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Photo by the World Bank

Shimla is trying to overcome a crisis and move towards water for all

In the summer of 2018, the northern hill city of Shimla experienced an acute water crisis that left residents reeling. Most of the city received water only once in eight days. There were long queues at public taps, and many residents waited for hours for water tankers to deliver relief.

Shimla city is one of India's most popular tourist destinations in summer. Last year, as thousands fled the searing plains for the relief of the mountains, water shortages forced city administrators to appeal to tourists to stay away. As a result, local businesses and hotels suffered losses as tourists avoided the parched city.

Fast forward to summer 2019, and the situation is dramatically different: water is provided daily, tourists are returning, the local economy is recovering, and water-borne illnesses are in decline.

Sanjay Sood, president of the Shimla Hoteliers Association, confirms the tangible changes. “Tourism has picked up, and water is provided to most hotels,” he says. Mayor of Shimla Kusum Sadret agrees: “This is the first summer I can remember when I haven’t heard concerns about water.”

The 2018 crisis was brought on by a combination of increased demand and poor water management. Demand for water soars in the peak summer months when the city’s resident population of around 200,000 swells with more than 66,000 tourists. Even as demand was growing each year, the old water infrastructure was losing around half the water supply to leakages and unauthorized siphoning. Moreover, at least 30-40 percent of the city’s population was not covered by the sewerage system, and sanitation became a serious public health issue resulting in water-borne epidemics.

How did Shimla overcome the water crisis?

The government of Himachal Pradesh (GoHP), the state in which Shimla is located, decided to face the challenges directly by overhauling the manner in which water supply and sanitation (WSS) services are delivered to the city.

To start, the state government and the

city governing body, Shimla Municipal Corporation, set up a professionally-managed, autonomous utility to manage water and sewerage services for the city. Until then, as elsewhere in the country, these services were delivered by different agencies, blurring responsibilities. The establishment of a new, dedicated utility helped formalize accountability and overcome the previously fragmented structure.

This utility, the Shimla Jal Prabandhan Nigam Ltd (SJPNL), is now running the city’s water and sewerage system. “Our focus is on the efficient management of the water supply and sanitation system to ensure that the citizens of Shimla receive the best level of services we can provide,” says Dharmendra Gill, Managing Director of SJPNL.

Since its inception, SJPNL has taken several quick steps to improve water quantity and quality, including replacing leaking bulk-water pipes, upgrading old pumps that raise water from river valleys thousands of feet below the city, expanding the number of daily water samples taken for testing, and increasing the volume of sewage collection. In the next phase, it plans to focus on three critical areas:

- bringing bulk water to Shimla from a new source on the Sutlej River;
- providing continuous (24x7) water supply and improved sewage management for Shimla city and;
- expanding sewage services for the peri-urban areas of the growing city.





The World Bank is supporting SJPNL and GoHP through a series of development policy loans, the first of which—Shimla Water Supply and Sewerage Service Delivery Reform Programmatic Development Policy Loan 1—closed recently.

Along with the improvements in infrastructure, the SJPNL has already switched to volumetric water tariffs for the city, with subsidies targeted at low-income households.

Some 24,000 consumer water meters have been installed so that citizens can track the water they consume. This new pay-for-what-you-use approach has reduced the bills for a significant number of consumers.

“I live alone, and I paid the same amount for water as the neighbors next door, who have a family of five. Now, my bill is lower and that seems fairer,” said Rashmi Kapur, a resident of the Sanjhauli area.

To ensure that the poorest households are not hit by the hike in tariff, SJPNL has kept the price for the first ‘lifeline’ slab of water consumption at an affordable Rs 100 for 7 kilo litres. It is also allowing poorer households to share a water connection, and to pay for the connection through instalments.

New focus on customer needs

To ensure citizens fully understand the new changes and to address any concerns or questions they might have, SJPNL is undertaking an intensive outreach campaign.

City councilors and women volunteers, known as Jal Sakhis, are helping to educate consumers about the changes in water delivery and helping them conserve water.

By utilizing basic water conservation techniques, residents can save thousands of liters of water each year, which translates to lower bills through the new volumetric billing schedule, and conserves an increasingly stressed resource.

Most importantly, SJPNL has set up a new system of grievance redressal to respond to any complaints. A new call center runs a hotline that receives around 100 calls per day, and customer service representatives dispatch these requests to the relevant agency or expert.

While the long journey to 24/7 water services is just beginning, SJPNL is scaling up its work to make the city and its surrounding areas more livable for residents, more productive for businesses, and more attractive for visitors. 

‘SDGs and Her’ competition

Driving change in Bengaluru



A taxi service that employs underprivileged women in a mostly male-dominated profession, is slowly driving change

The story of Taxshe is not just about women's safety; it's a story about empowerment and entrepreneurship, and bringing women from the most underprivileged sections of society into the workforce.

Taxshe is an exclusive all-women driver-on-demand and cab service running in Bengaluru, India since 2015, which provides transportation services to school children and women workers.

Vandana Suri started Taxshe after the rape of a woman in a taxi made news headlines and made her sit up and take a decision about how she was going to contribute towards creating a safer environment for women and children.

She has not looked back since.

