**Is Bangladesh Truly a Developing Country?**

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**Title:** Is Bangladesh Truly a Developing Country?

**Abstract:** This research paper analyzes whether Bangladesh truly qualifies as a developing country, despite being categorized as a least developed country (LDC) by the UN for a long time. The paper examines various factors such as GDP, standard of living, achievement of sustainable development goals, gender disparity, and healthcare system. Although Bangladesh has shown impressive economic growth in recent years, the paper argues that the growth has been disproportionate, with a significant proportion of the population living under the poverty line. Additionally, gender disparities persist, and the healthcare system is not strong enough. Therefore, the paper concludes that Bangladesh is not yet eligible to graduate from LDC status and become a developing country.

**Introduction**

The development of every country is classified into different categories by the UN based on its GDP, standard of living, achievement of sustainable development goals (SDG), etc. Least developed countries (LDC) are underdeveloped countries categorized by the UN that have structural challenges to long-term development. These countries usually have low economic and social growth which can not assure their emergence. On the other hand, developing countries are the ones seeking to be more advanced with a high growth rate yet are less advanced than developed countries. Bangladesh has been one of the least developed countries (LDC) in the world for a long period of time. Recently, the UN decided to promote Bangladesh as a developing country which will take effect in 2026 (*Least Developed Country Category: Bangladesh Profile*, 2021). Bangladesh has earned decent ratings in several development indexes for which it is being considered to be graduated out of the LDC list. Bangladesh has shown very rapid economic growth in the last few years which is one of the main reasons for its graduation. However, the economic situation here is very different from what seems from the outside as most of the people live under the poverty line. Again, Bangladesh holds decent enough records in the Human Development Index for which it’s being considered to be a developing country. However, due to the country's uneven growth in its population, the real scenario is different from the reports. Additionally, there are many sustainable development goals that Bangladesh is yet to improve on. Moreover, there exists gender disparity, as well as the safety of the citizens, is compromised. On top of that, Bangladesh doesn’t have a strong healthcare system for it to be a developing country. **Although Bangladesh as a whole is making progress, it is not eligible to be graduated out of LDC by the UN at this time because of the disproportionate nature of the economic growth, gender disparity, the depravity of health security, and lack of social safety in its population.**

