Australian Aid

UNDP Bangladesh

Social Protection Policy Support (SPPS) Programme

Sustainable Development Goals: Bangladesh Progress Report 2024



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Acronyms

8FYP	Eighth Five-Year Plan
AAGR	average annual growth rate
ABS	Access and Benefit Sharing
ACC	Anti-Corruption Commission
ADB	Asian Development Bank
ADR	Alternate Dispute Resolution
AfT	Aid for Trade
AI	Artificial Intelligence
AOI	Agriculture orientation index
APC	Accelerating Protection for Children
APSC	Annual Primary School Census
AQI	Air Quality Index
ATMs	automated teller machines
BANBEIS	Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Institution and Statistics
BAU	Business-as-usual
BBS	Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics
BCCSAP	Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan
BCCTF	Bangladesh Climate Change Trust Fund
BES	Bangladesh Education Statistics
BFIU	Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit
BGMEA	Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association
BIDA	Bangladesh Investment Development Authority
BIWTC	Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation
BLA	Bangladesh Labour Act
BMET	Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training
BREDAL	Bangladesh Renewable Energy Development Authority
BRRI	Bangladesh Rice Research Institute
BRT	Bus Rapid Transit
BSCCL	Bangladesh Submarine Cable Company Limited
BSVS	Bangladesh Sample Vital Statistics
BTRC	Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CCR	Cycle Completion Rate
CDA	Chattogram Development Authority
CDC	Communicable Disease Control
CDM	Clean Development Mechanism
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CFF	Climate Fiscal Framework
CIEOSH	Centre of Innovation, Efficiency and Occupational Safety and Health
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species
CPD	Centre for Policy Dialogue

CPHS	Citizen Perception Household Survey
CPJ	Committee to Protect Journalists
CPP	Cyclone Preparedness Programme
CREATE	Circular Economy in Bangladesh's Apparel Textile Industry Ecosystem
DAEs	Direct Access Entities
DGHS	Directorate General of Health Services
DHS	Demographic Household Survey
DMTCL	Dhaka Mass Transit Company Limited
DoE	Department of Environment
DPE	Department of Primary Education
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
DSHE	Directorate of Higher Secondary Education
ECAs	Ecologically Critical Areas
ECD	Early Childhood Development
ECDI	Early Childhood Development Index
ECDS	Early Childhood Development
EECMP	Energy Efficiency and Conservation Master Plan
EGPP	Employment Generation Program for the Poorest
EGSC	Ending Gender Stereotypes in Classrooms
EP	Essential Priorities
EPI	Expanded Program on Immunization
ERD	Economic Relations Division
ESD	Education for Sustainable Development
ESG	Environmental, Social, and governance
ETPs	Effluent Treatment Plants
EVI	Environmental Vulnerability Index
FAO	food security and nutrition in the world 2023
FAOSTAT	Food and Agriculture Organization Statistics
FCTC	Framework Convention on Tobacco Control
FDI	foreign direct investment
FES	Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung
FFP	Food Friendly Programme
FFW	Food for Work
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
FID	Financial Inclusion Department
FIES	Food Insecurity Experience Scale
FLFP	Female Labour Force Participation
FYP	Five-Year Plans
GATS	Global Adult Tobacco Survey
GBM	Ganges, Brahmaputra, and Meghna
GCED	Global Citizenship Education
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GDP	Gross Domestic Product

GED	General Economics Division
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
GIU	Governance Innovation Unit
GNI	Gross National Income
GoB	Government of Bangladesh
GPI	Gender Parity Index
HAI	Human Assets Index
HFC	Hydrofluorocarbons
HIES	Household Income and Expenditure Survey
HMSS	Household and Maternal Health Survey
HPNSP	Health Population and Nutrition Sector Program
HRBA	human rights-based approach
HSD	Health Services Division
IAEs	Implementing Agencies and Entities
ICCHL	Institute of Child and Community Health and Learning
ICLS	International Conference of Labour Statisticians
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
ICVGD	Investment Component for Vulnerable Group Development Programme
IDA	International Development Association
IDCOL	Infrastructure Development Company Limited
IFC	International Finance Corporation
IHR	International Health Regulations
ILO	International Labour Organization
ILOSTAT	International Labour Organization Statistics
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IoT	Internet of Things
IPAC	Integrated Protected Area Co-management
IRENA	International Renewable Energy Agency
ITC	International Trade Centre
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
IUU	illegal, unreported, and unregulated
IVR	Interactive Voice Response
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
JMP	Joint Monitoring Programme
KBAs	Key Biodiversity Areas
LAS	Literary Assessment Survey
LCP	Learning and Continuity Plan
LDC	Least Developed Country
LFS	Labour Force Survey
LGD	Local Government Division
LGED	Local Government Engineering Department

LJD	Law and Justice Division
LLDCs	Landlocked Developing Countries
LoGIC	Local Government Initiative on Climate Change
MCBP	Mother and Child Benefit Programme
MCPP	Mujib Climate Prosperity Plan
MCS	Monitoring, Control, and Surveillance
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MEFWD	Medical Education and Family Welfare Division
MF	Material Footprint
MFIs	Microfinance Institutions
MFN	Most Favored Nation
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MMP	Missing Migrants Project
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
MoDMR	Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief
MoE	Ministry of Environment
MoEFCC	Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change
MoF	Ministry of Food
MoHA	Ministry of Home Affairs
MOHFW	Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
MoPA	Ministry of Public Administration
MoS	Ministry of Shipping
MoWR	Ministry of Water Resources
MPAs	Marine Protected Areas
MPI	Multidimensional Poverty Index
MRT	Mass Rapid Transit
MSE	micro and small enterprise
MSMEs	micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises
MW	Mega Watts
NAEP	National Agricultural Extension Policy
NAES	National Agricultural Extension System
NAP	National Adaptation Plan
NAW	National Accounts Wing
NBR	National Board of Revenue
NCDs	Non-communicable Diseases
NCG	National Committee on LDC Graduation
NCLS	National Child Labour Survey
NCS	National Conservation Strategy
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
NDF	National Development Framework
NEET	Not in Education, Employment, or Training
NEP	National Education Policy
NER	Net Enrollment Rate
NFIS	National Financial Inclusion Strategy

NFNSP	National Food and Nutrition Security Policy
NGOs	Non-governmental Organizations
NHRC	National Human Rights Commission
NIPORT	National Institute of Population Research and Training
NMEP	National Malaria Elimination Programme
NPAN	National Plan of Action for Nutrition
NPDC	National Policy on Development Cooperation
NPDM	National Plan for Disaster Management
NPIs	national priority indicators
NPL	Non-Performing Loans
NPT	National Priority Targets
NRCC	National River Conservation Commission
NSA	National Student Assessment
NSDA	National Skill Development Authority
NSDP	National Skills Development Policy
NSSS	National Social Security Strategy
NTDs	neglected tropical disease
NWP	National Water Policy
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OMS	Open Market Sale
OP	Other Priorities
PEDP	Primary Education Development Program
PESP	Primary Education Stipend Program
PFM	Public Financial Management
PHR	Poverty Headcount Ratio
PISA	Program for International Students Assessment
PMO	Prime Minister's Office
PoA	Plan of Action
PoU	Prevalence of Undernourishment
PPP	Public-private Partnerships
QLFS	Quarterly Labour Force Survey
RAJUK	Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha
RCIP	Rural Connectivity Improvement Project
REDD+	Reducing Emission from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
RFMO	Regional Fisheries Management Organization
RGA	Rapid Gender Assessment
RLGIs	Rural Local Government Institutions
RMG	Ready-made Garment
RPSP	Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme
RTI	Right to Information
SCP	Sustainable Consumption and Production
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal

SDGR	Sustainable Development Goals Report
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SEDA	Sustainable Energy Development Agency
SEDP	Secondary Education Development Program
SESIP	Secondary Education Sector Investment Program
SEZs	Special Economic Zones
SFDRR	Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction
SHS	Solar Home System
SID	Statistics and Information Division
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SLCPs	Short Lived Climate Pollutants
SLR	Sea Level Rise
SMEs	Small and Medium Enterprises
SMS	Short Message Service
SREDA	Sustainable And Renewable Energy Development Authority
SRO	Statutory Regulatory Authority
SRVS	Sample Registration Vital Statistics
SSC	South-South Cooperation
SSNPs	social safety net programs
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
TB	Tuberculosis
TEUs	Twenty-foot Equivalent units
TFT	Two-finger Test
TIB	Transparency International Bangladesh
TMED	Technical and Madrasah Education Division
TR	Test Relief
TRIPS	Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights
TSA	Tourism Satellite Survey
TVET	technical and vocational education and training
UCD	Urban Community Development
UDD	Urban Development Directorate
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UIS	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
ULGIs	Urban Local Government Institutions
UMIC	Upper Middle-Income Country
UN	United Nations
UNCAC	United Nations Convention Against Corruption
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDRR	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
UNEP	United Nations Environment Program

UNESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNESDOC	UNESCO Digital Library
UNFCC	United Nations Framework on Climate Change
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNGEI	United Nations Girls' Education Initiative
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNSTAT	United Nations Statistics
USD	United States Dollar
VAT	Value-added Tax
VAW	Violence Against Women
VGD	Vulnerable Group Development
VGF	Vulnerable Group Feeding
VIPs	Very Important Persons
VWB	Vulnerable Women Benefit
WARPO	Water Resources Planning Organization
WASA	Water Supply and Sewage Authority
WASH	Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene for All
WB	World Bank
WDI	World Development Indicators
WEF	World Economic Forum
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
WiFi	Wireless Network
WOHFW	World Organization for Health and Family Welfare
WTO	World Trade Organization

Executive Summary

The Bangladesh SDG Progress Report 2024 provides a comprehensive assessment of the country's progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It provides a thorough overview of the current state of each of the 17 SDGs, highlighting both areas of success and domains requiring accelerated efforts as well as an evaluation of the obstacles, policy suggestions, and strategic directions for making further progress towards achieving the goals within the stipulated time frame.

Some progress has been made in goals such as SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), and SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy). However, significant challenges remain in achieving SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions), where issues such as insufficient health service coverage, high informality and lack of decent employment, socio-economic disparities, rapid urbanization, lack of good governance, and climate vulnerabilities remain persistent. Hence, the report reflects Bangladesh's determination to coordinate national development efforts with international goals while acknowledging the internal and external factors influencing progress.

Progress on the 17 SDGs

SDG 1: No Poverty

National poverty rate of Bangladesh decreased from 24.3% in 2016 to 18.7% in 2022 (according to the officially conducted Household and Income Expenditure Survey). Similarly, the rate of extreme poverty decreased from 12.9% to 5.6% during the same period. Likewise, according to the international poverty line of $2.15 per day, the poverty rate in the country dropped around 8.5 percentage points between 2016 and 2022, from 13.5 to 5.01 per cent. Despite improvements, the poverty rate in rural areas is still higher at 21.5%, while in urban areas it is 14.1%, according to the HIES, 2022.

Regional gaps still exist despite in poverty alleviation progress, especially in places that are vulnerable to disasters like the northern and coastal districts. Rapid migration and limited access to basic services, such as housing, water, and sanitation, in informal settlements are contributing factors to the rise in urban poverty. Shocks brought on by climatic events, such as cyclones and floods, continue to risk advancement and drive vulnerable groups back into poverty.

Targeted regional development strategies, with an emphasis on lagging regions, are required to maintain progress. Sustainable routes out of poverty can be established by boosting financial inclusion, improving rural infrastructure, and growing social safety net programmes. It will also be crucial to improve collaboration in efforts to reduce poverty and fortify disaster resilience.

SDG 2: Zero Hunger

Food security in Bangladesh has improved, as seen by a decrease in the rate of malnutrition from 16.4% in 2015 to 10.7% in 2023. Rice output, which is the principal source of calories, has increased from 34.7 million metric tonnes in 2015 to 38.5 million metric tonnes by 2023. However, stunting and wasting rates among children under five remain at 26% and 9.8%, respectively, indicating continued nutritional challenges.

Malnutrition and food prices continue to confront poverty reduction and zero hunger efforts. Rising food prices, as well as climate shocks such as flooding and storms, have an impact on the availability of food for vulnerable people. Severe salinity problems in coastal zones limit arable land and affect agricultural output. Extreme weather events and resource depletion have also had a negative impact on livestock and fisheries, which are important sources of protein.

There is a need for prioritising agricultural modernization by allocating a higher proportion of public expenditure toward agriculture, especially focusing on technology adoption, precision agriculture, and research. Furthermore, long-term agricultural investment plans should include sustainable practices and climate-resilient technologies to secure future food production. To effectively prevent malnutrition, programs focussing on maternal and child health should be prioritised.

SDG 3: Good Health and Well-Being

There is evidence of progress in some health outcomes, particularly in maternal and child health. Maternal mortality has dropped from 170 per 100,000 new births in 2015 to 136 per 100,000 by 2023. In 2015, there were 38 deaths per 1,000 live births; by 2023, the figure had reduced to 30. In addition, skilled health staff attended 90.06% of total national births in 2023, compared to 42.1% in 2014. The coverage of the national immunization program has also seen success, achieving 99% immunization rate in 2023.

Nevertheless, challenges still persist. Between 2015 and 2023, the number of tuberculosis cases remained stagnant at approximately 221 per 100,000 people. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), there has been a shift in the sickness burden, with non-communicable diseases (NCDs) now accounting for 67% of all fatalities. Furthermore, according to HIES 2022, 68.5% of all medical expenses are still paid for out of pocket, putting financial strain on low-income and marginalized households. In addition, access to critical medical treatments is limited in rural areas due to a lack of appropriate healthcare infrastructure.

More spending on public health is required to address these issues, as it presently stands at 0.74% of GDP, which is lower than the regional average. To ensure long-term health benefits, it is critical to expand universal health coverage, strengthen primary healthcare services, and improve noncommunicable disease preventative care. Moreover, investments in rural health infrastructure and workforce development are critical for reducing the regional inequalities in universal health care.

SDG 4: Quality Education

With a net enrolment rate of 98% in 2023, Bangladesh is close to achieving nearly universal primary enrolment. The enrolment rate of girls is higher than that of boys evident from the gender parity index, which was 1.21 for secondary education, 1.03 for higher secondary education in 2023. Besides, between 2016 and 2023, the lower secondary completion rate rose by 9.57 percentage points to 70.86%, while the primary education rate increased by 6.05 percentage points to 86.85%. Additionally, according to the BBS 2022 ICT Use and Access Survey, 86.2% of youths and adults nationwide have basic knowledge in ICT tasks, such as moving or duplicating data using copy-and-paste tools. However, very few of them have the moderate to advanced knowledges– such as using basic arithmetic formulae in a spreadsheet (36.3%), connecting and installing new devices (10.8%), creating electronic presentations (2.7%), programming or coding in digital environments (1.4%).

On the other hand, national assessments show that 70% of primary school students struggle with maths at grade level and 49% of them struggle with reading Bangla. Furthermore, the lack of trained teachers and educational resources in rural schools is contributing to the widening learning gap between urban and rural communities. At the lower and upper secondary levels, the state of teachers who meet the basic standards is unsatisfactory; according to the BES 2023, only about 63% of teachers met the requirements.

Investments in curriculum reform, teacher training, and digital learning infrastructure are necessary to improve the quality of education. By providing students with skills that are relevant to the market, expanding technical education and vocational training would increase employability of youth population.

SDG 5: Gender Equality

According to Labor Force Survey (LFS) 2023, the female labour force participation rate was 41.4%. Gender-responsive budgeting has been initiated, with 34.37% of the national budget allocated for women's development in FY 2023-24. Nonetheless, there are gender disparities in the workforce, with women are mostly involved in low-wage and informal sectors. In 2023, the percentage of women in managerial roles was only at 0.27%. Women continue to devote 24.6% of their time to unpaid care and household duties, which restricts their access to economic prospects, according to the Time Use Survey, 2022. This problem is exacerbated by the dearth of easily accessible and reasonably priced childcare facilities; there are just 63 state-funded daycare centres in the country. Additionally, in 2022, 58.8% women (18+ age) have mobile phones for own uses, while the corresponding figure for men was 86.7%, indicating a digital divide along the gender dimension.

Expanding women's access to digital and financial resources, encouraging gender-responsive employment rules, fortifying legal frameworks against gender-based violence, and implementing workplace anti-harassment policies are all essential to addressing these issues. Furthermore, expanding funding for women's education and training—especially in technical and digital domains—will improve their economic prospects.

SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation

With 71.22% of the population having access to safely managed drinking water services in 2023, up from 68.51% in 2021, Bangladesh has expanded the access to clean water and sanitation. In 2023, 69.7% of people had access to safely managed sanitary facilities, exceeding the 2025 goal of 60%. Water-use efficiency, however, dropped from 9.82% in 2020 to 5.84% in 2021, underscoring resource management issues. Even though 90% of surface water in transboundary basin areas comes from shared rivers, only 38% of these areas had functioning water cooperation agreements in 2021.

Sustainable drinking water supplies are still a challenge, especially in rural areas where 83.7% of the population depends on deep tube wells, which leaves them vulnerable to salinity, droughts, and changes in rainfall patterns. Only 19% of municipal wastewater is treated (in 2021), and many peoples are still impacted by arsenic poisoning. The limited transboundary water cooperation, with only the Ganges Water Sharing Treaty of 1996 in place, affects over 60% of shared water resources, contributing to seasonal water crises and regional disparities in water availability.

It is recommended to improve sanitation services, invest in water treatment infrastructure, and encourage rainwater collection in areas afflicted by salinity in order to alleviate these problems. Moreover, initiatives include tightening environmental laws and enhancing water use efficiency using cutting-edge technologies are also essential. Negotiating new transboundary water-sharing agreements and enhancing community involvement in water management can support sustainable water and sanitation practices.

SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy

With 99.5% of households having access to electricity in 2023, up from 77.9% in 2015, Bangladesh has nearly reached universal electrification. In 2023, 29.7% of the population was predominantly dependent on clean fuels and technology, which is close to the 30% target set for 2025. However, at 4.11%, the proportion of renewable energy in total final energy consumption is very low and well below the 15% target set for 2030. Green energy efforts have seen, such as renewable energy capacity per capita increased from 2.66 watts in 2015 to 7.01 watts in 2023. With more than 4.13 million systems installed, the Solar Home System (SHS) program has played a major role in electrifying rural areas. Additionally, international financial flows supporting clean energy development increased by 65.11%, from USD 301.1 million in 2015-16 to USD 496.8 million in 2018-19.

Even with these developments, there are still obstacles to overcome in order to guarantee fair access to energy and raise the proportion of renewables in the energy mix. There are still differences in energy supply between urban and rural areas, with rural areas having less reliable supplies and frequent power outages. The continued heavy reliance on fossil fuels hinders the switch to alternative energy sources and increases greenhouse gas emissions. Inefficient technologies are still a problem in the industrial sector, which affects energy efficiency and the achievement of key SDG 7 indicators.

Strengthening regulatory measures is necessary to expedite project implementation, and improving policy frameworks will aid both large- and small-scale renewable energy projects. For sustainable energy technology to be adopted more widely, more money must be invested through tax breaks, subsidies, and low-interest loans. The urban-rural energy gap can be

closed by growing effective initiatives like SHS and encouraging rural electrification through mini-grid projects. Furthermore, expanding the development of wind, solar, and biomass projects can help diversify energy sources and help achieve SDG 7 targets.

SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth

With a GDP growth of 4.22% in 2023–2024, Bangladesh falls short of generating adequate decent jobs. In 2022, the unemployment rate was 3.53%, indicating very modest progress towards the goal of bringing unemployment down below 3%. Despite a decline from 28.9% in 2015 to 19.7% in 2023, the percentage of youth (ages 15 to 24) not in education, employment, or training (NEET) is still far higher than the 10% target. In 2023, informal employment was accounted 84.1% of the workforce, with higher rates among women (95.7%) than males (77.9%). Child labour also remains a challenge, with 4.4% of children aged 5-17 engaged in work, including 2.7% in hazardous activities. The gender wage gap persists, with women earning significantly less than men across sectors.

High rates of informal employment, gender inequality, and the sluggish transition from informal to formal employment are some of the main obstacles. Skills mismatch and the limited opportunities of vocational training contribute to youth unemployment. Economic inclusion and job quality are still impacted by systemic labour market issues, even in the face of initiatives like the Employment Generation Program for the Poorest (EGPP) and the National Industrial Policy 2022. Decent work conditions are further impacted by the continued existence of hazardous work situations, especially in sectors like construction and textiles.

To improve outcomes under SDG 8, it is recommended to expanding education and vocational training, particularly for youth and marginalized groups. Strengthening labour rights, boosting financial inclusion through the National Financial Inclusion Strategy (2021-26), and increasing assistance for small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) are key priority areas. To guarantee sustainable and inclusive economic growth, targeted efforts are also required to prevent child labour and close the gender wage gap through increased enforcement of labour laws and awareness campaigns.

SDG 9: Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure

Bangladesh is emphasising to stimulate innovation, encourage inclusive industrialisation, and construct resilient infrastructure. In 2023, the percentage of rural residents who lived within 2 km of an all-season road was 91.1%, exceeding the 2025 goal of 90%. In 2023, manufacturing made for 25.1% of GDP, indicating consistent progress towards the goal of 35% by 2030.

Nonetheless, manufacturing employment is still low, accounting for 11.6% of all employment in 2023, indicating that the industry is having trouble creating jobs. R&D spending is still only 0.3% of GDP, well below the 1% goal for 2025, which restricts technological advancement and industrial sector diversification. Low-quality collateral, a lack of a standard definition, and vulnerability to external shocks are obstacles for SMEs.

It is recommended to increase R&D expenditures, improve SME assistance through focused financial and legislative measures, and encourage industry diversity. It is crucial to increase rural connectivity using cutting-edge technologies and significant infrastructural

investments. Industrial growth and competitiveness can be supported by integrating sophisticated manufacturing technology and promoting digital transformation. Inclusive and sustainable industrial growth can also be promoted by enhancing public-private partnerships and creating a supportive business climate.

SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities

With the Gini index rising from 0.48 in 2016 to about 0.50 in 2024, implying growing income differences, Bangladesh confronts difficulties in reducing inequality. Household spending for the poorest 40% of the population grew at a rate of 15.1% in 2022 compared to 7.7% in 2018. However, the wealthiest 10% of households own 41% of the national income, while the poorest 40% own only 12.9%. Regional and gender differences in access to work, healthcare, and education are still present. In 2018, 35.6% of the population reported having experienced harassment or discrimination, with a target to reduce this to 20% by 2030.

Achieving equitable resource distribution and inclusive growth still presents challenges. The financial sector is unsteady, and public trust is impacted by corruption and poor management. For instance, non-performing loans (NPL) accounted for 9.6% of all gross loans in 2023, illustrating the ongoing difficulties faced by financial institutions. Poverty rates and access to basic services like healthcare and education continue to differ between urban and rural areas, highlighting these inequities. The impact of fiscal policies on redistribution is limited by the dependence on indirect taxation, which accounts for two-thirds of overall tax income.

It is recommended that the tax collecting system must be strengthened, social security programs be expanded, and access to high-quality healthcare and education be improved in order to achieve SDG 10. Other crucial actions include strengthening institutional capacity and advancing financial inclusion under the National Financial Inclusion Strategy (NFIS).

SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities

Bangladesh has experienced unplanned urbanization, with over 31.5% of the population now living in cities, and more than half of them residing in urban slums. Although there has been very little progress, the percentage of urban residents living in slums has dropped from 54% in 2014 to 51.5% in 2022, falling well short of the 20% target by 2030. Besides, with only 2.43% of municipal solid waste being appropriately treated in controlled facilities as of 2021—a slight improvement from 2.25% in 2018—waste management remains a major problem. Air quality in urban areas continues to be a challenge, with PM2.5 levels reaching 79.9 $\mu g/m^3$ in 2023, significantly higher than the WHO guideline of 5 $\mu g/m^3$.

Increased air pollution and the ineffectiveness of municipal waste management emphasise the need for improved environmental management techniques. Urban living circumstances are made worse by traffic congestion, deteriorating road safety, and a lack of adequate urban infrastructure. Building inclusive, resilient, and sustainable cities requires enhancing urban governance, decentralising services, and putting in place efficient waste management systems. To promote sustainable urbanisation, it will be crucial to increase catastrophe resilience initiatives and improve urban planning with an emphasis on climatic adaptability. Additionally, efficient policy creation and progress tracking are hampered by the lack of comprehensive data for important SDG 11 indicators.

SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production

Bangladesh has developed a ten- year Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) framework, with the aim of reducing the environmental footprint of production and consumption in the country. In 2021, the national recycling rate increased to 15.6% from 15% in 2020, and by 2022, 49 companies had released sustainability reports, which increased accountability and transparency. In 2022, the country's per capita material footprint was 4.6 tonnes, whereas its per capita domestic material consumption was 3.62 tonnes. With 14.1 million tonnes wasted annually as of 2024, food waste is still a major concern. Hazardous waste management also shows room for improvement, with a compliance rate of 58.7% against international agreements.

Challenges persist in achieving fully responsible consumption and production patterns. The shift to renewable energy is hindered by the heavy reliance on fossil fuel subsidies, which increased from zero in 2015 to 7.1% of GDP in 2022. Infrastructure for managing hazardous waste is still insufficient, and companies have not yet embraced sustainability reporting. Inadequate data collection and monitoring mechanisms can make it more difficult to evaluate how well sustainability goals are being met.

Important actions are required include investing in hazardous waste management, growing recycling facilities, and encouraging green industrial practices through training and incentives. To encourage behavioural changes and aid in the execution of policies, it is also essential to set up reliable monitoring systems and raise public knowledge of sustainable consumption.

SDG 13: Climate Action

The number of people impacted by climate-related disasters per 100,000 population decreased from 12,881 in 2015 to 3,578 in 2021. In its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), Bangladesh has set high target, intending to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 15.12% with international assistance and 6.73% unconditionally by 2030. Comprehensive plans to improve climate resilience are outlined in the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) 2022–2050 and the Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (BCCSAP) 2022. However, with only USD 1,189.5 million raised versus a projected USD 12 billion needed by 2025, financial limitations continue to be a significant obstacle. Just 3.7% of the total amount needed has been provided by the USD 448.8 million contribution from the Green Climate Fund (GCF).

Climate policy implementation is also impacted by institutional and capability limitations. Furthermore, according to the Bangladesh Disaster-Related Statistics (BDRS) Report 2021, economic losses from extreme weather events amounted to 1.32% of GDP in 2021, up from 1.30% in 2015, indicating that Bangladesh is still extremely exposed to climate risks. Expanding community-based disaster risk reduction (DRR) programs, enhancing access to climate finance, improving institutional capacity, and advocating for climate justice on international stages are all crucial to tackling these issues. Prioritising adaptation efforts and implementing a strong climate financing framework would help Bangladesh create a sustainable and climate-resilient future.

SDG 14: Life Below Water

In accordance with international frameworks like the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), 8.8% of Bangladesh's exclusive economic zone has been declared as Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). Despite being essential to lives and food security, the fisheries sector has recently contributed less than 1% of GDP, with sustainable fisheries' share falling sharply from 3.29% in 2015 to 0.24% in 2021. Programs aimed at species like Hilsa demonstrate a targeted approach to conservation, while initiatives like the National Conservation Strategy (NCS) seek to protect marine biodiversity and advance sustainable practices. The Sundarbans mangrove forest is threatened by rising sea levels and saline intrusion, and marine ecosystems are still susceptible to overfishing, pollution, and climate change.

Budgetary restrictions, governance problems that impede efficient resource management, and a lack of infrastructure for marine conservation are among the difficulties. Because restrictions are not consistently monitored or enforced, illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing continues. Economic pressures and environmental degradation are putting coastal communities that depend on fishing at greater risk. Financial constraints also limit the impact of conservation programs, with a lack of comprehensive data on marine resources complicating planning and implementation.

Expanding MPAs, enforcing anti-illegal fishing regulations, and improving waste management to reduce marine pollution are all key steps in tackling these issues. Investing in blue economy initiatives, such as eco-tourism and sustainable aquaculture, can support economic growth while preserving biodiversity. Enhanced international cooperation and community-based conservation efforts are also critical to achieving SDG 14 targets and ensuring the long-term health of marine ecosystems.

SDG 15: Life on Land

As per currently available data in 2018, the forest coverage of Bangladesh increased slightly to 14.5% from 14.1% in 2015, representing 25,752 square kilometres of the country's total land area. However, the country aims to increase the amount of forest cover to 20% by 2030, but there are still obstacles in the way. To preserve a variety of habitats, such as wetlands, rivers, lakes, and coastal areas, Bangladesh has established 13 Ecologically Critical Areas (ECAs) totalling 71,544 hectares. In order to preserve biodiversity, the country also maintains protected areas; terrestrial protected areas make up 3.2% of the territory, while marine protected areas make up 2.36%. Initiatives for coastal afforestation and community-based forest management have made an impact; 23,818 hectares have been planted to improve wildlife habitats and fight land degradation.

Deforestation and biodiversity loss remain major problems in spite of these efforts. With an indication value of 252 in 2021 indicating significant illicit activity, the illegal wildlife trade is still a concern. According to the IUCN Plant Red List of Bangladesh-2024, 39.5% of the evaluated plant species are classified as threatened, while only 0.5% are highly endangered. The report on the Land Degradation in Bangladesh 2020 states that land degradation impacts about 270 square kilometres per year and that further efforts would be necessary to reach the 20% forest coverage target by 2030. Furthermore, insufficient research and uneven data

collection make it difficult to conduct efficient monitoring and develop policies to address environmental challenges.

Bangladesh should encourage sustainable forest management practices and strengthen enforcement against illicit logging and land conversion in order to meet SDG 15 ambitions. Important steps include expanding government funding for conservation initiatives, boosting community participation in resource management, and strengthening global cooperation for biodiversity preservation. Long-term ecological sustainability will be supported by the use of creative methods for preservation and improved incorporation of environmental regulations into national development plans.

SDG 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions

Important initiatives, such as the Independent Information Commission and the enactment of the Right to Information (RTI) Act, 2009 are in place, however, challenges remained in implementation stage. Human trafficking has decreased from 1.78 per 100,000 in 2015 to 0.72 per 100,000 in 2022, however, figures for female trafficking remain relatively stagnant. Intentional homicide rates dropped from 1.94 per 100,000 in 2015 to 1.33 in 2020, while they somewhat increased to 1.41 in 2022. Notably, according to the World Bank Enterprise Survey 2022, 25% of businesses in Bangladesh had at least one interaction with a public official in which they were asked for or paid a bribe, down from 41% in 2013.

Upholding the rule of law and guaranteeing access to justice continue to present difficulties. In 2022, 77% of all prisoners were unsentenced detainees, adding to the overpopulation in prisons and further stressing the legal system. With a significant prevalence of bribes in dealings with public officials, corruption remains a barrier. Given that many women are victims of physical, sexual, or psychological abuse, gender-based violence is still a serious problem. Additionally, the development of a just and open legal system is hampered by the absence of an efficient and independent justice system.

Important actions are required include enhancing public officials' accountability, strengthening anti-corruption efforts, and growing legal rights awareness initiatives. To improve justice delivery and discourage criminal activity, it is also essential to strengthen anti-trafficking laws, promote cross-border cooperation, and ensure just prosecution of people traffickers. Expanding digital public services and establishing survivor-friendly reporting mechanisms will support efforts to build inclusive and effective institutions.

SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals

Bangladesh currently prioritising in establishing international collaborations to promote sustainable development, especially as it gets ready to leave the Least Developed Country (LDC) category. The need for increased domestic resource mobilisation was highlighted by the country's revenue-to-GDP ratio of 9.47% in FY 2023-24, which was much lower than the 18% target for 2030. In 2023, Bangladesh's share of global merchandise exports rose little to 0.28% in 2022 from 0.19% in 2015. The percentage of global services exports were remained at 0.12% from 2020 to 2022. The nation has collaborated with major international development partners, and has used public-private partnerships (PPPs) to build infrastructure, especially in the transportation and energy sectors. However, challenges persist in areas such as debt

servicing, where prudent management strategies are needed, including debt restructuring and extending maturities to ease fiscal pressure.

Despite these efforts, the full potential of partnerships has not been realized. It is difficult for Bangladesh to match donor priorities with domestic requirements, especially when it comes to funding programs related to healthcare, education, and climate change. Another issue facing the country is the low level of foreign direct investment (FDI), which accounts for only 7.7% of the domestic budget compared to a target of 14%. High transfer costs, reliance on informal routes, and a lack of skill diversification among migrant workers have also prevented remittance inflows from meeting expectations. Data gaps also hinder progress, particularly in monitoring and implementing the "39+1" National Priority Indicators (NPTs) for SDG localization.

To draw FDI, it is recommended to expand the domestic tax base, strengthen public-private partnerships, and foster an atmosphere that is favourable to business. To help Bangladesh achieve its SDG goals, international cooperation should be strengthened, especially in sectors like trade, technology, and climate resilience. In order to address financial shortages and guarantee sustainable growth, it is also essential to implement cutting-edge financing strategies like impact investment and blended finance.

Progress of National Priority Indicators

Bangladesh's "39+1" National Priority Indicators (NPTs) show varying degrees of progress in localising the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Progress has been made in lowering poverty; in 2022, 5.6% of the population lived below the extreme poverty level. 99.5% of the population had access to electricity by 2024. However, in education, 86.9% of children completed primary education in 2023, requiring intervention to meet universal targets. Healthcare issues still exist, though, as the maternal mortality ratio in 2023 remained at 136 per 100,000 live births, well below the target of 70. Access to clean water and sanitation services also lags, with 71.22% of the population used safely managed drinking water and 69.7% of the population used safely managed sanitation services in 2023, showing stagnant progress. Internet usage reached 50.1% of the population in 2023, marking moderate progress toward the goal of 100%.

At the local level, the progress is hindered by data gaps, governance problems, and budgetary limitations. A major issue is financial inadequacy, as local government entities frequently have tight budgets that affect investments in social services, education, and infrastructure. In FY 2023–24, the government revenue-to-GDP ratio was 9.47%, well below the 20% target, highlighting the need for better resource mobilisation and creative financing strategies. Centralised decision-making and inadequate coordination between the national and local levels results in delays and inefficiencies. Furthermore, data collection and tracking systems need to be improved because inadequate data makes planning and resource allocation inefficient.

Improving governance frameworks, fortifying data systems, and establishing public-private partnerships to increase resource mobilisation are crucial to tackling these issues. Building sustainable and inclusive development paths also requires enhancing community engagement and integrating climate resilience into local development plans. The

development of digital data collection technologies can support evidence-based policymaking. Enhancing local officials' capacity-building programs and promoting a participatory approach to SDG implementation will facilitate a more efficient and focused localisation process.

Challenges

Bangladesh faces several challenges in achieving the SDGs, many of which are interconnected and span across multiple goals. One of the main challenges is persistent inequality, which manifests in income, gender, and regional disparities. Although SDG 1 (No Poverty) in reducing poverty is on-track, marginalised groups like women, indigenous populations, and people with disabilities frequently continue to be excluded from economic, healthcare, and educational opportunities; regional disparities, particularly between urban and rural areas, exacerbate these inequalities, with rural districts lagging behind in access to fundamental services; the issue of inequality also affects gender equality under SDG 5 (Gender Equality), where women face limited access to leadership roles, wage disparities, and gender-based violence, especially in rural areas.

Moreover, resource mobilization remains a critical constraint that impacts several SDGs, including SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being), SDG 4 (Quality Education), and SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure). Public investments in healthcare, education, and infrastructure development are constrained by the low domestic revenue generation, which is 9.47% of GDP and well below the regional average. Additional obstacles to success include difficulties aligning donor priorities with country requirements and delays in obtaining foreign assistance and climate finances under SDG 13 (Climate Action). The limited fiscal space also affects SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), where investments in water treatment and waste management infrastructure are needed. Additionally, it's critical to address the problems of unsafe drinking water management and poor sanitation, especially in rural and urban slums.

Since a large portion of the workforce works in the informal economy, where wages are low and employment rights are limited, economic issues under SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) are intimately related to labour market dynamics. Economic inclusion is still significantly hampered by youth unemployment and a large percentage of young people who are not in education, employment, or training (NEET).

Unplanned urbanization adds another layer of complexity, significantly impacting SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) and SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production). Cities are experiencing rapid population growth that has outpaced the development of infrastructure, resulting in stressed public services. Overcrowding and inadequate waste management hinder informal settlements, especially in megacities like Dhaka, which exacerbate environmental degradation. Since the use of fossil fuels contributes to pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, an excessive reliance on non-renewable energy sources under SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy) further exacerbates urban issues. Adopting eco-friendly methods and achieving global sustainability requirements are also challenges for the industrial sector, particularly the ready-made garment (RMG) sector.

Climate change also poses an existential threat, influencing multiple SDGs, including SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 13 (Climate Action), SDG 14 (Life Below Water), and SDG 15 (Life on Land). Extreme weather events like floods and cyclones are becoming more frequent, endangering coastal lives, agricultural production, and food security. Large areas of agricultural land have become unused due to salinity intrusion, which has an impact on SDG 2 and creates vulnerabilities in food supply chains. The negative impacts on land and marine ecosystems also make it more difficult to conserve biodiversity, which puts sustainable practices under SDGs 14 and 15 in jeopardy.

Governance and institutional capacity present cross-cutting challenges that affect the achievement of SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions) and have implications for all other goals. The legal system remains overburdened, limiting access to justice, while Corruption and bureaucratic inefficiencies erode public trust and impede efficient service delivery. Data gaps further impede evidence-based decision and SDG progress tracking, especially in real-time and disaggregated data. Limited efficacy in utilising private-sector and international partnerships to mobilise resources and improve technology transfer is another issue under SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals).

Conclusion and Way Forward

The future of Bangladesh depends on a comprehensive and integrated strategy that gives long-term sustainability and resilience against climatic hazards and international uncertainty equal weight with immediate socioeconomic requirements. Enhancing resource mobilisation through better domestic revenue production, encouraging creative financing methods, and building closer ties with private sector and international development partners are essential components of this strategy.

Targeted initiatives are required to enhance marginalised populations, especially in rural areas, by expanding social protection programs, improving access to high-quality healthcare and education, and creating decent employment opportunities. Furthermore, advancing gender equality and increasing women's involvement in the workforce and decision-making will be essential for fostering inclusive growth and attaining socioeconomic balance.

Adopting sustainable urban planning, increasing investments in green infrastructure, and enhancing waste management and public transportation systems are all critically needed to promote sustainable urbanisation and lessen the negative environmental effects of fast population expansion. Through the adoption of climate-resilient agricultural practices, the development of strong infrastructure, and the encouragement of renewable energy sources to lower greenhouse gas emissions, climate adaptation and resilience-building measures must be scaled up, especially in vulnerable coastal and disaster-prone regions. In order to improve public service delivery's efficiency, accountability, and transparency as well as to increase public trust in institutions—both of which are critical for creating an atmosphere that is conducive to sustainable development initiatives—it will be fundamental to strengthen governance and institutional frameworks.

To ensure that development interventions are well-targeted, evidence-based, and in line with the specific needs of various communities throughout the country, a coordinated effort involving all stakeholders—including the government, private sector, civil society, and

international partners—will be essential going forward. Improving mechanisms for gathering and managing data will be essential for assessing advancement, spotting new problems, and supporting evidence-based policies. By maintaining a focus on equity, resilience, and sustainability, and by binding the potential of innovation and technology, Bangladesh can continue its progress towards achieving the SDGs, ultimately contributing to a more prosperous, inclusive, and sustainable future for all its citizens.

Introduction

Background

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a landmark global initiative that seeks to redefine how countries approach development, inclusivity, and sustainability. Introduced in 2015 by the United Nations as a part of the Agenda 2030, the SDGs outline an ambitious vision for a world free from poverty and inequality, where people coexist in harmony with the planet (UN, 2024). This report, *SDGs Bangladesh Progress Report 2024*, provides a comprehensive assessment of Bangladesh's progress in achieving these goals, while shedding light on the challenges and opportunities that define this path.

The SDGs evolved as a successor to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which laid the groundwork for addressing global challenges in poverty, health, and education between 2000 and 2015. While the MDGs focused primarily on developing countries, the SDGs adopted a universal perspective, encompassing 17 interconnected goals, 169 specific targets, and 231 measurable indicators. Together, they aim to address pressing global issues such as climate change, social inequalities, economic stagnation, and environmental degradation. The SDGs emphasize "leaving no one behind," ensuring that the most vulnerable populations remain at the forefront of development efforts.

Unlike the MDGs, the SDGs place emphasis on economic growth, environmental sustainability, and social inclusivity, acknowledging the interdependent nature of these elements. This framework resonates with global challenges today, where progress in one area cannot come at the expense of another. Countries are urged to adopt a holistic approach, localizing these global aspirations to align with their unique socio-economic and environmental contexts.

Bangladesh's Commitment to SDGs

Bangladesh has integrated the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into its national development framework, building on lessons learned from previous various efforts. The focus is on aligning national policies with global SDG targets while addressing the country's specific development needs. Various policy and planning documents of the Government of Bangladesh outline key priorities aligned with the SDGs, including inclusive economic growth, climate resilience, human resource development, and institutional reforms.

To monitor progress, Bangladesh has identified 39+1 National Priority Indicators. These indicators are adapted to the country's socio-economic landscape, providing measurable targets for tracking outcomes across various sectors. This approach aims to ensure effective use of resources and measure results over time.

Implementation of the SDGs in Bangladesh follows a collaborative approach, involving multiple stakeholders. Government ministries and agencies work in association with development partners, civil society organizations, academia, private-sector actors, and local government institutions. This structure is intended to coordinate efforts, avoid duplication, and encourage resource-sharing among stakeholders.

Bangladesh has published three SDG Progress Reports in 2018, 2020, and 2022, providing a detailed review of its achievements and challenges. These reports serve as tools for assessing

progress and identifying gaps. They highlight areas requiring additional focus, such as inequalities in access to services, regional disparities, and resource constraints. The reports also emphasize the importance of evidence-based decision-making to refine strategies and address emerging challenges.

Additionally, financing SDG implementation remains a critical concern. Bangladesh relies on a mix of domestic resources, international aid, and private-sector contributions to fund its development programs. However, the existing resource gap puts challenges for achieving all targets within the 2030 timeframe. The government is exploring innovative financing mechanisms to address these constraints, including public-private partnerships and climate finance instruments.

As the country prepares its next SDG Progress Report, the focus is on identifying actionable solutions to overcome these challenges. Efforts are directed toward strengthening institutional frameworks, improving data collection and monitoring systems, and fostering greater collaboration among stakeholders. Sustained attention and strategic planning will be required to attain the SDGs in Bangladesh's unique development environment.

Evolving Global and National Dynamics

The world today is more interconnected than ever, yet it is simultaneously more fragmented. The evolving global and national dynamics continue to shape the contours of the development landscape of Bangladesh, bringing both challenges and opportunities. Understanding these dynamics is essential for assessing the country's SDG progress and designing strategies for a sustainable future.

Global dynamics: Changing world order

Since the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015, the global landscape has witnessed transformative events that have reformed pathways to sustainable development. These shifts, from global health crises to geopolitical realignments, have created obstacles that challenge efforts to achieve SDG targets, especially for developing countries like Bangladesh.

Russia-Ukraine War and Geopolitical Tensions: The Russia-Ukraine war, unfolding since 2022, has had far-reaching economic and political implications. Its impacts on global energy markets, food supply chains, and commodity prices have been particularly acute for developing countries like Bangladesh. Rising fuel prices have stressed public finances (SDG 8), while disruptions in food grain exports have heightened food insecurity (SDG 2). The redirection of resources from development funding to conflict mitigation in some regions also risks deprioritizing crucial global partnerships (SDG 17). Moreover, the geopolitical realignment driven by the conflict is threatening the cooperative spirit needed for collective SDG progress.

Middle East Unrest and Energy Security: The global significance of the Middle East as a hub of energy production makes fluctuations in this region critical to the global economy. Tensions in the Gulf region frequently leads to oil price spikes, affecting energy affordability and accessibility worldwide (SDG 7). For Bangladesh, which relies heavily on imported fossil

fuels, these fluctuations create significant economic vulnerabilities, constraining development investments (SDG 8). Additionally, the Middle East is home to a substantial number of Bangladeshi migrant workers whose remittances are essential for household incomes (SDG 1) and national economic stability (SDG 10). Disruptions in this region not only impact energy prices but also pose risks to the flow of remittances, further stretching economic resilience.

Climate Change and Global Commitments: Climate change remains an existential threat, particularly for countries like Bangladesh, which are highly vulnerable to its impacts. Despite global agreements such as the Paris Accord, a persistent gap exists between commitments and actions, weakening progress on SDG 13. For Bangladesh, the challenges are acute: rising sea levels threaten coastal communities (SDG 11), erratic monsoons destabilize food production (SDG 2), and frequent cyclones disrupt livelihoods (SDG 1). While climate financing mechanisms like the Green Climate Fund aim to address these issues, inconsistent disbursement and access hinder meaningful progress.

National Dynamics: Navigating Internal Complexities

Bangladesh's journey toward achieving the SDGs is shaped not only by global challenges but also by a unique set of national dynamics. These internal complexities intersect with the country's structural transformations, creating both opportunities and obstacles. Understanding how these challenges align with SDG achievement is important for addressing systemic bottlenecks and prioritizing action.

Governance and Political Dynamics: Bangladesh's political environment is fundamental in modeling its governance landscape, with implications for achieving transparency, accountability, and inclusivity—key aspects for SDG progress (SDG 16). Weak governance structures, marked by bureaucratic inefficiencies and corruption, hinder the effective delivery of basic services, such as health (SDG 3) and education (SDG 4). For instance, when resources allocated for healthcare or education are mismanaged, it directly affects access and quality, extending inequality (SDG 10). Additionally, limited participatory governance means that marginalized voices often remain unheard, weakening the inclusiveness of poverty reduction strategies (SDG 1) and other developmental initiatives. To overcome these challenges, political reforms must aim to improve the decision-making processes and ensure alignment between national policies and SDG targets.

Institutional Weaknesses and Reform: Weak institutions remain a fundamental barrier to sustainable development in Bangladesh. Inefficient public finance management, for example, leads to suboptimal allocation of resources, delaying progress on infrastructure development (SDG 9). Weak regulatory frameworks in sectors like agriculture and industry impede sustainable practices, directly impacting food security (SDG 2) and climate action (SDG 13). Moreover, without empowering local government institutions, the localization of SDGs remains a distant goal. Local governments are fundamental for delivering education, healthcare, and infrastructure services, and their underperformance weakens the achievement of multiple SDG targets simultaneously.

Economic Transition and LDC Graduation: Bangladesh's forthcoming graduation from Least Developed Country (LDC) status in 2026 is a milestone but also introduces vulnerabilities. The loss of duty-free trade privileges and other preferential benefits threatens

the export-driven garment industry, a major contributor to GDP and employment (SDG 8). This economic restructuring could lead to job losses, especially for women, exacerbating gender inequality (SDG 5) and poverty (SDG 1). Additionally, the lack of diversification in export sectors limits resilience, making the economy vulnerable to external shocks, further hindering progress in reducing inequalities (SDG 10) and promoting innovation (SDG 9). Strengthening foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows and negotiating favourable trade agreements are crucial for economic resilience in a post-LDC era.

Urbanization and Urban Governance: Unplanned urbanization poses significant obstacles to achieving SDG 11, which aims for inclusive, safe, and sustainable cities. Rapid migration to urban areas stresses housing, sanitation, and transportation systems. For example, overcrowded urban settlements often lack access to clean water (SDG 6) and basic sanitation, increasing health risks (SDG 3). Environmental degradation from unchecked urban sprawl affects air quality and contributes to climate change (SDG 13), highlighting the urgent need for sustainable urban planning. Without effective urban governance, these issues could escalate, undermining economic productivity and social cohesion.

Migration and Return Migration: Migration is a significant aspect of Bangladesh's socio-economic landscape, with profound implications for sustainable development. Over the decades, millions of Bangladeshis have migrated abroad, particularly to the Gulf and Southeast Asian countries, in search of better livelihoods. Remittances sent by these migrants have become a cornerstone of the national economy, contributing significantly to poverty alleviation (SDG 1), economic growth (SDG 8), and reducing inequalities (SDG 10). In 2023 alone, remittance inflows accounted for a substantial portion of Bangladesh's GDP, helping rural families access better education (SDG 4), healthcare (SDG 3), and improved living standards. However, during the COVID-19 pandemic, thousands of workers returned home due to job losses, creating challenges in reintegration and employment. These returnees often face difficulties finding suitable jobs, particularly when their skills do not align with the domestic job market. This situation aggravates unemployment rates (SDG 8) and increases the risk of poverty among migrant families. Moreover, climate-induced displacement is a growing concern, with rising sea levels, riverbank erosion, and extreme weather events forcing thousands to migrate from rural to urban areas each year. This rural-to-urban migration puts immense pressure on urban infrastructure and services, challenging progress on SDG 11, which seeks sustainable cities and communities. Migrants often end up in informal settlements lacking access to clean water (SDG 6), sanitation, and healthcare (SDG 3), further perpetuating cycles of inequality (SDG 10). Children in these settlements frequently drop out of school, hindering progress on education goals (SDG 4).

Climate Change and Disaster Management: As one of the most climate-vulnerable countries, Bangladesh faces severe risks from rising sea levels, erratic weather patterns, and natural disasters. Agricultural disruptions caused by erratic weather patterns threaten food security (SDG 2) and poverty (SDG 1), particularly for rural populations dependent on subsistence farming. Climate-induced displacement also strains urban infrastructure, further challenging progress on SDG 11. Without scaling up climate-resilient practices and securing international climate financing, these challenges will continue to impede sustainable development.

Demographic Transition: The demographic dividend in Bangladesh, characterized by a youthful workforce, presents an opportunity to drive economic productivity (SDG 8). However, this window is narrowing, and insufficient investment in education (SDG 4), skill development (SDG 8), and healthcare (SDG 3) risks turning this advantage into a liability. A poorly educated and unskilled workforce struggles to secure productive employment, perpetuating cycles of poverty (SDG 1). Moreover, without timely interventions, an aging population could burden social protection systems, challenging efforts to reduce inequalities and ensure well-being for all (SDG 10).

The interplay of these global and national dynamics creates a complex environment for Bangladesh's SDG implementation. While the global disruptions necessitate adaptive and collaborative responses, national challenges require context-specific solutions grounded in evidence-based policymaking. Balancing these two aspects is essential for ensuring that Bangladesh's development progress is sustained and that the country becomes more resilient, emerging stronger in the face of these interconnected challenges.

Objectives of the Bangladesh SDGs Progress Report 2024

This report is not just a retrospective account of Bangladesh's journey toward the SDGs; it is a forward-looking blueprint designed to inform and inspire. The primary objectives of the *Bangladesh SDG Progress Report 2024* are as follows:

- **Assess Progress Across Indicators**: Provide a comprehensive evaluation of the progress made toward each of the 17 SDGs, analysing indicator-wise achievements, gaps, and emerging trends.
- **Highlight Data Availability and Gaps**: Examine the status of disaggregated data availability for SDG indicators, identifying areas where improved data systems are critical.
- **Address Challenges and Global Comparisons**: Investigate the unique challenges Bangladesh faces exacerbated by the geopolitical shifts, while drawing comparisons with peer countries to identify best practices.
- **Analyse Localization Efforts**: Evaluate the current status of SDG localization, with a focus on the 39+1 National Priority Indicators, and assess their role in accelerating progress.
- **Provide Recommendations**: Synthesize lessons learned from the SDG implementation process to offer actionable recommendations for policymakers, stakeholders, and development partners.

Through these objectives, the report seeks to provide a holistic and evidence-based narrative, positioning Bangladesh's SDG efforts within the broader context of its development aspirations.

Structure of the Report

The report is structured to provide a clear and comprehensive narrative on Bangladesh's SDG progress. The following 17 chapters focus on individual SDGs, offering detailed analyses of progress, challenges, and opportunities for each goal, supported by data, projections, and stakeholder insights. A dedicated chapter highlights Bangladesh's 39+1 National Priority Indicators and explores the localization of SDGs, aligning global goals with the country's specific context. The final chapter synthesizes findings and offers strategic recommendations to address challenges and accelerate progress, providing a roadmap for achieving the 2030 Agenda. This structure ensures a cohesive and insightful examination of Bangladesh's SDG journey.

1 NO POVERTY

SDG 1: No Poverty

1.1. Background

In 2015, the United Nations stated that around 736 million people lived on less than $1.90 per day, providing a harsh reminder of the worldwide poverty epidemic. Millions were without necessities such as food, clean water, and sanitation, emphasizing the need for change. Sustainable Development Goal 1, which aims for the abolition of extreme poverty by 2030, is central to this objective and serves as the foundation for the 2030 Agenda's overall vision. Known as the "No Poverty" goal, it seeks to "end poverty in all its forms everywhere," recognizing that poverty is more than just income; it also includes access to education, food, healthcare, shelter, political participation, freedom of choice, safety, and dignity—all of which are essential for sustainable development.[1]

1.2. Global and Regional Context

The COVID-19 pandemic pushed nearly 90 million people into extreme poverty, reversing years of progress. Despite the expansion of social protection measures, about 4 billion people—55% of the global population—remain unprotected. From February 2022 to February 2023, 105 countries introduced nearly 350 social protection measures, but 80% of these were temporary. If poverty-reduction efforts do not improve, an estimated 575 million people may remain in extreme poverty by 2030, with Sub-Saharan Africa notably affected. At the current rate, barely one-third of countries are on track to cut poverty in half by 2030.

Extreme poverty has decreased globally, with South Asia making the most rapid progress. In 2002, 40.4% of the South Asian population lived on less than $2.15 a day, compared to 26.9% globally. By 2022, South Asia's rate had fallen to 9.7%, nearly matching the global average of 9.0% (Figures 1.1 and 1.2).

Figure 1. 1: World population living with less than $2.15

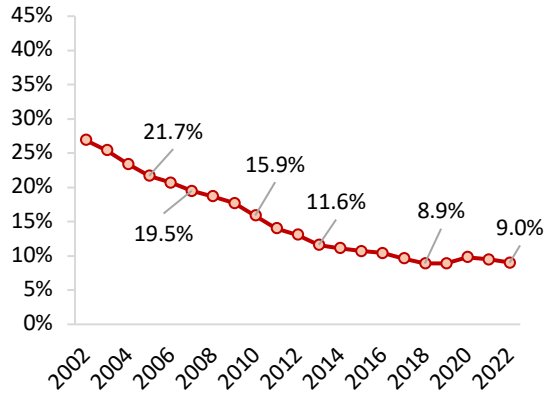
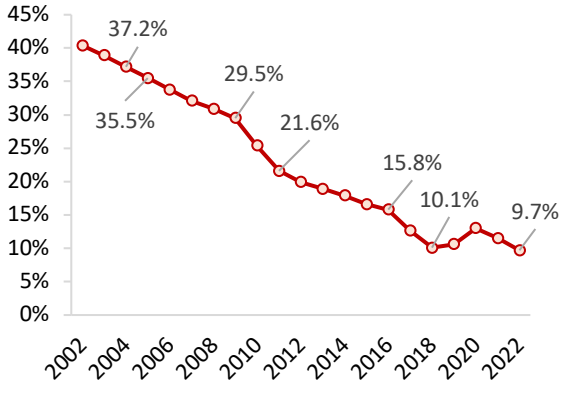


Figure 1. 2*: Population living with less than $2.15 in South Asia*



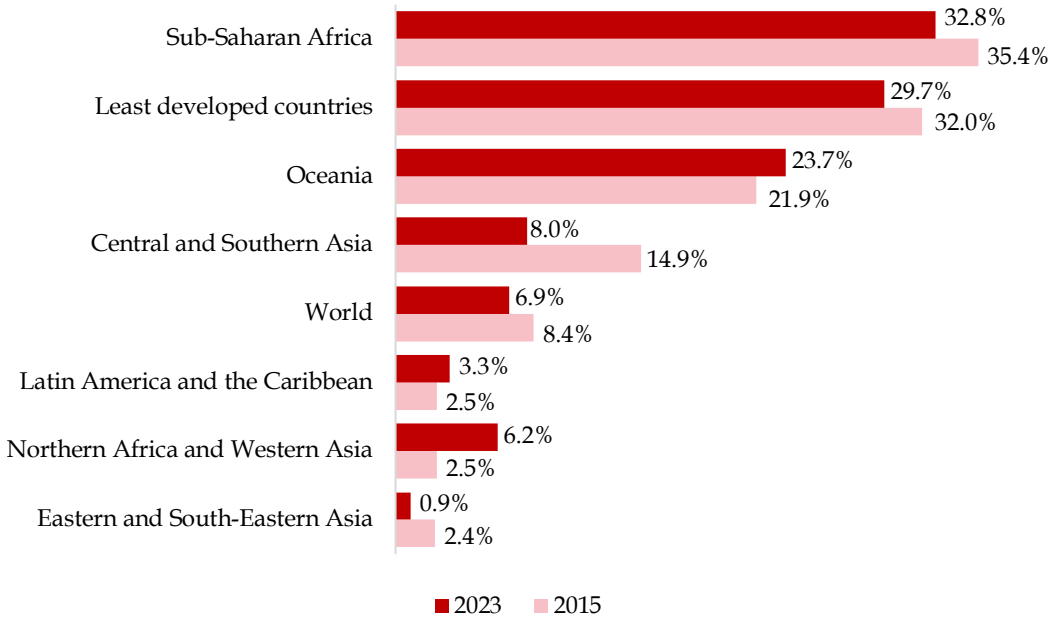
Source: World Bank Poverty and Inequality Platform (2024) – with major processing by Our World in Data.
Note: This data is expressed in US $ at 2017 prices.

[1] United Nations

According to the Global SDG Report 2024, the working poverty, employed people living below the poverty line, is still unevenly spread among populations. Youth are twice as likely as adults to be in working poverty, and women often suffer greater rates than men, with the greatest gender inequities occurring in the least developed countries (LDCs). Despite a minor improvement in the worldwide working poverty rate (from 8.4% to 6.9%), 241 million workers remained in extreme poverty in 2023.

Despite the worldwide positive trend, significant regional inequalities remain. Oceania (excluding Australia and New Zealand) experienced a significant increase in the number of employed people living on less than $2.15 per day, growing from 21.9 percent in 2015 to 23.7 percent in 2023. Sub-Saharan Africa, where over half of the global working poor reside, continues to face severe challenges, with 145 million workers living in extreme poverty. The region continues to experience a high prevalence of working poverty, though it saw a modest decrease from 35.4 percent to 32.8 percent (Figure 1.3).

Figure 1.3: Proportion of the employed population living below $2.15/day in 2015 and 2023 (%)



Source: The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2024, UN.

1.3. Assessment of National Progress on SDG 1

Indicator 1.1.1. Proportion of the population living below the international poverty line by sex, age, employment status, and geographic location (urban/rural)

According to World Bank data, the percentage of the population living on less than $2.15 per day has significantly decreased. Between 2010 and 2022, the poverty rate in the country dropped from 18.22% in 2010 to 5.01% in 2022 (Table 1.1), a total decrease of 13.21 percentage points. However, while the overall decline in poverty is evident, limitations in disaggregated data pose challenges to understanding the full picture. Detailed poverty estimates by sex, age, employment status, and geographic location (urban/rural) are often unavailable or

inconsistently reported, making it difficult to assess how different demographic groups have been affected.

Table 1.1: Poverty headcount ratio at $2.15/day 2017 PPP (%)

Year	Poverty rate
2010	18.22%
2016	13.47%
2022	5.01%

Source: World Bank.

Indicator 1.2.1. Proportion of population living below the national poverty line, by sex and age

According to the Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES), between 2016 and 2022, the national poverty rate fell from 24.3% to 18.7%. The reduction over the six years (2016-22) was 5.6 percentage points for moderate poverty, while extreme poverty decreased faster, 7.3 percentage points. The data shows progress, but continued efforts will be necessary to meet the 2030 targets of no extreme poverty, particularly in rural areas where the poverty rate is much higher.

Figure 1.4: Proportion of population living below the upper poverty line by national, rural and urban regions (%)

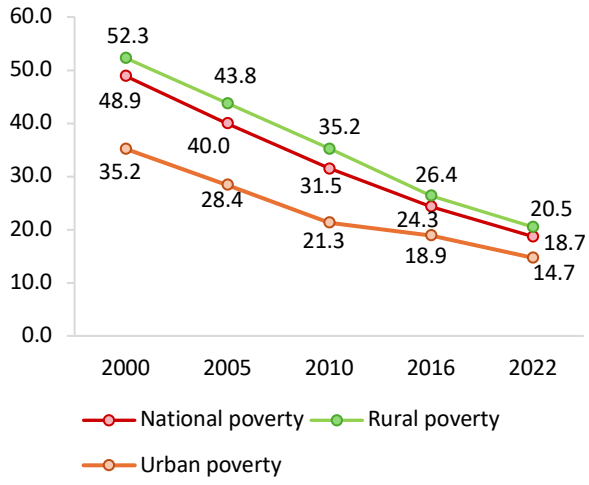
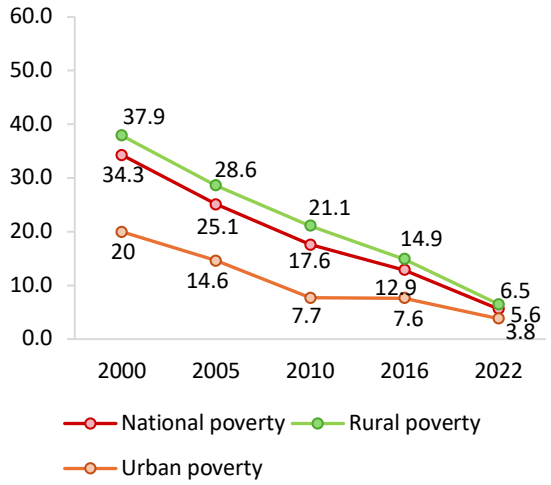


Figure 1.5: Proportion of population living below the lower poverty line by national, rural and urban regions (%)



Source: Author's presentation using data from HIES 2022, 2016, and 2010.

Indicator 1.2.2. Proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions

The statistics (Table 1.2) show that in 2019, 24% of the population was deprived of several areas of well-being, including health, education, and living standards. The "incidence" of multidimensional poverty—that is, the proportion of individuals who are impoverished in at least a particular percentage of weighted indicators across many dimensions—is captured by the headcount ratio. The overall degree of poverty across multiple dimensions is reflected in the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI), which was 0.106. It exhibits a degree of

deprivation that is mild but severe. For those who are affected, poverty is severe, as seen by the 44.2% poverty severity rate, which leaves nearly half of their basic needs and services unmet.

Table 1.2: Proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions

Dimensions	2014	2019
Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI)	0.175	0.106
Headcount Ratio	37.60	24.05
Intensity	46.5	44.16

Source: Global Multidimensional Poverty Index, UNDP, 2023.

Indicator 1.3.1. Proportion of population covered by social protection floors/systems, by sex, distinguishing children, unemployed persons, older persons, persons with disabilities, pregnant women, newborns, work injury victims, and the poor and the vulnerable

As per the HIES 2022, approximately 50% of the national population are social protection beneficiaries, meaning that half of the population is covered by at least one social protection programme. The coverage rate is significantly higher in rural areas (59.1 percent) compared to urban areas, indicating a disproportionate distribution of social protection coverage between urban and rural regions (Table 1.3).

Table 1.3: Proportion of social protection program beneficiaries by national, rural and urban

Year	National	Rural	Urban
2022	50.0%	59.1%	30.7%
2016	28.7%	35.7%	10.9%
2010	24.6%	30.1%	9.4%

Source: HIES 2022, BBS.

The trend (Table 1.4) also shows a similar pattern when the estimation accounts for household data. In recent years (2022), the trends highlight an increase in coverage across all areas, with rural areas maintaining a higher proportion of households under social protection programmes. (44% compared to 23.9% in urban areas).

Table 1.4: Proportion of households covered by social protection programmes (by national, rural and urban)

Year	National	Rural	Urban
2022	37.6%	44.0%	23.9%
2016	27.8%	34.5%	10.6%
2010	24.6%	30.1%	9.4%

Source: HIES 2022, 2016, 2010, and 2005, BBS.

1.4.1. Proportion of population living in households with access to basic services

Poverty reduction is not only about income; it hinges on access to essential services that sustain daily life. In Bangladesh, the availability of these services has seen gradual improvement. In 2021, just 2.6% of the population had access to basic services, and by 2022,

that figure rose to 3.7%. The access further increased by 8.9 percentage points to 12.5% in 2023, reflecting a decent shift in service availability (Table 1.5).

Despite progress, the overall percentage of households with access to all basic services remains low.

Table 1.5: Proportion of household living with access to basic services

Year	Status
2023	12.54%
2022	3.65%
2021	2.56%

Source: MICS, SID, SVRS, PHC.

1.4.2. Proportion of total adult population with secure tenure rights to land, (a) with legally recognized documentation, and (b) who perceive their rights to land as secure, by sex and type of tenure

There is a glaring gender gap in land tenure security in 2020, according to the data (Table 1.6). Just 8% of individuals having legally recognized documentation were female, compared to 44.6% who were male. Similar trends can be seen in the perception of the security of land rights: 41.9% of men and 7.26% of women, respectively, thought that their land rights were secure. These numbers demonstrate a significant gender disparity in land ownership and tenure rights by highlighting the large difference between men's and women's access to legal paperwork and perceived property security.

Table 1.6: Proportion of documented and perceived individuals by sex in 2020

Category	Documented	Perceived
Total	26.23%	24.51%
Male	44.60%	41.90%
Female	8%	7.26%

Source: ASC, SID, CPHS.

1.5.1. Number of deaths, missing persons and directly affected persons attributed to disasters per 100,000 population

The number of people affected by disasters has been declining since 2014, going from over 12,000 to just over 4,000 in just five years (Table 1.7). It is anticipated that this tendency will continue, with a goal to lower the number of impacted individuals to about 1,500 by 2030. On the other hand, the number of deaths per 100,000 people increased from 0.20 in 2014 to 0.32 in 2019. The influence of numerous small- and large-scale disasters is to blame for this growth.

Table 1.7: Number of deaths and affected persons to disasters per 100,000 population

	2014 (Base)	2019	2025 (T)	2030 (T)
Affected person	12,881	4,318	2,000	1,500
Death person*	0.20	0.32	0.18	0.15

Source: DDM, BDRHS, BBS, SID, ICCHL, *MoDMR for death figures.
Note: T means Target

1.5.2. Direct economic loss attributed to disasters in relation to global gross domestic product (GDP)

In 2015, the direct economic losses caused by disasters amounted to 1.3% of global GDP which increased to 1.32% in 2021. With the growing recognition of the economic impact of these events, efforts are focused on reducing this percentage, setting a target of 1% by 2030 (Table 1.8). While these targets are optimistic, the lack of reliable data in the years following 2021 creates challenges in tracking progress accurately. This data gap raises concerns about the potential for expectation bias, making it difficult to fully assess whether the desired reduction will be achieved as planned.

Table 1.8: Direct economic losses caused by disasters as a percentage of global GDP

Year	Value (%)
2015	1.30
2021	1.32
2030 (T)	1.00

Source: BDRHS, BBS, SID, DDM, MoDMR.

1.5.4. Proportion of local governments that adopt and implement local disaster risk reduction strategies in line with national disaster risk reduction strategies

As of 2019, 0.9% of municipalities and 8.3% of city corporations had established and put into practice local Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) plans. Going forward, the Local Government Division (LGD) will supervise the creation of local DRR strategies across all local government institutions, working in line with the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief (MoDMR) and the Urban Development Directorate (UDD) to make sure they are in line with national disaster risk reduction goals.

Table 1.9: Proportion of local governments that adopt and implement local disaster risk reduction strategies

	2019	2025 (T)	2030 (T)
City Corporations	8.3%	30%	100%
Municipalities	0.9%	30%	100%

Source: MoDMR.

Note: Computation Method- Member States count the number of local governments that adopt and implement local DRR strategies in line with the national strategy and express it as a percentage of the total number of local governments in the country.

1.a.1 Total official development assistance grants from all donors that focus on poverty reduction as a share of the recipient country's gross national income

Over the years, official development assistance (ODA) grants dedicated to poverty reduction have shown a steady decline. From 2015 to 2021, the share dropped from 0.19% to 0.11% (see Table 1.10). The highest reduction took place between 2015 and 2017, followed by a slower, more gradual decrease. This trend reflects a diminishing portion of aid being allocated specifically to poverty reduction efforts, signalling a shift in focus or a reallocation of resources over time.

Table 1.10: Official Development Assistance for poverty reduction as a share of GNI (2015-2021)

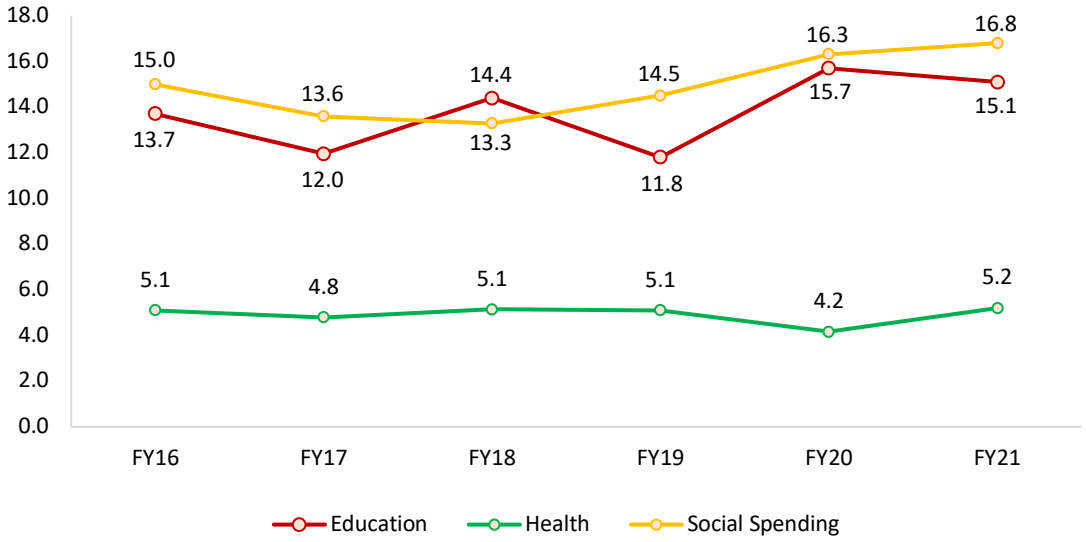
Year	FY 15	FY 16	FY 17	FY 18	FY 19	FY 20	FY 21	FY 22	FY 23
Grants (USD Million)	571	531	459	382	280	445	509	675	718
GNI (USD Million)	245,261	277,653	303,913	334,323	365,622	389,443	438,155	478,455	469,544
Grants as% of GNI	0.23%	0.19%	0.15%	0.11%	0.08%	0.11%	0.12%	0.14%	0.15%

Source: ERD for Grants; BBS for GNI.

1.a.2 Proportion of total government spending on essential services (education, health and social protection)

Between 2015 and 2020, government spending on essential services—education, health, and social protection—has shown varying trends, with each sector receiving different levels of investment (see Figure 1.6). Education spending peaked at 15.7% in 2019 but fluctuated throughout the years. Health spending remained fairly consistent, around 5%, with a modest rise to 5.2% by 2020. On the other hand, social protection spending demonstrated a slight increase, reaching 16.8% in 2021, surpassing the 15% target for 2030. The inconsistency in data over the years prevents any reliable projections, making it difficult to draw definitive conclusions about future trends.

Figure 1.6: Government spending in different sectors and the SDG target for 2030

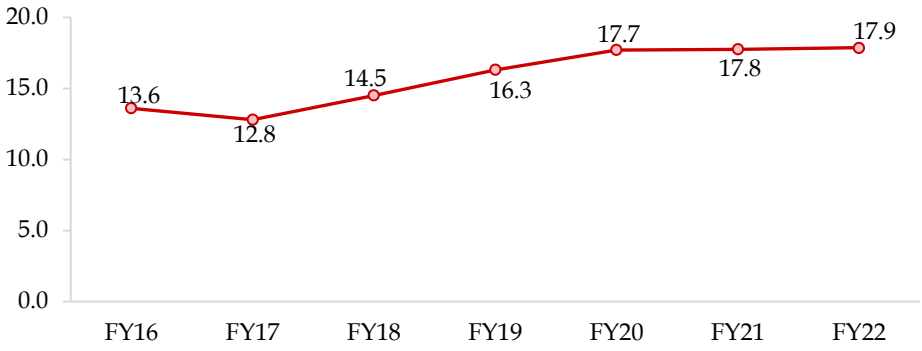


Source: Finance Division.

1.b.1 Pro-poor public social spending

The data from FY16 to FY22 shows a positive trend, with spending increasing from 13.6% in FY16 to 17.9% in FY22, indicating a commitment to pro-poor investments (see Figure 1.7). However, the dip in FY17 (12.8 percent) highlights the need for consistent policy focus. Continued efforts are necessary to increase this expenditure, ensuring that it translates into meaningful social benefits for the poor and contributes to the broader goal of poverty reduction.

Figure 1.7: Proportion of pro-poor public social spending (FY16-FY22)



Source: FD, HIES, SID.

1.4. Key Policies and Strategies to Achieve SDG 1

According to HIES, (2022), the extreme poverty rate in Bangladesh is 5.6%, whereas the present poverty rate is 18.7%. The 8th Five-Year Plan (2020–2025) has set a goal to reduce the poverty rate to 15.6% by 2025 in keeping with current efforts to combat poverty. Promoting prosperity and inclusive growth are the two main focuses of the 8th FYP, which also adheres to the development ideal of "Leaving No One Behind" by putting specific measures into place to improve communities and areas that are falling behind in terms of social and economic development metrics (Economic Review, 2023). The plan, which is being carried out by a number of Ministries, Departments, and Organisations, contributes to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by developing sector-specific plans and integrating COVID-19 recovery initiatives within its macroeconomic framework.

International migration has been the key driver of Bangladesh's economic progress and its journey towards alleviating poverty. Bangladesh has sent 11,26,060 workers abroad in FY23 according to the Bangladesh Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET), as a result, remittances received have gained significant momentum in recent years. Personal remittances received from international migration amounted to 5.3% of GDP in 2023 (World Development Indicators).

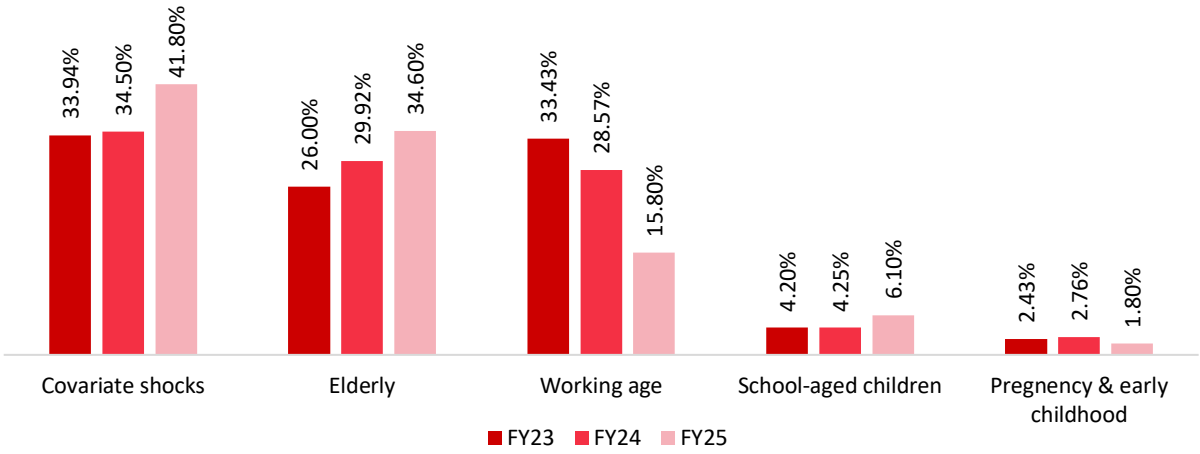
In an effort to alleviate poverty and vulnerability, the government of Bangladesh (GoB) is providing social protection support, in different forms. The social protection system was restructured in 2015 when the government implemented the National Social Security Strategy (NSSS), adopting a lifecycle-based approach. The budget for social protection has increased over the years. and in the recent proposed budget (FY25), the allocation stands at 1,36,026 crores, which consists of 17.06% of the national budget. Out of 140 social protection programmes, 55 are classified as social assistance programmes. Some of the major social protection programmes identified in the social protection budget report, include Old Age Allowance, Allowances for Widows, deserted and Distressed Women, Allowances for Physically Challenged Persons, Mother and Child Benefit Programs, Stipend Programmes, Subsidies for Open Market Sale (OMS), Food Friendly Programs (FFP), Honorarium for the Heroic Freedom Fighters, Food for Work, VGF Programs, Vulnerable Women Benefit (VWB) Programs, and Ashrayan−2 Project.

Social protection programmes were classified into various categories. Allowance programmes

received the highest amount of budget allocation, while credit support programmes received the lowest allocation. This was followed by Assistance for Special Communities, Various Funds and Programmes, and Stipend Programmes, among others.

There have been some shifts in priority, as evidenced by the budgetary allocation for social protection between FY23 and FY25. A stronger emphasis on tackling large-scale risks is evident in the increase in the allocation for managing covariate shocks, which went from 33.94% in FY23 to 41.80% in FY25. The working-age population's budget share, however, has significantly decreased from 33.43% in FY23 to just 15.80% by FY25, indicating a move away from direct assistance for this demographic. Furthermore, compared to other lifecycles, the allocation for pregnancy, early childhood, and school-aged children is noticeably smaller.

Figure 1.9: Allocation of social protection budget by life cycles between 2023 to 2025



Source: Author's presentation using data from the social protection budget.

1.5. Major Challenges

Bangladesh's poverty reduction efforts face a range of challenges, complicated further by global and regional dynamics. Among these, the COVID-19 pandemic has left a profound, lasting impact on economic structures, influencing poverty rates and exacerbating inequalities in unexpected ways. Although immediate effects were addressed in the 2022 SDG report, the ongoing structural shifts call for attention as they continue to shape Bangladesh's social and economic landscape.

Lack of Data on Detailed Poverty Analysis: This limitation of the HIES survey impacts the accuracy of poverty estimates for both indicators 1.1.1 and 1.2.1. The survey, which is considered nationally representative and a reliable source for poverty estimates, lacks a comprehensive analysis of poverty at a detailed level. It covers only 14,400 households, which may not capture sufficient individual-level data, leading to potential gaps in reporting. Consequently, the limitation of collected data, particularly for disaggregated demographic groups may not fully reflect the extent of poverty.