The service now has over a hundred women drivers driving more than 600 children to schools and coaching centers and as many

women to offices and airports in Bengaluru and Delhi.

Suri was one of the two global winners of the “SDGs and Her” competition in 2019 for women micro-entrepreneurs whose business operations help support the SDGs. The online competition was launched by the World Bank Group in partnership with the UN Development Program, UN Women, and the Wharton School's Zicklin Center for Business Ethics Research. The winners were selected from a pool of over 1,200 entries from all regions of the world through a rigorous three-stage judging process.

“Why should women always wait for somebody else to take the first step?” she said when speaking to us about her decision to leave her job as an investment banker and become an entrepreneur overnight, “I just decided to take the plunge; it takes that one minute to decide.”

Suri started with driving the taxis herself in order to set an example before recruiting women from weaker sections of society as drivers.

Women's safety

Taxshe recruits women living in slums; often their husbands too are taxi drivers and are concerned about their wives' safety.

"No woman wanted to become a taxi driver. There was no safety in it. It was a male domain," Vandana said of the challenges when she started out.

So in addition to women's safety, the service then decided to include the aspect of child safety into the conversation as well. Women were approached with the proposal that as drivers they would be responsible for safely ferrying children to and from school, and that they would act as quasi-mothers, thus looking out for the child's safety just as a mother would.

"This struck a chord with the women we approached to join us as drivers. Even their husbands couldn't say no to this."

Ensuring that the drivers were only ferrying women and children on fixed routes also answered concerns on the safety of the women drivers themselves. The women drivers are also trained in self-defense and taught about their legal rights.

Not just a job

"We made the women drivers realize that this was not just a job – they were taking a leadership role. Their respect had gone up because society wanted them now. That's a game changer."

Attrition was a big issue in the first two years for the company. Girls often left to get married, as well as family pressures pulled them back. Flexi timings and a model of part-ownership of the taxis by the women drivers themselves further helped in recruiting and retaining the women as drivers.

Through a 30-70 partnership model, women drivers could fully own a car in a few years.

Suri claimed the drivers earned as much as \$12,000 a year.





Overcoming stereotypes

“There were also perceptions about women not being good drivers,” Suri said, but she dealt with it with panache. “We did not want to be an alternate cab provider,” she explained. “I was an alternate mom taking your kids to school. And that’s when our acceptability became high. We weren’t competing with the men at all.”

Training the women was at first met with patriarchal stereotyping by male trainers who were not used to training women to drive for a living. Also, training schools usually gave 10-12 hours of training, which was not enough for these women who had never even sat in a car before.

“The women we train are from extremely underprivileged backgrounds, they have been maids and cooks; they don’t even have a primary school education. We’re bringing such women out to drive.”

Taxshe now has an in-house team of trainers, some of whom are also women, and training can go on for six months for a candidate.

Displaying how the service had become synonymous with safety and reliability in Bengaluru, Vandana related how they

received a request one day to ferry poppadums in their taxi. “Although this was a strange request, we understood that the client was putting their faith in us to take good care of the delicate poppadums and that spoke a lot about the quality of our drivers.”

Talking about the future of her company, Vandana said, “Charity is not sustainable beyond a

point. Women find it harder to access credit and should be supported. Many of the women who drive for us are single mothers, widows—they feel they have now earned the respect of society. They are leaders, entrepreneurs and role models. They deserve to be supported.” 

“I was an alternate mom taking your kids to school. And that’s when our acceptability became high. We weren’t competing with the men at all”.

Can South Asia unstrangle the Chicken's Neck?

South Asia's transportation networks once ranked among the most integrated in the developing world. Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal must come together again to remove all barriers and boost regional trade.



The Bangladeshi cabinet's decision to grant India, Nepal and Bhutan access to Chittagong Port is the beginning of a process that may unlock the potential of the northeast corner of South Asia.

Non-tariff barriers such as poor quality and connectivity of infrastructure in countries – Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal (also known as BBIN countries) – have suppressed regional trade for years.

This has meant that shipments to and from India's eight northeastern states must be hauled through the congested Siliguri corridor to access the nearest maritime port in India at Kolkata.

The Siliguri corridor is a transportation chokepoint known as the "Chicken's Neck."

This sliver of land narrows at one point to barely 27 kilometers wide and connects India to its landlocked northeastern states. The slender transit zone is flanked by Nepal, Bangladesh and Bhutan.

From Agartala, the capital of the northeastern Indian state of Tripura, it's a slow and costly 1,700-kilometer journey through the Chicken's Neck to the port in Kolkata. Bangladesh's decision to allow India access to Chittagong Port cuts the trip to a sea port to just over 200 kilometers.

"This is a huge step for Bangladesh and India to agree on access," said Sanjay Kathuria, a World Bank lead economist who has studied and recommended ways to improve the economic integration of South Asia.

Bangladesh will also benefit

If Chittagong captures just 25 percent of the cargo now trucked through the Chicken's Neck, the port could generate revenue of \$400 million, according to some estimates. Bangladesh, and especially Chittagong Port, has the potential to become a major trade and transit hub for South and Southeast Asia.

However, Chittagong Port, which already handles nearly 90 percent of Bangladesh's seaborne trade, will require significant efficiency and capacity improvements if it is to realize the potential and become a major gateway.

