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South Asian Institute of Policy and Governance (SIPG), North South University
JSW School of Public Policy (JSW-SPP), IIM Ahmedabad

List of Panels

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Web Conference hosted by
South Asian Institute of Policy and Governance, North South University

Moderators & Presenters	Abstracts
1. **Moderator**: Professor Helal Mohiuddin, PhD, Department of Political Science and Sociology, North South University **Speakers:** Bulbul Siddiqi, North South University William Paul Simmons, University of Arizona Saleh Ahmed, Boise State University Md A K Azad Khan, Government of Bangladesh Ishrat Sultana, North South University Vijendra Gadve, Gujarat State Fertilizers and Chemicals Limited	**Collaborative Governance and Marginalized People** Governance has become a contested term in recent times in many developing nations. In addition, poor governance, unstable democracy, corruption, and the tradition of lack of evidence-based policy have become the harsh reality, impacting the nation's development. Besides, the marginalized people suffer the most as they neither participate in the policy formation nor their voices reach the policymakers. Among these marginalized groups, the displaced and refugee population across the globe have been living in devastating situations. The Rohingya in Bangladesh is one such example of the contemporary world, where they are not even recognized as refugees due to the existing policy decision of the Government of Bangladesh. The COVID-19 pandemic has worsened the entire situation further. Under such a complex situation, the proposed panel aims to bring the critical discussion of engaging the marginalized people in policy formation; decolonizing the governance of sustainability and human rights with a particular focus on the Rohingya crisis in Bangladesh, the role of oversight agencies in ensuring transparency in spending COVID-19 fund, and increased vulnerabilities of the Ready-Made Garments (RMG) workers in Bangladesh. The panel argues that collaborative governance could be a practical approach to address these issues during and post-pandemic Bangladesh. The panel comprises papers from the academics of the West and Global South to bring a diverse perspective on collaborative governance. **Paper 1:** **Poverty and public policy in post-COVID-19 Bangladesh: Can voices of the poor make a difference?** **Presenter:** Bulbul Siddiqi, North South University Participatory policymaking has been popular in development thinking in recent times globally. However, this western notion of development and policymaking has not been popular in many developing nations; Bangladesh is not an exception. However, participatory policymaking in poverty reduction would be highly relevant and effective in post-COVID-19 Bangladesh as poverty has increased rapidly due to the pandemic. Thus, need-oriented support is required for the vast majority of the poor where their opinion and suggestions would make a real difference in poverty reduction in Bangladesh. In addition, several stimulus packages of the Government of

Bangladesh are underway, many of which are not managed well as corruption and lingering bureaucratic process are the two fundamental obstacles. Besides, bureaucratic procrastination is a common experience in developing nations, which in many cases reduce the efficacy of adopting a new policy. Under such a complicated context, based on a qualitative research among the urban poor in slum areas the present paper emphasizes that the lived perspectives and experiences of the poor would positively impact managing poverty and initiating a pragmatic poverty reduction policy in post-COVID-19 Bangladesh

Paper 2:

Decolonizing the Governance of Sustainability and Human Rights in the Context of the Rohingya Refugee Camps in Bangladesh

Presenter: William Paul Simmons, University of Arizona and Saleh Ahmed, Boise State University

In this paper we explore the possibilities of decolonizing the governance of sustainability and human rights in the Cox's Bazar region of Bangladesh. We follow recent scholarship on decolonization that calls for "minority groups [to] create alternatives to liberal institutions embodied by the states" (Álvarez and Coolsaet 2018). Such decolonization should be grounded in the local knowledge of the Rohingya and the host communities. The roots of the Rohingya crisis are grounded in the "Othering of the Rohingya", something that is done in varying degrees by all governments in the region. Without some forms of subjectification, where the Rohingya are able to claim their rights to identify themselves and their rights (Simmons 2011, chapter 5), they will continue to be branded as inferior by dominant classes. Such local activism could bring about empowerment and improve socio-economic conditions in the region. We argue that local activism could reverse trends among international actors that have been making decisions on behalf of the Rohingya with little input from them, including decisions about repatriation, relocation, and bringing of a case to the ICC. Currently, Rohingya are seen by the vast majority of the humanitarian aid and human rights communities as victims that need handouts. There have been few attempts to learn from the Rohingya (for an exception, see the work of the NGO Artolution). This is a prime example of what has been called epistemic injustice or what Santos (2015) calls Epistemicide. To privilege the Rohingya's voice and their knowledge it is critical to be aware how deeply embedded particular knowledge systems are in the modern liberal systems. In this case, technical solutions based upon the liberal subject have dominated development, humanitarian, and sustainability discourses. While such solutions provide much needed relief

especially at the height of the refugee crisis, long-term solutions, which should ensure the nexus between sustainability and peace, will need to involve a new way of thinking, and we propose that it be rooted in the Rohingya's worldviews. Of course, we are cognizant that many attempts at tapping into indigenous knowledge have ended up coopting that knowledge to advance the western development agenda (Coulthard 2014) and that such efforts often further empowering elites among a marginalized group thus making the more vulnerable community members (often women) even more vulnerable (Williams and Mawdsley 2006).

Paper 3:

The Role of the Oversight Agencies: COVID-19 Stimulus Budget and the Risks of Corruption in Bangladesh

Presenter: Md A K Azad Khan, Divisional Controller, Mymensingh

The Covid-19 has contested existing economy, health care practices, law and order situations, and national emergency policies to the outbreak of pandemics over the globe. Numerous vulnerabilities of the government of Bangladesh have been exposed due to the impacts of COVID-19, which have caused multifaceted adversities. The crisis has signalled massive distractions to the daily life of the citizens, their businesses, and governments. For the recovery of the economy, governments and development partners have been providing ample amount of funds and putting in to place large-scale programs. During the crisis, the government of Bangladesh embraced "pay now, check later" approach for providing support grants to businesses and affected lower-income vulnerable people. However, the safety measures in combating corruption are mostly missing from emergency outlines. This has created severe corruption risks to weaken an effective response to the pandemic.

