

FIRST TRAINING PROGRAMME FOR JOURNALISTS FINANCIAL INCLUSION IN BANGLADESH: IMPERATIVES AND PRACTICES



January 2022

The Policy Research Institute of Bangladesh (PRI)

FINANCIAL INCLUSION IN BANGLADESH: IMPERATIVES AND PRACTICES

POLICY INITIATIVE FOR DFS IN BANGLADESH

The Policy Research Institute of Bangladesh (PRI) organized the first training programme for journalists on “Financial Inclusion in Bangladesh: Imperatives and Practices” on December 28, 2021, in partnership with Economic Reporters’ Forum (ERF). The training programme was organized as part of the “Policy Initiative for DFS in Bangladesh” project, undertaken by PRI in partnership with Bill and Melinda Foundation. This training programme aimed to help journalists and media representatives better comprehend the technical and policy issues related to DFS and appreciate the significance of specialized reporting in this area. It also aimed to advance informed policy discussion and raise awareness amongst wider population groups through responsible and specialized reporting on DFS.

The training programme was attended by 74 journalists. Mr. Debdulal Roy, Executive Director (Programming), Bangladesh Bank, attended the event as Chief Guest. The training comprised three technical sessions, with Dr. Ahsan H. Mansur, Executive Director, PRI, Dr. Bazlul H. Khondker, Director, PRI, and Dr. M. A. Razzaque, Research Director, PRI as facilitators.

Opening Session

The daylong training programme started with a small opening session chaired by Ms. Sharmeen Rinvy, President, ERF. Mr. SM Rashidul Islam, General Secretary, ERF provided welcome remarks in the session. In his address, the Chief Guest said it is now a key issue for the country to ensure inclusion of the excluded people in the financial services. Adopting the 4IR (Fourth Industrial Revolution) mechanisms is crucial for continued growth of the country. The government allocation for social safety net programs can't be distributed properly due to lack of database and this needs to be addressed.

Technical Session 1

In the First technical session, Dr Ahsan H. Mansur presented on "Financial Inclusion and its role in Bangladesh's development." According to the EIU global Microscope report 2020, Bangladesh ranked 44 out of 55 countries in overall financial inclusion. In the consumer protection index, Bangladesh ranked 48 out of 55 countries. Dr. Mansur pointed out that Bangladesh notably lacks in infrastructure and government policy support. He suggested the government should upgrade all databases for landscapes development. The economic circumference of Bangladesh is growing day by day. Therefore, each and every one of the country should be included in financial services. Although DFS present a huge potential in all sectors of Bangladesh, some challenges need to be addressed. He also urged MFS providers to ensure transparency and good governance in their services for consumer rights protection.



Technical Session 2

The second technical session was facilitated by Dr. M. A. Razzaque. In his presentation on "Financial Inclusion through social protection and G2P payments," he pointed out that income disparity is increasing vastly in Bangladesh and the government needs to take proper initiative to reduce disparity in society before it's too late. The disparity may decline if financial inclusion goes up. It is crucial to include all people of the country, including poor and women, under the digital financing services. While Bangladesh has progressed enough from economic fragility over the last 50 years, the country needs to take proper strategy for the sake of future development. The need a proper database to ensure accountability in all sectors, especially disbursement of SSNP allocations, was emphasized by DR. Razzaque.

Technical Session 3

In the third technical session on "National Financial Inclusion Strategy: Key issues and Implementation", Dr. Bazlul Khondker highlighted that Bangladesh lags far behind in financial inclusion as nearly half of its adult population still remains unbanked. The government will have to bring nearly 18 million adults under at least one regulated financial service account in the next four years in order to achieve its target of 100 per cent financial inclusion by 2025. He also accentuated that financial inclusion has significant implications for alleviating poverty.

He suggested developing associated infrastructure alongside government policy support for the advancement of financial inclusion.

Closing Session

Throughout the training programme, the journalists participated in open interactive discussions. In the closing session they provided feedback on the training programme and how to improve the scope of the programme in future sessions.

