

## Editor's Note

It is our immense pleasure that *SUST Journal of Social Sciences* Vol 34, No. 1 has been published under the new Editorial Board. The main purpose of this journal is to publish original and contemporary issues in social sciences and humanities fields. As is in any transition, our regular publication has been slightly delayed. But from the next issue, we do intend to resume the timely publication. I would like to extend my gratitude and thanks to my Associate Editor and other members of our Editorial Board whose advice and suggestions made this issue possible. At this point we extend our sincere gratitude to our honourable VC sir, Professor Farid Uddin Ahmed for his continuous support and encouragement for this endeavor. We strongly believe that the readers will get new insights and motivation for further research in their respective areas.

This issue of the journal consists of five papers from the social sciences, which may be of interest to the readers.

We begin with the finance sector. Financial development is essential for sustained economic growth. But there has been insufficient and unequal financial development in Bangladesh. In their article, "Factors Influencing Financial Development in Bangladesh: An ARDL Bounds Testing Approach," Dr Md Mahabubul Hakim, Md Imran Hossain Milon and Farhana Ahmed, take data sources from 1975-1995 to explore factors influencing the financial development of Bangladesh by using the Autoregressive Distributed Lag (ARDL) bounds testing method. The findings indicate that financial development in Bangladesh is positively and significantly affected by trade openness and gross capital formation. In contrast, inflation and interest rates

both have adverse effects on financial development, implying that these factors have a detrimental effect on financial development in Bangladesh. They suggest that to enhance financial development in Bangladesh, the Government should maintain a favorable market structure, maintain a low inflation rate and lower lending interest rates.

The second article, "Factors Affecting Peasants' Choice and Usage of Pesticides: A Qualitative Study in a Northeastern Rural Area of Bangladesh" was written by Md Shahgahan Mia, Abdullah Al Rifat and Poushe Paul. The agriculture sector has a huge influence on the economy of Bangladesh. It creates jobs, reduces poverty, improves human resources, and ensures enough food for everyone. Choosing and using pesticides correctly is the biggest obstacle to successful and sustainable farming because peasants mainly depend on pesticide dealers and the indigenous knowledge system. By using a qualitative approach, in-depth interviews schedule and KII and through the thematic analysis of data, their results indicate that peasants use pesticides to maximize production and profit. They select and use the pesticides that the seller suggests. The peasants are unaware of pesticide use and do not know about the adverse side effects on health and the environment. To ensure sustainable agricultural production, policymakers should consider the simple method of pesticide selection and usage to improve food security.

Moving on to the education sector, the next article explores learner autonomy as an important component for quality education particularly in tertiary level education. The article, "A Study of Learner Autonomy in Tertiary Level Language Classes" is written by Tasnia Mizan Chowdhury. The study reveals that an autonomous learner takes charge of his/her own learning and is less dependent on the teacher and therefore tends to be a better learner. The study was conducted on various private universities in Sylhet assessing the application of the principles of learner autonomy in the language classrooms. A qualitative exploratory approach has been adopted for this study and the English language classrooms have been focused on. The findings reveal the common existence of a teacher centered classroom where students are solely dependent on their teachers for

learning. To promote learner autonomy, universities should emphasize on increasing students' motivation by developing their learning skills as well as providing teachers with greater autonomy in their decision making process.

Dr. Fahmida Aktar and Mst Tahmina Akter wrote the article, "Bangladesh-India Economic Relations: A Study on Cross-Border Trade. " In it they examine the bilateral economic relationship between Bangladesh and India, focusing on the contemporary cross-border trade dynamics across Bangladesh-India border. This study was conducted by using both primary and secondary data, the case study method was adopted and in-depth interviews and FGD were used for data collection. The findings indicate that the cross-border trade flow between Bangladesh and India is hindered by the improper functioning of formal trading due to several factors e.g., tariff and non-tariff barriers, informal trade, weak border governance, weak infrastructure, unnecessary legal restrictions, and local power dynamics.

Finally, Mohammed Moniruzzan Khan, Md Tauhiduzzaman, Md Abdul Malek and Nurunnahar Mazumder explore the Challenges of the Coastal Communities towards Coping Strategies and Adaptation of safe Drinking Water. Coastal areas of Bangladesh are affected by salinity and agricultural land. This study titled "Challenges of the Coastal Communities towards Coping Strategies and Adaptation Options to the Scarcity of Safe Drinking water" mainly explores the limited availability of safe drinking water in the south-western coastal region of Bangladesh. The findings indicate that the people of the community collect safe drinking water from a long distance; even preserve rain water using dram, jar and tank as coping strategies. In order to adapt to the situation, respondents set up deep tube-well, provide pipeline services, filter services, and invest in rainwater harvesting whilst attempting to restrict salinity intrusion. It is critical to redesign a release model to achieve better outcomes and ensure the effectiveness of their attempts.

At the end, I must mention here that the contributors play a major role in the success of the publication and are appreciated for their interest

in publishing with us. I would like to express my gratitude to all who assist in the operations of the Journal.

**Editor-in-Chief**

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