

## Editor's Desk

The September 2021 issue of *Thinking Aloud* focuses on "COVID-19 and development strategies". The first page article titled "Devising development strategies factoring in COVID-19" analyses the development challenges emerging in the context of continuation of the COVID-19 pandemic and proposes policy frameworks for tackling these challenges. The article argues that given the emergence of new variants of coronavirus, it is necessary to formulate development strategies which can cope up with the ever-changing pandemic situation. It has been proposed in the article that the government needs to develop some sector-specific protocols and area-specific protocols for economic activities under a prolonged pandemic. The article also calls for proper assessment of the stimulus packages provided by the government of Bangladesh. Without a proper assessment, further disbursement of stimulus packages would not yield expected result. There needs to be strengthened policy response for the social sectors, if a robust recovery is to be ensured. Most importantly, institutional deficiencies need to be addressed. The second and third pages of this issue present two more articles. The second page article titled "Youth perspective of the pandemic: Bangladesh context" looks into the impact of the pandemic on the youth of the nation. An analysis of the existing challenges to youth development and the effect of the pandemic on those challenges have been presented in the article. These challenges in the emerging context of the pandemic have to be countered with strategies leveraging the demographic dividend. The article stresses on inclusive approach with regard to development and implementation of youth policy. The third page article titled "Gendered perspective of the pandemic: Bangladesh context" delves into the issues surrounding gender inequality in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic has exacerbated the divides across gender in society and economy, and reversed the gains made in terms of gender parity. Women's education, health and security have been greatly disrupted by the pandemic and the associated structural shifts. The article puts emphasis on the need for sex-disaggregated data for effective policymaking. The article concludes that, without increased participation of women in the planning, the recovery from pandemic would not be sustainable. The fourth page showcases the events in August 2021.

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## Devising development strategies factoring in COVID-19

**Selim Raihan**

From the subsequent waves of COVID-19, over the last one and a half years, we have learned that COVID will stay for quite a long time. Experiences of different countries and scientific research also support this idea. Since we are observing different variants of COVID as well, such as the widespread and more lethal delta variant, there is no guarantee that more lethal variants would not emerge in the future. Earlier in the pandemic, we thought that COVID would be gone within a year or two, and probably we would be able to go back to what we call the "pre-COVID situation", and we would have something like a "post-COVID situation". However, given the circumstances, it seems that there would probably be no post-COVID situation. COVID will likely continue to stay at varying degrees across the countries and over time. We, therefore, must be prepared to cope with the situation keeping in mind that COVID is here to stay. We will also have to revisit our development strategies accordingly.

What kind of steps should we consider for coping with the COVID scenario and be prepared to combat the crisis? We should develop some protocols for running economic activities. These protocols would involve two major segments. One segment is the sector-specific protocols—how different sectors or economic activities can function under the COVID situation. The sector-specific protocol would demonstrate that the protocol applicable for a manufacturing firm would not be the same for any service-oriented firm. For example, the protocol for running a restaurant would be different from that of running a readymade garments factory. Another segment of the protocol is the area-specific protocols, which would mean that there would be separate protocols for areas with different types and intensities of economic activities. For example, the protocols for Dhaka would be very distinct from those for Rangpur because the type and intensity of economic activities are different in these two regions.

How to develop these sector-specific and area-specific protocols? In preparation for these protocols, the government should take the lead to involve the major stakeholders, especially the private sectors, representatives from different economic activities, the sectors' experts, and the experts on public health. Those responsible for developing these protocols should take into account global experience too. It is the need of time that we come up with such protocols. Unfortunately, we have not seen any initiative from the government to develop such protocols. Over the last one and a half years, we have seen both deterioration and improvement in the COVID situation at different times. The initiatives or steps so far remained on an ad hoc basis. We observed that sometimes the government was forced to impose lockdown measures. However, due to the weak enforcement capacity, lockdown measures were far from being effectively executed anyway. But poor implementation of lockdown measures also generated large-scale economic and social losses. Proper assessment of the management of the COVID situation so far is, therefore, needed to develop the protocols for the coming days. COVID has generated some profound economic and social losses. The major sectors of the economy, in particular the micro, small and medium enterprises, are affected. There is a high risk that many micro and small enterprises will be permanently out from their

businesses. At the same time, we have also observed some deep social losses in terms of the rising poverty rate and widespread turmoil in the labour market. Also, we are witnessing large-scale disruptions in the education and health sectors.

