

# 2026

## Magazine

January, 2026  
Issue: 01

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## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT REVIEW



### COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS



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# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT REVIEW

January 2026 · Issue 01

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# Introduction

The **Holistic Sustainable Development Network (HSDN) International** is a non-profit organization that creates, coordinates, and disseminates research relating to sustainable development. Although we are based in Canada, we collaborate and work internationally, arrange conferences and seminars as well as publish research in our peer-reviewed journals. We aim to disseminate relevant research and work experiences to the public and increase stakeholder participation in the practices and processes that impact sustainable development.

HSDN International, initiated in 2014 by the Environmental Policy Institute Graduate Candidates at Memorial University of Newfoundland, was pioneered by Jannatul Islam with the name "Worldwide Holistic Sustainable Development Cooperation (WWHSDC)". Afterward, Jannatul Islam moved to Toronto and continued the initiative under its current name, incorporating it into Canada under the leadership of Dr. Nasima Akter. The HSDN is defined by the motto "Live simply, live lively". It is a growing organization of academics dedicated to increasing access to high-quality peer-reviewed literature on sustainable development. The HSDN is truly an international undertaking with executive members from Canada, Bangladesh, the United Kingdom, Nigeria, and Jamaica.

We create student clubs in potential locations to build the network and strengthen the sustainability movement. Currently, we have student clubs at the University of Toronto, Toronto Metropolitan University, and in Bangladesh.

HSDNI runs and mentors initiatives that include Toronto Bangla School, HSDNI Academy, Community Exchange Network, The Trajectory of Sustainable Development (ISSN), PROYASHEE Foundation, Community Sustainability Global, and regular outreach activities year-round.

HSDNI has been organizing sustainability collaborative conferences periodically on current burning issues affecting community sustainability in different locations. In the continuation of this conference, the Student Club of HSDN International formed at Toronto Metropolitan University is hosting the HSDNI's 8th Sustainability Collaborative Conference-2024 for Future Sustainable Societies.

The theme of the year: Inclusion and Diversity for Sustainable Society

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## VISION

Advocacy for attaining sustainable development goals through **collaborative movement**

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## MISSION

Promote socio-cultural, economic and environmental well-being for all from grassroots to global level

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## VALUES

Complementary regard for human and environmental subjects

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## OBJECTIVE

- **Generate Ideas** through local experiences and spread it globally
- **Identify and engage to the projects** related to the organization's goals
- **Accumulate efforts** to mentor or make projects successful within jurisdictions
- **Support** for class neutral development of policies
- **Communicating activities** of the organization and giving feedback to stakeholders
- **Expanding network** and cooperation worldwide to secure greater success in sustainable development



**We invite you to join us as a participant, a teacher, a student, and a voice in this movement toward holistic sustainable development.**

**ARE YOU UP TO THE  
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INTERNATIONAL

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# EDITORIAL



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# IDEAS THAT SHAPE A SUSTAINABLE TOMORROW

**DR. SHAFIUN NAHIN SHIMUL**

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Welcome to the inaugural issue of our magazine—a platform born from a simple but powerful belief: the ideas of young people can change the world.

Across the globe, sustainability has moved from being a distant aspiration to an urgent necessity. Climate change, resource depletion, inequality, and fragile ecosystems are no longer abstract concepts discussed only in academic journals or international summits. They are realities shaping everyday life, especially for today's youth, who will live longest with the consequences of today's decisions.

This magazine is created with young thinkers, innovators, and changemakers at its heart. Our objective is clear: to publish well-thought-out, evidence-informed, and creative write-ups on sustainability issues, pieces that may not yet be full-fledged academic research, but that offer original insights, practical solutions, and bold ideas. We believe that great ideas often emerge before formal research catches up. This platform exists to nurture those ideas, give them visibility, and connect them with a wider audience.

For young people, particularly in developed countries, where access to technology, data, and global networks is expanding rapidly, this magazine offers a unique opportunity. It is a space to showcase talent, to test ideas in the public domain, and to engage with sustainability not just as a moral responsibility, but as an intellectual and creative challenge.