Multidimensional Poverty Remains High: The poverty analysis in the HIES survey predominantly focuses on income poverty, overlooking other essential indicators. The limited emphasis on a multidimensional approach leads to poverty reduction efforts focusing on income poverty resulting in persistent deprivations in access to basic needs (1.4.1). Although

income-based poverty has decreased over time, as noted in indicator 1.2.2, 24% of the population continues to experience multidimensional poverty, facing significant challenges in health, education, and living standards.

Persistent Rural-Urban Disparities in Poverty Reduction and Social Protection Coverage: Despite the progress in national poverty rate reduction, the percentage remains significantly higher in rural areas compared to urban regions on both upper and lower poverty lines. On the contrary, social protection coverage seems to be more focused on rural areas than urban regions. According to data discussed in indicator 1.3.1, while the coverage has improved (50% of the population covered), rural areas (59.1%) receive significantly more benefits than urban areas (30.7%). Despite this emphasis, the high poverty rate in rural areas indicates that economic growth and poverty alleviation programs may not be sufficient or reach rural communities effectively.

Gender Disparities in Land Ownership and Tenure Security: A significant challenge in property rights is the deep-rooted gender inequality in land ownership and security. As discussed in indicator 1.4.2, in 2020, only 8% of women had legally recognized land ownership, against 44.6% of men. Similarly, just 7.26% of women perceived their land tenure as secure, compared to 41.9% of men. This disparity limits women's economic empowerment and restricts their ability to leverage land as a financial asset, reinforcing broader social and economic inequalities.

Challenges in Meeting Disaster Risk Reduction Target: As per data from indicator 1.5.1, although disaster-affected populations have decreased during the period of 2014 to 2019, the death rate due to disasters has risen (from 0.20 per 100,000 in 2014 to 0.32 in 2019). Social protection measures in the country are reactive in nature rather than proactive, namely, the focus is given on providing support to individuals after a disaster rather than disaster preparedness. If the focus is not corrected immediately, this would be challenging to meet the target of indicator 1.5.1, which by 2025 aims to reduce the number of affected persons to 2000 and death person at 0.18%. Moreover, the proportion of local governments adopting and implementing local disaster risk reduction (DRR) strategies (indicator 1.5.4) is currently very low, with city corporations at 8.3% and municipalities at 0.9%. Given this starting point, indicator 1.5.4 may face challenges in meeting its 2025 target of 30%.

Declining International Development Assistance (ODA): The share of Official Development Assistance (ODA) (% of GNI) dedicated to poverty reduction illustrated a declining trend over the years, as mentioned in indicator 1.a.1 This reduction (dropped from 0.19% in 2015 to 0.11% in 2021) threatens the effectiveness of ongoing initiatives and limits the resources available to address persistent and emerging poverty challenges.

1.6. Recommendations for Future Action

Improving Poverty Data Collection: To ensure a more comprehensive analysis including detailed demographic breakdowns and other social indicators, the government should enhance the scope and coverage of poverty data collection. Increasing the sample size and investing in disaggregated data collection will help capture a more accurate picture of poverty. Additionally, to receive more up-to-date data on poverty the HIES survey can be

conducted on a three-year cycle instead of the current six-year cycle, this will enable tracking of the poverty rates effectively for indicators 1.1.1 and 1.2.1.

Shifting to a Multidimensional Poverty Approach: The existing Cost of Basic Needs (CBN) method of the HIES survey provides valuable insights into income poverty, though it only captures the aspect of insufficient income to meet basic needs. Moving beyond income and considering factors such as health, education, housing, and access to clean water and sanitation will offer a more nuanced picture of poverty. Shifting poverty estimates towards a multidimensional approach will enable more targeted interventions aimed at improving access to basic services. This, in turn, can yield a positive impact on indicator 1.4.1.

Balanced Social Protection Coverage to Bridge Urban and Rural Gap: While rural areas should continue to receive focused support due to higher poverty rates, it is crucial to enhance support for urban areas without compromising the benefits for rural populations. A balanced approach is needed to ensure social protection measures reach both urban and rural populations effectively and address specific challenges such as informal employment and old-age insecurity, thereby improving the outcome of Indicator 1.3.1, which measures the proportion of the population covered by social protection systems, by different demographic groups.

Promoting Women's Land Ownership and Tenure Security: To address the poor performance of indicator 1.4.2, the government should implement policies that promote women's access to land and tenure security. By implementing programs that raise awareness and offer women greater opportunities to leverage land as an economic asset, the government can reduce the large disparity between men and women in terms of secure tenure rights to land.

Strengthening Disaster Risk Reduction Measures: Social protection measures can be used as an effective tool to address disaster-related vulnerabilities. Strengthening proactive disaster risk reduction (DRR) measures by improving disaster preparedness will help reduce the adverse impacts of disasters. Moreover, the government should focus on capacity-building for local governments, ensuring they have the tools and strategies necessary to implement DRR initiatives effectively. Prioritizing the adoption of appropriate social protection measures and increasing the adoption of DRR strategies among local governments should be key actions to meet the 2025 targets for indicators 1.5.*1* and 1.5.4.

1.7. Summary

The Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) of "No Poverty" highlights poverty as a multidimensional issue encompassing financial deprivation and limited access to education, food, healthcare, shelter, and political inclusion. Despite some progress, significant challenges remain, especially following the COVID-19 pandemic, which reversed decades of poverty reduction gains and pushed millions back into extreme poverty. The national poverty rate in Bangladesh decreased from 40% to 18.7% between 2000 and 2022. Further efforts to eradicate poverty are hampered by disparities in social protection coverage and underfunding of certain fundamental services, such as clean drinking water and sanitary facilities. Bangladesh's strong reliance on remittances also makes it susceptible to shocks to the world economy, which emphasizes the importance of resilience and diversification.

Deteriorating international aid levels and a lack of support for disadvantaged populations, especially women and people in their working years, are also major obstacles. It will take both targeted investment in poverty alleviation and the establishment of universal, sustainable social safety systems to overcome these obstacles.

Upscaling urban social protection and boosting investments in essential services like sanitation, health, and education must be Bangladesh's top priorities in order to meet the "No Poverty" goal. Additionally, national development plans must be in line with the SDGs' objectives. The progress can be further accelerated by enhancing rural economic prospects through entrepreneurial and employment creation efforts. Furthermore, to provide sustainable finance for programs aimed at reducing poverty and to supplement diminishing aid, creative ways of funding are crucial.

2 ZERO HUNGER

SDG 2: Zero Hunger

2.1. Background

The United Nations (UN) recognizes that extreme hunger and malnutrition are major obstacles to sustainable development, prolonging poverty and limiting human potential. Hunger hinders progress across several SDGs, including those focused on health, education, and gender equality, as malnutrition reduces productivity, raises susceptibility to illness, and restricts opportunities for economic improvement. When the 2030 agenda was launched, nearly five out of nine people worldwide faced undernourishment, highlighting the urgency of Goal 2, which aims to "end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture." This goal is essential for fostering global development.

2.2. Global and Regional Context

The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World Report 2023 reveals that global hunger, measured by the prevalence of undernourishment (PoU), remained steady between 2021 and 2022, affecting 9.2% of the population—up from 7.9% in 2019. Rising food and energy prices, and agricultural input costs, exacerbated by the Ukraine war and slowed pandemic recovery efforts, are impacting vulnerable groups' incomes and stalling hunger reduction efforts. While hunger declined in Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean, Africa faced a setback, with hunger rates rising from 19.4% in 2021 to 19.7% in 2022, impacting nearly 11 million people (Figure 2.1). In Asia, hunger decreased by 12 million, largely due to improvements in South Asia, where all countries except Pakistan and Iran saw reductions in hunger from 2020 to 2022 (Figure 2.2). By 2030, substantial progress is expected in Asia, but limited improvements are projected in Latin America and the Caribbean, with hunger anticipated to rise further in Africa.

Figure 2. 1: Prevalence of undernourishment in different regions (%)

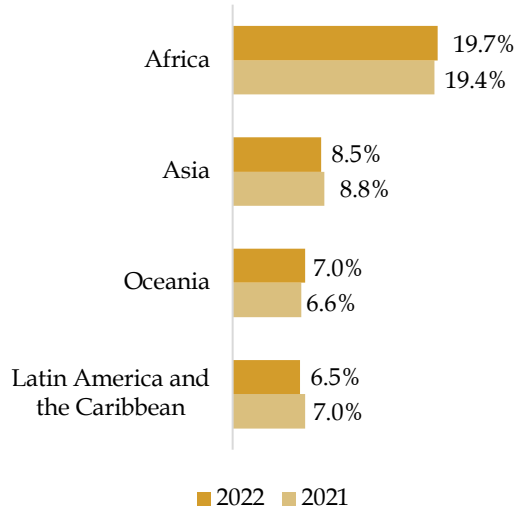
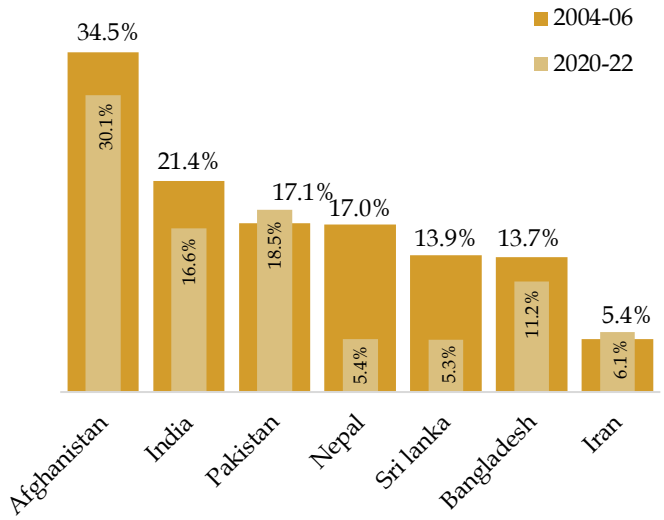


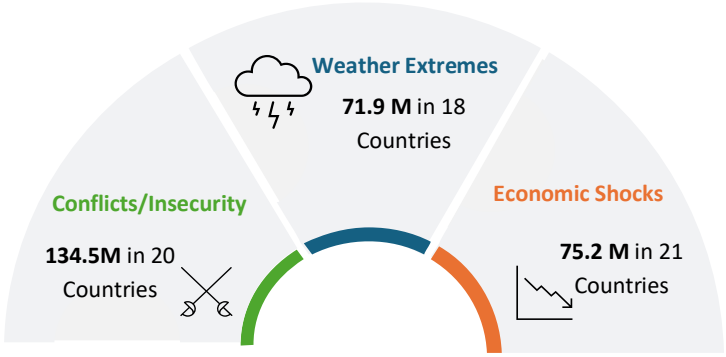
Figure 2.2: Prevalence of undernourishment in Southern Asian Countries (%)



Source: The state of food security and nutrition in the world 2023 (FAO).

By 2030, the target of eradicating hunger worldwide is not being met. According to the 2024 Global Report on Food Crises, over 59.8 million people, or nearly one-third of the population, experienced severe food insecurity in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka in 2023. Bangladesh is one of the worst-hit countries, with 11.9 million people living in severe food insecurity. Approximately 281.6 million people were impacted overall when 59 nations and territories were included. The main causes of acute food insecurity, such as conflict, insecurity, harsh weather, and economic shocks, are the root causes of this worldwide catastrophe (Figure 2.3).

Figure 2.3: Number of affected people by primary drivers of acute food insecurity in 2023



Source: Global Report on Food Crisis 2024.
Note: Economic shocks include the indirect impact of COVID-19 in 2020 and 2021 and the effects of the war in Ukraine in 2022.

2.3. Assessment of National Progress on SDG 2

Indicator 2.1.1. Prevalence of undernourishment

The data shows a general decline in undernourishment from 2015 to 2019, with prevalence decreasing from 14.9% to 11.9% and the number of affected people from 23.5 million to 19.7 million. In 2020, however, there was a reversal, with prevalence increasing to 12.1% and numbers to 20.3 million, apparently due to disruption caused by the pandemic. While improvements resumed in 2021 (11.8%, 19.9 million), 2022 marked a stagnation at 11.9% prevalence and 20.3 million people, indicating an ongoing struggle to sustain progress post-2020.

Table 2.1: Prevalence of undernourishment in Bangladesh (in% and million)

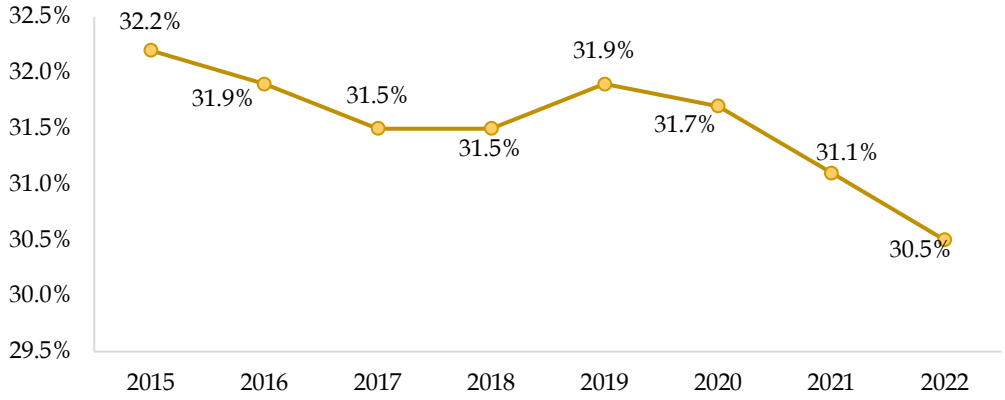
Year	Prevalence of undernourishment (%)	Number of undernourished people (million)
2015	14.90	23.5
2016	14.40	22.9
2017	13.70	22.2
2018	12.80	20.9
2019	11.90	19.7
2020	12.10	20.3
2021	11.80	19.9
2022	11.90	20.3

Source: FAOSTAT.

Indicator 2.1.2. Prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity in the population, based on the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES)

The percentage of moderate or severe food insecurity declined overall from 32.2% in 2015 to 30.5% in 2022, reflecting gradual progress. However, the trend was interrupted by a slight increase in 2019 (31.9%). Subsequent declines in the rates resumed post-2019 and in 2022, the percentage dropped to the lowest point of 30.5% (Figure 2.4).

Figure 2.4: The prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity in Bangladesh (%)



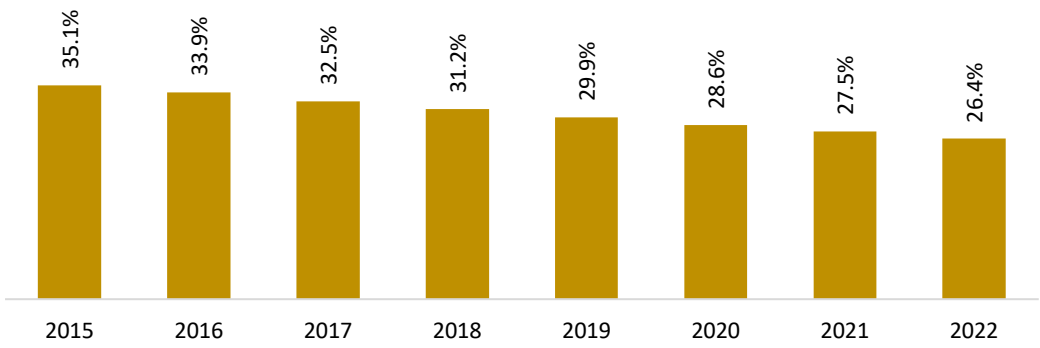
Source: Author's presentation using data from FAOSTAT.

Moreover, as per the State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World Report 2023, around 31.1% of the population experienced moderate or severe food insecurity, and 11.0% of the population experienced severe food insecurity between 2020-22 in Bangladesh. The report also shows that 111.9 million people were unable to afford a healthy diet in 2021, while the cost of a healthy diet was estimated at 3.201 (PPP dollars per person per day).

Indicator 2.2.1. Prevalence of stunting (height for age <-2 standard deviation from the median of the World Health Organization (WHO) Child Growth Standards) among children under 5 years of age

The fight against childhood stunting in Bangladesh reveals an encouraging trend in the field of public health. Bangladesh saw a consistent decline in stunting rates, marking a nearly 9 percentage point drop, from 35.1 per cent in 2015 to 26.4 per cent in 2022 (see Figure 2.5).

Figure 2.5: Prevalence of stunting in children under 5 (%)

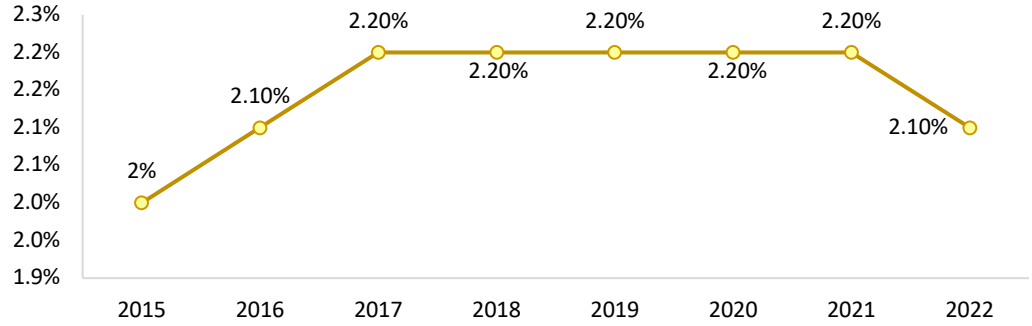


Source: WHO.

Indicator 2.2.2. Prevalence of malnutrition (weight for height >+2 or <-2 standard deviations from the median of the WHO Child Growth Standards) among children under 5 years of age, by type (wasting and overweight)

In Bangladesh, childhood obesity has been on a steady rise. Starting at just 2% in 2015, the prevalence of overweight children under five gradually climbed, reaching 2.2% by 2017 (see Figure 2.6). Though the number declined to 2.1% in 2022, the need for targeted interventions to curb the rise of childhood obesity and promote healthier early-life nutrition and lifestyle habits are inevitable.

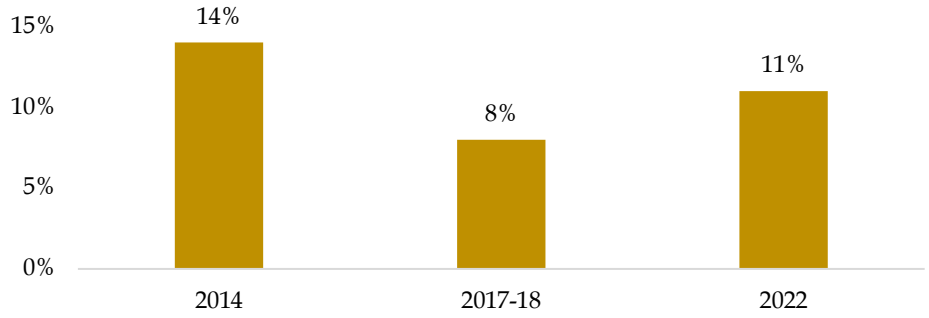
Figure 2.6: Prevalence of overweight among children under 5 (%)



Source: WHO.

According to the Bangladesh Demographic and Health Survey (BDHS) report 2022, when it comes to wasting (weight-for-height) the prevalence was 11% in 2022, an increase from 8% in 2017-18 (see Figure 2.7), highlighting the need for continued public health awareness and intervention. However, the overall trend shows, the prevalence has dropped by 3 percentage points since 2014 (14%), despite recent fluctuations.

Figure 2.7: Prevalence of overweight among children under 5 (%)



Source: BDHS, 2022.

Poor health can have long-lasting detrimental implications on an individual's results, including income, and is a critical component of human capital. It might impede Bangladesh's long-term goals of attaining zero unemployment and zero poverty if left unregulated.

Indicator 2.2.3. Prevalence of anaemia in women aged 15 to 49 years, by pregnancy status (percentage)

WHO data shows that anaemia prevalence among women aged 15 to 49 in Bangladesh remained relatively stable from 2015 to 2019, staying around 35.9 to 36.7% (see Table 2.2). This stagnant figure highlights a longstanding challenge in addressing anaemia effectively.

However, a slight increase began in 2016, indicating a growing health concern that calls for stronger maternal and reproductive health interventions.

Table 2.2: The prevalence of anaemia among women aged 15 to 49 years (%)

Year	Bangladesh
2015	35.90%
2016	36.00%
2017	36.20%
2018	36.40%
2019	36.70%

Source: WHO.

Indicator 2.5.1. Number of (a) plant and (b) animal genetic resources for food and agriculture secured in either medium or long-term conservation facilities

Between 2016 and 2022, Bangladesh steadily increased its ex-situ (off-site) conservation of plant genetic resources, growing from 33,064 accessions to 36,119. This upward trend highlights the country's effort to preserving plant diversity for agricultural resilience.

On the other hand, animal and plant genetic resources secured in conservation facilities also increased, from about 8,578 in 2018 to 8,868 in 2023 (see Table 2.3).

Table 2.3: Ex-situ conservation of plant and animal genetic resources for food and agriculture (2016–2023)

Year	Plant genetic resources accessions stored ex-situ (number)	Number of plant and animal genetic resources for food and agriculture secured in either medium or long-term conservation facilities
2016	33064.00	-
2017	33208.00	-
2018	33210.00	8578.00
2019	34594.00	8578.00
2020	34594.00	8615.00
2021	34594.00	8659.00
2022	36119.00	8734.00
2023	-	8868.00

Source: FAO SDG indicator's data portal, BRRI and MoA & Unit.

Indicator 2.5.2 Proportion of local breeds classified as being at risk, not-at-risk, or at an unknown level of risk of extinction

From 2015 to 2024, the number of local breeds classified as not extinct and those with unknown risk status both counts remained constant at 48 annually (Table 2.4). This stability suggests no documented extinctions or changes in risk categorization during this period. The data reflects either consistent conservation efforts, improved monitoring, or a lack of updates in status assessments for these breeds over the decade.

Table 2.4: The proportion of local breeds classified as being at an unknown level of risk of extinction and not extinct

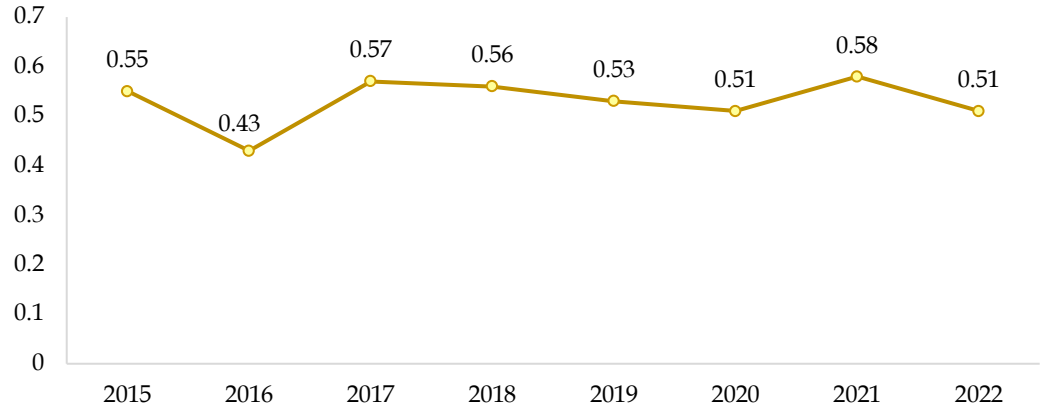
Year	Number of local breeds (not extinct)	Number of local breeds with unknown risk status
2015	48	48
2018	48	48
2021	48	48
2024	48	48

Source: FAOSTAT, FAO SDG indicator's data portal.

Indicator 2.a.1 Agriculture orientation index (AOI) for government expenditures

The Agriculture Orientation Index (AOI) measures the focus of government spending on agriculture by comparing the sector's share of public expenditure with its contribution to GDP. It includes agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting, offering insight into the adequacy of public investment in boosting productivity, income, and efficiency through physical or human capital [2]. Bangladesh's AOI fluctuated between 0.55 (2015) and 0.51 (2022); the index was at its lowest in 2016 (0.43), came back to the highest in 2021 (0.58), and was 0.51 in 2022, the same as in 2020 (Figure 2.8). This variability translates to changing priorities or sporadic allocation of public spending to agriculture as a proportion of overall expenditure, with no apparent long-term trend over the period.

Figure 2.8: Agriculture orientation index for government expenditures



Source: FAOSTAT.

2.4. Key Policies and Strategies to Achieve SDG 2

In order to accomplish Sustainable Development Goal 2, which aims to eradicate hunger, guarantee food security, and advance sustainable agriculture nationwide, Bangladesh has put in place a number of focused policies and initiatives.

The government's food assistance programs, which offer food help to low-income groups and government employees, are an essential component of this endeavour. The Ministry of Food (MoF) oversees the Open Market Sale (OMS) program, which aims to protect disadvantaged communities from abrupt price increases by stabilizing seasonal food grain prices. The largest of its kind, the Food-Friendly Program (FFP), is another pillar that ensures food access during times of scarcity by providing 30 kg of rice per month to eligible families during lean seasons

[2] FAO

(March–April and September–November). Other programs, such as the Other Priorities (OP) and Essential Priorities (EP), are designed to reduce price volatility during crucial times.

In addition to providing direct food aid, the government also supports vulnerable groups through employment-based programs. For instance, the Test Relief (TR) program is a non-monetized safety net that targets those in financial hardship by providing temporary employment through labour-intensive projects like road construction and water conservation; the Food for Work (FFW) program offers food assistance in exchange for labour on public infrastructure projects, improving food security for low-income individuals while promoting wider economic development; and other programs like Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF) and Vulnerable Group Development (VGD) expand this safety net, reaching almost 27.5 million people each year. According to Bangladesh Food Situation Report (April-June) 2024, about 59.3% of the 33.53 lac metric tons of food grains allocated for these programs in fiscal year 2023-24 had been distributed as of February 2024.

The National Food Policy 2006 is a multi-sectoral policy designed to establish a reliable food security system for all citizens, with a focus on ensuring a steady supply of safe, nutritious food, improving access for lower-income groups, and raising nutritional standards, especially for women and children. To sustain agricultural progress, the National Agricultural Extension Policy of 2012, succeeding the New Agricultural Extension Policy of 1996, was developed to address emerging challenges and global changes affecting food security. This policy encourages partnerships within the National Agricultural Extension System (NAES) to provide coordinated, efficient services that boost agricultural productivity. Beneficiaries include all farmers, particularly the small and marginal farmers who represent roughly 86% of the farming community, and receive support through "Farmers Groups" and federations at various administrative levels [3].

The National Nutrition Policy 2015 targets the root causes of malnutrition, particularly in vulnerable groups like mothers, adolescents, and children, with a focus on the first 1,000 days of life. The policy is operationalized through the Second National Plan of Action for Nutrition (NPAN2), covering 2016-2025, which outlines sector-specific strategies to improve national nutritional standards. However, challenges like limited funding, resource competition, and limited awareness of malnutrition's impact threaten the policy's progress. Parliament and local leaders have been identified as key partners in addressing these gaps through targeted advocacy and capacity-building efforts [4].

In 2020, the Government of Bangladesh approved the National Food and Nutrition Security Policy (NFNSP), to help it achieve SDG-aligned food and nutrition security by 2030. Food availability, affordable access to nutrient-dense food, dietary diversity, the extension of social protection, and improved cross-sectoral governance and collaborations are all addressed in the accompanying Plan of Action (PoA) for 2021–2030, which is in line with the Eighth and Ninth Five-Year Plans [5].

[3] National Agricultural Extension 2012 (MoA)

[4] Second National Plan of Action for Nutrition; Advocacy Plan for Nutrition, Bangladesh 2019-2025

[5] Bangladesh National Food and Nutrition Security Policy Plan of Action 2021-2030

In a same vein, the National Seed Policy was created to guarantee farmers' access to high-quality seeds of improved crop varieties, hence increasing agricultural production. Achieving food self-sufficiency and optimising the efficiency of other agricultural inputs, such fertiliser and irrigation, depend heavily on high-quality seeds. However, the effectiveness of this policy depends on expanding public production and distribution capabilities and fostering private-sector involvement to address gaps in seed supply [6].

2.5. Major Challenges

Global progress towards achieving SDG 2 has been severely set back by global events such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Many countries are now off track to meet the 2030 targets, with food insecurity levels reverting to those of 2015. The interconnectedness of global health threats, geopolitical tensions, and climate change has compounded resource degradation, economic hardship, and social instability. These challenges require systemic solutions to advance towards SDG 2 by 2030.

Challenges in Sustaining Progress for Undernourishment: Notwithstanding the progress in reducing undernourishment over the years, recent statistics as explored in indicator 2.1.1 (Persistent Undernourishment) shows fluctuation (an increase from 11.9% in 2019 to 12.1% in 2020 before returning to 11.9% in 2022), possibly an effect of the disruption brought by the COVID-19 pandemic. The fluctuation indicates persistent challenges, especially for low-income groups, in ensuring consistent access to sufficient nutritious food, raising concerns about sustaining progress to keep the undernourishment at 12% according to 2025 target.

Slow Paced Reduction in Food Insecurity and Economic Barriers to Progress: While food insecurity has declined over the year, the slow-paced reduction leads to a significant portion (30.5% in 2022) struggles with access to sufficient food, making the progress inadequate to attain the 24.2% target of 2025. Moreover, the high number (111.9 million in 2021) of individuals unable to afford a healthy diet (indicator 2.1.2), underscores structural economic barriers. Factors such as inflation, unstable food prices, and disruptions in supply chains continue to limit food availability, disproportionately impacting low- income families.

Insufficient Progress in Reducing Childhood Stunting: The gradual decline in childhood stunting reflects deep-rooted issues such as persistent poverty and limited access to diverse and nutrient-rich foods. During the period 2015-2022, the progress might seem positive (declining from 35.1% in 2015 to 26.4% in 2022), yet the current pace of reduction seems insufficient to achieve the 20% target of 2025 under Indicator 2.2.1.

Slow Improvement in the Malnutrition Status: The prevalence of both wasting and overweight among children under five in Bangladesh remains a pressing concern, despite efforts to address malnutrition. Indicator 2.2.2, highlights a marginal reduction in the rate of malnutrition from 2.2% in 2017 to 2.1% in 2022. This trend suggests an increasing risk possibly due to changing dietary patterns and limited awareness of balanced nutrition. Moreover, the 2025 targets for wasting and overweight are 7% and 1%, respectively, against baseline prevalence rates of 14.3% (BDHS, 2014) for wasting and 1.6% (MICS, 2012-13) for overweight.[7]

[6] The National Seed Policy (MoA)

[7] The target and baseline data was taken from Revised M&E Framework of the SDGs: Bangladesh Perspective.

The absence of recent data is, however, a major impediment to accurately measuring progress and making evidence-based policy choices.

High Anaemia Rates Among Women: Anaemia continues to be a chronic public health issue in Bangladesh among reproductive-aged women, with minimal advancement towards its reduction. According to WHO data, during 2015 to 2019, the prevalence was more or less stable, ranging from 35.9% to 36.7. At this progress rate, it is challenging to meet the target (30%) by 2025. Furthermore, the lack of recent statistics limits the ability to monitor trends effectively and introduce targeted interventions.

Unchanged Risk Status of Local Breeds and Unavailable Data: According to the data presented in indicator 2.5.2, the number of local breeds classified as "not-at-risk" or with an "unknown level of risk" has remained consistent at 48 annually. This stagnant rate may either reflect adequate conservation measures or absence of updated assessments. However, data for the breeds classified as "at risk" seems to be unavailable, making it difficult to assess the progress toward the 2025 target, which aims to limit the number of "at risk" breeds to just two. Without comprehensive data, it is challenging to gauge whether conservation efforts are effectively preventing extinction or if additional intervention is needed.

Inconsistent Agricultural Investment: Bangladesh's Agriculture Orientation Index (AOI) has shown variability over the years, peaking at 0.58 in 2021 and then falling back at 0.51 in 2022 (indicator 2.a.1). The fluctuations suggest that public spending on agriculture has not been consistently aligned with the sector's contribution to GDP. Given the current trajectory, it appears unlikely that Bangladesh will reach the 0.85 target by 2025 unless there is a significant and sustained increase in the share of public expenditure on agriculture.

2.6. Recommendations for Future Action

To effectively move toward achieving SDG 2, it is essential to address the interconnected challenges that have hindered progress. As we look ahead, it is crucial to implement strategies that tackle complex issues while fostering resilience within food systems and communities.

Adaptive Strategies for Sustained Progress in Reducing Undernourishment: To effectively sustain progress in reducing undernourishment, it is crucial to strengthen social protection programs, particularly for low-income and vulnerable populations. Though initially, existent food schemes under social protection need to be modified to incorporate diverse nutritious food and then expansion of these initiatives can improve access to this food and thereby will positively impact indicator 2.1.1. Without sustained policy efforts and adaptive strategies, maintaining long-term progress in reducing undernourishment will be difficult.

Accelerating the Reduction of Food Insecurity and Overcoming Economic Barriers: Economic uncertainties, inflation in food prices, and climate-related disruptions continue to pose risks to food security. To accelerate progress toward the 2025 target of reducing food insecurity, the government should prioritize policies, such as increasing access to food through subsidies or price controls on staple goods. Additionally, expanding food assistance programs, such as cash transfers, food vouchers, or direct food aid, can yield positive results for indicator 2.1.2. Moreover, investment in local food production systems by introducing climate-smart agriculture and supporting farmers would also help boost food security.

Enhancing Efforts to Combat Childhood Stunting: Addressing childhood stunting requires a multi-faceted approach such as investing in maternal health programs to provide better nutrition, iron and folic acid supplementation, and promoting awareness about healthy eating during pregnancy. Additionally, expanding early childhood nutrition interventions, such as breastfeeding promotion and access to diverse, nutritious foods, is essential. Introducing public health campaigns targeting caregivers and mothers can also raise awareness of the best practices in early childhood nutrition. Without targeted efforts, improving stunting status in children under 5 (indicator 2.2.1) is challenging.

Addressing Malnutrition through Comprehensive Interventions: Efforts to reduce both wasting and overweight should prioritize targeted interventions. To address the prevention of childhood obesity, public health campaigns can play a crucial role by promoting healthy eating and physical activity, as well as addressing the underlying causes of wasting, such as micronutrient deficiencies and food insecurity. Additionally, integrating nutrition education into community-based programs will raise awareness of healthy diets, especially in rural areas. Monitoring and updating data on the prevalence of malnutrition should also be prioritized to inform evidence-based policies and thereby improving outcome for indicator 2.2.2.

Tackling Anaemia Among Women through Multifaced Measures: Without significant improvements in nutrition, healthcare access, and awareness, achieving good health among women of reproductive age will remain challenging. Stronger efforts to improve iron and micronutrient intake, coupled with increasing awareness about dietary sources of iron, can significantly reduce anaemia prevalence. Expanding access to maternal healthcare services and ensuring early screening for anaemia during pregnancy are also essential steps. Policies promoting the fortification of staple foods like rice and wheat with iron and folic acid could complement these efforts. These multifaced measures can help reverse the poor performance of Indicator 2.2.3.

Strengthening Conservation of Local Breeds and Improving Data Collection: Integrating community-based conservation programs, where local farmers and communities play a more active role in breed preservation, could help strengthen the overall conservation effort. Additionally, enhancing the collection of genetic data on local breeds will support more informed conservation strategies. Improved conservation efforts and regular assessments will allow for better tracking of local breeds' risk status and ensure the long-term sustainability of the breeds, which directly contributes to improve the performance of indicator 2.5.

Consistent and Strategic Agricultural Investment for Long-term Growth: The government should prioritize increasing the Agriculture Orientation Index (AOI) by allocating a higher proportion of public expenditure toward agriculture, especially focusing on improving infrastructure, technology adoption, and research in the sector. Furthermore, long-term agricultural investment plans should include sustainable practices and climate-resilient technologies to secure future food production. By aligning spending with the sector's economic contribution, Bangladesh can achieve indicator 2.a.1 by 2025.

2.7. Summary

Despite global progress toward “zero hunger”, challenges persist due to inequality in food distribution, climate change, economic shocks, and geopolitical conflicts like the Russia-Ukraine war. These crises have disrupted global food systems, reversing progress in several regions, especially Africa and parts of Asia. In Bangladesh, undernourishment declined from 15.6% in 2013 to 11.9% in 2022, although acute food insecurity still affects 11.9 million people. Childhood stunting also decreased from 42.2% in 2010 to 26.4% in 2022, but challenges such as rising anaemia in women, increasing childhood obesity, and persistent malnutrition highlight the need for focused interventions.

To improve food security and nutrition, Bangladesh has put in place a number of laws and initiatives, including the National Food Policy and the National Nutrition Policy. However, there are still significant gaps, especially in the areas of sustainable agriculture, urban social protection, and meeting the nutritional needs of vulnerable populations like women and children. Given that resource deterioration and climate change pose a danger to agricultural productivity, the nation also has difficulties striking a balance between environmental sustainability and food production. The main points of the recommendations are to increase women's empowerment, support organic farming, broaden social security programs, and guarantee fair access to resources. To achieve the "Zero Hunger" target and guarantee sustained progress by 2030, strengthened governance, diverse funding, and integrated policies in line with the SDG framework are crucial.

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being

3.1. Background

Ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for people of all ages is the third Sustainable Development Goal (SDG). The aim covers important facets of health, from lowering maternal and child mortality to preventing infectious and non-communicable diseases, and it has 13 targets and 28 related indicators. Non-pathological health variables like air pollution, traffic accident fatalities, and access to reproductive health care and universal health coverage are also highlighted. When taken as a whole, these goals show a thorough strategy for reaching desired health outcomes globally.

In order to achieve sustainable economic growth, SDG 3 must be met. The foundation of productivity is a healthy populace, which allows people to actively participate during their working years, improving household welfare and supporting national economies. Furthermore, pervasive health issues might impede economic development by taxing resources and delaying growth paths.

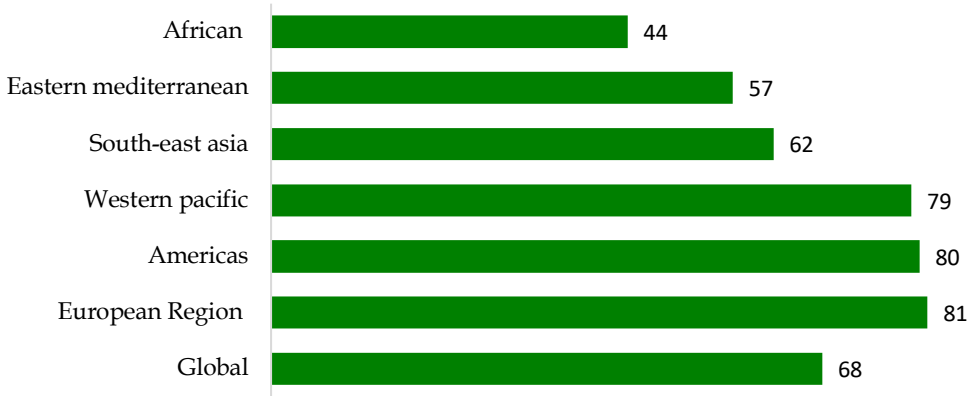
3.2. Global and Regional Context

In the global and regional arenas, the significance of Sustainable Development Goal 3 (SDG 3) has increased, especially in the wake of the COVID-19 epidemic. In addition to taking numerous lives, this catastrophe revealed serious weaknesses in healthcare systems around the globe, undoing advancements in a number of health and wellbeing-related fields.

Prior to the pandemic, regional differences in SDG 3 progress were notable. Southeast Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa were lagging behind other regions in reaching their goals. Some metrics, such as under-five mortality, showed improvement, with 146 out of 200 countries meeting or on track, but others continued to be difficult. Even if it dropped to 223 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2020, maternal mortality is still far behind the goal of 70 by 2030.

A decrease in infant immunisation rates, an increase in tuberculosis and malaria fatalities, and a lacklustre improvement in the Universal Health Coverage Index are examples of global setbacks (Figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1: Population Weighted Universal Health Care Service Coverage in 2021 (regional comparison)



Source: Tracking Universal Health Coverage 2023 Global Monitoring Report.

In 2021, almost four million people lacked proper access to healthcare due to a rise in the proportion of households experiencing catastrophic health expenses. These results highlight how urgently strong, equitable healthcare systems are needed to close current disparities and meet SDG 3's lofty goals.

3.3. Assessment of National Progress on SDG 3

Indicator 3.1.1. Maternal Mortality Ratio per 100,000 live births

Bangladesh has made steady progress in reducing its maternal mortality ratio over the years. In 2015, marking the launch of SDGs, national rate stood at 181 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births. Since then, the indicator has improved slowly, with the ratio reaching a value of 136 in 2023 (see Table 3.1). A notable disparity persists between rural and urban areas, with the rural maternal mortality rate of 157 being nearly three times higher than the urban rate. Except for the rate for urban areas, both current rural and national values for this indicator is only about halfway through to their 2030 targets.

Table 3.1: Maternal Mortality Rate in Bangladesh at National, Rural, And Urban Levels of Bangladesh Over the Years

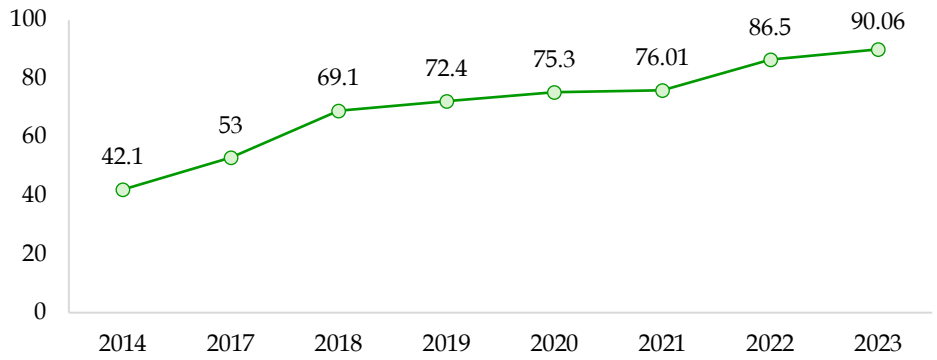
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2030 (T)
National	181	178	172	169	165	163	168	153	136	70
Rural	191	190	182	193	191	178	176	157	157	80
Urban	162	160	157	132	123	138	140	135	56	51

Source: Sample Vital Registration System (SVRS)-multiple years

Indicator 3.1.2. Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel[8]

In 2023, 90.06% of total national births were attended by skilled health personnel, while the value was 42.1% in 2014, around the base period which was 2015. This is a testament to the fact that since 2017, Indicator 3.1.2 has seen gradual improvement (see Figure 3.2).

Figure 3.2: Proportion of all births attended by skilled health personnel at national, urban, and rural levels over the years (%)



Source: Bangladesh Sample Vital Statistics-2017-2023.

[8] Bangladesh's national definition of 'skilled health personnel' varies from that of international one. International standard considers doctor, nurse and midwife whereas national standard is the int. std. along with trained midwife, paramedic/FWV, MA/SACMO/CHCP, and HA/FWA. The values presented here is as per national standard.

Indicator 3.2.1. Under-five mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)

Bangladesh has made some progress in reducing under-five mortality rates till 2021. The national rate decreased from 36 per 1,000 live births in 2015 to 28 in 2021. Both urban and rural areas show similar trends, closely following the national rate. However, since 2021, the national under-five mortality rate has gone up slightly and now it is 33 per 1,000 live births (see Table 3.2).

Table 3.2: Under-five mortality rate (per 1,000 live births) at national, rural, and urban levels

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2030 (T)
National	36	35	31	29	28	28	28	31	33	25
Rural	39	36	33	31	29	28	29	32	34	28
Urban	32	32	27	27	26	26	26	28	30	21

Source: Sample Vital Registration System (SVRS) (Bangladesh Sample Vital Statistics)-multiple years

Indicator 3.2.2. Neonatal mortality rate in Bangladesh (per 1,000 live births)

Bangladesh has made steady progress in reducing neonatal mortality since 2015. The national rate, which was 20 per 1,000 live births when SDGs were introduced, has decreased slowly over the years, reaching 16 by 2022 (see Table 3.3). However, it rose again to 20 per 1,000 live births in 2023, possibly due to the country's focus on managing the COVID-19 pandemic from 2020. The rural and urban rates have followed a similar trend to the national rate. The target is to reduce the neonatal mortality rate to 12 by 2030.

Table 3.3: Neonatal mortality rate in Bangladesh (per 1,000 live births) at national, rural, and urban level

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2030(T)
National	20	19	17	16	15	15	16	16	20	12
Rural	20	19	17	16	16	15	15	17	20	13
Urban	20	20	17	16	15	15	16	16	16	12

Source: Bangladesh Sample Vital Statistics-2018-2023.

Indicator 3.3.1. Number of new HIV infections per 1,000 uninfected population, by sex, age, and key population

HIV has not been a major epidemic in Bangladesh, thanks to early preventive measures, including mass awareness campaigns starting in the 1980s. Since 2015, the number of new HIV infections per 1,000 uninfected people has remained below 0.01, continuing this trend into 2023 (see Table 3.4). Given this, Bangladesh has already met the target for this indicator, which aims to reduce new HIV infections to 0.001 per 1,000 population, effectively ending the HIV epidemic. Now, the challenge is to continue maintaining this low level of HIV infections in coming years.

Table 3.4: Number of new HIV infections per 1,000 uninfected population.[9]

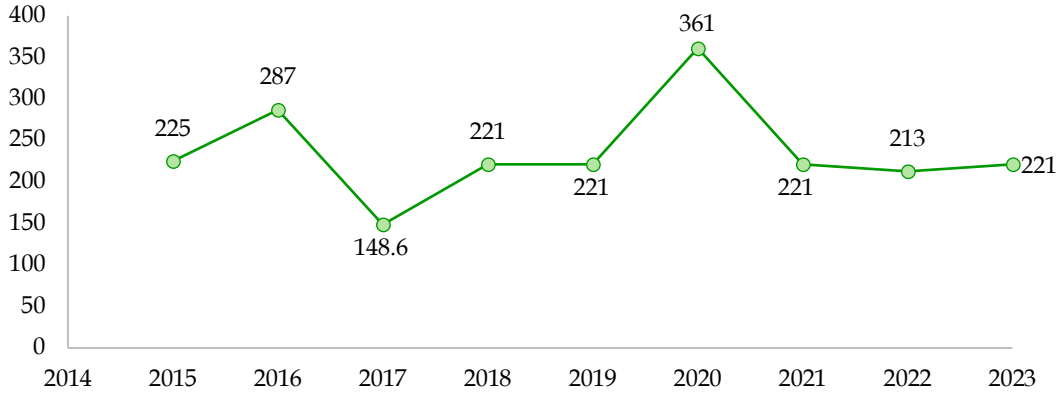
	2015	2020	2021	2022	2023
National	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01

Source: World Health Organization.

Indicator 3.3.2. Tuberculosis incidence per 100,000 population

In 2015, the tuberculosis incidence per100,000 population of Bangladesh stood at 225. However, since 2018, the progress for Indicator 3.3.2 has been stagnant, with the incidence reaching a value of 221 per 100,000 population in 2023—an 8-point increase from the previous year. The target for Bangladesh is to achieve a value of 45 per 100,000 population by 2030.

Figure 3.3: Tuberculosis incidence per 100,000 population



Source: World Health Organization.

Indicator 3.3.3. Malaria incidence per 1,000 population

Malaria incidence in Bangladesh has steadily declined since 2000, taking a value of 2.7 per 1,000 population in 2015 and, lately a value of 0.5 in 2022 (see Table 3.5). To meet the 2025 target of reducing malaria incidence to 0.09 per 1,000 population, and the 2030 target of reaching 0.00, the country must curb the spread of drug-resistant malaria parasites, and ensure affordable treatment in the affected districts.

Table 3.5: Malaria incidence per 1,000 population over the years

2015	2017	2019	2020	2030 (T)
2.99	1.64	0.92	0.5	0.0

Source: HMSS, BBS, SID (2) NMEP National Malaria Elimination Programme, DGHS, HSD

Indicator 3.3.4. Hepatitis B incidence per 100,000 population

Bangladesh has made significant progress in reducing Hepatitis B incidences as the indicator value has decreased from 1.38 in 2015 to 0.51 in 2021. However, this value still remains higher

[9] The indicator considers segregated data based on age, sex, and key population. However, due to the controlled nature and low prevalence of HIV in the country, details data on such degrees of segregation is most unavailable as they are not collected.

than the 2015 target of 0.7. The ultimate goal is to reduce malaria incidence per 100,000 population to 0 by 2030.

Table 3.6: Hepatitis B incidence per 100,000 population

2015	2018	2019	2021	2030(T)
1.38	1.38	1.38	0.51	0

Source: World Health Organization.

Indicator 3.3.5. Number of people requiring interventions against neglected tropical disease (NTDs)

In base year 2016, approximately 49 million people in Bangladesh required interventions for neglected tropical diseases (NTDs). However, progress slowed since then, and the figure rose to 56.3 million in 2019, and has remained almost the same for 2021 as well (see Table 3.7). The target for year 2030 for Indicator 3.3.5 is to lower the number of people requiring interventions against neglected tropical diseases to 35 million.

Table 3.7: Number of people (in millions) requiring interventions against neglected tropical disease for different years

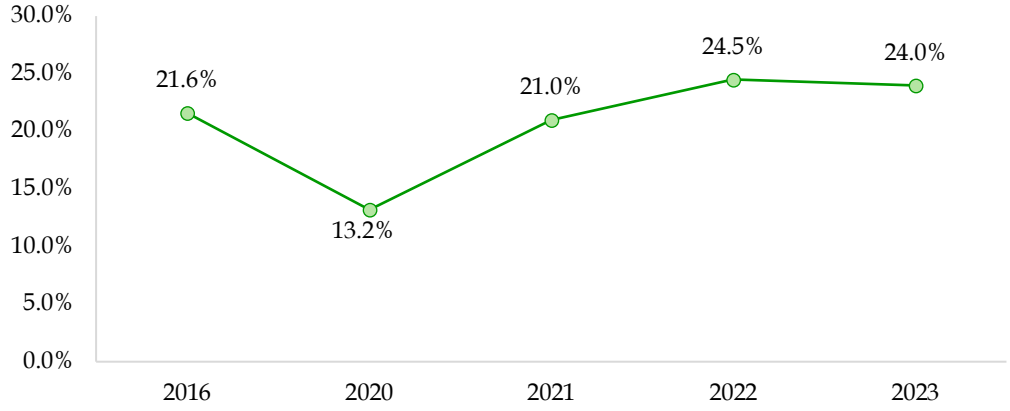
2016(base)	2019	2021	2030 (T)
49,873,889	56,339,392	56,381,566	35,000,000

Source: World Health Organization.

Indicators 3.4.1. Mortality rate attributed to (between 30 and 70 years of age) cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes, or chronic respiratory disease

The mortality rate from non-communicable diseases (NCDs) among individuals aged 30 to 70 has on average increased since 2016. The primary causes of the country's NCD burden are cardiovascular diseases, cancer, diabetes, and chronic respiratory disorders. In 2016, mortality rate attributed to such life-style diseases were 21.6%, which has taken a value of 24% in 2023 (see Figure 3.4). Furthermore, there was a sharp spike in the rate between 2020 and 2021, which could be linked to the lifestyle changes induced by the COVID-19 pandemic, including reduced physical activity. Since 2020, the rate has been on an increasing path, suggesting that improving performance in this target is becoming challenging.

Figure 3.4: Mortality rate attributed to selected non-communicable diseases for different years

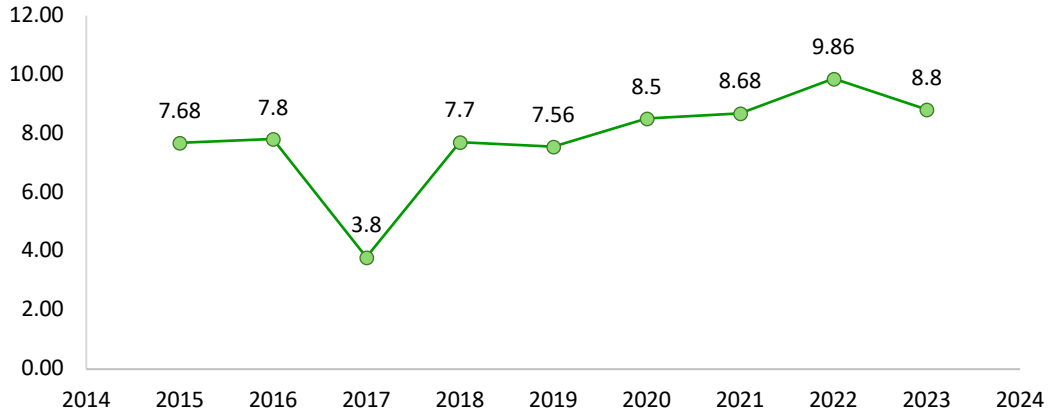


Source: SVRS.

Indicator 3.4.2. Suicide Mortality Rate (per 100,000 population)

The suicide mortality rate for Bangladesh was relatively low at 7.68 per 100,000 people in 2015. Since then, the value fluctuated till 2019, after which it worsened for three consecutive years from 2020 to 2022. The latest value for this indicator for year 2023 is 8.8, which is far more than its 2030 target value of 2.4.[10]

Figure 3.5: Suicide mortality rate (per 100,000 population)



Source: Public Security Division, MoHA.

Indicator 3.5.1. Coverage of treatment interventions (pharmacological, psychological and rehabilitation, and aftercare services) for substance use disorder

In 2026, 16,416 individuals were covered by treatment interventions mentioned in Indicator 3.5.1 and in 2020, a total of 30,133 individuals received treatment. However, this number has slightly declined to 29,000 in 2022, as reported by the Annual Drug Report-2022 of Bangladesh.

Table 3.8: Coverage of treatment interventions (pharmacological, psychological, and rehabilitation and aftercare services) for substance use disorder

2015	2018	2020	2022	2030(T)
16,416	38,035	30,133	29,000	55,000

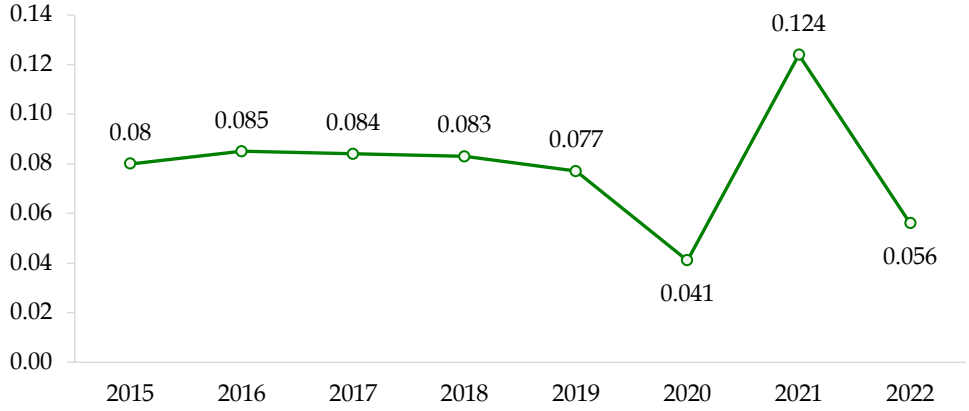
Source: Department of Narcotics Control, Security Services Department, Ministry of Home Affairs

I*ndicator 3.5.2. Harmful use of alcohol, defined according to the national context as alcohol per capita consumption (aged 15 years and older) within a calendar year in litres of pure alcohol*

Since 2015, per capita pure alcohol consumption remained relatively stable at 0.08 litres, reaching its lowest point in 2020 at 0.041 litres (see Figure 3.6). However, 2021 saw a sudden spike to 0.124 litres, likely influenced by pandemic-related lockdowns, before falling back to 0.056 litres in 2022.The national target is to reduce per capita alcohol consumption to 0.04 litres by 2025 and 0.02 litres by 2030.

[10] There is a sex segregated aspect for Indicator 3.4.2. However, suicide mortality rate for men and women for most of the years were unavailable.

Figure 3.6: Harmful use of alcohol within calendar year in litres of pure alcohol

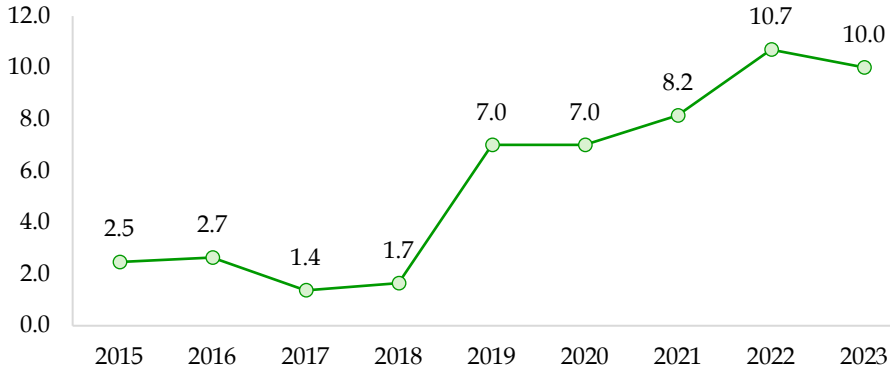


Source: Annual Drug Report of Bangladesh-2022, Department of Narcotics Control, Security Services Department, MoHA.

Indicator 3.6.1. Death rate due to road traffic injuries (per 100,000 population)

Road traffic fatalities in Bangladesh have surged between 2015 and 2023, rising from 2.48 deaths per 100,000 population in 2015 to 10.01 in 2023. Poor traffic law compliance, reckless driving, and unfit vehicles are key contributors to this crisis.

Figure 3.7: Death rates due to road traffic injuries per 100,000 population



Source: SVRS- different years.

Indicator 3.7.1. Proportion of women of reproductive age (aged 15-49 years) who have their need for family planning satisfied with modern methods

In Bangladesh, the proportion of women of reproductive age using modern contraceptives rose from 59.2% in 2017 to around 74% in 2022, stabilizing at around 73% in 2023 (see Table 3.9). The target is to bring 100% of the women of reproductive age under modern family planning methods by 2030.

Table 3.9: Proportion of women of reproductive age (aged 15-49 years) who have their need for family planning satisfied with modern methods (%)

2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2030(T)
59.2	61.6	63.7	62.3	64.6	73.9	72.9	100

Source: BDHS-2017, SVRS - different years.

Indicator 3.7.2. Adolescent birth rate (aged 10-14 years; aged 15-19 years) per 1,000 women in that age group

The adolescent birth rate, defined as the number of live births per 1,000 women aged 10-19 years, took a national value of 75 in base year 2025, and eventually increased to 84.28 in 2023 (see Table 3.10). While the indicator value for national level remained between 70 and 75, year 2023 has marked a concerning shift, with the national rate rising by 14 points from the previous year. Urban areas experienced an almost 18-point surge, and rural areas, where adolescent birth rates have historically been higher, also saw an increase of 13 points.

Table 3.10: Adolescent birth rate (aged 15-19 years) per 1,000 women in that age group

	2015(base)	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2030(T)
National	75	78	75	74	73.5	73	72.3	70	84.28	50
Urban	60	69	65	57	56.2	54.1	49.7	44.4	62.53	25
Rural	85	85	84	89	86.9	87	79.1	77.8	90.89	50

Source: Sample Vital Registration System (SVRS)-multiple years

Indicators 3.8.1. Coverage of essential health services

In 2016, Bangladesh scored 52 on the index used to measure performance in Indicator 3.8.1. The figure then slightly improved to 54 in 2019. However, the score dropped back to 52 in 2021, likely due to the strain on the health system during the COVID-19 pandemic. To achieve the target scores of 80 by 2025 and 100 by 2030, significant improvements in healthcare funding and infrastructure are needed.

Table 3.11: Coverage of essential health services

2016(base)	2017	2019	2021	2030(T)
52	50	54	52	100

Source: World Health Organization.

Indicators 3.8.2. Proportion of the population with large household expenditures (>10% of the total household expenditure or income) on health as a share of total household expenditure or income

In 2016, 24.7% of households in Bangladesh spent more than 10% of their household income on such expenses, and 9.5% of households spent over 25% of their income on healthcare—both alarmingly high figures. The target is to reduce the proportion of households with healthcare expenses above 10% to 15% and the proportion of households with healthcare expenses above 25% to 5%, respectively.

Table 3.12: Proportion of population with large household expenditure on health as a share of total household expenditure or income

Proportion of the population with health expenditure as given% of total household expenditure	2016	2030(T)
More than 10%	24.7	15
More than 25%	9.5	5

Source: Household Income Expenditure Survey-2019, BBS.

Indicator 3.9.1. Mortality rate attributed to household and ambient air pollution (per 100,000 populations)

In 2019, the mortality rate attributed to household and ambient air pollution stood at 149 per 100,000 people. The indicator performance worsened significantly to 241 by 2023. The 2030 goal for this indicator is to reach an indicator value of 55.

Table 3.13: Mortality rate attributed to household and ambient air pollution (per 100,000 populations)

2016	2021	2022	2023	2030(T)
149	217	231	241	55

Source: Sample Vital Registration System (SVRS).

Indicator 3.9.2. Mortality rate per 100,000 attributed to unsafe water, unsafe sanitation, and lack of hygiene (exposure to unsafe Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene for All (WASH) services)

The mortality rate due to inadequate WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) services in Bangladesh stood at 119 per 100,000 in 2016. By 2023, this figure had risen to 161, indicating significant public health concern. To meet the 2030 target of reducing the mortality rate to just 4.5 per 100,000, substantial improvements in WASH infrastructure are needed.

Table 3.14: Mortality rate attributed to unsafe water, unsafe sanitation, and lack of hygiene (exposure to unsafe Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene for All (WASH) services)

2016	2021	2022	2023	2030(T)
119	171	167	161	4.5

Source: DGHS, HSD, HMSS, BBS, SID, SVRS, BBS.

Indicator 3.9.3. Mortality rate attributed to unintentional poisoning (per 100,000 population)

According to the WHO Health SDG Profile Bangladesh (2019), the mortality rate from unintentional poisoning was 0.30 per 100,000 population in both 2016 and 2019. The lack of data makes it difficult to track progress or project future trends. The target is to reduce the rate to 0.25 by 2025 and to 0.15 by 2030. However, alongside efforts to lower mortality rates, better data collection and monitoring are essential.

Table 3.15: Mortality rate attributed to unintentional poisoning (per 100,000 population)

2016	2019	2030(T)
0.30	0.30	0.15

Source: World Health Organization

Indicator 3.a.1. Age-standardized prevalence of current tobacco use among persons of 15 years and older

Bangladesh signed the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) in 2003. Since then, two global Adult Tobacco Surveys have been conducted in 2009 and 2017, respectively. These surveys show a significant decline in tobacco use among adults, from 43.3% in 2009 to around 35% in 2017. These reports also inform that for the males, the decrease was from 58.0% to 46.0%, and for females, it dropped from 28.7% to 25.2%. This reflects an 8.3 percentage average decline in tobacco use. The target is to reduce tobacco use to 25% by 2030.

Table 3.16: Age-standardized prevalence of tobacco use among persons aged 15 years and older

	2009	2017	2030(T)
National	43.3%	35.3%	25%
Male	58.0%	46.0%	-
Female	28.7%	25.2%	-

Source: Adult Tobacco Survey-2009 and 2017, World Health Organization, GATS.

Indicator 3.b.1. Proportion of the target population covered by all vaccines included in the national program

Bangladesh has successfully met the target for this indicator. The national immunization program coverage has consistently exceeded 80%. Bangladesh had an immunization coverage value of 81.9% in 2015, which improved to 99.3% in 2023. The target for 2025 is to achieve 98% coverage, and Bangladesh had already reached 99% of coverage in 2021, surpassing the SDG target four years ahead of schedule.

Figure 3.8: Proportion of the target population covered by all vaccines included in the national programme (%)

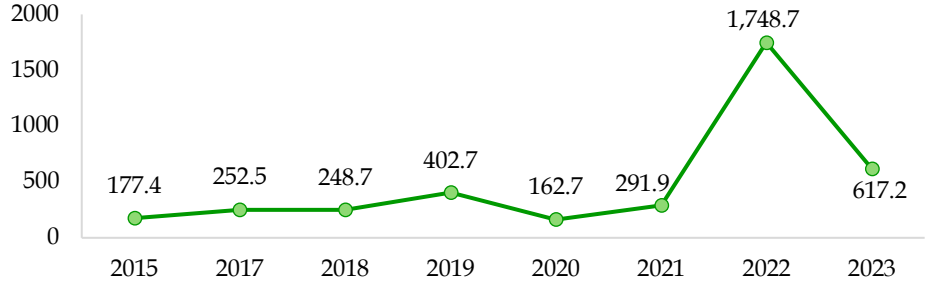


Source: Bangladesh Economic Review-2023

Indicator 3.b.2. Total net official development assistance to the medical research and basic health sectors

Bangladesh has seen a steady increase in net official development assistance (ODA) for medical research and basic health sectors, rising from USD 177.4 million in 2015 to USD 617.2 million in 2023. However, there have been fluctuations, with 2022 witnessing a significant spike to USD 1,748.7 million. This surge is linked to the investments for the COVID-19 vaccination program and related pandemic initiatives. As a result, Bangladesh has surpassed its 2025 target of USD 400 million and is on track to meet the 2030 target of USD 500 million. The medical research sector is expected to reach and sustain the USD 500 million target by 2030.

Figure 3.9: Total net official development assistance to the medical research and basic health sector



Source: ERD; HSD; MEFWD.

3.b.3. Proportion of health facilities that have a core set of relevant essential medicines available and affordable on a sustainable basis

Data on Indicator 3.b.3 for Bangladesh is scarce, with only one data point available for 2018. According to the National Institute of Population Research and Training (NIPORT), in 2018, 62 per cent of health facilities had essential medicines available on a sustainable basis. Due to the lack of recent data, it is difficult to assess the current state or progress of this indicator.

Indicator 3. c.1 Health worker density (per 10,000 population) and distribution (physician: nurse: health technologist)

A 2021 report by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MOHFW) and WHO reveals that Bangladesh has approximately 8.4 health workers per 10,000 population, a figure nearly unchanged from 2019 value of 8.3 and a slight increase from 2016 value of 7.4. Considering this stagnant progress, it can be concluded that Bangladesh faces a substantial gap in meeting the SDG targets of 31.5 by 2025 and of 44.5 by 2030.

Table 3.17: Health worker density (per 10,000 population)

2011	2016	2019	2021	2030(T)
5.7	7.4	8.3	8.4*	44.5

Source: MIS, DGHS, HSD, Government of Bangladesh.
Note: Value marked by * is taken from Health Labour Market Analysis- 2021 conducted by WOHFW and WHO.

The second component of this indicator assesses the distribution of health workers, including physicians, nurses, and health technologists. Data for this component is limited, with only two data points available from 2016 and 2019. Over this period, there was minimal improvement in the distribution of nurses and health technologists, as the distribution for physicians remained stagnant at 1 and the density for nurses slightly increased by 0.1 to take a value of 0.6. Bangladesh is far from meeting its targets 2030 which is to reach a value of 5. Given the lack of recent data, a proper assessment for this indicator's performance could not be made.

Table 3.18: Distribution of health workers (physician: nurse: health technologist)

Year	Physician	Nurse	Health Technologist
2016	1	0.5	0.2
2019	1	0.6	0.3
2030(T)	1	3.0	5.0

Source: MIS, DGHS, HSD, Government of Bangladesh.

Indicator 3.d.1 International Health Regulations (IHR) capacity and health emergency preparedness

In Bangladesh, the IHR capacity index dropped from 78 in 2016 to 58 in 2019, which is the available data point for the latest year. This value is significantly below the 2030 target of 100.

Table 3.19: International Health Regulations (IHR) capacity and health emergency preparedness

2016	2019	2030(T)
78	58	100

Source: WHO Benchmarks for International Health Regulations (IHR) Capacities-2019.

3.4. Key Policies and Strategies to Achieve SDG 3

In Bangladesh, the necessary strategies to achieve SDG goals are incorporated into the national development strategies and policies so that the SDG targets are achieved as a byproduct of implementing the national developmental policies. Some of the plans and policies relevant for SDG 3 are the national Health Policy-2011, Bangladesh Population Policy-2012, 4th Health, Population, and Nutrition Sector Programme (HPNSP, 2016-2022) Strategy for Finance in the Health Sector: 2012-2032, 7th Five Year Plan (2016-20), 8th Five Year Plan (2020-2025), etc. The ultimate objective of these polices is to achieve universal health care coverage so as to improve the standard of living for people from all walks of life.

The objectives of the 4th Health, Population, and Nutrition Sector Programme (HPNSP, 2016-2022) was to improve health service quality in both private and public sector, and expanding service delivery while strengthening the health service system such as governance and human resource. This programme aimed to achieve improvement in health service system and delivery through means of capacity building, better coordination among different types of providers and stakeholders, strengthening surveillance, etc. Some USD 588.45 million of the USD 14.7 billion programme was supposed to be financed by World Bank and other development partners following a result-based financing modality with Disbursement Linked Indicators. Under this modality, funding is to be disbursed based on achievement of targets. Till 2019, disbursement was supposed to be USD 275.99 million, of which USD 140.19 million was disbursed to the Government of Bangladesh, indicating an achievement rate of 51 per cent (GOB, 2022).

Bangladesh's 7th and 8th FYPs were both centred on achieving SDG 3 objectives, specifically universal health coverage. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare's implementation of the 7th FYP resulted in improvements in life expectancy, fertility rates, and maternal and infant mortality. It had trouble raising metrics like the percentage of births attended by qualified doctors and the rates of childhood vaccinations, though. The 8th FYP builds on these successes by pursuing the health-focused goals, emphasising universal health coverage and guaranteeing fair access to high-quality healthcare. Some indicators, such non-communicable illnesses and the elimination of tuberculosis and malaria, exhibit alarming trends that call for targeted attention in the current plan, even when other indicators have maintained or improved their condition.

Other than the overall health programmes and policies, there are some specific sectors in which the problems have lost existing with little improvements despite adoption of new policies. Road traffic safety and mortality rate from traffic accidents is one such sector. This is one of indicators in which the performance is showing deterioration in recent years. Moreover, the national data for this indicator is questionable. For instance, while this rate was 8.15 for 2023 in the national sources (BSVS, 2021), whereas the same indicator value calculated by WHO for the same year was 18.6. Moreover, the gap between policy adoption and implementation is apparent from the persistence of the problems and high rate of road traffic casualties. A similar trend can be found regarding many other aspects such a suicide mortality rate, expansion of universal health coverage and many more.

3.5. Major Challenges

Achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3, which aims to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages, remains a significant challenge for Bangladesh. Despite progress in some areas, several barriers continue to hinder the country's efforts toward improving its healthcare service delivery system and achieving universal health coverage. These challenges are multifaceted, ranging from insufficient healthcare service coverage to inefficiencies in governance, low health financing, and socio-cultural factors that affect health-seeking behaviours. Below are some of the major challenges that Bangladesh faces in its journey to achieve SDG 3.

Insufficient Health Service Coverage: One of the major challenges facing Bangladesh's healthcare system is the limited coverage of essential services, especially for infectious diseases and non-communicable diseases (as can been seen from the deteriorating performance of Indicators 3.9.1, 3.9.2, and 3.9.3). While maternal and child health services are generally available in many areas, access to care for conditions such as tuberculosis, sexually transmitted infections, diabetes, and hypertension remains poor. As indicator 3.b.c indicated that in 2018, only 62 per cent of the hospitals of Bangladesh had essential medications on a sustainable manner. The discrepancy in service availability results in disparities in health outcomes, particularly in rural and remote areas where healthcare resources are concentrated in urban centres like Dhaka. Furthermore, the absence of an efficient referral system exacerbates the issue, making it difficult for patients in rural areas to access specialized care.

Inefficiencies in Health System Governance and Service Delivery: Bangladesh's healthcare system is characterized by a mix of public, private, NGO, and development partner-run services. However, these services are unevenly distributed across the country. Urban areas generally have better-equipped public hospitals and a greater availability of private healthcare facilities, while rural areas rely more heavily on NGOs and community-based services. A significant issue in the health system is the low level of public investment, which has led to shortages of essential equipment and medical supplies. As per World Bank's Bangladesh - Improving Hospital Services Quality and Financial Protection for the Poor Project Information Document, only 66% of district hospitals had the set of equipment needed for basic care, and the number of hospital beds per 1,000 people stands at just 0.8 as of 2021, far below the WHO's recommended minimum of 3. In addition, the country faces a shortage of healthcare professionals, as exhibited in Indicator 3.c.1 which shows the low level of health

worker density per 10,000 population of the country. This shortage results in long wait times and delays in care, particularly in rural areas.

Low level of Health Financing: Although the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare's budget has increased from 2013 to 2023, Bangladesh still spends only .74% of its GDP in health, which is well below the WHO's recommended level of 4-5% and the regional average of 5.1%. This low level of health financing contributes to inadequate healthcare infrastructure and services. As Indicator 3.8.2 reveals, Proportion of population facing catastrophic health expenditure in Bangladesh is likely to increase for Bangladesh in the future. Such high out-of-pocket expenses for patients further discourage many from seeking professional treatment, particularly in emergency situations. As a result, many individuals forgo necessary healthcare, leading to poorer health outcomes, particularly for vulnerable populations who cannot afford the cost of treatment. Similarly, Indicator 3.b.2 exhibits that Bangladesh has achieved more than the targeted amount of foreign development assistance budget in the recent past. However, this influx of foreign aid into the health sector was COVID-19 response assistance which has already started to fall as COVID-19 situation has been brought under control. Furthermore, Bangladesh can no longer depend heavily on foreign assistance as it will no longer be eligible for such assistances once it graduates from Least Developed Country group in 2026. Thus, to maintain the achievements in health sector and improve it further, the government should increase its own health expenditure or look for alternative sources for budget.

Life Style Changes Affecting Patterns of Health Complications: As a country improves economically, the associated improvement in health sector due to introduction of modern healthcare systems and medicines changes the type of disease and health complications that affect the population the most. The general financial improvement of the people of Bangladesh means less people are dying in contagious or tropical diseases and more people are developing lifestyle diseases and non-communicable diseases such as diabetes and heart diseases. This pattern has been exhibited in the worsening performance of Indicator 3.4.1 (Mortality rate due to non-communicable diseases). Similarly, mental/psychological health is also becoming an alarming health hazard, as exhibited by the increasing suicide mortality rate of Bangladesh in Indicator 3.4.2. The already struggling healthcare system of Bangladesh may not be sufficiently equipped to properly address such changes in disease pattern, which will demand further government expenditure into the healthcare system.

Unavailability of Timely and Reliable Data: Timely data is a prerequisite for identifying the gaps of an existing system and developing schemes for addressing them. It is also necessary to monitor the progress of any implementation process. In the case of Bangladesh, many indicators of SDG 3 do not have regular and accurate data that can allow one to effectively monitor their progress. Some such indicator are Indicators 3.9.3, 3.a.1, 3.b.1, and 3.3.5, most of which has only a handful of rounds of data available while some other indicators have data available for inconsistent intervals, lowering the accuracy of the insights that can be gathered from those data. To mitigate this challenge of unavailability of data, a robust system of data collection and timely release needs to be developed and maintained.

Health-Seeking Behaviour and Gender Disparities: Another challenge lies in health-seeking behaviour, which is influenced by socio-cultural and financial factors. While both men and women seek healthcare at similar rates overall, the types of services they access differ. Women

predominantly seek care for maternal and child health, while men are more likely to seek treatment for non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and injuries. Financial constraints often lead to a gender bias in healthcare allocation, with families tending to prioritize the health of male breadwinners over that of women and children. This underestimation of women's health needs further exacerbates health disparities. A reflection of these trends can be seen in the fluctuating and low performance of indicators like 3.1.1 (maternal Mortality rate) which exhibits poor performance for rural women, 3.7.1 (Proportion of Female using modern methods to meet family planning needs, and 3.7.2 (Adolescent Birth Rate).

Persistent Gaps in Policy Implementation: Despite the adoption of various health policies and programs, there is often a significant gap between policy formulation and actual implementation. For example, the Road Transport Act of 2018, aimed at improving road safety and reducing traffic fatalities, has yet to achieve its desired outcomes. An impact of this is reflected in the already high and increasing rate of road traffic casualties, as exhibited in Indicator 3.6.1, owing to the gap between policy adoption and its effective enforcement. Another result of such gaps between policies and implementation is the low level of health emergency preparedness for Bangladesh as exhibited in Indicator 3.d.1, which shows that in 2019, Bangladesh was only slightly more than halfway prepared in relation to the 2030 target. Effective policy implementation, along with rigorous monitoring and accountability, is critical to achieving the intended health outcomes.

To achieve SDG 3, Bangladesh must address these critical challenges by ensuring equitable healthcare coverage, improving health system governance, increasing health financing, and addressing socio-cultural barriers to healthcare access. The country must also focus on reducing geographical disparities and improving policy implementation to ensure that all citizens have access to affordable, quality healthcare services.

3.6. Recommendations for Future Action

To achieve universal health coverage and improve the overall health system in Bangladesh, a comprehensive approach is needed. Given the current state of SDG 3 indicators and the challenges in the national healthcare system, the following recommendations are crucial for moving forward:

Increase Government Health Expenditure to Improve Accessibility: The government should raise healthcare spending from the current 2.3% of GDP to the WHO-recommended level of 5% (World Health Report, 2010). This would help enhance the quality of services in existing healthcare facilities and enable the expansion of services to underserved areas. Adequate subsidies should also be introduced to reduce citizens' out-of-pocket healthcare expenses, bringing them in line with the regional average. Special attention should be given to geographically remote areas and disadvantaged populations to ensure equitable access to care. If these can be achieved across the health sector, most of the indicators of SDG 3 can be expected to show stable improvements. To address the low doctor-to-patient and nurse-to-patient ratios exhibited in Indicator 3.c.1, investments should be made in medical education. This can help to develop a skilled healthcare workforce within the country, ensure better service delivery and reduced dependency on foreign-trained professionals, and improved health emergency preparedness (Indicator 3.d.1).

Decentralization of Healthcare Services and Good Governance: Healthcare facilities should be decentralized, with incentives offered to skilled doctors and specialists to work in regional and district-level facilities, rather than concentrating in urban centres like Dhaka. This will help ensure that quality care is accessible to more people, regardless of location, improving performances of Indicators such as 3.8.1 (Coverage of Essential Health Services) as well as more specific coverages such as for Indicator 3.5.1 (Treatment of Substance Abuse Disorder). Strengthening governance in the healthcare sector, particularly in public healthcare, is similarly necessary to rebuild trust in these facilities. This would improve public confidence and encourage greater use of available healthcare services.

Address the Rising Burden of Non-Communicable Diseases: With the shifting disease profile in Bangladesh, there must be a concerted effort to improve and expand services for non-communicable diseases such as cardiovascular diseases and cancers (Indicators 3.4.1, 3.9.1, 3.9.2, 3.9.3). This includes better prevention, treatment, and care systems to address these emerging health challenges. Besides this, deaths from avoidable deaths such as mortality from road traffic accidents, should also be taken seriously and addressed.