In the case of economic recovery, two areas need to be looked at seriously. One is vaccination. Without an effective vaccination program, we can't keep COVID under control. Therefore, the vaccination program needs to be stronger, and the uncertainties related to the vaccination programme need to be solved. Secondly, there has not been any proper assessment of the effectiveness of stimulus packages. Whether these packages could reach out to the affected industries properly needs to be evaluated. Some analyses, done by SANEM, through quarterly surveys of business firms, reveal that, though micro and small enterprises are the most affected sectors, a large part of them have remained outside of the benefit of the stimulus packages. Also, there are widespread institutional challenges in terms of implementing the stimulus packages. The management of the stimulus packages needs to be effective and transparent, and the institutional deficiencies need to be solved. Also, there must be a proper monitoring mechanism for the implementation of these stimulus packages.

Since the onset of COVID, educational institutions have remained closed, and we have not seen any effective work plan to restart the educational system under the COVID situation. Online education systems and some distance learning processes have been in place. But due to various reasons, especially the high poverty rate, low access to the online education system, and many other challenges, students from different institutions have not been able to participate effectively in the online education or distant learning processes. There is a high risk that a significant part of the young generation will be out of the education system as dropout rates in primary and secondary education and early marriage of girls escalate during the crisis. Findings from some recent surveys by SANEM and other research organizations confirm these phenomena. Therefore, there is a need for an effective recovery plan for the education sector. The recovery plan must consider running the education system keeping in mind that COVID will stay for long.

The health sector to begin with, even before the COVID-19 pandemic, was in deep crisis because of the abysmally low public spending on the health sector amid widespread institutional deficiencies in terms of corruption and poor management. COVID intensified these problems. Therefore, the health sector needs major overhauling and institutional reform to combat the long-lasting pandemic related health challenges.

In conclusion, as we acknowledge and understand that there will not be a post-COVID scenario anyway, we can re-think different planning processes for the economic and social recoveries. We must move away from the conventional planning processes to confront new challenges and new situations. The new planning process would require several innovative approaches, a lot of effort from the government, and critical institutional reforms, especially addressing the corruption and institutional deficiencies in a more rigorous way. As this planning process must involve the major stakeholders, we need to move away from the top-down approach of the planning process to a bottom-up approach to combat the crises.

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## Youth perspective of the pandemic: Bangladesh context

Eshrat Sharmin

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the lives and livelihoods of eight billion people in the world in an all-encompassing way. However, the magnitude of impact has not been the same for all, just as the term pandemic depicted its difference from an epidemic, being time-sensitive, varying in degree of both the short term and long term consequences of the disease on the affected. The socio-economic consequence following the public health crisis has shown that the impact of the crisis is not similar for different subgroups of the population due to the inherent heterogeneities. For instance, the present pandemic context has presented the youths of Bangladesh with a unique set of challenges along with the pre-existing ones.

According to National Youth Development Policy 2017, Bangladeshi youths belong to the 18-35 years age category, although the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics provides data for youths aged 15-29 years. The ambiguity of definition and data is not consistent with the youth-related development goals of the country. Being at fifty in 2021, arguably the country is also in her youth. This provides her with the chance to reassess the challenges and recalibrate the way forward to utilize potentials. For instance, transforming the youth demographic into a “demographic dividend” has contributed to achieving the development goals of the East Asian nations, namely Viet Nam, Cambodia etc. in the past. Evidently, the window of opportunity for achieving that dividend is shrinking over time for Bangladesh, as it will close around 2031.