A World Bank study measuring the competitiveness of South Asia ports found that containers spent an average 17 days in Chittagong Port in 2012, compared to three to four days at more efficient comparable ports, and less than one day at the most efficient container terminals. While there has been some progress in recent years, the port continues to struggle with severe congestion during busy periods.

Improving cross-border connectivity

Momentum is building for more regional cooperation among the BBIN countries.

Several bilateral and sub-regional agreements with the potential to unleash transformative change have been signed, including the Motor Vehicle Framework Agreement to ease border restrictions for vehicles, passengers, and cargo. Currently, an Indian truck transporting freight into Bangladesh must stop at the border, unload all items, and reload the freight on a Bangladesh truck.

While governments are still working out how to implement the 2015 motor vehicle agreement, investments in physical infrastructure abound.

A road bridge is being built across the River Feni that separates India's landlocked northeastern states and Bangladesh. The 150-meter bridge will connect the town of Sabroom in the state of Tripura and





Ramgarh in Bangladesh. The bridge and new border post facilities on both sides will give importers and exporters a shorter alternative to the congested Chicken's Neck corridor.

To support these encouraging developments, the World Bank is helping Bangladesh develop or upgrade modern land ports at Ramgarh, Sheola, Benapole, and Bhomra, where crossing times are measured in days, rather than hours as they should be.

The project will introduce a National Single Window for Trade for shippers to file all import, export and transit information via

a single electronic gateway instead of submitting the same paperwork to multiple government agencies.

“It’s inefficient and adds to shipping costs when a truck has to repeatedly show the same paperwork to various government regulators. This process should be electronic and seamless,” said Kathuria, the trade expert.

In the Indian state of Mizoram, a \$107 million World Bank project is widening about 81 kilometers of roads to boost regional trade. Studies are analyzing the potential modernization of another 330 kilometers of roads and trade infrastructure. Modern roads will allow Mizoram to ship agricultural products, handicrafts, and other exports faster and more cheaply to the port in Chittagong instead of Kolkata.

Access for Nepal

Nepal faces the same challenges. Virtually all Nepalese goods for export are now transported to the port in Kolkata. But a commercial truck loaded with carpets, textiles, tea or other exports may need up



to 20 days to drive from the mountains of Kathmandu to Kolkata.

The Government of Nepal, with support from the World Bank, is working to reduce transport time and logistics costs along the Kathmandu-Kolkata corridor. Work includes improving roads, upgrading land ports, and establishing a National Single Window for Trade to reduce the need for paperwork. The ambitious project is also creating an internationally accredited laboratory to inspect food, livestock, and agricultural products for diseases, pests, and contaminants.

“Border improvements help firms reduce their supply chain costs. Delays or damage to goods as they are being cleared through the borders force firms to keep higher levels of inventory than in other countries. As a result, cost of logistics in South Asia tend to be much higher than in other middle-income economies,” said Charles Kunaka, a World Bank private sector specialist. “In addition, border improvements help improve reliability of clearance processes, which then also help reduce overall logistics costs.”

Connectivity brings jobs and reduces poverty

Modern transportation corridors in South Asia are essential for regional trade. They

also directly affect the lives of the rural poor. Improved connectivity expands access to jobs, health care, and education, and lowers the cost of goods consumed.

“Border improvements enable farming households and small and medium enterprises in border regions to trade more easily with communities on the other side,” Kunaka said. “Evidence shows that improving facilities, simplifying processes, and training border agency staff can contribute to reducing poverty in border regions.”

Expanded trade also helps countries build trust

South Asia’s transportation networks once ranked among the most integrated in the developing world. After the 20th century partition of the subcontinent, most highways, waterways and rail links stopped at national borders. Security concerns have slowed efforts to rebuild an integrated infrastructure, but improvements are likely to result in a virtuous circle benefitting all.

Cooperation among BBIN nations to modernize border crossings, improve transport links, and remove trade barriers can help transform the landlocked area into a flourishing, land-linked subregion and finally reduce the stranglehold on the Chicken’s Neck. 🌐



Africa looks to India to scale up climate-smart agriculture



South-South knowledge transfer

Climate change is on the march. Temperatures are rising, and rainfall patterns are changing. Agriculture and farmers are especially feeling the heat, as growing seasons are getting shorter.

Chronic drought is rippling through East Africa, and the vast African continent, once an exporter of farm produce, is now a net importer. Across the Indian Ocean, too, significant drops in the production of rice and maize have been predicted.

Farm practices need to adapt climate-smart agricultural practices that can mitigate some of these impacts.

In a first-of-its-kind knowledge-sharing partnership, India and some East African countries brought together experts for a high-level, two-day knowledge exchange in Kenya. The event, held in Nairobi on June 12-13,

2019, sought to familiarize these countries with skills and expertise available with each other on six key topics: climate smart-seed systems, water management technologies, farm mechanization, leveraging digital technology, crop insurance for managing risk, and creating climate-resilient villages.