The Bangladesh government has already revealed 25 stimulus packages for various sectors equivalent to Tk 1,250 thousand million for various sectors to offset the COVID-19 shock and regenerate regularity in economic activities. Due to the lack of credible public representative and inefficient bureaucracy, the government has been a problem in utilising public resources according to the designed program in Bangladesh. The government has already faced criticisms for its failure to ensure transparency and accountability in the COVID-19 emergency fund. However, the oversight agencies, such as the parliament, Supreme Audit Institution (SAI), and Anti Corruption Commission (ACC), have a critical role in holding the government accountable to the public, which have remained unaddressed.

This paper aims to address this issue based on several secondary data sources. It will find out the government initiatives on the emergency response throughout the pandemic and the role of oversight agencies in ensuring transparency in spending COVID-19 fund. It will also provide some policy recommendations for the future.

Paper 4:

Losing Global Market, Losing Local Employment: Results of Governance Gap?

Presenter: Ishrat Sultana, North South University

While the world has been struggling with the management of the crisis caused by the pandemic, the struggle of Bangladesh is much more. A lack of a comprehensive crisis management plan is clearly evident in health, education, and economy, etc. in Bangladesh. One of the most frustrating incidents is unemployment and the uncared and unprotected situation of limited employment of the apparel industry workers in Bangladesh. According to the BGMEA website, "the apparel industry is Bangladesh's biggest export earner with the value of over $27.9 billion of exports in 2019-20 financial year". The World Trade Statistical Review 2021, however, shows that Bangladesh's share in the global apparel market dropped to 6.3% in 2020 from 6.8% a year earlier (Hossain, July 31, 2021). As a result, Bangladesh now stands in the third position with China holding its first position and Vietnam the second. On the one hand, the glorious image of the Bangladeshi apparel industry in the global market has fallen down. On the other, the rate of unemployment of the industry's workers particularly after the pandemic has been increasing alarmingly. Based on her ongoing empirical research, which is being conducted in greater Dhaka division, under the CTRG funding of North South University, this paper presents the worsening situation of the apparel industry workers most of whom are women. According to Sultana (2016), "most of the workers are economically desperate women and the industries are operated by a capitalist system that denies the rights of women, a systemic exploitation results". The research findings demonstrate that the vulnerability of female workers has been increased during the pandemic. I argue that the lack of collaborative governance for crisis management and emergency preparedness has increased the vulnerability of the RMG workers, which may eventually further affect the position of Bangladesh in the global market.

Paper 5:

	Collaborative support for better governance in pandemic time: Leaders Chronicle Vijendra Gadve, Gujarat State Fertilizers and Chemicals Limited An ongoing working paper that focuses on how collaborative governance has made an impact during the pandemic. It shall discuss the case studies that are the artifact of various initiative, turning out to be large-scale contributions to support the governance. It will also talk about the proactive leadership and future ready initiatives for a sustainable contribution during the pandemic. Initiatives that accomplished towards enhancing the capacity of existing health care infrastructure and support system in order to meet the need of time. The paper shall contain discussions and deliberation of such leaders, whose impactful contribution helped to increase the capacity of the existing public health system. Snowball method that helped the researcher to connect-the-dots between various leaders-contributors. Paper shall also narrate evidence based practices and ascertain the leadership in collaborative governance in crisis management. The paper shall open the avenues that how collaborative governance can be established for crisis management that shall boulevard for future public policy development to encourage and sustain more such initiatives for establishing parallel support system. Such collaborative efforts shall enhance the capacity of the future ready governance system in crisis situations.
2. **Moderator:** Professor Abdur Rob Khan, Dean, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, North South University **Speakers:** Ambassador Shahidul Haque, North South University	**Consequences of COVID-19 Pandemic on International Relations** **Presentation: Consequences of COVID-19 Pandemic on Foreign Policy: A New Dimension in Diplomacy** **Presenter:** Ambassador Shahidul Haque, Professor Sk. Tawfique M. Haque and Ambassador Dr. Mustafizur Rahman COVID-19 pandemic has made the world upside down, fundamentally transforming the societies and economies as well as how the state maintains its relations with other countries and entities. These have added new complexities and uncertainties in state behavior. Though the full extent of its transformative impact on foreign policy and relations is yet to be understood, it has already reshaped relations and diplomacy. New lexicons like "vaccine diplomacy, vaccine nationalism" have become new buzzwords. Some countries have been using the COVID-19 vaccine as a "new tool" to enhance their capacity to exercise and increase their fair influence on other countries and markets. The pandemic, in particular, vaccine production and distribution is likely to have a far-

Professor Sk. Tawfique M. Haque, North South University Ambassador Dr. Mustafizur Rahman, Government of Bangladesh Akhlaque Haque, PhD, Professor at University of Alabama at Birmingham,USA Carin Mayo, MBA, MPA, University of Alabama at Birmingham, USA	reaching consequence on market forces, supply chain as well as evolving geopolitical order. A series of geopolitical competitions in Asia is likely to be in play impacting state and market behaviors. Questions could be raised if COVID-19 is more of a "geopolitical good" rather than a "public good". Like other countries, Bangladesh will also be facing challenges of these new emerging realities. In fact, the COVID-19 pandemic has made managing unthinkable, unknown, and unknowable factors and forces in interstate relations more critical in defining foreign policy. Therefore, critical strategic thinking is essential in order to continue to pursue a pragmatic and balanced foreign policy to endure national interests within a broader international environment. In the context of the above scenario, the panel will make an attempt to find answers to the following questions: 1)Identify trends, contours of COVID-19, and their implications on foreign policy of South Asia in the context of COVID-19 2)How the new pandemic-burdened Asian order will unfold the interstate relations in Asia in future 3)Identify major actors and forces at the interface between pandemic politics and geopolitics in Asia 4)Analyze how the intellectual property issue may influence the future of vaccine production and distribution (equity question). 5) Suggest pragmatic balanced and innovative diplomatic tools for states to face the new challenges by the state and society. **Paper: Income inequality and vaccination gaps: Global Policy crisis in a post-pandemic Recovery** **Presenter:** Akhlaque Haque and Carin Mayo, University of Alabama atBirmingham COVID-19 Pandemic has challenged policymakers with a renewed sense of urgency to rethink global policies to meet the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. As the industrialized world prepares to fully open businesses and governments, the low-income and developing countries are continuing in lockdown as they await their supply of vaccines to help them cope with the wrath of the COVID-19 variants. The inequality of vaccine distribution has implications for post-pandemic recovery for the world. Post pandemic recovery from COVID in South Asia has powerful implications when considering global health equity policy, governmental responses, and how they relate to UN Sustainable Development Goals. The purpose of the paper discussion will be to survey inequities of post pandemic response to recovery in Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka and other South Asian countries, including equitable