Sustainability is not a single discipline; rather, it is a conversation across economics, environment, health, urban design, technology, culture, and social justice. Likewise, this magazine is not confined to one format or voice. Essays, reflective pieces, policy ideas, case narratives, data-informed arguments, and creative interpretations all have a place here.

Most importantly, it recognizes that young people are not just future leaders but they are current problem-solvers, already shaping sustainable practices in classrooms, communities, startups, and movements around the world.

As you turn these pages, we invite you not only to read, but to think critically, question boldly, and imagine differently. Sustainability demands more than awareness. It demands ideas, courage, and collaboration.

This first issue marks the beginning of that journey. We look forward to the voices, visions, and solutions you will bring.

The future is being written—let it be sustainable.

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# SUB-EDITORIAL/ FEATURE ARTICLES



# MARGINALIZATION IN EDUCATIONAL

JANNATUL ISLAM, MAEP, PH.D. CANDIDATE,  
TORONTO METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY



Marginalization is a broad and abstract term. Merriam-Webster (2014) defined marginalization as the process of putting or keeping someone in a powerless or unimportant position within a society or group. The term marginalization can refer to exclusion or the lack of full inclusion, as people are excluded from one of society's major integrating activities, which can be defined as marginal (Jenson, 2000) or in. Social exclusion refers to the act of excluding or isolating individuals from the mainstream of politics, society, and the economy (Hailu, 2012).

It is challenging to consistently define and examine marginalization, given its ongoing evolution in a rapidly changing environment. Evidence shows that in evolving situations, social exclusion, deprivation, oppression, and isolation exist in culture, lifestyles, race, age, sex, and intersectionality, etc., which is not even studied vigorously. For example, cultural safety works with not-for-marginalized people (Freire, 2000) in a complex environment of social, political, and historical contexts, where practitioners require critical self-reflection (Ward et al., 2016). However, in a power-dominated society, defined as the domination of the means of constraint, inequality, and the exercise of power over others (Foucault, 1982), society is shaped, and identities are directly affected by factors such as inequality, racism, sexism, and geographical context. Power also affects cultural landscapes in significant ways, dictating what to see and what not to. The inequality in power relations naturally creates two parties: the oppressor and the oppressed or marginalized. The assignment will attempt to analyze systemic marginalization and oppression in educational institutions, both methodologically and in administration.

Marginalization and oppression in the education system are a crucial issue, as the outcome is very drastic, since the prime service users of the education system, referred to as students, are builders of the future society. In the OECD report, Schleicher (2014) claimed that disparities in attainment and opportunity between children in many countries across the world put them at risk of marginalization, while schools can inadvertently act as agents of marginalization. Razer et al. (2013) featured that in an exclusive school environment, both teachers and pupils become marginalized, feeding off each other in negative ways, adopting a 'helplessness frame', which refers to feelings of worthlessness, guilt, and helplessness, or a 'false-identity' in which they cling to the goals, standards, methods, and rules. On the other hand, Freire (2000) explained that 'Pedagogy' refers to the teaching method currently practiced, which is problematic and creates two parties: teachers as oppressors and students as the oppressed. In the future, students become oppressors, even without knowing, because of their background experiences and perceptions. However, neither the oppressor nor the oppressed intentionally wants this situation; instead, the environment has been created by conquest, manipulation, divide and rule and cultural invasion by oppressors (Boston, 1955), which is against humanity, while power and domination are the key players instead of humanism, though humanity only differentiates us from animals. Freire (2000) blamed the prejudiced educational system, where educators teach from the perspective they were taught, and students learn and memorize it without questioning.

According to Freire (2000), dehumanization marks not only those whose humanity has been stolen, but also those who have stolen it, as they are distorted from becoming more fully human.



## MARGINALIZATION IN EDUCATIONAL (CONT...)

The prejudiced educational system created two parties. At the same time, educators are oppressors who dominate students' minds and students who are oppressed and fear change or thinking differently (Freire, 2000). Following the process, the oppressed became oppressors without knowing, as they built up a stereotype. To change the environment, the educator must shift their role from oppressor by abandoning the banking model of teaching.