The 80 participants hailed from six countries – India, Kenya, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Tanzania and Rwanda. The 18-member Indian delegation included senior officials from the Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare, director of research from Punjab Agricultural University, specialists implementing climate-smart World Bank projects in Indian states (Bihar, Karnataka and Maharashtra), think-tanks (Indian Council of Agriculture Research, Consortium of International Agricultural Research Centers, International Food Policy Research Institute, and International Water Management Institute) and private sector firms (Tractors and Farm Equipment Ltd, Indian Farmers Fertilizer Cooperative Ltd.) and Skymet Weather Services.



Opening the event, Ashok Dalwai, CEO, National Rainfed Area Authority of India, said, “Climate change is here to stay. It is going to adversely impact the agricultural systems of all countries, particularly in the Global South where agriculture is the mainstay of the economy.”

“We need to use science and technology to deal with the issue,” he emphasized. “The knowledge that has been developed in India, Kenya and other African nations can be integrated for mutual benefit.”

Sharing climate-resilient seeds

Given the increasing severity of droughts in recent years and shorter growing seasons, drought-resistant seeds for key crops such as wheat, maize and sugarcane are being developed, together with short-duration varieties that can also withstand higher temperatures.

Participants explored the idea of exchanging “germplasm” (live genetic resources such as seeds) between India and Africa, given that

the Indian government, with its emphasis on research and development, and the private sector in India have been working together in this field.

Discussions focused on the challenges of getting climate-resilient seeds to millions of Indian and African farmers and ensuring sustainable practices. Over the last 40 years, India’s national seed policy and programs have promoted strong research and development, with investments from the private sector.

Promoting soil health and better water management

The event also showcased efforts to ensure nutrient-rich soil quality for better yields. India is enabling 140 million farmers to send soil samples to labs across the country, so their quality can be scientifically assessed. Farmers then receive Soil Health Cards with recommendations about which nutrients and fertilizers to use for which crop.

Participants exchanged information about rainwater harvesting mechanisms to recharge groundwater, and measures to stem soil erosion. The importance of using water judiciously through sprinklers and drip irrigation systems was also discussed, in addition to the need to switch to less water-guzzling crops.

The Indian delegation shared examples of technology promoting climate-smart agriculture practices. In the World-Bank supported project Sujala III, “telemetric” rain gauges advise farmers in Karnataka, India’s second-most drought-prone state, on which



crops are best suited for their location. In Bihar's Jeevika project, also supported by the World Bank, women farmers use electronic moisture meters and are given real-time crop advisories to help them decide when to begin planting.

Delegates discussed how these technical solutions have been brought to scale by combining them with institutional support through water user associations, self-help groups and women-led producer companies, making them potentially replicable at the national level.

Mechanizing farms

Shorter “window of farming” are forcing farmers to complete crop cycles much faster now. Mechanized farms can help ensure increase in crop yields despite this constraint. Use of farm machinery such as tractors and tractor-mounted tools not only leads to shorter turnaround times, it also reduces the cost of operations.

The Indian delegation shared the country's experience in developing commercially viable low-cost agricultural machinery, available at affordable prices, especially to small farmers.

Several successful models of public and private “custom hiring centers” in India were also shared. The centers allow farmers to rent expensive equipment at affordable prices. Discussions explored how these models can be extended to Africa, where the use of farm machinery is still relatively low.

A key demand that emerged from the workshop was for this exchange to be followed up with deep-dive study tours on digital agriculture (including insurance), climate resilient villages, and natural resource management, with a strong focus on water management issues and rainwater harvesting.

It was also agreed that India would enable the transfer of climate-smart agricultural technology to Kenya to help the East African nation boost its food production. 

“Lighthouse India” is a World Bank initiative supporting systematic knowledge exchanges on good practices and innovations in development programmes between Indian states and the world. The knowledge exchange in Kenya was part of a larger knowledge-sharing partnership between India and Africa.



Face to Face

“Containing road accidents needs to be a multi-sectoral effort”

World Bank Lead Transport Specialist Arnab Bandyopadhyay talks about India's commitment to road safety and how the World Bank is supporting this effort.

The Indian government has just introduced the Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Act, emphasizing its commitment towards road safety. How important is this issue for India?

While India has less than 3 percent of the world's vehicles, it accounts for about 12 percent of the world's road deaths. In 2018 alone, World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that almost 300,000 people died due to road accidents in the country. This number remains disproportionately high compared to countries with much higher levels of motorization, such as the United Kingdom, Australia, and Netherlands.

The human cost in this is enormous, and so is the impact on the economy. A World Bank study has found that if India were to successfully halve road deaths and injuries between 2014 and 2038, it could potentially add 14 percent to its GDP per capita.

Unfortunately, the impact of vehicle accidents on the underprivileged is often disproportionate. Pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists, usually hailing from low-and middle-income strata, account for more than 50 percent of the road traffic deaths in India.

Road accidents can affect people's livelihood and push them into poverty. Studies show that poor households go into debt by borrowing money to cope with the additional medical expenses, in addition to losing income after an accident.

Containing road accidents needs to be a multi-sectoral effort that involves law enforcement, governance, (the issue of driving licenses and vehicle registration), engineering (appropriate road design) awareness raising and post-accident trauma care and management.

What, according to you, are the main areas India should focus on to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal that aims to halve the number of road accident deaths by 2020?