	access to vaccines. The panel will inform the breadth of the COVID-19 pandemic across South Asia and discuss the larger implications of various governmental responses to cope with the unprecedented global policy crisis.
3. **Moderator:** Asif M Shahan, PhD, Associate Professor, Department of Development Studies, University of Dhaka **Speakers:** Dr. Mirza Hassan, BIGD Syeda Salina Aziz, BIGD Sirajul Islam, BIGD Rafsanul Haque, BIGD Insiya Khan, BIGD Maheen Sultan, BIGD Iffat Jahan Antara, BIGD	**COVID-19 Governance in Bangladesh** **Paper 1:** **Political Economy of the Governance of COVID-19 in Bangladesh** **Presenter:** Dr. Mirza Hassan, BIGD The paper attempts to provide a political economic analysis of the governance of COVID 19 pandemic by the AL regime. Relying largely on the theoretical approach of state-society relations the paper sets this framework against the findings of a nationally-representative telephone survey of citizens' views and experiences of the governance of the pandemic. The analysis of the governance of COVID-19 rests on an assessment of the nature of the regime and de facto distribution of political power in Bangladesh—a dominant party-state with marginal role of the opposition and civil society actors--and how that have shaped institutional incentives and practices of national political elites, and therefore the policy and political choices made during the pandemic. A central hypothesis is that the nature of the governance of COVID-19 has been driven by the imperatives of 'performance legitimacy': in other words, the regime needed to demonstrate that it was performing well for its citizens, and in particular that it was delivering economic and social rights such as tackling poverty and hunger, job creation and human development. 'Performance legitimacy' matters in particular for the current regime because its democratic credentials are poor (elections are not seen as free and fair), and because broadly-shared development achievements, in particular protection against crisis, are foundational elements of the social contract in Bangladesh. **Paper 2:** **COVID-19 Lockdown in Bangladesh: A Governance Perspective** **Presenter:** Sirajul Islam, Rafsanul Haque and Insiya Khan, BIGD

Many countries worldwide restricted public activities and movement in varying degrees as part of 'lockdown' measures to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus. The Government of Bangladesh has attempted its own series of restrictive measures that began on 26 March 2020, implemented in multiple degrees and strategies, and shaped differently by economic, social, and political dynamics. The study draws from nationwide survey data, qualitative case studies across selected locations of Bangladesh, and media coverage of lockdown management to make a governance assessment of the lockdowns in Bangladesh. In particular, it analyzes the government's planning, design, capacity, and implementation of lockdown measures under existing socioeconomic circumstances. The Bangladeshi lockdown model poses the government as responsive to popular demand and hence forges a synergy between government interests and citizens' demands. Therefore, deficits in lockdown planning and design, poor governance in relief distribution, and weak and late implementation of measures led to ineffective lockdowns, but the relaxation of lockdowns did not contradict public interests. Considering its capacity and public perception towards the lockdown, the government took a balanced middle course of lockdown enforcement, in which it neither loosened the tide to the full scale nor did it put people under stringent restrictions. Its varying strategies also included a learning curve observed in the latter phases of the lockdowns. Given Bangladesh's socioeconomic dynamics, the country cannot adopt long-term lockdown, as it is not the most practical or effective measure to fight the pandemic. The study concludes by recommending an effective nationwide vaccination program, mandatory mask-wearing through all relevant stakeholders' participation, and views nationwide lockdown only as a last resort for Bangladesh.

Paper 3:

Health sector governance during first wave of covid-19: capacity, preparedness, and response

Presenter: Syeda Salina Aziz and Dr. Mirza Hassan, BIGD

This paper reviews the governance policies and mechanisms of Bangladesh's health sector during the first wave of the COVID-19 outbreak. It looks at the pre-existing policy framework, policy preparedness and response in the time of outbreak, the health capacity and health resource allocation and distribution, level of coordination and decision making along with health communication to understand the governance process. Desk research, media reports, in-depth interviews, and findings from a phone survey on 2700 respondents were the data sources. The findings suggest that the possibility of an epidemic or pandemic was never seriously considered

by the government before COVID-19 hit. Despite having recurrent incidents of communicable disease outbreaks, albeit at smaller scales, the country lacked the policy framework and resource capacity to successfully respond to long-term health emergencies. The underfunded health sector in the country had limited human resources, inadequate infrastructure and health supplies available to deal with the pandemic. During the outbreak, testing was inadequate, the supply of the testing kits and of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) was limited, the procurement process was slow, and the number of technologists available was insufficient. At the same time, the distribution was inequitable, directed towards the capital and urban centres.

The policy response during the pandemic was slow and ineffective. Strong decisive leadership to manage the pandemic was absent, the governance was marred by overly bureaucratic procedures and incoordination among actors and committees. The voice of the scientific community was not adequately incorporated. The health communication was somewhat effective in disseminating COVID-19 related information and building awareness about the pandemic among the public. But when it comes to communicating transparently, there were serious limitations. There were attempts to control information regarding infection spread, transmission levels and resource availability which resulted in some mistrust among the public.

