

## **Widespread Progress of Bangladesh: An Analysis (Focusing Achievements in MDGs and HDIs)**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Bangladesh is a densely populated least developed country prone to natural disaster and political turmoil. This country is classified as a Next Eleven emerging market and one of the Frontier Five. Despite the country is frequently facing huge damage almost in every year due to the occurrence of natural disaster and negative consequences of the political unrest, has made outstanding progress in the achievements of MDGs and HDIs. Bangladesh has already met several targets of the MDGs like reducing headcount poverty and poverty gap ratio, reducing the prevalence of underweight children, attaining gender parity at primary and secondary education, under-five mortality rate reduction, containing HIV infection with access to anti retroviral drugs etc. Moreover, the country has made remarkable progress in, increasing enrolment at primary schools, lowering the infant mortality rate and maternal mortality ratio, improving immunization coverage and reducing the incidence of communicable diseases.

### **PROGRESS IN GDP AND PER CAPITA INCOME**

According to a recent opinion poll, Bangladesh has the second most pro-capitalist population in the developing world. This country, between 2004 and 2014, averaged a GDP growth rate of 6%. The economy is increasingly led by export-oriented industrialization. The Bangladesh textile industry is the second-largest in the world. Other key sectors include pharmaceuticals, ship building, ceramics, leather goods and electronics. Being situated in one of the most fertile regions on Earth, agriculture plays a crucial role, with the principal cash crops including rice, jute, tea, wheat, cotton and sugarcane. Bangladesh ranks fifth in the global production of fish and seafood. Remittances from the citizens living abroad provide vital foreign exchange. Its telecoms industry has witnessed rapid growth over the years and is dominated by foreign investors. The government has emphasized the development of software services and hi-tech industries under the **Digital Bangladesh** scheme. Bangladesh has substantial reserves of natural gas and coal; and many international oil companies are involved in production and exploration activities in the Bay of Bengal. In 2015, its per-capita income stood at USD 1,314.

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## **ACHIEVEMENTS IN MDGS**

Bangladesh has made admirable progress in respect of attaining MDGs as portrayed below:

**Goal 1 (Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger):** Bangladesh has sustained a GDP growth rate of 6 percent or above in recent years that has played a positive role in eradicating poverty. Inclusive growth has resulted in impressive poverty reduction from 56.7 percent in 1991-92 to 31.5 percent in 2010; the rate of reduction being faster in the present decade than the earlier ones. The latest HIES 2010 data show that the incidence of poverty has declined on an average 1.74 percentage points in Bangladesh during 2000 to 2010 against the MDG target of 1.20 percentage points. Bangladesh has already met Goal-1 by bringing down the poverty gap against 2015 target of 8.0.

**Goal 2 (Achieve Universal Primary Education):** Significant progress has been made in increasing equitable access in education (NER: 97.7 percent), reduction of dropouts, improvement in completion of the cycle, and implementation of a number of quality enhancement measures in primary education. Bangladesh has already achieved gender parity in primary and secondary enrolment. Initiatives have been taken to introduce pre-school education to prepare the children for formal schooling.

**Goal 3 (Promote Gender Equality and Empower):** Women Bangladesh has already achieved the targets of gender parity in primary and secondary education at the national level. This positive development has occurred due to some specific public interventions focusing on girl students, such as stipends and exemption of tuition fees for girls in rural areas, and the stipend scheme for girls at the secondary level. Here Government is committed to attaining the objective of CEDAW, Beijing Platform for Action and MDGs in conformity with the fundamental rights enshrined in the Constitution and has adopted the National Policy for Women's Development (2011) and a series of programs for ensuring sustainable development of women.

**Goal 4 (Reduce Child Mortality):** Bangladesh is on track in meeting the target measured in three different indicators like under 5 mortality rate, infant mortality rate and immunization against measles. The under 5 mortality rate was 151 per 1000 live birth in 1990 which has come down to 41 in 2013 and thereby achieving the MDG target before the stipulated time. Likewise, the infant mortality rate was 94 per 1000 live birth in 1990 which has reduced to 32 in 2013. The successful programs for immunization and Vitamin-A supplementation are considered to be the most significant contributors to the decline in child mortality.