Establishing a clear national goal and pursuing it in mission mode through an appropriately resourced lead agency is something India should focus on as a priority. The new Motor Vehicle Act, in fact, makes a provision for exactly such an agency—the National Road Safety Board. States are being encouraged to create independent lead agencies as well.

The new National Road Safety Strategy, currently being finalized, also envisages halving the number of road accident fatalities by 2025.

For a lead agency to be most effective, however, it must be fully independent, accountable and adequately equipped with specialists from all aspects of road safety management.

Without adequate funding, institutional structures and processes can remain ineffective. In Argentina, for example, the lead agency received 1 percent of all collected vehicle insurance fees as core funding. Similar funds have been established in New Zealand, Australia, Sweden, Finland and Great Britain, for example.

Currently, India does not have a dedicated road safety fund at the central level. However, several states such as Kerala, Bihar, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Punjab, West Bengal, Nagaland, Manipur, Jharkhand, Uttarakhand, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu have set up such funds. These funds receive part of the money collected from traffic fines and the registration of motor vehicles. The money is then used to make the roads safer by improving infrastructure on national highways, patrolling the roads and highways, carrying out research into road safety, upgrading post-accident care, and raising awareness about road safety.

Further, establishing and maintaining a data management system that monitors and analyzes road accidents will help identify accident hot spots and enable the authorities to pin point what needs to be done to make these patches safer. Although road safety data in India is collected by the police departments of all states, this information needs to be analyzed, with targets and policies set accordingly.

So far, India does not have a national level database for road accidents, although the World Bank is supporting the development of one. Tamil Nadu and Himachal Pradesh have already developed their own crash data management systems, with support from the World Bank, while a few other states are in the process of doing so. From 2017 onward, all states and union territories have adopted a uniform traffic accident recording format developed by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH).

The above exercises will help governments at the center and the states develop a more targeted road safety program that brings together law enforcement, vehicle safety, drivers' licenses and training issues, as well as post-accident care on the part of the authorities. It also includes raising awareness and improving compliance on the part of the public.

How committed is the World Bank to road safety in the Indian context? How have projects helped?

World Bank support for road safety is spread across 12 national and state highway projects amounting to about \$200 million.

- The Bank has actively supported the Government of India in developing the new road safety legislation, especially with international benchmarking aspects.
- The Bank is also supporting MoRTH in revising the codes of practice, developing an accident monitoring and analysis system, and piloting a National Highway Safety System that focuses on improving road safety together with better traffic management.
- In seven states, the Bank has helped assess the safety of about 6,000 kilometers of key national and state highways, using automated risk rating technology.
- It is helping introduce road safety audits and actively supporting training and capacity-building in this area.
- The Bank has also undertaken demonstration projects along selected road corridors in several states – Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Gujarat, Karnataka, and Kerala. These projects have focused on a range of activities, including improving road engineering, strengthening enforcement, enhancing education on road safety issues and improving medical responses in emergencies. Results from some of these efforts have been encouraging. For example, the Karnataka Safe Corridor Demonstration Project led to a larger number of people complying with traffic rules, such as adhering to speed limits and wearing helmets. As a result, road fatalities reduced by nearly 60 percent in just one year – between 2016 and 2017.
- Currently, the Bank is working with Government of India to develop a national-level state road safety program that will establish a National Road Safety Fund and provide fiscal incentives to states to help them improve road safety. 🌐

ICR Update

This is a short summary of the Implementation Completion Report (ICR) of a recently-closed World Bank project. The full text of the ICR is available on the Bank's website. To access this document, go to www.worldbank.org/reference/ and then opt for the Documents & Reports section.

Secondary Education Project



Context

By the early 2010s, primary education in India was largely accessible, with a gross enrollment ratio (GER) of 99 percent. The strides made in elementary schooling then led the government to focus their attention on secondary schools. The gross enrollment rate in secondary schools was 50 percent, with inequities in access for poor and rural populations, girls, and socially disadvantaged groups i.e. Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST). Physical access was a significant barrier, as a third of villages were located more than 5 km away from a lower secondary school. Due to the lack of available infrastructure, each class was overcrowded with the large number of students, which adversely affected the quality of their education. In addition, various small-scale assessments conducted during that time, indicated low learning outcomes.

Secondary Education Project

Approval Date:	22 March, 2012
Closing Date:	30 June, 2017
Total Project Cost	\$12.8 billion
Bank Financing:	\$475.8 million
Implementing Agency:	Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India
Outcome:	Satisfactory
Risk to Development Outcome:	Moderate
Overall Bank Performance:	Moderately Satisfactory

The Government of India, in recognition of these multiple challenges to secondary education, launched a centrally-sponsored program in 2009, called the Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) Framework. The RMSA aimed to provide universal access to secondary education by 2017, with universal retention/completion by 2020.

The World Bank provided support by way of a sector-wide approach and supported the government's program, rather than specifying Bank support for certain activities or components.

Project Development Objectives

The objective of the World Bank-supported Secondary Education Project was to help India achieve increased and equitable access to good quality secondary education. This was to be achieved through support to the government's ongoing national program for secondary education – Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA).

The key objective of the project included increasing and improving equitable access to, and enhancing the quality of secondary education in the country.