Paper 4:

Achievements & Challenges in the COVID-19 Relief Programme

Presenter: Rafsanul Haque, BIGD

The spread of the COVID-19 pandemic put Bangladesh's disaster and relief management experiences to the test. To assesses the government's achievements and challenges in distributing relief to the citizens affected by the first wave of the pandemic in 2020, the article focuses on analyzing the nature of the relief program—structure, governance process and capacity—with an aim to evaluate the extent to which COVID-19 related relief was distributed efficiently, appropriately, and equitably. Drawing from both qualitative and quantitative data, the study argues that while relief efforts were made on a considerable scale, implementation of the relief program was troubled by poor governance. The results portray a lack of transparency and accountability, further complicated by the perceptions of corruption and lack of trust in political representatives. The deficits in governance capacity were made visible by the absence of and failure to prepare a robust database of eligible beneficiaries, the lack of coordinated efforts with non-government and local entities, and the absence of credible monitoring systems. The study

concludes by assessing the needs and potential strategies to develop a robust relief program as a part of a broader social safety net (SSN) program to cope with similar crises in the future.

Paper 5

Labour Governance in the RMG sector and COVID-19

Presenter: Maheen Sultan and Iffat Jahan Antara, BIGD

The RMG sector in Bangladesh is the main export sector and foreign currency earner (84% of the total export earnings in 2020), contributing 11% of GDP (Bangladesh Bank, 2020), employing approximately 2.59 million workers (MiB, 2020), and it is also highly exposed to global volatility and crises, as was demonstrated during the COVID pandemic (BGMEA, n.d.). As soon as the PM declared a national lockdown in the form of a general holiday on 26 March, she simultaneously announced a financial stimulus package for the garments sector to cover workers' wages.

The paper will explore how the RMG sector has been affected by the COVID pandemic. It explores the interests, incentives, and relative power of various actors and stakeholders to understand how the allocation and implementation of the financial stimulus packages played out in the RMG sector with some indications of who gained and who lost, and why. We will analyse state-business-labour relations in order to set the context for how COVID-19 policy responses played out in the RMG sector. We will discuss policy responses and their challenges and achievements from the perspectives of employers, workers, and government. Finally conclusions and some policy implications related to collaborative governance for crisis management and reimagining governance institutions in the lost pandemic world are discussed .

The paper is based on rapid research into trade union responses to the COVID-19 pandemic between April and May 2020; interviews with selected labour leaders, labour rights activists, and allies of the labour movement for more insights on the stimulus package and lockdown governance during COVID; existing literature and media reports, blogs, and op-eds from newspapers, social media, and RMG-related websites.

4. **Moderator:** Sony Pellissery	**Do leaders need scholars? Epistemic Crisis in Policy Practice** Six decades ago, Hannah Arendt spelled out the epistemic crisis that shrouds the world when it comes to decision making process in public sphere in her classic on *Truth and Politics*. The policy

Director, Institute of Public Policy, National Law Schoolof India University	practice of 'speaking truth to power' has become increasingly opaque since Arendt's prediction. This panel is exploring the problematic Arendt proposed in South Asian context.
	Knowledge generation, knowledge transmission and knowledge reception in professional context of advice giving is extremely complex. How knowledge is able to influence policy decisions becomes the proof of the pudding in the context of professional education. Most of the South Asian countries with authoritarian decision making model face the difficulty of convincing a leader with the apolitical tool of knowledge. This is the epistemic crisis of policy practice in South Asia. Educational content in policy schools, pedagogy used to prepare the graduates and strategic linkage of policy schools with government creates an eco-system to deal with this epistemic crisis.
	In South Asia, policy schools are yet to define their mission clearly, since most of these schools are attached with Management Schools, Law Schools, Economics Departments, private universities or even as entrepreneurial opportunities. Aaron Wildaswky's insightful formulation of "Public policy schools do to government what business schools do to business" (ref. *Speaking Truth to Power*) can be one leading light in this mission defining exercise. This panel aims to contribute to this mission defining exercise by exploring the connection between knowledge and power in advice giving in policy context.
	Three papers included in this panel are exploring the theme of the panel from three different viewpoints: **First,** from the point view of curriculum of public policy schools. Curriculum is designed in policy schools to prepare graduates to equip necessary skills, knowledge and value orientation to deal with the challenge of 'speaking truth to power'. However, different schools adopt different positions when it comes to policy practice. A clear divide that is emerging in South Asia is between techno-managerial approach and political approach. **Second** paper in the panel is examining the question of mismatch between skill requirement in the job market for public policy professionals and curriculum in South Asian schools. **Third** paper is examining the imbalance in relationship between public administrators and consultants. A good number of placements for graduates from policy schools are with consultants. Therefore, how the relationship between consultant and administrator is defined, shape the policy practice.
	All the three papers together contribute to the understanding on vexed relationship between truth and power in policy practice in South Asian context.
	Paper 1
	Competition of techno-managerialism and political views in the public policy training

Presenter: Sachin Tiwari, National Law School of India University & Drishti Ranjan, Army College of Law

A visible change has taken place in last one decade for public policy education in India. Forty seven schools of public policy education have emerged in less than a decade in India. Among them, five streams of policy education are being offered. These five streams are: a) undergraduate degree in public policy, b) post-graduate degree in public policy, c) doctoral education in public policy, d) diploma programmes in Public Policy, and e) online education programmes in public policy. This paper is comparing the educational curriculum of these 47 schools based on the publically available information, and interviews conducted with academic leaders and students of these schools. Pattern emerging here shows that in the post-graduate programme, there is a unifying trend. There is huge heterogeneity in all other streams of programmes. Therefore, further analysis is undertaken on the curriculum of post-graduate programme, where a divide of techno-managerial approach and political approach to public policy is visible.

Paper 2

Context matters for employable skills in Public Policy: A study of job-seeking patterns of graduates in Public Policy in India

Presenter: Vasundhara, National Law School of India University & Vijay Paul, Graphic Era University

Is there a mismatch between skills sets imparted through public policy education in India, and demands existing in job market? It is important to answer this question to inform the emerging public policy schools, not just in India, but across Asia. We study this by gathering information on placements from public policy schools and by conducting in-depth interviews with graduates after 2015. We notice that, there is good skill overlap between Master of Business Administration and Master of Public Policy. Very often, firms are employing graduates with MBA degree in the absence of sufficient pool of public policy graduates. Yet, the defining feature of policy professionals is their versatility and deep-rooted desire to bring positive societal change. In this manner, unlike MBA graduates, where works ends up perpetuating societal status quo through market focused work, public policy professionals are oriented to be organic intellectuals, where work is in the interfacing areas of market, the state and civil society. Thus, transformation of public sphere is contributed through the works of policy professionals themselves. The key

finding of our paper is the need for context-specific knowledge to gain public policy jobs. Knowledge as a universal transferable category to inform skills often is not appreciated by policy firms that recruit professionals. This is the epistemic crisis in policy practice we find.