Goal 5 (Improve Maternal Health): The Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) in Bangladesh in the 1990/91 was 574 per 100,000 live birth, which was one of the highest in the world. According to Bangladesh Maternal Mortality Survey (BMMS), maternal mortality declined from 322 in 2001 to 194 in 2010, which is 40 percent decline in nine years. The average rate of decline from the base year has been about 3.3 percent per year, compared with the average annual rate of reduction of 3.0 percent required for achieving the MDG in 2015.

Goal 6 (Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Other Diseases): Bangladesh has performed well in halting communicable diseases under this goal. Available data show that the prevalence of HIV/AIDS in Bangladesh currently is less than 0.1 percent and thus is still below an epidemic level. The country also achieved a significant improvement in the reduction of malarial deaths in the country over the years. The prevalence of malaria per 100,000 population was 776.9 in 2008, which has come down to 433.9 in 2014. The MIS data show that the proportion of children under 5 sleeping under insecticide-treated bed nets in 13 high risk malaria districts was 81 percent in 2008 which has increased to 92.2 percent in 2014.

Goal 7 (Ensure Environmental Sustainability): Bangladesh has achieved a significant progress towards this goal by familiarizing its social forestry campaign, which ensures its coverage of 13.40 percent of land with trees. Since 1991, there has been a steady increase in CO<sub>2</sub> emission in Bangladesh because of increasing development interventions and activities. But Bangladesh by adopting various initiatives Bangladesh becomes successful in protecting the emission of CO<sub>2</sub> within the expected limit. Apart from this Bangladesh already ensured 97.9 percent success in using improved/safe drinking water; 55.9 percent in using improved sanitation in 2012-13.

Goal 8 (Develop a Global Partnership for Development): Bangladesh attained a significant success with regarding this goal. For instance, during the last twenty four years, Bangladesh, on an average, received US\$ 1.74 billion ODA per year. The Government of Bangladesh has taken up plans to ensure universal access through harmonious development of telecommunication network and building a well-developed, strong and reliable telecommunication infrastructure for effective implementation of its ICT policy and ultimately for complementing the 'Vision 2021' of the government.

## **ACHIEVEMENTS IN HDIS**

Bangladesh achieved noteworthy progress in various indicators of Human Developments. The 2014 HDI report said Bangladesh scored 0.570 on the index with 70.7 years of life expectancy at birth, average per capita education of 5.1 years and

\$2,713 per capita gross national income (GNI). Here, Gender parity has been achieved in primary and secondary school enrollment. The total fertility rate has fallen from 3.4 to 2.3. The newly introduced Gender Development Index (GDI) compares the HDI calculated separately for women and men. Bangladesh has been ranked 107th in this index well ahead of India (rank 132) and Pakistan (rank 145). The GDI shows that Bangladesh has made the maximum progress in South Asia in reducing gender discrimination. Progress of Bangladesh in HDI during 2000 to 2014 is shown in the below table:

Year	HDI Points	HDI Ranking
2014	0.570	142
2013	0.558	142
2012	0.554	143
2011	0.549	141
2010	0.539	143
2008	0.515	134
2005	0.494	133
2000	0.453	126

## **CONCLUSION**

Owing to the above discussions, we can rightly claim that Bangladesh has achieved commendable progress in HDI, MDGs and other Macroeconomic Indicators. The country is on the cusp of becoming a middle-income country as its per capita income rose to \$1,314 in 2015. We are dreaming to be a middle-income nation by 2021, when the country will celebrate its 50th year of independence. However still we need our greater attention in employment generation, completion of primary schooling and quality education at all levels, creation of decent wage employment for women, increase in the presence of skilled health professionals at delivery, increase in correct and comprehensive knowledge on HIV/AIDS, increase in forest coverage, and coverage of Information and Communication Technology

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