Expand Mental Health Services: To raise mental health awareness and provide adequate support, mental health services should be expanded to improve the alarmingly high and increasing value of indicator 3.4.2- Suicide Mortality rate. This includes increasing the availability of quality psychological counselling and psychiatric treatment, with special focus on making these services affordable for the youth, who are often the most in need.

3.7. Summary

A country's health is intricately linked to its economic prosperity. A healthy population contributes to productivity and economic growth, while a sickly population can place a significant strain on government resources, requiring large financial expenditures for healthcare. For Bangladesh, a robust healthcare system is vital to ensure the health and well-being of its people. However, the country's healthcare system has long been plagued by inefficiency, poor governance, and a severe lack of financial and human resources. This has hindered its ability to provide adequate care for its citizens, particularly in rural and remote areas. The Covid-19 pandemic further exposed the vulnerabilities within the system, overwhelming already limited resources and deepening existing weaknesses.

In light of these challenges, the immediate focus must be on rebuilding and strengthening the healthcare system as the first step toward achieving SDG 3. While some health indicators in Bangladesh have shown improvement, many others remain stagnant or have worsened, indicating the need for targeted and sustainable interventions. The country's healthcare system faces multiple roadblocks that hinder progress, including insufficient coverage, limited access to essential services, and inadequate healthcare infrastructure, especially outside urban centres. Addressing these issues requires a comprehensive approach that involves data-driven decision-making and effective policy planning, with a focus on both short-term recovery and long-term improvement. By implementing evidence-based, target-oriented strategies, Bangladesh can overcome its healthcare challenges, retain its successes, and work toward better health outcomes for all.

4 QUALITY EDUCATION

SDG 4: Quality Education

4.1. Background

Education is a key driver of progress and one of the most influential Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Education quality is a broad concept that includes aspects like access to technology, well-trained teachers, the incorporation of digital literacy in teaching, and individual achievements such as minimum levels of proficiency in reading and Mathematics. However, education quality should also encompass social outcomes, such as receiving knowledge to achieve sustainable development in social, economic and environmental terms.

SDG 4 (Quality Education) is centred around providing inclusive, fair, and high-quality education for all, while also encouraging lifelong learning as a basic human right. It aims to achieve 10 global targets, tracked by 12 global indicators and supplemented by 31 thematic indicators. Study shows the quality of different skills taught at school has been proven to be statistically significant, where reading and mathematics skills are highly significant in contributing to a country's GDP growth. Thus, achievements under SDG 4 indicators are interconnected to economic growth including sustainable development both globally and within Bangladesh's development framework. To observe the statuses of all indicators under quality education at disaggregated levels maintaining the UNGA resolution[11], is necessary to understand the goal's achievements and its impact on the economy.

4.2. Global and Regional Context

As countries work to meet SDG 4 commitments, the global education landscape presents both tremendous opportunities and challenges. According to UN estimates, 84 million children and youth would still not be enrolled in school by 2030, and nearly 300 million students will not have the basic literacy and numeracy skills needed to succeed in life.[12]

The reopening of safe schools, assisting teachers as frontline workers, investing in skills, and tackling the digital divide were the five critical priorities listed in the 2020 Global Education Meeting Declaration. During widespread school closures, the pandemic revealed serious flaws in the world's educational systems, which prompted the adoption of digital learning solutions. Nevertheless, learning losses were documented in four of the five countries examined, indicating that these efforts were insufficient to counteract the significant impact (United Nations, 2024b). [13]

Between 2015 and 2023, some progress was made. The global primary school completion rate increased from 85% to 88%, lower secondary completion rose from 74% to 78%, and upper secondary completion improved from 53% to 59% (Figure 4.1). Bangladesh, while still below the global average for upper secondary completion in 2023, demonstrated some progress with

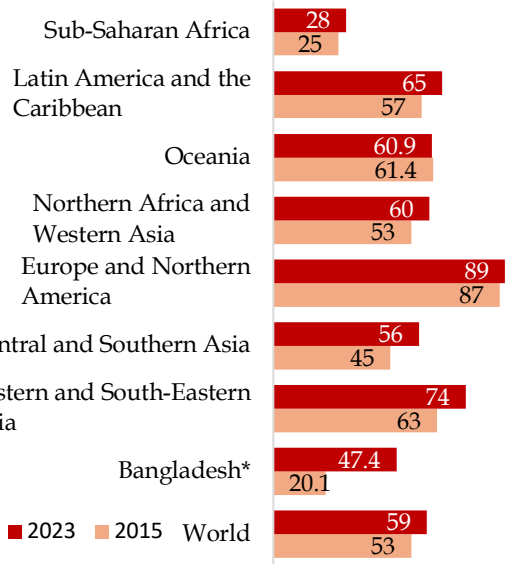
[11] Sustainable Development Goal indicators should be disaggregated, where relevant, by income, sex, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability and geographic location, or other characteristics, in accordance with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics (General Assembly resolution 68/261).

[12] Retrieved from The Sustainable Goals Report 2023

an average annual increase of 3.03 percentage points, reaching 47.4%. However, global progress in upper secondary completion has slowed, with the annual growth rate decreasing from 1.3 percentage points between 2010 and 2015 to just 0.9 percentage points between 2015 and 2023. Oceania even experienced a decline, while Eastern and South-Eastern Asia made significant strides, increasing completion rates by 11 percentage points. Globally, girls consistently outperformed boys in completion rates at all education levels, with the gender gap most pronounced in Eastern and South-Eastern Asia, where girls led boys by 14 percentage points at the upper secondary level (United Nations, 2024b).

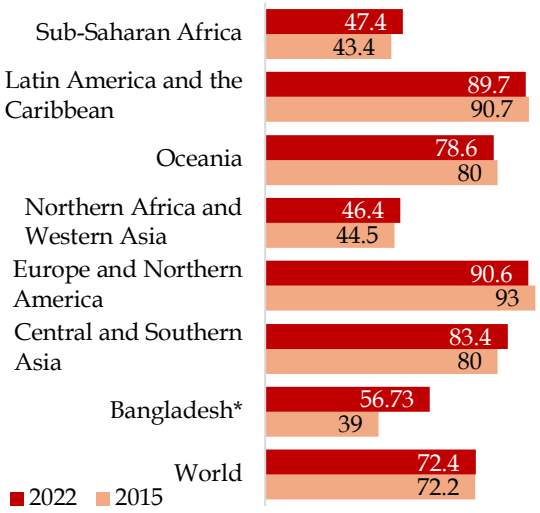
Participation in organized learning for children below primary school age showed limited global improvement from 2015 to 2022, with increases ranging from 0.2 to 3.4 percentage points across most regions. In contrast, Bangladesh achieved a 17.73 percentage-point growth, as shown in Figure 4.2, though it remains behind the 90% target set for 2025. Funding for pre-primary education continues to face gaps, compounded by global crises such as floods and conflicts, which have led to resource reallocations (UNESCO, 2023) . UNESCO estimates that Southern Asia will need an additional 15 million teachers by 2030 to achieve universal primary and secondary education, including 4.1 million for primary education and 10.9 million for secondary education (UNESCO, 2016).

Figure 4.1: Upper secondary school completion rate, 2015 and 2023 (%)



Source: Sustainable Development Goals Report 2024 (for global regions); SVRS (2015, 2023) (for Bangladesh).

Figure 4.2: Participation rate in organized learning (one year before the official primary entry age), 2015 vs. 2022 (%)



Source: Sustainable Development Goals Report 2024 (for global regions), SVRS (2015, 2023) for Bangladesh. Note: No data is available for Eastern and South-eastern Asia between 2015 and 2022.

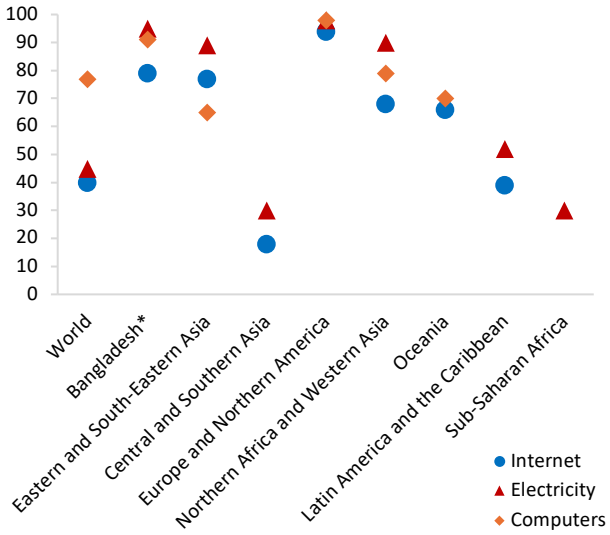
The pandemic's impact on education outcomes is evident in the 2022 PISA results, which showed significant declines in student performance. Between 2018 and 2022, average math scores dropped by 15 points and reading scores by 10 points. These figures underscore the severe disruptions to learning during COVID-19. The digital divide continues to be a significant obstacle to educational access at the same time. Figure 4.3 shows that in 2023, only 40% of primary schools globally had internet connectivity, whereas in Bangladesh, that

number was 79%. North America and Europe lead the world in this area, with the greatest rates of access.

Educational gaps are exacerbated by persistent discrepancies in ICT access, even in the face of technical breakthroughs. Online learning platforms reached more than 1 billion students during the epidemic, but they failed to reach 31% of students, mostly the most vulnerable and impoverished. Only a small percentage of students have access to digital tools like simulation software, and ICT adoption in classrooms is still low even in affluent nations (UNESCO, 2023).

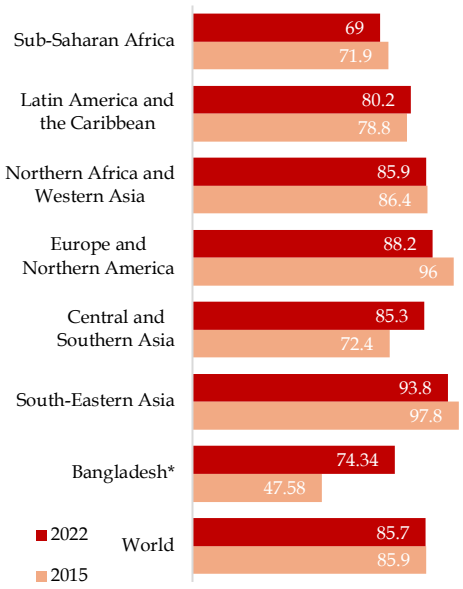
The share of qualified primary school teachers reflects similar disparities. Globally, Southeast Asia had the highest percentage of qualified primary school teachers from 2015 to 2022, though it declined slightly during this period. In contrast, Bangladesh saw some improvement, with the rate rising from 47.58% in 2015 to 74.34% in 2022, as shown in Figure 4.4.

Figure 4.3: Proportion of primary schools with access to basic services by type of service, 2022 (%)



Source: Sustainable Development Goals Report 2024 (for global regions), APSC (2022) for Bangladesh.

Figure 4.4: Proportion of primary school teachers with minimum required qualifications, 2015 vs. 2022 (%)



Source: Sustainable Development Goals Report 2024 (for global regions), SVRS (2015, 2023) for Bangladesh. Note: No data is available for Oceania.

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is still not consistently incorporated into curricula. According to a 2023 UN assessment, 66% of the assessed ninth-grade science and social science curricula missed sustainability issues, while 69% disregarded climate change. In spite of this, 50 pilot nations are developing ESD programs with the goal of preparing students to tackle global issues including resource inequity, biodiversity loss, and climate change. Although progress is still gradual, methods for learning assessment and teacher development are essential to reaching these objectives. To reach the UNICEF Strategic Plan targets for 2025, 52% of reporting nations have strong learning evaluation frameworks and just 30% had effective teacher development systems as of 2023 (UNICEF, 2022).

The statistics in this section demonstrate both the progress that has been accomplished and the amount of work that still needs to be done to provide fair, high-quality education on a worldwide scale. In order to handle future problems, they emphasise how urgent it is to address systemic gaps and disparities while building education systems' resilience.

4.3. Assessment of National Progress on SDG 4

Indicator 4.1.1. Proportion of children and young people: (a) in grades 2/3; (b) at the end of primary; and (c) at the end of lower secondary achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in (i) reading Bangla and (ii) mathematics, by sex

Students' performance is evaluated across bands on the National Student Assessment (NSA) 2022; grade-level competency is indicated by Bands 4 and 5. The results show enduring difficulties: two-thirds of elementary kids have trouble with fundamental maths, and half are unable to read at grade level (NSA, 2022). There is little progress between 2017 and 2022. While mathematics proficiency increased by 5 points in Grade 3, Bangla proficiency increased by 4 percentage points in Grade 3 and 6 points in Grade 5 (Table 4.1). However, there were only slight improvements in Grade 5 Mathematics (0.89 percent). Although the gender gap has somewhat expanded since 2017, girls performed better than boys in both subjects (NSA, 2022). There are still notable differences in performance between school types, and NGO schools and madrasahs need more assistance. The average results for mathematics and Bangla show little change or stagnation. However, long-term trends since 2011 indicate that fewer Grade 5 children are reaching minimum competency, highlighting the necessity of focused interventions. Comprehensive trends in grade-level abilities across subjects and grades are shown in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Proportion of children and young people in Grade 3 and Grade 5 - achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in reading Bangla and Mathematics, by sex (%)

Target and Indicators	2011	2013	2015	2017	2022	2030 (T)
4.1.1.a.I: Proportion of children and young people in grades 2/3 achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in reading Bangla, by sex, 2012-2023, (%)						
Total	21	35	25	47	51	100
Boys	20	33	22	45	47	
Girls	22	36	27	48	55	
4.1.1.a.II: Proportion of children and young people in grades 2/3 achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in Mathematics, by sex, 2012-2023, (%)						
Total	15	25	9	34	39	100
Boys	15	25	8	35	38	
Girls	15	25	9	33	40	
4.1.1.b.I: Proportion of children and young people at the end of primary (grade 5) achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in reading Bangla, by sex, (%)						
Total	82	77	65	44	50	100
Boys	82	77	64	43	47	
Girls	82	76	66	44	52	
4.1.1.b.II: Proportion of children and young people at the end of primary (grade 5) achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in Mathematics, by sex, (%)						
Total	66	59	39	32	30	100
Boys	-	60	41	32	29	

Girls	-	58	38	34	31

Source: NSA (2011, 2013, 2015, 2017, 2022), DPE. Note: The table represents cumulative values for students who achieved Band 4 (proficient) or Band 5 (advanced), that is, Band 4 and above.
Note: NSA 2017 introduced four performance standards for assessing student performance and determining grade-level competency, replacing proficiency bands (NSA 2022).

Indicator 4.1.2. Completion rate (primary education, lower secondary education, upper secondary education)

Cycle Completion Rate (CCR)[14] measures the proportion of students enrolled in Grade 1 expected to complete Grade 5, including repeaters (NSA, 2020). Between 2016, the baseline year for the Fourth Primary Education Development Program (PEDP4)[15], and 2023, completion rates for primary and lower secondary education showed consistent growth. The lower secondary completion rate rose by 9.57 percentage points to 70.86%, while the primary education rate increased by 6.05 percentage points to 86.85% (Table 4.2). Girls consistently outperformed boys in primary education completion rates during this period. Upper secondary education also saw the highest growth in completion rates from 2015 to 2023, though data for all years are not available.

Table 4.2: Completion rate in education (%), 2012-2023

Target and Indicators	2015	2016 - PEDP4 Baseline	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2025 (T)	2030 (T)
Primary (1-5) - both sexes	78.77*	80.8	81.2	81.4	82.1	82.8	85.85	77.5 (SVRS), 86.05 (APSC)	86.9	87	95
Primary (1-5) - **boys**	-	77.77	78.28	78.56	80.80	81.00	84.95	85.12	85.9		
Primary (1-5) - **girls**	-	83.9	84.08	84.31	83.20	84.5	86.75	86.81	87.7		
Lower secondary (6-8)	59.22*	61.29*	63.18*	64.91*	64.7**	67.55*	68.57*	68.1	70.9*	72	80
Upper secondary (9-12)	20.1	-	-	-	29.4**	-	-	47.3	47.4	35	50

Source: SVRS (2015, 2022, 2023), APSC (2016, 2017-2023); **MICS (2019), *UNESCO, 2024.

Dropout rates in primary education have decreased over the past decade, aligning with SDG 4 targets. From 39.8% in 2010 (40.30% for boys and 39.30% for girls), the dropout rate fell to 13.15% in 2023 (14.12% for boys and 12.32% for girls) (DPE, 2023). Government initiatives such as improved infrastructure, teacher recruitment, and stipend programs have played a critical role in reducing dropouts and enhancing access to quality education. However, despite these progresses, challenges remain, such as low salaries and opportunities for career improvement for primary school teachers which fails to attract highly educated teachers in the sector.

The coefficient of efficiency for primary education—indicating the ratio of ideal pupil-years to actual pupil-years spent—stood at 87.36% in 2022 (BANBEIS, 2022). However, challenges

[14] The CCR is the product of the likelihood of reaching the last grade (survival rate) and the probability of graduating from the last grade. DPE uses UNESCO reconstruction cohort model for calculating completion rate (APSC 2020).
[15] Fourth Primary Education Development Program.

persist. Out-of-school rates for youth in upper secondary education declined from 55.11% in 2015 to 41.55% in 2021, while rates for adolescents in lower secondary education increased from 9.15% in 2017 to 17.53% in 2022 (UNESCO & Sustainable Development Report, 2024). Students with lower achievement levels remain at a higher risk of dropping out (NSA, 2022).

Indicator 4.2.1. Proportion of children under 5 years of age who are developmentally on track in health, learning, and psychosocial well-being, by sex

According to MICS 2019, 27.4% of rural children were not developing at a normal rate, and 72.2% of children failed the literacy-numeracy category. Girls outperformed boys in literacy-numeracy (30.2% vs. 27.5 percent) and socio-emotional development (76.6% vs. 69.0 percent), while outcomes for the other domains were similar.

From 2012 to 2019, the proportion of developmentally on-track children rose from 63.9% to 74.5%. Improvements were seen in literacy-numeracy (up 7.6 percentage points to 28.8 percent), physical (up 6.2 points to 98.4 percent), socio-emotional (up 3.6 points to 72.7 percent), and learning domains (up 3.9 points to 91.4 percent). Older children, girls, and those from higher socio-economic households consistently showed better outcomes.

Table 4.3: Proportion of children under 5 years of age who are developmentally on track in health, learning, and psychosocial well-being, by domains of ECDI, sex and region (%), 2012-2019

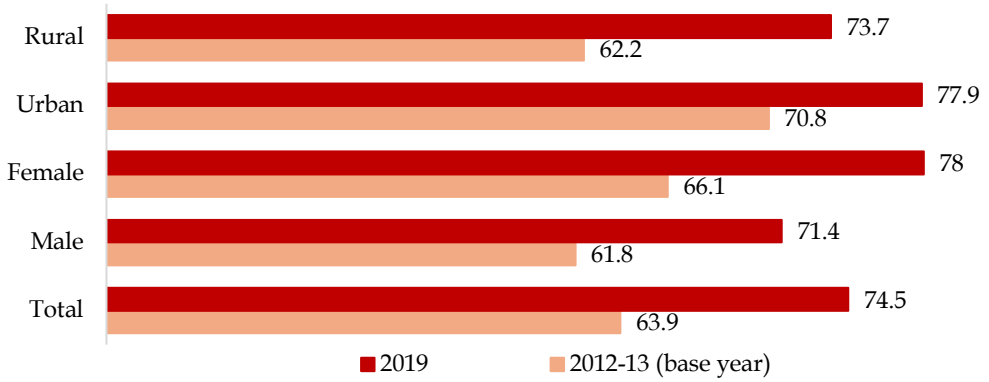
Year	Literacy-numeracy	Physical	Social-emotional	Learning	ECDI
MICS 2012-13 (base year)[16]					
Total	21.2	92.2	68.4	87.5	63.9
Male	20.7	92.8	65.5	87.7	61.8
Female	21.8	91.7	71.5	87.2	66.1
Urban	33.5	93.3	73.2	88.1	70.8
Rural	18.1	92	67.2	87.3	62.2
MICS 2019 (latest available)					
Total	28.8	98.4	72.7	91.4	74.5
Male	27.5	98.4	69	91	71.4
Female	30.2	98.4	76.6	91.8	78
Urban	34.8	98.6	74.3	92.5	77.9
Rural	27.2	98.3	72.3	91.1	73.7

Source: (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) & UNICEF Bangladesh, 2015), 2019.

Between 2012 and 2019, girls under five saw a 6.6 percentage-point improvement, compared to 4.3 points for boys. Rural children also showed greater relative progress (11.5 points) than their urban peers (7.1 points) (Figure 4.5), exhibiting potential for lowering the equity gap in education between urban and rural areas that is still in existence. These gains highlight the positive impact of targeted efforts to enhance early childhood development, particularly for disadvantaged groups.

Figure 4.5: Proportion of children under 5 years of age who are developmentally on track, by sex and region (%), 2012-2019

[16] Percentage of children age 36-59 months who are developmentally on track for indicated domains.



Source: MICS 2012-13, 2019

Indicator 4.2.2. Participation rate in organized learning (one year before the official primary entry age and sex)

In 2019, 21.2% of children participated in primary school and 56.3% of youngsters one year below the official primary entry age (6) attended early childhood education. This led to a 77.4% overall participation percentage among pre-primary students (MICS, 2019). Between 2016 and 2019, the participation rate increased significantly, rising from 34.3% to 77.4%, a 43-percentage point increase. Nevertheless, it subsequently fell to 56.73% in 2023 (SVRS 2023) and 67.42% in 2022 (SVRS 2022) (Table 4.4).

While pre-primary education rates remained stable globally from 2015 to 2022, with seven out of ten children participating in organized learning one year before the official primary entry age, certain regions, such as sub-Saharan Africa, Northern Africa, and Western Asia, saw a decline due to COVID-19, especially among the poorest children. This decline in participation was a result of the pandemic's disruption to early education systems, which are vital for addressing inequalities (United Nations, 2024b). In Bangladesh, this global trend is reflected in a 9.98 percentage-point drop in 2022 (Table 4.4).

Additionally, in 2019, the adjusted net attendance ratio for children one year younger than the official primary school entry age[17] was 79.9% in urban areas, compared to 76.8% in rural areas (MICS data).

Table 4.4: Participation rate in organized learning (one year before the official primary entry age/ pre-primary) (%), 2000-2023

Indicator	2015 (Base)	2019	2021	2022	2023	2025 (T)	2030 (T)
Boys	38	76.1	35.3	66.44	55.39	90	100
Girls	40	78.8	35.4	68.56	58.11	90	100
Total	39	77.4	35.3	67.42	56.73	90	100

Source: APSC Report (2015), SVRS (2021, 2022, 2023), MICS (2019)

Indicator 4.3.1. Participation rate of youth and adults in formal and non-formal education and training in the previous 12 months, by sex

Formal and non-formal education enrolment at the secondary level (grades 6–10) increased by 3.32 percentage points from 72.78% in 2015 to 76.1% in 2022 (Table 4.5). Higher secondary

[17] The official primary school entry age in Bangladesh is age 6 years (MICS 2019).

(grades 11–12) and postsecondary education had increases in participation rates of 8.71 percentage points and 3.63 percentage points, respectively, between 2015 and 2022, continuing this rising trend. During the same era, girls were consistently more likely than males to participate at the secondary level, but the opposite was true at the higher secondary and tertiary levels.

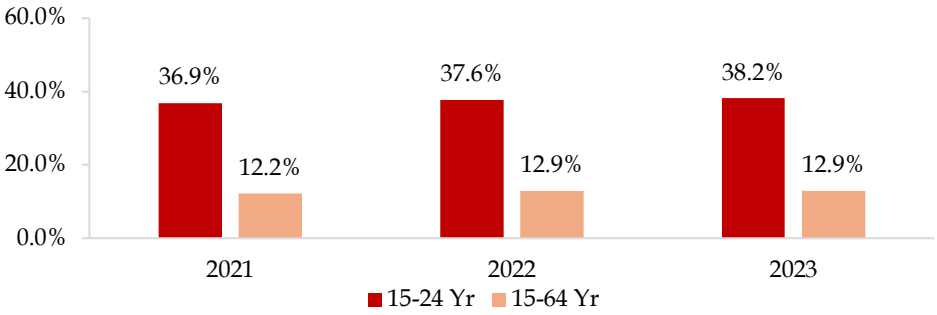
Table 4.5: Participation rate of youth and adults in formal and non-formal education and training in the previous 12 months, by education level and sex (%), 2012-2023

Level	2015 - Baseline	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
b) Secondary								
Total	72.78	74.23	74.64	75.32	75.62	76.38	75.52	76.10
Male	67.75	67.11	68.60	69.56	67.83	67.13	66.40	69.10
Female	77.84	81.74	81.90	82.50	83.36	85.19	83.15	83.20
c) Higher Secondary								
Total	38.99	39.77	40.50	43.80	47.32	48.39	48.79	47.70
Male	42.12	41.44	42.79	45.35	48.68	49.19	48.50	46.79
Female	35.86	38.01	38.13	42.16	45.87	47.54	49.88	48.71
d) Tertiary								
Total	15.03	15.67	15.84	16.88	19.01	20.07	20.19	18.66
Male	17.83	19.02	19.13	19.59	21.73	22.11	22.14	20.07
Female	12.11	12.32	12.87	14.06	16.18	17.94	18.20	17.19

Source: BES 2021 & 2022, BANBEIS.

For youth aged 15-24 years, the participation rate in formal and non-formal education and training stood at 38.2% in 2023, showing a modest increase of 0.6 percentage points from 37.6% in 2022 (Figure 4.6). For the broader group of youth and adults aged 15-64, the rate was much lower at 12.93%, with males at 14.5% and females at 11.5%.

Figure 4.6: Participation rate of youth and adults in formal and non-formal education and training in the previous 12 months, (%) 2021-23



Source: SVRS, BBS.

The 2021 Survey on Children's Education in Bangladesh, conducted by BBS and funded by UNICEF, examined the impact of COVID-19 school closures on children's learning. The survey found that only about 18.7% of school-aged children participated in online learning during the closure, with urban children (28.7 percent) participating at higher rates than rural children (15.9 percent). The primary school participation rate was lower (13.1 percent) compared to secondary and higher secondary levels. Additionally, while 36.9% of households had devices for online learning, only 57.7% of children used them regularly, with urban areas showing higher usage rates.

Indicator 4.4.1. Proportion of youth and adults with information and communications technology (ICT) skills, by type of skill

86.2% of youths and adults nationwide are adept in fundamental ICT operations, such as moving or duplicating data using copy-and-paste tools, according to the BBS 2022 ICT Use and Access Survey. Surprisingly, 88.3% of people in rural areas possess this competence, compared to 83.3% in metropolitan areas. Sending messages with attachments, such emails or SMS containing files, is the next most popular skill, according to 83.4% of respondents. Participation in this skill is marginally higher in urban regions (86.3 percent) than in rural areas (81.3 percent). Additionally, according to the 2022 survey, electronic presenting abilities increased somewhat, reaching 2.7% nationwide, with urban areas reporting 2.9% and rural areas 2.5% (Table 4.6).

However, there is also a notable digital divide between men and women, according to the report. Only 32.7% of women accessed the internet in the previous three months, compared to 45.3% of men. Similarly, 9.7% of men had a computer, compared to just 5.2% of women, and 72.3% of men owned a cell phone, compared to 51.4% of women.

Table 4.6: Proportion of youth and adults/individual ICT users with ICT skills (in the last three months) - by type of skills and locality, 2022 (%)

Indicator/ skill	Rural	Urban	National
Using copy and paste tools to duplicate or move data, information and content	88.3	83.3	86.2
Sending messages (e.g. e-mail, messaging service, SMS) with attached files (e.g.	81.3	86.3	83.4
Using basic arithmetic formulae in a spreadsheet	37.2	35	36.3
Connecting and installing new devices (e.g. a modem, camera, printer) through wireless network (WiFi)	12	9.2	10.8
Finding, downloading, installing and configuring software and apps	49.9	64.8	56.2
Creating electronic presentations with presentation software (including text, image, etc.)	2.5	2.9	2.7
Transferring files or applications between devices (including via cloud-storage)	18	22.6	19.9
Setting up effective security measures (e.g. strong passwords, log-in attempt, etc.)	16.7	13.6	15.4
Changing privacy settings on your device, account or app to limit the sharing of data	17.1	14.5	16
Verifying the reliability of information found online	14.3	13.5	14
Programming or coding in digital environments (e.g. computer software, app development, etc.)	0.7	2.3	1.4

Source: Survey on ICT use and access by individuals and households, BBS (2022).

Indicator 4.5.1. Parity indices (female/male, rural/urban, bottom/top wealth quintile, and others such as disability status, indigenous peoples, and conflict-affected, as data become available) for all education indicators on this list that can be disaggregated

Girls' enrolment has continuously surpassed boys' in Bangladesh, indicating a strong emphasis on girls' education. The Gender Parity Index (GPI) for girls in 2023 was 1.21 for

secondary education, 1.03 for higher secondary, 0.84 for tertiary, and 0.42 for technical education, according to Bangladesh Education Statistics (NSA, 2023) (BANBEIS, 2022). This indicates notable differences in favour of boys at the tertiary and technical levels. Near parity (1.03) was displayed at the higher secondary level, indicating a balanced ratio.

Gender inequality advantages girls in rural areas at the secondary level, although at the higher secondary level, parity was seen in rural areas (GPI of 0.97), while in 2023, girls in urban areas had a minor edge (GPI of 1.05) (Table 4.7). Between 2015 and 2017, gender parity was upheld in primary school, with girls exhibiting a modest advantage since 2018. As a result of concentrated efforts to enrol more females in primary education, the Net Enrolment Rate (NER) has progressively improved from 94.8% in 2010 to 97.76% in 2023, with girls continuously surpassing boys. Notably, from 2019 to 2021, the PEDP4 program's primary school GPI achieved precise parity (APSC, 2021).

Table 4.7: Gender Parity Index (GPI) by education level, 2015-2020

Level	2015 - Baseline	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2025 (T)	2030 (T)
a) Primary Student: GPI											
National	1.02	1.02	1.03	1.06	1.06	1.06	1.06	1.05	-	1	1
b) Secondary Student: GPI											
National	1.15	1.18	1.16	1.19	1.17	1.22	1.21	1.21	1.21	1.05	1
Rural	1.19	1.21	-	1.23	1.18	1.23	1.21	1.21	1.22		
Urban	1.09	1.11	-	1.09	1.14	1.19	1.19	1.21	1.21		
c) Higher Secondary Student: GPI											
National	0.85	0.98	0.91	0.93	0.94	1.02	1.01	1.01	1.03	0.95	1
Rural	0.86	1.00	0.95	0.95	0.97	1.00	0.98	0.96	0.97		
Urban	0.84	0.96	0.88	0.90	0.93	1.03	1.03	1.03	1.05		
d) Tertiary Student: GPI											
National	0.65	0.67	0.71	0.70	0.74	0.75	0.80	0.82	0.84	0.75	0.8
e) Technical Student Both: GPI											
National	0.38	0.39	0.38	0.38	0.34	0.37	0.37	0.37	0.42	0.57	0.7
f) Disability Student (6-10): GPI											
National	0.61	0.62	0.65	0.68	0.53	0.64	0.83	1.39	1.2	0.8	1

Source: BES, BANBEIS (2015-2023), BANBEIS 2021, 2023. (T represents Target values)

The GPI for secondary school teachers stood at 0.35 in 2020, indicating a gender disparity favouring male teachers, up from 0.26 in 2015 (Table 4.8). The GPI for tertiary-level teachers was 0.39, far below the 0.5 target for 2030.

Table 4.8: Gender Parity Index (GPI) for teachers by education level, 2015-2020

GPI	2015 (Base)	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2025 (T)	2030 (T)
Teacher (Secondary)	0.26	0.27	0.28	0.29	0.3	0.35	0.42	0.5
Teacher (Tertiary)	0.21	0.23	0.26	0.3	0.31	0.39	0.40	0.5

Source: BANBEIS. (T represents Target values)

Indicator 4.6.1. Percentage of the population aged 15 and over, achieving at least a fixed level of proficiency in functional (a) literacy and (b) numeracy skills, by sex

In Bangladesh, the adult literacy rate has steadily increased since 2005, with an 11.1 percentage-point rise from 2005 to 2015 and another 11 percentage-point increase from 2015 to 2023 (Table 4.9). Males have consistently outperformed females in literacy, with a gap of 5.8 percentage points in 2023.

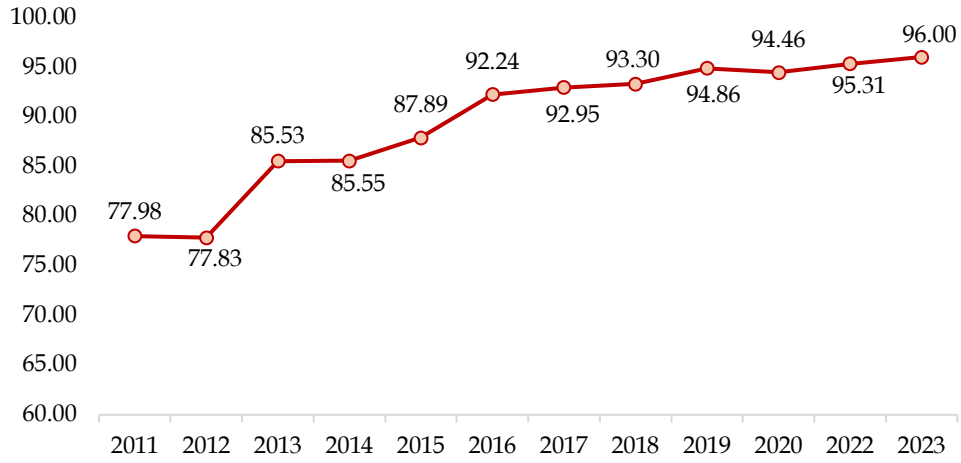
Table 4.9: Adult literacy rate of population aged 15 years and above (%), 2005-2023

	2005	2010	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
All adults	53.5	58.6	64.6	72.3	72.9	73.9	74.7	75.6	74.1	74.39	75.6
Males	58.3	62.9	67.6	75.2	75.7	76.7	77.4	78.2	77.0	77.38	78.6
Females	48.6	55.4	61.6	69.5	70.1	71.2	71.9	73	71.2	71.54	72.8

Source: SVRS (2005-2023), BBS

The youth literacy rate for ages 15 to 24 has been better, increasing by 18.02 percentage points, from 77.98% in 2011 to 96% in 2023 (SVRS) (Figure 4.7). Female youth outpace male youth, with female literacy rates at 96-97% in 2022-2023 compared to 94-95% for males.

Figure 4.7: Youth (age 15-24) literacy rate



Source: SDR (UIS, UNESCO) (2011-2020), SVRS (2022-2023).

The functional literacy rate for those aged 7 and older is 63%, with urban regions having a higher rate of 72% than rural ones (59%), according to the Literacy Assessment Survey 2023. The functional literacy and numeracy rates for adults aged 11–45 are 60.8 and 55.7%, respectively (Table 4.10). Overall development has been moderate, however there has been some improvement between 2011 and 2023, with functional literacy increasing by 7.2 percentage points and numeracy increasing by 2.87 percentage points.

Table 4.10: Adult functional literacy rate for population aged 11-45 years (%), 2011-2023

Indicator	2011	2023	2025 (T)	2030 (T)
Functional literacy	53.6	60.8	75	100
Functional numeracy	52.8	55.67	75	100

Source: LAS, BBS.
Note: T represents Target values.

Indicator 4.7.1 Extent to which (i) global citizenship education and (ii) education for sustainable development are mainstreamed in (a) national education policies; (b) curricula; (c) teacher education; and (d) student assessment

The degree to which national education systems incorporate Global Citizenship Education (GCED) and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is measured by Indicator 4.7.1. Based on government reports and discussions with pertinent parties, it focusses on curriculum, teacher preparation, student assessments, and education policies. Instead of evaluating actual classroom implementation, this indicator evaluates government intentions. On a scale of 0 to 1, Bangladesh's score for incorporating GCED and ESD into teacher education as of 2020 was 0.82, which is marginally lower than the global average of 0.85 (UN, 2020).

Indicator 4.a.1 Proportion of schools offering basic services, by types of services

The 2023 Annual elementary School Census (APSC) indicates that fundamental services provided by elementary schools have improved. The percentage of people with access to safe drinking water increased by 11 percentage points from 2021 to 97.8%. Strong coverage was also observed for other services, such as computer access and power, which were provided by 92.5% of schools and 95.3% of schools, respectively (Table 4.11). Despite a 9.1 percentage-point rise since 2020, only 47.1% of schools in 2023 had ramps or other adapted facilities, indicating that access to resources and infrastructure for students with disabilities remained poor.

Table 4.11: Proportion of primary schools offering basic services, by types of services (%), 2021-2023

Indicators	2015 (Base)	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2025 (T)	2030 (T)
Electricity	58	77	88	93.94	95.04	95.30	100	100
Internet	0.8	8.4	76.9	76.89	79.08	79.23	100	100
Computers	0.8	17.9	89.9	89.87	91.22	92.50	100	100
Access to adapted infrastructure and materials for students with disabilities/ ramp	34	52	38	37.52	40.16	47.10	80	100
Safe drinking water	82	79	86	86.41	93.67	97.80	95	100
Single-sex basic sanitation facilities	48	71	78	84.52	88.41	90.87	85	100
Basic hand washing facilities	0	43.5	43.5	-	-	-	100	100

Source: APSC, BANBEIS.

In secondary schools, the provision of electricity and basic hand-washing facilities grew steadily from 2015 to 2023. Electricity access rose by 12.6 percentage points, while hand-washing facilities saw a dramatic increase of 70.7 percentage points (Table 4.12). Internet access for teaching purposes also grew by 29.6 percentage points. However, the availability of ramps for disabled students remained low at just 18.1% in 2023, with only a slight 4.1 percentage-point improvement over the past nine years.

Table 4.12: Proportion of secondary schools offering basic services, by types of services (%), 2015-2023

	2015 (Base)	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2025 (T)	2030 (T)
Electricity	86.03	88.82	89.93	90.11	93.25	95.96	98.39	98.51	98.65	100	100
Access to internet for pedagogical purposes	26.49	29.24	34.56	35.21	37.64	47.50	52.21	53.32	56.09	100	100
Access to computers for pedagogical purposes	82.00	84.00	85.88	86.23	76.72	76.85	76.87	77.76	59.39	100	100
Access to adapted infrastructure and materials for students with disabilities/ Ramp	14.00	16.16	17.38	18.03	18.48	18.76	18.76	19.04	18.11	80	100
Access to basic drinking water	-	-	96.61	97.05	97.07	97.48	97.48	97.69	97.13	100	100
Single-sex basic sanitation facilities	-	-	95.55	95.88	95.93	96.59	96.62	97.34	95.20	70	100
Basic hand washing facilities	-	-	19.68	20.25	28.66	54.90	88.08	91.03	90.38	100	100

Source: Bangladesh Education Statistics (BES), 2023.

Note: BES data partially includes School, College, Madrasah, TVET & Voc. independent & English Medium.

Indicator 4.b.1 Volume of official development assistance flows for scholarships by sector and type of study

In Bangladesh, the volume of development assistance flows for scholarships has been steadily declining since 2014, dropping from USD 9.4 million to USD 7.6 million in 2017—a decrease of 19.15%. Compared to the base year of 2015, when the figure stood at USD 8.8 million, this marks a 13.63% decline (Table 4.13). This downward trend falls significantly short of the SDG target of reaching USD 20 million by 2025 and USD 25 million by 2030.

Table 4.13: Volume of official development assistance flows for scholarships (million USD), 2014-2017

2014	2015 (Base)	2016	2017
9.35	8.76	7.60	7.60

Source: Economic Relations Division (ERD)

Indicator 4.c.1 Proportion of teachers with the minimum required qualifications, by education level: (a) pre-primary education; (b) primary education; (c) lower secondary education; and (d) upper secondary education who have received at least the minimum organised teacher training (e.g. pedagogical training) pre-service or in-service required for teaching at the relevant level in a given country, by sex

The situation is especially difficult in Bangladesh at the lower and upper secondary levels, where, according to the BES 2023, just 62–63% of teachers fulfilled the requirements in 2023 (Table 4.14). Only 3.1 percentage points have been added to the share of qualified lower-

secondary teachers during 2015 to 2023, compared to an 18-point rise for upper-secondary teachers. Between 2019 and 2020, the proportion of qualified teachers at the elementary level increased by 7 percentage points, to over 80%.

Table 4.14: Proportion of teachers with the minimum required qualifications, by education level (%), by sex, 2015-2023

Education level and gender		2015 (Base)	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2025 (T)	2030 (T)
Lower secondary (%)	Total	59.73	61.68	68.68	61.56	62.01	62.17	62.71	62.76	62.83	85	100
	Male		58.54*	69.90	60.93	60.65	61.55	62.19	62.28	62.37		
	Female			67.61	63.24	63.78	63.80	64.14	64.22	64.31		
Upper secondary (%)	Total	44.10	48.54	58.54	58.95	59.01	61.33	61.93	61.95	62.01	80	100
	Male			55.79	56.12	56.90	57.48	58.05	58.18	58.23		
	Female			71.54	72.00	72.56	72.69	73.43	73.52	73.56		
Primary (%)	Total	73				80.1	80.1		73.60*	77.26*	100	100

Source: BES, 2015 - 2023; UNESCO, UIS, UNESCO (primary - 2022* and 2023*), APSC.
Note: Lower Secondary 6-8 grades, and Upper Secondary 9-12 grades, (Includes school, madrasah, colleges, Tec & Voc. And English Medium). T represents Target values.

4.4. Key Policies and Strategies to Achieve SDG 4

Bangladesh has made steps towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) by increasing access to education at all levels. With an emphasis on minimising differences between urban, rural, and socioeconomic classes, the 8th Five-Year Plan emphasises equity in education. In order to provide access to high-quality education, the plan integrates technology, fortifies governance, and stimulates private investment by placing a strong emphasis on skill development, technical education, and higher education quality.

In order to promote gender equality and assist students with disabilities, efforts to increase educational access have focused on underprivileged populations, including girls, low-income families, and rural communities. 3.4 million pupils nationwide are enrolled in pre-primary education, and 3,214 government schools have launched experimental initiatives to increase early childhood education (APSC, 2023). With dropout rates sharply decreasing—from 20.4% in 2015 to 13.15% in 2023—primary education has reached a net enrolment rate of 98%. Dropout rates in secondary school have also decreased, indicating increased access and retention (BANBEIS, 2022).

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2010's mandate to extend free primary education to Grade 8 is a revolutionary move. The extension of elementary education from Grades 5 to 8 through trial projects in hundreds of government schools has advanced universal access. Over 21 million children have benefited directly from comprehensive programs under the Fourth Primary Education Development Program (PEDP-4), and millions of families nationwide have benefited indirectly (APSC, 2023). Additionally, secondary education's gross enrolment ratio increased to 74.81%, with net enrolment at 73.20%, attaining gender parity and a rising emphasis on lowering the proportion of children who are not in school (BES, 2023).

Pre-primary education initiatives have been pivotal. The introduction of a two-year pre-primary curriculum in 2023, piloted in 3,000 schools, aligns with SDG 4.2, focusing on early

childhood development (APSC, 2023). Literacy and numeracy initiatives have further bolstered foundational skills, with youth literacy rates (ages 15–24) standing at 96% in 2023. Since 2023, new curriculum that prioritise fundamental skills have been in place, improving the standard of education at the basic and secondary levels (UNICEF, 2024).

Along with changes to teacher training curricula, the Secondary Education Development Program's (SEDP) capacity-building and teacher training initiatives have guaranteed the hiring of competent educators (GED, 2023). Global citizenship education is being incorporated into curriculum updates at the same time as facilities are becoming more sensitive to gender and disability issues. Notably, monies from global education funds have made it possible to implement creative initiatives like ability-based accelerated learning for children who are not enrolled in school (UNICEF, 2023).

Financial aid for students has also been given top priority by the government. Due to the reduction of financial obstacles brought about by stipend programs and free textbook distribution, textbook access is now almost ubiquitous (APSC, 2023). ICT education has been included into all subject areas, including Madrasa education, in order to get students ready for the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Schools now have the technology they need to promote digital literacy thanks to ICT Learning Centres and multimedia classrooms (GED, 2023).

With upgrades to classrooms and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) facilities, infrastructure development continues to be a top priority, helping millions of children. In order to improve vocational training possibilities, particularly for women, the Technical and Madrasah Education Division (TMED) is working to develop technical schools and polytechnic institutes throughout the nation (GED, 2022). Programs that are gender-sensitive, like the Adolescent Girls' Program, address issues like managing menstruation health and advance gender-equitable education (UNICEF, 2023).

Additionally, the national curriculum now includes mental health literacy, which supports secondary school instructors' and students' psychosocial wellbeing. Additionally, programs such as the She Power Project have strengthened economic inclusion and job participation by empowering women through ICT training and freelance opportunities (UNICEF, 2023).

Bangladesh continues to show its dedication to attaining SDG 4, promoting fairness, diversity, and high-quality education while equipping its people for a world that is changing quickly, through these concerted policies and initiatives.

Box 4.1: United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI) in some of the E-9 countries including Bangladesh

The Ending Gender Stereotypes in Classrooms (EGSC) initiative by UNGEI showed how education can challenge and dismantle gender stereotypes. Using a curriculum that blends play and reflection, the program encouraged children to question traditional gender norms. It reached 7,364 students, with 45% being girls, in India, Bangladesh, and Niger, supported by 391 teachers. In addition, 555 school management committee members and 11,081 parents and community members were engaged. In India, the program led to an 81-percentage-point increase among girls and 78 percentage points among boys in associating "gentle" with both genders. In Bangladesh, girls and boys showed a 62- and 61-percentage-point rise, respectively, in recognizing gender stereotypes. A co-published learning brief, *Ending Gender Stereotypes in Schools: Good Practices, Experiences, and Lessons Learned*, highlights how gender-focused education can shift attitudes and behaviors. A

related study in Sierra Leone further found that positive role models were more effective than traditional campaigns in changing deeply rooted gender beliefs.

Source: Global Annual Results Report, UNICEF, 2023.

4.5. Major Challenges

Bangladesh continues to face significant learning disparities based on region, school type, and geography, posing a critical barrier to achieving the SDGs by 2030.

Substandard Foundational Skills: A large number of students in Grades 3 and 5 still struggle to meet grade-level competencies in core subjects like Bangla and Mathematics. As of 2022, only 50-51% of Grade 5 students could meet Bangla reading targets, while just 30% in Grade 5 and 39% in Grade 3 met the required mathematics proficiency according to the findings from indicator 4.1.1 (DPE, 2022). These rates fall far behind the 2030 targets, signaling a slow rate of improvement. Alarmingly, over one-third of children aged 7-14 are unable to read basic words, and 51% lack fundamental reading skills (UNICEF, 2022). Numeracy is similarly problematic, with over one-third of children unable to perform basic number tasks and two-thirds failing pattern recognition tasks.

Low Functional Literacy and Numeracy Among Youth and Adults: According to Literacy Assessment Survey (LAS) (BBS, 2023), around 37% of the population aged 11-45 remain functionally illiterate indicating to a poor status of indicator 4.6.1. Additionally, only 42% of Grade 6 students and 65% of Grade 10 students have numeracy skills expected for Grade 3 as per Bangladesh Education Fact Sheets (UNICEF, 2020). These deficits are compounded by a widening gap in literacy and numeracy skills across all educational levels, with primary school students performing significantly worse in mathematics and Bangla assessments compared to their peers in earlier grades.

Low Participation in Organized Learning: As of 2023, only 57% of children aged 4-5 participated in organized pre-primary education, well below the 90% target for 2025 and 100% for 2030 (APSC, 2023). This gap undermines efforts to achieve SDG 4.2.2, particularly the objective of universal access to quality early childhood education.

Youth and Adult Education Deficits: In 2023, just 13% of youth and adults aged 15-64 received formal or non-formal education and training, a slight increase from 12% in 2021. This remains insufficient for meeting indicator 4.3.1, highlighting a significant gap in skill development for the working-age population.

Insufficient ICT Skills: Only 1-20% of youth and adults in Bangladesh possess medium to advanced ICT skills (National ICT Survey, 2022), including tasks such as basic spreadsheet functions, device connectivity, and programming (MICS, 2019) implying a major challenge to meet the indicator 4.4.1 targets. The gender disparity in ICT skills is particularly stark, with only 1.4% of females engaging in essential computer activities. The digital divide further exacerbates inequalities, with significant disparities in internet access between the richest and poorest households (MICS, BBS, 2019). This gap prevents equal access to digital learning opportunities.

Increased Inequality Due to Technology: The digital divide reinforces existing inequalities, particularly in access to quality digital learning resources. Despite improvements, internet

access remains unequally distributed, with 62% of households lacking home internet access (Global Education Monitoring Report, UNESCO, 2023), reveals the findings from the indicator 4.4.1. The high cost of technology further compounds the gap, disadvantaging lower-income families and exacerbating educational disparities, particularly in rural and remote areas.

Inadequate Facilities for Students with Disabilities: While 47% of primary schools had adapted infrastructure for students with disabilities in 2023, only 18% of secondary schools provided such facilities (APSC 2023), which hiders a specific target of indicator 4.a.1. This points to an urgent need for improved infrastructure to ensure inclusive education for students with special needs.

Low Volume of Development Assistance for Scholarships: Despite the target of USD 25 million in official development assistance for scholarships by 2030, the figure remained low at USD 7.6 million in 2017 (ERD). This declining trend poses a significant challenge in meeting the SDG 4.b.1 target for expanding educational opportunities.

Gaps in Education for Sustainable Development (ESD): Despite various initiatives, significant gaps remain in integrating climate change education into ESD affecting indicator 4.7.1. There is limited funding for climate change education, a lack of focus on certain vulnerable groups like youth, women, and persons with disabilities, and insufficient emphasis on the values domain of ESD.

Teacher Training Deficiencies: A World Bank assessment in 2020 revealed that teacher training in Bangladesh remains inadequate, especially for pre-primary education (Mid-term Implementation Review of the 8FYP, GED, 2023). This deficiency impacts almost all the indicators, especially 4.c.1, 4.1.1, 4.2.1, 4.2.2, etc. Despite some improvements, the training modules have not evolved significantly in the past decade, limiting the effectiveness of classroom teaching and assessments.

Insufficient Education Financing: Although the education budget increased by 7.42% in FY 2024-2025, Bangladesh's education expenditure as a percentage of GDP remains low at 1.7%, one of the lowest among LDCs. This shortfall in funding limits the government's ability to address skill gaps and improve educational infrastructure impacting indicators, such as 4.4.1, 4.7.1, 4.a.1, 4.b.1 and 4.c.1 as the country moves towards graduation from LDC status.

4.6. Recommendations for Future Action

Despite the efforts to achieve SDG 4, several challenges persist, creating opportunities for action and improvement. The following recommendations are proposed to address these gaps:

Focus on Early Childhood Development and Learning Participation: Strengthening early childhood programs is crucial. Introducing play-based pedagogy and cognitive development initiatives can ensure that all children under five are developmentally on track by 2030 (indicator 4.2.1). Parenting education is vital to improve children's literacy, numeracy, and social skills. In rural Bangladesh, strengthening public health interventions is essential to enhance Early Childhood Development (ECD) programs, particularly those focusing on child

health ECDI domains are fundamental to building a solid learning foundation for children aged 36-59 months.

Improve Primary Education in Reading and Math: With significant portions of students in Grades 3 and 5 not meeting their grade-level competencies, effective learning methods are essential to achieve the indicator 4.1.1. Simple teaching techniques, such as emphasizing object classification and numerical relationships, can help children better grasp fundamental concepts like "more than" and "less than". Teachers and parents should foster interactive learning environments to promote a love for learning, thereby enhancing reading and numeracy skills.

Increase Youth and Adult Participation in Education and Training: Tertiary education participation remains low at 18%, and adult education even lower at 13%. To address this, resource allocation in non-formal education should be increased, with updated learning materials and technology to support literacy and numeracy. Aligning curricula with labour market demands is also necessary to better equip young job seekers. This will not only improve participation but also retention improving the status of indicator 4.3.1.

Invest in ICT Skills and Bridge the Digital Divide: Expanding ICT access, particularly in rural areas, is crucial to preparing Bangladesh for the challenges of the 4th Industrial Revolution. Digital inclusion can empower the poor, enhancing employability through market-linked skills training positively impacting indicator 4.4.1. Special focus should be given to closing the gender gap in ICT access. Adequate investment is required to ensure the effective use of technology while safeguarding privacy, safety, and equality.

Equip Schools with Ramp Facilities: As part of the National Priority Targets (NPT), equipping schools—especially at the secondary level—with ramp facilities should be a top priority. This will ensure safer, more inclusive learning environments for all students and improve the status of indicator 4.a.1.

Mobilize Financing for Scholarships: To increase development assistance for scholarships, Bangladesh must explore diverse financing sources, such as international development finance institutions, private markets, and official support (United Nations, 2024)[18]. Strategic alignment of financing efforts will help address the country's scholarship funding shortfall and help Bangladesh reach target of indicator 4.b.1.

Strengthen Education for Sustainable Development (ESD): Although ESD is present in formal education through environmental subjects, there is an urgent need to embed sustainability principles more comprehensively across curricula to achieve indicator 4.7.1 target. Investments in teacher training on climate change and sustainability should be prioritized, particularly focusing on vulnerable groups such as youth, women, refugees, and persons with disabilities.

Recruit More Qualified Teachers: To meet SDG targets in all education levels under indicators 4.1.1, 4.2.1, 4.2.2, and 4.c.1, Bangladesh should increase teacher recruitment, especially to achieve Universal Secondary Education. Maintaining a reasonable pupil-teacher ratio, ideally not exceeding 25:1 (APSC 2023; UNESCO, 2016) is also critical for ensuring

[18] UN. (2024). Bridging the financing gap to achieve SDGs requires mobilization of various financing sources.

quality education. Increasing the recruitment rate of qualified teacher can help meet the demands for quality education.

Enhance Teacher Training and Capacity Building: Teacher quality is a key factor of educational outcomes. Strengthening training modules and offering continuous professional development through workshops and seminars, with rigorous monitoring and evaluation, is essential to improve teaching standards (indicator 4.c.1).

Increase Education Financing: Achieving SDG 4 requires prioritizing education funding. This includes ensuring free, mandatory education, hiring more teachers, upgrading infrastructure, and embracing digital advancements. Despite efforts, low- and lower-middle-income countries face a funding gap of USD 97 billion annually according to the Sustainable Development Goals Report 2023 (UN, 2023). Mobilizing sufficient resources is critical to meet the challenges for all indicators.

4.7. Summary

Near-universal primary school enrolment and gender parity at the primary and secondary levels have been attained by the country. Government programs like the Secondary Education Sector Investment Program (SESIP) and the Primary Education Stipend Program (PESP) have also improved learning results and decreased dropout rates. But problems still exist, especially when it comes to improving the quality of education. Student learning is nevertheless hampered by problems including outdated curricula, crowded classrooms, and inadequate teacher preparation. To guarantee inclusivity, technical and vocational education and training (TVET) must be strengthened. Additionally, children with special needs must be adequately accommodated.

To address these gaps, the government should prioritize updating curricula, providing advanced teacher training, improving school infrastructure—especially with ramp facilities—and expanding digital learning opportunities to bridge gaps in technology access across income groups and genders. While digital access in schools has significantly increased, the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted urban-rural disparities in technology access. Pre-primary education programs are also expanding, especially in rural areas, but funding remains a challenge for their long-term sustainability.

Despite these advancements, Bangladesh still faces issues with equitable access, digital infrastructure, and teacher quality. Overcoming these hurdles is crucial to achieving SDG 4 by 2030. A strategic focus on rural education, digital literacy, and teacher training is essential to equip youth and adults with the skills needed to thrive in an increasingly digital world. Ultimately, achieving SDG 4 will require a collaborative approach, drawing on both domestic and international support.

5 GENDER EQUALITY

SDG 5: Gender Equality

5.1. Background

Gender equality is at the core of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and achieving holistic economic, social, and environmental development. Although integrated into other goals, especially poverty alleviation (SDG 1), quality education (SDG 4), decent work (SDG 8), and health (SDG 3), the United Nations (UN) set SDG 5 as a distinct goal to address rather specific deep-rooted cultural and systematic binding constraints that perpetuate gender-based inequalities, requiring targeted interventions.

Because of the long-standing patriarchal nature of the societal structure, which normalises women's subordination and frequently encourages violence against them, women have historically faced disadvantages. According to WHO estimates from 2021, one in three women experience abuse from their spouses or non-partners, and the majority of them decide not to disclose it primarily out of fear of societal disapproval. Compared to their male colleagues, they nevertheless face obstacles on other fronts that prevent them from realising their full economic and social potential. Around the world, women are still disproportionately responsible for unpaid care and household labour. Women have historically held a disproportionate number of low-skilled, low-paying, and informal employment. Despite occupying almost 40% of the labour force, women are highly underrepresented in managerial and leadership positions. In the backdrop of this progress, the UN has forecasted that by 2050, only 28 in every 100 managerial positions will be held by women.

To overcome the historic injustice and marginalisation of women, positive discrimination, sometimes in the form of quotas or cash transfers, is often imperative to create economic opportunities to improve their political and economic participation.

5.2. Global and Regional Context

As per the UN SDG Report 2024, the global statistics related to gender equality are grim and non-aligned with the targeted timeline of 2030. Even today, 1 in every 5 girls on average is married off before reaching the age of 18, contrasted with 1 in every 4 girls married off by the same age 25 years ago, showing a slight improvement over two and a half decades. Over the last 8 years, the practice of FGM has been increasing, with the highest incidence of over 130 million in Africa, 80 million in Asia, and 6 million in the Middle East.

In 2022, women's employment share worldwide was 40%, but they only accounted for about 25.7% of managerial or leadership roles, showing no discernible growth since 2016. It would take an additional 176 years to achieve parity in managerial posts due to the ingrained legal and societal impediments and the current trend.

Women's representation in parliament has increased by 4.6% over the past ten years, from 22.3% in 2015 to 26.9% in January 2024. On average, women spend 2.5 hours more on unpaid care and household labour than men do, with the biggest differences occurring in North Africa and Western Asia, despite rising female labour force participation (FLFP).

During the five years between 2019 and 2023, only 56 good legislation reforms supporting gender equality have occurred in 120 nations; the majority of them have dealt with economic equality, while the remaining ones have addressed gender-based violence. In general, women with disabilities are disproportionately vulnerable to physical violence at the hands of their partners compared to other women. 56% of women aged 15–49 years in 69 countries can make their own sexual and reproductive health choices, with regional advances noted, however, declines observed in Western and Central Africa.

Bangladesh has fared better than its South Asian neighbours, including Nepal, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Bhutan, India, and Pakistan, in achieving gender parity, with a higher overall ranking of 99 and a score of 0.689.[19] However, as the performance depicted in Table 5. 1 suggests, special efforts need to be concentrated in certain areas.

Table 5.1: Global Gender Gap Index

	Bangladesh	Nepal	Sri Lanka	Maldives	Bhutan	India	Pakistan
Ranking	99	117	122	132	124	129	146
Score	0.689	0.664	0.653	0.633	0.651	0.641	0.57

Source: World Economic Forum, Gender Gap Report 2024

Although Bangladesh with a score of 0.94 is ahead of Nepal and Pakistan in educational gender parity, it still trails significantly behind regional leaders like Maldives and Sri Lanka as shown in table 5.2. There is scope for improvement in bridging the gender gap in educational attainment to move up the rankings and achieve greater parity.

Table 5.2: Educational Attainment Gender Gap Index

	Bangladesh	Nepal	Sri Lanka	Maldives	Bhutan	India	Pakistan
Rank	125	130	49	1	113	112	139
Score	0.94	0.923	0.997	1	0.963	0.964	0.836

Source: World Economic Forum, Gender Gap Report 2024

Bangladesh's position in economic participation is alarming, as shown in table 5.3 is alarming, ranking the poorest in South Asia, with an immense gender gap that reflects deeply rooted systemic inequalities, including not just a lack of access but also potentially significant barriers, such as discrimination, inadequate policy implementation, and insufficient support for women in the workforce.

Table 5.3: Economic Participation and Opportunities

	Bangladesh	Nepal	Sri Lanka	Maldives	Bhutan	India	Pakistan
Rank	146	137	127	132	103	142	143
Score	0.311	0.475	0.544	0.514	0.643	0.398	0.36

Source: World Economic Forum, Gender Gap Report 2024

Bangladesh's leadership in political empowerment within South Asia is strong, ranking 7, likely due to women's longstanding presence in top political roles and reserved seats in Parliament. In contrast, countries like Nepal and India show slower progress, while Sri Lanka,

[19] The scores range from 0 to 1, where 1 indicates complete parity (full gender equality) and 0 indicates no parity. For example, a score of 0.68 means that 68% of the gender gap has been closed, while 32% remains to be addressed.

Maldives, Bhutan, and Pakistan have even fewer women in leadership, indicating a wider regional gap in political representation.

Table 5.4: Political Empowerment

	Bangladesh	Nepal	Sri Lanka	Maldives	Bhutan	India	Pakistan
Rank	7	51	123	138	139	65	121
Score	0.543	0.288	0.09	0.055	0.045	0.215	0.122

Source: World Economic Forum, Gender Gap Report 2024

Bangladesh's low rank in health and survival suggests entrenched gender inequalities, with women facing significant barriers to healthcare and well-being. This gap, especially compared to Sri Lanka and Nepal, highlights deficiencies in addressing women's health needs and systemic neglect in ensuring gender parity in health outcomes. It necessitates addressing issues like gender-based discrimination in healthcare access and potential cultural biases affecting women's health outcomes.

Table 5.5: Health and Survival

	Bangladesh	Nepal	Sri Lanka	Maldives	Bhutan	India	Pakistan
Rank	129	82	1	121	122	142	132
Score	0.962	0.969	0.98	0.962	0.962	0.951	0.961

Source: World Economic Forum, Gender Gap Report 2024.

5.3. Assessment of National Progress on SDG 5

5.1.1. Whether or not legal frameworks are in place to promote, enforce, and monitor equality and non-discrimination based on sex

Bangladesh Labour Act 2006 ensures equality for women in the workplace. It requires fully paid maternity leave for 16 weeks (Section 46) while forbidding an employer from dismissing a woman during such a time (Section 50). The Act further prohibits women's employment in unhealthy environments (Section 39) or during night shifts, except with their consent (Section 45). Additionally, the Act requires crèche facilities in any establishment that employs 40 or more women (Section 94) and offers equal pay to maintain gender equality (Section 345), allowing working mothers to combine their obligations to their families and their careers. Additionally, the Act provides for rest periods (Section 100), protects women from harassment in the workplace (Section 332), and allows pregnant and nursing women to work flexible hours due to the unique challenges they confront. The law's dedication to protecting women from exploitation and injury is further demonstrated by the prohibition against forced labour under Section 326 and the compensation payable for workplace injuries under Chapter XII, which reiterates the need for a gender-sensitive labour framework.

The Suppression of Violence Against Women and Children Act (2000) prohibits criminal offenses like rape, sexual harassment, acid attacks, human trafficking, and dowry-related violence with strict penalties for violators.

Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act (2010), an outcome of the CEDAW obligation, takes a comprehensive approach to defining domestic abuse as including physical, psychological, sexual, and economic abuse. It introduced protection orders for victims and

mandated legal aid and shelters. It provides for preventive measures, such as raising awareness and training law enforcement. However, it does not mandate punishment for violent perpetrators.

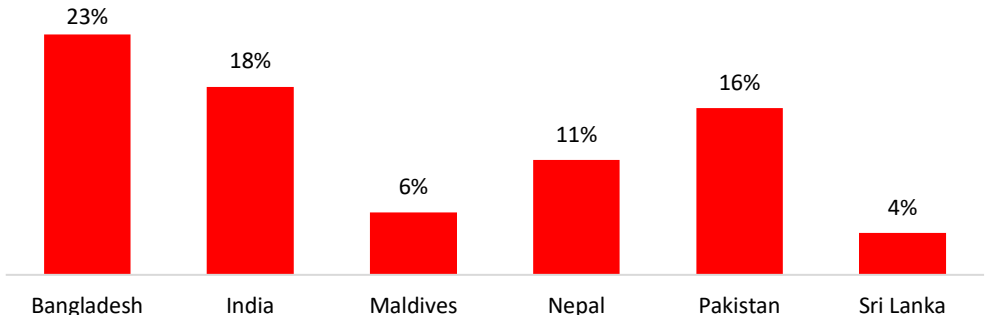
Child Marriage Restraint Act 2017 sets 18 years as the minimum lawful age for marriage for women and 21 years for men, including penalties for those involved in child marriages. Most controversially, it includes a "special circumstances" clause that would permit child marriages under certain conditions with court approval, which is a loophole often misused by perpetrators.

Recently, the two-finger test (TFT), which was widely exercised in rape investigations and used in legal proceedings was abolished in 2018. The test was not only a violation of basic human rights, dignity, and privacy of the rape survivors but also deemed unscientific by medical experts. The legal reform has been a major milestone in the context of Bangladesh in recent times, upholding its commitment to human rights protection.

5.2.1 The proportion of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to physical, sexual, or psychological violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by the form of violence, and by age

As per the WHO data, currently available for this indicator, the proportion of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15–49 years subjected to physical and/or sexual violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months has decreased from almost 70% in 2011 to 23% in 2018. While the decrease has been marked in over a decade, it still is the highest compared to its South Asian neighbours including India (18 %), Pakistan (16 %), Nepal (11 %), Maldives (6 %), and Sri Lanka (4 %). It is in line with the target of reaching 20% by 2025 and subsequently 0% by 2030, however, there are concerns regarding the quality and availability of data.

Figure 5. 1: Proportion of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15–49 years subjected to physical and/or sexual violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months (%) in 2018



Source: WHO

5.2.2 Proportion of women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to sexual violence by persons other than an intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by age and place of occurrence

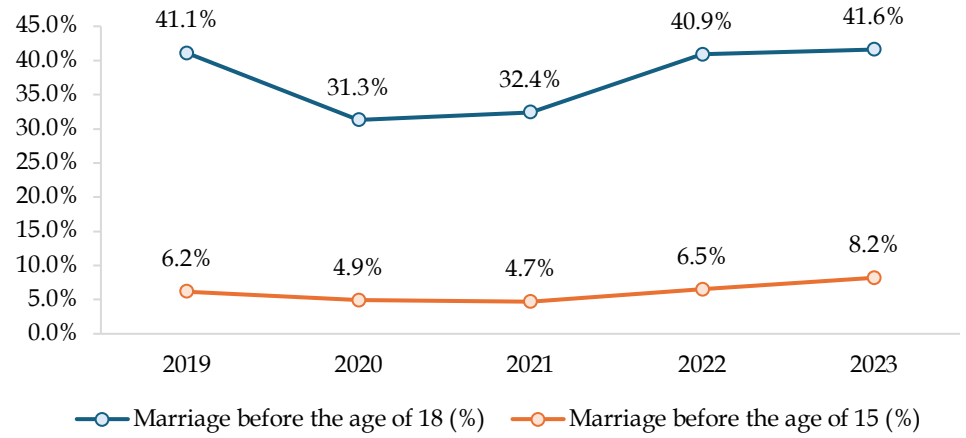
As per the Violence Against Women (VAW) Survey 2011, 1% of surveyed participants, amounting to over 0.32 million women and girls, reported facing sexual violence by a non-

partner in the last 12 months pertaining to the date of the survey. The incidence was the highest amongst the 15-19-year-old group of adolescents, and in rural areas, it was in contrast to urban locations. Although the sample size was much smaller for the VAW survey 2015, it revealed a concerning trend with an increased non-partner sexual violence rate of 2.4 %. Notably, the highest prevalence was reported by the age group 20-24 and in urban locations in contrast to the findings in 2011. The VAW survey has not been conducted after 2015, leaving a gap in national level data availability.

5.3.1. Proportion of women aged 20-24 years who were married or in a union before age 15 and before age 18

The BSVS findings show a concerning upward trend in early marriages in Bangladesh. The proportion of girls and women married off both before the age of 15 and 18 saw a sharp decline between 2019-2020, after which it is only increasing persistently. The hike in early marriage is also related to the COVID-19 shock, when a large number of female students dropped out of school. The prevalence of early marriage is most common amongst households in the lowest quintiles of wealth.

Figure 5.2: Proportion of women aged 20-24 years who were married or in a union before age 15 and before age 18

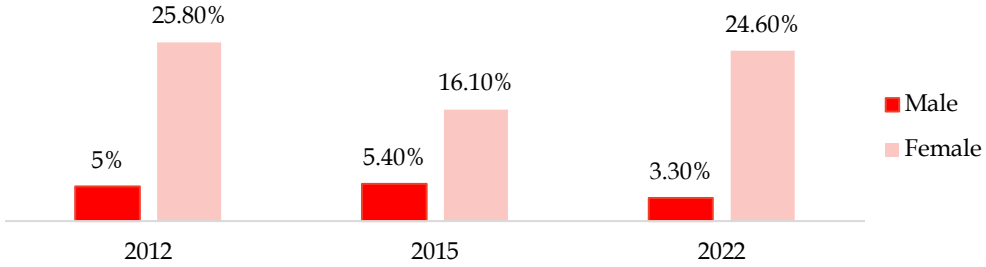


Source: BSVS, 2023.

5.4.1. Proportion of time spent on unpaid domestic and care work, by sex, age, and location

The gender gap in time spent on unpaid domestic and care work is significant, with women persistently having to shoulder disproportionate burdens. Over a decade, the men's share of unpaid work decreased from 5% in 2012 to 3.30% in 2021 (Time Use Survey, 2021), contrasted with women's share which notably declined from 25.8% in 2012 to 16.10% in 2015, but increased to 24.6% in 2021 This upward trend is worrying as it is misaligned with the target to decrease female care burden to 20% and increase male work responsibilities to at least 10% by 2030. Although female labour force participation has increased in the last decade, it is mostly in the agricultural sector as highlighted in the Labour Force Survey 2022. This trend reflects a lack of job opportunities for females and the entrenched socio-cultural barrier that restricts women's mobility.

Figure 5.3: Proportion of time spent on unpaid domestic and care work, by sex



Source: Time Use Survey, BBS;

5.5.1. The proportion of seats held by women in (a) national parliaments

The observed upward trend in the portion of seats held by women in parliament can be mainly attributed to the reserved seats mandated by the Constitution. However, women's rights activists have been persistently raising concerns over the nominations of women with allegiance to the ruling party mostly, which hinders the true objective of women's participation in national politics and inclusive governance.

Table 5.6: Proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments (%)

2014	2018	2023
19.83	20.29	20.86

Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union, World Bank Portal.

5.5.1. The proportion of seats held by women in (b) local government

As per the LGD data, the proportion of seats held by women at the local government level has slightly improved over the years from 23% in 2016 to 23.4% in 2021.

Table 5.7: Proportion of seats held by women in local government

2016	2018	2020	2021
23	25.21	23.3	23.4

Source: LGD

5.5.2. Proportion of women in managerial positions

Despite the increasing female labour force participation, the representation of women in managerial and leadership positions is grim, with the proportion of women in managerial positions falling from 0.6% to about 0.27%, indicating systematic barriers and a glass ceiling for women to reach higher positions.

Table 5.8: Proportion of employed women in managerial positions, aged 15 years or older

2016	2022	2023
0.6	0.3	0.27

Source: Labour Force Survey (LFS 2016, QLFS 2022, LFS 2023)

5.6.1. Proportion of women aged 15-49 years who make their own informed decisions regarding sexual relations, contraceptive use, and reproductive health care

The Demographic Household Survey (DHS) 2022 found that overall, almost 91% of women participate in family planning either alone or jointly. In contrast, the DHS 2018 found that only 63.8% of women between the age of 15-49 were able to make their own decisions regarding contraceptive usage and family planning. While there has been improvement in terms of women's participation in family planning, concerted efforts are still needed to ensure greater awareness and autonomy in informed planning, especially amongst rural and marginalized groups of women.

Figure 5.4: Proportion of women aged 15-49 years who make their own informed decisions regarding sexual relations, contraceptive use, and reproductive health care



Source: The Demographic Household Survey (DHS), 2022.

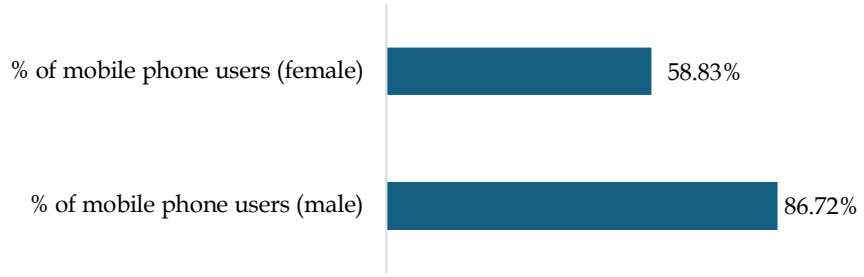
5.6.2 Number of countries with laws and regulations that guarantee full and equal access to women and men aged 15 years and older to sexual and reproductive health care, information and education

Undertaken by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, the laws and regulations aimed to reach a balance between the growing population and the limited resourced of the country so as to achieve sustainable development. Reducing the rate of population growth was one major area of focus of this plan and consequently increasing the usage of family planning methods was a major objective too. Eliminating gender discrimination in access to family planning resources was one specific objective in this regard. To achieve this, programmes such as undertaking programmes to create awareness among men to make them more responsive to the family planning needs of female, arranging educational activities on generating awareness about reproductive health care and family planning methods for men and women, creating opportunities to increase access to family planning method of choice for the females, etc. were undertaken to shorten the gender gap about family planning knowledge and practices in the country while promoting women empowerment in general.

5.b.1. Proportion of individuals who own a mobile telephone, by sex

The Population and Housing Census (2022) revealed a significant mobile gender gap in Bangladesh, where only 58.83% of females use mobile phones compared to 86.72% of males, with the starkest disparity in the Rangpur division where the gap exceeded 38 %age points. Similarly, the data shows gender disparities in terms of internet use, where 28.09% of females contrasted with 46.53% of males use internet services nationwide. This means the benefits of digital transformation is disproportionately distributed with women getting the lower share.

Figure 5.5: %age of mobile phone users by gender

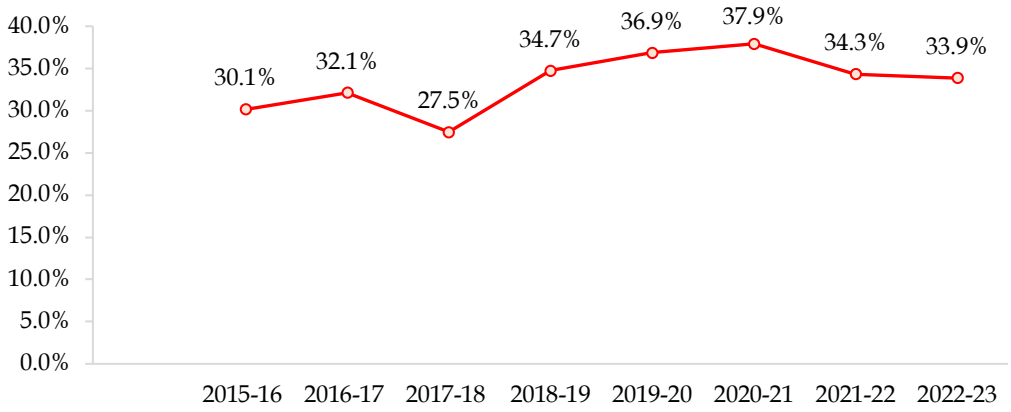


Source: Population and Housing Census (2022)

5.c.1 Proportion of countries with systems to track and make public allocations for gender equality and women's empowerment

Bangladesh's gender budget as a portion of the total budget has fluctuated over time, showing an overall upward trend. Compared to other countries, Bangladesh has stronger gender-sensitive budgeting with over one-third of allocation to ensure equal distribution of public resources.

Figure 5.6: Gender budget as% of Budget



Source: Finance Division

5.4. Key Policies and Strategies to Achieve SDG 5

The Constitution of Bangladesh (1972) serves as the foundation for establishing not just gender equality but also gender equity in all spheres of human life. Article 27 mandates equality before the law, Article 28 (1) restricts all types of discrimination based on sex, caste, race, etc., Article 28 (2) mandates equality of opportunities in every public sphere and most importantly Article 28 (4) lays out the foundation for positive discrimination to address historic inequalities by making special provisions for women and children.

In 1995, Bangladesh ratified the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which was less just another document and more of a firm commitment to advancing women's rights, focused on economic, social, legal, and political empowerment and equal participation in all spheres of life, including education, healthcare, and safety.

Bangladesh ratified the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) 1984, which is a guiding framework for all gender-based state initiatives and has played an instrumental role in national policy formulation. The CEDAW is

a global contract that binds the adopting countries to reform their laws and policies to protect women's rights. However, Bangladesh has not yet removed its reservations on Article 2, which calls for social and cultural changes in the patriarchal system that perpetuates inequalities, and Article 16.1 C, which mandates equal rights in marriage and divorce. Although the reservations contradict the Constitutional provisions, they are legitimised following the Shariah Law. Bangladesh ratified CEDAW in 1984. The provisions of the CEDAW are widely reflected in the national policy documents, including the government's 5-year plans.

The government also adopted the National Women Development Policy (NWDP) 2011, a comprehensive policy framework reflecting the Beijing Declaration and CEDAW. It calls for ensuring the fundamental human rights of all girls and women, including women with disabilities and women belonging to ethnic groups. It takes a comprehensive approach to economically empowering women through proper education, training, and technology access. It extensively prohibits not only any kind of discrimination against women but also any growing harmful social norms. Through integrated efforts with the NGOs, the policy calls for active prevention of gendered abuse on all levels of society. It also calls for up-taking efforts to ensure the appointment of women in 30% of the posts related to policy-making positions in line with the UN Economic and Social Council's recommendations.

The National Social Security Strategy (NSSS) (2015) has committed to ensuring special provisions to support and empower marginalized women by integrating them into the mainstream economy and society. At present, there are 9 different programs under the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs including-- the Mother and Child Benefit Programs (MCBP), Vulnerable Women Benefit (VWB) Programs, Joyeeta Foundation initiatives, *Tottho Apa* for empowering women through ICT, capacity building of the Joyeeta Foundation, promotion of women entrepreneurs for grassroots economic empowerment, the Investment Component for Vulnerable Group Development Programs (ICVGD), and enhancing adaptive capacities of coastal communities, especially women, to cope with climate change-induced salinity, along with the Accelerating Protection for Children (APC) programs.