Paper 3

Effective Policymaking and Implementation: Do we need Administrators when Consultants call the shots?

Presenter: Mounik Lahiri (Deloitte), Anoushka Roy (PwC), & Shreoshee Mukherjee (J-Pal)

Abstract: Opposed to traditional views of who constitutes the 'circle' of policymakers and implementors, the emergence of private management consultancies—the knowledge brokers, or intermediaries between knowledge generators and policy decision-makers (Craft& Howlett, 2012; Lindvall, 2009; Sundquist, 1978), has expanded the public policy ecosystem. This ecosystem has ventured well beyond closed-door, bureaucratic public institutions. The often-acknowledged impasse within the public administrative system has strengthened the role of policy consultants, presenting fertile institutional settings, and conducive developmental priorities for policy consulting as an industry, and a profession to thrive.

Against this background, we question whether there is a need to rethink the functions of traditional administrators. If consultants control the life cycle of a policy, do we need administrators at all? This paper seeks to answer the question by examining how policy consultants operate differently from public administrators, latently embedded within the governance processes for many years. The key objective of this paper would be to investigate policy decisions which are complimented by private consulting firms at various stages forms—as political aide, as research consultants or as on-field executors. With this paper, we aspire to call out the obliterating line between the public and the private in policymaking, a topic rarely addressed in policy academia.

5.

Moderator: Ahmed Khaver, Sustainable Development Policy Institute

Evidence Informed Policy Making Amid Pandemic: A South Asian perspective

The spread of COVID-19 in South Asia magnified the lack of governance and state capacity to respond in the face of challenge. The pandemic tested the limits of policy making and the effectiveness of public institutions. The growing number of cases have overstretched health systems, brought in economic disruptions and uncertainty about the future. Being a novel

Speakers: Ms Radhika Menon, Oxford Policy Management Ms Sana Zia, FCDO Mr Anushka Wijesinha, International Trade Centre Selim Raihan, University of Dhaka	situation, only a handful of nations have been able to remain somewhat in control of the spread. Preparing public leaders to respond to such unforeseen challenges is imperative as the pandemic has made particularly clear. To equip and prepare public leaders, evidence use must be at the forefront of the discussion. The ever changing and evolving nature of the pandemic that spans every sector of the economy demands real time, reliable and actionable evidence-based policy making. Evidence acquired must be brokered, translated and effectively communicated to inform government decision-making. For an effective forum to be able to do so, it requires an inclusive approach to problem framing, making sense of the available evidence and to arrive at pertinent recommendations for policy makers. As the region grapples with the pandemic, the fundamental questions remain, can policy makers employ evidence to adapt to the changing nature of the pandemic? Can collaborative governance with evidence as the centerpiece work during a crisis? What are the avenues for policy makers to look for answers in the post pandemic world? The panel seeks to address the following points: 1. How can evidence-use help in adaptive policy making in an uncertain world? Are there any examples? 2. The role of non-government partners and development partners in charting out a way forward for policy makers through evidence brokering? 3. How open are policy makers to consider system and process level changes to improve evidence-use amid crisis times? 4. The need to improve and update curriculum and capacity of public sector officials for a post pandemic world
6. **Moderator:** Professor Ferdous Arfina Osman, Chair, Department of Public Administration, University of Dhaka	**Impact of Online Education in Addressing SDGs in COVID-19 Pandemic Situation: A Study on Bangladesh** The objective of the research is to study the impact of online education in ensuring equal access to all men and women to affordable higher, tertiary, education by addressing Sustainable Development Goals' (SDGs') target in the pandemic period of COVID-19. Apart from the health and economic sectors, education sector is affected most in this pandemic period. Since 16 March,

Speakers: Abu Momtaz Saaduddin Ahmed, Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre Rokeya Fahmida PhD, Bangladesh Public Administration TrainingCentre Md. Anisur Rahman, Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre Shohela Ferdous, Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre	2020 till now, all the traditional face- to- face educational activities are suspended in all educational institutions. The government is forced repeatedly to reschedule the date of reopening as the pandemic period is lingering. As an alternative mode of traditional way of learning, online education is introduced and exercised for its flexible, comprehensiveness and rapid accessibility quality. Even if educational institutions will be opened, it will be uncertain whether we will get the previous set up of education or not. So, in future, blending method- a balanced combination of traditional and online education can be applied to address this kind of emergency. As online education is a new approach in Bangladesh and is used broadly, it is necessary to investigate how far it ensures the equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality higher education. This study includes present condition of online education in tertiary level, studying the behavioural change before and after using the tools used in this educational system, and possibilities and challenges of this system. In doing so, the researchers use Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), (Davis, 1986), to determine the behavioral intention to use technology in education. Students and teachers' perspectives will be measured to get the performance. This study is quantitative in nature and follows survey-based questionnaire method as data collection technique. Moreover, interviews are taken from educators. After analysing the feedback received as data, the study suggests recommendations for different stakeholders to make better polices and reformation of the earlier ones.
7. **Moderator:** Srinivas Yelandur, Founder Elephant Ear Advisors LLP **Speakers:** Srinivas Yelandur, Founder Elephant Ear Advisors LLP Randeep D, IAS, Spl Commissioner (Health & IT) and Zonal Commissioner,	**Leveraging Technology for Governance in a Post-Pandemic World** Technology has been a key driver during the pandemic and has always lead fromthe front while shaping public policy. Governance has been the cornerstone of public policy even before the pandemic and will continue to be so in the post pandemic world. For effective governance, technology must be accessible, available and adopted both by society, businesses and the government. In the pre pandemic times, technology in governance was largely authoritarian an autocratic. During the pandemic technology was driving change and transforming the way society was governed. This led to democratisation of technology and lepto positive impact ingovernance administration at the grassroot level. This transformation was large scale and drove a culture of innovation that fosteredcloser relationship in public private partnership models, that led to to creating innovative solutions