Achievements

By the end of the project, enrollment in secondary educational institutions increased by 10 million students. The gross secondary completion rate increased from 55.4 percent (baseline) to 64.5 percent in 2016-17. Sixteen states/Union Territories (UTs), including low-income states saw an average increase by 25 percentage points in the GER in secondary schools.



Over the life of the project, there was also a substantive improvement in gender parity in secondary school enrollment. The number of girls per 100 boys completing Grade 10, improved from 79.0 percent to 91.2 percent. Girls' hostels set-up in educationally backward blocks led to increased enrollment of disadvantaged girls and helped them to remain in school. By the end of the project, over 1,000 girls' hostels were constructed and over 100,000 girls were enrolled in them.

The government approved around 12,000 new secondary schools, of which over 11,000 became functional, with a total enrollment of 1.47 million students. The program also provided funding for the construction of additional classrooms in existing government schools to improve the student-classroom ratio. Of about 50,000 additional classrooms approved, more than 31,000 schools completed the necessary civil work, leading to an improved student-classroom ratio of 46 students per class in 2015-2016 compared to 56 students per class in 2010-2011.

The program also supported the strengthening of infrastructure and other related facilities. The civil work required for science labs, computer rooms, library rooms, and art/craft/culture rooms were completed. In addition, toilet blocks and drinking water facilities were also built.

The proportion of students from the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes who completed secondary school increased. The GER for SC girls (86.9 percent) now exceeded that for SC boys (83.9 percent). The GER for ST girls (75.38 percent) was also higher than that for ST boys (73.7 percent).

A key contribution of the project was the development of a national system of student assessment at the secondary level, which tracked progress in learning achievements over time. Learning achievements in Grade 10 were measured for the first time in 2014-2015, with a sample of 277,000 students in over 7,000 schools across 34 states/UTs. A National Achievement Survey (NAS) enabled comparisons across states and over time and provided evidence for developing well-targeted remedial strategies for students' overall learning improvement and teacher training.

The project also leveraged the expertise of national- and state-level institutions to provide technical assistance on teacher training, school leadership, and school standards. Some states developed and implemented innovative interventions like the use of satellite technology for beaming lectures/lessons of subject experts remotely to classrooms, especially in schools without mathematics and science teachers; and used information and communication technology for teacher training.

By the end of the project, the number of female project beneficiaries reached over 11.5 million.

Lessons Learnt

- **Government ownership and commitment:** Strong government commitment and ownership is critical for successfully steering a sector-wide reform program and improving service delivery.
- **Any new approach to be implemented also requires a strong government buy-in and continuous commitment.** It is also important to establish implementation support mechanisms and an incentive structure for adapting innovative approaches.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** The availability of timely and reliable data and information is essential for planning, selecting, and setting the result indicators to measure the achievements of the development objectives and monitoring.
- **Results Framework:** The project's results needs to be carefully developed at the project preparation stage and should be based on a realistic assessment regarding the data validity, reliability, accuracy and implementation capacity.
- **Timely restructuring:** If challenges are identified during project implementation, restructuring would be a great opportunity to make mid-course adjustments and enhance the project performance.
- **Capacity building:** Inadequate staffing and capacity constraints, especially at the state and local levels, lead to challenges. Continued capacity building of officials and key stakeholders at the state, block and school levels is essential. 🌐



This is a select listing of recent World Bank publications, working papers, operational documents and other information resources that are now available at the New Delhi Office Public Information Center. Policy Research Working Papers, Project Appraisal Documents, Project Information Documents and other reports can be downloaded in pdf format from 'Documents and Reports' at www.worldbank.org

Publications may be consulted and copies of unpriced items obtained from:

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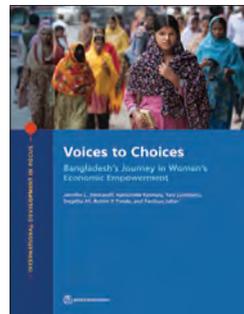
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South Asia Publications

Voices to Choices: Bangladesh's Journey in Women's Economic Empowerment



By Jennifer L. Solotaroff,
Aphichoke Kotikula, Tara
Lonnberg, Snigdha Ali,
Rohini P. Pande, and
Ferdous Jahan

Available On-Line

Published: June 2019,
282 pages

English Version, Paperback
ISBN: 978-1-4648-1374-0

Bangladeshi women are increasingly empowered, yet their choices remain limited. Gender gaps persist in employment, financial assets, land, and entrepreneurship. Sexual harassment, limited mobility, costs, and limited childcare need to be addressed, requiring sex-disaggregated data collection to monitor progress.

India: Policy Research Working Papers

WPS8917

Co-Location, Socioeconomic Status and Perceptions of Environmental Change in the Indian Sundarbans

By Susmita Dasgupta, Bansari Guha and David Wheeler

Research on the determinants of collective action in the commons generally focuses on interest-group heterogeneity, implicitly assuming that groups perceive the same problems but have different priorities.