5.5. Major Challenges

Poor enforcement of the law: Poor enforcement of the law collapses the legal impediment against violence and further subjugates women, hindering the achievement of SDG 5.1.1. Even though Bangladesh has established Acts that are intended to prevent violence against women, loopholes within the laws, along with irregular enforcement and a lack of funding for legal and social support, deny justice to many women. This persistent culture of absolute impunity enjoyed by business class and political elites. The access to justice is undeniably hard for women and girls especially from the marginalized and lower-economic backgrounds.

Victim-blaming Culture: The culture of victim-blaming is widely prevalent in Bangladesh, impeding the SDG 5.2.1. Harmful societal attitudes toward women reinforce discriminatory behaviours and breed a culture of silence regarding gender-based violence, in which women usually fear the process of reporting abuse due to victim-blaming and social ostracization. Support systems are under-resourced, leaving survivors of violence, including rape victims, with limited access to the legal and financial aid required for recovery and rebuilding of lives.

Data Deficiency: The absence of updated data on gender-based violence impedes effective policymaking. To be precise, the last national survey on violence against women was conducted more than a decade ago. These constraints achieving a real picture of the progress made in SDG 5.2.2 and prevents policymakers from comprehensively understanding the extent of the problem and coming up with evidence-based interventions.

Dearth of Childcare Facilities: The lack of accessible, affordable and quality childcare facilities restricts women's labour force participation post motherhood, which is the turning point in most women's career. At present there are only 63 state funded daycare facilities which widely falls short to cater to the needs of all young working women, who are perceived to be the primary caregivers. Additionally, there is very limited enforcement of provisions for daycare facilities in the BLA 2006, constraining the attainment of SDG 5.4.1.

Patriarchal Norms and Discrimination: The role of patriarchal norms and discrimination before entry into the labour market severely constrains women's opportunities which is a binding constraint for achieving gender equality, particularly, SDG 5.4.1. It is because of deep-rooted patriarchal values in Bangladeshi society that discriminatory practices are perpetrated and act on the level of girls' aspirations, pushing girls toward traditional roles of women that surely impede their participation in the labour market and the public sphere.

Limited Social Protection and Legal Support: There is limited social protection and available legal support for the purpose of reporting gender-based abuse. Social protection systems in Bangladesh are inadequate to help women report abuses, and at the same time, there is huge reluctance among them to seek help due to fear of divorce, which is highly stigmatized, and consequently makes them further vulnerable to continued abuse and poverty. This needs to be addressed to attain SDG 5.5.1.

Sexual Harassment: The significant prevalence of sexual harassment impedes women's labour force participation and access to major economic opportunities. As highlighted in the White Paper (2024), women groups shared that the technical and vocational training institutes fail to uphold the practices against gender-based harassment despite existing policies. This growth demands urgent attention to reach SDG 5.5.2 within the given time frame.

5.6. Recommendations for Future Action

Strengthening policies and Enforcing Laws: To ensure the achievement of SDG5.2.1, it is imperative to strengthen the existing mechanisms for preventing gender-based violence and workplace harassment, with the adequate enforcement of Acts such as the Domestic Violence Act and the Suppression of Violence Against Women and Children Act. Given the longstanding issue of victim-marginalization, more resources need to be allocated to public awareness against stigma against abuse, and establishing robust and functional mechanisms of reporting and support services.

For effective, timely and needful policy-making, development of integrated national data-base that systematically collects information on gender-based violence using local and national-level data is essential. The lack of disaggregated data based on age and locality can be addressed through stronger inter-ministerial coordination between government ministries

and agencies, law enforcement departments, healthcare providers, and the civil society organisations.

Providing Social Protection to Stop Child Marriage: For achieving SDG5.3.1, the factors such as poverty and income vulnerability leading to increased child marriage needs to be addressed. Besides, a stricter implementation of the Child Marriage Restraint Act needs to be ensured by the law enforcing authorities. The clause for 'special circumstances', need to be reviewed, leaving no loopholes in the law. Additionally, investment in awareness campaigns need to be increased especially amongst communities with greater tendency for child marriage.

Expanding and Promoting Childcare Facilities: In order to promote female labour force participation and to reduce time spent on unpaid work (SDG 5.4.1), there is a dire need to expand adequate, accessible and affordable childcare services for working mothers. The establishment of additional 60 daycare centres under the Department of Women Affairs should be expedited. Additionally, the enforcement of the crèche facilities in all workplaces with 40 female employees, under the Bangladesh Labour Act 2006 should be enforced adequately through improved monitoring.

Promoting Women's Participation in Politics: The true attainment of the SDG 5.5.1 calls for women's political participation well beyond the reserved seats at the national level. The nomination of women for general seats beyond the reserved quotas need to be encouraged to ensure a more equitable representation in the governance system.

Effective GRS: The establishment of properly functioning grievance redressal systems (GRS) and mechanisms should be prioritized at all institutions to advance the anti-harassment policies, which is essential for achieving SDG 5.5.2. The grievance redressal bodies should form in a way that they are independent and impartial in nature, creating a safe place for victims to report and get justice.

Lowering Digital Gender Divide through Technological Integration: To bridge the digital gender gap and achieve SDG 5.b.1, the initiatives undertaken by MoWCA needs to be expanded. The optimal way to proceed would be to ensure strengthened collaboration with the private sector, providing affordable and accessible training services. Women's technological integration is essential for promoting economic inclusion.

Increasing Reproductive Health Education and Services: To achieve SDG 5.6.1, reproductive health education and services to empower women's decision-making needs to be increased through comprehensive reproductive health education in schools and access to family planning services, particularly in underserved rural communities.

Institutionalizing Comprehensive Gender-responsive Budgeting: The institutionalization of comprehensive gender-responsive budgeting should be strengthened in all ministries as part of SDG 5.c.1 This will ensure their budget proposals respond to structural barriers that confront women, including workplace discrimination, unpaid care work, and unequal access to resources. All the ministries should be mandated to conduct gender audits consistently.

5.7. Summary

The chapter looks at various parameters in terms of progress and setbacks toward gender equality. While the constitutional protections and frameworks like CEDAW and the 8th Five-Year Plan (8FYP) are in place, entrenched gender inequalities persist. Women face significant gaps in economic participation, with only around 7% holding managerial positions and carrying a disproportionate burden of unpaid care. Violence is pervasive, with nearly 23% of women experiencing intimate partner violence, supported neither legally nor socially in most cases.

Bangladesh has done relatively well in the sphere of political empowerment; thus, it is ranked 7th in the world, which shows the consequences of the reservation of seats for women in Parliament. The pandemic worsened challenges, raising child marriage and erasing gains in education. Digital gender gaps are also large, with only 58% of women using mobile phones compared to 87% of men.

Recommendations include gender-responsive budgeting across the line ministries, an effective national database on cases of gender violence, and accessible childcare facilities to enhance female labour-force participation. Together with these reforms, strengthening the rule of law will push Bangladesh closer to the SDG-5 goals by 2030 and create a critical need for momentum with accountability.

6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION

SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation

6.1. Background

The goal of universal clean water and sanitation was incorporated into the 2030 Agenda to address the pressing global need for universal access to clean water and sanitation, by UNGA Resolution 70/1 (2015)[20] Access to safe water and sanitation can help sustain society, the economy, and the environment. The UN Water Conference in 2023 highlighted how effective management of water resources lowers poverty, improves public health, and increases climate resilience. Furthermore, vulnerable groups are disproportionately affected by pollution, scarcity, and poor sanitation infrastructure, according to the UN-Water Synthesis Report for 2022. Rapid urbanisation poses increasing threats to Bangladesh, as it might result in water contamination. This is made worse by droughts and floods that affect business and agriculture.

SDG 6 pertains to fundamental human rights, as stated in UNGA Resolution 64/292 (2010), which acknowledges that access to clean water and proper sanitation are essential components of a standard of living required for health and wellbeing. Accordingly, Bangladesh's progress towards social justice, human rights, and sustainable development in accordance with the UN framework will be greatly aided by achieving SDG 6.

6.2. Global and Regional Context

Over the years between 2015 to 2022, access to drinking water rose considerably from 69% to 73%, despite which 2.2 billion people still lacked safely managed drinking water in 2022. At the same time, sanitation access also showed improvement from 49% to 57%, however, 3.5 billion people lacked sanitation facilities. Despite the increased coverage of basic hygiene from 67% in 2015 to 75% in 2022, 2 billion people still faced inadequate facilities, indicating a significant gap to reach universal access. Based on the current progress rate, it has been estimated that around 2 billion world's population is likely to lack safely managed drinking water, 3 billion are likely to be deprived of safely managed sanitation and 1.4 billion go without basic hygiene facilities. In 2022, half of the world's population faced severe water scarcity for at least a part of the year, while one-fourth faced extremely high-water stress, with Central and Southern Asia facing the highest stress and Northern Africa at critical levels.

In terms of water management and monitoring, vast inequalities between high-income and low-income countries persist. Out of 73 reporting countries, 76% of total wastewater received some level of treatment in 2022, with 42 countries reporting 60% of the wastewater flows receiving at least secondary-level treatment. Compared to low-income countries, high-income countries—including those in Europe—had safer and better wastewater treatment systems. Approximately 58% of home wastewater in 140 countries was safely treated. Only 56% of the 91,000 water bodies evaluated in 2023 had satisfactory water quality, and most of the reported bodies came from wealthy nations. Interestingly, only 101 nations studied rivers, leaving lakes and groundwater mostly unobserved. While there were some advances in the quality of the

[20] UN, 2015. Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 25 September 2015, Seventieth session Agenda items 15 and 116.

water in Europe and portions of North America, South Asia and other places saw far less development, with excessive pollution and untreated effluent causing degradation. The agricultural sector saw the largest increase in water use efficiency over time, improving by 36% between 2015 and 2021. Compared to Central and Southern Asia, highly industrialised countries like Europe, Oceania, and Northern America saw the largest improvements. Between 2015 and 2021, water stress levels rose 3% globally and 12% in Northern Africa and Western Asia, with agriculture accounting for the majority of this stress, followed by industry and services.

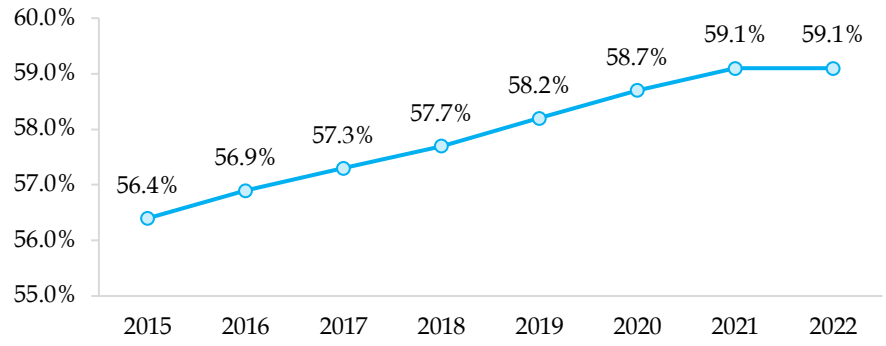
As of 2024, the progress in transboundary agreements is very limited, with only 43 out of 153 countries having transboundary water cooperation agreements. While 16 sub-Saharan African countries are leading in cooperative arrangements, many Asian, Latin American, and North African countries are lagging significantly behind. Due to reservoir filling and climate change, there has been a 2.1% increase in permanent water bodies and loss of permanent water due to droughts in Australia, Latin America, and Central Asia. Integrated water management implementation score increased from 49% in 2017 to 57% in 2023 across various countries, with the best progress in Europe and parts of North America and high-income countries while Central and Southern Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, Oceania, and sub-Saharan Africa are facing major challenges.

6.3. Assessment of National Progress on SDG 6

6.1.1. Proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services

The access to safe drinking water has improved from 68.51% in 2021 to 71.22% in 2023, of which a staggering majority of about 83.70% still have limited access, as per the SRVS data. In 2022, the access was 70.43% in Bangladesh compared to the global average of around 73% of people who had access to safe drinking water as of 2022. Notably, over 50% of people in Bangladesh obtain drinking water through deep tube-wells, with higher reliance seen in rural settings (56.8%) compared to urban (8.22%) settings.[21]

Figure 6. 1: Proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services



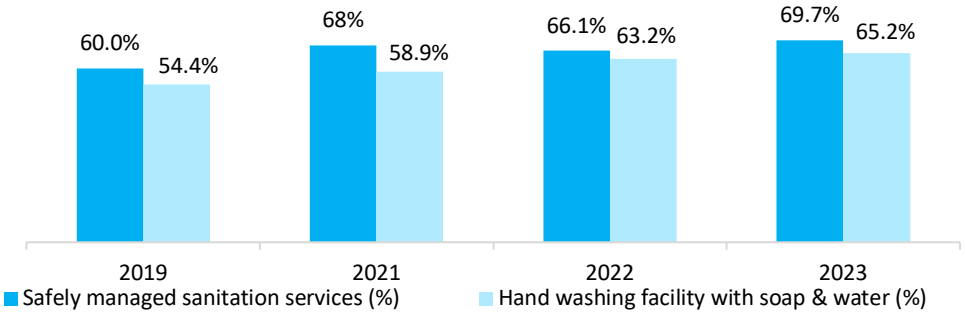
Data Source: WHO, UNICEF, BBS (SRVS)

[21] SRVS 2023, Pg. 25 and high reliance on deep tube wells.

6.2.1. Proportion of population using (a) safely managed sanitation services and (b) a hand-washing facility with soap and water

The portion of people having access to safely managed sanitation facilities improved to 69.7% in 2023 up from 60% in 2019, as per the MICS and SRVS data, indicating that Bangladesh has surpassed the target of covering 60% population by 2025 and is in line with the target of 80% by 2030. However, access to handwashing with soap facilities is limited, with 65.2% of people washing their hands with soap in 2023 up from 54.4% in 2019. According to the Demographic and Health Survey 2022, 61.6% of the population have access to basic sanitation, while only 56.6% have access to handwashing facilities with soap.

Figure 6.2: Proportion of population using safely managed sanitation services, including a handwashing facility with soap and water



Source: SVRS and MICS for 2019. (Note: SVRS 2019 did not report safely managed sanitation.)

6.3.1. Proportion of domestic and industrial wastewater flows safely treated

According to the Environmental Protection Expenditure, Resource & Waste Management (EPER&WM) Survey 2022, the proportion of safely treated wastewater flows showed a stagnant trend, which even reduces a bit from 24.6% in 2018-19 to 24.2% in 2020-21. On the other hand, the Municipal Waste Management Survey Report 2023, which contains information on all the municipalities and *Pouroshavas*, highlights an alarming situation. The proportion of wastewater treated was notably limited, with only 19.61% treated in 2019, followed by 17.65% and 19.05% in the next two subsequent years.

Table 6. 1: Percentage of wastewater flow safely treated

Year	Wastewater generated (in million cubic meter)	Wastewater treated (in million cubic meter)	Percentage of wastewater treated
2018-19	4947.04	1218.17	24.60%
2019-20	4499.46	1067.90	23.73%
2020-21	4851.88	1174.77	24.21%

Source: EPER&WM Survey, 2022.

Note: Household wastewater, as well as wastewater from other small economic activities in rural areas does not effluent through the sewerage piping system, therefore, estimation did not consider wastewater that is generated from rural households or from other type of economic activities does not enter any wastewater treatment plants.

6.4.1. Change in water-use efficiency over time

Bangladesh's water efficiency increased by 9.82% in 2020; however, it decreased to only 5.84% in 2021 (DPHE, LGD). The trend provides insights to give emphasis on responsible use of

water so as not to waste it, and making sure there is enough for all, particularly in water-scarce regions or where it is becoming increasingly difficult to manage.

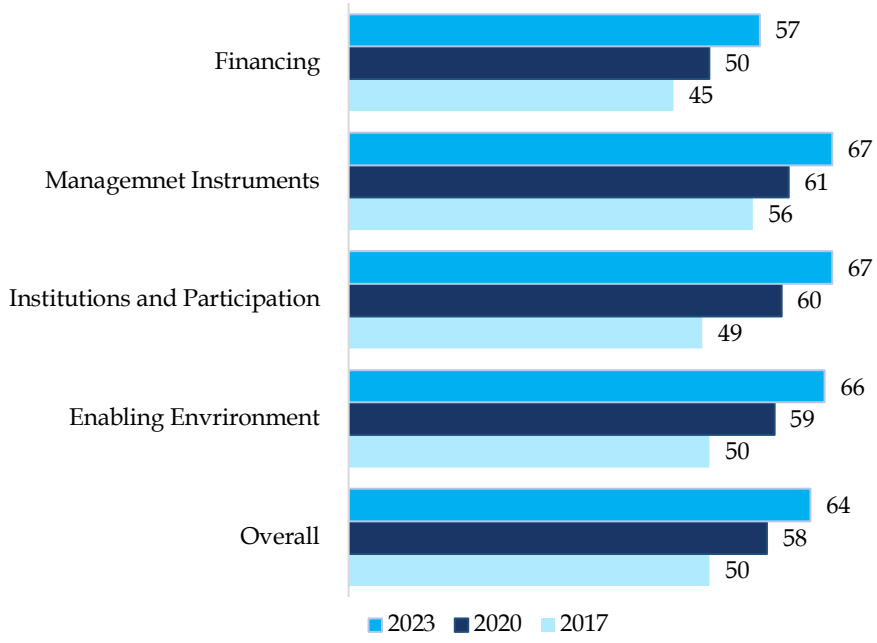
6.4.2. Level of water stress: freshwater withdrawal as a proportion of available freshwater resources

Stress levels below 25% suggest efficient water use, while higher stress levels indicate overuse and potential risk of depletion. According to UN-Water data for 2020-2021, Bangladesh's overall freshwater withdrawal as a proportion of available freshwater resources was 5.72%, which decreased from 6% in 2017. While Bangladesh is in a relatively safe position, it is still distant from its target of reaching 3.5% by 2025.

6.5.1. Degree of integrated water resources management

According to UN-Water, the overall degree of water resource management implementation has improved from 50 in 2017 to 64 in 2023. This takes into account various indicators, including financing, management instruments, institutions and participation, and the enabling environment. Among the different indicators, the highest improvement has taken place in institutions and participation.

Figure 6.3: Degree of integrated water resources management implementation (0-100) in Bangladesh, progress over time, by dimension



Source: UN Water Portal

6.5.2. Proportion of transboundary basin area with an operational arrangement for water cooperation

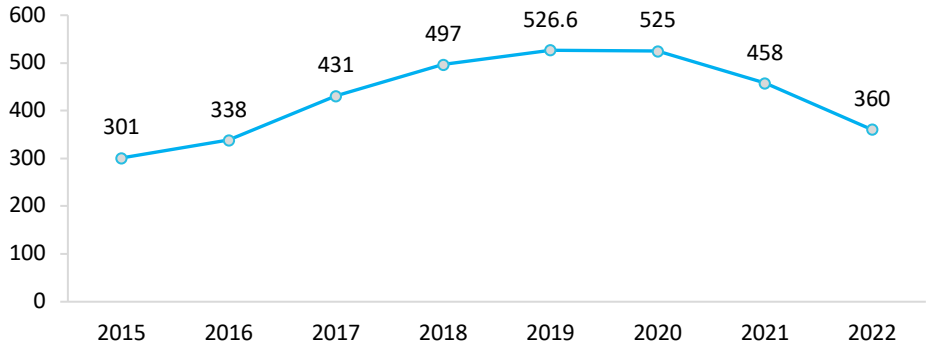
Since 2021, Bangladesh has started reporting its progress on SDG 6.5.2 to the UN as part of its monitoring mechanism, which shows that the proportion of transboundary basin areas with an operational arrangement for water cooperation was only 38% in 2021 in Bangladesh. Despite 90% of the country's surface water flowing from transboundary rivers, its operational

cooperation is very limited. Currently, there is only one operational agreement with India, the Ganges Water Sharing Treaty of 1996. The treaty covers 46,700 km² out of the total 120,400 km² across the Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna (GBM) Basins.

6.a.1. Amount of water- and sanitation-related official development assistance that is part of a government-coordinated spending plan

Over the years, the sanitation-related Official Development Assistance (ODA) showed an upward trend, increasing from USD 301 million in 2015 to almost USD 526.6 million in 2019. However, since 2019 there has been a persistent declining trend in the ODA, indicating diminishing priority for sanitation and water infrastructure development.

Figure 6.4: Amount of water- and sanitation-related official development assistance that is part of a government-coordinated spending plan (million USD)



Source: Economic Relations Division (ERD)

6.b.1. Proportion of local administrative units with established and operational policies and procedures for participation of local communities in water and sanitation management

The proportion of local administrative units with established and operational policies and procedures for the participation of local communities in water and sanitation management remained the same at 95.99% from 2019 to 2021 as per data of the Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE).

6.4. Key Policies and Strategies to Achieve SDG 6

The National Water Policy (NWP) 1990 was developed to address the challenges faced by the densely populated deltaic country prone to climate disasters. It laid a strong foundation for equitable allocation of scarce water resources, pollution control, and conservation. The main focus areas of this policy are equitable distribution of water, management of groundwater, control of pollution, and infrastructure for flood management. This foundational document set the groundwork for later regulations, such as the Bangladesh Water Act 2013, which enforces many of its principles through the regulation of water rights and usage, as well as pollution. It has also influenced the National Strategy for Sanitation, 2005, which emphasizes clean water for public health. Besides, the Ganges Water Sharing Treaty of 1996 is consistent with the policy principles on transboundary management and calls for cooperation in resource sharing with India. Thus, all these put together have formed a coherent framework for meeting the goal of sustainable water and sanitation management under the SDG 6 target.

To ensure effective materialization, NWP 1990 assigned key responsibilities to different institutions. The Water Resources Planning Organization (WARPO) is the central organization for integrated water resources planning and coordination at a sectoral level, with the mandate to guide equitable and sustainable water use. The Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) and local government authority shall undertake water and sanitation projects, particularly at the rural levels. The Ministry of Water Resources (MoWR) has the overall governance and enforcement of policies. The policy allows for inter-ministerial coordination, which shall involve the Environment, Health, Agriculture, and Local Government ministries to attain integrated water resource management across urban, industrial, and agricultural sectors.

The Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100, approved by the National Economic Council (NEC) in 2018, is a long-term water resource management strategy and action plan to translate the SDG6 vision into reality. The intergenerational commitment emphasises water security for future generations. It also advises on project selection criteria focused on adherence to adaptive delta management principles, referring to 80 projects with an approximate investment budget of US$ 37 billion. It assigned the key implementation M&E responsibility to GED, analysing all M&E from all involved agencies.

6.5. Major Challenges

Lack of Sustained Drinking Water Sources: Despite improving access to safely managed drinking water services as indicated by SDG 6.1, a large rural population still lacks sustainable sources. The vast majority heavily relies on deep tube-wells for water extraction, which is vulnerable to changes in rainfall patterns, droughts, and salinity. Additionally, arsenic contamination remains a significant concern**.**

Insufficient Safe Water Waste Treatment Facilities: Safe water waste treatment facilities, including the sewerage and drainage system, remain insufficient and underfunded to accommodate the urban sprawl and growing domestic and industrial wastage. A glaring example of this shortfall is that municipalities treat only 20% of wastewater, leaving the rest untreated and exposing communities to significant contamination risks as indicated by SDG 6.3.

Lack of Sustainable Financing: The capital-intensive sector lacks sustainable financing. This has essentially translated to industries largely dumping untreated water waste directly into the water bodies, polluting them on a large scale. While regulation exists, compliance is low, which can be attributed to the capacity constraints of implementing agencies and the deeply rooted coordination issues among them. Industrial waste and untreated urban wastewater continue to pollute rivers at alarming rates, posing a severe threat to water quality and biodiversity. This makes achieving SDG 6.3.1 increasingly difficult. Without a decisive and unified response, the ecological and economic consequences of river pollution will be devastating.

Decreasing ODA for Water and Sanitation: The declining trend in Official Development Assistance (ODA) for water and sanitation in Bangladesh, as indicated by SDG 6.a.1, has become a concern, especially with LDC graduation approaching. Investments have been constrained by reduced concessional financing and limited domestic resources, while

increasing urbanisation and climate vulnerabilities have placed greater pressure on existing infrastructure. Progress has been further hindered by weak institutional coordination and limited private sector participation, raising concerns about the long-term sustainability of water and sanitation services.

Poor Shared Water Management: As indicated by SDG 6.5.2., Bangladesh fares poorly in terms of shared water management resources. This issue with the neighbouring country, India, remains a significant concern. While Bangladesh shares 54 rivers with its neighbour, only the Ganges Water Sharing Treaty of 1996 governs their use, covering just 38% of these rivers. Over 60% of transboundary waters lack a cooperative framework, leaving Bangladesh vulnerable to seasonal water crises. The unresolved Teesta water-sharing deal exemplifies these challenges, with opposition from West Bengal halting progress. This lack of agreements leads to erratic water flows, affecting agriculture, fisheries, and water security, particularly in the northern regions.

Inefficiency in Water Use and Management: The change in water use efficiency indicator, SDG 6.4.1, takes into account the usage in various sectors, including agriculture, industry, and services. It indicates progress in using water responsibly so as not to waste it and ensure there is enough for all, particularly in water-scarce regions or where it is becoming increasingly difficult to manage. Bangladesh has been performing poorly on this front, indicating the lack of water-efficient technologies adoption, particularly in the water intensive agricultural sector.

Addressing these intertwined challenges requires cohesive policies, strategic investments in infrastructure, and strengthened international cooperation. Only then can sustainably progress in water and sanitation management be achieved.

6.6. Recommendations for Future Action

Bangladesh's journey toward sustainable water and sanitation management requires targeted and actionable steps. The following recommendations highlight priority areas for intervention, emphasizing clarity, efficiency, and long-term impact.

Renovating and Expanding Sanitation Infrastructure: Investments in renovating and expanding sanitation infrastructure and water treatment facilities are critical to reaching SDG 6.2.1. Increasing municipal wastewater treatment capacity and adopting decentralised treatment methods in high-density areas will reduce environmental pollution and minimize health hazards. These upgrades are essential to meet the growing needs of urban and rural populations.

Stricter Enforcement of Environmental Laws: To combat river pollution, stricter enforcement of environmental laws is necessary. Industries must face heavier fines for non-compliance, and all factories should operate with functional Effluent Treatment Plants (ETPs). Advanced monitoring technologies and regular independent audits should be implemented to ensure compliance. Measurable improvements in water quality and ecosystem health must be tracked as indicators of progress toward achieving SDG 6.3.1.

Innovative Water-saving Technology: To ensure continued water usage efficiency, robust investments in innovative water-saving technology need to be incentivized, along with the integration of sustainable industrial practices. Going forward, this will be essential for Bangladesh in preventing water wastage and achieving SDG 6.4.1.

Improved Inter-ministerial Coordination: Improved coordination efforts among key ministries, such as Water Resources, Environment, and Health, along with agencies like WARPO and NRCC, is essential for achieving particularly SDG 6.5.1. Establishing an integrated framework can address policy gaps and conflicts while ensuring clear mandates, adequate funding, and effective enforcement mechanisms. This approach will foster streamlined governance and better regulation across the water sector.

Strengthening Transboundary Water Agreements: Strengthening transboundary water agreements is essential for SDG 6.5.2. Renewed diplomatic efforts to expand water-sharing treaties with India are crucial for managing Bangladesh's shared rivers. Negotiating mutually beneficial agreements, such as resolving the Teesta water-sharing issue, will help stabilize water flows for irrigation, fisheries, and overall water security. Seasonal flooding can also be better managed through coordinated preventive measures, boosting agricultural productivity and regional resilience.

6.7. Summary

This chapter delves into Bangladesh's progress and challenges in achieving SDG 6, which emphasizes universal access to clean water and sanitation. Despite significant advancements in access to drinking water and sanitation, rapid urbanization has outpaced infrastructure development, leaving slums and rural areas struggling with inadequate facilities. Untreated wastewater and industrial discharges severely degrade river ecosystems and pose serious health risks to communities.

Regulatory enforcement is further weakened by governance inefficiencies, which are typified by disjointed policies and inadequate interministerial cooperation. Furthermore, only the Ganges Water Sharing Treaty exists, limiting transboundary water cooperation and leaving the majority of shared rivers unregulated and open to conflict.

Establishing an integrated water governance framework, developing and modernising sanitation infrastructure, negotiating new transboundary water-sharing agreements, and rigorously implementing pollution reduction measures are the main goals of the recommendations made. In order to maintain sustainable water management, enhance public health, and protect Bangladesh's river ecosystems, these problems must be resolved.

7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY

SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy

7.1. Background

A key element of the global sustainable development agenda, SDG 7 was created to address the urgent need for universal access to modern, cheap, and dependable energy. Ensuring access to clean energy is crucial from the perspective of sustainable development because it promotes progress in all spheres—social, economic, and environmental. Reaching this goal might lead to significant reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, which would mitigate climate change, promote green jobs, and improve energy security and resilience. The recognition that energy poverty continues to be a serious reality for millions of people worldwide, impeding their ability to escape the cycle of poverty and take part in economic progress, provides the global motivation for this goal.

SDG 7's implementation in Bangladesh is highly important. With a rapidly growing population and economy, the country's energy needs are growing. Making the transition to sustainable energy sources is crucial to maintaining environmental integrity and economic progress. The creation of this local goal has been driven by important factors such as the desire to increase energy self-sufficiency, dependence on imported fossil fuels, and geographic vulnerability to climate change. The government's commitment to this change is demonstrated by its emphasis on renewable energy initiatives, especially solar power plants.

From the perspective of human rights, SDG 7 ensures that several fundamental components are protected. Access to affordable, clean energy affects health, education, and the ability to maintain a decent standard of living, making it more than just an infrastructure problem but a fundamental human right. Promoting energy availability enables communities to get greater healthcare services, superior educational facilities, and an overall enhanced quality of life. For Bangladesh, the attainment of SDG 7 signifies a more egalitarian society in which energy serves as a catalyst for sustainable development, benefiting all citizens and safeguarding the nation's long-term prosperity.

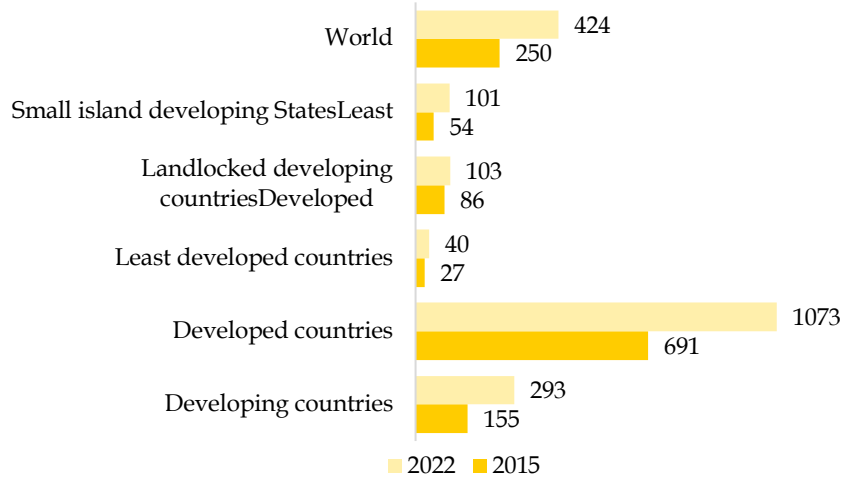
7.2. Global and Regional Context

Worldwide, advancements in attaining Sustainable Development Goal 7 are varied. The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2024 indicates that certain regions have achieved considerable progress, but others are falling behind. Central and Southern Asia, along with Eastern and South-Eastern Asia, have had significant advancements in access to power and clean cooking options. These places have reduced carbon emissions and increased energy security by using renewable energy sources like wind and solar.
On the other hand, Sub-Saharan Africa continues to face significant challenges. Despite some improvements, the area still has the least access to clean cooking facilities and electricity. Attempts to achieve SDG 7 have been hampered by political unrest, financial constraints, and a lack of infrastructure. Western Asia and Northern Africa have also made progress, but more slowly than other regions.

Particularly in the areas of energy efficiency and investments in renewable energy, Latin America and the Caribbean have made great strides. However, disparities still exist within

the region, with some nations making greater progress than others. Oceania has made progress in using renewable energy, although challenges still exist in remote and rural areas. Notwithstanding encouraging developments, the international community must continue to work together to eradicate current inequalities and ensure that no one is left behind in the shift to sustainable energy.

Figure 7. 1: Installed capacity for renewable electricity generation, 2015 and 2022 (watts per capita)



Source: The Global Sustainable Development Goals Report, 2024.

Globally, the per capita capacity for generating electricity from renewable energy sources almost doubled from 250 watts in 2015 to 424 watts in 2022 (Figure 7.1). The last five years witnessed a compound annual growth rate of 8.1%, marking an all-time high. In developing countries, the expansion was significant, with renewable watts per capita increasing from 155 to 293. Developed nations experienced a slower rise, from 691 to 1,073 watts per capita, maintaining 3.7 times more installed capacity compared to developing nations. However, notable disparities persist, particularly for Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs), and small island developing states, which reached 40, 103, and 101 watts per capita respectively in 2022. At the current rate of expansion, LDCs would require almost 41 years, LLDCs 38 years, and small island developing states 11 years to reach the 2022 levels of developing countries. This significant divide underscores the urgent need to bridge gaps and ensure equitable access to sustainable energy.

7.3. Assessment of National Progress on SDG 7

7.1.1. Proportion of population with access to electricity

With nearly all of the population now having access to electricity, Bangladesh has made significant strides towards achieving SDG 7.1.1 (Table 7.1). This noteworthy achievement demonstrates the country's commitment to ensuring that everyone has access to electricity. However, large energy disparities persist. Electricity supply in rural areas is often less reliable and of lower quality than those in urban areas. Despite a high rate of electrification, almost 20% of rural families still frequently lose electricity, which affects their daily lives and financial activities, according to data from the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (SVRS, BBS, 2023).

Table 7.1: Proportion of population with access to electricity (%)

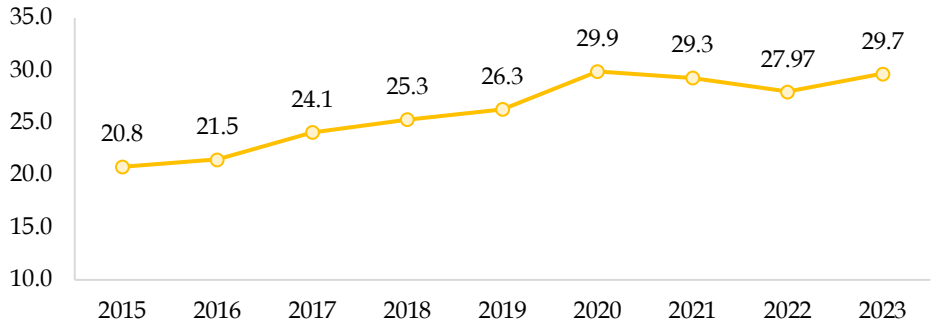
2015 (Base)	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2025 (T)	2030(T)
77.9	81.2	85.3	90.1	93.5	96.2	99.4	99.4	99.5	100	100

Source: Sample Vital Registration System (SVRS) 2023
Note: T represents target values.

7.1.2. Proportion of the population with primary reliance on clean fuels and technology

The proportion of the population that primarily relies on clean fuels and technologies shows a promising trend in terms of clean fuel access. Just under the 30% and 35% targets established for 2025 and 2030, respectively, 29.7% of the population as of 2023 depends mostly on clean fuels and technologies (Figure 7.2). Bangladesh can work towards a future where all of its citizens have equal and reliable access to energy by giving priority to infrastructure improvements and expanding renewable energy initiatives. This would help the country achieve the far-reaching goals of sustainable development.

Figure 7.2: Proportion of population with primary reliance on clean fuels and technology (share in %)

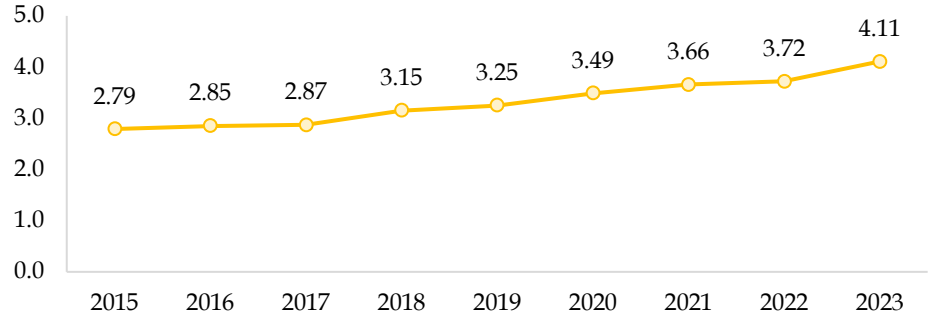


Source: Sample Vital Registration System (SVRS) 2023

7.2.1. Renewable energy share in the total final energy consumption

According to the Sustainable and Renewable Energy Development Authority (SREDA), the proportion of renewable energy in total final energy consumption (TFEC) stood only at 4.11% in 2023 against the newly established target of reaching 15% by 2030 (UN, 2023) (Figure 7.3). During the 2015-2023 period, there has been an increase of 1.32 percentage points only.

Figure 7.3: Renewable Energy Share in Total Final Energy Consumption (%)



Source: SREDA

However, there have been some good efforts to promote renewable energy. For example, the Solar Home System (SHS) program has installed over 4.13 million systems, and provided off-grid electricity to rural communities, showcasing the potential for renewable energy in addressing energy access challenges. Despite all of these, the share of renewable sources in

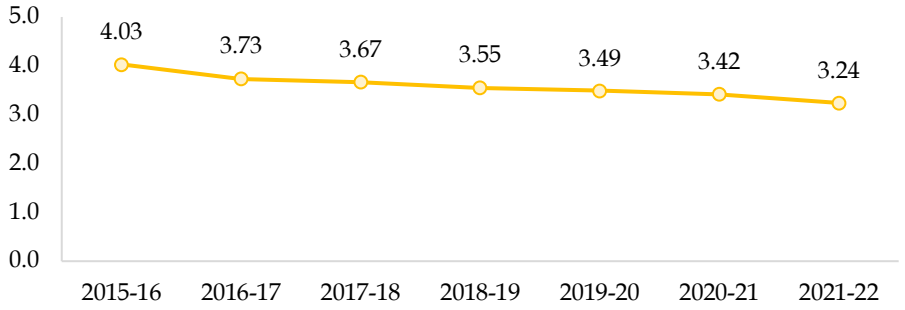
the nation's electricity, underscores the gap between existing efforts and the scale of the challenge.[22]

The potential for renewable energy in Bangladesh is immense. The country has over 20,000 square kilometres of land where wind speeds range from 5.75 to 7.75 meters per second, translating to an estimated wind energy capacity exceeding 30,000 megawatts (Mark et al., 2018). Harnessing this resource could significantly bolster the renewable energy sector.

7.3.1. Energy intensity measured in terms of primary energy and GDP

The national energy intensity is calculated by dividing the primary energy consumption per constant (real) GDP (SREDA, 2018). The country's energy intensity (measured as energy use per unit of GDP) decreased from 4.03 ktoe/BDT billion (kilo ton oil equivalent per BDT billion) in FY 2015-16 to 3.24 ktoe/BDT billion in FY 2021-22 as per the SREDA (at FY 2014-15 constant market prices in BDT). Lower energy intensity means less energy is used to produce a product or service. Thus, this reduction reflects a positive trend towards more efficient energy use, driven by various policies and initiatives aimed at promoting energy efficiency across multiple sectors. Since FY 2015-16, the energy intensity is following a downward trend tending to reach the targets for 2030 (3.13 Mega Joule).

Figure 7.4: Energy intensity measured in terms of primary energy and GDP (ktoe/BDT billion)



Source: Sustainable and Renewable Energy Development Authority (SREDA), 2022.

7.a.1 International financial flows to developing countries in support of clean energy research and development and renewable energy production, including in hybrid systems

Data from ERD shows that international financial flows to Bangladesh in support of clean energy research and development and renewable energy production, including hybrid systems have increased from USD 301.1 million in 2015-16 to USD 496.8 million in 2018-19, an increase of 65.11% (Table 7.2). The targets for 2025 and 2030 are USD 600 million and USD 800 million respectively.

Table 7.2: International financial flows to developing countries in support of clean energy research and development and renewable energy production, including in hybrid systems (USD million)

2015-16	2018-19	2025 (T)	2030 (T)
301	497	600	800

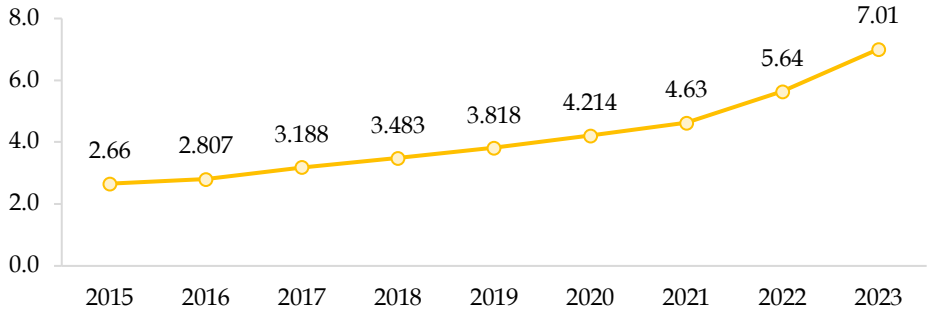
[22] World Economic Forum, 2022. Planet or prosperity: How Bangladesh is navigating a just transition to clean energy.

Source: ERD

7.b.1. Installed renewable energy-generating capacity in developing countries (in watts per capita)

Bangladesh has carried out a number of programs and projects with the goal of enhancing energy efficiency and accessibility. The Rooftop Solar Programs, which attempts to put solar panels on residential and commercial buildings, is one of the initiatives. By 2023, the initiative was supposed to deploy over 600 MW of solar capacity, giving metropolitan regions a backup electricity supply and lessening the burden on the national grid. The installed renewable energy-generating capacity in Bangladesh increased from 2.66 watts per capita in 2015 to 7.01 watts per capita in 2023 (Figure 7.5).

Figure 7.5: Renewable electricity-generating capacity per capita (in watts per capita)



Source: SREDA

7.4. Key Policies and Strategies to Achieve SDG 7

Notwithstanding its age, Bangladesh's 2008 renewable energy strategy is still in effect and is essential to the nation's energy development. The creation of the SREDA is one of this policy's many noteworthy advantages. With the help of partnerships with academic institutions, NGOs, and stakeholders in the public and private sectors, this organisation offers crucial oversight for sustainable energy initiatives. A favourable investment climate is also created by the policy's significant incentives for private investment, which include tax exemptions, renewable energy tariffs, and VAT exemptions on renewable energy equipment. It contributes to national energy security by improving investment opportunities in rural, peri-urban, and urban areas through integration with larger national energy initiatives. In order to provide flexibility in meeting different energy needs, the policy also covers a wide range of renewable energy sources, including biomass, biogas, wind, and solar.

However, there are significant flaws in the policy. Future planning needs more achievable goals, as seen by unrealistic expectations like the unfulfilled promise of utilising 10% renewable energy by 2020. The implementation of renewable energy projects has been hindered by the delayed foundation of SREDA, which may have stalled progress. Rural areas are given priority, although growing renewable energy in these areas is still difficult because of their poor infrastructure and high investment requirements. Furthermore, limiting grid-connected projects to those with a power output of less than 5 MW in order to facilitate licensing may impede the growth of larger-scale projects that would accelerate the adoption of renewable energy. The strategy may be unsustainable due to its strong reliance on

government partnerships, tax incentives, and subsidies, particularly if funding sources or political agendas shift.

Bangladesh's renewable energy industry offers a number of prospects. Through programs like the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), the global carbon market presents an opportunity to draw in foreign investment, which would help solar and biomass projects. Adoption of cutting-edge solutions is made possible by the quick development of renewable energy technology, especially in the fields of wind and solar. The increased emphasis on renewable energy around the world may make it easier for Bangladesh to attract funding and technical support from donor agencies, international organisations, and climate funds. By fostering technical innovation, improving skills, and creating jobs, the focus on rural energy development has the potential to strengthen local economies. By decreasing reliance on imported fossil fuels and lowering the risks associated with unstable international markets, increasing renewable energy can also result in increased energy independence.

However, the strategy also faces significant threats. High initial costs and reliance on imported technologies pose substantial barriers to widespread renewable energy adoption. Political and policy instability could disrupt consistent support for renewable energy initiatives, impeding progress. The current electricity grid may be insufficient to handle the increased renewable energy supply, requiring further investment in grid modernization. Environmental and social risks also exist, particularly for large biomass projects, which must be managed sustainably to avoid degradation and negative impacts on rural communities. Finally, the reliance on subsidies, carbon credits, and public funds raises sustainability concerns, especially if financial management proves challenging or if these funding mechanisms become unreliable.

7.5. Major Challenges

Energy Disparities: Even though almost everyone has access to electricity, there are still large energy differences between urban and rural areas in terms of consistent and reliable electrical supply, which poses a challenge to meet indicator 7.1.1 target. Urban regions benefit from a steady and dependable supply of power because of their excellent infrastructure and significant investments. On the other hand, regular power outages, lower voltage, and a variable supply affect everyday life and business operations in rural areas.

Low Renewable Energy Share in TFEC: Given the findings from indicator 7.2.1 where it shows that we are far from the target of reaching 15% by 2030, and it poses as a major challenge to reach there at the current average rate of growth observed so far.

Lack of Efficiency and Technological Advancements: The industrial sector's persistent struggles with old technologies and wasteful procedures have an impact on energy efficiency impacting indicators 7.b.1. While initiatives for increasing energy efficiency are outlined in the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Master Plan (EECMP), and Integrated Energy and Power Master Plan (IEPMP) 2023, there is still much room for improvement, particularly in rural areas where conventional and inefficient energy sources like kerosene and biomass are common.

7.6. Recommendations for Future Action

Strengthen Policy Frameworks for RE: Implementing more robust and aggressive renewable energy (RE) policies is recommended to ensure smooth electricity supply in rural areas which will help reduce urban-rural disparity in energy use. Ensuring these policies will not onlt support large-scale renewable projects but also small and medium-scale installations, particularly in rural areas. These policy frameworks will ensure meeting the SDG indicators 7.1.1 and 7.2.1.

Robust and Effective Regulatory Measures: Developing clear and streamlined regulations is required to remove bureaucratic hurdles and facilitate quicker project approvals to facilitate reaching indicators 7.2.1, which is the most focal one to achieve at present, and also the impacts all other indicators.

Increase Financial Investments: More domestic and international financial resources should be mobilized to fund renewable energy projects (indicator 7.2.1, 7.b.1, and 7.a.1). Financial incentives such as subsidies, tax breaks, and low-interest loans to encourage the adoption of renewable energy technologies should be provided.

Enhance Technological Adoption: Invest in modernizing the national grid to reduce transmission and distribution losses. Implement smart grid technologies to improve efficiency and reliability. Promote the use of energy-efficient appliances and technologies in both residential and industrial sectors will positively impact 7.1.2 and 7.b.1.

Focus on Rural Electrification: Successful programmes like the Solar Home System (SHS) and mini-grid projects to cover more rural areas should be introduced and expanded to enhance the continuity and extent of rural electrification reaching close to the urban status (indicator 7.1.1). These projects should be equipped with reliable and efficient technologies, and infrastructure in rural areas to ensure consistent and reliable electricity supply, bridging the urban-rural energy divide.

Diversify Energy Sources: Reducing dependence on fossil fuels by accelerating the development of wind, solar, and biomass energy projects will help meet the targets of 7.2.1, along with meeting 7.1.2 and 7.b.1 sooner. In this regard, potential for offshore wind farms and other innovative renewable energy solutions should be explored. Encouraging investments and pilot projects in the identified potential regions are also necessary.

Strengthen PPP and International Cooperation: Engaging in more public-private partnerships (PPPs) to attract investment, and enhancing cooperation with international organizations and developed countries to share best practices, technologies, and financial resources (indicator 7.a.1). Participate in global forums and partnerships focused on sustainable energy to leverage knowledge and support.

7.7. Summary

Bangladesh has made major progress towards providing energy to all, especially in rural areas. Nonetheless, the country has difficulties guaranteeing fair energy distribution and making the switch to renewable energy sources. Although significant strides have been made in improving energy efficiency and growing energy services, the nation has to step up its

efforts to meet sustainable energy targets. Bangladesh can establish itself as a leader in sustainable energy development and help create a more resilient and equitable future by bolstering international cooperation, focussing on rural electrification, increasing financial investments, improving technological adoption, diversifying energy sources, and increasing public awareness.

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth

Background

Sustainable Development Goal 8 (SDG 8) focuses on achieving decent work and sustained economic growth, a cornerstone of the global sustainable development agenda. It underscores the importance of fostering full and productive employment, ensuring fair wages, and providing safe and decent working conditions. By emphasizing these aspects, SDG 8 aims to transform economic growth into meaningful improvements in people's lives.

The goal's global significance is reflected in key indicators such as economic growth rates, unemployment levels, labour productivity, youth not in education, employment, or training (NEET) rates, financial inclusion, and aid for trade. These metrics assess the health of economies and their ability to generate employment. For Bangladesh, which has witnessed significant economic expansion in recent years, these indicators hold particular relevance. However, persistent challenges such as informal employment, wage disparities, gender inequality, and poor working conditions continue to hinder equitable growth and limit the benefits of progress.

Achieving SDG 8 is crucial for fostering social and economic sustainability. It promotes decent work opportunities and fair labour practices, which enhance social cohesion, reduce inequalities, and improve living standards. Economically, SDG 8 drives growth by boosting productivity and encouraging innovation, particularly by supporting small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and entrepreneurship. From a human rights perspective, it safeguards workers' rights and combats exploitative practices, ensuring alignment with international labour standards.

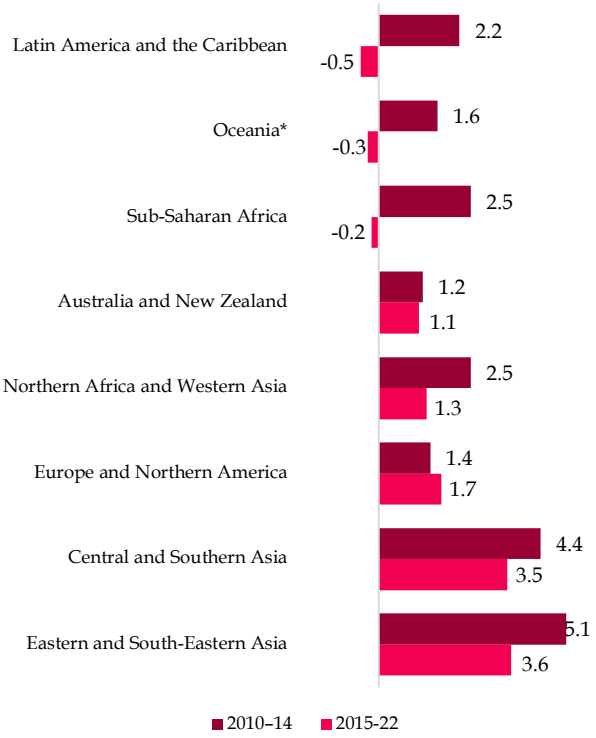
8.2. Global and Regional Context

Global economic progress has faced significant challenges in recent years, marked by the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, rising trade tensions, escalating debt in developing nations, and ongoing geopolitical instability. These factors have collectively disrupted sustainable growth, posing obstacles to achieving targets such as Sustainable Development Goal 8 (SDG 8). While global real GDP per capita saw some recovery in 2021, growth slowed in 2022 and is projected to stabilize at modest levels through 2025.

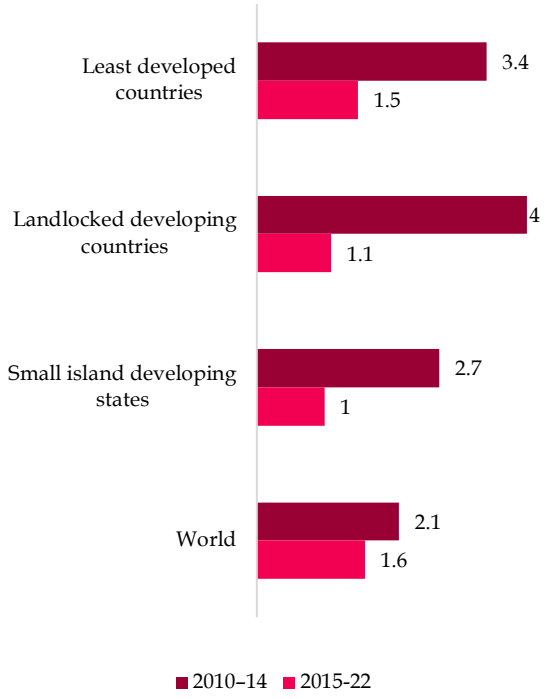
From 2010 to 2014, global real GDP per capita growth averaged 2.1%, but this declined to 1.6% between 2015 and 2022. Regional disparities are stark: Eastern and South-Eastern Asia recorded strong growth, while regions like Latin America, the Caribbean, and least developed countries (LDCs) experienced sharp declines. For example, LDCs saw their growth rate drop from 3.4% to 1.5%, and small island developing states (SIDS) declined from 2.7% to 1%. These trends highlight the uneven distribution of economic recovery, with certain regions lagging significantly.

Figure 8. 1: Average annual growth of real GDP per capita (%)

(a) Average annual growth of real GDP per capita by continent and region (%)



(b) Average annual growth of real GDP per capita by country alliances and the world (%)

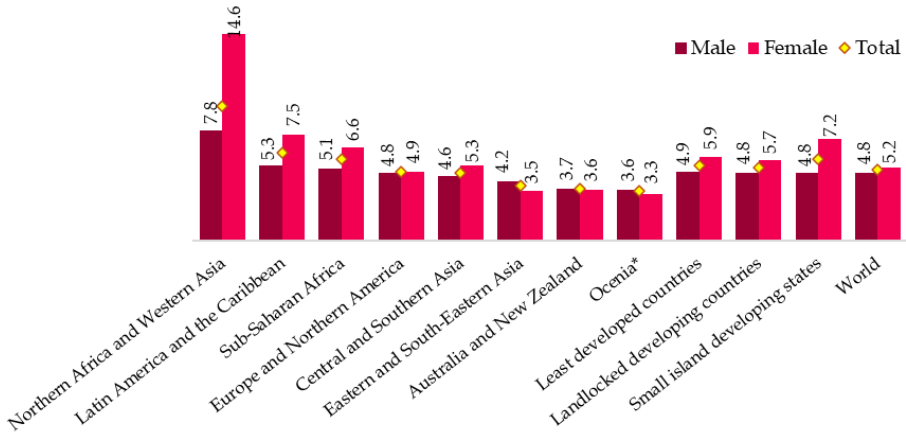


Source: The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2024.
Note: * denotes Australia and New Zealand are not included in Oceania.

NEETs (youth not in school, employment, or training) continue to be a major worldwide concern. The NEET rate in 2023 was 21.7%, which was marginally better than the baseline of 21.8% in 2015 but slightly lower than the 23.8% rate in 2020. Despite a significant decline of 7.5 percentage points from 2005, regions like Northern Africa and Western Asia had the highest NEET rates, at 28.5%, followed by Central and Southern Asia at 27.4%. In Central and Southern Asia, nearly half of young women are categorised as NEET, compared to just 12.3% of young men. This indicates that young women continue to suffer disproportionate problems. In 2023, 269 million young people worldwide were NEET, highlighting the need for focused interventions, especially for young women.

The global unemployment rate reached a record low of 5.0% in 2023, with a slight decline to 4.9% anticipated in 2024. However, this overall improvement masks regional and gender disparities. Northern Africa and Western Asia recorded the highest unemployment rates at 9.5%, while Eastern and South-Eastern Asia also experienced increases. Gender gaps remain stark in many regions; for example, women in Northern Africa and Western Asia face significantly higher unemployment rates than men, whereas Europe and Northern America showed near parity, with female and male unemployment at 4.9% and 4.8%, respectively. Despite the declining global unemployment rate, issues like working poverty and informal employment persist, challenging the achievement of decent work for all.

Figure 8.2: Unemployment rate by sex (%)



Source: The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2024.
Note: * denotes Australia and New Zealand are not included in Oceania.

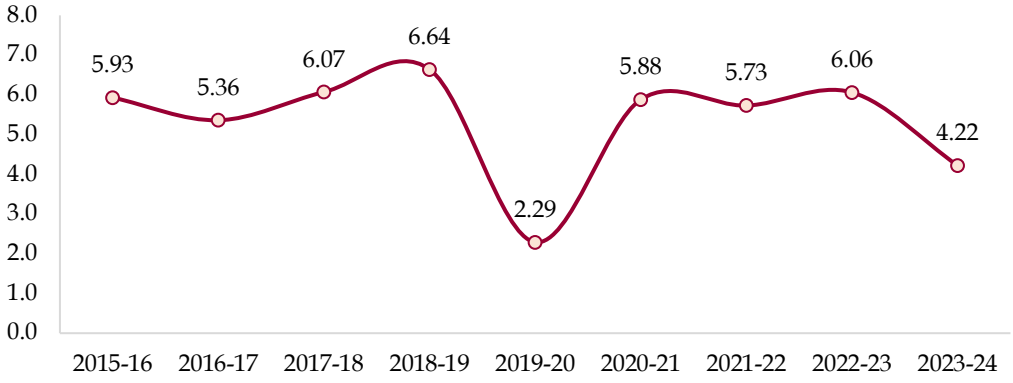
Labour rights compliance has also deteriorated globally[23]. Between 2015 and 2022, the average level of compliance with labour rights, measured on a scale of 0 (highest compliance) to 10 (lowest), worsened from 4.50 to 4.81. Declines were particularly pronounced in Eastern and South-Eastern Asia, Central and Southern Asia, and Latin America. Increasing restrictions on union formation and collective bargaining rights have fueled this downward trend, underscoring the need for stronger protections to uphold labour rights and promote social justice.

8.3. Assessment of National Progress on SDG 8

Indicator 8.1.1. Annual growth rate of real gross domestic product (GDP) per capita

Despite disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, Bangladesh's economy has maintained steady growth. After a temporary slowdown, the annual growth rate of real GDP per capita rebounded to 5.9% in FY2021 (Figure 8.3). Since then, growth has remained stagnant, however, slightly reduced to 4.22% in FY 2023.

Figure 8.3: Growth rate of real GDP per capita (%)



Source: National Account Statistics, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS).

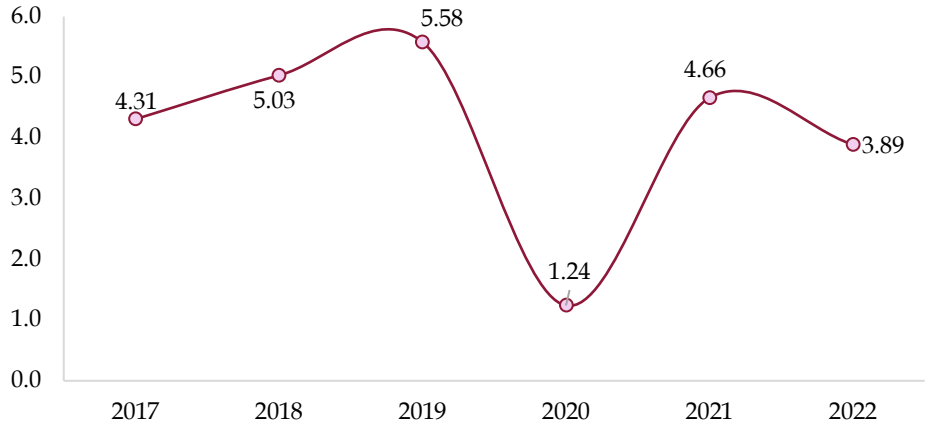
[23] Sustainable Development Goals Report 2024

Indicator 8.2.1. Annual growth rate of real gross domestic product (GDP) per employed person

Real GDP growth per employed person in Bangladesh was 4.31% in 2017 and surged to 5.03% in 2018 and 5.58% in 2019 (Figure 8.4). But because of the COVID-19 pandemic's severe effects on the economy, the rate fell to 1.24% in 2020.

Despite declines in 2020, the growth rate recovered to 4.66% in 2021, reflecting renewed economic momentum, but fell to 3.89 in 2022. To sustain this progress, Bangladesh has set ambitious targets, aiming for growth rates of 5.5% by 2025 and 6.5% by 2030. These goals underline the country's commitment to enhancing labor productivity as a cornerstone of its economic development strategy.

Figure 8.4: Growth rate of real GDP per employed person of Bangladesh (%)



Source: National Accounting Wing, BBS, Statistics and Informatics Division (SID), Ministry of Planning (MoP).

Indicator 8.3.1. Proportion of informal employment in total employment, by sector and sex

As of the Labour Force Survey (LFS) 2023 informal employment constituted 84.1% of the workforce, with notable disparities: 95.7% of women and 77.9% of men were engaged in such jobs (Table 8.1).

Trends indicate gradual progress. Informal employment has declined from 86.2% in 2015–16 and 85.1% in 2016–17 to 84.1% in 2023. Gender dynamics within the informal sector reveal a share of female participation, now at 39.3%, compared to 60.7% for men.

Table 8.1: Share of informal employment by sex and sector (%)

Year	Percent of informal employment in total employment	Percent of informal employment of males and females in the informal sector		Percent of informal employment of males and females relative to their respective total employment	
		Male	Female	Male	Female
2015–16	86.2	67.0	33.0	82.3	95.4
2016–17	85.1	66.9	33.1	82.1	91.8
2022	84.9	59.8	40.2	78.4	96.6
2023	84.1	60.7	39.3	77.9	95.7

Year	Percent of informal employment in agriculture, industry, and services relative to their respective total employment		
	Agriculture	Industry	Service
2015–16	97.9	90	70.6
2016–17	95.4	89.9	71.8
2022	96.8	90.5	67.8
2023	96.9	88.7	67.1

Source: QLFS 2015–16, LFS 2016–17, LFS 2022, LFS 2023, BBS.

The sectoral analysis underscores persistent informality in agriculture, where 96.9% of jobs were informal in 2023, marginally lower than 97.9% in 2015–16. The industry sector showed slight fluctuations, with informal employment rising from 89.9% in 2016–17 to 88.7% in 2023. Meanwhile, the services sector experienced an encouraging decline from 71.8% in 2016–17 to 67.1% in 2023, signalling progress toward formalization.

Indicator 8.5.1. Average hourly earnings of female and male employees, by occupation, age, and persons with disabilities

Noteworthy gender and occupational wage discrepancies are highlighted in the Labour Force Survey (LFS) 2023, which offers a thorough analysis of income differences across occupations in Bangladesh (see Table 8.2). With an average monthly salary of BDT 33,868, managers were at the top of the income chart, while those in elementary vocations made the lowest, BDT 9,301. Between 2016–17 and 2023, certain occupations, such as clerical support workers, craft and related trades workers, and plant and machine operators, and assembler, saw income growth of 35.9%, 19.7%, and 15.5%, respectively. However, earnings stagnated for professionals and technicians, with female professionals experiencing sharp declines of 17.8% and 25.7%, respectively. The overall average monthly income increased by just 4.6% between 2016–17 and 2023.

Table 8.2: Average monthly income (in taka) by occupation and sex

Occupation	Average monthly income in 2023 (in taka)			Percent change in 2023 compared to 2016–17		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Managers	33868	34233	29036	-5.2	-5.3	-10.9
Professionals	21598	22945	18549	-17.8	-15.0	-25.7
Technicians and Associate Professionals	20602	20593	20717	-2.4	-3.2	1.6
Clerical Support Workers	21815	22325	18653	35.9	37.0	25.9
Service and Sales Workers	13209	13469	9927	11.6	12.5	-11.2
Craft and Related Trades Workers	12552	13208	10238	19.7	23.1	3.7
Plant and Machine Operators, and Assembler	13875	14179	9280	15.5	16.6	-17.6
Elementary Occupations	9301	10188	5856	10.8	16.1	-19.7
Other occupations	26856	26946	17986	3.1	2.9	-19.9
Total	13865	14489	10831	4.6	6.7	-11.6

Source: LFS 2016–17, LFS 2023, BBS.

Indicator 8.5.2. Unemployment rate, by sex, age group and persons with disabilities

For the youth aged 15–24, unemployment rose from 10.2% in 2015–16 to 10.97% in 2022 before improving slightly to 8.24% in 2023 (see Table 8.3).

Female unemployment in this age group remained consistently higher than male unemployment, peaking at 16.8% in 2016–17 but declining significantly to 4.72% in 2023. In the 25–34 age group, unemployment displayed gender disparity as well. Total unemployment rose slightly from 5.1% in 2015–16 to 5.7% in 2016–17, with female unemployment at 9% compared to 3.8% for males. By 2023, the overall unemployment rate dropped to 4.57%, with female unemployment experiencing a decline to 4.42%. For the 35–64 age group, unemployment rates remained lower overall, though female rates consistently exceeded male rates in most categories.

Data on the unemployment status of persons with disability is difficult to find in the context of Bangladesh as specific data for this group was not included in the official Labour Force Surveys (LFS) conducted by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics. However, a separate section for persons with disability was introduced in LFS for the first time in 2022. According to the LFS 2023, out of 2.46 million unemployed individuals, 9.07 thousand are persons with disabilities. Of these, 8.18 thousand are males and 0.90 thousand are females.

Table 8.3: Unemployment rate by sex and age group (%)

Age group	QLFS 2015–16			LFS 2016–17			LFS 2022			LFS 2023		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
15–24	10.2	9.2	12.3	12.3	10.1	16.8	10.97	14.3	7.54	8.24	11.53	4.72
25–34	5.1	3.2	8.7	5.7	3.8	9.0	2.88	3.26	2.47	4.57	4.68	4.42
35–44	2.0	0.9	4.2	1.2	0.8	2.1	0.96	0.76	1.55	1.09	0.94	1.48
45–54	1.3	0.9	2.4	0.8	0.8	0.9	0.73	0.60	1.16	0.63	0.64	0.59
55–64	1.0	0.8	1.7	0.6	0.6	0.3	0.59	0.58	0.63	0.53	0.57	0.35
Total unemployment	4.2	3.0	6.8	4.2	3.1	6.7	3.53	3.5	3.59	3.35	3.41	3.23

Source: QLFS 2015–16, LFS 2016–17, LFS 2022, LFS 2023, BBS.

Indicator 8.6.1. Proportion of youth (aged 15–24 years) not in education, employment, or training (NEET)

The NEET rate in Bangladesh decreased by 9.2 percentage points between 2015–16 and 2023, reaching 19.7% in that year. Nonetheless, notable gender discrepancies are concealed by this overall improvement. Due to greater options for education and training, female NEET rates had a sharp decline, falling by 25.6 percentage points. The male NEET rate, on the other hand, increased by 8.0 percentage points, suggesting a concerning trend of disengagement among young males.

Table 8.4: NEET as% of youth 15–24 working age population

QLFS 2015–16	LFS 2016–17	LFS 2022		LFS 2023

Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
28.9	10.0	47.0	26.8	9.2	43.9	23.1	19.7	26.3	19.7	18.0	21.4

Source: QLFS 2015–16, LFS 2016–17, LFS 2022, LFS 2023, BBS.

Indicator 8.7.1. Proportion and number of children aged 5–17 years engaged in child labour, by sex and age

Child labour remains a significant challenge in Bangladesh, affecting the lives of millions of children. According to the National Child Labour Survey (NCLS) 2022, there are 39.96 million children aged 5–17 in the country. Between 2013 and 2022, trends in child labour revealed both progress and setbacks (see Table 8.5). Among boys, the proportion of working children increased from 10.2% to 13.2%, while for girls, it dropped from 7.1% to 4.2%. Similarly, child labour among boys rose modestly from 4.6% to 6.6%, whereas for girls, it decreased from 3.9% to 2.1%. These gendered disparities highlight persistent vulnerabilities among boys in the labour market.

Children aged 14–17 consistently exhibited the highest rates of both working children and child labour. In 2022, 19.7% of this age group were working, compared to 22.0% in 2013. For child labour, 7.9% of children aged 14–17 were engaged in 2022, far exceeding the rates for younger age groups: 3.9% for those aged 12–13 and 2.8% for ages 5–11. Hazardous child labour followed a similar pattern, with 7.9% of children aged 14–17 engaged in dangerous activities, compared to much lower rates of 1.6% and 0.2% in younger age brackets.

Table 8.5: Share of working children, child labour, and hazardous child labour in total children aged 5–17 years (%)

Indicators	2013						2022					
	Sex		Age group			Total	Sex		Age group			Total
	Male	Female	5–11	12–13	14–17		Male	Female	5–11	12–13	14–17	
Working children	10.2	7.1	2.1	5.9	22.0	8.7	13.2	4.2	3.0	9.3	19.7	8.9
Child labour	4.6	3.9	2.1	0.6	10.3	4.3	6.6	2.1	2.8	3.9	7.9	4.4
Hazardous child labour	3.7	2.7	0.2	0.6	10.3	3.2	4.3	0.9	0.2	1.6	7.9	2.7

Source: Child Labour Survey 2013 and National Child Labour Survey 2022, BBS.

Indicator 8.9.1. Tourism direct gross domestic product (GDP) as a proportion of total GDP and in growth rate

For Bangladesh, the share of tourism in GDP grew from 1.56% in FY12 to 3.02% in FY19, according to the Tourism Satellite Survey conducted by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) (see Table 8.6). This upward trend demonstrates the sector's potential as an economic driver.

Table 8.6: Tourism direct GDP as a proportion of total GDP (%)

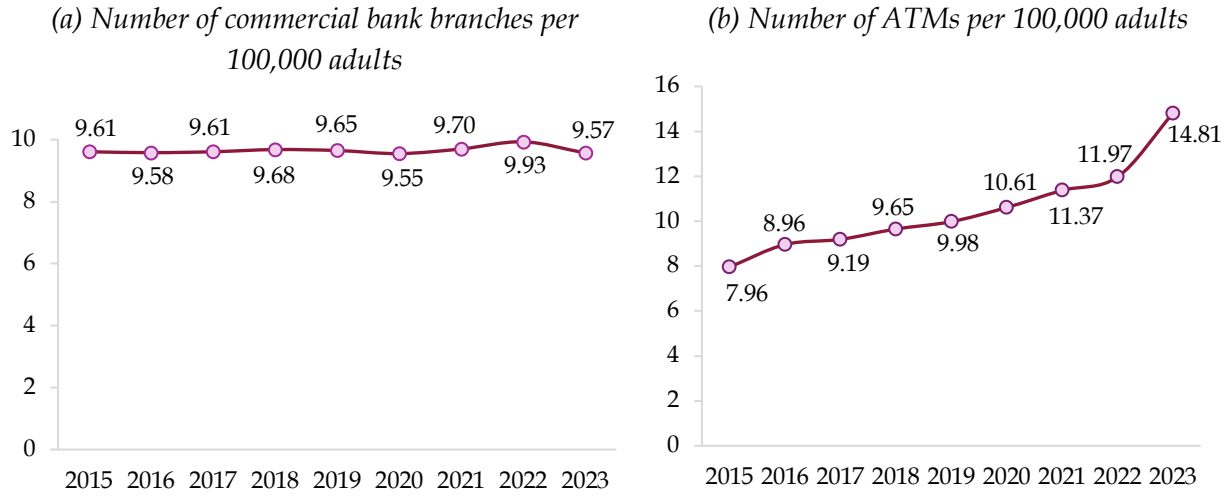
Indicator	2011-12	2018-19
Tourism direct GDP as a proportion of total GDP	1.56	3.02

Source: Tourism Satellite Survey (TSA) 2011–12 and TSA 2020, BBS.

Indicator 8.10.1 (a) Number of commercial bank branches per 100,000 adults and (b) number of automated teller machines (ATMs) per 100,000 adults

The number of commercial bank branches per 100,000 adults has reached 9.57 branches in 2023 (see Figure 8.5 (a]). Bangladesh aims to have ten branches by 2025 and twelve by 2030. In a similar vein, the proliferation of automated teller machines (ATMs) highlights initiatives to improve accessibility. Between 2015 and 2023, there were 14.81 ATMs per 100,000 adults, up from 7.96 in 2015 (Figure 8.5 (b)). Bangladesh has made strides in this sector, surpassing its goals of 8 ATMs per 100,000 adults by 2025 and 9 by 2030.

Figure 8.5: Number of commercial bank branches and automated teller machines (ATMs) per 100,000 adults



Source: Financial Inclusion Department (FID), Bangladesh Bank.

Indicator 8.10.2. Proportion of adults (15 years and older) with an account at a bank or other financial institution or with a mobile-money-service provider

Bangladesh has made progress in the proportion of adults (15 years and older) with an account at a bank or other financial institution, or with a mobile money service provider, which reached 51.71% in 2023.

Table 8.7: Proportion of adults (15 years and older) with an account at a bank or other financial institution or with a mobile-money-service provider

Indicator	2021	2022	2023
Proportion of adults (15 years and older) with an account at a bank or other financial institution or with a mobile-money-service provider	48.02	48.5	51.71

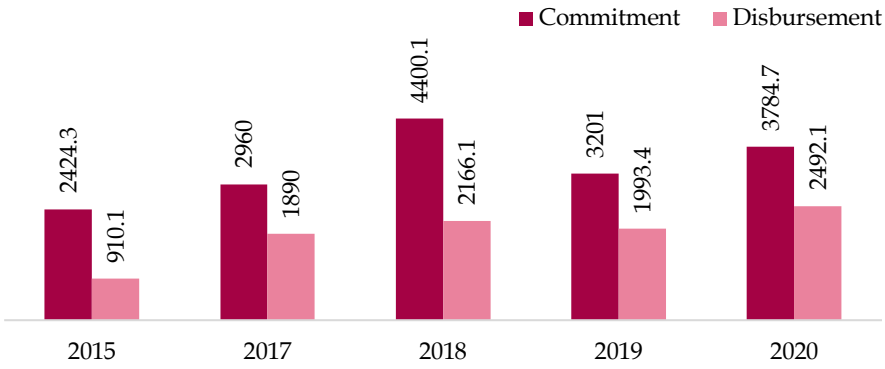
Source: Sample Vital Registration System (SVRS), BBS, Statistics and Informatics Division (SID).

Indicator 8.a.1. Aid for Trade (AfT) commitments and disbursements

AfT funding flows are categorized into commitments (pledged amounts) and disbursements (actual funds delivered). The disparity between these two measures has been a persistent challenge. In 2015, commitments stood at $2,424.3 million, but only $910.1 million—a mere 37.5 percent—was disbursed (see Figure 8.6). From 2017 to 2019, disbursement rates stabilized at around 63%, while commitments fluctuated. Despite the economic disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, 2020 marked a high point for AfT funding, with commitments rising

to $3,784.7 million and disbursements reaching $2,492.1 million, the highest rate (65.8 percent) in five years.

Figure 8.6: Commitments and disbursements of aid for trade for Bangladesh (million $)



Source: Aid for Trade at a Glance (2017, 2019, and 2022), WTO and OECD.

Bangladesh has established ambitious AfT targets for the coming decade. By 2025, the country aims for commitments of $4,000 million, with expected disbursements of $1,500 million (37.5% of commitments). For 2030, these figures rise to $5,000 million in commitments and $2,000 million in disbursements (40 percent). With annual growth rates of 12.7% for commitments and 21.4% for disbursements, Bangladesh appears on track to meet these goals.

Indicator 8.b.1. Existence of a developed and operationalized national strategy for youth employment, as a distinct strategy or as part of a national employment strategy

SDG indicator 8.b.1 is meant to show how well countries are doing at tackling the problem of young employment. In this regard, it seems that a country that formally adopts what can be considered a structured strategy for youth employment will pay more attention to the issues facing the young labour market than a nation that does not have a plan. Typically, the creation of such a strategy requires extensive involvement and coordination and consultation among various stakeholders. However, Bangladesh has not produced any data on this indicator yet.

8.4. Key Policies and Strategies to Achieve SDG 8

Bangladesh has implemented a number of strategic initiatives to address the issues of job creation, poverty alleviation, and economic development as it strives to meet its commitment to SDG 8, which places an emphasis on promoting inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all. In order to achieve SDG 8's primary goals of raising economic productivity and offering decent work opportunities, the country's development plan is centred on industrialisation, labour market transformation, and skill training improvement.

The National Industrial Policy 2022 stands as a crucial framework in Bangladesh's pursuit of SDG 8. This policy aims to boost the country's industrial output and diversification, targeting a 40% contribution of the industrial sector to the national income by 2027. The policy's top goal is to foster an atmosphere that encourages business expansion and the creation of new job opportunities. The policy aims to improve labour productivity and job opportunities in a

number of industries by encouraging industrial expansion. The creation of a competent labour force is at the heart of its goals, and the strategy emphasises the value of vocational education and training in providing workers with the skills they need for respectable employment. The focus on exports, manufacturing, and industrialisation is in line with SDG 8's objectives of boosting productivity and promoting sustainable economic growth. Additionally, the policy's emphasis on boosting exports and preserving domestic sectors contributes to the nation's economic stability, directly bolstering SDG 8 statistics pertaining to employment and growth.

In parallel to industrial growth, the Employment Generation Program for the Poorest (EGPP) plays a significant role in addressing poverty and unemployment among Bangladesh's most vulnerable groups.[24] This program offers temporary job opportunities to those facing extreme poverty, particularly during lean seasons when employment opportunities are scarce. In addition to helping local communities, program participants work on community development projects including road construction, embankment repairs, and irrigation maintenance, which give families in need vital cash. Because it targets the most disadvantaged groups, such as women, people with disabilities, and youth, the EGPP has a direct impact on a number of SDG 8 indicators, particularly those pertaining to unemployment. By offering temporary work, the initiative lowers unemployment rates and advances SDG 8.6.1, which measures the percentage of young people (ages 15 to 24) who are not enrolled in school, working, or receiving training. Additionally, by giving needy households income, the initiative indirectly combats child labour by lowering the pressures that push kids into the workforce and advancing SDG 8.7.1.

The National Skills Development Policy (NSDP) 2022, along with the National Action Plan for Skills Development 2022–2027, complements these efforts by focusing on enhancing the country's human capital. The NSDP aims to ensure that the skills training system aligns with the evolving demands of the labour market, both domestically and internationally. The policy advocates for the integration of skills development into national strategies and emphasizes equal access to training opportunities, particularly for marginalized groups such as women, rural communities, and youth. By prioritizing re-skilling and up-skilling initiatives, the NSDP is directly linked to SDG 8's indicators on reducing unemployment and improving wage equality. By supporting the advancement of cutting-edge technology, enhancing apprenticeships, and fostering competency-based learning, the National Action Plan that goes with it reinforces these initiatives even more. These actions target SDG 8 indicators for formal job creation and informal employment reduction by boosting labour productivity and easing the shift from informal to formal employment.