BBMP (Bangalore Municipal Corporation) Ganesh Kollegal, Vice President and Head of Public Policy at Swiggy Isha Pant, IPS, Dy. Commissioner of Police and Commandant, COVID Taskforce (Bangalore City Police)	and delivering efficiency in governance models. There are numerous instances and use cases where technology has driven public policy and vice versa. In the post pandemic era, the prevalence of a technology driven public policy model to impact governments, bureaucracy and society will bethe hallmark of this changing revolution. From health care and education to commerce in retail, policy shaping and policy implementation was closely linked with technology-driven initiatives during the pandemic which will be the foundation to build a fabric for governance in the postpandemic era. The panel will discuss perspectives on how public policy has leveraged technology in the areas of healthcare management, law and order, decision making, monitoring, information gathering and administration. It will also discuss how corporates and new startup ecosystems collaborated with stakeholders in the government and bureaucracy to impact society positively during the pandemic andthe role they will continue to play in the post pandemic era.
8. **Moderator:** Prof. Quamrul Alam, Central Queensland University **Panelists:** Dr. Humayun, Divisional Commissioner,Rajshahi Deputy Commissioner, Chapai Nawabganj Mayor, Shibgonj Upozila, Chapai Nawabganj	**Managing COVID-19: Experiences from the Field** Managing lockdown decision during Covid 19 pandemic situation by governments across globe has been a global challenge across the world since early 2020. Bangladesh is not an exception which like all other countries has been grappling with Covid 19 pandemic from March of last year. In the case of Bangladesh, however, the situation becomes challenging in context of a huge population – especially when a large segment of which thought it was mainly an urban health issue. Though the front-line workers to handle this crisis has been health professionals, other branches of Government have also been involved in managing the pandemic. Especially, the civil administration has also played a crucial role in enforcing health safety procedures and implementing various government directives and policy decisions. This panel presentation will offer a snap shot overview of how the civil administration of Rajshahi Division (an administrative division in North western Bangladesh) in collaboration with other relevant government departments/ agencies along with local level peoples' representatives have tried to manage the crisis. In particular, we will focus on a particular district – Chapai Nawabganj which came up with a successful model of managing the pandemic involving various government departments, volunteers and localcommunities and peoples' representatives.

	Firstly, the presentation will cover initial challenges faced by local administration in implementing government policy (lockdown) decision. Secondly, the strategies initiated by the civil administration to overcome them through at times innovative and mostly collaborative efforts and how they have been able to control the crisis. Finally, this presentation suggests that a multi-level collaborative governance structure comprising people from all sectors of a locality can be instrumental in managing a global crisis like Covid 19 pandemic situation.
9. **Moderator:** Eric Click, PhD, Webster University **Speakers:** Eric Click, PhD, Webster University Suzanne Discenza, PhD, Webster University Becky Stuteville, PhD, Kansas State University Suwithida Charungkaittikul, PhD, Chulalongkorn University	**Programs, Pandemics, and Beyond: Preparing Global Professional Citizens Across Boundaries in South Asia** In today's global society and as the result of the COVID-19 pandemic, professional citizens need public service education and training more than ever to succeed as global public servants at all levels of the workforce in various sectors and disciplines. Through public affairs programming, students in a variety of fields can become better global citizens- impacting both global governance and change. This panel explores lessons learned through the global pandemic for education and workforce development in various sectors and disciplines related to public service in South Asia. **Presentation 1:** **Global MPA: East Meets West: Preparing Global Professional Citizensto Engage in a Global Society** **Presenter:** Eric Click, PhD, Webster University Click will discuss the how and why of creating MPAs and other public programs with an increasing global public service value focus, including his recent curricular revamping of an MPA. These programs can better prepare global professional citizens to engage in public affairs throughout global society, including Southeast Asia, ex. global pandemic. In particular, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN-SDGs) can serve as a guiding framework for integration and operationalization. **Presentation 2:**

COVID-19 Public Health Responses: Comparing and ContrastingThailand versus the U.S.

Eric Click, PhD, Webster University & Suzanne Discenza, PhD, Webster University

Click, with Discenza, will continue to build on his initial brief presentation with this specific pandemic example. The presenters will discuss public policy, political, administrative, and citizen responses to the pandemic in Thailand versus those in the United States with particular focus on transparency, accountability, and professional responsibility.

Presentation 3:

Connecting Public and Healthcare Administrators

Becky Stuteville, PhD, Kansas State University

Stuteville will discuss the need for connections between public administrators and animal health professionals in both academics and practice. The need for coordination between public officials and animal health professionals is even more pressing in light of the world's experience with COVID-19.

Presentation 4:

Lifelong Learning and Importance to Public Service in South Asia

Suwithida Charungkaittikul, PhD, Chulalongkorn University

Suwithida will discuss teaching and learning in the COVID-19 crisis and beyond, with a focus on the role of educators and public service must be one of the priorities mentioned in this moment. Societies should foster more lifelong learning (LLL) opportunities for people as development goals. Suwithida will discuss the roles of lifelong learning in promoting peaceful and inclusive societies that drive individual learning, organizations, and societal learning in which all citizens