According to the data from the Youth Development Index prepared by the Commonwealth Secretariat, Bangladesh ranked 126th among 181 nations, indicating improvement along with other neighbouring South Asian nations (Global Youth Development Report, 2020). The index represents the progress made for youth defined as 15–29 years old in 6 areas: education, employment and opportunity, health and well-being, equality and inclusion, political and civic participation and peace and security. Bangladesh is one of the top five risers of the Commonwealth Asian nations.

The country has been long praised for its educational attainment in terms of enrollment rate at the primary level, along with gradual improvement in secondary and tertiary, with some extent of gender parity. However, the quality of education, leading towards the discussion of skill mismatch between the education sector and labour market has been a matter of concern from the youth perspective. Due to the nature of the labour market, youths in the labour market are facing multidimensional challenges, including lack of financing curbing the chance to self-employment, lack of soft skills, or marketable skills, perpetuating a rather high unemployment rate among youths with higher secondary education or tertiary education. Consequently, 51.6% of unemployed youths had higher secondary education and 16.4% had tertiary education. Although, the scenario is not inconsistent with the high level of the youth unemployment rate (10.6%), compared to the national rate of unemployment (4.2%), according to the pre-pandemic data of Labour Force Survey 2016.

On the other hand, the sectoral weaknesses of the

country affect all people and youths are not an exception. On the contrary, broad issues such as health, social protection, and poverty bring specific sets of challenges for youths. For instance, lack of adequate sexual and reproductive health services, stigmatization of mental health issues and lack of adequate, accessible services, lack of information regarding these issues, lack of youth-targeted, relevant social protection schemes, such as unemployment benefits, or lack of relevant mechanisms to mitigate the youth-centric issues have risen due to poverty.

Poverty emanates a whole set of issues covering from the lack of educational infrastructure or resources, menstruation resources, digital divide leading towards divergence in learning outcomes and skillsets, access to information, and transportation, which all again integrates into access to institutional mechanisms providing security, financial resources, justice, and other basic rights. However, as always, the youths of Bangladesh are relentless in their effort to contribute to solving the issues that they encounter, as a part of society. For example, the Bidyanondo Foundation, widely known for the initiative titled “One Taka Meal”, providing food at an affordable price for the extreme poor, started its journey with just 22 students in Narayanganj on 22 December 2013. Another noteworthy example would be the Pashe-Achi Initiative, a youth-based non-profit organisation working for the economically marginalised people since March 2020 during the pandemic.

Regardless, the challenges related to mental health require changing the way we think about mental health issues as a nation. Youths, as expected, are on the frontier of various initiatives which have been working on these issues, namely, Kaan Pete Roi, which is the first-ever helpline set up in the country regarding depression, suicidal tendencies, and other mental health emergencies. Furthermore, it is high time we accept that the pandemic induced education-halt or lockdowns, and the uncertainty related to the whole context is sprouting the mental health issues of youths to another level.

Against this backdrop, the coronavirus pandemic brought a new set of challenges that reiterated the importance of solving the old issues keeping the broader development goals in mind in the context of Bangladesh. For example, the fourth industrial revolution, which requires a new set of skills from the labour force and obsoletes the old and repetitive ones, has been closer than ever due to the pandemic that presented us social distancing as a prerequisite and minimized human contact. The youth of Bangladesh, on the other hand, facing the virtual educational system and more than a year and a half long closure of education institute is confronted with the possibility of skill erosion, and loss of learning, which might be irreparable, according to UNICEF. Moreover, various categories of disparities broadening the digital divide are worsening the overall scenario.

According to the Youth-led Digital Engagement (YDE) Survey 2020 conducted by SANEM and ActionAid Bangladesh in Satkhira, Barguna, Rajshahi and Kurigram upazila, 57.7% of the surveyed youths has never availed any digital device for educational purposes. The youths who are leaving the education sector and moving towards the labour market encounters a depressed labour demand, and shrinking employment opportunities due to the

pandemic induced recession. Although the budget speech of FY2021-22 has mentioned the lofty goal of one million additional employment during 2022 based on the past decade’s record of the sector riding on youth entrepreneurs, lack of adequate institutional and financial support, along with policy framework results in a declining rate of growth to the sector and asks for further actions to realize such goals, apart from depending on the “entrepreneurial spirit” of youths. For instance, although the share of global online labour supply has risen for our neighbouring nations such as India during this pandemic, Bangladesh’s share has declined consistently over the past three years.