The National Financial Inclusion Strategy (NFIS) (2021–26) is another important program that attempts to guarantee that financial services are available to all people and enterprises in Bangladesh. The NFIS makes it possible for people to start or grow enterprises, lessen economic shocks, and better manage their lives by expanding access to financial products. Because it facilitates the transition of informal workers into the formal sector, this program directly affects SDG 8 metrics pertaining to the reduction of informal employment. Additionally, by promoting financial literacy, especially among young people and

[24]https://socialprotection.org/discover/programss/employment-generation-programs-poorest-egpp#:~:text=The%20EGPP%20aims%20to%20create,lean%20period%2C%20to%20reduce%20poverty

underserved areas, the plan lowers the NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) rate and gives them the confidence to undertake entrepreneurial endeavours. Furthermore, by encouraging financial inclusion and enhancing access to financial services, the NFIS advances SDG 8.10 and advances the nation's overall economic expansion.

Although there are still obstacles to overcome, especially in maintaining long-term economic growth and guaranteeing fair access to opportunities, the aforementioned actions provide a strong basis for raising living standards, encouraging decent work, and supporting inclusive development in Bangladesh.

8.5. Major Challenges

Substandard and Hazardous Workplaces: In sectors including construction, light engineering, tanneries, and textiles, unsafe and unhealthy working conditions continue to be a major problem. Basic safety precautions including sufficient ventilation, fire exits, and protective gear are often absent from workplaces. This carelessness has frequently led to severe mishaps and long-term health issues for employees. The 2013 collapse of Rana Plaza, which killed more than 1,100 people, serves as a sobering reminder of what happens when unsafe labour practices are used. Indicator 8.8.1 and 8.8.2 are both impacted by the fact that many workplaces continue to fall short of acceptable safety standards, putting workers' lives in danger every day despite ongoing reforms.

Prevalent Unemployment Issues: Although the unemployment rate in Bangladesh declined from 4.2% in 2016–17 to 3.35% in 2023, as reported by the Labour Force Survey 2023, challenges remain significant. Women face disproportionately higher unemployment rates, exacerbated by cultural norms, inadequate childcare facilities, and limited access to vocational training. These barriers prevent many women from entering or remaining in the workforce, slowing progress toward inclusive economic growth. However, the existing unemployment problem hinders achieving indicator 8.5.2. Besides, skill mismatch and the lack of industrial diversification increase the unemployment rate impacting indicator 8.2.1 and 8.1.1.

High Level of Labour Underutilization: Labour underutilization is another critical issue. According to the Labour Force Survey 2023, men are more affected, with an underemployment rate of 5.64% as a percentage of the working age population compared to 4.75% for women. This mismatch between workers' skills and job requirements not only stifles economic potential but also leads to long-term consequences, such as skill deterioration and mental health challenges. Addressing this underutilization requires targeted skill development programs aligned with market demands. The high level of labour underutilization affects indicator 8.5.1, putting downward pressure on wages and lowering bargaining power to negotiate for higher wages. Many workers start working in the informal sector which negatively affects indicator 8.3.1.

Unutilized Demographic Dividend: Bangladesh has been benefiting from a demographic dividend for over a decade. The Labour Force Survey 2023 indicates that 49% of the population is under the age of 25. Despite this potential, many young individuals lack the necessary skills to meet labour market demands, resulting in a mismatch that restricts their employment opportunities. Furthermore, challenges such as gender inequality and

inadequate job creation in emerging sectors intensify this issue. As Bangladesh fails to utilize the demographic dividend, it affects the youth to access the job market, affecting indicators 8.6.1, 8.5.2, 8.3.1 and 8.5.1.

Presence of Informal Employment: According to the Labour Force Survey 2023, 84.1% of the employed population is engaged in informal employment, with rates reaching 95.7% for females and 77.9% for males. This prevalence of informal employment complicates efforts to improve labour standards and regulate working conditions. A significant portion of the workforce operates in informal settings, particularly in sectors such as agriculture (96.8 percent), industry (90.5 percent), and services (67.8 percent). The informal nature of these jobs hinders workers' ability to secure loans or access essential services, thereby perpetuating cycles of poverty and inequality. The presence of informal employment directly impacts indicator: 8.3.1. This also affects indicator 8.5.1, as informal workers generally lack wage protection and regulated minimum wage.

High NEET Rates Among Youth: According to the Labour Force Survey 2023, a significant portion of Bangladesh's youth is neither in education, employment, nor training (NEET), with the NEET rate for individuals aged 15–24 standing at 19.7%. This indicates barriers such as limited educational opportunities, insufficient vocational training programs, and a lack of quality jobs. Addressing the NEET challenge is critical to ensuring a productive workforce for the future. This challenge directly impacts indicator 8.6.1. A High NEET rate also reduces labour productivity and wages, impacting indicator 8.2.1 and 8.5.1.

Presence of Child Labour: Child labour remains a concern, with 4.4% of children aged 5–17 engaged in work, as per the National Child Labour Survey 2022. Of these, 2.7% are involved in hazardous activities, including working with chemicals, carrying heavy loads, or working in unsafe environments. Despite strict legal prohibitions, weak enforcement allows child labour to persist, jeopardizing the health and future prospects of affected children. The presence of child labour creates challenges in achieving indicator 8.7.1.

Gender Disparity: Gender inequality continues to hinder progress toward decent work. Women face systemic barriers, including limited access to education, skills training, and job opportunities. The gender wage gap remains pervasive, with women earning less than men for the same work across many sectors. Addressing these disparities is essential for fostering an inclusive labour market and unlocking the full economic potential of the workforce, with a view to improving indicator 8.5.1 and 8.5.2.

8.6. Recommendations for Future Action

Addressing the challenges to creating a decent work environment in Bangladesh is essential for achieving sustainable economic growth and inclusive development. Issues such as a large informal labour sector, inadequate labour rights protections, gender inequality, and limited youth employment opportunities require targeted interventions. By fostering equal access to education, training, and employment opportunities, Bangladesh can build a more inclusive labour market that supports economic growth and social well-being for all.

Invest in Youth Education and Training: Expanding youth-focused education and training programs is crucial for preparing the next generation for emerging job markets, particularly

in the technology and innovation sectors. Specialized initiatives should target skill development in areas such as coding, data analytics, and renewable energy. Supporting young entrepreneurs through financial aid and mentorship programs, especially in rural areas, can drive local job creation and stimulate economic growth. This would primarily affect indicator 8.6.1, which would further reduce the unemployment rate by impacting indicator 8.5.2: Unemployment rate, by sex, age group and persons with disabilities. Investing in youth education and training will expand opportunities to enter the formal workplace helping in achieving indicators 8.3.1 and 8.2.1.

Promote Inclusive Education and Vocational Training: Accessible vocational training centres should focus on equipping workers with both technical and soft skills tailored to high-demand industries like IT, renewable energy, and manufacturing. Priority must be given to women and marginalized groups, ensuring their participation through scholarships, flexible schedules, and community-based programs. Aligning training with industry needs will enhance employability and drive workforce modernization. By doing so, there would be positive impact on indicator 8.5.1: Average hourly earnings of employees, indicator 8.5.2: Unemployment rate, and indicator 8.6.1: Proportion of youth (aged 15-24 years) not in education, employment, or training (NEET).

Address the Gender Wage Gap: With a 33.8% income disparity between men and women, as reported in the Labour Force Survey 2023, enforcing equal pay policies is vital. Transparent wage reporting across industries and proactive measures to include women in leadership roles can significantly narrow this gap. Targeted programs, such as scholarships and mentoring for women in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM), can also promote gender equity in high-paying fields. By taking these initiatives, significant improvements can be achieved, positively impacting indicator 8.5.1: Average hourly earnings of employees and indicator: 8.5.2 Unemployment rate, by sex, age group and persons with disabilities.

Support Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs): Providing SME owners with financial education and training on budgeting, risk management, and credit utilization can enhance their capacity to sustain and grow businesses. Access to affordable financing and new market opportunities can empower SMEs to contribute significantly to achieving Sustainable Development Goal 8 (SDG 8). These measures will also encourage formalization, boosting overall economic productivity. Supporting SMEs will help reduce the overall unemployment impacting indicator 8.5.2: Unemployment rate, thus affecting indicator 8.1.1: Annual growth rate of real gross domestic product (GDP) per capita. Besides, it will reduce the informal employment, impacting indicator: 8.3.1 Proportion of informal employment in total employment, by sector and sex.

Expand Apprenticeship Programs: To reduce the proportion of youth not in education, employment, or training (NEET) with a view to achieving improvements in indicator 8.6.1: Proportion of youth (aged 15-24 years) not in education, employment, or training (NEET), the government should expand apprenticeship and internship programs. Collaborations with private companies can provide young workers with on-the-job training and entry-level employment opportunities, equipping them with practical experience and soft skills. This

approach can help achieve the government's goal of reducing the NEET rate to 12% by 2025 and 3% by 2030.

Leverage Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs): Public-private partnerships can play a pivotal role in integrating informal workers and entrepreneurs into the formal economy. Private partners, with government support, can provide microfinance services and access to advanced technologies, empowering workers to improve productivity and bridge the digital skills gap. By fostering innovation and resource sharing, PPPs can significantly enhance economic inclusivity and sustainability impacting indicator 8.5.2: Unemployment rate, thus affecting indicator 8.1.1 Annual growth rate of real gross domestic product (GDP) per capita.

8.7. Summary

SDG 8 emphasizes inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all. Its key indicators—such as economic growth rates, unemployment levels, and the proportion of youth not in education, employment, or training (NEET) offer valuable insights into the health of an economy and its job creation potential.

Challenges such as widespread informal employment, wage inequality, and poor working conditions persist, limiting the equitable distribution of its economic gains. The government's commitment to SDG 8 is reflected in policies like the National Industrial Policy 2022, the Employment Generation Program for the Poorest (EGPP), and the National Financial Inclusion Strategy (2021–2026). However, addressing systemic issues such as unemployment, substandard labour conditions, and child labour remains crucial for achieving sustainable economic development.

To advance SDG 8, targeted investments in education and vocational training to utilize the demographic dividend and provide benefits to the marginalized group are necessary so that Bangladesh can achieve improvements in indicator 8.5.2: Unemployment rate, indicator 8.5.1 Average hourly earnings of employees, indicator 8.6.1: Proportion of youth (aged 15–24 years) NEET, indicator: 8.3.1 Proportion of informal employment in total employment, by sector and sex, and indicator 8.1.1 Annual growth rate of real gross domestic product (GDP) per capita. By taking this initiative, labour productivity will increase, positively affecting indicator: 8.2.1 Annual growth rate of real GDP per employed person. These efforts will help build an inclusive labour market that ensures decent work opportunities for all. By focusing on these priorities, Bangladesh can foster a more equitable economy that benefits everyone, particularly those most vulnerable to economic disparities.

9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION, AND INFRASTRUCTURE

SDG 9: Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure

9.1. Background

Three interrelated pillars—resilient infrastructure, inclusive and sustainable industrialisation, and innovation—are the emphasis of Sustainable Development Goal 9. This aim, which comprises eight targets and twelve indicators, highlights how important these elements are to promoting long-term economic growth, lowering inequality, and tackling environmental issues. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda both emphasise inclusive industrialisation as a major force behind sustainable development, highlighting its capacity to improve economies and communities.

Building prosperous, sustainable communities, easing access to necessary services, and promoting economic activity all depend on resilient infrastructure. Modern technological innovation and breakthroughs increase this influence even more by reducing energy consumption, increasing resource efficiency, and providing answers to urgent environmental and financial problems.

In addition to fostering social inclusion through the advancement of gender equality, youth employment, and women's empowerment, industrialisation also creates jobs, income, and chances for decent labour. It creates avenues towards sustainable growth by accelerating value addition, promoting information sharing, and encouraging investments in education and skill development. Furthermore, the necessity for contemporary communication technology, renewable energy, and public transit has grown essential as the pressures on metropolitan areas from around the world increase. In this regard, establishing robust infrastructure, encouraging innovation, and promoting industrialisation are necessary for inclusive, long-term growth that does not leave anyone behind.

9.2. Global and Regional Context

Achieving Sustainable Development Goal 9 demands a rigorous focus on inclusive and sustainable industrial development, resilient infrastructure, and accessible technological innovation. In order to advance these fields, promote economic growth, and create chances for improved employment and the development of human capital, it is imperative that research and development (R&D) funding be increased globally.

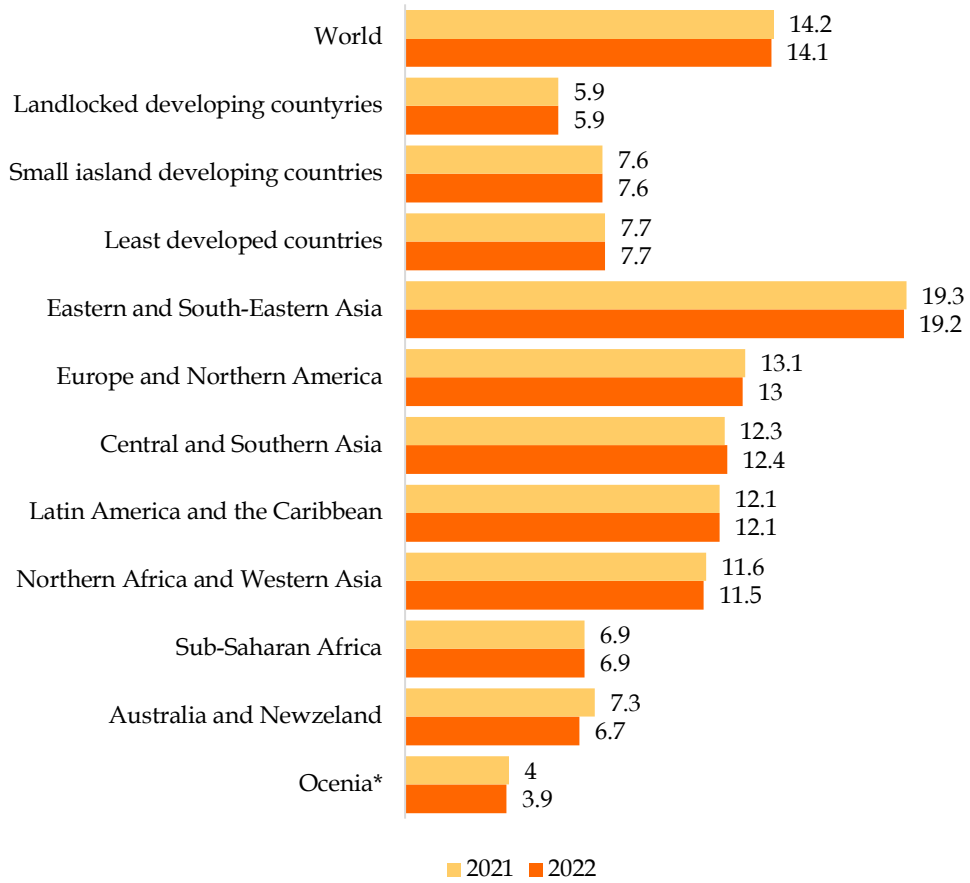
The worldwide manufacturing value-added per capita increased from $1,653 to $1,922 (in constant 2015 prices) between 2015 and 2023, a 16% increase (United Nations, 2024b). Nevertheless, the sector's share of the world economy increased only slightly from 16.3 to 16.7% during this time, and it is expected to stagnate in 2024 as a result of issues including inflation, high energy prices, logistical difficulties, and geopolitical concerns. Particular difficulties are faced by Least Developed Countries (LDCs), whose manufacturing value-added share of GDP increased from 12% in 2015 to 14.5% in 2023, but at a rate that is still below the 2030 aim of doubling this share. Manufacturing employment has likewise made little headway globally, remaining almost unchanged as a percentage of total employment from 2015 to 2022. While regions like Australia and New Zealand experienced growth in

manufacturing employment, Eastern and South-Eastern Asia saw a decline of 0.8 percentage points over the same period.

Investment in R&D has shown significant global growth, reaching $2.37 trillion in 2021 (constant 2015 US$), up from $1.3 trillion in 2010. The share of global GDP allocated to R&D rose from 2% in 2010 to 2.7% in 2021. However, this progress is uneven; developing regions such as sub-Saharan Africa and Northern Africa invested only 0.44% and 0.58% of their GDP in R&D, respectively, compared to 1.48% in middle-income countries. The average investment for landlocked countries and LDCs was only 0.20% of GDP. The number of researchers per million people worldwide rose from 1,266 in 2010 to 1,525 in 2018, with South Korea setting the record with 9,082 researchers per million in 2021, notwithstanding these differences.

In terms of internet coverage, 3G or higher broadband networks are the main or only way to connect to the internet, and approximately 95% of people in developing nations have access to it. Globally, mobile broadband (3G) coverage has barely improved by 4 percentage points since 2018, and 18% of people in LDC countries still do not have access to the internet.

Figure 9. 1: Manufacturing Employment as a Proportion of Total Employment, 2021 and 2022



Source: The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2024.
Note: * Excluding Australia and New Zealand.

9.3. Assessment of National Progress on SDG 9

Indicator 9.1.1. Proportion of the rural population who live within 2 km of an all-season road

Ensuring access to reliable, sustainable, and resilient infrastructure is vital for fostering inclusive growth and connectivity. All-season roads, designed to remain accessible throughout the year, play a crucial role in achieving this goal, though temporary disruptions can occur during severe weather conditions. In Bangladesh, rural connectivity has witnessed remarkable progress. According to data from the Bangladesh Sample Vital Statistics (SVRS) in 2023, 91.09% of the rural population lives within 2 kilometres of an all-season road, surpassing the 90% target set for 2025.

Table 9. 1: Proportion of the Rural Population Who Live Within 2 Km of An All-Season Road (%)

2022	2023
88.50	91.09

Source: Bangladesh Sample Vital Statistics (SVRS), BBS.

Indicator 9.1.2. Passenger and freight volumes, by mode of transport

In 2022, passenger and freight volumes in Bangladesh were reported at 66.3 million and 42.3 million metric tons of CO_2-equivalent, respectively, reflecting a decline from 77.9 million and 56.5 million metric tons in 2021 (Table 9.2 & 9.3). Increasing demands are seen over the past decades urging innovation in the transport system.

Table 9. 2: Total Passenger, By Mode of Transport (in number - metric tons of CO_2-equivalent)

2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
136,246,308	138,945,620	138,749,890	127,590,876	122,368,606	76,078,985	77,966,440	66,276,525

Source: Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation (BIWTC), MoS (Ministry of Shipping).

Table 9. 3: Total Freight Volume, By Mode of Transport (in number - metric tons of CO_2-equivalent)

Year	2019	2020	2021	2022
Total Freight Volume	28,756,250	31,987,500	56,456,250	42,284,610

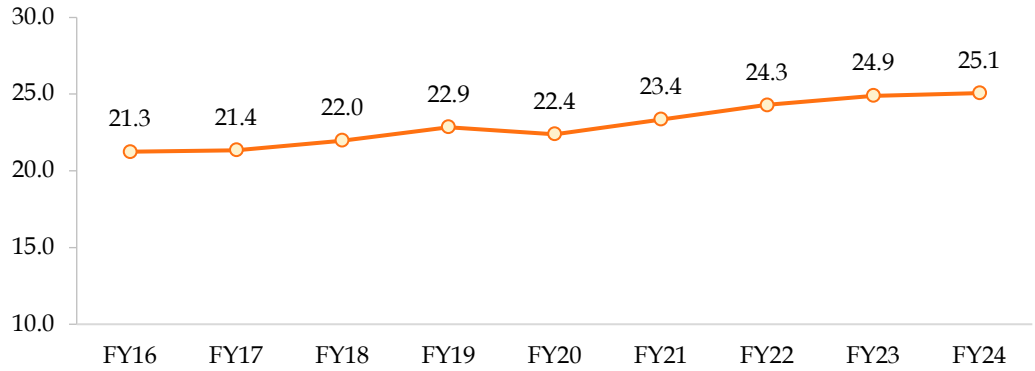
Source: Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation (BIWTC), MoS.

Indicator 9.2.1. Manufacturing value added as a proportion of GDP and per capita

The lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, combined with geopolitical challenges, have limited global manufacturing growth to approximately 2.7% since 2022, a trend projected to persist into 2024. To align with SDG 9, the emphasis is on significantly increasing the manufacturing sector's contribution to GDP and employment by 2030, with a particular focus on doubling its share in least developed nations.

In Bangladesh, the manufacturing sector has demonstrated resilience and steady progress. In FY23, the broad industry sector contributed 37.56% to GDP, with the manufacturing sub-sector making up 24.9 per cent—a modest rise from 24.3% in FY22 (see Figure 9.2). A moderate improvement persists in FY24 as well, with an increment of 0.2 percentage points from FY23.

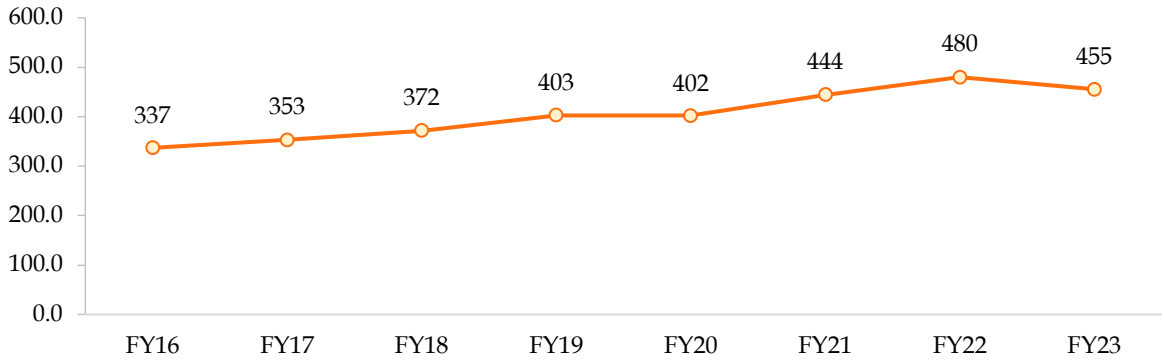
Figure 9. 2: Manufacturing Share of GDP at Constant Prices (Base Year: 2015-16) (%)



Source: Bangladesh Economic Review 2024, Finance Division, Ministry of Finance, *FY24 = Provisional.

Bangladesh has also seen incremental growth in this area, with per capita manufacturing output peaking at $480 in FY22 before dropping to $455 in FY23 (see Figure 9.3).

Figure 9. 3: Manufacturing Value Added per Capita (US$)



Source: National Accounting Wing (NAW), BBS.

Indicator 9.2.2. Manufacturing employment as a proportion of total employment

According to the Labour Force Survey 2022, the manufacturing sector accounted for 11.26% of total employment. However, this share was higher at 14.43% in FY17 (see Table 9.4). In 2023, there was a moderate increase in this proportion. However, this indicator is also identified in the 7th Five-Year Plan (FYP), with a target set for 25% of manufacturing in total employment by 2030.

Table 9. 4: Manufacturing Employment as a Proportion of Total Employment (%)

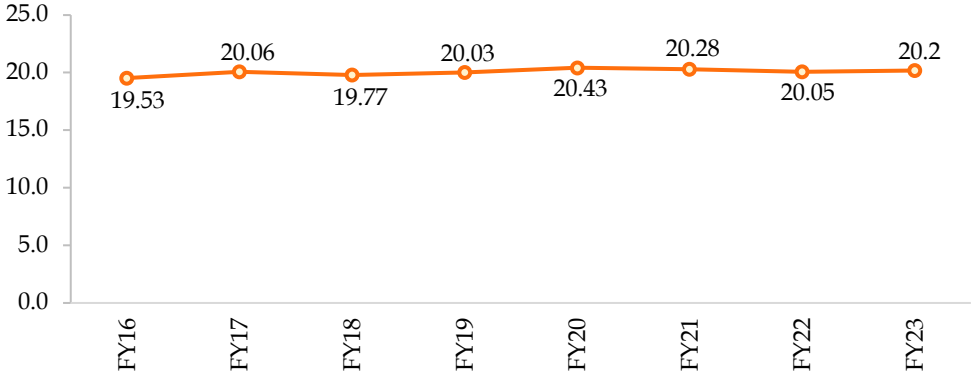
FY16	FY17	2022	2023
14.4	14.4	11.26	11.56

Source: Labour Force Survey (LFS).

Indicator 9.3.1. Proportion of small-scale industries in total industry value added

Food products, dairy, leather goods, and wood-based industries saw an increase in small-scale production in FY21, but textiles, clothing, chemicals, and metals saw a decrease. Notwithstanding these oscillations, since FY16, the share of small-scale industries in overall industrial value added has stayed steady at about 20%.

Figure 9. 4: Proportion of Small-Scale Industries in Total Industry Value Added (Percentage)



Source: Survey of Manufacturing Industries (SMI), BBS.

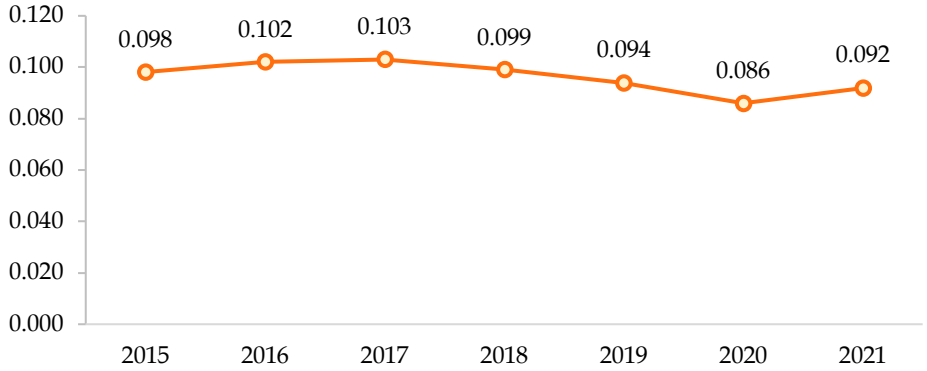
Indicator 9.3.2. Proportion of small-scale industries with a loan or line of credit

Govt. supports are much needed in helping small industries to sustain during and after a crisis. According to the Survey of Manufacturing Industries, the proportion of small-scale industries was 57.79% with a loan or line of credit in 2019.

Indicator 9.4.1. CO2 emission per unit of value added

In 2021, carbon dioxide emissions per unit of GDP in Bangladesh were approximately 0.1 kg (UNSTAT, 2024). Bangladesh can further lower its CO2 emission levels as a responsible member of the global community fighting climate change by adopting innovative methods of firm management and greener energy production, all of which also help the country to move closer to achieving Zero Carbon Emission.

Figure 9. 5: CO2 Emissions per Unit of GDP PPP (Kilograms of CO2 per Constant 2017 US$)



Source: UNSTAT, 2024.

Indicator 9.5.1 Research and development expenditure as a proportion of GDP

In FY21, Bangladesh's R&D expenditure stood at 0.30 per cent of GDP, amounting to BDT 104.8 billion (Table 9.5). However, this proportion has declined since FY19, far from the targeted 1 per cent set for 2025.

Table 9. 5: Proportion of R&D expenditure to GDP (%)

FY19	FY20	FY21
0.345	0.312	0.297

Source: Report on Research and Development (R&D) Survey 2022, BBS.

Indicator 9.5.2 Researchers (in full-time equivalent) per million inhabitants

Between FY2019 and FY2021, the number of full-time researchers per million inhabitants stagnated at 75–77 (Table 9.6). However, the expected milestones and targets for researchers in 2025 and 2030 are set at 998 and 1,080 per million people. Bangladesh is neither pursuing or neither declining from current proportion to reach this milestone and target. At the current growth rate of 2.4% per year, this number will remain below 100 by FY 2030—falling drastically short of the targets.

Table 9. 6: Full-time Researchers in per Million People

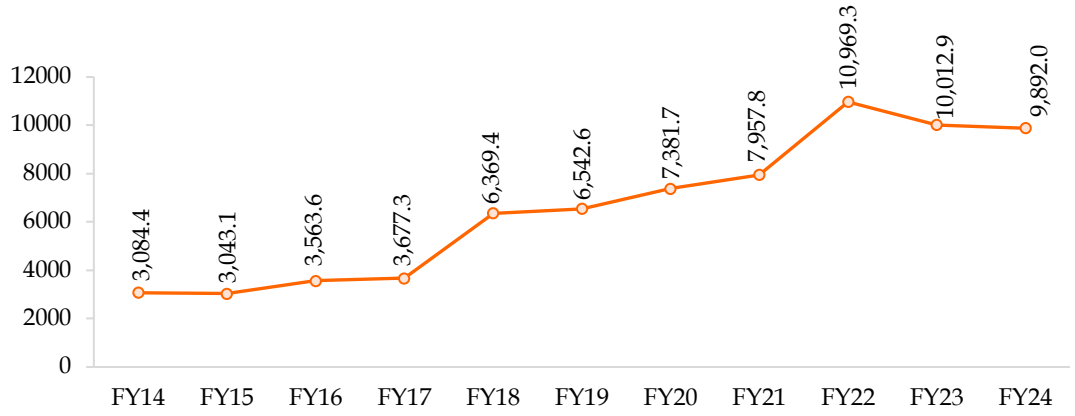
FY19	FY20	FY21
76.49	72.91	75.68

Source: Report on Research and Development (R&D) Survey 2022, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS)

Indicator 9.a.1 Total official international support (official development assistance plus other official flows) to infrastructure

The volume of Official Development Assistance (ODA) has been increasing steadily since fiscal year 2010. The volume of official international support to infrastructures stood at USD 10 billion in FY23 which was only USD 2.2 billion in FY17 (see Figure 9.6). Over the 8 years, ODA has increased by almost 3 times. Although the milestone is set at $2,600 million by 2025 and the target at $3,500 million by 2030, Bangladesh has already reached its targeted value since FY16.

Figure 9. 6: Total International Support to Infrastructure (Million US$)



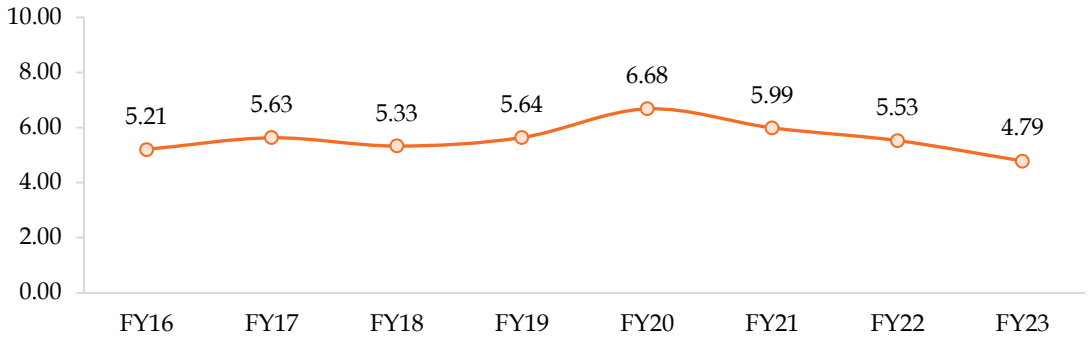
Source: Economics Relation Division (ERD); FY24=Provisional

Indicator 9.b.1 Proportion of medium and high-tech industry value added in total value added

Figure 9.7 shows that the proportion of medium and high-tech industry value added to total value added increased gradually from FY16, reaching its peak (6.68 percent) in FY20 and starting to decline (see Figure 9.7). Although the share of the manufacturing industry in total

value added has increased over time, the growth of the medium and high-tech industry has been slowing since FY21, following an earlier growth rate of 6.75%.

Figure 9. 7: Proportion of medium and high-tech industry value added in total value added (%)



Source: Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS).

I0ndicator 9.c.1 Proportion of population covered by a mobile network by technology (%)

2G network technology coverage reached almost close to 100% by 2014, while both 3G and 4G network technology coverage were at 59% (see Table 9.7). By 2018, 2G and 4G network coverage had increased significantly, with 3G network coverage reaching more than 95% and 4G coverage reaching 79%. The target for both 2G and 3G coverage is set at 100% by 2030. By 2022, almost all three network coverages had already reached the target.

Table 9. 7: Coverage of Proportion of Population by a Mobile Network by Technology (%)

Technology	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
4G	59	65	65	67	79	82	97.8	98.2	98.5
3G	59.1	71	91.4	92.79	95.23	95.4	97.8	98.2	98.5
2G	99	99.4	99.47	99.47	99.6	99.6	99.62	99.63	99.63

Source: Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC).

9.4. Key Policies and Strategies to Achieve SDG 9

Bangladesh is determined to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 9, focusing on resilient infrastructure, inclusive and sustainable industrialization, and fostering innovation. The government has developed comprehensive policies and implemented strategic initiatives to overcome challenges and accelerate progress toward these objectives.

The National Industrial Policy 2022 serves as a cornerstone for economic growth by emphasizing the importance of the industrial sector. This policy prioritizes labour-intensive industrialization using domestic raw materials and resources, with the dual objectives of increasing productivity and enhancing the quality of manufactured goods. It also incorporates strategies to harness the opportunities presented by the Fourth Industrial Revolution while addressing structural barriers to private investment and improving the profitability of public institutions.

In transportation, the government has undertaken the ambitious Dhaka Mass Transit Company Limited (DMTCL) project. Aimed at creating a modern, eco-friendly transportation

network, this initiative will establish six Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) lines covering 128.74 kilometres with 104 stations by 2030. This metro rail system is expected to alleviate urban congestion and serve as a model for sustainable urban mobility.

The 8th Five-Year Plan (8th FYP) is a vital policy instrument aligning national development goals with global sustainability objectives. This plan emphasizes expanding ICT infrastructure and fostering innovation. Bangladesh has already achieved 100% 2G coverage and 95.5% and 98% coverage for 3G and 4G technologies, respectively, by 2021. The government aims to reach 100% coverage for 3G and 4G by 2025, ensuring digital connectivity nationwide.

The FY25 budget underscores the government's commitment to industrial growth and economic self-reliance. Targeted measures include adjustments in import duties and value-added tax (VAT) to support local industries, particularly in textiles and heavy manufacturing, ensuring their competitiveness in domestic and global markets. These strategies are crucial for transitioning Bangladesh into an industrially developed middle-income country.

To support small and medium enterprises (SMEs), Bangladesh Bank has introduced various refinancing schemes. In collaboration with international partners such as JICA and European agencies, the central bank administers 14 funds and projects to empower entrepreneurs, enhance women's economic participation, and uplift communities. These initiatives are instrumental in promoting inclusive growth and reducing inequalities.

As of February 2024, the country's highway network spanned 22,476 kilometres. Mega-projects like the Padma Rail Link, Dhaka Elevated Expressway, and Chattogram-Cox's Bazar Rail Link aim to improve regional connectivity and integrate Bangladesh into international transport networks. In order to improve communities' access to markets and economic zones, the Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) is leading the Rural Connectivity Improvement Project (RCIP), which aims to upgrade 2,700 km of rural highways. Furthermore, the JICA-funded Cross-Border Road Network Development Project seeks to improve connectivity for both domestic and foreign trade.

An important part of the government's plan is climate resiliency. The issues presented by climate change are addressed in the National Adaptation Plan, which was developed under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Bangladesh Bank increased funding from BDT 400 crore in 2020 to BDT 1,000 crore in 2024, a major expansion of its revolving refinance scheme for green ventures. This scheme supports eco-friendly projects, including solar energy, biogas plants, and effluent treatment facilities.

Ports and digital connectivity also play critical roles in facilitating economic growth. Chattogram seaport, which handles 92% of the country's international trade, managed over 30 million TEUs of containers and cargo worth 118.29 million tons in FY23. To meet growing internet demand, the Bangladesh Submarine Cable Company Limited (BSCCL) is upgrading its capacity from 2,506 Gbps to 3,800 Gbps, with the SMW4 submarine cable projected to reach 4,650 Gbps upon completion.

9.5. Major Challenges

Bangladesh has demonstrated a strong commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), embedding them into its national development plans. However, the path to achieving SDG 9, which emphasizes resilient infrastructure, inclusive industrialization, and innovation through spending R&D, is fraught with significant obstacles. These challenges, exacerbated by global disruptions such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine war, can be grouped into the following categories:

Challenges in Rural Connectivity and Declining Transport Volumes: Although rural connectivity through all-season roads has made significant progress in achieving the target of 90% of all-season roads within 2 km of rural communities by 2023 (indicator 9.1.1), frequent natural disasters and insufficient monitoring still pose significant challenges to maintaining this progress in the near future. Total passenger and freight volumes have declined in recent years (2020 to 2022), which may indicate challenges stemming from underinvestment and inefficiencies in the transport network; however, it also reflects the ongoing economic effects, such as those from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Challenges in Manufacturing Growth Despite Resilience: The manufacturing sector in Bangladesh remains resilient despite the lingering effects of COVID-19, which have impacted the growth of the global manufacturing industry. This resilience is largely due to the uninterrupted production of Ready-Made Garments (RMG) even during the pandemic. However, despite its resilience during Covid-19, Bangladesh remains stagnant in its total manufacturing output to GDP share at 25% and manufacturing value added per capita (indicator 9.2.1) even after the pandemic. The manufacturing value added to the GDP target is set at 35% by 2030; however, the lack of diversification and the cost of doing business still pose significant challenges to achieving this target.

Challenges in Creating Jobs in the Manufacturing Sector: The lack of job creation within the manufacturing sector presents a significant challenge. Bangladesh is trailing far behind its goal of 25% for manufacturing's contribution to total employment by 2030, as the sector currently generates only 11.56% of total employment in 2023 (indicator 9.2.2). This might also explain why the manufacturing value added to GDP has stagnated at 25%. Insufficient skilled labour, lack of vocational training, and inadequate investment in education obstruct this growth rate and pose major challenges for increasing employment in the manufacturing sector.

Barriers for Small and Medium Enterprises (SME): Although the government of Bangladesh and other financial institutions have provided good financial support to SME with a 57.79% with a loan or line of credit in 2019 (indicator 9.3.2), SME face structural barriers that undermine their growth and resilience issues like low-quality collateral and lack of a standard SME definition persist, creating knowledge gaps and complicating policy implementation. Additionally, reliance on indigenous raw materials leaves SMEs vulnerable to external shocks, highlighting the need for better-targeted financial and policy support.

Declining R&D Investment: Spending on R&D in Bangladesh remains low, with a declining share relative to GDP and full-time researcher per million people (indicator 9.5.1 and 9.5.2). With a target of 1% R&D spending of GDP and 1080 full-time researcher per million people

by 2030, Bangladesh is far behind than expected. Lack of investment discourages engagement in scientific research and limits the technological capabilities of industries. As the country nears LDC graduation, the loss of TRIPS flexibilities will further challenge its ability to compete technologically. Promoting R&D and incentivizing innovation are essential for supporting long-term industrial and technological growth.

9.6. Recommendations for Future Action

To ensure a smooth transition period following the LDC graduation in 2026 (Most developed countries will provide an additional 3 years of extended period after LDC graduation), achieve SDG Goal 9 by 2030, and attain Upper Middle-Income Country (UMIC) status by 2031, Bangladesh must move decisively from pledges to concrete actions. The scale and urgency of the task demand bold and proactive measures, as a "business as usual" approach will fall short of these ambitions. The following targeted strategies can help achieve these goals:

Strengthening Rural Connectivity and Revitalizing Transport Networks: To address challenges of having robust rural connectivity as well as compensating declining transport volumes and freight, policymakers need to pursue a holistic response that is led by robust infrastructure investment and innovative technology solutions. Strengthening and upgrading all-season roads with advanced monitoring and early warning systems will reduce the impact of natural disasters, while smart ticketing, dynamic scheduling, and multi-modal connectivity will enhance passenger convenience and reliability. For freight, maximizing regulatory processes, stimulating private investment in modernized logistics hubs, and fostering public-private partnerships will be required in a bid to minimize costs as well as optimize operational efficiency. These measures, along with targeted fiscal support and shock-resistant planning in response to economic shocks like the COVID-19 pandemic, will not only guarantee rural connectivity (indicator 9.1.1) but also stimulate growth across passenger and freight transport volumes (9.1.2)

Driving Industrial Growth and Attracting Investments: Bangladesh aims to increase manufacturing's contribution to GDP from 24.89% to 35% by 2030, requiring significant investment in high-growth sectors such as textiles, electronics, and renewable energy. Streamlining regulatory processes, simplifying the ease of doing business, and establishing a dedicated task force to address sector-specific challenges will attract domestic and foreign investments. Maintaining industrial growth and GDP contribution requires promoting technological innovation, such as automation and advanced manufacturing technologies, and encouraging private-sector involvement in infrastructure projects (indicator 9.2.1). The financial and technological assistance required to increase competitiveness can also be obtained through partnerships with international development organisations.

Enhancing Labour Productivity and Skills Development: With current manufacturing employment at 11.56 per cent, reversing this decline requires a robust framework for skills development. Drawing inspiration from Vietnam's vocational training initiatives supported by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Bangladesh should implement scalable training programs in technical and vocational education and training (TVET) to ensure adequate labour in manufacturing sector (indicator 9.2.2). These programs must focus on digital skills, green manufacturing, and emerging technologies to prepare workers for

future industrial demands. Integrating women and youth into industrial roles through targeted initiatives and establishing public-private partnerships will ensure inclusivity and responsiveness to industry needs.

Empowering Small-Scale Industries: Small-scale industries, essential for employment generation and inclusive growth, have suffered setbacks due to external shocks like the COVID-19 pandemic. To strengthen this sector, the government should improve access to affordable financing, even though Bangladesh has a good track record compared to the global average in assessing lines of credit for SMEs at 57.8%. The major hindrance to translating this credit support into SME contributions to the total industry, which is currently stagnant at 20 per cent, is that the government needs to ensure the proper allocation of credit to SME owners. Without proper monitoring of this line of credit, the expected contribution of SMEs to the total industry will remain stagnant or decline from the current status. In addition, encouraging collaboration between small enterprises and larger industry players can facilitate resource sharing, modernisation, and improved market access. These measures will enable SMEs to integrate into broader value chains and drive inclusive industrial growth and will help to progress in indicator 9.3.1.

Boosting Research and Development (R&D): Bangladesh's R&D expenditure, at 0.30% of GDP, is far below the 1% target set for 2025. Bangladesh is way behind than its peer in investing R&D and producing researcher at a time. Retroactive policy should be needed to boost R&D sector. One way is to increase investments in R&D by incentivizing both the public and private sectors involvement. Creating a national R&D strategy focusing on green technology, ICT, and biotechnology can foster innovation and enhance competitiveness. Establishing technology parks, promoting collaboration between academia, industry, and government, and expanding international research exchange programs will help build a robust innovation ecosystem. Scholarships and funding for higher education will further encourage research and scientific breakthroughs and promote to increase the full-time researcher per million people. These policies can certainly help to progress on indicators 9.5.1 and 9.5.2.

Advancing Digital Transformation: In terms of mobile network coverage, Bangladesh is in a good position to adopt 4G. However, information about the population's usage of this internet coverage is lacking. The government can take the required steps to ensure accessibility and broad coverage for the general public if this data is accessible. To facilitate the broad use of technologies like automation and artificial intelligence (AI), the government should also give top priority to investments in 5G infrastructure, especially in industrial zones. Productivity and competitiveness in the manufacturing sector will be greatly increased by providing tax incentives to companies implementing these technologies and fostering digital transformation.

9.7. Summary

Bangladesh has made moderate strides in achieving SDG 9, reflecting progress in mobile network and internet coverage, improved rural connectivity, and an expanding manufacturing base. However, achieving inclusive and sustainable industrial growth, driven

by resilient infrastructure and technological innovation, remains essential for creating jobs, advancing technology, and improving living standards.

The Covid-19 pandemic underscored the critical importance of a diversified industrial sector and robust infrastructure in sustaining economic stability. In response, the government has adopted initiatives under the 8th Five-Year Plan (2021–2025) to boost the ICT sector, foster innovation, and support emerging startups. Simultaneously, large-scale infrastructure projects are modernizing the economy and creating new opportunities.

Despite these efforts, challenges persist. These include unequal access to information, high business costs, land constraints, and organizational inefficiencies, which hinder progress. To accelerate achievements under SDG 9, Bangladesh must prioritize strategic sectors, adopt advanced technologies for a green transition, address digital inequalities, lower business costs, strengthen the private sector, and focus on transformational infrastructure projects. These targeted actions will pave the way for sustainable industrialization and long-term economic growth.

10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES

SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities

10.1. Background

Economic prosperity alone will not achieve inclusive development and social progress towards the marginalized people of a country. Inequality impends long-term social and economic development, ills poverty reduction and destroys people's sense of rights and dignity. Additionally, severe inequality can pose a risk of leaving human potential unrealized, damaging social structure, hindering economic activities and undermining democratic participation. To mitigate these multi-dimensional risks, SDG 10 outlines a wide net to capture multiple drivers of inequality and to ensure that no group or individual is left behind during the progress towards a sustainably developed nation. In this process, SDG 10 focuses on inequalities within and among countries, migration and social inclusion.

Reducing inequality and ensuring the inclusion of all regardless of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status is at the heart of the pledge that 'no one will be left behind' (World Bank & UN DESA, 2019). SDG 10 plays a crucial role in achieving the target of other SDGs and they are more inter-linked. For instance, inequality can prolong poverty among the people; inequality can pose food insecurity; gender disparity can create a higher illiteracy rate and unemployment, etc. SDG 10 comprises the universality of the 2030 Agenda in which goals and targets involve the entire world, developed and developing countries alike. Inequality in this respect is not only about closing gaps but about doing so in a way that lifts the bottom up and guarantees the equal realization of individual's basic rights.

Moreover, SDG 10 includes four targets to address the country's inequality across social, economic and political dimensions aiming to expand prosperity, inclusion, and social protection. Additionally, the three targets aim to reduce inequality among countries with attention to cross-border flows of finance and people and the distribution of voice in global institutions. Finally, the other three targets focus on the means of implementation and put forward concrete steps for attaining greater equality by directing financial resource (i.e., ODA, FDI) flows toward those most in need.

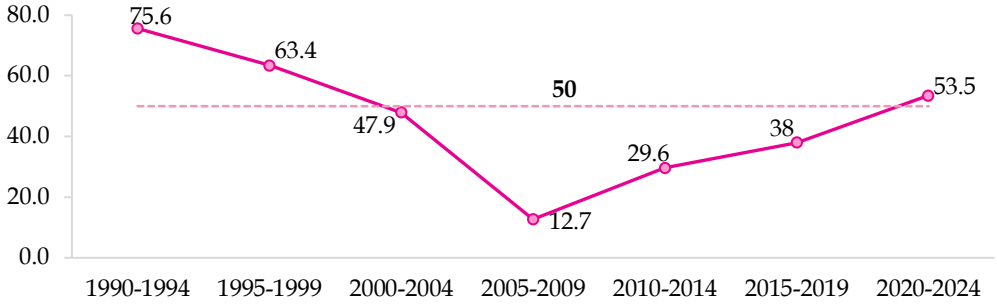
10.2. Global and Regional Context

International development efforts have made considerable progress to lift people out of poverty through reducing inequality, particularly in the most vulnerable countries — Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs), and Small Island Developing States (SIDS). These nations have demonstrated resilience in increasing the income per capita of the lower group of households/people. However, their advancement is still hampered by persistent inequality and differences in access to resources like as health care, education, and other necessities.

Disparities in wealth and income continue to widen globally, but at varying rates. The World Inequality Report 2022 emphasises that there are still significant income and wealth gaps in the world today: the richest 10% of people earn 52% of the world's income and own 76% of its

wealth, while the poorest 50% earn only 8.5% and own only 2%.[25] Furthermore, the UN Sustainable Development Goals Report 2024 indicates that in half of the 75 most vulnerable countries, those eligible for concessional lending from the World Bank's International Development Association (IDA)—the income gap with the wealthiest economies continues to widen (Figure 10.1).[26]

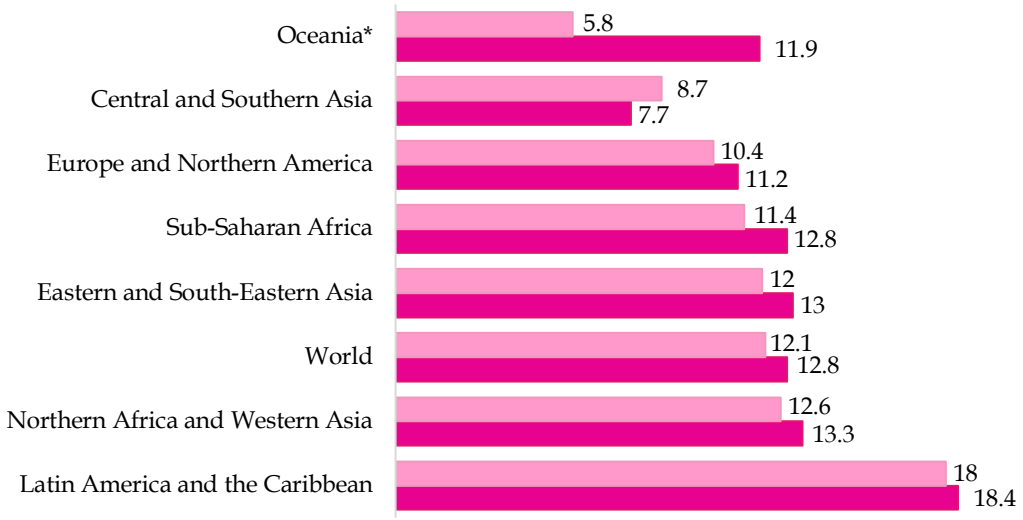
Figure 10.1: Share of IDA countries with GDP per capita growth lower than in advanced economies, 1990–2024 (percentage)



Source: The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2024.

Despite the economic disruptions by the COVID-19 pandemic, the global share of people living on less than half the median income has declined owing to social assistance programmes, particularly in wealthier countries, falling from 12.8% to 12.1% (data from 82 countries, representing 70% of the world's population) (Figure 10.2).

Figure 10.2: Proportion of population living on less than half the median income, (2015–2019 vs post-2019)



Source: The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2024; Uniter Nation (2024).

[25] The total income measured at Purchasing Power Parity (PPP). Note that top wealth holders are not necessarily top-income holders. Incomes are measured after the operation of pension and unemployment systems and before taxes and transfers.

[26] One in four people in IDA countries live on less than $2.15 a day, an extreme poverty rate that is more than eight times the mean for the rest of the world. 90% of people facing hunger and malnutrition live in IDA countries, half of which are in debt distress or at high risk of it.

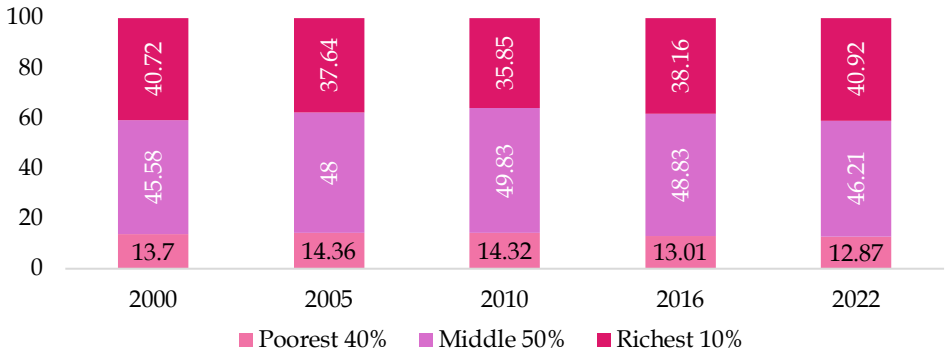
On the other side, workers' wages have not kept pace with productivity, and labour's share of GDP has resumed its long-term decline. The labour income shares of global GDP declined from 54.1% in 2004 to 52.7% in 2021, amounting to a loss of $568 (in purchasing power parity) per worker. This downward trend suggests that the gains from increasing labour productivity have not been fully reflected in corresponding improvements in labour earnings (United Nations, 2024).

While the global average cost of remittances has declined, digital remittance services offer potential to further accelerate cost reductions. The global average cost of sending $200 dropped from 7.4% in 2016 to 6.18% in 2023, though it remains above the 3% target set by the SDGs. In 2023, the average cost of digital remittances was 4.84%, markedly lower than the 6.77% for non-digital, cash-based remittances. Regionally, the highest costs for sending $200 were in Oceania (excluding Australia and New Zealand) and sub-Saharan Africa, at 8.33% and 7.36%, respectively, despite substantial progress in both regions from 2011 to 2023. To achieve further reductions and meet the SDG target, stakeholders could leverage digitalization to reduce minimize costs, increase improve efficiency, and improve enhance accessibility to towards remittance services.

10.3. Assessment of National Progress on SDG 10

Bangladesh has experienced economic growth in recent years; much of the population has been left behind, with the benefits disproportionately favouring higher-income groups. Since the 2000s, the income gap between the rich and poor in Bangladesh has been widening, with no signs of improvement (Figure 10.3). According to the Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) 2022, a significant portion of the national income (about 41 percent) is concentrated in the hands of the top 10% of households, while the share of the poorest 40% has further declined to 12.9%, and the middle 50% has remained relatively stagnant to 45-46% (BBS, 2023). The Commitment to Reducing Inequality Index 2024 reflects a similar trend, with Bangladesh dropping 17 positions since 2022, now ranking 124th out of 164 countries, compared to its previous position of 107th among 161 countries (OXFAM & Development Finance International, 2024).[27]

Figure 10.3: Share of deciles in total household income at the national level, 2000-2022



Source: HIES database, BBS.

[27] The report shows the Commitment to Reducing Inequality Index (CRI) to assess three areas critical to reducing inequality – social services, taxation and work commitment of 164 countries and regions.

Table 10. 1: Selected Social Indicators for Poorest and Richest Quintiles in Bangladesh (as Year of 2022)

Indicator	Quintile	
	Poorest	Richest
Percentage of children under age 5 malnutrition rate (percent of children under age 5 are stunted)	34.3	15.2
Under-5 mortality per 1,000 live births	44	22
Total fertility rate	2.8	2
Teenage mothers (percent of women 15-19 years)[28]	28.9	14.3
Per cent of women receiving Antenatal care (ANC) from a medically trained provider	75.7	96.5
Percentage of women delivered in a health facility	42.4	87.4
Educational attainment of the male household population (More than secondary)	2.7	33
Educational attainment of the female household population (More than secondary)	2	23.9
Percent of women have no education (percent)	36.2	13.5
Percent of men have no education (percent)	36	10.4

Source: Demographic and Health Survey 2022, BBS.

Although the country is wealthier than ever, over 41 million people still live in poverty (UNDP, 2024). Not only that Bangladesh's ranking on the Social Progress Index dropped from 119th out of 169 countries in 2022 to 121st out of 170 countries in 2023, placing it in the Tier 4-lower sixth and seventh deciles. It is also evident that urban inequality has been rising and remains higher than in rural areas, however, most of the social protection beneficiaries are from rural regions—60% residing in rural areas and only 31% in urban areas (BBS, 2023).[29] On the other hand, in the Human Development Index (2023–24), Bangladesh continues to fall under the same "medium human development" category, slipping to 130th in 2021 from 128th in 2020 out of 193 countries (UNDP, 2024). Besides, according to the Global Findex 2021, financial inclusion gaps between the poorest 40% and the richest 60%, rural and urban populations, and men and women have shown improvement over time (World Bank, 2021). However, significant disparities remain, indicating that further efforts are needed to achieve equitable access to financial services across these groups.

Inequalities in education, health, and access to basic services in Bangladesh are closely linked to income and wealth disparities (Table 10.1). Despite significant reductions in maternal mortality, rural women remain up to twice as likely to die during childbirth compared to their urban counterparts. A similar trend is observed in child mortality, with the rate per 1,000 live births under the age of five being notably higher in rural areas. Access to education also has stark disparities—only 2-3% of individuals from lowest-income households, regardless of gender, could get the opportunity to pursue education beyond secondary school. Furthermore, the proportion of individuals with no formal education is nearly three times higher among the poorest households compared to the wealthiest. These patterns illustrate

[28] Percentage who has begun childbearing

[29] In the survey, it was considered the households have received benefits from SSNP Programmes during the last 12 months.

the deep socioeconomic divides that persist in Bangladesh, with access to essential services and opportunities largely determined by wealth and location, leaving the most vulnerable populations at a significant disadvantage position.

Indicator 10.1.1. Growth rates of household expenditure or income per capita among the bottom 40% of the population and the total population

The goal of this indicator is to progressively achieve and sustain income growth for the bottom 40% of the population at a rate higher than the national average by 2030. Bangladesh has set specific targets for this, aiming for a household expenditure or income per capita growth rate of 9.5% for the bottom 40% by 2025, rising to 10% by 2030. For the total population, the target is 9.3% by 2025 and 9.7% by 2030. Progress with growth for the bottom 40% increasing from 7.7% in 2016 and 2018 to 15.5% in 2022, and for the total population, from 9.1% to 15.5% during the same period (Table 2).

Table 10. 2: Growth rates of household expenditure or income per capita among the bottom 40% of the population and the total population

Year	Growth rates of HH expenditure of bottom 40 percent	Growth rates of HH expenditure of total population
2016	7.7%	9.1%
2022	15.1%	15.5%
2025 (Target)	9.5%	9.3%
2030 (Target)	10.0%	9.7%

Source: HIES database, BBS.

Indicator 10.2.1. Proportion of people living below 50% of median income, by sex, age, and persons with disabilities

According to the HIES 2016, about 15.98% of people in Bangladesh live below 50% of the median income, while the SDG 2030 target seeks to promote social, economic, and political inclusion for all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion, or economic status

Indicator 10.3.1. Proportion of population reporting having personally felt discriminated against or harassed in the previous 12 months based on a ground of discrimination prohibited under international human rights law

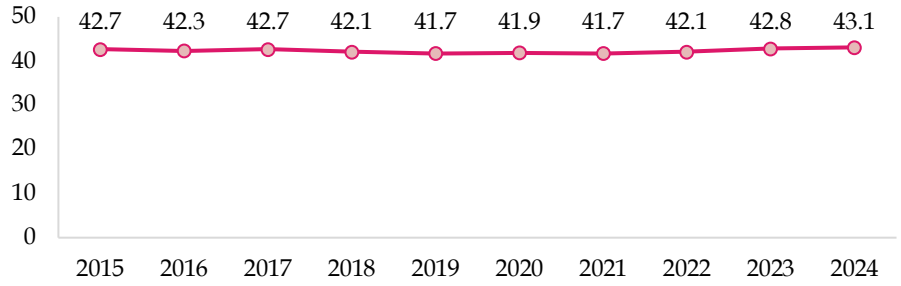
As of 2018, 35.6% of the population in Bangladesh reported experiencing discrimination or harassment in the previous 12 months based on prohibited grounds under international human rights law (according to CPHS, BBS). Additionally, disparities exist between genders, with 36.3% of women and 35% of men reporting such experiences. The national target aims to reduce this share to 25% by 2025 and further to 20% by 2030.

Indicator 10.4.1. Labour share of Gorss Domestic Product (GDP)

The labour share of GDP refers to the proportion of national income attributed to labour compensation, such as wages and salaries, relative to the country's overall GDP. Figure 10.4 illustrates that the labour share of GDP in Bangladesh has remained nearly stagnant at approximately 42.3% over the past decade. In 2024, this share has improved slightly above

the long-term average, standing at 43.1%. This trend suggests that the gains from economic growth are not being transformed among workers, potentially indicating that capital owners are capturing a larger proportion of income.

Figure 10.4: Bangladesh's labour income shares of GDP (in percentage)[30]

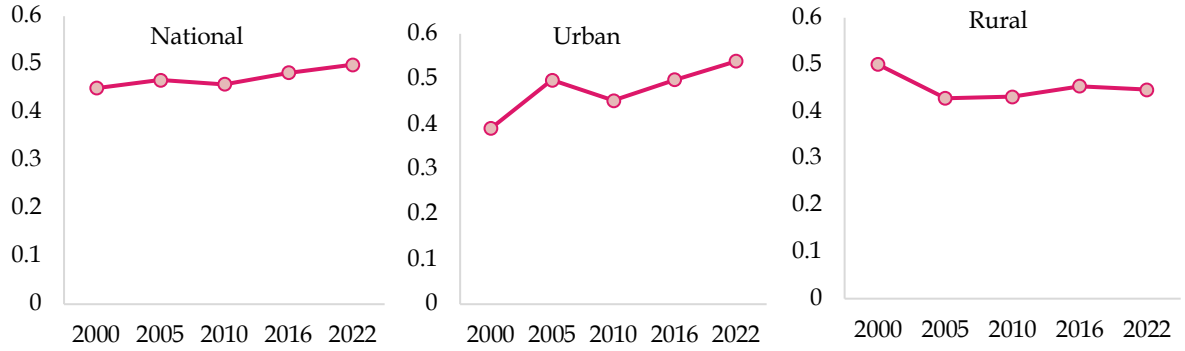


Source: ILOstat (2024); accessed on 22 October 2024.

Indicator 10.4.2. Redistributive impact of fiscal policy

Bangladesh, with its relatively low tax-to-GDP ratio of approximately 8% over the past decade, has limited fiscal resources to implement fiscal policies that could significantly reduce income inequality. This constraint has hindered the government's ability to utilize fiscal tools to redistribute wealth and narrow the gap between the rich and poor. This is also reflected in the rising national Gini coefficient, which increased from 0.458 in 2010 to 0.499 in 2022 (Figure 10.5). Additionally, urban inequality has been particularly increasing while rural areas have been declining over time, thanks to the greater concentration and allocation of social safety net programs (SSNPs) in rural areas.

Figure 10.5: Bangladesh's Gini Coefficient of Income



Source: HIES database, BBS

Indicator 10.5.1. Financial Soundness Indicators

Table 10.3 shows that Bangladesh's financial system has been experiencing a worrying trend in recent years, with a drop in most financial soundness metrics. This decline is mainly due to a combination of factors, such as poor management, money laundering, the accumulation of non-performing loans, and loan rescheduling in spite of poor repayment histories.

[30] Since this indicator is included in the Global indicator framework for the SDGs targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2024, unfortunately, specific data on the labour share of GDP is not immediately available on official sources for Bangladesh.

Table 10. 3: Financial Soundness Indicators in Bangladesh

Years	Regulatory Tier 1 capital to assets	Regulatory Tier 1 capital to risk-weighted assets	Non-performing loans net of provisions to capital	Non-performing loans to total gross loans	Return on assets	Liquid assets to short-term liabilities	Net open position in foreign exchange to capital
2015 (base year)	5.40	8.00	44.19	8.40	1.86	51.13	4.72
2016	5.63	8.14	44.08	8.86	1.28	45.95	4.93
2017	5.18	7.45	49.66	8.9	1.37	34	3.71
2018	4.74	6.77	53.36	9.89	0.86	44.48	7.43
2019	5.17	7.69	44.62	8.90	1.09	38.56	6.13
2020	4.77	7.42	34.49	7.74	0.77	52.44	9.91
2021	4.76	7.44	39.42	7.97	0.74	48.52	6.36
2022	6.70	10.26	38.76	8.72	1.32	39.39	6.57
2023	6.55	10.29	47.44	9.57	1.68	38.97	6.4

Source: Bangladesh Bank, Financial Institutions Division, Ministry of Finance.

Indicator 10.6.1. Proportion of members and voting rights of developing countries in international organizations

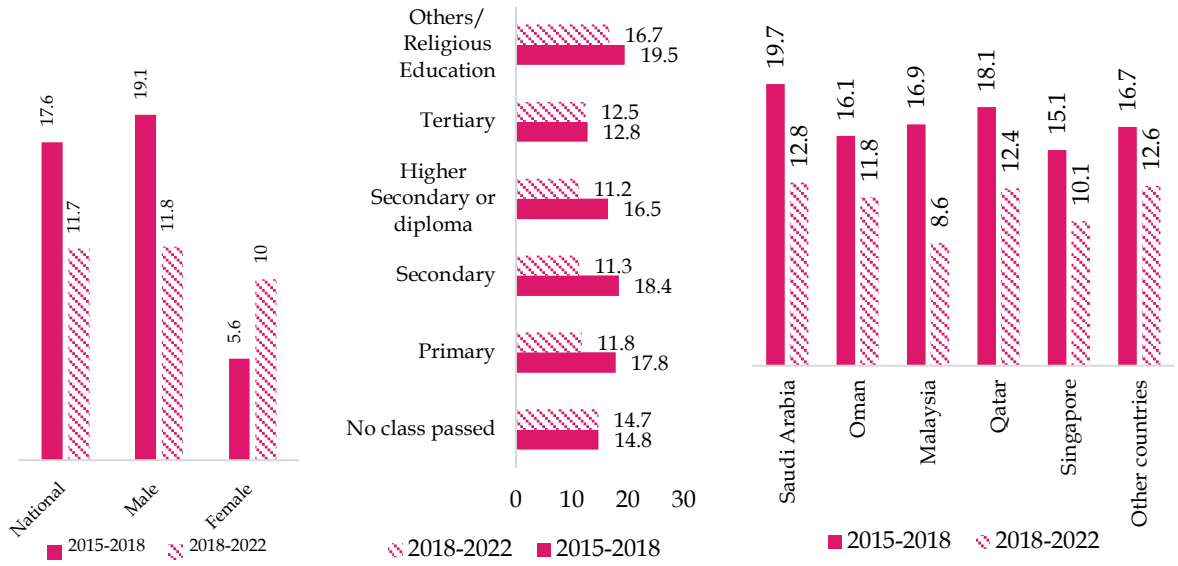
Although 74% of the United Nations General Assembly members are from developing countries, their voice in shaping international economic decisions and governance structures is limited (United Nations, 2024a). At the World Bank, developing countries hold only 39% of voting rights, despite representing75% of the institution's membership. The situation is more pronounced similar at the International Finance Corporation (IFC), where developing countries account for just 32% of voting rights. Moreover, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) underwent two General Reviews, in 2019 and 2023, yet left developing countries' voting share stagnant at 37%. Other major international financial institutions have not undertaken significant voting rights reforms since 2015, further entrenching the status quo.

Indicator 10.7.1. Recruitment cost borne by employee as a percentage of yearly income earned in country of destination

According to definition from the Cost of Migration Survey 2020, the recruitment cost for migrants typically includes expenses related to documentation (e.g., passport, visa, residency permit), security measures (e.g., medical check-ups, security clearance), skills assessments (e.g., language tests, vocational training, and exams), transportation, and recruitment service fees paid to agents. However, these costs vary by factors such as gender, education level, skills, age, and destination country (Figure 10.6).

Figure 10.6: Proportion of recruitment cost in the monthly employment earnings, by sex, education and country of destination (months needed)

(a) Gender *(b) Education* *(c) Country of destination*



Source: Cost of Migration Survey 2020; BBS, Labour Force Survey 2023, BBS.

In line with the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target 10.7.1, it is worth mentioning that migrant workers required an average of 17.6 months of salary to recover recruitment costs during the period of 2015-18, which has decreased to 11.7 months in the period of 2018-2022. Along with the education level, the proportion of recruitment costs relative to monthly employment earnings by destination country has also shown improvement. For example, the time required to recover recruitment costs has reduced for Malaysia (from 16.9 months to 8.6 months), Saudi Arabia (from 19.7 months to 12.8 months), Oman (from 16.1 months to 11.8 months), Qatar (from 18.1 months to 12.4 months), Singapore (from 15.1 months to 10.1 months), and other countries (from 16.7 months to 12.6 months). Moreover, the *Report on Socio-Economic and Demographic Survey 2023* highlights that 58.24% of migrants rely on borrowing to cover migration expenses, with dependency slightly higher in rural areas compared to urban areas.

Indicator 10.7.2. Proportion of countries with migration policies that facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people

Bangladesh has developed and adopted the '*Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Policy 2016*' and further amended its migration policy framework, passing the *Overseas Employment and Migrants (Amendment) Bill-2023* in September 2023.[31] Implementing these frameworks can help Bangladeshi migrant workers secure higher-paying jobs, offering a valuable alternative for semi-skilled and skilled labour. This is essential as the domestic economy struggles to create enough jobs for the growing workforce, resulting in unemployment and underemployment. Without such measures, achieving zero unemployment will be difficult.

[31] Approximately 62% of countries worldwide have successfully adopted national migration policies that align with International Organization for Migration (IOM) criteria across various policy domains, promoting orderly, safe, regular, and responsible migration (UNstats, 2024).

10.7.3. Number of people who died or disappeared in the process of migration towards an international destination

Measuring safe migration poses significant challenges, with SDG Indicator 10.7.3 currently serving as the sole measure for this goal. This indicator tracks the 'number of people who died or disappeared in the process of migration towards an international destination', based on data from the IOM's Missing Migrants Project (MMP).[32] As of October 26, 2024, over 69,076 deaths have been reported as a result of unsafe migration since 2014 (IOM, 2024).[33] With at least 24,036 fatalities, the Central Mediterranean route continues to be the deadliest. Other routes, however, also sustain significant casualties; over the same time period, 15,818 people died on the African route, 9,840 in the Americas, and 8,683 in Asia.

Bangladesh is dedicated to setting aggressive goals to drastically lower the number of these fatalities among its foreign-born population, with the goal of bringing the number down to 60 by 2025 and then to 40 by 2030.

Indicator 10.a.1. Proportion of tariff lines applied to imports from least developed countries and developing countries with zero-tariff

LDCs were granted duty-free market access on 62.9% of tariff lines on imports in 2022, a share that has remained relatively constant since 2015. In contrast, developing economies as a group entering duty-free markets to developed countries has increased by nearly 6 percentage points, reaching 55.2% of tariff lines (UNCTAD, 2024).

Indicator 10.b.1. Total resource flows for development, by recipient and donor countries and type of flow (e.g. official development assistance, foreign direct investment and other flows)

While Bangladesh is no longer an aid-dependent country, official development assistance (ODA) remains instrumental in driving poverty alleviation, social sector initiatives, and infrastructure development. It has also been reflected in the recent trend that the growth rate of ODA has slowed. Moreover, the country has set the ODA target at $11 billion, reducing the ODA dependence further (Figure 10.5).

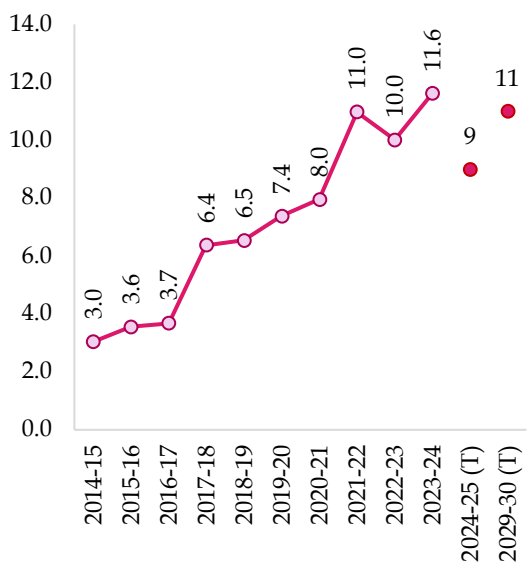
Foreign direct investment (FDI) is a crucial driver of economic development, the net FDI flow in Bangladesh has not improved over the last decade (Figure 10.6). While Bangladesh aims to increase FDI inflows to $12 billion by 2024-25 and $15 billion by 2029-30, it only received $1.5 billion by the end of 2023-24.

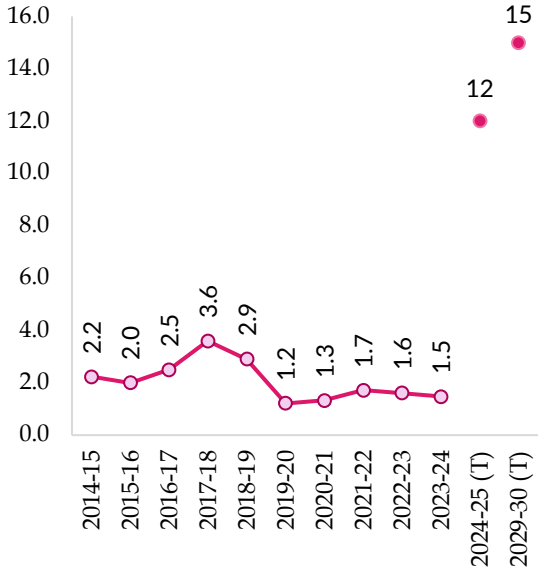
Figure 10.7: Total Official Development Assistance (ODA) for development over Time (Value in billion USD)

Figure 10.8: Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflow for development over Time (Value in billion USD)

[32] Missing Migrants Project tracks incidents involving migrants, including refugees and asylum-seekers, who have died or gone missing in the process of migration towards an international destination.

[33] Data represent minimum estimates, while the latest incident recorded occurred on 21 October 2024.



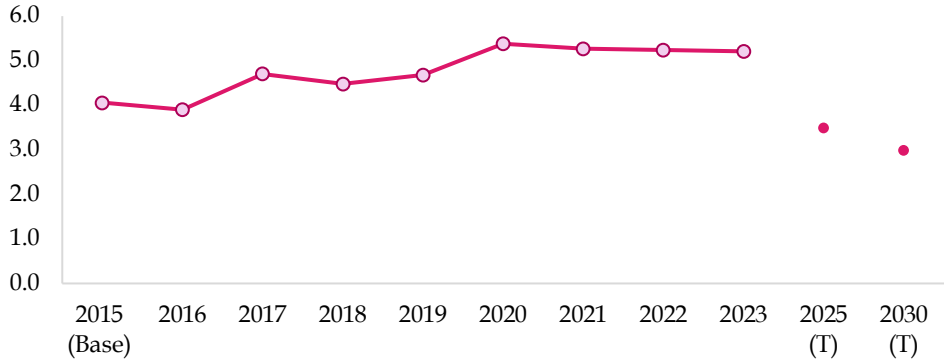


Source: Bangladesh Bank and ERD

Indicator 10.c.1 Remittance costs as a proportion of the amount remitted

The target of this indicator includes two components, reducing to less than 3% the transaction costs of migrant remittances and eliminating remittance corridors with costs higher than 5%. Bangladesh aims to align with the SDGs 2030 Framework by reducing remittance costs to 3% of the total amount remitted. However, the country reported a remittance cost of about 5.21% of the amount remitted in 2022, which represents an increase of 1.15 percentage points since 2015 (Figure 10.17).

Figure 10.9: Remittance costs as a proportion of the amount remitted, (%)



Source: Bangladesh Bank, Financial Institutions Division.

10.4. Key Policies and Strategies to Achieve SDG 10

The 8th Five-Year Plan (2021–2025) builds on the efforts of the 7th Five-Year Plan (2016–2020) and maintains its focus on sustainable development, with a focus on reducing inequality through sustainability and inclusivity. Reducing inequality and fostering inclusion for all demographic groups—regardless of gender, age, religion, geography, or educational attainment—is the main goal of this approach. In addition to adopting a comprehensive redistribution policy, the recent mid-term review of the 8FYP emphasised the need of

addressing growing income disparity. In order to lessen inequality, the strategy establishes two goals that include consumption and income metrics.

To enhance the inclusivity of the growth strategy, a cornerstone of the 8FYP's approach to reducing income inequality is the adoption and execution of a redistributive fiscal policy. This policy aims to significantly increase public investment in health, education, social protection, rural infrastructure, and water resources. These expenditures are to be financed by raising additional tax revenue, improving the financial performance of state-owned enterprises, and reducing subsidy expenditures.

In pursuit of SDG10 at the local level, three primary policy pillars have also been identified: (i) moderating income inequality through inclusive growth, redistributive fiscal policies, enhanced income opportunities for low-income groups, and supportive measures; (ii) reducing disparities in health, nutrition, and education through targeted interventions, improved delivery channels, strengthened institutions for quality services, and expanded access in underserved areas; and (iii) eliminating social and gender-based exclusion and discrimination through affirmative action and institutional policies.

Bangladesh has benefited greatly from the creation of the National Social Security Strategy (NSSS) in 2015, which has helped to lower poverty and preserve a moderate degree of inequality. In order to promote economic growth, employment, and human development, this plan seeks to combat growing inequality and create an inclusive social security system for all marginalised individuals. Urban income inequality has gotten worse as a result of increased migration from rural to urban areas brought on by seasonal changes in income and economic restructuring. As a result, a number of programs have been started to reduce urban multidimensional poverty and inequality. These programs include Open Market Sales (OMS), the Ghore Phera (Back to Home) initiative, Urban Community Development (UCD) programs, rehabilitation initiatives, and the establishment of alternative employment opportunities for those who are begging.

Furthermore, mechanisms for social security program monitoring and evaluation (M&E) have been created and put into place. These systems have three main goals: evaluating the methods used to deliver services, recording outcomes, and educating policymakers on the efficacy of different strategies. Additionally, the nation is working on a revised National Social Security Strategy (NSSS), which is expected to be unveiled in 2026. Through the addition of additional targets and indicators, this revised strategy seeks to address NSSS 2015 targets that were not previously addressed, strengthening its inclusivity and robustness.

Following the 5C (Commitment, Cooperation, Co-ordination, Co-existence, Comprehensive) principles of national strategy development, the first National Financial Inclusion Strategy (NFIS) was developed to improve the health of the financial sector and make it more inclusive. The NFIS aims to achieve 100% financial inclusion for all adults by 2025, facilitating a transition to a cash-lite society through a nationally authenticated evaluation framework. The strategy focusses on offering a diverse range of financial products and services tailored to meet the various needs of various population groups and businesses. It seeks to enhance the quality, relevance, and responsiveness of financial offerings while leveraging technology to create effective interfaces between providers like banks, insurance companies, and microfinance institutions. Additionally, NFIS emphasizes expanding financial literacy and

education, establishing a robust consumer empowerment framework, and enhancing the statistical capacity of regulatory bodies to monitor progress and make necessary adjustments. Ultimately, it aims to transform informal economic sectors into formal ones, fostering greater financial inclusion.

Actionable outcomes have not yet been achieved, despite the 8FYP's mid-term assessment acknowledging the necessity for a comprehensive redistribution program to address rising income disparity. Furthermore, despite the introduction of programs such as the SDG Tracker to track progress, their efficacy is still in doubt because of persistent problems with data and information availability on various indicators. Bangladesh's ambitions to meet the targets of SDG 10 and all of the SDGs by 2030 would remain unmet unless these deficiencies are addressed immediately and cooperatively, endangering the welfare of the most vulnerable citizens of the nation.

10.5. Major Challenges

Rising inequality, especially in terms of income, has emerged as a pressing policy challenge for Bangladesh, raising critical questions about the sustainability of its economic growth. The progress of indicator 10.4.2 reveals a troubling trend: as the economy expands, income inequality deepens, indicating a disconcerting pattern where the wealthy accumulate ever-greater fortunes while the poor are left behind, often descending further into poverty.

Furthermore, there is a significant correlation between income inequality and the quality of institutions. Weak institutional frameworks not only fail to address these disparities but may actively contribute to their exacerbation. This relationship underscores a critical concern: the past decade have seen not only an increase in income inequality but also a deterioration in institutional quality, from the financial institutions (impacted 10.5.1) to other governing bodies, undermining social cohesion and economic progress.

