

MEDIA RELEASE

Progress achieved, but Disparities remain - reveals Survey

Dhaka, 05 July 2015: Despite remarkable progress being made in many areas of the wellbeing of women and children of Bangladesh, large disparities remain between households from different geographical regions; rural and urban areas; households with different wealth and education levels of mothers, reveals a Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS)-UNICEF survey released today.

The complete results of the 2012-13 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS), 'Progotir Pathey', was presented today at an event with Mr. AHM Mustafa Kamal, FCA, MP, Honourable Minister for Planning, as the chief guest; Mr. M.A. Mannan, MP, Honourable State Minister, Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Planning and Ms Kaniz Fatema ndc, Secretary, Statistics and Informatics Division (SID), as the special guest; Mr. Edouard Beigbeder, UNICEF Representative, as the guest of honour and Mr. Mohammad Abdul Wazed, Director General, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics who chaired the occasion.

"We are very pleased that the BBS through a longstanding partnership with UNICEF has successfully completed the MICS which is a nationally representative survey with information on the wellbeing of children at division and district levels. The results clearly show remarkable progress made in Bangladesh over the last few years in improving conditions for children, but it also highlights important disparities that need to be addressed", said Mr. Edouard Beigbeder, UNICEF Representative.

The present survey covered a total of 79 social indicators, of which 16 are Millennium Development Goal (MDG) indicators. Though the country as a whole made progress in child survival and education, timely initiation of breastfeeding, reduction of child and infant mortality, pre-school attendance rate and school retention rate remains a challenge.

For instance, while overall 42 per cent under-5 children were stunted in the country, more than half of the children from the poorest households (52.8 per cent) as compared to 27 per cent of children from the richest group, were stunted. Eastern districts show higher levels of stunting with Meherpur having the least and Netrokona with highest proportion of stunted children.

Similarly, while 43.5 per cent of births are attended by a skilled health personnel during delivery, mothers from the poorest household get the services in only 26.5 per cent cases as compared to 72.8 per cent of mothers from the richest households. Though deliveries attended by skilled health personnel is in general more prevalent in western parts of the country as compared to the eastern part, Feni and Bandarban districts, both from Chittagong division show respectively the highest and lowest proportions of deliveries attended by skilled personnel.

Prevalence of child marriage continues to be high with about 52.3 per cent of women of age 20-24 getting married before the age of 18 years, and 18.1 per cent getting married before 15 years. For women of age 20-49 years, every three out of five women are married before age 18 (62.8 per cent) while almost one in four are married before age 15.

Seventy-seven per cent of the population of country use improved sanitation facilities and only about four per cent practice open defecation. There are, however; significant differences in the use of improved sanitation facilities between the richest (95.9 per cent) and the poorest households (45.6 per cent). Among the districts Madaripur in Dhaka and Bandarban in Chittagong divisions are the best and the worst districts in this regard.

The survey was conducted in all 64 districts in Bangladesh by the BBS with technical assistance from UNICEF, from December 2012 to April 2013 engaging a total of 224 field survey personnel who collected data from 51,895 households.

While extending thanks to UNICEF Bangladesh for its support on MICS and other activities, Mr. Mohammad Abdul Wazed, Director General of BBS congratulated the survey team and all who contributed to the successful completion of the survey.

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About UNICEF: UNICEF promotes the rights and wellbeing of every child, in everything we do. Together with our partners, we work in 190 countries and territories to translate that commitment into practical action, focusing special effort on reaching the most vulnerable and excluded children, to the benefit of all children, everywhere. For more information about UNICEF and its work visit: www.unicef.org.bd

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