In the case of other economic broad sectors, the employed youths are already highly involved in the informal sector and experiencing a higher level of job loss, and income loss as reported by several national and international research organizations. According to the SANEM Household survey 2020, 57.4% of wage-employed youths have reported a wage decline. The outcome of the aforementioned educational scenario is a higher level of early marriage, early pregnancy, and child labour, among others. On that note, violence against children and women, largely female youths, are increasing at an alarming level. YDE Survey 2020 also mentions that 87.8% of married female youths experienced IPV during the pandemic period.

As of August 2021, online classes and exams are being attempted at various tertiary educational institutes. However, vaccination of all the students in the country will take another year, even from an optimistic view. Again, the disparity in the rate of vaccination and online exam processes will perpetuate the ongoing disparities among youths currently studying in various educational institutions. On top of that, as mentioned before, pre-existing challenges including climate change, and consequential disasters, such as floods, cyclones, droughts, recurring diseases, such as dengue, chikungunya and other preventable non-communicable diseases, also continue to affect the lives of the youth population.

Lack of implementation of policies or changes in existing old ones requires an inclusive approach towards policy making, comprising intersectional parts of the youth population, which is severely lacking in the present scenario. The resulting policies are, therefore, seems to be on an ad-hoc basis from the youth perspective, lacking the adaptability to the present context. For example, according to the YDE survey 2020, only 7.6% of youths participate in local decision-making with their local governments’ engagements. While we find many examples of youth-led organisations budding from the necessity of mitigating socio-economic crises, including the present pandemic, the involvement of the said youth leaders in the policy level, or the initiative to scale up the solutions they are inventing, is yet to be seen in the policy landscape of the country.

Although the youth perspective of the pandemic in Bangladesh presents a bleak scenario, it also presents an opportunity to get back on track through changing the business-as-usual practices and engaging youths in the solution generating processes.

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## Gendered perspective of the pandemic: Bangladesh context

*Syeda Tasfia Tasneem*

There is mounting evidence from around the world that the COVID-19 pandemic has not been gender neutral. In the developing world, women are bearing the brunt of the secondary effects of the pandemic both economically and socially. In Bangladesh, as in the rest of the world, women are more likely to be employed in the informal sector, making them more vulnerable to job losses and income shocks. Women, as healthcare workers and primary care-givers at home, have also been at the forefront of the battle against COVID-19.

According to World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2021, the overall gender gap in Bangladesh has widened by 0.7 per cent compared to the previous year. The remarkable progress that Bangladesh has achieved over the past decades in ensuring gender parity in education, health and overall women empowerment has been threatened by the fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic. This is alarming because the inability to provide opportunities to women and girls, and of ensuring their rights will inevitably slow down economic development. At the same time, it will hinder Bangladesh's pursuit of the sustainable development goals (SDGs).

Current evidence from around the world suggests that, although men and women are equally likely to acquire COVID-19, the likelihood of death from coronavirus is higher among men. However, the emergency healthcare measures adopted in response to the pandemic often cause a diversion of resources away from areas such as reproductive and sexual healthcare—depriving women of vital healthcare—potentially translating into higher maternal and neonatal deaths. This requires urgent attention because disruptions in maternal and child health services could reverse decades of progress—putting millions of lives at risk.

Due to the prevalence of high inequality in the intrahousehold allocation of resources, women in Bangladesh are more likely to report food insecurity. According to SANEM's nationwide household survey conducted in 2020, as a result of the pandemic, average per capita food expenditure declined by 30%, 15% and 2% in extremely poor, moderately poor and vulnerable poor households respectively. This reduction in food expenditure can further exacerbate the pre-existing gender differences in food insecurity and result in poor health and decreased nutritional intake for women.