Annex 1: News coverage of the first journalists training programme

The Financial Express:

[Faster MFS expansion a must for financial inclusion, say economists \(thefinancialexpress.com.bd\)](http://thefinancialexpress.com.bd)

The Daily Star:

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/news/half-adult-population-still-unbanked-2927856>

Prothom Alo:

<https://www.prothomalo.com/business/%E0%A6%B8%E0%A6%A0%E0%A6%BF%E0%A6%95-%E0%A6%A8%E0%A7%80%E0%A6%A4%E0%A6%BF-%E0%A6%B8%E0%A6%B9%E0%A6%BE%E0%A7%9F%E0%A6%A4%E0%A6%BE%E0%A6%B0-%E0%A6%85%E0%A6%AD%E0%A6%BE%E0%A6%AC%E0%A7%87-%E0%A6%AE%E0%A7%8B%E0%A6%AC%E0%A6%BE%E0%A6%87%E0%A6%B2-%E0%A6%AC%E0%A7%8D%E0%A6%AF%E0%A6%BE%E0%A6%82%E0%A6%95%E0%A6%BF%E0%A6%82-%E0%A6%8F%E0%A6%97%E0%A7%8B%E0%A6%9A%E0%A7%8D%E0%A6%9B%E0%A7%87-%E0%A6%A8%E0%A6%BE>

Dhaka Tribune:

<http://www.econoinsights.com/economists-infrastructure-development-government-policy-support-needed-for-financial-inclusion-dhaka-tribune/>

The Business Standard:

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/policy-support-matters-financial-inclusion-350089>

NewAge:

[Bangladesh lags behind in financial inclusion: experts \(newagebd.net\)](http://newagebd.net)

Bangla Tribune:

[‘আর্থিক অন্তর্ভুক্তির জন্য দেশে নীতি-সহায়তার অভাব রয়েছে’ \(banglatribune.com\)](http://banglatribune.com)

SaraBangla:

[মোবাইল ব্যাংকিং সেবার আওতায় ১০ কোটি মানুষ: পিআরআই \(sarabangla.net\)](http://sarabangla.net)

Samakal:

[আজকের পত্রিকা - সমকাল \(samakal.com\)](http://samakal.com)

Daily Nayadiganta:

[ইআরএফের প্রশিক্ষণে আহসান মনসুর আর্থিক অন্তর্ভুক্তিতে অবকাঠামো ও সরকারি নীতিসহায়তার অভাব রয়েছে \(dailynayadiganta.com\)](http://dailynayadiganta.com)

Risingbd:

[আর্থিক অন্তর্ভুক্তির জন্য দেশে নীতি-সহায়তার অভাব: পিআরআই \(risingbd.com\)](http://risingbd.com)

NewsBangla24:

আর্থিক অন্তর্ভুক্তির জন্য কঠোর নীতিমালা প্রয়োজন (newsbangla24.com)

BhorerKagoj:

পিআরআই-ইআরএফ আয়োজিত কর্মশালায় বক্তারা : আর্থিক অন্তর্ভুক্তির জন্য দেশে নীতি-সহায়তার বড় অভাব।

Bhorer Kagoj | ভোরের কাগজ

Dhaka Post:

<https://www.dhakapost.com/economy/87215>

Daily Janakantha:

<https://www.dailyjanakantha.com/details/article/622324/%E0%A6%A8%E0%A7%80%E0%A6%A4%E0%A6%BF-%E0%A6%B8%E0%A6%B9%E0%A6%BE%E0%A7%9F%E0%A6%A4%E0%A6%BE%E0%A6%B0-%E0%A6%85%E0%A6%AD%E0%A6%BE%E0%A6%AC%E0%A7%87-%E0%A6%B2%E0%A7%8B%E0%A6%95%E0%A6%B8%E0%A6%BE%E0%A6%A8%E0%A7%87-%E0%A6%AE%E0%A7%8B%E0%A6%AC%E0%A6%BE%E0%A6%87%E0%A6%B2-%E0%A6%AC%E0%A7%8D%E0%A6%AF%E0%A6%BE%E0%A6%82%E0%A6%95%E0%A6%BF%E0%A6%82/>

Kaler Kantha:

<https://www.kalerkantho.com/print-edition/industry-business/2021/12/29/1105702>