**Disproportionate Nature of Economic Growth**

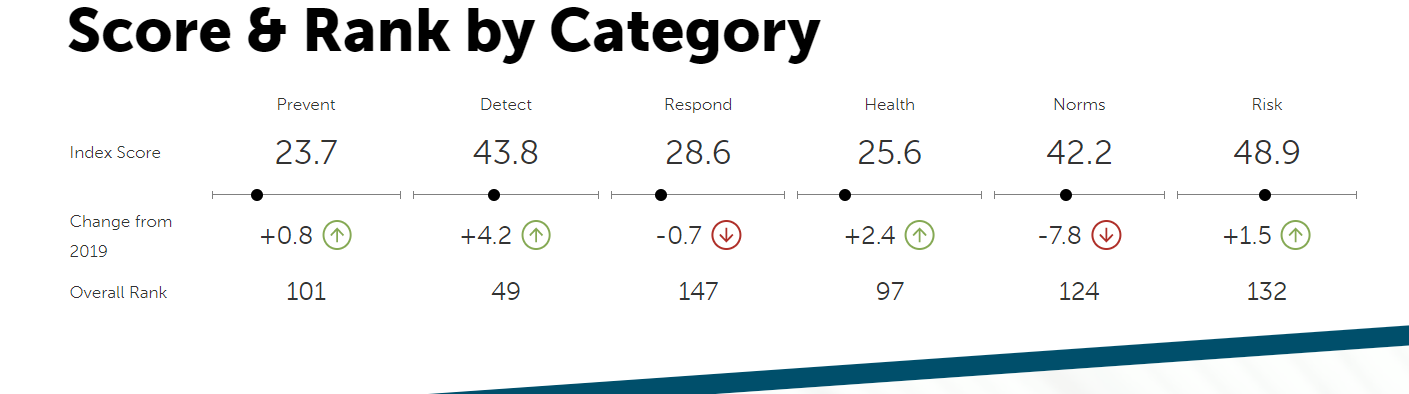
Bangladesh hasa disproportionate nature of growth in its population for which it is not making enough progress towards improving the lives of its residents as a developing country should do. Although Bangladesh has a decent per capita income in the reports, the real scenario of the incomes of its population is quite different from what the actual report shows. According to the World Bank’s [GDP per capita (current US$) - Bangladesh](https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD) report (2020), Bangladesh has a per capita income of $5310, which is adequate for a developing country given that other developing countries have incomes around the same range. However, the per capita income is measured by dividing the whole gross domestic product (GDP) of a country by its population. Now, Bangladesh has industrialized its economy through the RMG sector, which employs inexpensive labor and generates a large amount of money from exports, which is added to the country's GDP. Bangladesh gained $40.53 billion in export revenue in the financial year 2018–2019, with the RMG sector accounting for 84.21 percent of the total (Hasan et al., 2021). Despite the GDP increasing, the citizens of the country don’t earn as shown in the per capita income report as the industry owners and upper-class population are the ones earning the profit. Again, a huge percentage of the population of the country is living in poverty for which they will be facing the price hike and other consequences of a developing country. According to the Poverty and Equity Brief of the World Bank (2020), the upper and extreme poverty rates of Bangladesh are 24.3% and 12.9% percent consecutively which is a massive amount of the population who will have to face many crises if Bangladesh is graduated from LDC. Again, many other LDC countries have similar or even better rates of poverty than Bangladesh which is another reason for it to stay on the LDC list. Of the least developed countries, Myanmar has a poverty rate of 24.80% which is almost similar to Bangladesh and Bhutan has a rate of 8.20% in this sector which is way less than Bangladesh yet it is on the LDC list (*Poverty Rate by Country 2022*, 2022). Moreover, there is a poor getting poorer and rich getting richer scenario in Bangladesh so the growth has not been equitable but disproportionate. According to the 2021 NHD report, The richest 5% of Bangladesh's population owned nearly 30% of the country's wealth, while the poorest 5% received less than 0.3 percent (Hossain, 2022). Thus, Bangladesh still has a long way to go in terms of establishing itself as a developing country due to its unbalanced growth in the economy.

**Gender Disparity**

In comparison to other developing countries, Bangladesh still has a lot of gender disparities to overcome, which is one of the main reasons why it has yet to truly achieve its status as a developing country. Surprisingly Bangladesh received a very high ranking in the latest global gender gap index compared to other LDC and developing countries. According to the Global Gender Gap report 2021 (2021), Bangladesh has ranked 65th in the Global Gender Gap Index in 2021 whereas developing countries like Albania have ranked 35th. Accordingly, Bangladesh appears to deserve to be on the list of developing countries based on this ranking, since many other developing countries are falling behind in the index such as Thailand and China at 79th and 107th consecutively. However, there are some areas of improvement that are underscored by the World Economic Forum (WEF) report for which Bangladesh achieved such a high ranking. Consequently, there remain the real reasons behind this success to be objectively examined because there's still a lot of work to be done in the area of gender equality in this country. To illustrate, Bangladesh's status as a country with a female prime minister for decades contributed to its ranking of 7th in the political empowerment subindex of the WEF report. However, Bangladesh is one of the least developed countries when it comes to ensuring equal economic opportunities for women. It has ranked 147th out of the 156 countries in the Economic Participation and Opportunity sub-index. Again, in the Educational Attainment and Health and Survival sub-index, it has ranked 121st and 134th consecutively (*Global Gender Gap Report 2021*, 2021). Hence, It is clearly visible that only because of the political ranking Bangladesh has achieved an overall decent ranking in the gender gap index. In fact, women in Bangladesh are also deprived of the opportunities that they deserve in their job sectors by men while other developing countries have more women empowerment in their economic sectors. Thailand is at the 22nd position in the sub-index of Economic Participation and Opportunity (*Global Gender Gap Report 2021*, 2021). In fact, women in Bangladesh are almost never seen in positions of authority because of the glass ceiling that exists in tons of organizations. According to Khaled (2021), only Pakistan and Afghanistan among the south Asian countries have a lower proportion of women in leadership roles in the workforce than Bangladesh. Bangladesh has still a lot to develop in terms of its gender disparity starting from ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women in the workforce to developing a nation with as many educated women as men. Thus, due to all the gender disparity that exists in Bangladesh, it should not be regarded as a developing country; rather, necessary steps should be taken to empower women in order for the country to truly progress.