A major cause of concern in most developing countries including Bangladesh is the failure to ensure equal access to safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines. According to DGHS, out of the 5.8 million people who received the first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine during the first vaccination campaign that ran from February 7 to April 26, only 38% recipients were females. This clearly depicts that even vaccine uptakes exhibit gender differences which can lead to a profound setback in ensuring women's rights. In many cases, women's ability to access vaccines is limited due to limited mobility, restricted access to resources, lack of decision-making power and lack of technological know-how. Hence, it is crucial that the authorities responsible for vaccine management and distribution consider ways to overcome gender-related barriers to enable access for women.

In Bangladesh, the government proactively ordered the closing of all educational institutions nationwide

on March 18, 2020, which exerted varying degrees of impact on education and student development. The transition to digital learning platforms was fraught with many difficulties since we did not have much prior experience in distanced learning. The government's initiative to broadcast lessons via television channels for primary and secondary level students deprived students who belonged to households that do not have access to a television. Furthermore, many students from low-income families who live in remote areas and do not have adequate access to a digital device or internet connectivity have faced various challenges in continuing classes online. The gender gap in the use of digital technology is particularly prominent in the country. According to a SANEM study on gender and youth inclusiveness in technology, percentage of female youth who have used the internet at least once in their lifetimes is only 24% at the urban level and 14% at the rural level. A recent study published in the GSMA Mobile Gender Gap Report 2021 showed that only 19% women in Bangladesh use mobile internet as opposed to 33% men. Moreover, internet penetration among women in Bangladesh is also lower than neighboring countries, India and Pakistan, where 30% and 21% of the female population use mobile internet respectively.

Evidence from past epidemics suggest that sustained school closures widen gender gaps in education by increasing female dropout rates, incidences of child marriages and unanticipated pregnancies. Even before the pandemic, Bangladesh was among the top ten countries in the world having the highest rate of child marriage, with over 38 million child brides who were married before the age of 18. According to a study by the UNICEF, 10 million more girls globally are at risk of becoming child brides over the next decade as a result of the pandemic. Not only do child marriages limit the opportunity to attend schools and engage in earning activities, but also they can pose serious risks on the physical and mental health of young girls.

In addition to the health and education related challenges, the COVID-19 outbreak has had a major economic toll on women. This is because a high proportion of working women are engaged in informal, insecure and low-wage employment and in industries such as hospitality, travel, textile manufacturing, and retail, most of which have been severely affected by the pandemic. According to the SANEM employment and migration survey conducted in 2021, 16.1% female wage-employed workers lost their jobs as opposed to 7.1% male workers. Several studies also found that women entrepreneurs faced severe challenges in accessing the fiscal stimulus packages announced by the government for micro, small and medium enterprises.

Women looking to re-enter the workforce will also face the need to adapt to the emerging automation and digitization trends that have transformed jobs and in many cases, continuing employment may require them of ability to telecommute. As men have greater access to digital devices and the internet and are more likely to be preferred for jobs that require remote work, women will be at a disadvantage and will face the need to reskill or change occupations. This essentially means that the pandemic's disproportionate impact on women's jobs and incomes will persist in the future and have long-term implications.

Simultaneously, pandemic induced quarantine and stay-at-home measures have caused the burden of