For Bangladesh, some other critical challenges are identified in the SDG10 (Reducing Inequalities) implementation:

Limited Fiscal Space and Weak Tax System: In many economies, efforts to mitigate income inequality often begin with taxation policies; however, Bangladesh exhibits one of the lowest tax-to-GDP ratios globally. While direct and progressive taxation are generally effective mechanisms for addressing indicators 10.1.1 and 10.2.1—both directly related to inequality—Bangladesh's tax system has predominantly relied on indirect taxes. Over the past two decades, indirect taxes have accounted for approximately two-thirds of the country's total tax revenue. Furthermore, the implementation of a progressive taxation system has faced significant challenges. A major obstacle to increasing direct tax revenue in Bangladesh is the widespread issue of inaccurate income reporting and the reluctance among individuals to pay their fair share of taxes. Despite the existence of over 10 million registered taxpayers, more than two-thirds of them fail to contribute to the tax system (NBR, 2024).

Absence of Redistributive Fiscal Policy: Rather than increasing public expenditure in core essential areas (i.e., health, education and social protection) for improving income inequality, there has been a stagnant situation over the period of time as mentioned above in the indicator 10.4.2 *(Redistributive impact of fiscal policy)*. Although overall expenditure in real terms has

risen for health, education, and social protection, it has failed to increase as a share of GDP. For instance, the allocation for education is below 2% of GDP, health expenditure is less than 1%, and social protection is approximately 2.5%. These figures reflect a critical shortfall in investment that undermines efforts to address income inequality and improve social welfare in Bangladesh.

Mismanagement in the financial sector: From indicator 10.5.1, it has been evident that progress in the financial sector has deteriorated over the last decades due to corruption, malpractices, and misappropriation of funds in both the banking sector and capital markets. This has eroded public trust and undermined the stability of the financial system. These problems strain banks and create broader macroeconomic challenges. For example, people withdrew their money from the bank, triggering a liquidity crisis and investment contraction. They also stopped sending remittances through formal channels, which further put pressure on the foreign exchange reserve.

Data and Information Management Challenges: Although a dedicated website, the SDG Tracker, has been established to monitor progress across various indicators, only a limited number of these indicators can currently be measured in a rigorous and consistent manner. For example, there is no recent data available for the indicators 10.3.1 and 10.7.3. Additionally, while the UN Global Indicator Framework has been consistently updated to incorporate various indicators relevant to SDG 10, such as indicators 10.4.1 (labour share of GDP) and 10.6.1 (the right to vote in international organizations and institutions), etc., there remains a significant lack of updated information on these specific indicators. This absence of current data impedes the effective monitoring of progress, and the formulation of evidence-based policies aimed at reducing inequalities.

SDG Localization Challenges: The country has made significant strides in the localization of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), setting 39 national priority targets, 64 district priority targets, and 492 upazila priority targets. However, tangible progress at the local level remains elusive, as most advancements have primarily been observed at the sub-national level. To effectively monitor and collect data on progress at the local level, it is essential to extensively deploy local institutions, including non-governmental organizations (NGOs), microfinance institutions (MFIs), and civil society think tanks, in conjunction with district, city, and upazila/union-level local government institutions. This collaborative approach will facilitate the gathering of information and enhance the monitoring of progress, thereby fostering the localization of SDG 10 and promoting greater accountability and transparency in the implementation of these targets.

10.6. Recommendations for Future Action

Inequalities in outcomes and opportunities are mutually reinforcing, perpetuating a cycle of disadvantage. To break this cycle, a comprehensive policy framework must develop in both dimensions. A significant challenge for policymakers in developing countries like Bangladesh is designing such a framework, particularly due to systemic discrimination and exclusion that limit access to economic, political, and social resources for marginalized groups.

Equal opportunities can level the playing field so that the circumstances of birth (such as race, gender, rural or urban location) do not adversely influence an individual's chances to get ahead in life. To achieve this, Bangladesh requires a multifaceted policy approach:

Address Income Inequality through Taxation: Implementing progressive taxation, strengthening social safety nets, and promoting inclusive economic growth can help reduce income disparities, which will ensure the progress of 10.1.1, 10.2.1, and 10.4.2.

Investment in Human Capital: Prioritizing investments in health, nutrition, education and social protection, particularly for disadvantaged groups, can improve human capital and break intergenerational cycles of poverty and inequality. This will in turn make sure the higher compensation of the labour (related with 10.2.1 10.4.1 and 10.4.2).

Focus on Social Exclusion: Promoting social inclusion will make further progress on indicator 10.2.1, 10.3.1, 10.7.1) combating discrimination regardless of gender, area, and education, and challenging inequality-reinforcing cultural norms can empower marginalized groups and create a more equitable society.

Strengthen institutional capacity and governance: Ensuring good governance at every institutional level is critical for effectively implementing the migrants' laws and policies (aligned with indicators 10.7.2 and 10.7.3), facilitating SDG localization, and restoring public confidence in the banking sectors and capital markets through improving financial soundness indicators (indicator 10.5.1). This all, in turn, will help (indicators 10.b.1 and 10.c.1) to bring more FDI inflows and increased remittance earnings, which will increase the capacity to invest more for the marginalized and vulnerable people of the country.

10.7. Summary

Addressing inequality in Bangladesh continues to present substantial obstacles, especially in light of SDG 10. The gains from economic growth have not been shared fairly, which has resulted in growing income disparity. Just 12.9% of the national income goes to the lowest 40% of households, whereas 41% goes to the wealthiest 10% of households. Despite increases in life expectancy and literacy rates, the Global Inequality Index 2024 shows a worrying decline to 124th out of 164 countries, highlighting persistent discrepancies. The Gini coefficient, which gauges income inequality, has not changed, indicating ongoing disparities in access to basic services like healthcare and education, which disproportionately impact rural women who have greater rates of maternal death than their urban counterparts.

The growth rates of household income or expenditure are highlighted by specific measures linked to SDG 10, which set lofty goals for the poorest 40% of the population, with a growth rate of 9.5% by 2025. However, monitoring progress is made more difficult by the lack of current data on the percentage of people living below 50% of the median income. Furthermore, a decrease in the labour share of GDP points to an uneven allocation of the advantages of economic growth among employees. While the national Gini index rose from 0.458 in 2010 to 0.499 in 2022, the low tax-to-GDP ratio limits the fiscal resources available to combat income inequality.

Further complications arise from the disparity between urban and rural areas; urban inequality is increasing while rural inequality is decreasing, which is explained by social safety net initiatives. To address these discrepancies, comprehensive measures are necessary, such as the National Social Security Strategy, which aims to lower inequality and poverty. Both the necessity of progressive taxation to improve resource allocation and the significance of strong monitoring and evaluation systems for social security programs are underlined.

Finally, low funding, inadequate public spending in important areas, and difficulties managing data to track progress are the main barriers to reaching SDG 10. To improve accountability and openness in tracking progress, cooperative strategies involving local authorities, non-governmental organisations, and civil society are essential. Therefore, to make significant progress towards achieving the targets of SDG 10 by 2030, future policy action should concentrate on investing in social protection, health, and education for underprivileged groups, establishing progressive taxation, encouraging social inclusion, and using political shifts to prioritise anti-inequality measures.

11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities

11.1. Background

Despite making up only 3% of the planet's land area, cities are significant drivers of economic growth, employment, and innovation, contributing over 80% of the world's GDP. More over 4 billion people, or half of the world's population, live in cities now, and estimates suggest that by 2050, there will be 6.5 billion. But there are also serious drawbacks to this fast urbanisation, such as the growth of slums and the rise in pollution from industrial processes, automobile emissions, and poor waste disposal. Seventy-five% of carbon emissions worldwide come from urban areas alone. The interdependence of urban and global sustainability emphasises how vital it is to address urban problems in order to address more general environmental, economic, and social difficulties. In this context, SDG 11 aims to make cities inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable, focusing on affordable housing, sustainable transport, and green public spaces for everyone.

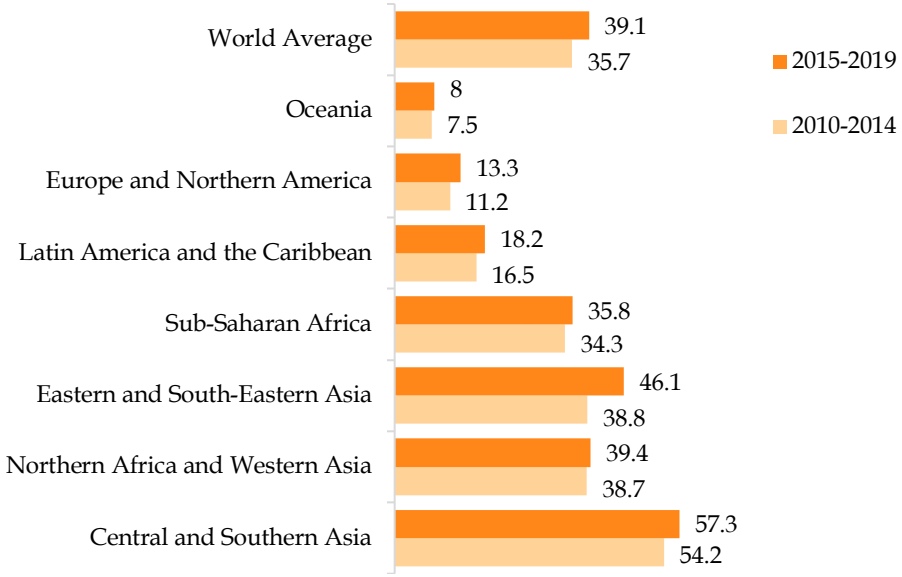
The way that cities handle their natural resources has a direct impact on the standard of living in metropolitan areas. Environmental stresses and the need for infrastructure, jobs, land, affordable housing, and basic services all increase with the number of people living in cities. This is especially important for the 1.5 billion people who live in nations where social injustice and environmental violence are persistent, as well as the approximately 1 billion people who live in urban slums. Cities are particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change and natural catastrophes because of their dense populations, extensive infrastructure, and economic activity. Thus, enhancing urban resilience is essential to lowering economic, social, and human losses. However, maintaining sustainable urbanisation is essential for safeguarding the environment and reducing the dangers associated with disasters and climate change. Cities that manage their resources well can lower expenses and lessen their impact on the environment while increasing productivity and innovation. Additionally, these cities give their citizens greater chances to adopt sustainable consumption and lifestyle choices.

11.2. Global and Regional Context

Creating sustainable cities means making them inclusive, safe, resilient, and environmentally friendly, with a focus on affordable housing, efficient transportation, and reduced ecological impact. The goal is to enhance urban living conditions while preserving the environment for future generations. Achieving these ambitious goals requires collaborative efforts from governments, businesses, civil society organizations, and citizens. To make progress on UN SDG 11, four key areas need attention: First, identifying and agreeing on the most sustainable methods to achieve targets, including determining which activities to cease and which to accelerate. Second, building the necessary capacity and skills among stakeholders to implement these changes. Third, securing financing and developing innovative designs, delivery models, and projects for integrated city infrastructure, including buildings, energy, transport, water, sanitation, and waste management. Finally, establishing practical processes for multi-stakeholder engagement throughout all stages of urban development to foster consensus, inclusion, resilience, and sustainability.

According to the UN SDG Report 2024, progress toward achieving SDG 11 varies across regions. While urbanization is accelerating globally, challenges remain, particularly in low- and middle-income countries. Air quality is one area where positive trends are emerging, with global exposure to fine particulate matter (PM2.5) dropping by 9% between 2010-2014 and 2015-2019 (Figure 11.1). Eastern and South-Eastern Asia saw significant improvements, as PM2.5 levels fell from 46.1 µg/m³ to 38.8 µg/m³. Europe and Northern America also saw progress, with levels declining from 13.3 µg/m³ to 11.2 µg/m³. However, not all regions experienced improvements; sub-Saharan Africa and Northern Africa and Western Asia experienced increases in air pollution during the same period, with levels rising from 34.3 µg/m³ to 35.8 µg/m³ and from 38.7 µg/m³ to 39.4 µg/m³ respectively.

Figure 11.1: Five-Year Average Population-Weighted $PM_{2.5}$ Concentrations in Urban Areas by Region, 2010–2014 and 2015–2019 (µg/m³)



Source: The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2024

Even with advances in air quality, there are still major obstacles in other areas of urban development. Slums accounted for 24.8% of the world's urban population in 2022, up from 24.2% in 2020 (Table 11.1). This means that there will be 1.12 billion people living in slums overall in 2022. The decline is especially noticeable in sub-Saharan Africa, where it increased from 50.2% to 53.6% during the same time period, and in Eastern and South-Eastern Asia, where it increased from 21.7% in 2020 to 24.8% in 2022. Additionally, access to open areas and public transportation varies by region.

Globally, only 60.6% of urban residents have convenient access to public transport. This figure drops dramatically in the least developed countries (LDCs), where only 37.3% of urban dwellers have such access, compared to 83.7% in Europe and Northern America. Just 16.2% of urban dwellers in Oceania (apart from Australia and New Zealand) have easy access to public transport, making the gap much more pronounced there. Likewise, just 44.2% of urban dwellers globally have a public place within short walking distance, indicating inadequate access to open public spaces. This percentage ranges from 21.2% in sub-Saharan Africa to as high as 71.1% in Australia and New Zealand.

Table 11.1: Proportion of Global Urban Population Living in Slums by Region, 2020 and 2022 (%)

Region	2020 (%)	2022 (%)
Sub-Saharan Africa	50.2	53.6
Central and Southern Asia	48.2	42.9
Eastern and South-Eastern Asia	21.7	24.8
Northern Africa and Western Asia	18.7	17.8
Latin America and the Caribbean	17.7	16.9
Oceania	15.3	12.2
Europe and Northern America	0.69	0.66
Australia and New Zealand	0.03	0.03
World Average	24.2	24.8

Source: The Sustainable Development Goals Report, UN, 2024.
Note: Oceania does not include Australia and New Zealand.

There are significant regional differences in the advancement of SDG 11. With 53.6% of its metropolitan population living in slums and just 33.8% having easy access to public transport, Sub-Saharan Africa has the most pressing problems. With 334 million people living in slums, Central and Southern Asia has the highest levels of urban air pollution in the world, with PM2.5 levels reaching 54.2 µg/m³ between 2015 and 2019. Globally, there has been mixed progress in reaching SDG 11, with many areas still facing urban issues such poor housing, limited access to services, and environmental deterioration.

11.3. Assessment of National Progress on SDG 11

Indicator 11.1.1. Proportion of urban population living in slums, informal settlements or inadequate housing

According to data from United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 58.31% of Bangladesh's urban population lived in slums, informal settlements, or inadequate housing in 2000. This percentage had decreased to 51.51% by 2022 (Table 11.2). However, the pace of improvement is slow compared to the government's ambitious targets of reducing this proportion to 30% by 2025 and 20% by 2030. It's worth noting that, according to the Population and Housing Census 2022, the proportion of people living specifically in slums is estimated to be 1.09% in 2022.

Table 11.2: Proportion of National Urban Population Living in Slums Informal Settlements, or Inadequate Housing

2014	2016	2018	2020	2022	2025 (T)	2030 (T)
53.8	53.16	52.51	51.87	51.51	30	20

Source: Website of United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, and Monitoring & Evaluation Framework of SDGs: Bangladesh Perspective, GED, 2018.

11.4.1. Total per capita expenditure on the preservation, protection and conservation of all cultural and natural heritage, by source of funding (public, private), type of heritage (cultural, natural) and level of government (national, regional, and local/municipal)

Bangladesh's expenditure on the preservation, protection, and conservation of cultural and natural heritage has shown a fluctuating trend from 2016 to 2021. According to multiple

government sources[34], the totals per capita spending (including both public and private sources) ranged from a low of PPP$1 in 2018 to a high of PPP$2.4 in 2016 (Table 11.3). The amount spent in 2021 was PPP$2.2. Bangladesh is close to meeting its spending goals of PPP$2.3 by 2025 and PPP$3.54 by 2030, notwithstanding these variations. This implies that the nation is still on course to reach the spending targets established for historic protection, notwithstanding the irregular spending pattern. It might be possible to meet the 2030 target with consistent work. In the upcoming years, more constant and gradually increasing funding techniques will probably be necessary for the nation to reach these aims.

Table 11.3: Per capita spending on the preservation, protection and conservation of cultural and national heritage (in PPP$)

2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2025(T)	2030(T)
2.4	1.3	1	2	1.3	2.2	2.3	3.54

Source: Finance Division, Ministry of Finance of Bangladesh; Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change of Bangladesh; Ministry of Cultural Affairs of Bangladesh. (Note: T indicates target values)

11.5.1. Number of deaths, missing persons and directly affected persons attributed to disasters per 100,000 population

One crucial metric under SDG 11 is the indicator for the number of disaster-related deaths and directly impacted individuals per 100,000 population. A decrease in the frequency of disaster-related deaths and injuries indicates improved mitigation techniques and increased preparedness. The number of affected individuals per 100,000 people has shown a favourable trend, declining from 12,881 in 2015 to 3,578 in 2021, according to Bangladesh Disaster-Related Statistics 2021 released by BBS. By 2025 and 2030, the government hopes to reduce this number to 2,000 and 1,500, respectively.

Indicator 11.5.2 Direct economic loss attributed to disasters concerning the global gross domestic product (GDP)

The direct economic loss attributed to disasters in Bangladesh, in terms of GDP damage to critical infrastructure and the number of disruptions to basic services, rose to 1.32% of GDP in 2021, up from 1.30% in 2015, according to the Bangladesh Disaster-Related Statistics (BDRS) Report 2021.

Table 11.4: Direct economic loss attributed to disasters concerning the global gross domestic product (GDP) (as% of GDP)

2015	2021	2025(T)	2030(T)
1.3	1.32	<1	<1

Source: Finance Division, Ministry of Finance of Bangladesh; Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change of Bangladesh; Ministry of Cultural Affairs of Bangladesh, and Monitoring & Evaluation Framework of SDGs: Bangladesh Perspective, GED, 2018. Note: T indicates target values.

[34] Finance Division, Ministry of Finance of Bangladesh; Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change of Bangladesh; Ministry of Cultural Affairs of Bangladesh.

11.6.1. Proportion of municipal solid waste collected and managed in controlled facilities out of total municipal waste generated by cities

According to the Environmental Protection Expenditure and Resource Management (EPER) Survey conducted by the BBS (2022), only 2.25% of the total municipal waste generated was properly collected and managed in controlled facilities in 2018-19. This percentage slightly decreased to 2.23% in 2019-20, and 2.43 in 2020-21, indicating a gradual decline in waste management efficiency.

Table 11.5: Proportion of municipal solid waste collected and managed in controlled facilities out of total municipal waste generated by cities (%)

2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
2.25	2.23	2.43

Source: Environmental Protection Expenditure and Resource Management (EPER) Survey, BBS, 2022.

11.6.2: Annual mean levels of fine particulate matter (e.g. PM2.5 and PM10) in cities (population weighted)

In 2015, the annual mean level of fine particulate matter was 65.6 µg/m³ (Table 11.3), which is significantly higher than the World Health Organization's guideline of 5 µg/m³ for PM2.5. The country saw a slight improvement in the following two years, with levels decreasing to 64.4 µg/m³ in 2016 and 63.9 µg/m³ in 2017. However, 2018 marked a sharp deterioration in air quality, with levels spiking to 79.6 µg/m³, the highest in the recorded period. The subsequent years showed some improvement, with levels dropping to 67 µg/m³ in 2019. However, the trend reversed again in 2020 and 2021, with levels rising to 72.4 µg/m³ and 73.4 µg/m³ respectively.

Table 11.6: Annual Mean Levels of Fine Particulate Matter (PM2.5 and PM10) in Cities (Population Weighted) from 2015 to 2022 in Bangladesh

2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023*
65.6	64.4	63.9	79.6	67	72.4	73.4	63.4	79.9

Source: Atmospheric Composition Analysis Group of Washington University in St Louis.[35], World Air Quality Report 2023, IQAir (2023*).

11.4. Key Policies and Strategies to Achieve SDG 11

Bangladesh is committed to building inclusive, secure, resilient, and sustainable cities that meet SDG 11 goals. To solve urban issues, the government has implemented a number of laws and plans, making it possible for cities to expand while meeting the demands of the environment and their citizens. With groups like RAJUK, CDA, and UDD carrying out development plans that cover more than 11% of the nation's land, urban planning has become a crucial component of this endeavour. These programs seek to strengthen social services, encourage regional economic growth, and improve infrastructure. Upgrading drainage and

[35] See more on: https://sites.wustl.edu/acag/datasets/surface-pm2-5/ and https://dashboards.sdgindex.org/profiles/bangladesh/indicators

sewerage systems has also been given top priority, demonstrating the government's dedication to developing liveable and useful urban areas.

Targeted programs for low- and middle-income groups have made headway in housing construction, another crucial area. These initiatives have benefited greatly from the work of organisations like the National Housing Authority and RAJUK. Significant obstacles still exist, though, such as the high cost of land and the little participation of the private sector. Public-private partnerships, which could be crucial in increasing housing access, have not yet been completely created, and the mortgage market is limited. Participatory methods, like Dhaka's land pooling schemes, present a viable way to maximise land usage and build cheap homes in spite of these obstacles.

Urban sustainability is greatly influenced by transport infrastructure, and Bangladesh has made significant efforts to update its systems. To ease traffic and integrate public transport networks, projects such as the Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) and Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) systems have been introduced (MIR 8FYP, GED, 2023). An important milestone has been reached with the opening of Dhaka's first metro rail line, which heralds the start of an age of more effective and ecologically friendly urban transportation. Future developments and projects, such as the installation of electric buses and pedestrian-friendly areas, are intended to improve accessibility and connection even more.

Bangladesh has also placed a strong emphasis on disaster preparedness and environmental resilience in recognition of its susceptibility to climate change. While focused programs enhance services in susceptible areas, the Urban Resilience Project fortifies building safety in cities such as Dhaka and Sylhet (MIR 8FYP, GED, 2023). The goal of disaster management initiatives like the National Plan for Disaster Management 2021–2025 and the Cyclone Preparedness Programs is to reduce hazards and adjust to the demands of rapidly increasing urbanisation. These actions demonstrate a thorough strategy for protecting urban dwellers from climatic and environmental hazards.

Waste management has also become a priority, with regulations introduced to promote recycling, private-sector involvement, and sustainable waste disposal practices. The Kaultia Waste-to-Energy Power Plant and the Integrated Solid Waste Management Improvement Project aim to modernize waste handling while reducing environmental pollutants (MIR 8FYP, GED, 2023). Meanwhile, air quality management has gained traction, with the government implementing standards under the Air Pollution (Control) Rules 2022 and promoting clean energy solutions to tackle the rising health risks associated with urban air pollution. Currently, the interim government of Bangladesh has undertaken some initiatives right after assuming office to improve the air and environmental quality of the country such as stalling issuing permits for new brick kilns, shutting down kilns without environmental clearance, stricter implementation of laws and regulations about public transportation’s fitness so that they do not exhaust harmful gasses into the air, etc. Along with government initiatives, general population too needs play their respective roles to improve air qualities to be non-toxic for the urban population.

11.5. Major Challenges

Bangladesh is expected to experience a surge in urbanization as it moves towards becoming a high-income country. According to the 2022 national census, the country's urban population is around 54 million, making up 32% of the total population (BBS, 2022) . The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) projects that Bangladesh's population will peak at 185 million by 2041, with the urbanization rate reaching about 60% by 2050 (World Bank, 2022). Bangladesh's economic development has both possibilities and challenges as a result of its fast urbanisation. Two crucial concerns that need to be resolved for this urban growth to spur economic development and assist Bangladesh in becoming a high-income country are highlighted in a World Bank report: (i) making sure Bangladesh's capital, Dhaka, can continue to be productive in spite of its expanding population; and (ii) developing other cities outside of Dhaka and Chittagong to attract formal businesses and skilled workers, thus establishing new hubs for economic growth and productivity (World Bank, 2022).

Lack of Proper Housing Facilities: To achieve SDG Indicator 11.1.1 (Proportion of urban population living in slums, informal settlements or inadequate housing), the government of Bangladesh wants to reduce the proportion of the urban population living in slums or informal settlements by 25% by 2025 while it is 51.51% in 2022 (UNDESA, 2023). With the current trend in the progress of reducing population living in slums, informal settlements or inadequate housing, it is not possible to achieve the target. Rapid rural to urban migration has exacerbated the issue as the demand for housing keeps rising. The supply side remains unaddressed as there has been no visible step from both the public and private sector to solve the problem so far.

Air Quality at Alarming Level: Bangladesh faces serious challenges with air pollution and environmental management, particularly in Dhaka city. According to the World Air Quality Report 2023, Dhaka's air pollution reached critical levels in early 2023, ranking it as the world's most polluted city at the time. Fine particulate matter (PM2.5) levels regularly exceed WHO safety limits, with major sources being vehicular and industrial emissions, construction activities, and brick kilns. These factors show the importance of serious consideration from the government's part in achieving SDG indicator 11.6.2 (Annual mean levels of fine particulate matter (e.g. PM2.5 and PM10) in cities). The Annual Mean Levels of Fine Particulate Matter measured in 2022 was 63.4, much higher than the WHO recommended level. Although the government has made efforts to develop green spaces and address river encroachment problems, progress remains limited, and the effectiveness of these measures in meeting quality standards remains uncertain.

Substandard Urban Transportation and Traffic Management: While the government prioritized the MRT system to tackle Dhaka's traffic congestion, other critical areas like integrated public transport, traffic management, and infrastructure for non-motorized transport have lagged behind. The city continues to struggle with deteriorating road conditions, substandard public transportation, insufficient parking facilities, and uncoordinated urban planning. In addition, urban transport is a major contributor to urban air pollution in Dhaka and Chittagong. The dismal performance in the indicator 11.6.2 is the reflection of uncoordinated urban transport planning. Along highways, district roads, and rural roads, particulate matter and road dust pose serious health risks during the dry season,

particularly affecting the poor who work or walk near the roadside. Implementation of a better urban transportation system will be helpful in achieving SDG indicator 11.6.2.

Poor Municipal Waste Management: As one of South Asia's fastest-growing urban economies, Bangladesh has seen a rapid increase in waste generation with no concrete waste management efforts. Given that only 2.43% of municipal solid waste is collected and managed in controlled facilities out of the total municipal waste generated by cities, Bangladesh is significantly behind in making satisfactory progress towards indicator 11.6.1. Current municipal waste management efforts focus primarily on collecting and disposing of waste, with limited cost-effective strategies for waste reduction and recycling. As a result, large amounts of uncollected and untreated waste contribute to public health hazards. Poor waste management leads to the spread of communicable diseases.

Addressing Data Gaps for Effective Monitoring: A critical challenge in achieving overall SDG 11 is the absence of comprehensive data for many indicators (especially, 11.2.1, 11.5.1, 11.5.2, 11.6.1, and 11.b.2, etc.) which impedes accurate assessment and policy formulation. To overcome this, the government must invest in robust data collection and management systems. This will enable better monitoring, evaluation, and informed decision-making, ensuring that urban development aligns with sustainable growth objectives.

11.6. Recommendations for Future Action

Bangladesh must address issues with urbanisation, environmental management, and governance if it hopes to meet SDG 11. Building inclusive and sustainable cities requires addressing data, housing, transportation, and disaster resilience gaps. Sustainable urban development can be significantly advanced by targeted efforts in these areas.

Improving Housing and Upgrading Slums: Enhancing housing conditions and reducing the prevalence of slums should remain a top priority. Greater investment in affordable housing projects is essential, complemented by collaborations with the private sector and NGOs to upgrade existing slum areas. Expanding access to housing loans for low-income groups can address the increasing demand for housing while promoting financial inclusion. These measures will help reduce the proportion of the urban population living in slums, informal settlements, or inadequate housing, contributing to the achievement of Indicator 11.1.1.

Advancing Sustainable Urban Transportation; Urban transportation systems require immediate upgrades to address congestion and promote sustainability. Accelerating the implementation of Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) and Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) systems is vital. Simultaneously, developing pedestrian and cyclist-friendly infrastructure and deploying smart traffic management systems can significantly improve mobility and reduce air pollution in cities. Air pollution will be reduced in cities by promoting sustainable transportation options, thereby contributing to the achievement of Indicator 11.6.2.

Strengthening Environmental Management: Environmental sustainability must be prioritized through stricter enforcement of air and water pollution control measures. Expanding urban green spaces and promoting clean energy usage across industries and households can foster healthier city environments. In parallel, waste management needs attention, with efforts to increase solid waste collection efficiency, develop recycling facilities,

and implement the Extended Producer Responsibility system to manage industrial waste effectively. Thus, achieving Indicator 11.6.1 will be facilitated by improving waste management systems through increased efficiency in solid waste collection, the development of recycling facilities, and the implementation of effective waste control measures.

Improving Urban Governance: Better governance is crucial for sustainable urban development. Enhancing coordination among development agencies and strengthening the capacity of local government institutions will improve urban planning and management. Encouraging greater public participation in planning processes can foster accountability and inclusivity. Urban Local Government Institutions (ULGIs) must be equipped with financial resources, technical expertise, and training to address the impacts of climate change, including increased migration and health challenges.

Ensuring Regular Monitoring and Evaluation: To ensure progress toward SDG 11, regular monitoring and evaluation of all indicators are indispensable. By addressing data gaps and focusing on priority areas such as housing, transportation, environment, disaster resilience, and governance, Bangladesh can create sustainable, inclusive, and resilient cities that meet the needs of its growing urban population.

11.7. Summary

Bangladesh's progress towards achieving SDG 11's goal of creating inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable cities is not satisfactory. While there have been very slight improvements in some areas, such as a reduction in the proportion of urban populations living in slums (from 58.31% in 2000 to 51.51% in 2022) and a decrease in the number of people affected by disasters, significant challenges remain. These include high levels of air pollution, inadequate waste management, and increasing urbanization pressures. The country has implemented various policies and initiatives to address these issues, including urban planning efforts, transport development strategies, and disaster management programs.

However, several major constraints hinder progress. These include rapid urbanization leading to housing shortages, severe air and water pollution, traffic congestion, declining road safety, and the proliferation of urban slums with poor living conditions. The lack of comprehensive data for many SDG 11 indicators further complicates efforts to accurately assess and address these challenges. To accelerate progress, it is recommended to focus on affordable housing development, improving urban transportation systems, strengthening environmental management, enhancing disaster resilience, and significantly improving data collection and analysis capabilities.

There is also need for coordinated action across multiple fronts to create more sustainable, inclusive, and resilient cities in Bangladesh. Key recommendations include increased investment in affordable housing, expansion of mass transit systems, stricter enforcement of pollution control measures, improved waste management, and strengthening urban governance structures. By addressing these areas and improving data monitoring, Bangladesh can work towards meeting its SDG 11 targets and improving the quality of life for its growing urban population.

12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production

12.1. Background

The earth provides humanity with a lot of natural resources on which life and economic development depend. These resources are finite and intrinsically scarce; thus, their use should be efficient and sustainable to meet current and future demands. However, these resources have been used at rates that exceed the capacity of the planet to replenish them, causing significant environmental degradation. This makes the challenge of maintaining environmental sustainability alongside economic growth urgent.

This highlights the urgent challenge of achieving environmental sustainability while fostering economic growth—a challenge that must be addressed without delay. To tackle this, the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development includes a specific goal focused on ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns: Sustainable Development Goal 12 (SDG 12).

The establishment of SDG 12 began with the Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit in 1992, when the idea of sustainable production and consumption first attracted international attention. The need to transition to more sustainable methods was acknowledged by governments and organisations across the globe. This need was further highlighted at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, which resulted in the development of frameworks and action plans based on the conclusions of earlier Earth Summits, such as the 1992 Rio Earth Summits. In order to emphasise the significance of responsible production and consumption in reaching overall sustainability goals, the United Nations formally incorporated SDG 12 in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by 2015This objective was greatly influenced by the 10-Year Framework of Programs on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns (10YFP). The aim consists of eleven targets and fourteen indicators, including monitoring policies and compliance with international standards, raising awareness and educating people, and evaluating waste management, recycling, material consumption, and clean energy.[36]

12.2. Global and Regional Context

Countries have made progress in fulfilling their commitments under international environmental agreements pertaining to chemicals and hazardous waste, as well as putting comprehensive strategies into place to stop environmental deterioration. Nonetheless, unsustainable production and consumption patterns continue to exist.

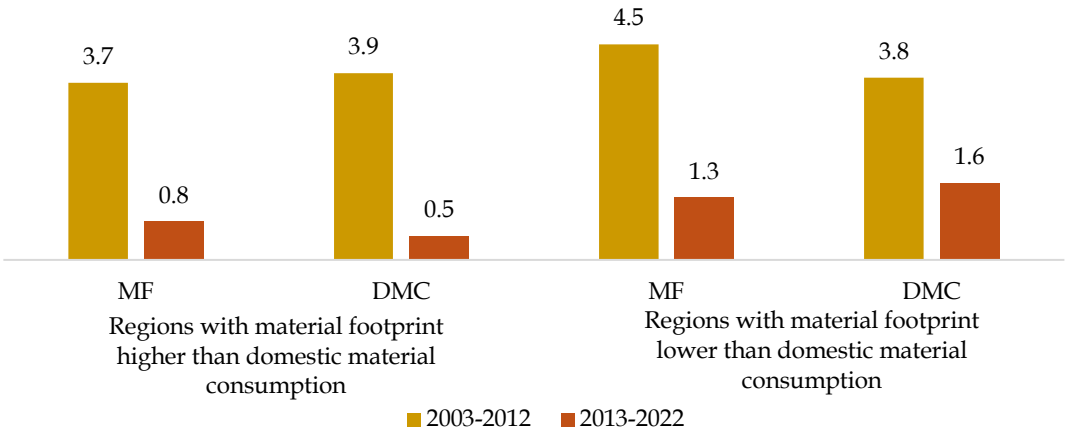
In 2021, 13.2% of food produced globally was lost after harvest and during transport, storage, wholesale and processing. A startling 1.05 billion metric tonnes, or 19%, of all food at the retail or consumption stage was wasted in 2022. For every 783 million people who were hungry in that year, around 1 billion meals of edible food were wasted every day, or 1.3 meals per person. The Global Sustainable Development Report 2024 revealed an intriguing conclusion: in areas like Eastern and Southeastern Asia, where the material footprint (the total amount of

[36] Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations

raw materials used) exceeds domestic material consumption (the amount of material consumed within the region), the latter is rapidly slowing down. However, in nations where domestic material consumption exceeds material footprint, the compound annual growth rate is declining more quickly than the rate of decline for domestic material consumption (see Figure 12.1).

Additionally, the quantity of e-waste produced rose from 6.3 to 7.8 kilogrammes per person between 2015 and 2022, with 62 million metric tonnes produced in 2022. Only 1.7 kilogrammes per person were collected and managed in an environmentally responsible manner. The majority of e-waste was either exported to low-income countries with inadequate or non-existent management infrastructure or recycled improperly, despite the fact that over 40% of it was collected in high-income countries. Even if domestic material footprints and consumption are still increasing, growth rates have decreased (UN, 2024).

Figure 12.1: Compound annual regional growth rate of material footprint and domestic material consumption, 2003-2012 and 2013-2022 (%)



Source: The Sustainable Development Goals Report, UN, 2024.

The implementation and further development of SDG 12, on sustainable consumption and production, has been facilitated through a multitude of initiative types. The 10-Year Framework of Programs on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns, launched at the Rio+20 Conference in 2012, was a catalyst for this action through its six thematic programs for promoting sustainable policies and practices worldwide. [37]Meanwhile, the One Planet Initiative is a dynamic global community of practice that advances 10YFP through the connective role of governments, businesses, and civil society to amplify impact through collective solution. [38] The Global Opportunities for Sustainable Development Goals, GO4SDGs, which was founded in 2019, focused on aligning the action of global partnerships with regional needs toward policy coherence, innovation, and youth empowerment to

[37] UN Environment Programs: 10 Year Framework of Programs on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns

[38] The One Planet Network (2021)

support inclusive and sustainable economies.[39] Aggregated, all these initiatives represent one universal move toward achieving responsible consumption and production.

12.3. Assessment of National Progress on SDG 12

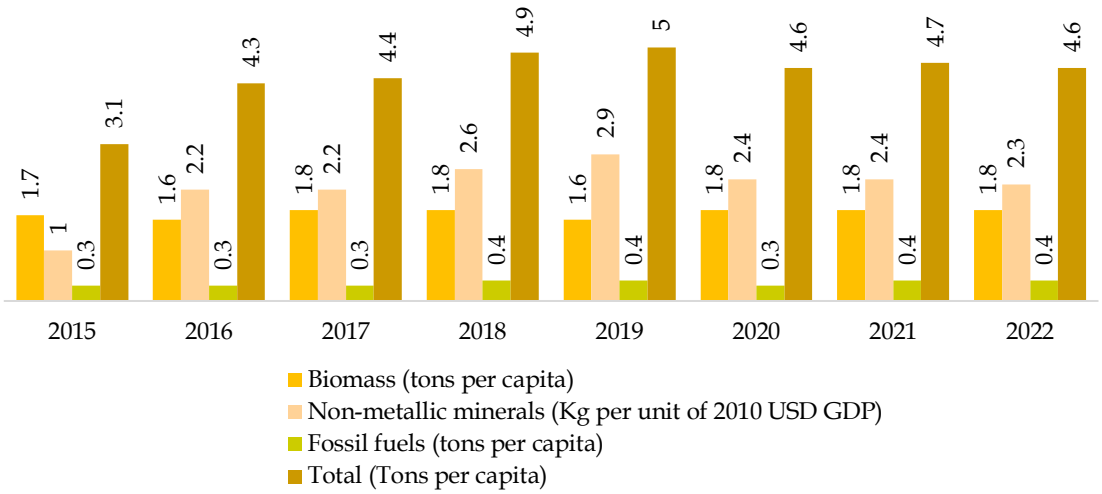
Indicator 12.1.1. Number of countries developing, adopting or implementing policy instruments aimed at supporting the shift to sustainable consumption and production

Bangladesh has previously included Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) in its national policies and strategies, including the National Sustainable Development Strategy and the Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan. A 10-year SCP framework has already been accepted by Bangladesh. In order to accomplish SDG 12, the government has incorporated the promotion of sustainable production and consumption systems in industries into its Environmental Strategies and Activities under the 8FYP (MIR 8FYP, GED, 2023). In addition, Bangladesh has participated in a number of regional and global initiatives, including the South Asia Sustainable Consumption and Production Programs, to promote the exchange of best practices and cooperative SCP projects.

Indicator 12.2.1. Material footprint, material footprint per capita, and material footprint per GDP

Material use by Bangladeshis increased steadily between 2015 and 2022, driven by the growth of non-metallic minerals and fossil fuels. Biomass use stayed relatively steady between 1.7 to 1.8 tons and mineral use peaked in 2019 at 2.9 kg per unit of GDP and levelled off since then (see Figure 12.2). From 2018, consumption started to increase from 0.3 to 0.4 tons per capita. Consumption has gone up from 3.1 tons in 2015 to 5 tons in 2019. After the pandemic levelling, it was around 4.6-4.7 tons, which seems to have stabilized.

Figure 12.2: Material footprint per capita in Bangladesh (disaggregated)



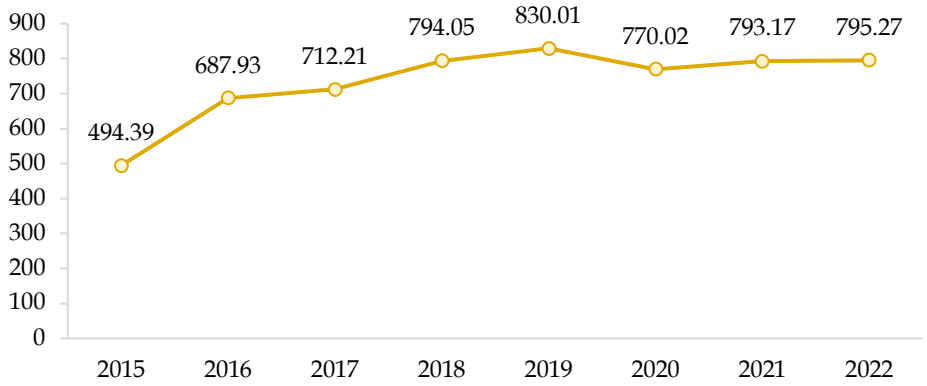
Source: UNESCAP Data Explorer.

The resource consumption trajectory of Bangladesh is highlighted by the SDG 12.2.1 statistics. According to the data, resource consumption is on the rise, rising from 494 million tonnes in

[39] UN Environmental Programs: Global Opportunities for Sustainable Development Goals (2024)

2015 to 830.01 million tonnes by 2019, then declining slightly to 795.27 million tonnes in 2022 (Figure 12.3).

Figure 12.3: Material footprint per capita in Bangladesh (Total – million tons)

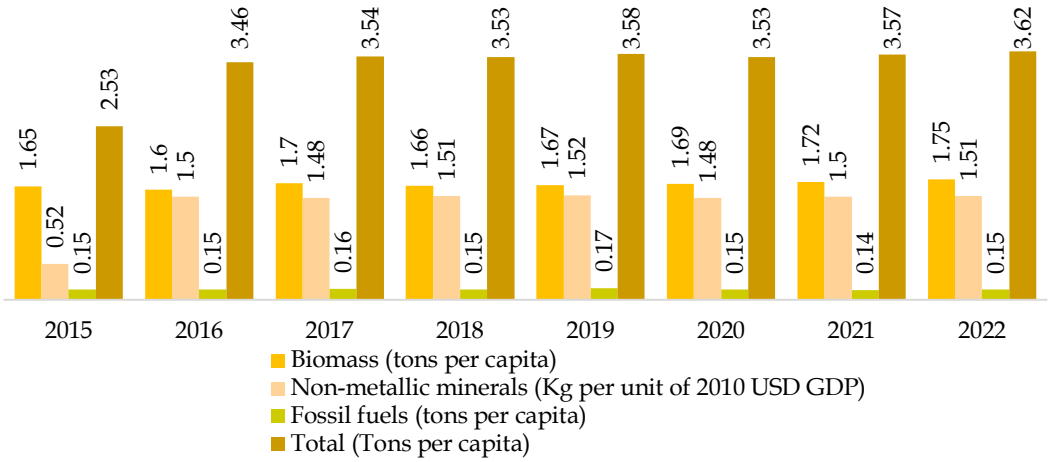


Source: UNESCAP Data Explorer

Indicator 12.2.2. Domestic material consumption, domestic material consumption per capita, and domestic material consumption per GDP

Per capita material consumption in Bangladesh increased gradually from 2015 to 2022 (see Figure 12.4). Biomass consumption remained stable while increasing from 1.65 to 1.75 tons per capita; non-metallic minerals had a jump in the first instance, remaining from 2016 onwards at about 1.5 kg per unit of GDP, whereas fossil fuel consumption remained low, ranging between 0.15 and 0.17 tons. Material consumption per capita in all therefore rose from 2.53 to 3.62 tons.

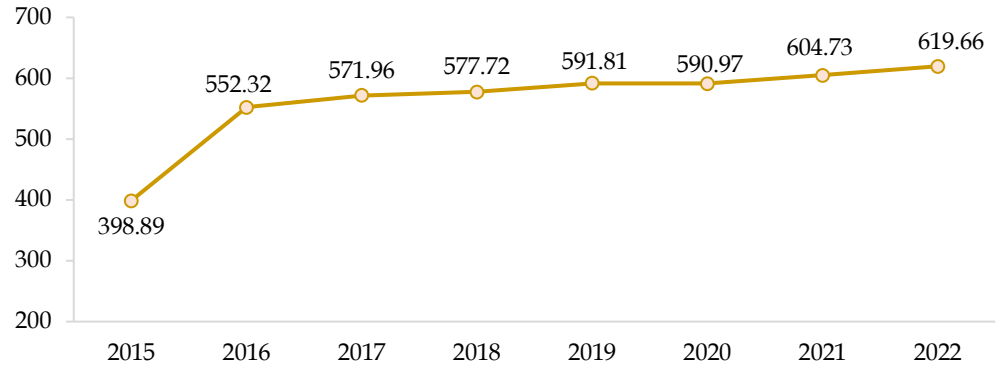
Figure 12.4: Domestic material consumption per capita in Bangladesh (disaggregated)



Source: UNESCAP Data Explorer

The actual data for Bangladesh's resource consumption shows a consistent upward trend, reaching 619.7 million tons in 2022 (see Figure 12.5).

Figure 12.5: Domestic material consumption total in Bangladesh (disaggregated total – million tons)



Source: UNESCAP Data Explorer

Indicator 12.3.1.(a) Food loss index[40] (b) Food waste index

According to the "Food Waste Index Report 2024" released by the Nairobi-based United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), households in Bangladesh waste on average 14.1 million tonnes of food annually, which was 10.62 million tonnes in 2021, implying an increase of 32.8% over the last three years. A Bangladeshi wastes 82 kg of food each year on average in 2024, up from 65 kg per in 2021, according to Food Waste Index Report 2021 and 2024 by UNEP and WRAP. The food waste for an average Bangladeshi (per capita food waste) increased by 26.2% during 2021-2024.

Indicator 12.4.1. Number of parties to international multilateral environmental agreements on hazardous waste, and other chemicals that meet their commitments and obligations in transmitting information as required by each relevant agreement

As per the Department of Environment (DoE) in Bangladesh, the country's compliance rate for hazardous waste and chemicals against international environmental agreements stood at 58.66% in 2022. The outcome reflects partial engagement but highlights significant failures in meeting international obligations. A compliance rate below 60% manifests deficiencies in data transmission and adherence to reporting requirements, possibly denting Bangladesh's environmental credibility at the global level.

Indicator 12.4.2. (a) Hazardous waste generated per capita; and (b) Proportion of hazardous waste treated, by type of treatment

Between 2018 and 2021, Bangladesh faced ongoing challenges in hazardous waste management, with treatment levels remaining low despite changes in waste generation. The per capita generation of hazardous waste saw a slight fluctuation, dropping from 27.78 kilograms (kg) in 2018-19 to 25.89% in 2019-20, before increasing to 27.25 kg in 2020-21 (MWM Survey, BBS, 2022) (see Table 12.1).

Table 12.1: Hazardous waste generated per capita (kilogram)

2018-19	2019-20	2020-21

[40] Data on 12.3.1 (a) Food loss index is not available for Bangladesh. Food loss index calculates food loss from farm/production level to retail level while food waste index measures retail to consumption level food waste.

27.78	25.89	27.25

Source: Municipal Waste Management (MWM) Survey 2022, ECDS Cell, BBS, SID, GoB.

Nevertheless, the percentage of treated hazardous waste showed only a slight increase, from 0.23% in 2018-19 to 0.26% in 2020-21 (see Figure 12.7). This slight increase indicates significant waste processing infrastructure shortcomings, posing potential environmental and public health risks.

Table 12.2: Proportion of hazardous waste treated (%)

2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
0.23	0.25	0.26

Source: Municipal Waste Management (MWM) Survey 2022, ECDS Cell, BBS, SID, GoB.

Indicator 12.5.1. National recycling rate, tons of material recycled

The national recycling rate in the country has gone up only modestly from 14.9% in the fiscal year 2018-19 to 15.6% in 2020-21 as per the Municipal Waste Management (MWM) Survey (BBS, 2022) (Table 12.3). The amount of waste recycled has also increased very slightly since FY 2019 at 5.38 metric tons to FY 2021 at 5.48 metric tons (Table 12.4). This increasing trend charts a growth in the recycling culture over time. The limited progress towards recycling indicates to significant barriers to higher rates of material recovery and sustainability in the waste sector.

Table 12.3: National Waste Recycling Rate (%)

2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
14.91	15.03	15.59

Source: Municipal Waste Management (MWM) Survey 2022, BBS.

Table 12.4: Waste Recycled in Bangladesh (metric ton)

2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
5.38	5.27	5.48

Source: Municipal Waste Management (MWM) Survey 2022, BBS

Indicator 12.6.1. Number of companies publishing sustainability reports

The government of Bangladesh has directed large companies to submit their sustainability reports in a timely manner. By 2022, a total of 49 companies listed in the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) in Bangladesh have successfully submitted their sustainability reports, demonstrating their commitment to integrating sustainable practices and providing transparency in their operations according to the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), 2024. However, a large percentage of companies have still not adopted the practice of sustainability reporting.

Indicator 12.a.1. Installed renewable energy-generating capacity in developing and developed countries (in watts per capita)

Bangladesh's renewable electricity capacity has shown steady growth, increasing from 2.66 watts per capita in 2015 to 4.21 watts per capita in 2020 as per the SREDA data (Table 12.4).

Table 12.5: Renewable Electricity Capacity in Bangladesh (in watts per capita)

2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
2.66	2.807	3.188	3.483	3.818	4.214

Source: SREDA

Indicator 12.c.1. Amount of fossil-fuel subsidies (production and consumption) per unit of GDP

Fossil-fuel subsidies in Bangladesh, measured per unit of GDP, were zero in FY 16 and FY 17. They increased to 0.11% in FY 18 and peaked at 0.60% in FY 19 (Table 12.5). Subsequently, subsidies decreased to 0.20% in FY 20 and 0.22% in FY 21 according to SREDA and increased to 7.1% in 2022 according to the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) data. The fossil-fuel subsidies (consumption and production) in Bangladesh reached 25.9 billion of nominal USD as of 2022 (UNESCAP, 2024).

Table 12.6: Amount of fossil-fuel subsidies (production and consumption) per unit of GDP (% of GDP)

2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2022*
0.00	0.00	0.11	0.60	0.20	0.22	7.1*

Source: Finance Division (FD), Ministry of Finance (MoF) (2015-16 to 2020-21) and UNESCAP (2022*)

12.4. Key Policies and Strategies to Achieve SDG 12

Bangladesh has implemented a number of policies and strategic initiatives to advance the principles of sustainable development, primarily by achieving SDG 12, which emphasises responsible production and consumption. The government has implemented policy programs aiming at waste reduction, effective resource management, and support of sustainable practices across sectors in recognition of the environmental demands posed by rising urbanisation, industrial growth, and resource consumption. The Green Banking Policy, the 3R Strategy for Waste Management, the National Strategy for Sustainable Development, and other initiatives demonstrate Bangladesh's dedication to striking the right balance between environmental stewardship and economic prosperity. These are a variety of strategies and policies designed to help Bangladesh transition to a circular economy with low environmental impact, conservation of resources, sustainable long-term growth, and responsible patterns of production and consumption.

In order to achieve SDG 12, Bangladesh is developing a 10-year Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) framework with the goal of promoting circular economy, sustainable development, and green growth. With the help of cooperative efforts with both domestic and foreign partners, this program aims to provide precise standards and metrics for responsible production and consumption. By involving key stakeholders, including the private sector, and encouraging innovations that reduce ecological impact, Bangladesh's SCP framework will help align national practices with global sustainability standards, as envisioned in the Roadmap for Responsible Consumption and Production in 10 years prepared by UNDP in 2018, contributing to a more balanced and resource-efficient economy by 2030.[41]

[41] Roadmap for Responsible Consumption and Production in 10 Years, 2018.

The Bangladesh Standards and Guidelines for Sludge Management (2015) by the Department of Environment outlines procedures for safely managing sludge from water and wastewater treatment plants. It offers disposal techniques and classification guidelines with the goal of assisting operators in treating sludge responsibly. By encouraging environmentally friendly waste management techniques, this guideline supports SDG 12. To cut down on waste production, the Department of Environment (DOE) also adopted the National 3R for Waste Management back in 2010. The three Rs in this context stand for reduce, reuse, and recycle. (FAO, 2023).

The goal of Bangladesh's 8th Five Year Plan (8FYP, 2021–2025) is to promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth. The Plan describes a number of tactics to guarantee environmentally sustainable development over the long run. These tactics include, among other things, expanding employment opportunities, boosting women's labour market participation, improving worker skill development, and giving small and medium-sized businesses access to credit.

By integrating sustainability into all aspects of business operations, the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) is spearheading a revolutionary change in the ready-made clothing sector. With 206 accredited facilities, BGMEA has the biggest concentration of LEED-certified green factories in the world, demonstrating its strong environmental credentials. In addition to goals for gender equality, workplace safety, and community well-being, the BGMEA Sustainability Strategic Vision 2030 sets ambitious targets in the environmental, social, and governance (ESG) domains, including energy efficiency, waste reduction, water management, and carbon emission reduction (Department of Environment, 2015).

Transparency and accountability are strengthened through BGMEA's GRI-based Sustainability Report, SDG alignment, and the ESG Digital Data Reporting Platform, which enhances data-driven decision-making. BGMEA also champions renewable energy through solar power collaborations with Green Power Ltd and Huawei, and further supports sustainable practices with the SWITCH2CE project for waste reduction and the CREATE project to promote circular economy models. The Centre of Innovation, Efficiency and Occupational Safety and Health (CIEOSH), which offers training to improve safety standards, emphasises the importance of worker well-being (FAO, 2023).

With an emphasis on youth and sector-based employment, the Ministry of Labour and Employment's National Employment Policy 2020 seeks to generate 30 million new jobs by 2030. The policy, which embraces the ideas of the circular economy, emphasises the expansion of jobs in reprocessing industries such as metals and wood, which require more workers than the extraction of raw materials. It is anticipated that rising recycling rates will increase demand for waste management services and promote long-term job growth.

In short, Bangladesh is committed to implementing SDG 12 through strategic policy frameworks that ensure sustainable consumption and production. The initiatives such as the 10-year SCP framework and the National 3R Strategy address environmental concerns while allowing economic growth. The pledge for sustainability followed by the garment industry is a good example of how smoothly the country is shifting towards a circular economy. With an

enhancement in these policies, it is getting closer to a balance between economic development and care for the environment.

12.5. Major Challenges

Low Number of initiatives for SCP: Though the government has adopted some policy instruments to achieve SCP (indicator 12.1.1), any significant implementation measures have not been observed so far. Mentionable measures or policies have not been found in the mid-term review (MIR) of 8FYP regarding this.

Food Waste and Loss in Supply Chains: Despite high rates of undernourishment, a huge amount of food is lost or wasted at every stage along supply chains including retail, food service, household and individual level wastages in Bangladesh affecting indicator 12.3.1. Poor methods of harvest, combined with inefficiencies in transportation, storage, and distribution systems, make food loss high, adding to food insecurity.

Low Recycling and Waste Management Capacity: Limited progress towards national waste recycling indicates to significant barriers (indicator 12.5.1) as most of the municipalities in Bangladesh have very little recycling infrastructure. Therefore, very minimal rates of recycling and extremely high reliance on landfills can be found. Lack of sufficient recycling facilities, minimal public awareness, and inadequate waste segregation practices contribute to inefficient resource recovery, putting pressure on land resources and increasing pollution.

High Dependency on Fossil-Fuel Subsidies: The subsidies for fossil fuel mean affordability in Bangladesh but create a barrier to the transition towards renewable sources of energy. High dependencies on fossil-fuel subsidies observed from indicator 12.c.1, inhibits the development of sustainable energy while straining government finances, impacting the ability to finance alternative energy projects and initiatives toward emission-reducing.

Insufficient Hazardous Waste Management: Very little improvement of hazardous waste treatment compared to its generation (indicator 12.4.2) shows that hazardous waste management remains one of the problems. Bangladesh does not have enough facilities and regulatory mechanisms for the treatment and safe disposal of hazardous wastes. The generation of electronic waste has also risen steadily, but Bangladesh lacks an effective system for managing e-waste.

Dependency on Traditional Energy Sources: The country's reliance on conventional energy sources, such as coal and natural gas, conflicts with global sustainability targets. This dependence increases greenhouse gas emissions, while limited adoption of renewable energy sources slows progress toward cleaner energy goals (indicator 12.a.1).

Limited Corporate Engagement in Sustainability Reporting: A large portion of companies in Bangladesh have still not adopted the practice of sustainability reporting, indicating limited corporate accountability and transparency in environmental practices affecting indicator 12.6.1. Often the industries in Bangladesh are slow to adopt sustainable practices, such as resource efficiency, waste reduction, and pollution control.

Weak Monitoring and Data Collection Systems: Bangladesh faces challenges in monitoring and collecting data related to sustainable consumption and production (12.1.1). Inadequate

data hinders the ability to track progress, identify gaps, and assess the effectiveness of sustainability initiatives, making it difficult to make informed policy decisions.

12.6. Recommendations for Future Action

Gradually Reduce Fossil-Fuel Subsidies: A phased approach to reducing fossil-fuel subsidies, with redirected support toward renewable energy investments, can ease the transition to cleaner energy. This shift can be supported by incentives for renewable energy projects, which would lessen dependence on non-renewable sources over time impacting indicators 12.c.1 and 12.a.1.

Investing in Recycling Infrastructure and Strengthening Hazardous Waste Management Systems: Expanding recycling facilities and systems across the country can improve resource recovery and reduce landfill reliance. Increasing investments in hazardous waste treatment facilities and enhancing regulatory frameworks are necessary for safe waste disposal. Proper training and enforcement of disposal standards can reduce environmental contamination and health risks associated with hazardous waste. Educational campaigns to promote waste segregation and recycling practices are essential to increase public participation in sustainable waste management. All these will help achieve indicators 12.4.2 and 12.5.1.

Reducing Food Loss and Waste in Supply Chains: Implementing better storage, transportation, and distribution systems can help reduce food loss and waste from post-harvest level to retail-consumption levels (indicator 12.3.1). Targeted interventions, such as improving cold storage and training supply chain workers, can ensure more food reaches consumers and reduce overall waste.

Promoting Sustainable Material Use: Policies promoting resource efficiency and material substitution can help manage high material consumption impacting indicators 12.2.1 and 12.2.2. Industries can be encouraged to adopt circular economic practices, such as reusing and recycling materials, to reduce dependency on non-renewable resources.

Developing E-Waste Collection and Recycling Systems: Creating formal e-waste collection, recycling, and disposal systems can address the rising e-waste challenge. Partnerships with private sector entities can help establish e-waste management facilities that safely recycle electronic waste and reduce environmental harm (12.4.2 and 12.5.1.).

Facilitating the Adoption of Green Industrial Practices: Providing technical support, financial incentives, and training can encourage industries to adopt environmentally friendly practices which will facilitate sustainability reporting by companies (indicator 12.6.1). Access to eco-efficient technologies and resources can help industries reduce waste, conserve resources, and minimize pollution.

Establishing Robust Monitoring and Data Collection Systems: Developing systems to monitor sustainable consumption and production indicators can improve data availability and accuracy. Comprehensive data collection can help track progress, identify gaps, and provide a basis for evidence-based policy adjustments needful for monitoring and implementing all the indicator related activities.

12.7. Summary

With 49 businesses releasing sustainability reports by 2022 and a national trash recycling rate rising to 15.59% by FY 2020–21, Bangladesh is making headway towards Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 12. The capacity to generate renewable energy, particularly solar energy, has significantly increased, rising from 2.66 watts per capita in 2015 to 4.21 watts per capita in 2020.

Significant obstacles still exist, though, such as the high rate of food waste, the poor infrastructure for recycling, and the dependence on fossil fuel subsidies that impede the shift to renewable energy. Furthermore, many businesses do not report on sustainability, and hazardous waste management is inadequate. Reducing fossil fuel subsidies, funding recycling facilities, enhancing hazardous waste management, minimising food loss, and encouraging the use of renewable energy sources are some suggestions for resolving these problems. To assess progress and inform policy, it is also crucial to build strong monitoring systems and raise public awareness.

13 CLIMATE ACTION

SDG 13: Climate Action

13.1. Background

Climate change is a real and undeniable threat to our entire civilization. The effects are already visible and will be catastrophic unless we act now. SDG 13, titled "Climate Action", is aimed at combating climate change and its impacts by taking urgent action at both national and global levels. It emphasizes building resilience to climate-related hazards, integrating climate measures into policies, and improving awareness and capacity. Through education, innovation and adherence to our climate commitments, it is targeted to make the necessary changes to protect the planet. These changes also provide huge opportunities to modernize our infrastructure which will create new jobs and promote greater prosperity across the globe.

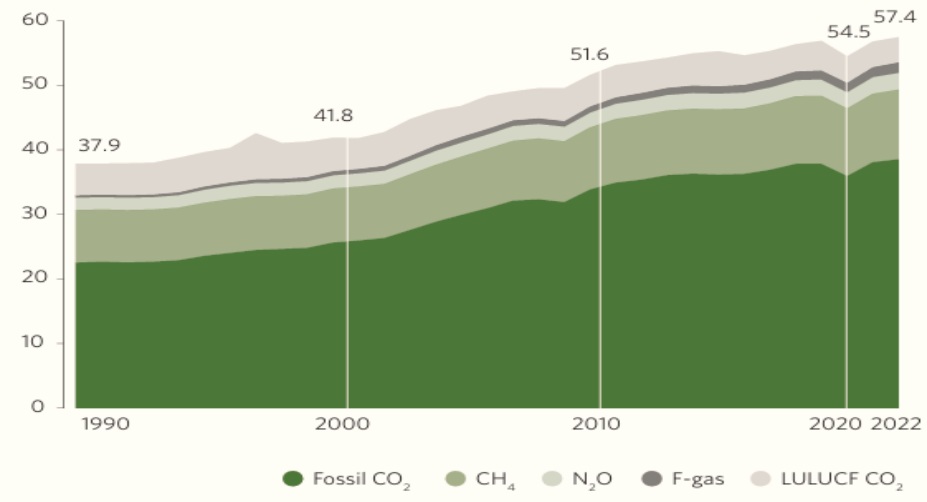
The SDG targets were historically established a few months before the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement, which is likely why the objectives stated in SDG 13 were broader and more general in nature. However, the goals set in the agreement were much more specific and the UN recognizes that global sustainability frameworks are complementary and reinforced so the goal of SDG 13 is to achieve the Paris Agreement. The agreement was formally ratified by 193 countries and these targets are set to be achieved by the year 2030.

13.2. Global and Regional Context

Climate records were shattered in 2023 as the climate crisis accelerated in real time. Rising temperatures have not abated and global greenhouse gas emissions continue to climb. Communities worldwide are suffering from extreme weather and increasingly frequent and more intense disasters, destroying lives and livelihoods daily. Meanwhile, fossil fuel subsidies hit a record high.

The world is failing to meet climate goals, as evidenced by the highest-ever greenhouse gas emissions. The United Nations Environment Program's Emissions Gap Report 2023 states that global greenhouse gas emissions hit a new high of 57.4 gigatons of CO2 equivalent in 2022. CO2 from industrial operations and the burning of fossil fuels makes for around two thirds of emissions. Emissions from every major sector, with the exception of transport, have recovered from the epidemic and are currently higher than they were in 2019. Due to the growth of coal- and gas-fired power generation, the energy sector continues to be the major contributor, accounting for 86% of worldwide CO2 emissions (United Nations, 2024).

Figure 13. 1: Total net anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions, 19902022 (gigatons of CO2 equivalent)



Source: United Nations Environment Program's Emissions Gap Report, UNEP, 2023.
Note: Total net anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions include CO2 emissions from fossil fuels and industry (fossil CO2), CO2 emissions and removals from land use, land use changes and forestry (LULUCF CO2), methane (CH4) emissions, nitrous oxide (N2O) emissions and fluorinated gas (F-gas) emissions reported under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

Climate finance is crucial in backing global mitigation and adaptation efforts. Developed countries committed to mobilizing USD 100 billion annually in climate finance for developing countries by 2020 and through 2025. Based on OECD figures, by 2022, developed countries were approximately halfway towards meeting this goal. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) estimates that nearly USD 6 trillion is needed for developing countries' climate action plans by 2030. Fossil fuel subsidies hit a historic high in 2022 exceeding a whooping USD 1.5 trillion. No improvements in terms of temperature too as 2023 was recorded as the warmest year. However, preparedness for disasters lowered mortality rates caused by disasters(UNEP, 2023).

Another report, The-Sustainable-Development-Goals-Report-2023, suggests, the impact of the climate crisis, the war in Ukraine, a weak global economy, and the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have revealed weaknesses and hindered progress towards the goals. It was also evident from the report that while lack of progress is universal, it is the world's poorest and most vulnerable who are experiencing the worst effects of these unprecedented global challenges. It also points out areas that need urgent action to rescue the SDGs and deliver meaningful progress for people and the planet by 2030.

13.3. Assessment of National Progress on SDG 13

Indicator 13.1.1. Number of deaths, missing persons and directly affected persons attributed to disasters per 100,000 population

The number of affected people in recent years declined specially between 2014 to 2019. Between these five years the number of affected people declined threefold from 12881 in 2014

to 4318 in 2018. The downward trend continued in 2021 when the number of affected people per 100,000 population declined further to 3578.

Table 13.1: Number of deaths, missing persons and directly affected persons attributed to disasters per 100,000 population

	2015 (Base)	2019	2021	2025 (T)	2030 (T)
Affected per 100000 persons	12,881	4,318	3,766	2,000	1,500
Death per 100000 persons	0.20	0.32	0.85	0.18	0.15

Source: BDRHS, BBS, Statistics and Informatics Division (SID), Ministry of Planning & Impact of Climate Change on Human Life (ICCHL) Programme, BBS.

Indicator 13.1.2. Number of countries that adopt and implement national disaster risk reduction strategies in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030

The Sendai Framework focuses on the adoption of measures which address the three dimensions of disaster risk (exposure to hazards, vulnerability and capacity, and hazard's characteristics) in order to prevent the creation of new risk, reduce existing risk and increase resilience (*UNDRR*, 2015). The government of Bangladesh has shown commitment to disaster risk reduction (DRR) by aligning national strategies with global frameworks such as the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR).

The first of its type in Bangladesh, the National Plan for Disaster Management (NPDM) 2010-2015 established a fundamental framework for disaster management. In order to move from reactive disaster response to proactive disaster risk reduction, it concentrated on tackling catastrophe risks holistically. The Disaster Risk Reduction Strategies of Bangladesh (2016–2020) were another significant move, representing a paradigm change away from reactive, relief-based disaster management and towards a more proactive strategy focused on disaster risk reduction. The National Plan for Disaster Management (NPDM 2016-2020), which included extensive steps to improve resilience, was a translation of this approach, which placed an emphasis on capacity building. The NPDM 2021-2025 is an updated framework that incorporates national and international protocols, such as the 8th Five Year Plan and the Delta Plan 2100, and builds on the experiences learnt from the 2016-2020 plan. It additionally addresses rising concerns such rapid urbanisation and climate change. The plan incorporates gender-responsive and disability-inclusive approaches and emphasizes public-private partnerships to ensure business continuity during disasters(MoDMR, 2020). The credibility of the climate change initiative has always been a source of concern. Despite commendable efforts in formulating policies and developing plan of actions, it is largely seen as a rhetoric to propel the case for more funds.

Indicator 13.1.3. Proportion of local governments that adopt and implement local disaster risk reduction strategies in line with national disaster risk reduction strategies

The government has adopted the National Disaster Management Plan along with provisions to engage civil society organizations and local government authorities to work together during any natural disasters. According to MoDMR, in 2019, 8.33% of the City Corporations and 0.99% of the *Paurashavas* have adopted and implemented local disaster risk reduction strategies. It is important to note that, there are a total of 12 city corporations in Bangladesh

and only one of them adopted and implemented local disaster risk reduction strategies in line with national disaster risk reduction strategies.

Indicator 13.2.1. Number of countries with nationally determined contributions, long-term strategies, national adaptation plans and adaptation communications, as reported to the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

The primary objective of the UNFCCC convention is "stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system. Such a level should be achieved within a time frame sufficient to allow ecosystems to adapt naturally to climate change, to ensure that food production is not threatened and to enable economic development to proceed in a sustainable manner (*United Nations Framework Convention*, 1992).

In 2021, the nation revised its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), broadening its emission reduction goals to include the entire economy rather than just the energy sector. In order to improve climate resilience and conform to UNFCCC adaptation procedures, Bangladesh has also created a Draft National Adaptation Plan (NAP) that focusses on eight important sectors and is projected to cost USD 230 billion between 2023 and 2050.

Indicator 13.2.2. Total greenhouse gas emissions per year

The updated Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) 2021 of Bangladesh targets an unconditional contribution to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 6.73% below business as usual (BAU) levels by 2030 and a conditional 15.12% reduction by the same timeframe (Ministry of Environment, Forest, 2021). Bangladesh has also successfully implemented the required obligation for Montreal Protocol.

Energy, Industrial Processes and Product Use (IPPU), Agriculture, Forestry, and Other Land Use (AFOLU), and Waste were the four sectors with the highest greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions (in $MtCO_2e$) from 2015 to 2019 (see Table 13.2). The largest contributor to emissions was the energy sector, which increased from 97.33 $MtCO_2e$ in 2015 to 115.26 $MtCO_2e$ in 2019. Although it had the lowest emissions, the IPPU sector's growth from 2.83 $MtCO_2e$ in 2015 to 4.26 $MtCO_2e$ in 2019 was erratic. Over time, AFOLU emissions increased marginally from 69.22 $MtCO_2e$ to 72.64 $MtCO_2e$, remaining comparatively constant. A steady increase from 18.6 $MtCO_2e$ to 21.04 $MtCO_2e$ was observed in the waste sector. From 187.98 $MtCO_2e$ in 2015 to 213.2 $MtCO_2e$ in 2019, overall GHG emissions rose gradually.

Table 13.2: Sector-wise GHG emissions (MtCo2e)

Sectors	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Energy	97.33	104.22	105.34	111.57	115.26
IPPU	2.83	3.08	3.18	3.06	4.26
AFOLU	69.22	70.34	69.81	71.84	72.64
Waste	18.6	19.15	19.77	20.4	21.04
Total GHG Emissions (MtCO2e)	187.98	196.79	198.1	206.87	213.2

Source: First Biennial Update Report of Bangladesh to UNFCCC, June 2023, DoE, MoEF&CC.

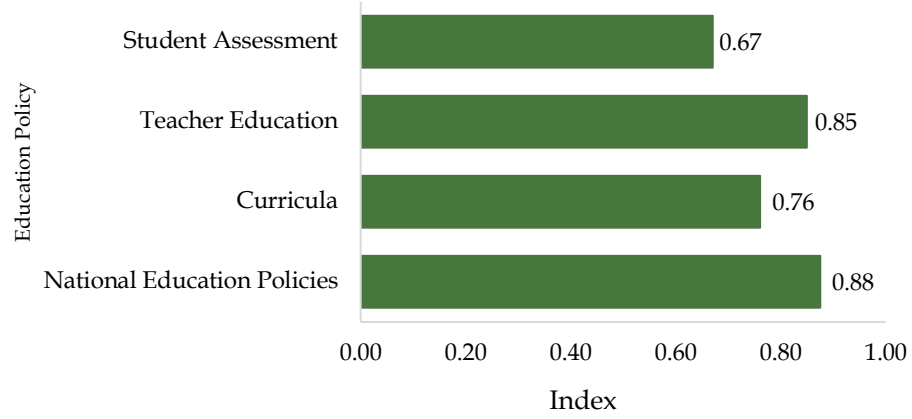
Bangladesh is pursuing a low-carbon development path with increasing emphasis on renewable energy and energy efficiency. To do that, it has installed Solar and Wind power plants and has invested in building a nuclear power plant as well. These initiatives are in line with the measures that are necessary to be implemented to achieve zero carbon emission, one of the 3 Zero aims towards achieving the vision of a world without 3 Zeros, which are zero poverty, zero unemployment, and zero carbon emission.

Indicator 13.3.1. Extent to which (i) Global Citizenship Education (GCED) and (ii) Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) are mainstreamed in (a) national education policies; (b) curricula; (c) teacher education; and (d) student assessment

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is UNESCO's response to the urgent challenges facing our planet. Education for Sustainable Development empowers people with the knowledge, skills, values, attitudes and behaviours to live in a way that is good for the environment, economy, and society. It encourages people to make smart, responsible choices that help create a better future for everyone.[42]

Ministry of Education, Bangladesh has introduced a new Education Policy in 2010. Components of ESD and GCED have been embedded in this policy. Among the 30 objectives stated in the policy, objectives 7, 11, 18, 28, and 29 are directly connected with ESD, GCED and SDGs.[43] The concept of ESD and GCED are included in the different areas of the National Curriculum Framework 2021(UNESDOC, 2024). The mainstreaming of the components is quite evident from the index of the different components. This index suggests to what extent the following categories were able to mainstream GCED and ESD. A value of 1 or closer to 1 would suggest high levels of mainstreaming whereas 0 or closer to 0 would mean lower levels of mainstreaming. The values of the index on each of the education policy suggest a fairly high level of mainstreaming (see Figure 13.2).

Figure 13.2: Index of Mainstreaming Global Citizenship Education and Education for Sustainable Development in National Education Policies, Curricula, Teacher Education, and Student Assessment



Source: Secondary and Higher Education Division (SHED), Ministry of Education (MoE), 2022.

[42] Education for sustainable development | UNESCO

[43] Ministry of Education

Indicator 13.a.1. Amounts provided and mobilized in United States dollars per year in relation to the continued existing collective mobilization goal of the $100 billion commitment through to 2025

In Bangladesh, only two organizations are accredited as Direct Access Entities (DAEs) (PKSF & IDCOL), while there are 16 International Accredited Entities (IAEs) working in Bangladesh. Until December 2023, nine projects were approved in Bangladesh with USD 442.6 million. There are deficits of prioritization for adaptation activities in Bangladesh. For instance, USD 141.8 million (32.0 percent) is allocated for adaptation while the allocation is USD 256.5 million (58.0 percent) for mitigation, and USD 44.4 million (10.0 percent) for cross-cutting.

Bangladesh needs invest at least USD 12,000 million from domestic and international sources by 2025 to combat the adverse impact of climate change. A total of USD 1189.5 million has been approved for Bangladesh from national and international sources, representing only 9.9% of the country needs. Green Climate Fund (GCF) approved USD 448.8 million for projects including RPSP activities in Bangladesh. The contribution of GCF is only 3.7% of the total requirement. Notably, GCF is yet to prioritize capable and potential institutions to implement innovative projects on results-based payments and activities related to carbon sequestration and carbon market.

Indicator 13.b.1. Number of least developed countries and small island developing States with nationally determined contributions, long-term strategies, national adaptation plans and adaptation communications, as reported to the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

Bangladesh, as a least developed country, has implemented several key policies and strategies to address climate change and enhance resilience in line with the UNFCCC. The Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (BCCSAP), first introduced in 2009 and updated in 2022, provides a comprehensive framework for climate action. The country's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC), updated in 2021, set ambitious targets for reducing emissions and promoting sustainable development. The Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100 outlines a 100-year strategy focused on long-term water, food security, and reducing vulnerability to natural disasters.

The National Adaptation Plan (NAP) for 2022-2050 focuses on key sectors like water resources, agriculture, and disaster management, ensuring the country's ability to adapt to climate change. Additionally, Bangladesh has implemented the Plan of Action to Implement the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 and the National Plan for Disaster Management 2021-2025 to improve disaster preparedness. The National Solar Energy Roadmap (2021-2041) and the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Master Plan (up to 2030) further highlight the country's focus on transitioning to renewable energy and improving energy efficiency. These strategies demonstrate Bangladesh's commitment to climate change mitigation and adaptation, reported under the UNFCCC.

13.4. Key Policies and Strategies to Achieve SDG 13

Bangladesh is one of the countries that faces a lot of climate vulnerabilities. It is ranked seventh among the countries affected due to climate change. What is more concerning is,

Bangladesh's contribution to global warming is negligible but due to externalities, it is among the most affected countries. That is why, the Government of Bangladesh (GoB), Ministry of Environment (MoE), Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) and Ministry of Water Resources (MoWR), are working with other relevant stakeholders to make the country climate resilient. Bangladesh has, therefore, made great strides in enhancing its regulatory and institutional frameworks towards realizing climate-resilient sustainable development. Over the years, the government formulated and implemented various policies, plans, and programs to address climate change and disaster management. Below are some of the policies and strategies that were taken to make the country more climate resilient:

- Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (BCCSAP), 2009 (updated in 2022)
- Bangladesh Climate Change Trust Act, 2010
- Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC), 2015 (Enhanced & Updated in 2021)
- Bangladesh Delta Plan, 2100
- National Adaptation Plan (NAP), 2022
- Mujib Climate Prosperity Plan (MCPP) 2022-2041
- Bangladesh Climate Fiscal Framework, 2020
- Disaster Management Act, 2012
- National Disaster Management Policy, 2015
- Standing Orders on Disaster 2019
- Plan of Action to Implement Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030
- National Strategy on Internal Displacement Management 2021
- National Plan for Disaster Management 2021-2025
- National Solar Energy Roadmap, 2021-2041 (Draft)
- Bangladesh Energy Efficiency and Conservation Master Plan up to 2030
- Renewable Energy Policy of Bangladesh, 2008
- Bangladesh National Action Plan for Reducing SLCPs, 2012, Updated in 2018
- National Action Plan for Clean Cooking, 2020-2030

Aside from these, there were a couple of other regulations that were taken for environmental protection. They are:

- Air Pollution (Control) Rules, 2022
- Solid Waste Management Rules, 2021
- Hazardous Waste (E-waste) Management Rules, 2021
- Bangladesh Biodiversity Conservation Act, 2015
- Ecologically Critical Area Management Rules, 2016
- Bangladesh Environment Conservation Act, 1995, (Updated in 2010)

Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (BCCSAP) which only had six thematic areas to focus, now revised to consist of eleven thematic areas to capture the changing circumstances. However, as demoralizing as it sounds, Bangladesh failed to implement any of the 77 odd action plans brought forward by the plan. Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC)'s expanded its emission reduction strategy from only the energy sector to the whole economy of the country. Bangladesh Delta Plan 100, comprehensive strategic plans were also developed to achieve a safe, climate-resilient, and prosperous delta with a mission to ensure

long term water and food security, economic growth and environmental sustainability. It also includes the goal to reduce climate vulnerability to natural disasters. The National Adaptation Plan (NAP) is expected to be the main strategic document under the UNFCC process in the future to implement adaptation actions in developing countries. This is also believed to enhance our adaptation ambition. However, it is still in the baby stage of implementation, coordinated efforts are necessary to fulfil the adaptation aspirations. Government of Bangladesh established Bangladesh Climate Change Trust Fund (BCCTF) in FY 2009-10 from its own resources is also an approach to focus on adaptation, mitigation and climate change research. Aside from such financing strategies, the government also adopted the Climate Fiscal Framework (CFF) to make climate inclusive Public Financial Management (PFM) system.

Several measures have been taken to achieve its aspirations. A large number of volunteers currently work under the Cyclone Preparedness Programs (CPP). Cyclone shelters were constructed across the coast along with food shelters and disaster relief warehouses. To provide early warning for anticipatory action in reducing loss and damage, it established community radio networks as well as Interactive Voice Response.