	have equitable opportunities to access effective and relevant learning throughout life, delivered through a variety of settings. Public Service plays an important role in LLL worldwide. This requires fundamental changes in curriculum and research, emphasizing willingness to learn as much as content mastery, as well as urgent action on re-thinking the existing approaches. Development of lifelong learning (a fundamental human right and a public good) is a sustainable way to create peaceful and inclusive societies, resulting in improved quality of life, community and societal well-being, democratic participation, and social inclusiveness/cohesion, which will act as a social force driving the development of the country's economic and national growth.
10. **Moderator:** Dr. Gambhir Bhatta, Dirtector, Nepal Policy Institute (NPI), Visitinhg Professor, Kathmandu University School of Management (KUSOM) &Adjunct Senior R3esearch Fellow, Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, Singapore **Speakers:** Prof. Achyut Wagle, Kathmandu University School of Management (KUSOM) Dr. Amina Singh, Kathmandu University School of Management (KUSOM) Dr. Gopi Khanal, Ministry of Federal Affairs and General	**Reforming Government Institutions in Nepal, post-Covid** In keeping with the general orientation of the Conference, the panel will focus on the key theme of reforming and reimaging government institutions in Nepal. The particular context, as is understandable, has three drivers: (i) the federalization exercise currently ongoing in the country pursuant to the landmark 2015 constitution that made Nepal a democratic republic; (ii) the Covid-19 induced pandemic which has begun to fundamentally alter the underlying premises of government action towards achieving the development goals inherent in the SDGs and the 15th Five-Year Plan (FY2020 – FY2024); and (iii) the swiftly evolving political situation in the country which lends credence to the assertion that Nepal has perennial political instability.[1] As understood for purposes of this conference, the term 'institutions' refers to both organizations as well as what have been described as the 'rules of the game'. The primary objective of the panel discussions is to shed further light on the scope for strengthening relevant institutions of governance in Nepal such that concrete steps forward towards achievement of the development goals of the government can be ascertained and discussed. Particular focus will be on a risk assessment that clearly delimits the parameters of the actions proposed.

Administration, Government of Nepal Ms. Kalpana Jha, NepalPolicy Institute (NPI)	
11. **Moderator:** Namrata Chindarkar, PhD, Chairperson - JSW School of Public Policy, Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad **Speakers:** Namrata Chindarkar, PhD, Chairperson - JSW School of Public Policy, Indian Institute of Management, Ahemedabad R Balasubramaniam, PhD, Member-HR, Capacity Building Commission, Govt.of India, New Delhi Kalpana Gopalan, Additional Chief Secretary to Government, Government of Karnataka, Bangalore, India Ashish Khanna, World Bank	**Public Administration Education in South Asia** Public Administration Education in South Asia. This pandemic has affected lives significantly than one can think of—health crises, economic collapse, social unrest, and the digital divide that impacts education and work. The Current Pandemic has challenged everyone in the world. We saw an enormous impact on people and their lives; the policymakers and policy administrators faced their biggest test in generations. The bigger question is, are we ready for another pandemic? This Panel would discuss and deliberate lessons we learnt from the current pandemic and take a futures view on steps that government organizations can take to equip the Policy Makers and administrators to be more effective in the future public administrations?

12. **Moderator:** Professor Ahmed Mushtaque Raza Chowdhury, Adviser to the James P. Grant School of Public Health at BRAC University & Professor of Population and Family Health at Columbia University in New York **Keynote Presenter:** Dr. Abu Muhammad Zakir Hussain, MBBS, MPH, Ph. D Bangladesh Health Watch **Panelists:** Dr. Abu Jamil Faisel, University of Dhaka Rumana Haque, PhD, University of Dhaka Dr. Yasmin H Ahmed, MBBS, Bangladesh Health Watch(BHW)	**Restructuring of the Public Health Sector of Bangladesh in light of the Experience Gleaned from the Manner Covid-19 was Managed in the Country** The panel seeks to address the following points 1. Examine the pros and cons of Covid19 management policies, strategies, plans and actions, with reference to: multi-sector and multifaceted stakeholder coordination and engagement; governance, stewardship, planning, budgeting, funding, allocation, procurement and expenditure; and focus on vulnerable, with special attention to gender perspectives; 2. Assess the information scenarios; 3. Assess the technical assistance scenarios; 4. Draw inference on the strengths and weaknesses of various functionalities; 5. Recommend way out and way forward The ravaging pandemic that engulfed the whole world today, named Covid-19, has given good multi-faceted individual, family, social, economic, educational, occupational and political lessons to the people as well as the governments in each and every country. In addition to a deluge of 'infodemics' we have noticed a 'me too public health specialist' syndrome flooding global scenario. Cardiologists posed as epidemiologists, thanks to the media at home and abroad. Mismanagement of the pandemic was questioned in almost every country and many big names lost their jobs and positions. Advices of the national technical committee in Bangladesh, on Covid-19, formed by the Ministry of Health itself, are sometimes not honored by the Ministry, according to some committee members; may be on understandable grounds. Experts of other subjects, introduced as public health experts, keep on issuing Covid-19 related projections and advice without much thought on their implications. True public health experts, immunologists and epidemiologists are hardly heard. Diagnostic services inter alia should be monitored more meticulously. Communication interventions are not perceived to be effective. Transparency was a big issue with regard to some Covid-19 dedicated hospital care, testing laboratories and procurement. Much and many of these issues were solved ultimately though, hinged on dedication, commitment and honesty of some pivot level officials. Nevertheless, all these point out to the fact that, unless an efficient and effective institutional governance and leadership set-up is established through reorganization of the present one,for managing public health concerns, the same patchy works might be seen in future as well. To this end we advocate for establishment of a public health infrastructure in Bangladesh for attending, addressing and managing public health issues. This would require deployment of public health experts in relevant nodal positions.
13. **Moderator:** Rufruf	**The Shifting Tides of the Post-pandemic era and its Impacts on the Criminal Justice System in the Sub-continent**