domestic and unpaid care work to explode. According to ILO estimates, women perform over three quarters of the total unpaid work globally. Similarly, a SANEM study conducted in 2019 found that working women spend almost 2.4 times more hours performing unpaid domestic work compared to working men in Bangladesh while unemployed women spend 3.75 times more hours in unpaid domestic work compared to unemployed men. In countries like Bangladesh, where schools have been shut for extended periods of time and healthcare systems are stretched, women had to cope with the added burden and stress of caring for young, old and ill household members. The struggle to balance between family and work responsibilities has been aggravated by the pandemic, discouraging women from participating in paid labor and worsening gender inequalities across the country. As seen during other major economic, political and health crises, reduced access to justice and essential services as a result of the COVID-19 crisis can be associated with a rise in cases of gender-based violence globally. Several studies in Bangladesh conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic confirmed the same. In the first 10 months of 2020 alone, BRAC's Human Rights and Legal Aid Clinics reported to have received over 25000 complaints of gender-based violence from across the country. While data is a crucial tool to understand and analyze the impact of pandemics such as the COVID-19 on gender-based violence, collecting data is difficult due to unwillingness of victims to report domestic violence, lack of awareness regarding human rights, inability to ensure privacy and safety of victims.

Moreover, government measures adopted to control the spread of the pandemic often have the negative consequences of diverting financial resources away from essential GBV and sexual health services and disrupting the provision of humanitarian aid. For example, many services that were in place to control and prevent the high rates of gender-based violence that were prevalent in the Rohingya Refugee Camps in Cox's Bazar have experienced temporary disruptions due to government enforced lockdowns.

Despite the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on the lives and livelihoods of women, they have been conspicuously absent from the policy discourse surrounding recovery plans. Gender-blind policies which fail to sufficiently address the challenges and vulnerabilities facing women will not be able to initiate an inclusive and sustainable recovery process. Developing targeted policies and initiatives to help women overcome the existing structural loopholes and enhancing their participation in COVID-19 recovery process and decision-making is imperative to ensure sustainable recovery. At present, Bangladesh lags far behind the rest of the world in terms of collecting sex-disaggregated data. All data collected at the regional and national levels should be disaggregated by sex to support the formulation of evidence-based policies and programmes that respond to women's needs and alleviate the negative consequences of the pandemic faced by women. To enable better understanding of on-the-ground realities, it is crucial that women are included at all levels of decision-making. It is important to realize that women are a vital force in the post-pandemic recovery process. If the emerging gender gaps in education and employment are not addressed in time, the country will be deprived of half of its human potential.

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### SANEM-The Asia Foundation webinar on COVID-19 and Business Confidence



SANEM, in collaboration with The Asia Foundation, hosted a webinar on "COVID-19 and Business Confidence in Bangladesh" to disseminate the findings from the 5th round of the nationwide firm-level survey. The webinar, held on 28 August 2021, shed light on the experiences and expectations of the business community amidst the second wave of the ongoing pandemic. A total of 501 firms belonging to various sectors, including RMG, textiles, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, leather and tannery, light engineering, wholesale and retail, restaurants, transport, real estate, ICT, participated in the survey. Dr Selim Raihan, Professor, Department of Economics, University of Dhaka, and Executive Director, SANEM, presented the findings of the study. During the webinar, Mr. Kazi Faisal Bin Seraj, Country Representative in Bangladesh of The Asia Foundation, delivered the welcome remarks.

### Dr Bazlul H. Khondker and Dr Sayema H. Bidisha spoke at the UN Women Bangladesh webinar



Dr Bazlul H. Khondker, Professor, Department of Economics, University of Dhaka, and Chairman, SANEM and Dr Sayema Haque Bidisha, Professor, Department of Economics, University of Dhaka, and Research Director, SANEM, joined a webinar on "Multi Stakeholders' consultation on Gender Responsive Planning and Budgeting (GPRB) and social protection of tea garden workers in Bangladesh" as panelists on 25 August 2021. The webinar was jointly organized by UN Women Bangladesh, UNFPA, UNICEF and ILO. Among the esteemed panelists were Msst. Ferdousi Begum, Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, Md. Nayeb Ali, Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Social Welfare, and Ferdousi Sultana Begum, Gender and Social Protection Expert. In the webinar, Gitanjali Singh, Head of Office of UN Women Bangladesh delivered the welcome remarks while UN joint program coordinator Alexius Chicham presented an overview of the program. Tapati Saha from UN Women hosted the webinar. Among other guests, Nilufer Ahmed Khan, national consultant of ILO was also present.