Rehabilitation of the Climate displaced people were also among the key initiatives. Bangladesh has taken *"Khurushkul Ashrayan Prokalpa"* the world's biggest housing project for climate refugees in Cox's Bazar to construct 139 five-stored buildings with modern facilities to shelter 4,409 climate refugee families. The country is also moving towards a low-carbon development path as it increases its focus on renewable energy, though the realization of the agenda remains far from achievable. It also took initiatives in terms of Research and Development specifically in the crops, so that they can cope with the change in climate.

Recently, the government of Bangladesh has initiated a project that aims to eliminate the notorious biodegradable plastic bags and replace them with newly invented bags made from jute fibre.

13.5. Major Challenges

Climate Vulnerabilities: Despite contributing only 0.56% of global emissions, Bangladesh ranks as the seventh most vulnerable country to climate-related devastation, according to the 2021 Global Climate Risk Index by German watch. This vulnerability is reflected in real-world impacts: between 2000 and 2019, Bangladesh endured 185 extreme weather events, resulting in economic losses amounting to USD 3.72 billion. These figures highlight the disproportionate impact of climate change on the country, despite its minimal contribution to global emissions.[44] The threat of climate change to Bangladesh is undeniable and multifaceted. Here's a breakdown of some of the key elements that endanger progress and the overall climate scenario in Bangladesh.

- Sea-Level Rise and Coastal Erosion is one of the greatest threats as Low-lying coastal areas are particularly vulnerable to the rise in sea levels that have exacerbated erosion, flooding, and salinity intrusion in Bangladesh. It threatens not only the livelihoods of

[44] How the Climate Crisis Is Impacting Bangladesh | The Climate Reality Project

millions of people in the coastal areas but also puts agricultural productivity at risk due to soil degradation and loss of arable land.

- Growing number of extreme weather events: Such disasters include cyclones, floods, storm surges, in addition to large-scale destruction of infrastructure, houses, and crops, resulting in considerable economic loss.
- Climate Injustice in Bangladesh: As the country contributes only a small share to global greenhouse gas emissions, the country faces some of the most severe climate consequences. The emissions from wealthier, high-emission countries far exceed those from Bangladesh, yet it is the people of Bangladesh who disproportionately suffer the impacts. This imbalance underscores the injustice in which nations with minimal responsibility for climate change are bearing the greatest burden of its effects.

Financial Barriers: The lack of adequate financing of climate adaptation and mitigation measures is a serious challenge. This is even though Bangladesh has executed well-needed locally led climate adaptation programs that have been quite successful. According to the "Key Highlights: Country Climate and Development Report for Bangladesh, World Bank, 2023", the scale of the investment needed in terms of increasing resilience is approximately 3% of GDP. Considering this it is estimated that additional financing needed for climate action at medium term in Bangladesh will stand at about USD 12.5 billion. The financing gap can partially be covered through additional funds from budget prioritization, carbon taxation, external financing, and private investment. However, mobilization of funds remains a challenge due to the limited access to international climate finance, especially adaptation measures that require investment in the long term.[45] The lack of scientific evidence attached with the approach put forward by the government of Bangladesh (GoB) has contributed to low financing from international communities. The story of a not-so-trustworthy managing of funds made ensuring funds even more difficult.

Disbursement delays are also prevalent in GCF-funded projects in Bangladesh. Only 13.3% of the approved funds have been disbursed (TIB, 2024). The first instalment of the disbursement was delayed for three years in a project. The delayed disbursement of the fund not only hindered the project implementation but also exacerbated climate vulnerabilities in the project areas (*TIB*, 2024). For example, Bangladesh's 'Climate Resilient Infrastructure Mainstreaming' project was approved in 2015. After two years of approval, the fund was not disbursed. Consequently, the loss and damage in the project area increased due to delays in fund disbursement and project implementation.

On top of the existing inadequacies in this regard, climate funding is also at risk of further reduction due to the impact of past Covid-19 pandemic as well as the congoing Russia-Ukraine war and the war in the Middle East. Such natural and human emergencies often shift donor funding away from causes such as climate change, prolonging the climate vulnerabilities of the people from developing and underdeveloped countries. To reduce such uncertainties, strong commitments of donor countries and organizations to the cause of mitigating climate change is imperative.

[45] Key Highlights: Country Climate and Development Report for Bangladesh

Institutional and Capacity Constraints: While there have been commendable efforts at the level of formulating climate policies and action plans, there are gaps related to institutional capacity. In general, coordination across different ministries and local government bodies hinders the proper implementation of policies. Additionally, capacity-building efforts at both institutional and community levels need further enhancement to cope with the increasing frequency and severity of climate impacts.

Energy Transition: Bangladesh has made a good stride towards the adoption of renewable energy, although the country is vastly reliant on its fossil fuel reserves. Shifting to a more sustainable energy system is relevant; in view of the several challenges that need to be overcome, related to high initial costs of renewable energy technologies, infrastructure, and regulatory barriers, rapid progress is unlikely to appear. It is important to note that, still now the government provides heavy subsidies on fossil fuels.

13.6. Recommendations for Future Action

Bangladesh needs to take a number of crucial steps in order to successfully solve its climate issues and get towards SDG 13. Even though Bangladesh contributes very little to global greenhouse gas emissions, it is among the countries most negatively impacted by climate change. The need for focused actions is emphasised by the coastal regions' susceptibility, the rising frequency of extreme weather events, and the cost of adaptation. Here are a few recommendations to help reach the 13th Sustainable Development Goal.

Enhanced Access to Climate Finance: Bangladesh should strengthen its efforts to secure adequate financing for climate adaptation and mitigation measures. This includes improving access to international climate funds, streamlining the disbursement processes, and encouraging private sector investment. In order to secure international funding, Bangladesh needs to carefully devise quality action plans. Program based approach is recommended as a viable solution for long term vision. Additional focus should be placed on utilizing carbon taxation and prioritizing climate-related budgeting to bridge the current financing gap.

Expanding Renewable Energy and Reducing Fossil Fuel Reliance: A swift transition to renewable energy is essential. Bangladesh must continue expanding its renewable energy infrastructure while phasing out subsidies for fossil fuels. Investment in solar, wind, and other clean energy technologies will not only reduce carbon emissions but also support energy security in the long term. The plan to achieve 30% of renewable energy by and 40% by 2041 should not be confined to words, it needs to take proper actions to fulfil the agenda.

Institutional Strengthening and Capacity Building: The successful execution of climate policies depends on enhancing institutional competence and coordination. This can be accomplished by enhancing climate resilience in areas and sectors that are at risk through focused capacity-building initiatives at the local and governmental levels. To align the climate policies, plans, and strategies with UNFCCC guideline and Sendai Framework (indicator 13.1.2 and 13.2.2), strengthening institution and building its capacity is must.

Promoting Community Engagement and strengthening DRR: Raising public awareness of climate change and involving local communities in climate action should be given more priority, which will ultimately helping to streamline the DRR strategy (indicator 13.1.2). This

involves educating people about the advantages of adopting climate-resilient behaviours and incorporating them in the application of adaption plans. Moreover, DRR should continue to be a top priority to invest in resilient infrastructure, develop more cyclone and flood shelters, and expand early warning systems.

International Cooperation and Advocacy: Bangladesh should continue advocating for stronger global commitments to reduce GHG emission worldwide. Despite having low emissions, Bangladesh is among the nations most impacted by climate change, making it a prime candidate to take the lead in promoting climate justice internationally. Additionally, securing GCF and other international financial support requires active cooperation and collaboration with global partners.

13.7. Summary

Despite being one of the least contributors to global greenhouse gas emissions, Bangladesh faces extreme climate vulnerability, ranking seventh on the Global Climate Risk Index. The country's exposure to sea-level rise, coastal erosion, and an increasing number of extreme weather events underlines the urgency of climate action.

In terms of national progress, Bangladesh has made significant strides, especially in disaster preparedness, reducing cyclone-related deaths, and implementing frameworks like the Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100 and National Adaptation Plan (NAP). These initiatives, which emphasise enhancing infrastructure and managing climate risk, are in line with global goals and aim to increase long-term resilience.

Bangladesh, however, has a number of difficulties. Delays in obtaining international climate money make efforts much more difficult, and financial obstacles restrict the nation's ability to carry out extensive adaptation measures. Progress is nevertheless hampered by the gradual switch from fossil fuels to renewable energy sources as well as institutional capacity shortages.

Increasing access to climate finance, developing infrastructure for renewable energy, and bolstering institutional capacity are some of the main suggestions for Bangladesh. To meet its SDG 13 targets and create a more climate-resilient future, Bangladesh must take these actions in addition to ongoing disaster risk reduction initiatives.

14 LIFE BELOW WATER

SDG 14: Life Below Water

14.1. Background

Life Below Water is integrated into the global sustainable development agenda to tackle the urgent necessity of conserving and sustainably utilizing oceans, seas, and marine resources. The oceans comprise more than 70% of the Earth's surface and are essential for climate regulation, food provision, and preservation of biodiversity. However, overfishing, pollution, and climate change have severely degraded marine ecosystems. Achieving SDG 14 is crucial for long-term sustainability, as it aims to protect the health of marine ecosystems, which are vital for economic activities such as fishing and tourism, as well as the livelihoods of millions worldwide. The objective is to diminish marine pollution, safeguard marine and coastal ecosystems, and advocate sustainable fishing methods, thus improving the social, economic, and environmental aspects of sustainable development.

About 207,000 square kilometres make up Bangladesh's maritime domain, which is 1.4 times larger than its land area. Bangladesh's extensive coastline and heavy reliance on marine resources make SDG 14 especially important for the country. Many Bangladeshis rely on the Bay of Bengal for their livelihoods since it provides both food security and economic opportunity. To improve the sustainable use of marine resources and preserve biodiversity, the government has emphasised the Blue Economy initiatives.

For individuals and coastal communities to be able to depend on the ocean for their social and economic well-being, efforts must be made to reduce marine pollution and overfishing. Because it ensures the preservation and effective use of marine resources for future generations, SDG-14 is crucial for sustainable development both globally and in Bangladesh.

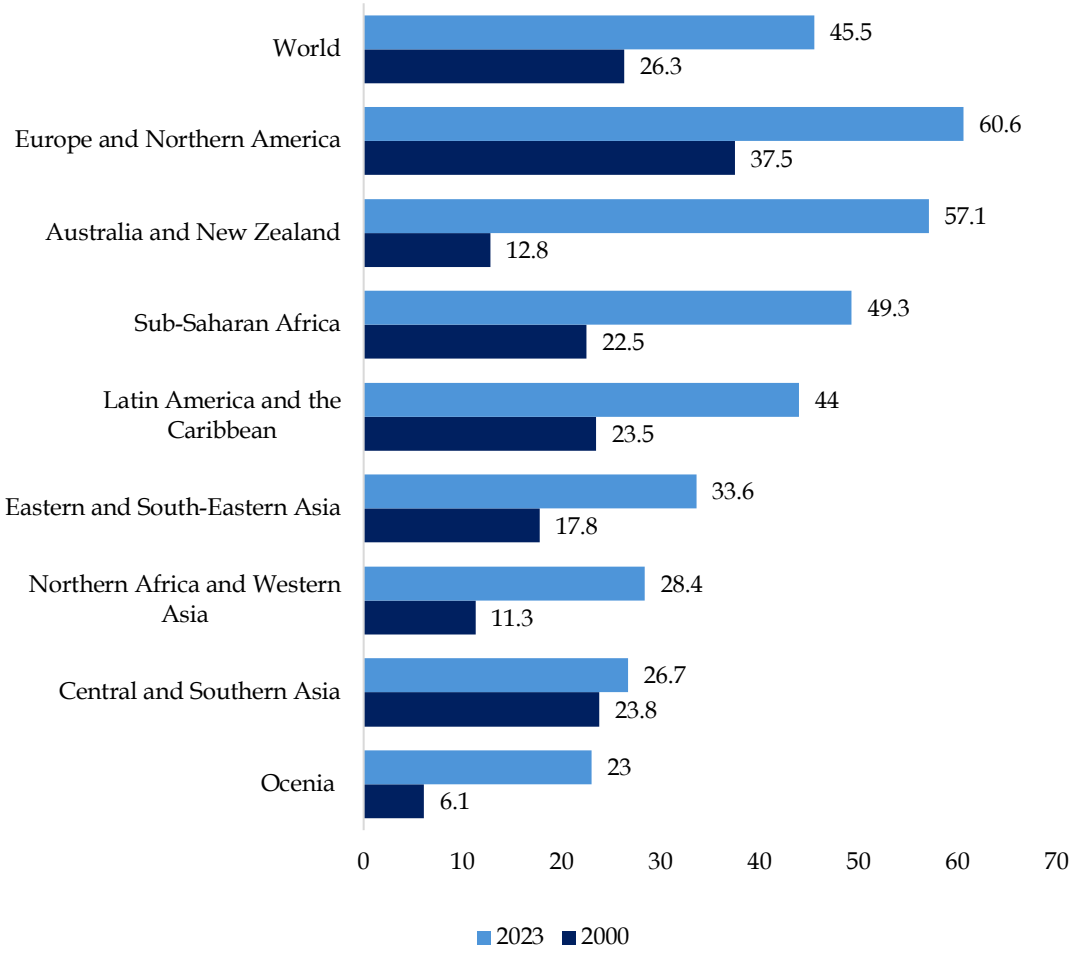
14.2. Global and Regional Context

Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) are a crucial tool for protecting marine life and maintaining marine resources. In order to preserve the environment and biodiversity, MPAs are areas of seas, oceans, estuaries, or huge lakes where human activity is prohibited. The preservation of maritime ecosystems, which are becoming more and more endangered due to pollution, overfishing, and climate change, depends on these places. By protecting marine life and letting ecosystems flourish unconstrained by humans, it contributes to biodiversity conservation. By guaranteeing that fish populations may recover and maintain healthy levels, MPAs help promote sustainable fishing. By preserving habitats like mangroves and coral reefs, which serve as organic barriers against harsh weather, it also improves climate resilience.

Over the past 20 years, MPA coverage has grown significantly on a global scale (see Figure 14.1). Compared to the early 2000s, when only roughly 26.3% of marine regions were protected, nearly half of the world's ocean area is now designated as MPAs as of 2023. Despite this progress, regional disparities exist. Due to a lack of funding, political obstacles, and conflicting economic interests, Central and Southern Asia continues to have one of the slowest rates of MPA coverage increase. Nonetheless, current programs seek to improve marine conservation in this area, emphasising hotspots for biodiversity and important ecosystems. Countries like Indonesia, the Philippines, South Africa, Kenya, Chile, Mexico, Australia, and

New Zealand have made significant progress, but other regions such as Eastern and South-Eastern Asia, Northern Africa and Western Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Oceania have made varying degrees of progress. Expanding MPAs is a step in the right direction for protecting marine biodiversity and guaranteeing the sustainable use of ocean resources, but in order to overcome regional differences and achieve the goals outlined in SDG 14, more work and international cooperation are required.

Figure 14.1: Region wise mean proportion of marine protected area, 2015 and 2023 (share in %)



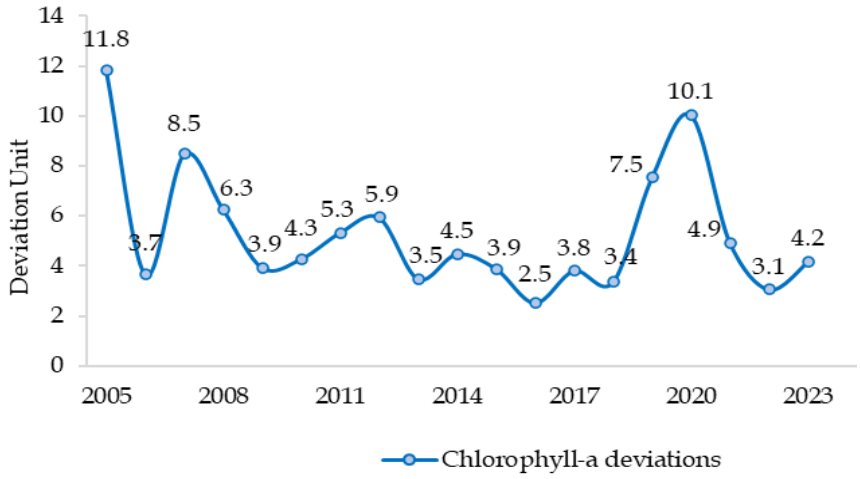
Source: The Sustainable Development Goals Report, UN, 2024.

14.3. Assessment of National Progress on SDG 14

Indicator 14.1.1. Reduce marine pollution

One of the most important markers of nutrient levels in marine environments is chlorophyll-a, a pigment found in phytoplankton. Excessive chlorophyll-a concentrations often signal nutrient pollution, leading to harmful algal blooms and oxygen depletion, while unusually low levels may disrupt the food chain. In Bangladesh, chlorophyll-a levels are highly unstable, frequently exceeding averages in Central and Southern Asia, reflecting concerning levels of nutrient pollution (see Figure 14.2).

Figure 14.2: Chlorophyll-a deviation from the global average, 2005 to 2022

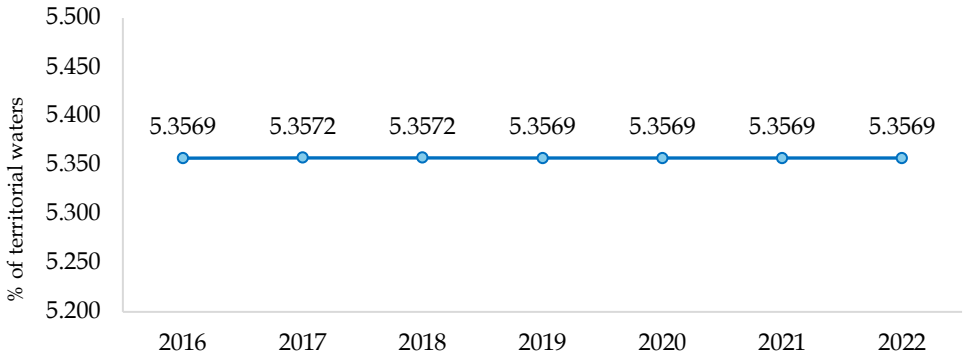


Source: UN Statistics Division

Indicator 14.5.1. Coverage of protected areas in relation to marine areas

As part of its 2019 National Plan of Action to combat illicit, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing, the government of Bangladesh has designated 8.8% of its exclusive economic zone as MPAs. Data from World Bank, 2024 showed that the MPAs in Bangladesh have stagnant at around 5.35% of territorial waters from 2016 onwards until 2022 (see Figure 14.3).

Figure 14.3: Marine protected areas (% of territorial waters)

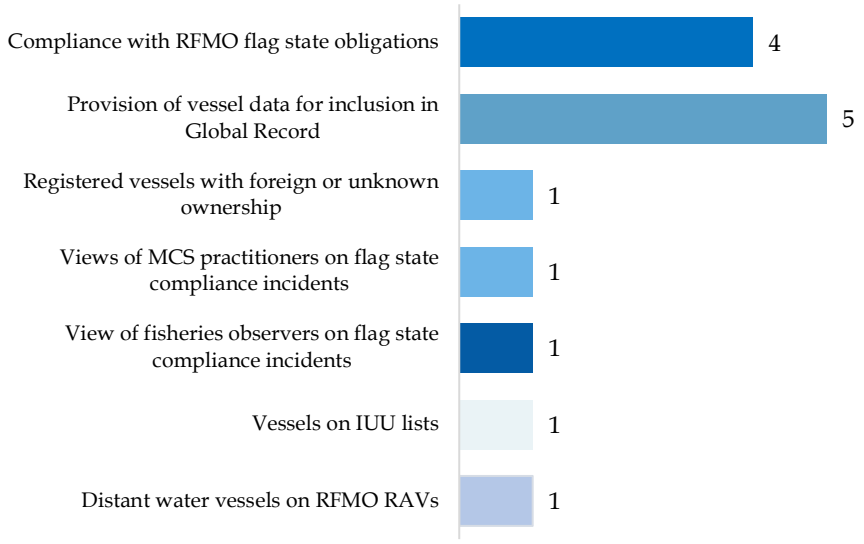


Source: World Bank (2024)

Indicator 14.6.1. Degree of implementation of international instruments aiming to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing

Bangladesh has made progress in guaranteeing adherence to the responsibilities of the Regional Fisheries Management Organisation (RFMO) and contributing vessel data to international databases such as the Global Record (see Figure 14.4). There are still major obstacles to overcome, though. There are significant enforcement gaps due to the lack of monitoring of remote water vessels, especially those owned by unknown or foreign entities. The need for more stringent monitoring and regulatory measures is highlighted by reports from Monitoring, Control, and Surveillance (MCS) practitioners and fishery observers, which point to numerous cases of non-compliance.

Figure 14.4: Fishing risk index by indicator (1 = Poor, 5 = Satisfactory)



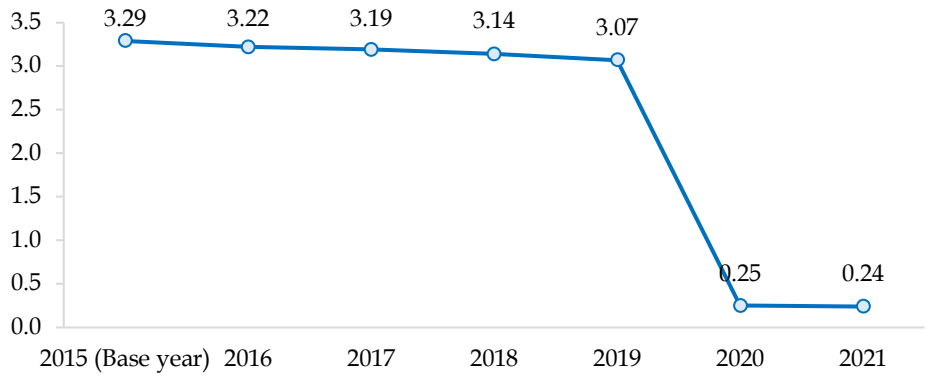
Source: IUU Fishing Risk Index 2023.

Moreover, in 2022, Bangladesh scores 3 in combating illegal fishing performance[46], reflecting moderate progress but signalling substantial room for improvement (FAO, 2023).

Indicator 14.7.1. Sustainable fisheries as a proportion of GDP in small island developing States, least developed countries and all countries

For Bangladesh, where millions depend on fishing for livelihoods, this goal holds particular significance. Sustainable management of marine and coastal ecosystems can boost food security, generate employment, and alleviate poverty while safeguarding biodiversity, potentially having positive impact on achieving zero poverty and zero unemployment in Bangladesh- two out of the 3 Zeros towards the vision of creating a world of 3 Zeros. However, achieving these outcomes requires robust governance, investment in sustainable practices, and stringent regulations to prevent overfishing and environmental degradation.

Figure 14.5: Sustainable fisheries as a proportion of GDP for Bangladesh



Source: National Accounting Wing, BBS, Statistics and Informatics Division (SID), Ministry of Planning (MoP).

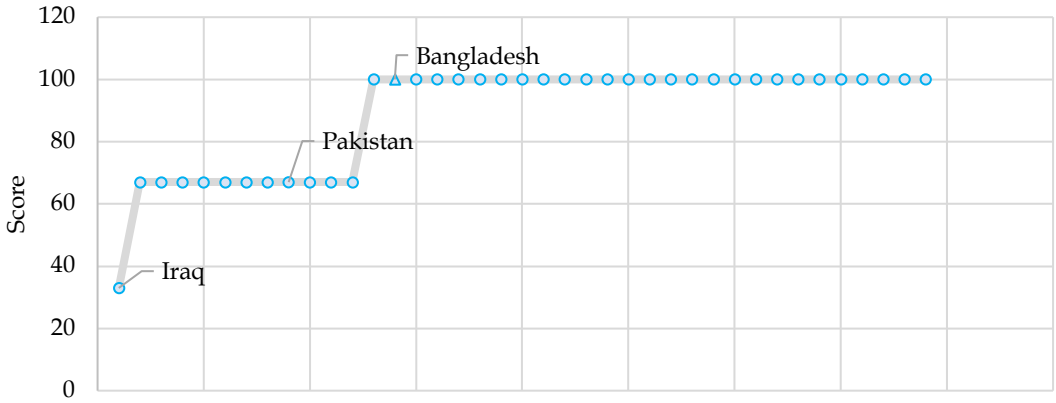
[46] The score ranges from 1 to 5 where, 1=Poor and 5= Satisfactory.

Data showed that, from 2015 to 2019, the share of sustainable fisheries to GDP gradually declined from 3.29% to 3.07%, which indicates a steady decrease in the sector's relative economic contribution. However, in 2020, there was a sharp decline to 0.25%, which remained nearly the same in 2021 at 0.24%. This drastic drop could be attributed to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, disruptions in supply chains, and other economic factors that affected the fisheries sector.

Indicator 14.c.1. Number of countries making progress in ratifying, accepting and implementing through legal, policy and institutional frameworks, ocean-related instruments that implement international law, as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, for the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans and their resources

Bangladesh, as a coastal nation with extensive reliance on marine resources, has made notable strides in ratifying the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and aligning its policies with international maritime standards (Figure 14.6).

Figure 14.6: Progress towards the ratification and accession of UNCLOS, 2023



Source: UN Office of Legal Affairs, 2023.

14.4. Key Policies and Strategies to Achieve SDG 14

The National Conservation Strategy (NCS) of Bangladesh is a comprehensive framework aimed at preserving the country's biodiversity and natural resources while advancing sustainable development. It covers important areas like biodiversity, fisheries, land, water, forests, and marine and coastal resources, outlining a comprehensive set of measures and regulations to protect these vital ecosystems. The NCS, which runs from 2021 to 2036, intends to direct national decision-making procedures and guarantee that conservation initiatives are successfully included into the nation's overall development plan.

Additionally, there is a concentrated effort to preserve important species, such as Hilsa, indicating a well-focused approach to conservation. The plan is further strengthened by international recognition, as the *Sundarban* mangrove forest's classification as a UNESCO World Heritage site and a RAMSAR site brings legitimacy and support from throughout the world. The sustainable management of marine resources is supported by initiatives to reduce pollution, such as the designation of Ecologically Critical Areas (ECAs), and seasonal prohibitions, such as the 65-day limit on shrimping and trawl fishing.

But there are certain drawbacks to the approach. The dearth of thorough information on marine resources, their interactions with human activity, and the socioeconomic effects on nearby populations is a major drawback. Furthermore, the sluggish expansion of the artisanal marine fishing industry points to inefficiencies or challenges that have not yet been successfully resolved. The execution of conservation measures is made more difficult by the requirement for collaboration amongst many government agencies and stakeholders, which frequently leads to bureaucratic obstacles. Persistent problems like pollution and climatic dangers provide tremendous challenges. However, the NCS offers significant prospects for progress, including the extension of Marine Protected Areas, which may result in improved biodiversity preservation and the sustainable utilisation of marine resources.

Notwithstanding these encouraging opportunities, the NCS is threatened by a number of serious factors. While continuous pollution from multiple sources continues to deteriorate marine habitats, climate change and growing environmental variability pose serious threats to the efficacy of conservation efforts. Conservation goals are frequently at odds with economic constraints brought on by overfishing and uncontrolled coastal development. Furthermore, unlawful activities that jeopardise conservation efforts and raise significant security issues include uncontrolled fishing and the trafficking of illegal migrants. The interaction of these elements emphasises the necessity of a robust and flexible strategy to guarantee the Bangladesh National Conservation Strategy's long-term success.

14.5. Major Challenges

Structural Deficiencies: Bangladesh lacks the essential infrastructure to manage maritime resources effectively and control pollution. Inadequate facilities for waste disposal, monitoring systems for illicit fishing, and technologies for marine conservation restrict the nation's ability to safeguard its maritime ecosystems. In order to ensure sustainable ocean governance, these shortcomings constitute significant obstacles.

Financial Constraints: Efforts to engage in sustainable fisheries management and marine conservation initiatives are severely hampered by a lack of funds. Initiatives to preserve marine species, repair habitats, and encourage ethical fishing methods are underfunded, which limits their effectiveness.

Socio-Economic Dependencies: Fishing is an essential livelihood for millions in Bangladesh's coastal communities. Introducing and enforcing restrictions in order to safeguard marine ecosystems typically competes with the financial survival of these communities, resulting in a socio-economic dilemma. A constant struggle continues between conservation and local economics.

Governance Issues: Weak implementation of existing regulations by an opaque system, corruption and weak institutional capacity impedes effective governance of marine resources. Governance flaws exacerbate the deterioration of marine habitats by allowing uncontrolled fishing, marine pollution, and a lack of accountability.

Vulnerability to Climate Change: Bangladesh, one of the most vulnerable nations to climate change, suffers drastic consequences to its marine ecosystems. Displacement and the destruction of habitat leading to the loss of biodiversity and coastal erosion are caused by

rising sea levels, ocean acidification and the increased frequency and intensity of cyclones. Such environmental changes put to strain the delicate marine ecosystems in the country.

Knowledge and Data Gaps: Little updated data and research on marine ecosystems restrict evidence-based policy making and targeted interventions. Improving the ability to gather data and conduct research is crucial for making well-informed decisions and carrying out conservation actions effectively.

14.6. Recommendations for Future Action

Expand Marine Protected Areas (MPAs): By 2025, MPA coverage should have increased from the present 5% to at least 10%, with an emphasis on areas with high biodiversity, such as mangrove forests and coral reefs. Plans for sustainable management and more stringent enforcement may fall under this category.

Combat Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing: Fight Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing: Although Bangladesh has made strides in following international rules, there are still significant enforcement gaps. Make stronger Monitoring, Control, and Surveillance (MCS) systems that use drones and satellite technologies to keep an eye on far-off watercraft, especially those owned by unknown or foreign entities. Ensure conformity with international fishing legislation.

Regulate Plastic Waste and Runoff: The fluctuating and often excessive levels of chlorophyll-a indicate significant nutrient pollution in marine waters, leading to harmful algal blooms and oxygen depletion. Implement stricter regulations on plastic usage and agricultural runoff (fertilizers and pesticides) to reduce marine pollution. Ban or limit single-use plastics and provide incentives for industries to adopt eco-friendly packaging solutions. Also, make strict regulations on using pesticides and fertilizer. Improve infrastructure for waste collection and disposal, particularly in coastal regions, to prevent marine debris from entering the ocean. This includes establishing coastal cleanup programmes and educating coastal communities on proper waste management practices.

Promote Deep Sea Fishing: Currently, the majority of fishing in Bangladesh is artisanal. The lack of suitable fishing infrastructure, such as vessels, fish ports, and contemporary fishing equipment, poses substantial hurdles to deep-sea fishing. Because fishing is a public good, the excessive reliance on artisanal fishing contributes to overfishing. To avoid overfishing and protect marine ecosystems, responsible fishing techniques, such as community-based fisheries management, must be promoted. Additionally, investment in sustainable aquaculture and environmentally friendly deep-sea fishing technologies is critical.

Incentivize Blue Economy Initiatives: Expand the Blue Economy plan by incentivising industries such as eco-tourism, sustainable marine farming, and renewable ocean energy (for example, offshore wind farms) to generate economic opportunities that support marine conservation.

Support Community-Based Conservation: Participatory co-management strategies can enhance local communities by promoting engagement and compliance. Additional potential includes investigating sustainable tourism under green principles to strike a balance between

environmental stewardship and economic growth, as well as expanding mangrove regeneration initiatives for coastal protection. Additionally, there is room for creating regional plans to address problems like piracy and illegal migration, which will enhance security and conservation results.

International Cooperation on Ocean Law: Enhance Bangladesh's cooperation with regional and international bodies to implement and enforce global ocean-related laws and treaties. This includes ratifying conventions such as the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and actively participating in Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs).

14.7. Summary

Goal 14 of the Sustainable Development Goals emphasises the crucial need of conserving and using oceans, seas, and marine resources in order to achieve sustainable development. Oceans, which span more than 70% of the Earth's surface, are critical for climate regulation, food security, biodiversity preservation, and the livelihoods of millions worldwide. However, issues such as overfishing, marine pollution, and climate change have substantially harmed marine ecosystems. Bangladesh, with a maritime region greater than its land size and a major reliance on the Bay of Bengal, sees SDG 14 as critical to preserving economic development and ecological balance.

Bangladesh has made headway in marine conservation by designating 8.8% of its exclusive economic zone as Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and ratifying international agreements such as UNCLOS. However, significant gaps remain in managing marine pollution, reducing illicit fishing, and raising sustainable fishery income. The country also has limited infrastructure, budgetary constraints, poor governance, and the devastating effects of climate change. Furthermore, despite its importance for livelihoods, its fisheries sector continues to underperform, generating less than 1% of GDP while dealing with overfishing and resource management concerns.

Moving ahead, Bangladesh must extend MPAs, tighten anti-illegal fishing measures, and regulate plastic trash and agricultural runoff. To use marine resources for economic growth and biodiversity preservation, investments in ecotourism, blue economy projects, and sustainable aquaculture are essential. Connecting local livelihoods with sustainable practices can be facilitated by enhancing marine waste infrastructure, strengthening coastal zone management, and encouraging community-based conservation. Bangladesh can make significant strides towards achieving SDG 14 targets and preserving the resilience and health of its maritime ecosystems for future generations by tackling these challenges with creative solutions and international collaboration.

15 LIFE ON LAND

SDG 15: Life on Land

15.1. Background

SDG 15- Life on Land aims to 'protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and biodiversity loss'. Humans have an intricate relationship of co-dependency with their environment, where one benefits and protects the other in different ways. However, irresponsible reaping of these benefits can put the environment at risk of degradation and permanent loss. With a total of 12 targets and 14 indicators under it, SDG-15 works to address those risks by ensuring sustainable management as well as protection of the biodiversity of each country.

Because of the fact that humankind is dependent on the natural environment for many of their life's essential necessities, such as clean air and water, the natural environment and its components are capable of influencing many human rights outcomes. For example, The Right to Health can be facilitated with better quality air and water, needless to mention the medicinal supplies that many plants and animals provide. Likewise, considering the environment and its components, such as plants, animals, and fertile lands provide the food humans eat, environments related to the Right to Adequate Food and Safe Drinking Water are rather obvious as well. Considering the fact that the population of the world is on the rise, efficient management of the environment will be crucial in order to ensure these rights for the current and future generations.

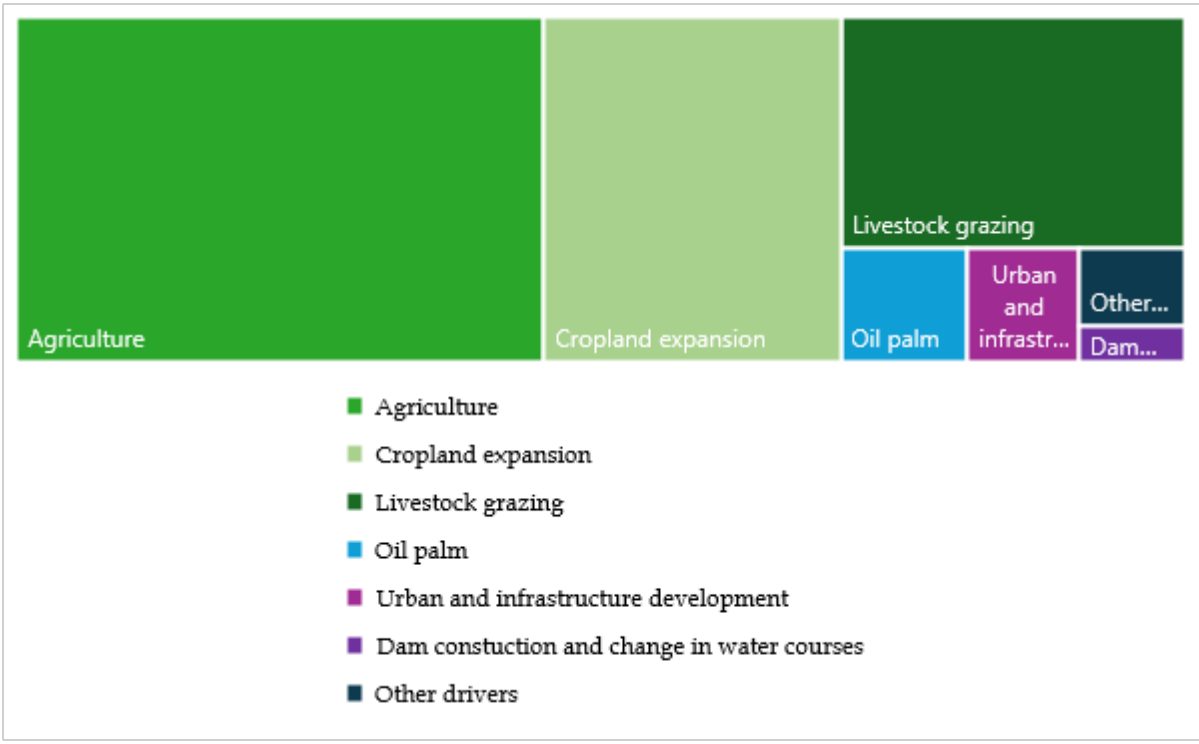
Achieving sustainable growth without the sustainable management of environmental resources, which is one of the aims of Goal 15, is close to impossible because of humankind's dependency on the environment for economic and biological resources. The nature of each country is not only a source of life through air, water, and food, but also that of livelihood as many people earn a living through fishing, foraging, and farming. On the other hand, natural endowment of a country often shapes the economies and determines the path of economic prosperity, or the lack thereof, of the respective countries as resource such as fertile lands, minerals, and fuels function as the inputs of the economic production process. As the population increases, and economies grow, the demands and dependencies on the environment will increase and draining the natural resources too much may put the future generations at the risk of limited economic prosperity and scarcity. Thus, achieving Goal is critical for achieving sustainable growth of any nation and its economy.

15.2. Global and Regional Context

Protecting terrestrial ecosystems, preserving biodiversity, preventing desertification, and stopping land degradation are the main objectives of Sustainable Development Goal 15. The environment is still becoming worse because of climate change, population pressure, and man-made disasters, even with international efforts. These issues are taken to light in the Sustainable Development Goals Report 2024, which states that agricultural growth was the main cause of the world forest cover's reduction from 31.9% to 31.2% between 2000 and 2020 (see Figure 15.1). Similarly, between 2015 and 2019, at least 100 million hectares of productive

land were lost annually, indicating an acceleration of land degradation. Because it lowers agricultural output, this decline immediately jeopardises the world's food security.

Figure 15.1: Main drivers of deforestation, 2000-2018 (in percentage)



Source: Sustainable Development Goals Report 2024.

Biodiversity loss is another alarming trend. Over 44,000 species—28% of the 160,000 assessed globally—are at risk of extinction. Central and Southern Asia face particularly severe biodiversity declines, highlighting the fragility of ecosystems in the region. Each endangered species disrupts its ecosystem's balance, compounding environmental challenges. Moreover, illegal wildlife trade has surged, affecting approximately 4,000 plant and animal species between 2015 and 2021, further threatening biodiversity (Sustainable Development Goals Report-2024).

Environmental degradation's impacts, though gradual, are increasingly apparent amid worsening climate change. These trends underline the urgent need for coordinated and intensified global and national actions. Without immediate interventions, achieving sustainable management of ecosystems and halting biodiversity loss will remain elusive, endangering the planet's ecological and economic stability.

15.3. Assessment of National Progress on SDG 15

Indicator 15.1.1. Forest area as a proportion of total land area

In Bangladesh, forest coverage remains modest. As of 2018, forest area spanned 25,751.96 square kilometres (25,75,196 hectares), accounting for 14.5% of the country's total land area (Figure 15.1). This marks a slight increase from 14.1% in 2015, the baseline year. Bangladesh Forest Division has incurred a loss of 26000 hectares of primary forest in the period between 1990 and 2015. The Sundarbans, the world's largest mangrove forest and a UNESCO World

Heritage Site, forms a significant part of Bangladesh's forest ecosystem, hosting diverse tree species such as *sal, gamari, garjan*, and *sundari*. Although the Sundarbans remain quite unaffected, heavy losses have been recorded in all the other forest areas. Despite progress, Bangladesh faces challenges in achieving its forest coverage targets—18% by 2025 and 20% by 2030.

Table 15. 1: Forest as proportion of total land area of Bangladesh

2015	2018	2025(T)	2030(T)
14.10	14.47	18	20

Source: Bangladesh Forest Division, Statistical Yearbook Bangladesh-2022.
Note: T indicates target.

Indicator 15.1.2 Proportion of important sites for terrestrial and freshwater biodiversity that are covered by protected areas, by ecosystem type

In Bangladesh, important sites for terrestrial and freshwater biodiversity that are covered by protected areas include national parks, wildlife sanctuaries, eco-parks, botanical gardens, safari parks, and community conservation areas, all governed under the Wildlife Preservation Act 1974 and the Wildlife Conservation and Security Act 2012 (see Table 15.2). Key protection measures restrict activities such as hunting, trapping, poaching, and timber collection, although certain sites, like national parks and eco-parks, allow controlled public access for recreation and education.

Table 15. 2: Distribution of the 53 protected areas of Bangladesh by arrangement types

Arrangement Type	Number of Arrangements
Wildlife Breeding Centre	1
Protected Area	4
Eco Park	3
Wildlife Sanctuary	25
National Parks	20

Source: Bangladesh Forest Department.

The entire protected area of Bangladesh, which includes both marine and terrestrial habitats, is roughly 817,917 hectares. Of this, 348,046 hectares, or 2.36%, are marine protected areas, while 469,871 hectares, or around 3.18% of the nation's total land area, are terrestrial protected areas. Although growth has recently stalled, Figure 15.4 shows significant advancements in the expansion of terrestrial protected areas between 2015 and 2019. It needs creative strategies, like implementing the best worldwide standards and expanding the number and reach of current protected zones, to meet the 2030 goal of preserving 5% of the nation's land area.

Table 15.3: Proportion of protected areas for protecting terrestrial biodiversity over the years (%)

2015	2019	2025(T)	2030(T)
1.70	3.06	3.30	5

Source: Bangladesh Forest Department. Note: T indicates Targets.

Similarly, freshwater protected areas have seen little progress since 2014 (see Table 15.3) With a more ambitious 2030 target of 14%, greater focus is required to manage and protect Bangladesh's vast river networks and coastal ecosystems, including globally significant sites such as Cox's Bazar, the world's longest sea beach. Strengthened conservation efforts in both

terrestrial and freshwater domains are essential to preserving biodiversity and meeting sustainability goals.

Table 15. 3: Proportion of protected areas for protecting freshwater/marine biodiversity over the years (%)

2014	2018	2025 (T)	2030 (T)
1.80	3.08	9	14

Source: Bangladesh Forest Department.

Indicator 15.2.1. Progress towards sustainable forest management

In order to track the health and expansion of its main forests—aside from the Chittagong Hill Tracts—Bangladesh has also created an inventory. This information aids in directing tactics for improved forest management. To improve sustainability, the nation has also adopted contemporary techniques including mangrove afforestation and agroforestry.

23 protected areas are now under co-management through initiatives like Integrated Protected Area Co-management (IPAC) and the USAID-backed *Nishorgo* Assistance Project. These programs raise the standard of living in the surrounding community while also enhancing forest conservation. Bangladesh is moving closer to sustainable forest management with sustained efforts.

Indicator 15.3.1. Proportion of Land that is degraded over total land area (in hectares or km2)

According to a 2022 report on *Land Degradation in Bangladesh 2020*, around 270 square kilometres of land degrade annually, a figure nearly equivalent to the size of Dhaka, the country's capital. The report also indicates that 11.24 million hectares of land—about 76% of the country—suffer from moderate to severe degradation. This highlights the urgent need for updated data and effective measures to combat land degradation and restore affected areas.

Indicator 15.4.1. Coverage by protected areas of important sites for mountain biodiversity

The 157,492 hectares of mountainous land in Bangladesh are divided into two classes according to slope and elevation. More than 98% of Bangladesh's mountain KBAs were deemed unprotected in 2019, with only 0.35% of the lands being protected. Effective monitoring and management of these areas is challenging and costly due to their remote and frequently inaccessible location. Policymakers are also hesitant because of the potential for lucrative tourism in certain regions, as conservation efforts may limit the growth of tourism.

It is evident that substantial improvement is required, even though there is insufficient current data to evaluate development in its entirety. Less than 1% of Bangladesh's mountain KBAs were protected as of 2019, indicating a crucial area that needs conservation focus.

Indicator 15.4.2. Mountain Green Cover Index

Cropland and woods make up the majority of Bangladesh's mountain ranges' green cover. While agriculture is restricted to specific crops and vegetables, the forests are varied and include rubber plantations and bamboo. Water bodies cover the remaining areas.

Bangladesh's mountain regions had 96.05% green cover in 2015, although it is anticipated that this has decreased over the last eight years as a result of growing tourism. It is challenging to effectively evaluate the current situation in the absence of fresh data, underscoring the necessity for up-to-date information to direct sustainable management.

Indicator 15.5.1. Red List Index

The first Plant Red List of Bangladesh was released in November of 2024, after 4 years of assessment. The round of assessment assessed 1,000 plant species from which 395 was found to be threatened, 5 have been listed as critically endangered, 127 as endangered, 263 as vulnerable, 7 as regionally extinct, and 1 species as extinct in the wild. Another component of the plant red list project was to identify invasive species present in Bangladesh, which has listed 17 invasive plants in 5 protected areas of Bangladesh, from which 7 has been identified as of major environmental threat to local ecosystems. Considering this is the first plant Red List of Bangladesh, there is barely any past data to compare and assess the status of plants of Bangladesh. However, the information of the list will guide the conservation effort of the plant-based fauna of Bangladesh, especially regarding managing the protected forest areas of Bangladesh from invasive plant species, in the coming days.

Table 15. 4: Species status of plants as per the IUCN Plant Red List of Bangladesh-2024

Status Category	No. of Species	% of Total Species Assessed
Minimally Threatened	271	27.1%
Threatened	395	39.5%
Critically Endangered	5	0.5%
Endangered	127	12.7%
Vulnerable	263	26.3%
Extinct in the Wild	1	0.1%
Regionally Extinct	7	0.7%
Nearly Threatened	70	7%
Insufficient data for assessment	256	-

Source: Plant Red List of Bangladesh-2024 Volume 1 and 2.
Note: Categories listed as Critically Endangered, Endangered, and Vulnerable are sub categories of the category Threatened and represent different degree of being a threatened species.

Indicator 15.6.1. Number of Countries That Have Adopted Legislative, Administrative and Policy Framework to Ensure Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits

Bangladesh has complied with the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, thereby aligning itself with these objectives. This pledge demonstrates the nation's advancements in biodiversity preservation and responsible resource use. However, maintaining compliance with international norms and attaining sustainable biodiversity management would require further fortification of national legislative and administrative measures.

Indicator 15.7.1. Proportion of traded wildlife that was poached or illicitly trafficked

The indicator value for Bangladesh in 2021 was 252, which shows that a sizable amount of the wildlife trade is illegal. Nevertheless, this number has limits because illicit commerce is not always discovered and the indicator shows illegal trade in the nations of origin rather than the countries where seizures take place. Although this is an indirect indicator of poaching, the value may alter in response to shifts in the volumes of either legal or illicit trade. It is clear that unlawful trading of protected species is a significant problem given its great importance for Bangladesh. The government and foreign partners must work together to combat this issue and lessen illegal wildlife trafficking.

Indicator 15.a.1. (a) official development assistance on conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity; and (b) revenue generated and finance mobilized from biodiversity-relevant economic instruments

Despite the positive growth of revenue generated and finance mobilized from biodiversity-relevant economic instruments (see Table 15.5), it remains a small fraction of Bangladesh's total annual revenue. Given the country's pressing environmental challenges, including air pollution and land erosion, there is an urgent need to broaden the scope of biodiversity-related instruments. Strengthening compliance and reinvesting the revenue into environmental protection initiatives will be crucial for achieving sustainable biodiversity management and addressing the nation's ecological concerns.

Table 15. 5: Revenue generated, and finance mobilized form biodiversity related economic instruments (in million USD)

2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
14.7	31.7	44.5	62.6	74.8	81.8

Source: Finance Division, Ministry of Finance.

15.4. Key Policies and Strategies to Achieve SDG 15

Bangladesh has laid a strong foundation for environmental protection and biodiversity conservation, reflecting its commitment to achieving Sustainable Development Goal 15. This goal emphasizes the sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, halting biodiversity loss, and combating land degradation. The country's commitment is enshrined in Article 18A of the Constitution, which obligates the state to protect and improve the environment and preserve biodiversity, forests, wetlands, and natural resources for present and future generations. This constitutional provision is supported by national legislation and policy instruments, including the Wildlife (Conservation and Security) Act 2012 and the Eighth Five-Year Plan (2021–2025).

The Wildlife (Conservation and Security) Act 2012 serves as a cornerstone for biodiversity conservation in Bangladesh. It outlines key objectives, such as establishing wildlife sanctuaries, regulating hunting and trade, and creating the Wildlife Advisory Board. The Act also promotes community involvement in conservation, recognizing the vital role of local populations in preserving ecosystems. Additionally, it integrates sustainable land management and ecotourism, seeking to harmonize ecological preservation with economic development. These initiatives aim to ensure the long-term safety and conservation of the country's natural resources.

Sustainable environmental practices and national development priorities are in line with the Eighth Five-Year Plan (8FYP). Increasing the amount of forest cover, protecting biodiversity, and putting sustainable land management techniques into practice with community involvement are its main goals. Unfulfilled goals from previous plans, such increasing forest areas and improving biodiversity conservation, are addressed in the 8FYP. Goals from the Perspective Plan 2041, which outlines a long-term, sustainable development path for Bangladesh, are also included.

Bangladesh has established 13 Ecologically Critical Areas (ECAs) totalling 71,544 hectares under the Ecological Conservation Rules in an effort to better safeguard biodiversity. These ECAs encompass a variety of ecosystems, including freshwater wetlands, rivers, lakes, coral reefs, and coastal regions. Additionally, vulture-safe zones have been established in the northeast and southeast regions to protect these endangered birds. In 2015, the *Ratargul* Swamp Forest, Bangladesh's last freshwater swamp forest, was declared a biosphere reserve to preserve its unique ecosystem.

The government has taken decisive steps to combat deforestation. The moratorium on tree cutting in reserve forests, extended until 2022, demonstrates a commitment to controlling unsustainable practices. Furthermore, Bangladesh's judicial system has actively sought to regulate tree-cutting through directives from the High Court, prompting the formulation of guidelines to oversee tree-cutting activities nationwide.

Coastal afforestation initiatives have significantly enhanced the country's green coverage. The Forest Department has afforested 23,818 hectares and mapped potential chars (sediment islands) and other barren lands for future plantation projects. These efforts not only combat land degradation but also provide critical habitat for wildlife and protect coastal regions from natural disasters. However, inter-agency coordination is critical for full realization.

To improve forest monitoring and policymaking, Bangladesh has established several advanced systems. The Bangladesh Forest Inventory (2019) offers a comprehensive assessment of forest resources, carbon stocks, and biomass levels. The National Forest Monitoring System and National REDD+ Strategy aim to reduce carbon emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, while the Bangladesh Forest Information System facilitates transparent data sharing among stakeholders.

Bangladesh's global commitments further reinforce its dedication to environmental conservation. The country has ratified several key international conventions, including the Convention on Biological Diversity (1992), CITES (1973), Ramsar Convention (1971), World Heritage Convention (1972), and the Convention on Migratory Species (1979). Bangladesh is required by these accords to respect global norms for the preservation of biodiversity and sustainable resource management.

Bangladesh has also taken measures to lower emissions and improve the forest carbon inventory. By encouraging sustainable forest management and involving local populations in conservation initiatives, programs like the National REDD+ Strategy seek to lessen the effects of deforestation.

15.5. Major Challenges

Achieving SDG 15- Life on Land is of high significance for Bangladesh because of the extent of the countrymen's dependence on nature for both a livelihood and good standard of living with respect to environmental aspects, such as air and water quality. However, the threats to the environment and biodiversity of Bangladesh are multifaceted and has both internal and external factors. On one hand, the growing population and the associated heightened demand for food and housing are adversely affecting the land and biodiversity of the country. On the other hand, global developments such as global warming and rising sea levels are also having their toll on the country's ecosystem in the form of more frequent natural disasters such as floods and cyclones. These are some of the reasons why it is important to pay more attention to achieving SDG 15 for Bangladesh, for which identifying the major challenges to achieving this goal is crucial. Some major challenges in this regard have been discussed briefly below-

Lack of Goodwill and Limited Effort to Protect the Environment: Lack of good will to protect the environment, specially by regulating widespread illegal or environmentally degrading practices, can be identified through the lack of those regulations. For example, the practice of filling up waterbodies such as rivers and lakes for commercial space, agricultural land, or to meet housing demands not only affect the biodiversity and the local weather in the long run but also make the country prone to natural disasters such as flooding in rainy seasons. Such instances of river fillings are often done by politically powerful parties and are often left unchecked due to that reason, making hundreds of thousands of local people suffer the consequences. Continuous and strict effort to eradicate such environmentally harmful practices has not been observed over the year, and the result is perhaps visible in the fact that only 2.36 per cent of the country's total area is protected marine area (Indicator 15.1.2), and in 2018, the proportion of forest as percentage of total land area were just above half of the suggested and targeted coverage area for 2030 (Indicator 15.1.1). Considering the journey to achieve SDG initiated almost a decade ago, and Bangladesh is still lacking in tackling these existing malpractices only indicated a lack of goodwill towards protecting the environment and life on land.

Lack of Awareness among the General Population and Harmful Practices: Lack of awareness about environmentally harmful practices as well as helpful ones among the masses is contributing to adverse impact on the environment and biodiversity of the country. For example, excessive use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides in the croplands is a major cause of the lands losing biological component and productive fertility in Bangladesh. On the other hand, this practice, often detrimental to the human health, also unintentionally ends up killing many non-harmful and even helpful insects and small animals such as butterflies and birds. Likewise, people often practice overfishing at the waterbodies for economic causes, adversely affecting the stock of fish in the rivers. The impacts of these can be seen in the fluctuations in the group-wise indicator value of the Red List, as noted in Indicator 15.5.1. Other examples of such practices include cover collection of timber for fuel, making furniture, or economic purposes without planting trees to replace them. Such practices, many of which could be lessened with awareness building and proper implementation of protectionary laws, depleting natural resources in an unsustainable manner, put both the current and future generations at a risk of resource shortage.

Lack of Data and Research: The discussion on the SDG-15 targets exhibited the lack of data for many targets for Bangladesh, which is a phenomenon that can be said even about the indicators for which the data was available for some years, as there are issues with consistency in updating data and data collection and reporting issues as well. For example, for Indicators 15.3.1, 15.4.2, and 15.7.1, only a single data point could be easily accessed, while Indicators 15.1.1, 15.1.2, and 15.5.1 has only 2-3 years of data available. This poor availability of timely data keeps Bangladesh from monitoring and evaluating the trends of change in different aspects of the environment, such as forest coverage, stock of carbon, protection of waterbodies, etc. and taking necessary steps to protect the environment. This lack of data also bars scientists from carrying out intricate and timely research to better understand or predict current as well as future trends, the findings of which can be used to design effective policies. Thus, data shortage remains a challenge that needs to be overcome for Bangladesh, to which end, national sincerity and international collaborations are vital.

15.6. Recommendations for Future Action

To accelerate progress toward achieving SDG 15, a comprehensive approach is essential to address legal, ecological, technological, and social dimensions of environmental resource and biodiversity management. These recommendations focus on strengthening governance, fostering community involvement, leveraging technology, and enhancing collaboration.

Strengthen Legal and Policy Frameworks and enforcement: Revising and implementing robust legal provisions is critical for protecting environmentally significant areas across Bangladesh. Current laws must be strengthened to mitigate the negative impacts of industrial production processes on ecosystems. Additionally, efforts should be made to identify and bring under protection lesser known environmentally vital areas beyond prominent hotspots like the Sundarbans and Cox's Bazar. Expanding the legal framework to cover such regions will bolster biodiversity conservation and sustainable use of natural resources. Furthermore, strengthening the enforcement of existing environmental regulations is imperative. This includes stricter monitoring and application of rules related to tree felling, wetland preservation, and the hunting or trading of wild animals. Protecting domesticated animals and urban wildlife, such as cats and dogs, should also be prioritized, ensuring their welfare through targeted policies and guidelines. These initiatives and help to address the challenges mentioned in the first major challenges, and can have positive impact in a short period of time in Indicators such as 15.1.1 and 15.1.2.

Community Involvement in Resource Management: Engaging communities that depend on forests and other natural resources is essential for fostering sustainable practices. Focusing on revamping Bangladesh's performance in Indicator 15.2.1 (Sustainable Forest Management) can improve Bangladesh's efficient involvement of community in forest protection. Community-based resource management can ensure that conservation strategies do not undermine local livelihoods. This approach can strike a balance between ecological preservation and socio-economic stability, promoting shared responsibility for resource stewardship. To this end, improving the performance of Indicator 15.a.1 can also be helpful as it will help to arrange for the resources necessary to implement community-based

initiatives through official foreign assistance and gains from biodiversity-relevant economic instruments.

Raise Public Awareness: Public awareness campaigns are vital to instil environmentally responsible behaviours. Educational initiatives should focus on minimizing harmful practices like overfishing, excessive pesticide use, and waste mismanagement. Indicators such as 15.7.1 (illicit trading, trafficking, and poaching of wildlife) by discouraging individuals from partaking in such activities and encouraging them to report such activities to the relevant authorities. By fostering a culture of environmental responsibility, individuals can play a more active role in conservation efforts, contributing to long-term sustainability.

Increase Government Investment: Greater government investment is needed to support projects aimed at conserving biodiversity and addressing critical environmental challenges. Funding research initiatives to generate actionable knowledge will further enhance the country's ability to manage and protect its ecosystems effectively. Such initiatives will also help to mitigate the challenges regarding data availability discussed in the third major challenges, which significantly affects Indicators 15.3.1, 15.4.1, and 15.7.1 alongside other indicators. Leveraging advanced technology can also be of great help in monitoring bio-diversity related trends.

Strengthening International Collaboration: International cooperation is crucial for advancing conservation initiatives. For example, data for Indicator 15.5.1, Red List for endangered species, has been carried out for 2 rounds only for Bangladesh and by the International Union for Conservation of Nature. Collaborations with such international organizations will mean capacity development for Bangladesh where they will be able to carry out such monitoring by themselves and thus be better equipped to adopt necessary policies to protect the environment. Bangladesh should enhance partnerships with global stakeholders to access financial and technical resources for biodiversity protection. Collaborating with international experts can also introduce the best practices and innovative solutions tailored to local challenges.

15.7. Summary

Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 15 has been meaningly advanced by Bangladesh, especially in the areas of increasing protected areas, applying sustainable forest management techniques, and increasing forest coverage. Although there are still obstacles in reaching the 2030 target of 20%, the modest increase in forest coverage from 14.1% in 2015 to 14.5% in 2018 shows encouraging progress. Similar to this, protected areas on land and in freshwater have grown, but in order to preserve biodiversity, the rate of increase needs to be accelerated. These improvements have been made possible by initiatives like afforestation programs and co-managed conservation projects, but long-term effects require creative conservation tactics and strong policy enforcement.

Despite these developments, the annual degradation of almost 270 square kilometres of land makes land degradation a serious worry. Since less than 1% of important biodiversity areas were protected in 2019, mountain biodiversity protection also needs immediate attention. Significant challenges to native flora are also highlighted in the recently released Plant Red List, which emphasises the necessity of focused conservation efforts to counteract invasive

species and habitat loss. In order to stop environmental degradation, these problems highlight the need for improved institutional frameworks, updated data gathering, and the incorporation of sustainable land management techniques.

Bangladesh needs to improve its enforcement systems, strengthen its policy frameworks, and encourage more cooperation between local communities, foreign partners, and government institutions. Achieving SDG 15 targets will require bolstering biodiversity protection, boosting conservation funding, and implementing best practices from around the world.

16 PEACE, JUSTICE, AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

SDG 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions

16.1. Background

SDG 16 calls for the creation of inclusive, responsible, and productive institutions at all levels, as well as the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies in order to sustain development and ensure that everyone has access to justice. The rule of law and political stability are two of the most important pillars for economic progress, and peace and justice are essential for maintaining development. The experiences of nations and regions impacted by violence, when even those with substantial wealth are frequently left homeless, amply illustrate this. Such conflicts have an effect on economies all throughout the world, not just in war zones.

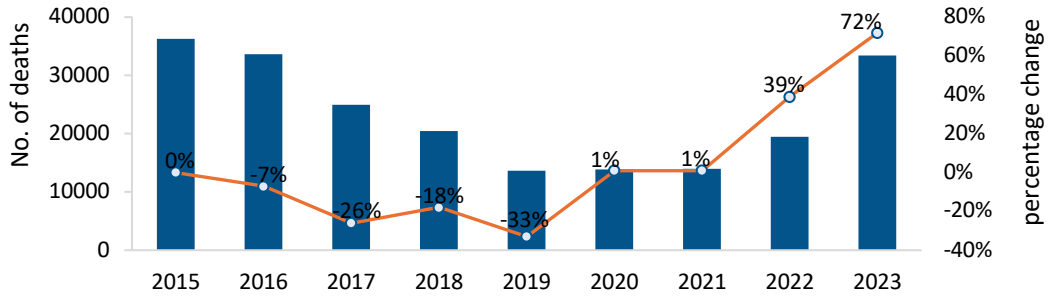
To advance the major initiatives of a forward-thinking country, effective institutions are also essential. A country's advancement can be seriously hampered by ineffective state structures. To accomplish sustainable development goals, strengthening inclusive institutions, foster a positive atmosphere, and offer an equal opportunity for all members of society to engage in economic activity, promote innovation, and assist small business owners are essential components. On the other hand, elites and politically influential people can gain from extractive institutions at the expense of the general populace, as they do not provide equitable chances. Political instability, ingrained unfairness, and the breakdown of crucial political institutions are all made possible by this imbalance.

Among the main issues Bangladesh is currently dealing with violence, a poor rule of law, criminality, breaches of human rights, corruption, and the disintegration of state institutions. The significance of SDG 16 for Bangladesh has grown due to the pressing need to reform institutions, put an end to violations of human rights, lessen corruption, and reinstate the rule of law. These problems are widespread throughout the world, but they are more severe in the Global South. They are not unique to Bangladesh. SDG 16 was created in part because of the pressing need to address these important concerns on a global scale.

16.2. Global and Regional Context

The globe is becoming more and more enmeshed in conflict and violence, and there is a lot of injustice, especially in war zones, which puts civilian populations at risk. Fears of further regional conflicts are heightened by growing tensions, such as those between Israel and Iran. Conflicts between Israel and Hezbollah in southern Lebanon have resulted in the displacement of around 100,000 persons as of September 25, 2024, according to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). With 117.3 million displaced people by the end of 2023, the UNHCR reports that the worldwide displacement situation is getting worse. Conflicts in Israel, Ukraine, and portions of Africa caused a 72% increase in civilian casualties in 2023, which is close to the highest levels recorded since 2015. These growing crises highlight how vital it is to put peace and the rehabilitation of impacted civilians first.

Figure 16.1: Number of civilian conflict-related deaths and percentage change from previous year, 2015–2023



Source: The Sustainable Development Goals Report, UN, 2024

Global corruption is on the rise, and nearly one-fifth of the world's population has experienced bribery—32% in low-income countries versus 9% in high-income ones. Prison systems also exhibit systemic inefficiencies; although the global prison-to-population ratio decreased from 150 per 100,000 in 2015 to 144 per 100,000 in 2022, Central and Southern Asia still faces significant challenges, with 60% of inmates remaining unsentenced. Improving prison conditions and reducing pretrial incarcerations are crucial steps towards achieving justice.

The level of violence experienced by journalists and human rights advocates is concerning. The Gaza conflict accounted for 75% of the 150 journalist killings reported by the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) as of October 1, 2024. These numbers highlight the dangers faced by individuals who stand up for accountability and the truth.

The COVID-19 epidemic revealed weaknesses in state institutions around the world, particularly in developed nations. Years later, governments are still focused on preserving financial institutions, bringing political stability back, and controlling inflation. Achieving lasting peace and justice requires bolstering institutional resilience to endure future shocks, which has become a worldwide necessity.

16.3. Assessment of National Progress on SDG 16

Indicator 16.1.1. Number of victims of intentional homicide per 100,000 population, by sex and age

The number of victims of intentional homicide was decreased from 1.94 per 100,000 population in 2015 to 1.33 per 100,000 population in 2020, which again rose to 1.41 per 100,000 population in 2022, likely exacerbated by the psychological crisis induced by COVID-19, which affected the entire world. However, as people begin to recover from this crisis, the situation is showing signs of improvement, evidenced by a slightly lower ratio than in 2021.

Table 16.1: Number of victims of intentional homicide per 100,000 population

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2025 (T)	2030 (T)
Total	1.94	1.72	1.65	1.55	1.39	1.33	1.43	1.41	1.20	1
Male	3.1	2.73	2.5	2.31	2.1	1.00	2.11	2.08	0.90	0.9
Female	0.76	0.72	0.8	0.78	0.67	0.34	0.77	0.76	0.30	0.2

Source: BP, MoHA. Note: 'T' represents target values.

Indicator 16.1.2. Conflict-related deaths per 100,000 population, by sex, age, and cause

In Bangladesh, the rate of such deaths per 100,000 population experienced a decline, falling from 0.85 in 2015 to 0.17 in 2018 (Table 16.2). However, lack of data has missed to describe the current scenario. Efforts to maintain peace and foster constructive political dialogue remain critical for sustaining this progress and ensuring that such episodes of violence remain isolated in Bangladesh's trajectory toward sustainable development.

Table 16.2: Conflict-related deaths per 100,000 population

Time Period	Total/ Disaggregation	Status
2015	Total	0.85
2018	Total	0.17
	Male	0.08
	Female	0.09

Source: BP, MoHA.

Indicator 16.1.3. Proportion of population subjected to physical, psychological or sexual violence in the previous 12 months

Violence against women remains a significant issue worldwide, especially in developing countries like Bangladesh. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, 54% of Bangladeshi women aged 15–49 reported experiencing intimate partner violence at least once in their lives, according to UN Women's global database. A Rapid Gender Assessment (RGA) survey conducted during the pandemic by UN Women and Ipsos revealed a troubling surge in violence. Among women aged 18 and above with access to mobile phones, 91% reported either personally experiencing or knowing someone who had experienced violence during the pandemic, with verbal abuse accounting for 89% of incidents.

The last official survey on Violence Against Women (VAW) in Bangladesh, conducted in 2015, examined five forms of violence: physical, psychological, sexual, economic, and controlling behaviour. Findings showed that the proportion of married women reporting violence from partner in the previous 12 months fell from 66.9% in 2011 to 57.7% in 2015, reflecting a declining trend among younger generations (Table 16.3).

Table 16.3: Proportion of female (at least once among ever-married) population subjected to physical, psychological or sexual violence from partner in the previous 12 months (% of at least once among ever-married women)

2011	2015	2025 (T)	2030 (T)
66.9	57.7	30	15

Source: VAW, BBS, SID. Note: 'T' represents target values.

Indicator 16.1.4. Proportion of the population that feel safe walking alone around the area they live

According to the Citizen Perception Household Survey (CPHS), 85.85% of Bangladeshis feel safe walking alone in their neighbourhood, with 83% of women and 87% of men reporting this sentiment (Table 16.4). Similarly, the 2019 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) indicated that 74.8% of women aged 15–49 feel safe in their local areas. Bangladesh aims to increase this figure to 90% by 2025 and 95% by 2030. However, the lack of updated data makes

it difficult to evaluate progress or predict whether these targets will be achieved. Addressing this gap is crucial for improving safety and achieving these goals.

Table 16.4: Proportion of the female population that feel safe walking alone around the area they live

2018	2025 (T)	2030 (T)
85.85	90	95

Source: CPHS, BBS, SID. Note: 'T' represents target values.

Indicator 16.2.1. Proportion of children aged 1-17 years who experienced any physical punishment and/or psychological aggression by caregivers in the past month

According to data from the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) 2019, 88.5% of children aged 1 to 17 reported receiving corporal or physical punishment in the last month, with 88.4% of urban children and 88.9% of rural children reporting this experience (Table 16.5). In addition, 64.6% of kids in this age range experienced physical abuse as kids. According to the report, 89.2% of male children and 88.7% of female children are impacted by violence, making male children marginally more vulnerable.

Table 16.5: Proportion of children aged 1-17 years who experienced any physical punishment and/or psychological aggression by caregivers in the past month (%)

	2019	2025 (T)	2030 (T)
Total	88.5	80	70
Rural	88.9	-	-
Urban	88.4	-	-

Source: MICS, BBS, SID. Note: 'T' represents target values.

Indicator 16.2.2. Number of victims of human trafficking per 100,000 population, by sex, age, and form of exploitation

Bangladesh has made progress in reducing human trafficking, with the rate decreasing from 1.78 per 100,000 in 2015 to 0.72 in 2022 (Table 16.6). However, trends vary by gender: while male trafficking has shown improvement, declining from 1.14 in 2015 to 0.72 in 2022, the figures for female trafficking remain relatively stagnant.

Table 16.6: Number of Victims of Human Trafficking and Sexual Violence 100,000 Population, by sex

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Total	1.78	1.06	1.19	0.6	1.21	0.461	0.41	0.72
Male	1.14	0.64	0.74	0.27	0.58	0.229	0.38	0.9
Female	0.64	0.42	0.45	0.33	0.63	0.232	0.44	0.54

Source: BP, MoHA.

16.2.3. Proportion of young women and men aged 18–29 years who experienced sexual violence by age 18

Sexual violence in childhood leaves lasting scars, profoundly affecting victims' emotional and physical well-being into adulthood. In Bangladesh, data on male victims remains scarce, with the focus primarily on violence against women. The 2015 Violence Against Women (VAW) survey revealed that 3.5% of women had experienced sexual harassment or exploitation

(Table 16.7). Among women aged 15–19, 7.3% reported being victims of sexual violence within the preceding year, with intimate partners implicated in 3.1% of these cases.

Bangladesh has set an ambitious target to reduce the prevalence of sexual violence to 1.5 per 10,000 population and, ultimately, to eliminate it entirely. Achieving this requires enhanced legal protections, greater public awareness, and targeted interventions to address both the root causes and the social stigma surrounding the issue.

Table 16.7: Proportion of young women and men aged 18–29 years who experienced sexual violence by age 18

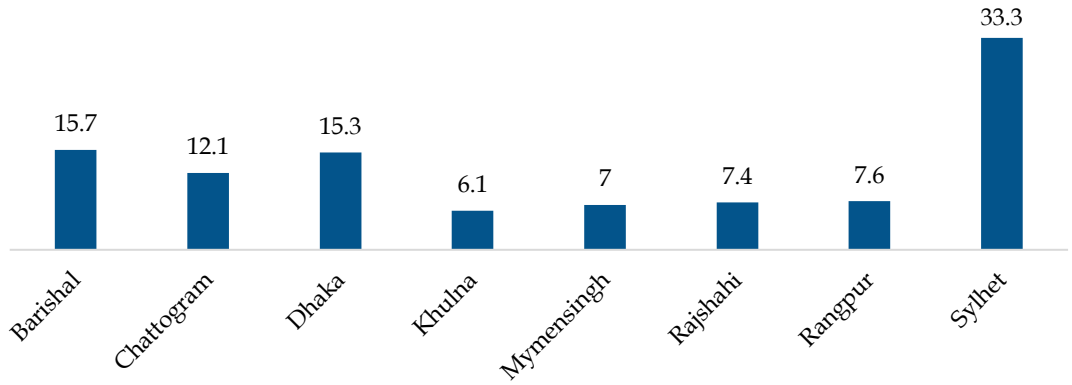
Time Period	Total/Disaggregation	Targets	Status (%)
2015 (Base Year)	Female		3.45
2025(Target)	Total	1.5	-
2030(Target)	Total	0	-

Source: VAW Survey 2015, BBS, SID.

Indicator 16.3.1. Proportion of female victims of violence in the previous 12 months who reported their victimization to competent authorities or other officially recognized conflict resolution mechanisms

In Bangladesh, despite the high incidence of physical and sexual violence, a significant gap exists in the reporting of these crimes to competent authorities or conflict resolution mechanisms. This reluctance is largely due to the social stigma and shame that victims face, which discourages them from coming forward. According to the 2019 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS), only 10.3% of women reported their most recent experience of violence to the police or relevant authorities. The figures show a slight difference between urban and rural areas, with 12.2% of women in urban areas and 9.8% in rural areas reporting incidents to the police (Figure 16.2). The data reveals a clear regional disparity, with the lowest reporting rates in Khulna Division, and only about 7% of women in the northern regions—such as Mymensingh, Rajshahi, and Rangpur—reporting incidents of violence. This indicates a strong need for improved mechanisms to encourage and support victims in coming forward.

Figure 16.2: Percentage of women for whom the last incident of physical violence in the last year was reported to the police in different districts



Source: VAW Survey, 2015, BBS, SID.

Indicator 16.3.2. Un-sentenced detainees as a proportion of the overall prison population

According to data from the Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA), in 2022, a confounding 77% of detainees were held without trial (Table 16.8). This alarming statistic highlights systemic issues within the country's legal framework. If these trends continue, Bangladesh will fall far short of its judicial reform targets, which aim to reduce the proportion of un-sentenced detainees to 50% by 2025 and 40% by 2030.

Table 16.8: Percentage of Un-sentenced detainees as a proportion of overall prison population (%)

2016 (Base)	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2025 (T)	2030 (T)
76.5	84.0	81.3	79.0	79.0	80.9	77.0	50.0	40.0

Source: Department of Prison, MoHA.

Indicator 16.3.3. Proportion of the population who have experienced a dispute in the past two years and who accessed a formal or informal dispute resolution mechanism, by type of mechanism

The 2018 Citizen Perception Household Survey (CPHS) revealed that a significant 97% of the population in Bangladesh experienced some form of dispute within the previous two years (Figure 16.3). Among those who faced disputes, 78% turned to formal dispute resolution mechanisms, while 22% sought informal channels, highlighting a notable reliance on formal institutions for resolving conflicts.

Figure 16.3: Proportion of the population who have experienced a dispute in the past two years and who accessed a formal or informal dispute resolution mechanism, by type of mechanism



Source: CPHS 2018, BBS, SID.

Indicator 16.4.2. Proportion of seized, found, or surrendered arms whose illicit origin or context has been traced or established by a competent authority in line with international instruments

In Bangladesh, the issuance of arms licenses is generally restricted, with most being granted to VIPs, which has minimized concerns regarding the proliferation of illicit firearms in recent years. However, the Defence Ministry reported a rise in the rate of seized, found, or surrendered arms with traceable illicit origins, increasing from 85 in 2019 to 102 in 2020 (Table 16.9). The government has taken further steps to recover weapons, which could lead to an even higher count in the 2024 data.

Table 16.9: Proportion of seized, found, or surrendered arms whose illicit origin or context has been traced or established by a competent authority (%)

2018	2019	2020
123	85	102

Source: Ministry of Defence (MoD).

Indicator 16.5.1. Proportion of persons who had at least one contact with a public official and who paid a bribe to a public official, or were asked for a bribe by those public officials, during the previous 12 months

According to the 2018 Citizen Perception Household Survey (CPHS), 31.3% of the population had at least one interaction with a public official in the past 12 months during which they either paid a bribe or were asked to do so (see Table 16.10). The survey revealed that 29% of males and 35% of females reported such encounters. Since then, no official survey has been conducted on this issue. Bangladesh has set a goal to reduce this proportion to 15% by 2025 and to further lower it to 10% by 2030.

Table 16.10: Proportion of persons who had at least one contact with a public official and who paid a bribe to a public official, or were asked for a bribe by those public officials, during the previous 12 months

	2018	2025 (T)	2030 (T)
Total	31.32	15	10
Male	28.91	-	-
Female	35.02	-	-

Source: CPHS. Note: 'T' represents target values.

Indicator 16.5.2. Proportion of businesses that had at least one contact with a public official and that paid a bribe to a public official or were asked for a bribe by those public officials during the previous 12 months

The 2013 World Bank Enterprise Survey revealed that 41% of businesses in Bangladesh had at least one interaction with a public official during which they either paid a bribe or were asked for one (Table 16.11). Although, the 2022 survey showed an improvement, with this figure dropping to 23%, well below the 2025 target of 25%, it needs further careful efforts to meet the 10% target by 2030.

Table 16.11: Percentage of businesses that had at least one contact with a public official and that paid a bribe to a public official or were asked for a bribe by those public officials during the previous 12 months (%)

2013	2022	2025 (T)	2030 (T)
41	23	25	10

Source: World Bank Enterprise Survey (WBES), World Bank.

Indicator 16.6.1. Primary government expenditures as a proportion of the original approved budget, by sector (or by budget codes or similar)

Over the past four years, the primary government expenditure as a proportion of the original approved budget has steadily increased, rising from 80.30% in the 2019-20 fiscal year to 84.5% in the 2022-23 fiscal year (see Table 16.12). However, due to the unpredictable nature of government spending, especially with potential changes in administration, adopting a more realistic budgeting approach is necessary.

Table 16.12: Primary Government Expenditures as a Proportion of the Original Approved Budget

2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
80.30	81	85.9	84.5

Source: Ministry of Finance (MoF).

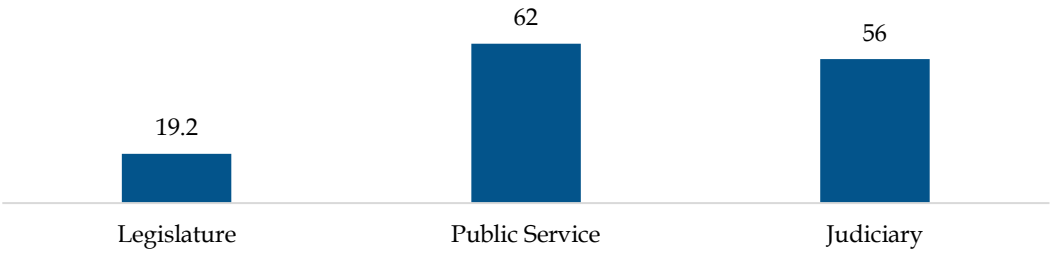
Indicator 16.6.2 Proportion of the population satisfied with their last experience of public services

Bangladesh has traditionally struggled to provide effective public services, with official institutions frequently failing to meet standards. Just 39.7% of people said they were happy with their most recent experience with public service, according to the 2018 Citizen Household Perception Survey (CPHS). By 2025 and 2030, the nation hopes to raise this satisfaction rate to 60% and 90%, respectively. It is anticipated that recent initiatives to restructure governmental institutions would be essential to accomplishing these objectives and promoting sustainable growth.

Indicator 16.7.1 Proportions of positions in national and local public institutions, including (a) the legislatures; (b) the public service; and (c) the judiciary, compared to national distributions, by sex, age, persons with disabilities and population groups

Women's representation in national and local legislative institutions in Bangladesh is 19.2%, suggesting that their influence in political decision-making bodies is expanding but still quite small. Nonetheless, women have made progress in public service occupations, accounting for 62% of all positions, up from 56% in 2017 (Figure 16.4). Women are moderately but consistently represented in the judiciary as well. Notwithstanding the progress, more work is required to guarantee greater diversity and gender balance in all governmental branches.