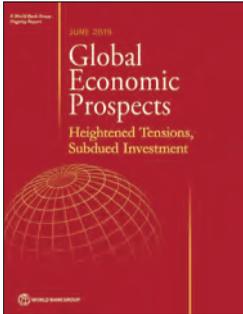
This paper changes the focus to the role played by perceptions themselves. Within localities, collective action may be easier if elite and non-elite households have similar perceptions of environmental problems. Regionally, collective action may be aided by common perceptions among local elites who communicate across village lines.

This paper uses regression analysis to explore variations in environmental perceptions across classes

and localities, using new survey data from the Indian Sundarbans. The paper finds that perceptions vary significantly across localities.

Other Publications

Global Economic Prospects, June 2019: Heightened Tensions, Subdued investment



By The World Bank Group
Available On-Line
Published: July 2019,
270 pages
English Version, Paperback
ISBN: 978-1-4648-1398-6

Global growth continues softening while the modest recovery in emerging markets and developing

economies remains constrained by subdued investment, impeding progress toward achieving development goals. Downside risks to the outlook remain elevated, and policymakers continue facing major challenges to boost resilience and foster long-term growth.

This edition of Global Economic Prospects includes analytical essays on the benefits and risks of government borrowing, recent investment weakness in emerging market and developing economies, the pass-through of currency depreciations to inflation, and the evolution of growth in low-income countries.

LIFELINES: The Resilient Infrastructure Opportunity



By Stephane Hallegatte, Jun Rentschler and Julie Rozenberg
Available On-Line
Published: July 2019,
220 pages
English Version, Paperback
ISBN: 978-1-4648-1430-3
Sustainable Infrastructure Series

From serving our most basic needs to enabling our most ambitious ventures in trade and technology, infrastructure services are essential for raising and maintaining people's quality of life. Yet millions of people, especially in low- and middle-income countries, are facing fragile systems. Building on a wide range of case studies, global empirical analyses, and modeling exercises, Lifelines lays out a framework for understanding infrastructure resilience—the ability of infrastructure systems to function and meet users' needs during and after a natural shock—and it makes an economic case for building more resilient infrastructure.

This book concludes by identifying five obstacles,

concrete recommendations, and specific actions that can be taken by governments, stakeholders, and the international community to improve essential services, thereby contributing to more resilient and prosperous societies.

China's High-Speed Rail Development

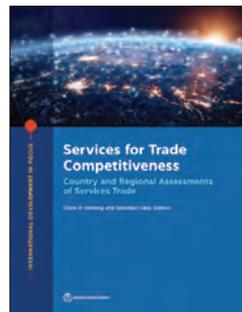


By Martha Lawrence, Richard Bullock and Ziming Liu
Available On-Line
Published: June 2019,
98 pages
English Version, Paperback
ISBN: 978-1-4648-1425-9

The report examines the Chinese experience to draw

lessons for countries considering investing in high-speed rail. Findings include financial viability based on very high passenger density.

Services for Trade Competitiveness: Country and Regional Assessments of Services Trade



By Claire H. Hollweg and Sebastián Sáez
Available On-Line
Published July 2019,
264 pages
English Version, Paperback
ISBN: 978-1-4648-1406-8

Services for Trade Competitiveness presents selected applications of new

methodologies developed to assess the competitiveness of countries' services sectors, discerning regulatory barriers and their policy implications.

Ensuring Quality to Gain Access to Global Markets: A Reform Toolkit



By Martin Kellermann
Available On-Line
Published July 2019,
272 pages
English Version, Paperback
ISBN: 978-1-4648-1372-6

Jointly developed by the World Bank Group and the National Metrology Institute of Germany, this guide is

designed to help development partners and governments analyze a country's quality infrastructure (QI) ecosystems and provide recommendations to design reforms and enhance the capacity of their QI institutions.

From the Blogworld

The high price of healthy food ... and the low price of unhealthy food

Derek Headey and Harold Alderman

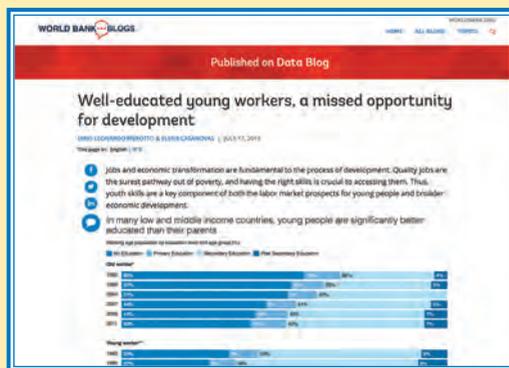
Poor diets are now the number one risk factor in the global burden of disease, accounting for one in five deaths globally. Too much sugar, fat and red meat increase the risks of heart disease, diabetes, cancer; all killers in later life (mostly in higher income countries). Too little nutrient-dense fruits, vegetables, dairy, eggs, meat and fish are associated with wasting, stunting and micronutrient deficiencies in early childhood; all killers in early life (mostly in lower income countries). Poor diets are therefore at the epicenter of a diverse range of health problems in a diverse range of places. 🌐

Read More: <https://tinyurl.com/y3hudvpe>



Well-educated young workers, a missed opportunity for development

Dino Leonardo Merotto and Elena Casanovas



Jobs and economic transformation are fundamental to the process of development. Quality jobs are the surest pathway out of poverty, and having the right skills is crucial to accessing them. Thus, youth skills are a key component of both the labor market prospects for young people and broader economic development. 🌐