### SANEM-World Vision Bangladesh webinar on women's empowerment



SANEM and the World Vision Bangladesh jointly organized a webinar titled "Role of Women's Empowerment in Bangladesh Economy" on 29 August 2021. The webinar was hosted to share the findings of the study jointly conducted by SANEM and the World Vision Bangladesh on assessing the overall scenario of women's economic empowerment in Bangladesh and quantifying the relationship between women's economic empowerment and GDP. The survey was conducted on women aged 15 and above, across 850 households from districts including Barisal, Chattogram, Dhaka, Satkhira, Jamalpur, Mymensingh, Rajshahi, Rangpur and Sunamganj. Mr Chandan Z. Gomes, Senior Director, Operations and Program Quality Department, World Vision Bangladesh was the moderator of the webinar. Dr Sayema Haque Bidisha, Professor, Department of Economics, University of Dhaka, and Research Director, SANEM and Mr. Mahtab Uddin, Lecturer, Department of Economics, University of Dhaka, and Research Economist, SANEM presented their papers at the beginning of the session. As panelists were present Ms. Mosammat Nasima Begum, Member (Secretary), Socio Economic Infrastructure Division, Ministry of Planning; Mr. Gunjan Dallakoti, SME Development Specialist of ILO Office, Dhaka; Dr Sanzida Akhter, Associate Professor, Department of Women and Gender Studies, University of Dhaka; Ms. Laila Farzana, Senior Category Head (Marketing), Unilever Bangladesh and Ms. Mehzabin Ahmed, Programme Coordinator, UN Women Bangladesh. Dr Selim Raihan gave his remarks before the open discussion. Mr. Suresh Bartlett, National Director, World Vision Bangladesh ended the session with concluding remarks.

### Dr Selim Raihan was a panelist at the UNESCAP-SANS webinar

Dr Selim Raihan was a panelist at the Expert Group Meeting on "Exploring New Value Chains in Textile and Garments in South Asia: Building Back better from COVID-19". The meeting was organized virtually by the UNESCAP South Asia Network on the SDGs on 31 August 2021. Dr Rajan Sudesh Ratna, Deputy Head, ESCAP-SSWA moderated the session.

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### SANEM's in-house training on heat map using ArcGIS

#### SANEM's In-house Training on Heat Map using ArcGIS

August 18, 2021

Trainer: Md. Jonaed  
Senior Research Associate, SANEM



SANEM arranged an in-house training on creating Heat Map, a data visualization technique using ArcGIS on 18 August 2021. Md. Jonaed, Senior Research Associate, SANEM conducted the session. The research and communication staff of SANEM participated in the session. The training session is a part of the overall capacity building program of SANEM.

### Dr Selim Raihan joined a brainstorming meeting organized by UNESCAP-SSWA



Dr Selim Raihan joined a brainstorming meeting organized by UNESCAP- South and South West Asia on 4 August 2021. Members of the South Asia Network on the Sustainable Development Goals (SANS) participated in a panel discussion and shared their views and insights on "How to Make SANS more effective & sustainable". Dr Nagesh Kumar, Director, Institute for Studies in Industrial Development (ISID) led the session. As discussants were present: Rajan Ratna, Deputy Head and Senior Economic Affairs Officer, UNESCAP South and South-West Asia Office (ESCAP-SSWA); Mr. Adnan Ailani, Officer in Charge, ESCAP-SSWA; Dr Omar Joya, Executive Director, Biruni Institute; Dr Posh Raj Pandey, Chairman, South Asia Watch on Trade, Economics & Environment (SAWTEE); Dr Arvind Kumar, President, India Water Foundation; Ms. Sonam Pem, Executive Director, Tarayana Foundation; Dr Abid Suleri, Executive Director, Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI); Dr Dushni Weerakoon, Executive Director, Institute of Policy Studies (IPS); Prof. Sachin Chaturvedi, Director General, Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS) and Dr Fahmida Khatun, Executive Director, CPD.