Figure 16.4: Percentage of women in different national and local institutions, 2017



Source: BPS, LJD, Supreme Court, MoPA, 2017.

Indicator 16.9.1. Proportion of children under 5 years of age whose births have been registered with a civil authority, by age.

From 37.0% in 2013 to 56.2% in 2019, the percentage of children under five whose births have been registered with a civil authority rose. It is interesting to note that the registration rate was marginally higher in rural areas (56.8 percent) than in urban areas (54.0 percent). But in 2023, when the rate fell to 39%, this improvement was undone. According to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) and the Statistics and Information Division (SID), this decrease can be related to the COVID-19 pandemic's disruptions.

Indicator 16.10.2 Number of countries that adopt and implement constitutional, statutory, and/or policy guarantees for public access to information

In 2009, Bangladesh passed the Right to Information (RTI) Act in an effort to improve accountability and openness in government agencies. Citizens of Bangladesh are granted the right to ask public authorities for information under this law, and officials are typically obligated to provide the requested information. Concerns over possible abuse have been raised by the law's contentious clauses, which permit public servants to conceal private or sensitive information. The government created the Independent Information Commission that same year to help implement the law. Guidelines, research, institutional capacity building, transparency initiatives, and handling information access complaints are all under the purview of this agency.

Indicator 16.a.1. Existence of independent national human rights institutions in compliance with the Paris Principles

Bangladesh formed the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) in 2009. The commission was charged with looking into claims of violations of human rights and making sure that fundamental rights were upheld. Its goal was to support human dignity and preserve Bangladesh's standing in the world. However, political meddling frequently prevents the commission from addressing pressing concerns like politically motivated extrajudicial murders, and its efforts have mainly been limited to gathering facts and preparing reports.

Indicator 16.b.1. Proportion of population reporting having personally felt discriminated against or harassed in the previous 12 months based on a ground of discrimination prohibited under international human rights law

About 35.6% of Bangladeshis, according to the 2018 Citizen Perception Household Survey (CPHS), mentioned they had been the victim of harassment or discrimination in the previous 12 months on the basis of grounds that are illegal under international human rights legislation. By 2030, the target is to reduce this percentage to 15%.

16.4. Key Policies and Strategies to Achieve SDG 16

In order to speed up the settlement of disputes outside of the conventional court system, Bangladesh implemented Alternate Dispute Resolution (ADR) procedures, which were integrated into the Civil Procedure Code, despite these persistent difficulties, such as political instability and the Rohingya influx in Cox's Bazar. In order to combat the financing of extremism and combat the growing threat of financial crimes, Bangladesh also launched the National Strategy for Prevention of Money Laundering and Combating the Financing of Terrorism (2019–2021).

The National Action Plan to Prevent Violence against Women and Children (2013–2025), which seeks to safeguard women and advance gender equality, reflects the nation's efforts to address gender-based violence. In terms of governance and anti-corruption, Bangladesh passed numerous important laws, including the Public Procurement Act (2006) and the Money Laundering Prevention Act (2012), and ratified the United Nations Convention

Against Corruption (UNCAC). These rules are aimed to prevent corruption in both the public and private sectors by fostering transparency in government contracts, public procurement, and financial transactions. The establishment of organisations such as the Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit (BFIU) and the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) enhances the nation's institutional structure for keeping an eye on and fighting corruption.

Despite these achievements, the country's human rights record remains under scrutiny. International human rights organizations have raised concerns about the use of laws like the Cyber Security Act. While Bangladesh has expressed a willingness to amend or repeal these laws to better align with international human rights standards, ongoing vigilance is necessary to ensure that reforms are fully implemented, and the rights of citizens are protected. Furthermore, political violence, human rights violations, and the present Rohingya crisis all highlight the necessity of continual collaboration to address these problems.

16.5. Major Challenges

High Frequency of Partner Violence Against Women: Females (ever-married) experiencing physical, sexual or emotional/psychological violence from partners are still very high, according to the findings under indicator 16.1.3. To reach the targets, the rates must be decrease for better women's safety.

Large Share of Un-sentenced detainees: Findings from indicator 16.3.2. show that a large share of detainees was held without trial as per the latest available data from MoHA. This necessitates a call for action to ensure access to justice, human rights, and also contributes to prison overcrowding. Delayed legal proceedings, inefficiencies in case management, and limited access to legal representation hinders achieving the indicator 16.3.2.

Higher Share Citizens Experiencing Disputes: The 2018 Citizen Perception Household Survey (CPHS) revealed that a huge share (97%) Bangladeshi citizens experienced disputes in the past two years (16.3.3). Such high share should be reduced to achieve the targets.

Low Share of Female Victims Reporting Violence: A low share of female victims are observed to be reporting about their victimization to competent authorities against the targets or 2025 and 2030 (indicator 16.3.2). Due to societal pressure and fear of stigma, females in Bangladesh mostly do not feel comfortable to report.

Bribery and Corruption: Findings reveal that the share of people having at least one contact with a public official and bribing the official, is much higher than the target values (indicator 16.5.1). This reflects corruption, weak institutional accountability, and lack of enforcement of anti-corruption laws. Many public officials operate with limited oversight, and citizens often encounter bureaucratic red tape, leading to reliance on bribes to expedite services. Additionally, low public awareness of legal rights, fear of retaliation, and political influence over law enforcement agencies contribute to the persistence of corruption make it difficult to meet the targets.

Poor Rate of Child Birth Registrations: The proportion of children under five whose births have been registered with a civil authority increased is at a very poor stage given the targets of 80% and 100% by 2025 and 2030 respectively (indicator 16.9.1). This reflects lack of

awareness and literacy among parents or guardians. Also, bureaucratic hassles and fees or charges in case of poor parents, make them reluctant in registering children's births.

Relatively High Rates of Intentional Homicides: During the period 2021-22, the number of victims of intentional homicide, especially number of female victims was on rise (indicator 16.1.1) compared to the targets for 2025 and 2030. The rising number of intentional homicides, particularly among women draws attention to the gaps in law enforcement, inadequate protection for vulnerable groups, and social tolerance of gender-based violence. Weak crime prevention mechanisms, delays in the judicial process, and insufficient victim support services contribute to the challenge.

Relatively High Rates of Human Trafficking: According to the latest data (2022) from Bangladesh Police (BP), the human trafficking number has raised a concern for reaching the target for 2025 and eventually 2030 in terms of indicator 16.2.2. The increasing cases of human trafficking in Bangladesh reflects border security, weak law enforcement, and insufficient victim protection measures. Poverty, unemployment, and lack of awareness make vulnerable populations, especially women and children, easy targets for traffickers. Additionally, low conviction rates and corruption hinder efforts to combat trafficking.

Data Unavailability: Another significant challenge for Bangladesh is the lack of data which impedes proper investigation for all indicators. Data is essential for informed decision-making. Tracking the indicators become a challenge without proper data and evidence.

16.6. Recommendations for Future Action

Ample and Effective Fast-track/Mobile Courts: To reduce the share of un-sentenced detainees (16.3.2), Bangladesh should implement fast-track courts for minor offenses, improve case management systems, and enhance legal aid services for detainees. Digitizing court records, expanding alternative dispute resolution (ADR), and increasing judicial capacity through recruitment and training can expedite trials. Additionally, bail system reforms should be introduced to prevent unnecessary pre-trial detention, ensuring a fair and efficient justice system. Besides, community-based ADR, digitized case management to enhance accessibility, expanding local mediation centres, and simplifying legal procedures can ensure faster and more affordable dispute resolution (indicator 16.3.3).

Bangladesh should establish fast-track courts for homicide cases, strengthen gender-sensitive policing, rehabilitation programs and enhance community surveillance in high-risk areas (indicator 16.1.1). Moreover, expanding victim protection programs, increasing crime data monitoring, and enforcing stricter penalties for perpetrators will curb violence and homicides. Public awareness campaigns on gender-based violence prevention should be integrated into education and media.

Strengthen Enforcement of Domestic Violence Laws and Expand Survivor Support: To reduce partner violence against women (16.1.3), Bangladesh should strengthen enforcement of domestic violence laws, expand survivor support services, and implement mandatory gender-sensitivity training for law enforcement and judiciary officials. Establishing more one-stop crisis centres (OSCCs), enhancing community-based intervention programs, and increasing access to legal aid and shelters will provide protection for victims. Additionally,

launching nationwide awareness campaigns and integrating gender equality education in schools can help shift societal norms and prevent future violence.

Establish Survivor-friendly Mechanism for Females: Confidential and survivor-friendly reporting mechanisms, including 24/7 helplines, online complaint platforms, and women-only police desks should be established (indicator 16.3.2). Expanding legal aid services, strengthening witness protection, and implementing community awareness campaigns can reduce stigma.

Enhance Accountability and Reform Bureaucratic Processes: Anti-corruption bodies should be allowed to operate with full autonomy and authority to investigate and prosecute corrupt practices to reduce bribery and corruption (indicator 16.5.1). Implementing strict monitoring systems to ensure that public officials are held accountable for their actions.

In addition, simplifying administrative procedures and reducing bureaucratic red tape to decrease opportunities for bribery are essential. Digitizing public services and increasing accessibility are recommended to reduce the need for face-to-face interactions to avoid bribery. Whistleblower protection mechanisms should be strengthened to encourage citizens to come forward and report issues.

Awareness Campaign and Lowering Fees for Birth Registration: To improve birth registration rates, the government should launch awareness campaigns on the importance of registration, eliminate registration fees for low-income families, and streamline bureaucratic processes (indicator 16.9.1). Expanding mobile registration units and leveraging digital platforms can also enhance accessibility and encourage timely registration for all children.

Strengthening Anti-trafficking Laws and Cross-border Cooperation: Bangladesh should strengthen anti-trafficking laws and enforcement, enhance cross-border cooperation, and invest in technology-driven surveillance at trafficking hotspots (indicator 16.2.2). Expanding rehabilitation programs for survivors, conducting nationwide awareness campaigns, and improving livelihood opportunities in high-risk areas can help prevent trafficking. Additionally, establishing specialized anti-trafficking courts and ensuring strict prosecution of traffickers will improve justice delivery and act as a deterrent.

Monitoring and Evaluation for Data Collection and Management: Regularly updating data and ensuring its accuracy are vital steps toward addressing this issue. Proper data would help in identifying priority areas and designing effective policies for the country's development.

16.7. Summary

Bangladesh's journey towards achieving SDG 16, which focuses on peace, justice, and strong institutions, presents a mixed picture. While the country has made some strides, significant challenges continue to impede sustained progress. Political instability, human rights violations, and inefficiencies in governance remain significant barriers. Furthermore, external pressures, such as ongoing regional conflicts and the refugee crisis, have compounded these domestic challenges, stretched resources and tested the country's resilience.

Despite these obstacles, Bangladesh has seen some improvements in the rates of intentional homicides, conflict-related deaths, and incidents of violence. This reflects the country's

commitment to reducing violence and fostering a more peaceful environment. However, recent political upheaval has resulted in severe bloodshed, a stark reminder of the volatility that still lingers in the political landscape. While these events are concerning, many hope that the country has turned a corner, with future instability being avoided.

17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

SDG 17: Partnerships to Achieve the Goal

17.1. Background

The SDG 17, strengthening the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development, is a unique goal with respect to the other goals as it calls for a collaboration among the nations to achieve targets of sustainable development. The idea of this goal is centred around strengthening global partnerships to support and achieve the targets set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. SDG 17 recognizes that the successful implementation of all the other 16 SDGs depends on strong, inclusive, and equitable partnerships across governments, the private sector, civil society, and global institutions. This goal highlights the importance of enhancing international cooperation in areas such as finance, technology, capacity-building, trade, policy and institutional coherence, multi-stakeholder partnerships, and data.

Each country has primary responsibility for its economic and social development however, as countries are in different levels of development stage, some countries, particularly the developing, least developed, landlocked, small island developing states and middle-income countries, requires special support to attain the targets of SDGs. Ultimately, SDG 17 stresses the significance of partnerships that are founded on shared principles and values and that have the capacity to foster effective multi-stakeholder collaboration. It calls for the involvement of all relevant stakeholders to create inclusive and sustainable global solutions that benefit all countries, leaving no one behind.

17.1. Global and Regional Context

The success of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) relies heavily on Goal 17, which focuses on strengthening global partnerships for sustainable development. However, since the adoption of the SDG agenda in 2015, the world has encountered a series of destabilizing events that have hindered global cooperation. These include trade wars, the COVID-19 pandemic, escalating geopolitical tensions among nuclear-armed countries, and various regional conflicts. These crises, combined with rising protectionism and the erosion of multilateralism, have fractured global cooperation and delayed progress towards SDG 17. According to the latest SDG Progress Report for 2024, only about 30% of the targets under SDG 17 have been achieved, underscoring the difficulties in fostering international collaboration.

Raising funds for a worldwide recovery and the SDGs' accomplishment is one of the most urgent issues. Even while official development assistance (ODA), FDI, and remittances have all increased recently, particularly following the initial setbacks brought on by COVID-19, there is still a sizable funding deficit in poor nations. The yearly SDG investment gap is projected to reach $4 trillion by 2024, a significant rise from $2.5 trillion in 2019. Financial flows into developing countries have been further stressed by global issues like the pandemic and geopolitical conflicts, which are highlighted by this growing disparity. As seen in Table 17.1, historical patterns demonstrate that industrialised nations have often fallen short of their pledge to devote 0.7% of their GNI to ODA. The epidemic and the conflict in Ukraine have

caused a recent boost in assistance flows to developing nations, but they are regarded as short-term spikes rather than long-term fixes.

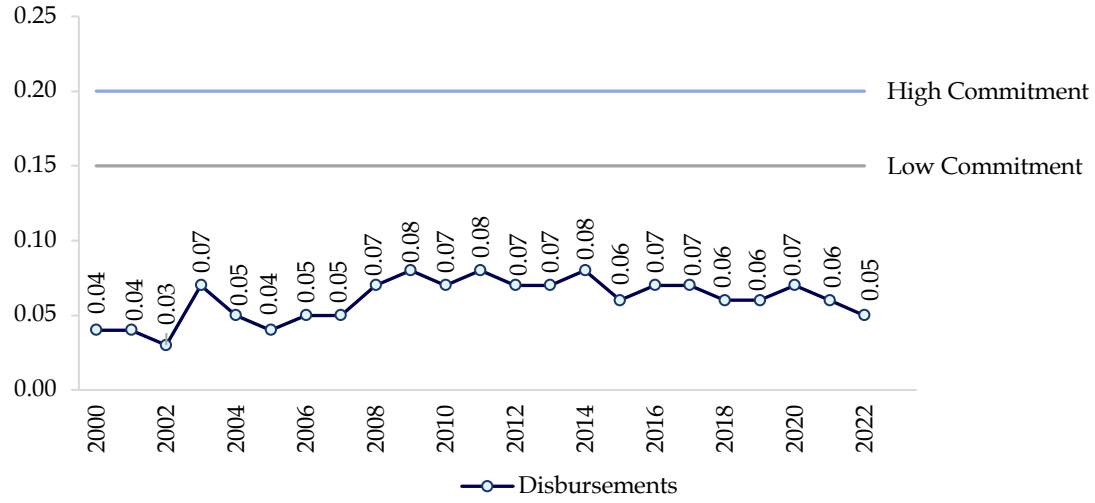
Table 17.1: Percentage of gross national income (GNI) of developed country disbursements and commitment to developing countries

2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
0.3	0.32	0.31	0.3	0.3	0.33	0.33	0.36	0.37

Source: UNCTAD, 2024.

In contrast, ODA disbursements to Least Developed Countries (LDCs) have seen a decline after peaking in 2020. In 2022, ODA to LDCs totalled $62 billion, marking a 4% drop compared to 2021, with a further 9.3% decrease in 2021 (Figure 17.2). This downward trend in ODA to LDCs underscores the challenges faced by the most vulnerable countries in securing sustainable financial assistance for development.

Figure 17.2: Percentage of gross national income (GNI) of developed country disbursements and commitment to LDCs



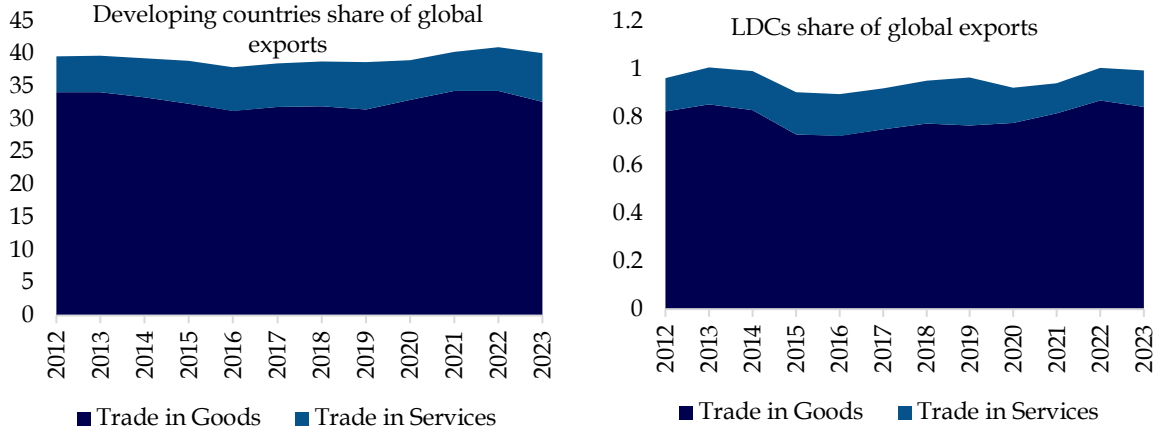
Source: UNCTAD, 2024.

Foreign direct investment (FDI) in developing countries decreased by 7.4% in 2023, a total of $836 billion, compared to the previous year. However, LDCs saw a positive development, with FDI inflows rising by 17.4%, reaching $31.3 billion (UNCTAD, 2024). Similarly, remittances to developing countries increased by 1.7%, reaching $857 billion in 2023, reflecting a steady flow of financial support despite global challenges (Ratha et al., 2024) . However, regional disparities persisted while remittance flows rose in East Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, and South Asia, they declined in Europe, Central Asia, the Middle East, North Africa, and Sub-Saharan Africa.

In terms of global trade, developing countries, including LDCs, were unable to expand their share in international markets in 2023. The Istanbul Programs of Action and the Doha Programs of Action, both set ambitious targets to double the share of LDCs in global exports from 1% in 2011 to 2% by 2020. Unfortunately, despite absolute growth in exports, LDCs' share of global goods and services exports has remained stagnant at around 1% since 2012 (Figure 17.3). A forecasting analysis suggests that, based on current growth rates, LDCs will not reach

the target of 2% by 2030. Even if export growth accelerates to 3% annually, their share would only rise to approximately 1.22% by 2030, still falling short of the 2% goal.

Figure 17.3: Developing countries and LDCs' export share in global exports



Source: UNCTAD, 2024.

17.2. Assessment of National Progress on SDG 17

As mentioned earlier, SDG 17 is a crucial goal for achieving the ambitious targets set out in the 2030 Agenda. Assessing the progress made towards this goal requires a comprehensive analysis of its underlying indicators. This analysis will evaluate Bangladesh's current state of progress on each indicator, along with various prospective analyses to assess whether the country can achieve the goal by 2030.

Indicator 17.1.1. & 17.1.2. Total government revenue as a proportion of GDP, by source and proportion of domestic budget funded by domestic taxes.

During FY24, total government revenue was BDT 4780 billion, which was equal to 9.47% of GDP (Table 17.1). As per the target outlined in "Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework of SDGs: Bangladesh Perspective," the goal is to increase the proportion by 17% by 2025 and 18% by 2030. On the other hand, the proportion of domestic budget funded by domestic taxes has been on standing at 66.9% in FY24 given the targets of 67% and 70% by 2025 and 2030 respectively (Table 17.1).

Table 17.1: Total Government Revenue and Proportion of Domestic Budget

Indicators	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Government revenue (share of GDP)	8.55%	9.40%	9.83%	10.73%	10.98%	9.96%	9.79%	9.64%	9.47%
Share of the domestic budget funded by domestic taxes	67.1%	81.5%	69.8%	71.5%	69.4%	65.2%	65.5%	65.6%	66.9%

Source: Bangladesh Economic Review 2024, Ministry of Finance, FD.

Indicator 17.3.1. Foreign direct investment (FDI), official development assistance (ODA), and South-South Cooperation (SSC) as a proportion of the total domestic budget

FDI and ODA are critical in financing Bangladesh's budgetary needs. In FY23, net FDI inflows stood at $4.43 billion, representing 7.7% of the total budget, according to provisional data (Table 17.2). The highest FDI inflow was recorded in FY19 at nearly $5 billion, or 10.6% of the annual budget. However, since FY19, net FDI inflows have declined while the national budget has continued to rise, causing a reduction in FDI as a proportion of the budget. The FDI as share of total domestic budget remains far from the target of 14% by 2025 and 2030 (for both years).

Table 17.2: FDI as the proportion of budget

Indicators	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
FDI (billion USD)	2.53	2.502	3.038	3.29	4.946	3.233	3.387	4.636	4.428
FDI as% of Budget	9.6%	8.2%	8.9%	8.4%	10.6%	6.5%	6.2%	7.7%	7.7%
FDI as% of GDP	1.0%	0.8%	0.8%	1.1%	0.8%	0.3%	0.3%	0.4%	0.4%

Source: Bangladesh Economic Review 2024, Ministry of Finance, FD.

The net ODA disbursement in FY23 was recorded at $10.01 billion, which was only around $3.5 billion in FY15 (Table 17.3). The targets for ODA as share of total domestic budget by 2025 and 2030 are 10% and 9% respectively.

Table 17.3: Overseas development assistance (ODA) as a proportion of the annual budget

Indicators	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
ODA (billion USD)	3.043	3.564	3.677	6.369	6.543	7.382	7.958	10.969	10.012
ODA as% of Budget	11.6%	11.7%	10.8%	16.2%	14.0%	14.9%	14.7%	18.3%	17.4%

Source: Bangladesh Economic Review 2024, Ministry of Finance, FD.

Indicator 17.3.2. Volume of remittance as proportion of total GDP

Remittance inflows to Bangladesh have generally risen from FY15 to FY23, with a peak in FY21, reaching a record $24.78 billion. In FY24, remittances amounted to approximately $23.91 billion, accounting for 5.2% of GDP (Table 17.4). Despite the overall growth in remittance since FY15, the share of remittances to GDP has consistently fallen short of the 7.6% target set for 2020. The targets for 2025 and 2030 are 9% and 10% respectively.

Table 17.4: Remittance to GDP ratio

Fiscal Year	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Remittance Billion USD	15.32	14.93	12.77	14.98	16.42	18.21	24.78	21.03	21.61	23.91
Remittance as% of GDP	6.60%	5.63%	5.11%	4.66%	4.67%	4.87%	5.95%	4.57%	4.79%	5.2

Source: Bangladesh Bank and Bangladesh Economic Review, 2024.

Indicator 17.4.1. Debt service as a proportion of exports of goods and services

This indicator tracks the ratio of principal and interest payments to total export earnings, reflecting a country's capacity to service its external debt relative to its exports. A higher ratio can signal potential debt sustainability challenges, while a lower ratio indicates a stronger ability to manage debt. In 2022-23, the total debt service was USD 4.8 billion, which was 9.4% of exports of goods and services. The targets for 2025 and 2030 are 4.5% and 4% respectively.

Table 17.5: Debt service as a proportion of exports of goods and services

Year	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Total Debt Service (Billion USD)	2.5	3.0	2.5	2.4	2.0	3.2	3.3	3.6	4.8
Exports of Goods & Services (Billion USD)	29.2	33.4	33.7	36.8	41.3	36.9	40.1	52.5	51.0
Debt service as a proportion of exports of goods and services (%)	8.6%	9.0%	7.5%	6.5%	4.9%	8.6%	8.2%	6.9%	9.4%

Source: Export of Goods and Services data from Bangladesh Bank and Total Debt Service data from ERD.

Indicator 17.6.2. Fixed internet broadband subscriptions per 100 inhabitants, by speed

Fixed internet broadband subscriptions per 100 inhabitants are a crucial indicator of technological access, communication, and global knowledge-sharing. A higher subscription rate indicates improved access to information and greater potential for digital participation. In Bangladesh, broadband connectivity has been consistently rising, facilitating information exchange and knowledge dissemination. According to data from the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the number of subscriptions increased from 3.10 per 100 people in 2015 to 6.93 in 2022 (Table 17.6). The target for 2020 has already been missed (8%), while targets are way high at 15% and 20% for 2025 and 2030 respectively.

Table 17.6: Fixed internet subscription per 100 population

Indicator	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Fixed broadband subscription per 100 inhabitants	3.10	4.13	4.51	4.92	4.89	6.00	6.58	6.93

Source: The International Telecommunication Union, 2024.

Indicator 17.8.1. Proportion of individuals using the Internet

The most recent Bangladesh Sample Vital Statistics show that internet usage increased from 30.39% in 2015 to 50.1% in 2023. With 58% of men and roughly 43% of women having internet access, gender-based segregation in internet access shows a clear discrepancy. Regionally, internet connectivity increased by about 10-percentage points in 2023 compared to 2020 levels, however there is still a difference between urban and rural areas. Despite having already

reached the 40% target set for 2020, the country is still far from meeting the 70% and 90% targets set for 2025 and 2030, respectively.

Table 17.7: Proportion of individuals using the internet (%)

Level	Estimated			
	2020	2021	2022	2023
National	43.5	43.7	45.5	50.1
Male	52.7	51.1	53.9	58.0
Female	34.3	36.5	37.6	42.6
Urban	52.1	57.1	59.2	62.7
Rural	36.5	39.4	41.2	46.1

Source: SVRS, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), 2023.

Indicator 17.9.1. Dollar value of financial and technical assistance (including through North-South, South- South and triangular cooperation) committed to developing countries

Bangladesh has received international support for capacity building in various sectors, including health, education, governance, and infrastructure. Development partners such as the UN, World Bank, and Asian Development Bank have been instrumental in these efforts. Additionally, Bangladesh is actively involved in South-South cooperation, sharing best practices and expertise with other developing nations.

The data from 2014-15 to 2021-22 shows a generally upward trend in the dollar value of financial and technical assistance committed to Bangladesh, with the assistance rising from USD 493.55 million in 2014-15 to USD 1,349.29 million in 2021-22 (Table 17.8). The total value of assistance more than doubles over this period, indicating growing international interest and support for Bangladesh's development, likely due to its economic growth, rising population, and continued development challenges. Bangladesh has already surpassed the target of USD 1,200 million by 2025 and on track of reaching the target of USD 1,500 by 2030.

Table 17.8: Dollar value of financial and technical assistance (including through North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation) committed to Bangladesh (Millions of constant 2021 USD)

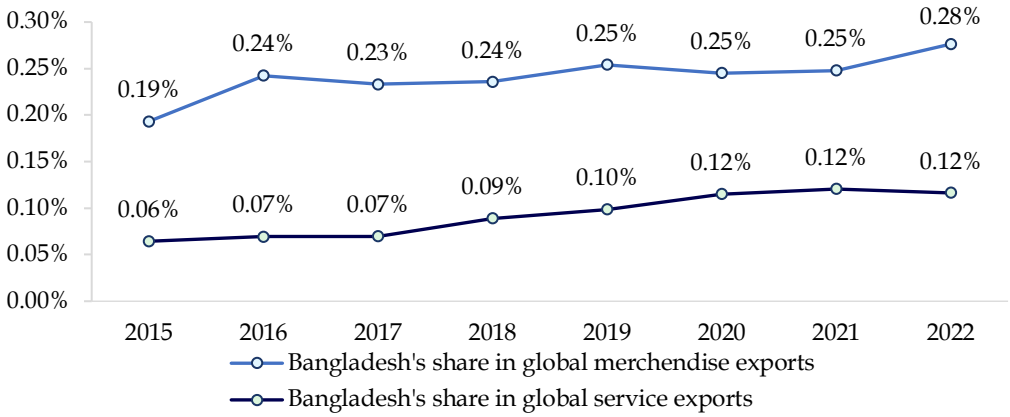
Indicator	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Dollar value of financial and technical assistance (including through North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation) committed	493.6	579.3	761.9	819.4	559.0	965.6	849.3	1,349.3

Source: SDG Indicators Database.

Indicator 17.11.1. Developing countries and least developed countries share of global exports

Bangladesh's share in global merchandise exports has slightly increased to 0.28% after stagnating for consecutive three years during 2019-2021 at 0.25%, up from 0.19% in 2015. Though in the services sector, Bangladesh has doubled its share of global exports between 2015 and 2022 accounting for 0.12% (2022), the share has been stagnating over the past three years (2020-2022).

Figure 17.4: Bangladesh's share in global merchandise and service exports



Source: International Trade Centre (ITC).

Indicator 17.12.1. Average tariffs faced by developing countries, least developed countries, and small island developing states

Since 2010, the tariff rates faced by Bangladesh have been gradually declining, starting at 8.9% in 2010, dropping to 8.5% in 2015, and further decreasing to 8.1% by 2022. In terms of preferential tariff access, Bangladesh encountered a rate of 3.80% in 2022, compared to 3.64% in 2010 and 4% in 2015. The target for MFN is 8.25%, while the target for preferential is 3.88% by 2025 and 2030.

Figure 17.5: Average MFN tariffs face by Bangladesh

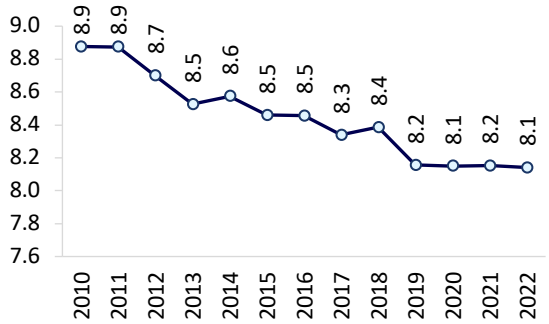
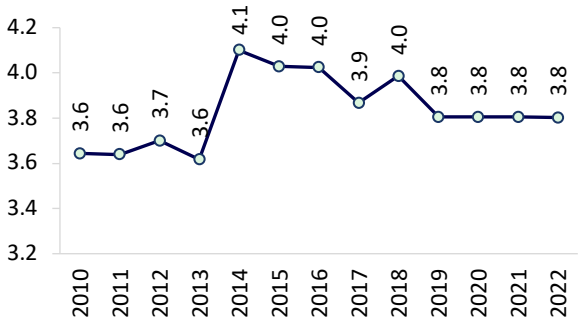


Figure 17.6: Average preferential tariff face by Bangladesh



Source: UNDESA, 2023.

Indicator 17.19.2. Proportion of countries that (a) have conducted at least one population and housing census in the last 10 years; and (b) have achieved 100% birth registration and 80% death registration

Bangladesh conducted its first Population Census in 1974. In line with the ten-year interval, the 6th Population and Housing Census was scheduled for 2021 but was delayed due to the global COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, the census was conducted nationwide from June 15 to 21, 2022 and published in August 2022.

The birth registration rose from 37% in 2015 to 63.45% in 2022 (SVRS, 2022). The goal is to reach 80% by 2025 and achieve 100% by 2030. Meanwhile, the death registration rate saw a slight increase, climbing from 49% in 2015 to 50.49% in 2019. The targets for death registration are 70% and 80% by 2025 and 2030 respectively.

17.3. Key Policies and Strategies to Achieve SDG 17

Bangladesh has made strides in its pursuit of SDG 17, which emphasizes fostering global partnerships for sustainable development. These efforts are particularly timely as the nation prepares for its impending graduation from Least Developed Country (LDC) status. Key frameworks like the National Development Framework (NDF), the Five-Year Perspective Plans, the National Policy on Development Cooperation (NPDC), and the National Committee on LDC Graduation (NCG) have provided guidance for the country's development trajectory. These initiatives are not just policy tools but strategic roadmaps that integrate the goals of sustainable development with Bangladesh's unique socio-economic challenges. They ensure that policymaking and government actions remain cohesive and directed towards long-term sustainability objectives.

Bangladesh has also underlined how crucial collaborations are to reaching SDG 17. A key component of the country's approach has been multi-stakeholder collaborations, which include private sector participants, international development agencies, and civil society organisations. By combining various resources and areas of knowledge, these collaborations form a powerful team that can tackle difficult sustainability issues. Bangladesh has aggressively shared its development experiences and lessons learnt from other countries in the Global South, while also advocating for South-South collaboration. Regional development networks are strengthened and reciprocal growth is encouraged by this knowledge sharing.

The mobilisation of domestic resources has become a key component of Bangladesh's sustainable development strategy. The nation wants to lessen its reliance on foreign help by implementing extensive tax changes and improved revenue collection systems. These initiatives have been strengthened even further by public-private partnerships, which have created independent financial mechanisms capable of supporting future expansion. Although these internal efforts are important, Bangladesh also understands the need of international cooperation. To fortify its developmental underpinnings, the country has aggressively sought out international collaborations, foreign aid options, and trade agreements.

Initiatives to increase capacity have been essential in giving civil society and government representatives the tools they need to carry out these plans successfully. A strong monitoring and evaluation structure keeps track of developments, spots gaps, and guides required adjustments to guarantee accountability and transparency. Bangladesh's commitment to attaining sustainable development that benefits all of its population is demonstrated by this methodical approach.

In addition to aiming to achieve SDG 17, Bangladesh is establishing the framework for a resilient, inclusive, and sustainable future in the post-LDC era via these policies and initiatives.

17.4. Major Challenges

Low Tax-GDP Ratio: Bangladesh faces a persistent struggle to mobilize adequate resources, a difficulty compounded by its low tax-to-GDP ratio (7.5%), which remains one of the lowest in the region and low against the targets for 2025 (17%) and 2030 (18%). This limited capacity for domestic revenue generation forces the country to rely heavily on external assistance to

finance development projects. Without improving domestic resource mobilization and reducing dependency on foreign aid, achieving the ambitious targets of SDG indicator 17.1.1 may remain out of reach. A low tax-to-GDP ratio restricts the country's ability to SDG implementation and essential public services.

Insufficient FDI and High ODA Dependency: The FDI in Bangladesh as share of the domestic budget is too low (7.7%) compared to the targets (14%) by 2025 and 2030 (Indicator 17.3.1). A lack of business-friendly policies, inadequate infrastructure, and bureaucratic inefficiencies deter potential investors. On the other hand, the ODA dependency is at a concerning level (17.4%) against the much lower targets. These will create economic vulnerabilities by limiting private sector investment, technology transfer, job creation, and long-term financial stability. Insufficient FDI limits capital investment, while excessive ODA dependency risks financial instability if aid declines. This imbalance hampers sustainable growth, reducing Bangladesh's ability to achieve long-term economic resilience and SDG financing.

Remittance Falling Short of Target: Remittance as share of the GDP has been consistently low compared to targets (Indicator 17.3.2). This reflects structural barriers such as high transfer costs, reliance on informal channels (hundis), and limited skill diversification among migrant workers. Declining remittances increase external vulnerabilities, constrain domestic consumption, and limit foreign reserve accumulation, impacting economic stability and long-term growth prospects.

Rising Debt Service Burden: Debt service as a proportion of exports of goods and services is too high compared to target (Indicator 17.4.1.). The escalating burden of debt servicing poses a significant threat to Bangladesh's fiscal stability. As external debt payments consume a growing share of the national budget, critical public expenditures may face cuts, jeopardizing investments in health, education, and infrastructure. If this trend continues unchecked, it could undermine the nation's broader development goals and impede progress across several SDG targets.

Poor Fixed Broadband Penetration and Low Internet Use: Fixed internet broadband subscriptions are too low compared to targets (Indicator 17.6.2.). Bangladesh's low fixed broadband penetration hampers digital transformation, limiting productivity, innovation, and economic competitiveness. This reflects factors such as inadequate infrastructure, high costs, and regional disparities restricting access, and financial inclusion. Weak broadband expansion undermines digital economy growth, reducing efficiency in industries and government services.

Findings from the indicator 17.8.1 show that the current share of individuals using the internet are way below the targets to be achieved by 2025 and 2030. Bangladesh's low internet usage rate hinders digital inclusion, economic productivity, and access to online services. This restricts e-commerce, fintech growth, and skill development, slowing economic modernization.

Poor Birth and Death Registration Rates: Bangladesh is still lagging far behind the targets for 2025 and 2030 for both birth and death registrations (Indicator 17.19.2). Low birth and death registration rates hinder effective policy planning, resource allocation, and social

protection delivery. Inaccurate demographic data weakens governance, limiting access to education, healthcare, and financial services.

Stagnation in Global Export Shares Due to Lack of Diversification: Bangladesh's share in global merchandise exports was stagnant for consecutive three years during 2019-2021, while the services sector share of global exports has been stagnating during 2020-2022 (Indicator 17.11.1). This reflects lack of export diversification as the country's exports are overwhelmingly concentrated in the Ready-Made Garment (RMG) sector. This lack of diversification exposes the economy to external shocks and limits its ability to expand into higher-value markets. Adding to the challenge is the looming loss of trade preferences as Bangladesh graduates from its LDC status, potentially eroding its competitive edge in the global market. These factors make the target of doubling the country's share in global merchandise exports a formidable challenge.

17.5. Recommendations for Future Action

Mobilizing Resources Beyond Government Revenues: Bangladesh should enhance domestic resource mobilization by expanding the tax base by formalizing the informal sector, improving tax compliance, and strengthening revenue administration (indicator 17.1.1). Leveraging digital systems can boost collection efficiency. Additionally, policy reforms and incentives for formalization can increase contributions from the informal sector. Moreover, integrating the private sector, public-private partnerships (PPP), and development partners into the financing framework can provide substantial benefits.

Comprehensive Structural Reform to Improve Business Climate: To reduce ODA dependency and boost FDI, Bangladesh should prioritize comprehensive structural reforms aimed at improving the business climate (indicator 17.3.1). This includes simplifying regulations, enhancing transparency, and reducing bureaucratic inefficiencies. Establishing well-equipped special economic zones (SEZs) with adequate infrastructure, utilities, and streamlined regulatory frameworks can significantly enhance investor confidence. Strengthening the capacity of the Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA) to facilitate and manage investments is equally important. Increased FDI will not only boost economic growth but also drive technological transfer and diversify export markets, contributing to long-term resilience.

Moreover, investments in infrastructure, particularly in energy and transportation, can attract foreign investors.

Investment in Digital Infrastructure: To improve broadband penetration and internet usage, Bangladesh should invest in expanding digital infrastructure, particularly in underserved rural areas addressing regional disparities (indicators 17.6.2 and 17.8.1). Public-private partnerships (PPPs) can play a key role in reducing costs and improving service delivery. Additionally, the government should incentivize telecom companies to lower prices and improve connectivity. Strengthening digital literacy programs and promoting e-commerce, fintech, and online education would enhance economic productivity, inclusion, and competitiveness, driving long-term growth and digital economy development.

Favourable Repayment Terms and Extension of Maturities to Ease Fiscal Pressure: To mitigate the rising debt service burden, Bangladesh should prioritize debt restructuring strategies, including negotiation of favourable repayment terms and extending maturities to ease fiscal pressure (indicator 17.4.1). Additionally, increasing export diversification and boosting foreign exchange reserves can improve the debt-to-export ratio. Strengthening domestic revenue mobilization and reducing reliance on external borrowing for non-essential projects would ensure that critical investments in health, education, and infrastructure remain intact, safeguarding long-term development goals.

Export Diversification for Higher Global Export Shares: To address stagnation in global export shares, Bangladesh must diversify its export base beyond the Ready-Made Garment (RMG) sector by developing high-value industries such as electronics, pharmaceuticals, and information technology (indicator 17.11.1). Strengthening trade agreements and negotiating better market access will help counter the loss of LDC preferences. Additionally, investing in innovation, quality standards, and improving logistics infrastructure will enhance competitiveness and open new markets, reducing vulnerability to external shocks and facilitating sustainable export growth.

Enhancing Remittance Inflows: To increase remittance inflows, Bangladesh should reduce transfer costs by promoting competition among formal remittance channels and strengthening partnerships with international money transfer operators (indicator 17.3.2). A combination of policy and operational interventions such as adopting a market-based exchange rate will discourage the use of unofficial channels, ensuring a more significant flow of funds through legal means. Concurrently, enhancing the skills of expatriate workers through programs under the National Skill Development Authority (NSDA) can increase their earning potential and sustain remittance inflows. Targeting high-value job markets abroad can further amplify this impact, aligning remittance growth with national economic priorities. Additionally, creating incentives for remittance inflows, such as tax breaks, could encourage the use of formal channels.

17.6. Summary

Achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 17, which emphasizes partnerships for global development, remains a challenging but crucial objective for Bangladesh. While progress has been made in some areas, significant gaps persist in resource mobilization, technology and connectivity, trade, and data systems. These deficiencies highlight the need for targeted interventions to address systemic shortcomings and foster sustainable growth.

Bangladesh's revenue-to-GDP ratio stood at 9.47% in FY23, substantially below the 18% target set for 2030. Similarly, indicators such as Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), remittance inflows, and debt servicing are off-track, falling short of their respective targets. In the realm of technology and connectivity, while fixed broadband subscriptions and internet usage have seen steady growth, the pace remains insufficient. Gender and regional disparities in internet access continue to impede equitable development. On the trade front, Least Developed Countries (LDCs), including Bangladesh, are struggling to achieve the ambitious goal of doubling their global export share to 2% by 2030. Furthermore, despite improved population

and housing census coverage, birth and death registration rates remain below expectations, underscoring critical gaps in data systems.

To bridge these gaps, several key strategies have been proposed. Expanding the domestic tax base and fostering private sector engagement through enhanced public-private partnerships are essential for boosting resource mobilization. Prudent debt management strategies, including the use of concessional loans, debt restructuring, and enhanced negotiation capabilities, are critical to maintaining fiscal stability. Creating a business-friendly environment, complemented by the development of special economic zones, will be instrumental in attracting more FDI. Strengthening remittance flows through a market-based exchange rate and robust skill development programs for expatriates is another essential priority. Moreover, addressing gender and regional inequalities in digital access, alongside improving data systems, is fundamental for ensuring inclusive development.

Bangladesh's pathway to achieving SDG 17 requires cohesive and sustained efforts across multiple sectors. By implementing these measures, the country can overcome existing challenges, accelerate progress, and set a robust foundation for sustainable development by 2030.

SDG LOCALIZATION:
Progress of National Priority Indicators

Background

Sustainable development embodies the aspirations, necessities, and entitlements of individuals globally. The achievement of these aims is infrequently uniform, as local contexts and priorities significantly influence their interpretation and execution. SDG localisation refers to the alignment of local realities, challenges, and resources with global sustainable development goals. It involves local planning, implementation, and oversight of programs to ensure that global objectives produce significant outcomes for local communities.

Localisation has historical origins as well. "Local Agenda 21" was initiated at the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, also referred to as the Earth Summit. This voluntary initiative underscored the critical role of local governments and communities in formulating policies and action plans for sustainable development, demonstrating how inclusive and pragmatic solutions emerged through the engagement of stakeholders, including local government, civil society, business entities, and marginalised groups.

Localisation involves more than just geographical adaptation; it represents a transformation in governance and planning that aligns global objectives with local conditions. The framework translates the abstract goals of the SDGs into concrete actions that correspond to the unique socio-economic, cultural, and environmental contexts of each region. Localisation integrates global objectives into local development strategies, ensuring community engagement in the design, implementation, and assessment of projects that impact their lives directly.

The concept of SDG localisation is particularly significant for countries like Bangladesh. Bangladesh, as a developing nation, faces multiple challenges, including poverty alleviation, climate resilience, gender equality, and educational advancement. The SDGs encompass numerous indicators; however, their relevance and applicability differ within the specific context of Bangladesh. The country implemented a prioritisation plan, focussing on the goals and targets considered most critical for its development.

The "39+1" model of Bangladesh exemplifies a localised strategy. The framework includes 39 nationally prioritised indicators aligned with the global Sustainable Development Goals, in addition to one supplementary indicator that addresses specific local needs. This strategic intervention ensures that the nation's development framework is aligned with international standards while remaining relevant to local contexts. The "+1" indicator is important as it offers flexibility, enabling communities to address emerging issues that may not be fully covered by the standard SDG framework.

SDG Localization Efforts

Bangladesh has made some developments in the localization of the SDGs, emphasizing the importance of integrating global objectives into national and sub-national contexts. Recognizing the critical role of local governments and stakeholders, the country has taken various initiatives to align its development efforts with the 2030 Agenda. Strategic planning, institutional reforms, and capacity-building programs aimed at fostering equitable and sustainable development establish the foundation for SDG localisation in Bangladesh. Bangladesh implemented a "whole-of-society" approach to operationalise SDG localisation,

ensuring the participation of many stakeholders, including local governments, NGOs, private sector entities, and marginalised communities (SIR, 2022). The Governance Innovation Unit (GIU) facilitated the localisation process through capacity-building activities at various administrative levels and the staging of workshops. These workshops aimed to equip participants with the tools and information necessary to translate global SDG targets into actionable local development priorities. In 2018, the GIU identified 39 national priority indicators (NPIs) and one additional indicator designed to meet local needs. This strategy outlines Bangladesh's initiatives to tackle particular challenges while maintaining coherence with global objectives.

Under the guidance of Divisional Commissioners, "Train the Trainers" seminars were held at the divisional level, engaging participants from government ministries, civil society, and commercial sector companies (GIU, 2023). The sessions highlighted the significance of SDG localisation, concentrating on practical strategies for implementation and monitoring. Upazila-level workshops convened local leaders, such as Upazila Nirbahi Officers, chairpersons of Upazila Parishads, and other stakeholders, to identify and prioritise local development indicators (GIU, 2023). This participatory approach cultivated ownership and accountability among local actors, thereby improving the relevance and impact of initiatives related to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Bangladesh has incorporated SDG localisation into its comprehensive development framework, alongside training and capacity-building initiatives. The Seventh and Eighth Five-Year Plans of the nation synchronise national development priorities with Sustainable Development Goal targets, ensuring consistency across policy areas. Local government entities, such as Union Parishads and Upazila Parishads, are tasked with formulating five-year plans that incorporate Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) priorities. The plans aim to fulfil the distinct requirements of local communities while also promoting national development goals.

Bangladesh has developed a web-based SDG tracker to improve monitoring and evaluation, providing a detailed overview of progress at national and sub-national levels. Users of this portal can assess the effectiveness of programs aimed at the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The localisation process highlights the need for extensive data to precisely depict the complexities of different places. Local initiatives aimed at improving data collecting and analysis frameworks support evidence-based decision-making by strengthening local systems.

A vital aspect of the localisation of the Sustainable Development Goals in Bangladesh is the focus on promoting collaboration and establishing strategic partnerships. The government has initiated discussions with development partners, international agencies, and the business sector to efficiently utilise resources and skills. Nonetheless, significant obstacles remain. There is an urgent necessity for improved promotion of public-private partnerships to foster innovation and boost service delivery efficiency. Furthermore, Bangladesh has emphasized the role of South-South cooperation, shared its experiences and learned from other developing countries to enhance the localization process.

Bangladesh's initiatives to localise the Sustainable Development Goals are further evidenced by its community engagement. Despite the involvement of local populations in the design and execution of development efforts, political, administrative, behavioural, and planning obstacles persist (Zahid, 2022). Community engagement is crucial, particularly to adhere to the SDG objective of "leaving no one behind," guaranteeing that developmental advantages extend to the most marginalised and disadvantaged groups.

Progress of '39+1' National Priority Indicators

Bangladesh's efforts to adapt the SDGs through its '39+1' National Priority Indicators (NPTs) illustrate a narrative of achievement alongside persistent challenges. The indicators are formulated to reflect the developmental objectives of the country, offering a thorough assessment of progress across various domains, such as poverty alleviation, education, health, and infrastructure. Despite numerous challenges, their narrative reflects determination and gradual advancement.

An examination of the advancements indicates strides in alleviating poverty and enhancing child health, two essential facets of growth. The widespread availability of power and the rising percentage of students engaging in technical education indicate policy initiatives. Nonetheless, the persisting obstacles are equally compelling. Despite advancements in child health indicators, maternal health outcomes continue to be troubling, as elevated maternal mortality rates indicate deficiencies in healthcare accessibility and quality. Access to safe water and sanitation services, essential for public health, continues to fall short of established standards, rendering a substantial segment of the population susceptible to disease. Gender inequality remains a substantial obstacle, with phenomena such as child marriage and restricted female labour force participation illustrating entrenched social and cultural impediments that necessitate more assertive governmental and community-level solutions.

Education reveals a complex landscape of advancement. On one hand, technical education among secondary school graduates has experienced growth, providing a means for skills development and employment opportunities. Conversely, completion rates for elementary and junior secondary school are deficient, highlighting the necessity for more robust initiatives to achieve universal education. Despite advancements in physical improvements, including the expansion of paved roads, transport accessibility for underprivileged groups remains a significant challenge, hindering inclusivity in development.

In order to track and carry out SDG localization, data is essential. Evaluate the impact of policies and adjust to new demands are both made more difficult by weak data systems. An incomplete understanding of problems and progress due to a lack of sufficient data makes it difficult to formulate a comprehensive plan to achieve targets. Moreover, institutional capability and governance are essential elements affecting the efficacy of SDG localization. Therefore, improving institutional accountability and stakeholder collaboration is essential for transforming plans into quantifiable results. Besides, obstacles in revenue generation and financial sustainability persist, underscoring the need for enhanced governance and new fiscal policies.

The progress of the 39+1 indicators of Bangladesh reflects its commitment to attaining the Sustainable Development Goals, despite considerable challenges. Table 18.1 highlighted the status of these national priority indicators.

Table 18.1: Status of National Priority Indicators

SDGs	National Priority Indicator (NPT)	Status
SDG 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere	**NPT 1:** Reduce the proportion of the population living below the extreme poverty line below 3% (SDG Indicator 1.2.1)	5.6% of the population lived below the extreme poverty line in 2022 (HIES 2022, BBS)
	NPT 2: Reduce the proportion of the population living below the national poverty line below 10% (SDG Indicator 1.2.1)	18.7% of the population lived below the national poverty line in 2022 (HIES 2022, BBS)
SDG 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture	**NPT 3:** Reduce the prevalence of stunting among children under 5 years of age to 12% (SDG Indicator 2.2.1)	The prevalence of stunting among children under 5 was 24% in 2022 (BDHS Survey 2022, MoHFW)
	NPT 4: Ensure the proportion of cultivable land at a minimum of 55% of the total land area	Insufficient data.
SDG 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages	**NPT 5:** Reduce neonatal mortality rate to 12 per 1,000 live births (SDG Indicator 3.2.2)	The neonatal mortality rate was 20 per 1,000 live births in 2023 (Bangladesh Sample Vital Statistics (SVRS, 2023)
	NPT 6: Reduce under-5 mortality rate to 25 per 1,000 live births (SDG Indicator 3.2.1)	The under-5 mortality rate fell to 33 per 1,000 in 2023 (SVRS, 2023)
	NPT 7: Reduce the maternal mortality ratio to 70 per 100,000 live births (SDG Indicator 3.1.1)	The maternal mortality rate was 136 per 100,000 live births in 2023 (SVRS, 2023)
	NPT 8: Reduce the death rate due to road traffic injuries to 1.2 per 100,000 people (SDG Indicator 3.6.1)	Road traffic injuries caused 10.01 deaths per 100,000 population in 2023. (SVRS, 2023)
SDG 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all	**NPT 9:** Ensure 100% completion rate of primary education	Primary education completion rate was 86.9% in 2023 (SVRS, 2023)
	NPT 10: Ensure 100% completion rate of junior secondary education	Junior secondary (lower secondary) education completion stood at 68.8% in 2023 (SVRS, 2023)
	NPT 11: Ensure the proportion of students in the technical level above 20% of the total students passed every year in secondary education (SSC, Dakhil, and Vocational)	Insufficient data.

	NPT 12: Ensure the proportion of schools by 100% with access to the following: A. Electricity; B. Internet; C. Basic drinking water; D. Single- sex basic sanitation facilities (SDG Indicator 4.a.1)	95.3%-97.2% of schools had basic utilities in 2023, but gaps in internet access (79.2%) (APSC & BES, BANBEIS, 2023)
	NPT 13: Ensure the proportion of schools by 100% with access to adapted infrastructure and materials for the child/students with disability (SDG Indicator 4.a.1)	18.11% of secondary schools had adapted infrastructure for students with disabilities while 47.1% of primary schools had the same in 2023, needing intervention (APSC & BES, BANBEIS, 2023)
SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls	**NPT 14:** Reduce the proportion of women aged 20-24 years who were married before age 15 to zero (SDG Indicator 5.3.1)	8.2% of women aged 20-24 were married before 15 in 2023 (SVRS, 2023)
	NPT 15: Reduce the proportion of women aged 20-24 years who were married before age 18 to 10% (SDG Indicator 5.3.1)	41.6% of women aged 20-24 were married before 18 in 2023 (SVRS, 2023)
	NPT 16: Increase the female labour force participation rate to 50%	Female labour force participation was 41.7% in 2023 (LFS 2023, BBS)
SDG 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all	**NPT 17:** Ensure 100% population using safely managed drinking water services (SDG Indicator 6.1.1)	71.22% of the population used safely managed drinking water in 2023 (WHO, UNICEF, BBS (SRVS).
	NPT 18: Ensure 100% population using safely managed sanitation services (SDG Indicator 6.2.1)	Safely managed sanitation services covered 45% of the population in 2023 (SVRS, 2023)
SDG 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all	**NPT 19:** Ensure access to electricity for 100% population (SDG Indicator 7.1.1)	Electricity reached 99.5% of the population in 2023 (SVRS, 2023)
	NPT 20: Increase renewable energy share in total final energy consumption to 10% (SDG Indicator 7.2.1)	Renewable energy accounted for 4.11% of final energy consumption in 2023 (SREDA)
SDG 8: Promote sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all	**NPT 21:** Increase annual growth rate of GDP to 10% (SDG Indicator 8.1.1)	Growth rate of real GDP per capita stood at 4.22% in FY 2023-24, while it was 6.06% in FY 2022-23 (National Account Statistics, BBS)
	NPT 22: Reduce unemployment rate below 3% (SDG Indicator 8.5.2)	Unemployment rate was 3.35% in 2023 (LFS, 2023, BBS)
	NPT 23: Reduce the proportion of the youth population (15-29 years) not in education, employment, or training to 10% (SDG Indicator 8.6.1)	18.9% of youth (15-29) were not in education, employment, or training in 2023 (SVRS, 2023)
SDG 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and	**NPT 24:** Ensure 100% pucca roads (suitable for all seasons) (SDG Indicator 9.1.1)	91.09% of roads were pucca in 2023 (SVRS, BBS, 2023)

sustainable industrialization, and foster innovation	**NPT 25:** Increase Industry (manufacturing) value added as a proportion of GDP to 35% (SDG Indicator 9.2.1)	Manufacturing contributed 37.56% to GDP in 2023 (Bangladesh Economic Review 2024, Finance Division, Ministry of Finance)
	NPT 26: Increase manufacturing employment as a proportion of total employment to 25% (SDG Indicator 9.2.2)	Manufacturing employment comprised 11.56% of total jobs in 2023 (LFS 2023, BBS)
	NPT 27: Increase the number of entrepreneurs ten times in the Information and Communication Technology sector	Insufficient data to evaluate.
SDG 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries	**NPT 28:** Reduce the ratio of income of the top 10% population and the bottom 10% population to 20	Percentage share of income of households at the national level for top 10% was 40.92% in 2022, and 1.31% for bottom 10% in 2022 (HIES, BBS, 2022).
	NPT 29: Reduce the recruitment cost borne by employees as a proportion of yearly income earned in a country of destination to 10% (SDG Indicator 10.7.1)	Proportion of recruitment cost in the monthly employment earnings by country of destination was 11.7% in 2023 (LFS 2023, BBS)
SDG 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable	**NPT 30:** Ensure women, children, the elderly, and persons with disabilities have convenient access to public transport (minimum 20% seats) (SDG Indicator 11.2.1)	Proportions of population that has convenient access to public transport in 2023 were– national 85.05%, female 85.1%, children (<15 yrs) 84.69%, elderly (65+ yrs) 82.64% (SVRS, 2023)
SDG 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns	**NPT 31:** Ensure 100% of industries install and operate a waste management system	Only 2.23% of industries operated waste management systems in 2019-20. However, 62.34% industrial waste water enters the environment without any treatment in FY 2020-21, and 3,118.37 million cubic meter industrial wastewater flow safely is generated out of which 37.66% is safely treated in FY 2020-21 (EPER and Waste Management Survey 2022, ECDS, BBS, SID)
SDG 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts	**NPT 32:** Reduce the number of deaths, missing persons, and directly affected persons attributed to disasters to 1,500 per 100,000 population (SDG Indicator 13.1.1)	Disasters affected 3,766 persons per 100,000 population and caused death to 0.85 per 100,000 population in 2021 (BDRHS, BBS, SID, MoP & Impact of Climate Change on Human Life (ICCHL) Programme, BBS)
SDG 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas, and marine resources for sustainable development	**NPT 33:** Expand the coverage of protected areas in relation to marine areas by 5% (SDG Indicator 14.5.1)	Marine protected areas covered 5.36% of territorial waters in 2022 (WDI, World Bank, 2024)

SDG 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss	**NPT 34:** Enhance forest area as a proportion of total land area to 18% (SG Indicator 15.1.1)	Forests accounted for 14.47% of land area in 2018 (Bangladesh Forest Division, Statistical Yearbook Bangladesh-2022)
	NPT 35: Increase the area of tree-covered land by 25% in relation to the total land area	About 23.23% (3.1 million ha) of the land in Bangladesh has some kind of tree and forest management (Tree and Forest Resources of Bangladesh: Report on the Bangladesh Forest Inventory, BFI, 2020)
SDG 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all, and build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels	**NPT 36:** Increase the proportion of children under 5 years of age whose births have been registered with a civil authority to 100% (SDG Indicator 16.9.1)	56.2% of children under age 5 whose births are reported registered with a civil authority in 2019 (MICS 2019, BBS & UNICEF). However, 39.66% of children aged 0-4) had birth registrations in 2023 (SVRS 2023, BBS)
	NPT 37: Increase the proportion of complaint Settlement against cognizance of cases by National Human Rights Commission to 60%	Insufficient data.
SDG 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development	**NPT 38:** Increase total government revenue as a proportion of GDP to 20% (SDG Indicator 17.1.1)	Government revenue was 9.47% of GDP in 2023-24, needing intervention to reach 20% (Bangladesh Economic Review 2024, Ministry of Finance, FD)
	NPT 39: Increase the proportion of individuals using the Internet to 100% (SDG Indicator 17.8.1)	Internet usage reached 50.1% of the population (aged 15+) in 2023 (SVRS, 2023)
Leave no one behind agenda	NPT +1: Districts/upazilas to have specific target based on the context and ground reality existing in the locality.	Insufficient data.

Challenges and Moving Ahead

The progress of '39+1' NPTs of Bangladesh emphasises a dual narrative of achievement and enduring challenges. While steps have been made in poverty alleviation, child health, and technical education, the journey toward the SDGs remains uptight with financial, governance, behavioural, and environmental hurdles. To translate global objectives into local realities, Bangladesh must overcome these hurdles through focused, data-driven policies.

A major challenge is resource mobilisation. Significant investments are necessary for various critical indicators, including poverty reduction (NPT 1 and NPT 2), maternal mortality (NPT 7), and infrastructure development (NPT 24). The revenue-to-GDP ratio stands at 9.47% for FY 2023-24, significantly below the 20% target outlined in NPT 38, thereby constraining financial capacity. The reliance on external funding and the slow pace of innovative financing mechanisms necessitates a stronger focus on enhancing domestic resource mobilization. Improving tax administration, broadening the tax base, and fostering public-private

partnerships could provide alternative financing avenues, ensuring local government institutions have the resources needed to implement SDG-related projects effectively.

Governance challenges, such as centralised decision-making and inadequate coordination, persistently hinder the progress of NPIs. Discrepancies exist between national targets and local realities in the domains of education (NPT 9 and NPT 10), gender equality (NPT 14 and NPT 15), and water and sanitation (NPT 17 and NPT 18). The restricted autonomy of local institutions frequently hinders timely interventions, thereby impacting outcomes like female labour force participation (NPT 16) and inclusive transport access (NPT 30). Decentralising governance structures, enhancing institutional accountability, and promoting stakeholder collaboration may streamline implementation and improve service delivery at the grassroots level.

Community awareness and participation are essential for the attainment of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). However, behavioural challenges persist, particularly regarding gender equality and education. For instance, the high rates of child marriage (8.2% before age 15 and 41.6% before age 18) highlight the need for robust awareness campaigns and grassroots initiatives. Furthermore, the low internet usage rate of 50.1% among individuals aged 15 and older in 2023 (NPT 39) restricts access to information and opportunities, highlighting the necessity for digital literacy programs and inclusive discussions that promote ownership of development initiatives.

Effective SDG localization relies on robust data systems, yet data insufficiency hampers progress tracking in several areas. Indicators including the proportion of cultivable land (NPT 4), technical education (NPT 11), and ICT entrepreneurship (NPT 27) are deficient in data, hindering evidence-based policymaking. Investment in digital tools for data collection, enhancement of local officials' analytical capacity, and establishment of transparent monitoring frameworks have the potential to convert data gaps into opportunities for informed decision-making.

Bangladesh's vulnerability to climate change remains a pressing concern. The high impact of disasters (3,766 affected persons per 100,000 in 2021, NPT 32) calls for integrating climate resilience into all stages of project planning and implementation. Developing resilient infrastructure, advancing renewable energy (currently at 4.11%, NPT 20), and emphasising sustainable practices in industry (with only 2.23% of industries implementing waste management systems, NPT 31) are essential measures for progress. Collaboration with international partners can provide the necessary resources and expertise to fortify climate adaptation strategies.

Capacity development for local officials is crucial for navigating the complexities of SDG localization. Regular training, knowledge-sharing initiatives, and partnerships with academic institutions could enhance technical and managerial competencies, ensuring that local governments are well-equipped to meet development targets. Improving completion rates in primary education (86.9%, NPT 9) and junior secondary education (68.8%, NPT 10) can be facilitated through the enhancement of institutional capacity and the promotion of effective governance practices.

SUMMARY:
A Performance Snapshot

Performance by SDG Indicators in Bangladesh

The following Table provides the most updated value for the SDG indicators with its progress trend. The evaluation of the progress trend in reaching the SDGs was based on careful examination of the improvement achieved over the past years toward fulfilling the particular targets established under each goal. Examining trends, assessing progress, and contrasting successes against set benchmarks help this assessment of the country's direction toward the 2030 Agenda. However, the evaluation method faced challenges mostly connected to data-related limitations. For several indicators, the lack of up-to-date data limits the extent of the evaluation.

Indicators	Value	Year	Progress trend
1.1.1 Proportion of the population living below the international poverty line (2.5 $ per day)	5.01	2022	
1.2.1 Proportion of population living below the national poverty line	18.7	2022	
1.3.1 Proportion of population covered by social protection floors/systems	50	2022	
1.4.1 Proportion of population living in households with access to basic services	12.54	2023	
1.5.1 Number of directly affected persons attributed to disasters per 100,000 population	4318	2019	
1.5.2 Direct economic loss attributed to disasters in relation to global gross domestic product (GDP)	1.3	2015	
1.5.4 Proportion of cities that adopt and implement local disaster risk reduction strategies	8.3	2019	
1.a.1 Total official development assistance grants as a share of the recipient country's gross national income	0.11	2021	
1.a.2 Proportion of total government spending on essential services (education, health, and social protection) in million USD	15.1, 16.8, 5.2	2021	
1.b.1 Pro-poor public social spending (%)	17.9	2022	
2.1.1 Prevalence of undernourishment (%)	11.9	2022	
2.1.2 Prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity based on the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES)	30.5	2022	
2.2.1 Prevalence of stunting among children under 5 years of age (%)	26.4	2022	
2.2.2 Prevalence of malnutrition among children under 5 years of age (%)	2.1	2022	
2.2.3 Prevalence of anaemia in women aged 15 to 49 years (%)	36.7	2019	
2.5.1 Number of (*a*) plant and (*b*) animal genetic resources for food and agriculture secured in either medium- or long-term conservation facilities	8,868	2023	
2.5.2 Proportion of local breeds classified as being at risk of extinction	48	2024	
2.a.1 The agriculture orientation index for government expenditures	0.51	2022	
3.1.1 Maternal mortality ratio	136	2023	
3.1.2 Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel	90.06	2023	
3.2.1 Under-5 mortality rate per 1000 population	33	2023	
3.2.2 Neonatal mortality rate per 1000 live births	20	2023	

Indicators	Value	Year	Progress trend
3.3.1 Number of new HIV infections per 1,000 uninfected population	<0.01	2023	↑
3.3.2 Tuberculosis incidence per 100,000 population	221	2023	↓
3.3.3 Malaria incidence per 1,000 population	0.5	2020	↓
3.3.4 Hepatitis B incidence per 100,000 population	0.51	2021	↗
3.3.5 Number of people(in millions) requiring interventions against neglected tropical diseases	56.3	2021	↓
3.4.1 Mortality rate attributed to cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes or chronic respiratory disease	24	2023	↓
3.4.2 Suicide mortality rate	8.8	2023	↓
3.5.1 Coverage of treatment interventions for substance use disorders	29,000	2022	→
3.5.2 Alcohol per capita consumption within a calendar year in liters of pure alcohol	0.056	2022	→
3.6.1 Death rate due to road traffic injuries per 100,000 population	10.01	2023	↓
3.7.1 Proportion of women of reproductive age (aged 15–49 years) with needs for family planning satisfied with modern methods	72.9	2023	↗
3.7.2 Adolescent birth rate (aged 10–14 years; aged 15–19 years) per 1,000 women in that age group	84.28	2023	→
3.8.1 Coverage of essential health services index	52	2021	↓
3.9.1 Mortality rate attributed to household and ambient air pollution (per 100,000 population)	241	2023	↓
3.9.2 Mortality rate attributed to inadequate WASH services per 100,000 population	161	2023	↓
3.9.3 Mortality rate attributed to unintentional poisoning (per 100,000 population)	0.3	2019	→
3.a.1 Age-standardized prevalence of current tobacco use among persons aged 15 years and older	35.3	2017	↓
3.b.1 Proportion of the target population covered by all vaccines included in their national programme (%)	99.3	2023	↑
3.b.2 Total net official development assistance to medical research and basic health sectors (in millions)	617.2	2023	↗
3.b.3 Proportion of health facilities that have a core set of relevant essential medicines available and affordable on a sustainable basis	62	2018	-
3.c.1 Health worker density per 1000 population and distribution	1, 0.6, 0.3	2019	↓
3.d.1 International Health Regulations (IHR) capacity index	58	2019	↓
4.1.2 Completion rate (primary education)	86.85	2023	↓
4.2.1 Proportion of children aged 24–59 months who are developmentally on track in learning	91.4	2019	↗
4.2.2 Participation rate in organized learning	56.73	2023	→
4.4.1 Proportion of youth and adults with information and communications technology (ICT) skills	86.2	2022	↗
4.6.1 Proportion of population in a given age group (adult) achieving at least a fixed level of proficiency in functional (*a*) literacy and (*b*) numeracy skills	75.6 (literacy)	2023	→

Indicators	Value	Year	Progress trend
4.7.1 Extent to which (i) global citizenship education and (ii) education for sustainable development are mainstreamed in (*a*) national education policies; (*b*) curricula; (*c*) teacher education; and (*d*) student assessment	0.82	2020	→
4.a.1 Proportion of primary schools offering basic services by service type	97.8 (drinking water)	2023	↗
4.b.1 Volume of official development assistance flows for scholarships (million USD)	7.6	2017	↓
4.c.1 Proportion of primary teachers with the minimum required qualifications	74.34	2022	↓
5.2.1 2 Proportion of women and girls aged 15–49 years subjected to violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months	23	2018	→
5.2.2 Proportion of women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to sexual violence by persons other than an intimate partner in the previous 12 months	2.4	2015	↓
5.3.1 Proportion of women aged 20–24 years who were married or in a union before age 18	41.6 (Married before age 18)	2023	↓
5.4.1 Proportion of time spent on unpaid domestic and care work by women	24.6	2022	→
5.5.1 Proportion of seats held by women in (a) national parliaments and (b) local governments	20.86 (a)	2023	→
5.5.2 Proportion of women in managerial positions	0.27	2023	↓
5.6.1 Proportion of women aged 15–49 years who make their own informed decisions regarding sexual relations, contraceptive use and reproductive health care	91	2022	→
5.b.1 Proportion of women who own a mobile telephone	58.83	2022	→
5.c.1 Proportion of countries with systems to track and make public allocations for gender equality and women's empowerment	33.9	2022-23	↑
6.1.1 Proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services	59.1	2022	→
6.2.1 Proportion of population using safely managed sanitation services	69.7	2023	↗
6.3.1 Proportion of domestic and industrial wastewater flows safely treated	24.2	2020-21	↓
6.4.1 Change in water-use efficiency over time (%)	5.84	2021	→
6.5.1 Degree (0-100) of integrated water resources management	64	2023	↗
6.5.2 Proportion of transboundary basin area with an operational arrangement for water cooperation	38	2021	↓
6.a.1 Amount of water- and sanitation-related official development assistance (in million USD)	360	2022	→
6.b.1 Proportion of local administrative units with established and operational policies and procedures for participation of local communities in water and sanitation management	95.99	2021	↑
7.1.1 Proportion of population with access to electricity	99.5	2023	↑
7.2.1 Renewable energy share in the total final energy consumption (%)	4.11	2023	↓
7.3.1 Energy intensity measured in terms of primary energy and GDP	3.24	2021-22	↗
7.b.1 Installed renewable energy-generating capacity in developing countries (in watts per capita)	7.01	2023	→

Indicators	Value	Year	Progress trend
8.1.1 Annual growth rate of real GDP per capita	5.4	2023-24	
8.2.1 Annual growth rate of real GDP per employed person	5.02	2022-23	
8.3.1 Proportion of informal employment in total employment	84.1	2023	
8.5.1 Average hourly earnings of employees	13865 (monthly income)	2023	
8.6.1 Proportion of youth (aged 15–24 years) not in education, employment or training	19.7	2023	
8.7.1 Proportion of children aged 5–17 years engaged in child labour	4.4	2022	
8.9.1 Tourism direct GDP as a proportion of total GDP and in growth rate	3.02	2018-19	
8.10.1 (*a*) Number of commercial bank branches per 100,000 adults	9.57	2023	
8.a.1 Aid for Trade commitments and disbursements (million USD)	6276.8	2020	
9.1.1 Proportion of the rural population who live within 2 km of an all-season road	91.09	2023	
9.1.2 Passenger by mode of transport (in million USD)	66	2022	
9.2.1 Manufacturing value added as a proportion of GDP and per capita	455	2023	
9.2.2 Manufacturing employment as a proportion of total employment	11.26	2022	
9.3.1 Proportion of small-scale industries in total industry value added	20.2	2023	
9.3.2 Proportion of small-scale industries with a loan or line of credit	57.79	2019	
9.4.1 CO_2 emission per unit of value added (kg per unit of gdp)	0.1	2021	
9.5.1 Research and development expenditure as a proportion of GDP	0.3	2021	
9.5.2 Researchers (in full-time equivalent) per million inhabitants	75.68	2021	
9.a.1 Total official international support to infrastructure (in billion USD)	9,892	2024	
9.b.1 Proportion of medium and high-tech industry value added in total value added	4.79	2023	
9.c.1 Proportion of population covered by a mobile network, by technology	98.5 (4G)	2022	
10.1.1 Growth rates of household expenditure or income per capita among the bottom 40 per cent of the population	15.1	2022	
10.2.1 Proportion of people living below 50 per cent of median income	15.98	2016	
10.3.1 Proportion of population reporting having personally felt discriminated against or harassed in the previous 12 months.	35.6	2018	
10.4.1 Labour share of GDP	43.1	2024	
10.4.2 Redistributive impact of fiscal policy (Bangladesh's Gini Coefficient of Income)	0.499	2022	
10.5.1 Financial Soundness Indicators	47.44 (NPL)	2023	
10.6.1 Proportion of members and voting rights of developing countries in international organizations (UN)	74	2024	
10.7.1 Recruitment cost borne by employee as a proportion of monthly income earned in country of destination (BDT)	3,81,967	2022	

Indicators	Value	Year	Progress trend
10.7.2 Proportion of countries with migration policies that facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people	62	2024	↗
10.a.1 Proportion of tariff lines applied to imports from least developed countries and developing countries with zero-tariff	62.9	2022	→
10.b.1 Total resource flows for development (in billion USD)	11.6	2023-24	↗
10.c.1 Remittance costs as a proportion of the amount remitted	5.21	2023	→
11.1.1 Proportion of urban population living in slums, informal settlements or inadequate housing	51.51	2022	→
11.4.1 Total per capita expenditure on the preservation, protection and conservation of all cultural and natural heritage	2.2	2021	↓
11.5.1 Number of directly affected persons attributed to disasters per 100,000 population	3,578	2021	↗
11.6.1 Proportion of municipal solid waste collected and managed in controlled facilities out of total municipal waste generated	2.23	2020	↓
11.6.2 Annual mean levels of fine particulate matter (e.g. PM2.5 and PM10) in cities (population weighted)	79.9	2023	→
12.1.1 Number of countries developing, adopting or implementing policy instruments aimed at supporting the shift to sustainable consumption and production (Description doesn't match)	63	2023	↗
12.2.1 Material footprint, material footprint per capita (in tons per capita)	4.6	2022	↗
12.2.2 Domestic material consumption, domestic material consumption per capita (in tons per capita)	3.62	2022	→
12.3.1 food waste index (in million tons per year)	14.1	2024	↓
12.4.1 Bangladesh's compliance rate for hazardous waste and chemicals against international environmental agreements	58.66	2022	→
12.4.2 Hazardous waste generated per capita (%)	27.25	2021	↗
12.5.1 National recycling rate, tons of material recycled	15.59	2021	↗
12.6.1 Proportion of companies publishing sustainability reports	49	2022	→
12.a.1 Installed renewable energy-generating capacity in developing countries (in watts per capita)	4.214	2020	↓
12.c.1. Amount of fossil-fuel subsidies (production and consumption) per unit of GDP	7.1	2022	↓
13.1.1 Number of directly affected persons attributed to disasters per 100,000 population	3,578	2021	↓
13.1.3 Proportion of cities that adopt and implement local disaster risk reduction strategies in line with national disaster risk reduction strategies	8.33	2019	↓
13.2.2 Total greenhouse gas emissions per year (%)	6.73	2021	→
13.a.1 Amounts provided and mobilized in USD per year in relation to collective mobilization goal of the $100 billion through to 2025	1189.5	2023	↓
14.1.1 (*a*) Index of coastal eutrophication; and (*b*) plastic debris density (Chlorophyll-a deviation from the global average)	4.16	2023	↓
14.5.1 Coverage of protected areas in relation to marine areas	5.36	2022	→
14.7.1 Sustainable fisheries as a proportion of GDP	0.29	2019	↓

Indicators	Value	Year	Progress trend
15.1.1 Forest area as a proportion of total land area	14.47	2018	→
15.1.2 Proportion of important sites for terrestrial and freshwater biodiversity that are covered by protected areas	3.18	2024	→
15.4.1 Coverage by protected areas of important sites for mountain biodiversity (%)	0.35	2019	↓
15.4.2 Green coverage of Bangladeshi mountain areas	96.05	2015	-
15.5.1 Red List Index	(several index)		↗
15.a.1 Revenue generated, and finance mobilized from biodiversity-relevant economic instruments (in million USD)	81.8	2020-21	→
16.1.1 Number of victims of intentional homicide per 100,000 population	1.41	2022	↗
16.1.2 Conflict-related deaths per 100,000 population	0.17	2018	↑
16.1.3 Proportion of population subjected to (*a*) physical violence, (*b*) psychological violence and (*c*) sexual violence in the previous 12 months	57.7	2015	→
16.1.4 Proportion of population that feel safe walking alone around the area they live	85.85	2018	↗
16.2.1 Proportion of children aged 1–17 years who experienced any physical punishment and/or psychological aggression by caregivers in the past month	88.5	2019	↓
16.2.2 Number of victims of human trafficking per 100,000 population, by sex, age and form of exploitation	0.72	2022	↗
16.2.3 Proportion of young women and men aged 18–29 years who experienced sexual violence by age 18	3.45	2015	↓
16.3.1 Proportion of victims of violence in the previous 12 months who reported their victimization to competent authorities	10.3	3.45	↗
16.3.2 Unsentenced detainees as a proportion of overall prison population	77	2022	↓
16.3.3 Proportion of the population who have experienced a dispute in the past two years and who accessed a formal or informal dispute resolution mechanism	97	2018	→
16.4.2 Number of seized, found or surrendered arms	102	2020	↗
16.5.1 Proportion of persons who had at least one contact with a public official and who paid a bribe to a public official, or were asked for a bribe by those public officials, during the previous 12 months	31.32	2018	→
16.5.2 Proportion of businesses that had at least one contact with a public official and that paid a bribe to a public official, or were asked for a bribe by those public officials during the previous 12 months	23	2022	↗
16.6.1 Primary government expenditures as a proportion of original approved budget	84.5	2022-23	→
16.6.2 Proportion of population satisfied with their last experience of public services	39.7	2018	↓
16.9.1 Proportion of children under 5 years of age whose births have been registered with a civil authority, by age	56.2	2019	→
16.b.1 Proportion of population reporting having personally felt discriminated against or harassed in the previous 12 months YEAR doesn't match	37	2018	→
17.1.1 Total government revenue as a proportion of GDP, by source	9.47	2023-24	↓
17.1.2 Proportion of domestic budget funded by domestic taxes	67	2023-24	↓

Indicators	Value	Year	Progress trend
17.3.2 Volume of remittances (in USD) as a proportion of total GDP (%)	4.8	2022-23	↓
17.4.1 Debt service as a proportion of exports of goods and services	9.4	2022-23	→
17.6.1 Fixed Internet broadband subscriptions per 100 inhabitants not in explanation	6.93	2022	→
17.8.1 Proportion of individuals using the Internet	50.1	2023	↗
17.9.1 Dollar value of financial and technical assistance (in million USD)	1,349.3	2021-22	↓
17.11.1 Bangladesh's and least developed countries' share of global exports	0.28	2022	→
17.12.1 Weighted average tariffs faced by developing countries, least developed countries and small island developing States	8.1	2022	↗

↑ *SDG achieved / On-track* ↗ *Satisfactory/ Moderately improving* → *Challenges remain/ Stagnating* ↓ *Significant challenges/ Decreasing*

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