**The Depravity of Health Security**

Bangladesh is going to be classified as a developing country by the United Nations within the next few years, but it still has a long way to go in terms of people's health and social security. Bangladesh, when compared to other developing countries, lags far behind in terms of health security, and must make significant progress to close the gap. China, India, and Indonesia are among the developing countries (Silver et al., 2021) that have ranked 52, 66, and 45 consecutively in the Global Health Security Index in 2021 whereas Bangladesh has the rank of 95th country out of the 195 which is much lower in the ranking for a developing country (*Global Health Security Index*, 2021).

(*2021 GHS Index Country Profile for Bangladesh*, 2021)

It is essential for a country's healthcare system to retain control over detecting and preventing the spread of bacterial infections among its citizens. However, Bangladesh remains behind in terms of avoiding bacterial diseases and detecting their progression overtime for which it has a low score in this field. Bangladesh has ranked 143rd out of the 195 countries in the Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) indicator of the prevent category. Again, Bangladesh does not have a well-developed transportation system or well-constructed roads, which raises the risk for patients. Bangladesh ranks 151st in terms of infrastructure adequacy, indicating that it is falling behind in meeting community transportation demands (*2021 GHS Index Country Profile for Bangladesh*, 2021). Despite the fact that the country did reasonably well in some categories, it performed poorly in many others. According to Ali (2021), In various sub-pillars, such as biosecurity, biosafety, linking public health and security authorities, and infection control methods, Bangladesh received a zero score out of 100. A country should not deserve to be graduated out of LDC with a zero score in many of its indicators in the health security system. Moreover, Bangladesh's healthcare system is still underperforming far behind that of other developing countries, and it has to be improved significantly. Thus, strengthening Bangladesh's health security is important if it is to be added to the list of developing countries.

**The Depravity of Social Safety**

Bangladesh cannot provide the same level of social protection for its large population as other developing countries, which is one of the reasons why it is still classified as a least developed country (LDC). To begin with, Bangladesh has a very high crime rate for which the social safety of its citizens is compromised. According to research (*Crime Rate by Country 2022*, 2020), Bangladesh is at the bottom of safe countries as it holds the ranking of 17th country in terms of crime rate whereas all other LDC countries except Afghanistan have much lower crime rates than Bangladesh. Again, Bangladesh is one of the most unsafe countries for women to live in. Bangladesh lacks so much in ensuring women's safety that half of the citizens of this country fear moving freely. Bangladesh has ranked 152nd out of 170 countries in the Women's Peace and Security index report. Again, the other LDC countries have more social safety for women than Bangladesh. Its ranking is only higher than Afghanistan among the other countries on the LDC list whereas Nepal being in the list of LDC has ranked 95th in the index (*Women Peace and Security Index 2021/2022*, 2021). Thus, Bangladesh’s status in social safety for its citizens is not good enough for graduating from LDC.

**Conclusion**

Bangladesh is one of the fastest expanding countries on the list of LDCs, although it still needs to progress in some key areas to qualify as a developing country. Additionally, only a small percentage of its population is advancing, leaving the rest of the massive population in darkness. As a result, If the country graduates from LDC, the general public will be faced with a significant transformation, which could lead to instability in the country. Furthermore, Bangladesh does not have a strong health security system as a developing country is expected to have nor can it provide proper safety for its citizens. Moreover, Another SDG objective that it has yet to achieve is gender equality. While rapid economic growth is one of the reasons for its graduation from the LDC category, it does not add much to the lives of its citizens due to unequal distribution and rich-centric development, which is why the living conditions of its citizens are not up to the standards that a developing country should have. Subsequently, It will not be possible to emerge up to the expectations of a developing country anytime soon for Bangladesh. Hence, Bangladesh is not qualified enough to be graduated out of LDC status by the UN at this moment due to the disproportionate nature of economic growth, inequality between men and women, health security depravity, and lack of social safety among its people. In conclusion, Bangladesh must ensure development in its underdeveloped sectors through better planning and implementation in order to graduate from the LDC status.

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