Chaudhary, Founder and Director, Mazeltov - Innovation and Justice **Speakers:** Ahmed Shafquat Hassan, Strategic and Academic Director, Mazeltov – Innovation and Justice Ayesha Iqbal, Global Advisor, Mazeltov – Innovation and Justice Devanshi Janmeja, Magistrate, Indian JudicialService, New Delhi	**Ahmed Shafquat Hassan:** The speaker will focus on the protection of the Fundamental Right of protection and safeguards against the unlawful arrests and detentions. The speaker will highlight the endeavours undertaken by the Criminal Justice Systems across Bangladesh, India and Pakistan to ensure that individuals were given the opportunity to be presented before of a court of law upon their arrests. The speaker will explain the necessity of upholding such fundamental rights even in the face of an emergency and the theoretical underpinnings as to why such rights ought not to be suspended. The speaker will engage the topic, relying on the doctrinal analysis of the rights enumerated across the Constitutions of all three nations and the philosophy behind the creation of such rights and principles. **Ayesha Iqbal:** The panelist will lay emphasis on how COVID-19 has unleased institutional weaknesses and limitations particularly in the context of correctional institutions across three main jurisdictions: Pakistan, India & Bangladesh. The panelist will further highlight the vulnerabilities of inmates being exacerbated by the pandemic leading to grave human rights violations whilst also exploring how different nations have used the pandemic as a catalyst for legislative and judicial prison reform in their respective jurisdictions. **Devanshi Janmeja:** As physical appearances by lawyers and litigants were discouraged in courts due to the strict safety protocols of the COVID-19 crisis, Courts started functioning with a mandated virtual protocol, allowing only matters of human rights and questions of life and liberty to be dealt with in person. Courts across different countries gave mandates to their respective jurisdictions to decongest prisons to prevent outbreak of the disease in Jails. Under-trial prisoners were released on interim bail, convicted prisoners on parole. Judiciaries across the sub-continent harnessed technology to ensure that access to courts was not impeded. Per contra, digitisation of courts came with its own set of problems. The speaker will address the ways in which the Courts re-organised to address these issues. The speaker will also highlight the myriad problems brought on by the change of the infrastructure.
14. **Moderator:** Dr.Joe Devine University of Bath, UK **Speakers:** Feisal Rehman and Hann	**Uncertainty and the City: How *Public* Crisis Management and *Private* Resilience collide in Cities** One thing that the pandemic made quite evident, is that the infrastructure and services of South Asian cities were just not equipped to respond to a public crisis. For the many economic migrants, lockdown governmentality made it clear that they were simply 'invisible' to survival infrastructures including: food, housing, transport and security. The city is transient, temporary,

Ruszczyk, Durham University, UK Ipshita Basu and Ripin Kalra, University of Westminster Joe Devine, University of Bath Asif M Shahan, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh	and the 'foreseeable' certainty of further lockdowns accelerated a "belongings in a bag" approach to working and living in the city. This panel investigates the affect of state approaches to reducing the risk of Covid-19 on the lives and livelihoods of urban citizens, from marginalised communities including the urban poor, women, ethnic and religious minorities and informal workers. The findings reveal the affects of peripheralization from physical and digital infrastructures and services combined and the informal ways in which communities 'survived' through economies of care and frugal technologies. **Paper 1:** **Contextualising Covid-19 pandemic's impact on food security in two small cities in Bangladesh** **Presenter:** Feisal Rehman and Hanna Ruszczyk, Durham University Using two rapidly urbanising small cities in Southern Bangladesh as case studies, this research reports on urban food (in)security and associated coping mechanisms in small cities of Bangladesh during the COVID-19 lockdown from March to May 2020. Due to restrictions during the prolonged lockdown, residents (especially low-income groups) had limited access to livelihood opportunities and experienced significant or complete loss of income. This affected both the quantity and quality of food consumed. Coping strategies reported include curtailing consumption, relying on inexpensive starchy staples, increasing the share of total expenditure allocated to food, taking out loans and accessing relief. The pandemic has exacerbated the precariousness of existing food and nutrition security in these cities, although residents with guaranteed incomes and adequate savings did not suffer significantly. The study highlights the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on low-income and households without guaranteed income owing to their limited flexibility to use income differently and limited access to formal support. **Paper 2:** **Pandemic Journeys: The Socio-spatial impact of Covid-19 pandemic on mobility operators in Dhaka** **Presenter:** Ipshita Basu and Ripin Kalra, University of Westminster and Joe Devine, University of Bath

Mobility, that is the choices and behaviours to move or 'stay put' is an important indication of experiences of inequality and difference in the city. While lockdown governance imposed restrictions on movement, it posed new challenges on motorised and non motorised mobility operators in the city. From a survey conducted between February 2021-July 2021, with over 100 respondents living in and around three major informal settlements in Dhaka this paper reveals how mobility operators and their households coped with social, economic and spatial changes that shaped emerging regimes of movement. While some of these changes were temporary, others have become a permanent feature of post-pandemic urban life and they have changed the regimes and practices of movement in important ways. By contextualising mobility to its social, spatial and economic dimensions the paper makes an important contribution to understanding the pathways to inclusive mobility futures and its links to a sustainable city.

Paper 3:

Covid-19 and Access to Social Protection: The Effect on the Urban Poor of Bangladesh

Asif M Shahan, University of Dhaka

Before the Government of Bangladesh introduced the National Social Security Strategy in 2015, there were 145 social protection programs run by 23 ministries. The National Social Security Strategy (NSSS) tried to consolidate different programs, address the limitation of the existing programs and introduced a life-cycle approach. Right now, there are 116 social protection programs in Bangladesh trying to support the poor. Important to note that these programs have mostly focused on helping the rural poor and even though the NSSS promised to provide adequate assistance to the urban poor, only a few programs are currently (e.g., Allowances for Lactating Mothers) targeting them. To the policy makers and the political actors, the urban poor have remained largely invisible and political consideration has always played a key role in denying their access to services. In this context, the recent Covid-19 crisis has opened up a new opportunity for them. The surge of Covid-19 and the government's decision to impose lockdown had significantly disrupted the livelihood options and opportunities of the poor, especially the urban poor and acknowledging this, the government decided to provide different types of social protection services including but not limited to a cash support of BDT 2500, VGF, and OMS. It was promised that these services would be available for both the urban and rural poor and the local government agencies were involved in ensuring accessibility to social protection services.

In effect, the current crisis created an opportunity for the urban poor to be recognized as 'worthy of support' by the government which may have a long-term implication. In this context, this paper makes an effort to explore whether the urban poor, living in the slums and pavements, have indeed gained access to services, as promised. In doing that, the paper has also attempted to identify and explain the factors that have facilitated and/ or hindered their access. Data for this study has been collected from a three-year long qualitative study conducted between 2019 and 2021, where livelihood opportunities of 30 participants from the Dhaka and Chattogram have been tracked annually. This timeline (i.e., 2019-2021) allows the study to specifically capture whether the Covid-19 has indeed made social protection services more accessible to the urban poor.