Read More: <https://tinyurl.com/yymbv9fc>

Harmonized learning outcomes: transforming learning assessment data into national education policy reforms

Harry A. Patrinos and Noam Angrist

It's been almost a year since the World Bank Group launched the Human Capital Project (HCP), a revolutionary effort to measure education not by years in school or degrees earned, but by actual learning outcomes. The vision is that equipping countries with the data needed to make evidence-based decisions will promote investment in people, the world's most vital resource. While there has been an international revolution in education access, 260 million children are still out of school, and another 260 million attend school but still cannot read—that's 1 out of 4 young people in low-and middle-income countries. The HCP has a vision to change that, and it's working. 🌐

Read More: <https://tinyurl.com/y2tefhpv>



From the Blogworld

Where can the youth find employment?

Hiroko Maeda



July 15 marks World Youth Skills Day. The youth—those born between 1994 and 2003—account for 16 percent of the world's total population. These 1.2 billion people are likely first-time job seekers or those relatively new to the labor market.

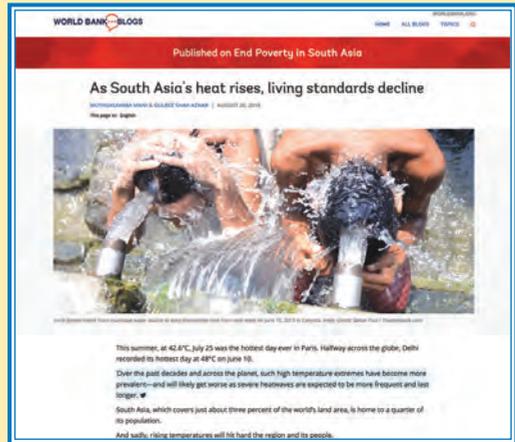
Where can they find employment? In the early 2000s, the services sector surpassed agriculture to become the world's largest employer. Today, services accounts for 50 percent of employment, while agriculture and industry make up 30 and 20 percent, respectively.

Visit the World Development Indicators page, or the World Bank Open Data page to learn more about the employment in services, industry, and agriculture indicators used in this blog.

Read More: <https://tinyurl.com/y4cud523>

As South Asia's heat rises, living standards decline

Muthukumara Mani, Gulrez Shah Azar



This summer, at 42.6°C, July 25 was the hottest day ever in Paris. Halfway across the globe, Delhi recorded its hottest day at 48°C on June 10.

Over the past decades and across the planet, such high temperature extremes have become more prevalent and will likely get worse. South Asia, which covers just about three percent of the world's land area, is home to a quarter of its population. And sadly, rising temperatures will hit hard the region and its people.

According to the World Bank report, South Asia's Hotspots annual average temperatures in the region are projected to increase between 1.5 and 3°C by 2050 relative to 1981-2010, if little or no action is taken to curb carbon emissions.

Read more: <https://tinyurl.com/y6cegl6q>

In South Asia, the case for road safety investment is stronger than ever

Hartwig Schafer and Makhtar Diop

The global road safety crisis has reached epidemic proportions. Every year, according to the World Health Organization (WHO) estimates, some 1.35 million people lose their lives on the road, and millions more sustain serious injuries that often result in permanent disability.

The situation is particularly alarming in low and middle-income countries, where economic growth has boosted vehicle ownership and road construction, but road safety action hasn't kept pace.

South Asia, has just 10 percent of the world's cars, trucks, and motorcycles, but accounts for 27 percent of global traffic deaths.



Read more: <https://tinyurl.com/y3uekx56>

From the Blogworld

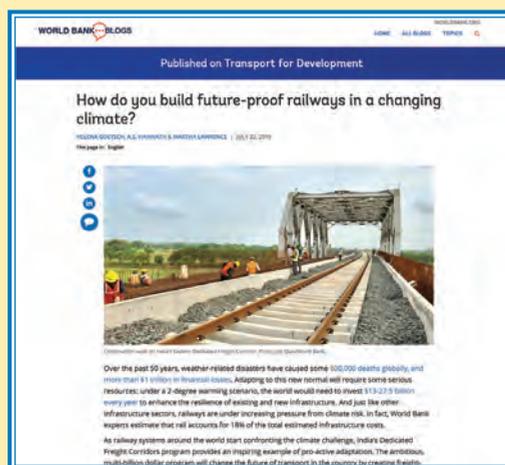
How do you build future-proof railways in a changing climate?

Helena Goetsch, A.S. Harinath and Martha Lawrence

Over the past 50 years, weather-related disasters have caused some 800,000 deaths globally, and more than \$1 trillion in financial losses. Adapting to this new normal will require some serious resources. Under a 2-degree warming scenario, the world would need to invest \$13-27.5 billion every year to enhance the resilience of existing and new infrastructure. And just like other infrastructure sectors, railways are under increasing pressure from climate risk.

As railway systems around the world start confronting the climate challenge, India's Dedicated Freight Corridors program provides an inspiring example of pro-active adaptation. 🌐

Read more: <https://tinyurl.com/yyumc6ka>



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