Instead, the educational environment will consider students' minds and their real lives, allowing them to question and learn in their own way without fear or prejudice, so they do not have to be oppressed in how they build themselves. Dialogue could be the way to mitigate differences by creating an environment of humility, faith, and love. At the same time, everyone feels empowered, equitable, and human, not just a materialistic number of values in a power- and domination-based society. Otherwise, the oppressed will continue to be disheartened, fearful, and beaten (Debray, R., 1967).

However, improving the situation is critical for social cohesion and equity. Otherwise, the oppressed will continue to be disheartened, fearful, and beaten (Debray, 1967), and the denial of the human rights of the oppressed people can only cause risk and an unsafe environment for the oppressors (Clare, 2003). Besides, the oppressed people become oppressors in a particular situation, thinking it is a standard practice in an unequal society. Freire (2000) claimed that the oppressed can change the world view and create humanity in a social perspective rather than a materialistic one through dialectical action among parties, grounded in unity, compassion, organization, and cultural synthesis. In strengthening the claim, Martinez's (2018) statement can further contribute to the idea that the indicated power relationship and social order are not natural or divine, but rather a historic construction by the people and therefore changeable, and we need to identify the way of exercising in a specific society for social change. Baines (2017) introduced Anti-Oppressive Practices (AOP) in social work as an integrated model drawing on concepts from social justice-oriented approaches, including feminist, Marxist, postmodernist, Indigenous, anti-colonial, and anti-racist. The AOP can only grow from embracing humility in all diverse and adverse situations, both in the short run and the long run. The AOP is a widely studied model today for minimizing discrimination, improving social services, and empowering service users. Further, Baskin (2016) claimed that "Indigenous Worldviews" way of social work looks for the root problem rather than the current situation, which will open more options, creativity, and a fresh outlook for the service provider to treat a particular individual in a particular situation, and also to help the social worker themselves in a way of incorporating anti-oppressive practices.

Finally, the oppressed can change the world view and create humanity in a social perspective rather than a materialistic one through dialectical actions among parties, grounded in unity, compassion, organization, and cultural synthesis.

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# CLIMATE CHANGE AND AIR QUALITY IN MAJOR INDIAN CITIES: IMPLICATIONS FOR SDGS

**DR. KAREN LOBO**

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Climate change and air quality are among the most serious environmental issues globally. In India, air quality is worsening, especially in major cities like Mumbai, Delhi, and Kolkata. These urban areas are tackled with severe air pollution due to rapid urban growth, industrialization, and emissions from vehicles, which are causing significant health problems for their residents. This write up examines the current air quality in these cities, the factors contributing to the problem, and how these challenges relate to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In India the air pollutants are either emitted by natural sources such as long-range transport of desert dust originating from Africa, middle east and Thar regions, mostly during summer. Or they can be of anthropogenic origin, such as extensive crop-residue burning, fossil fuel combustion, burning of waste and construction activities. 95% of the air pollution in India is due to vehicular emissions and has been identified as the prevalent source of high NO<sub>2</sub> concentrations followed by industries and fuel burning. (Kaur et al,2021). Mumbai, India's financial hub where people from all over India come to fulfil their dreams, faces severe air pollution from multiple sources.

According to The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), open burning and landfill fires of municipal solid waste is the primary contributors, followed by vehicle emissions and construction activities. The city's air quality index (AQI) frequently surpasses safe levels which can be harmful for its residents. Coastal humidity combined with pollution results in a dense smog, reducing visibility and worsening air quality, especially during winter. A pulmonologist consultant at Hinduja Hospital Mumbai said, "During winter, the drop in night temperatures creates a blanket of cold air that traps pollutants like particulate matter and carbon monoxide in the lower atmosphere. This results in smog, which worsens conditions for those with asthma, bronchitis, and other respiratory disorders." The pollution heightens health issues, such as emphysema, chronic bronchitis, respiratory infections and eye irritation.

I am originally from Mumbai and my family still reside there. Whenever my parents go outside, they experience difficulty breathing and irritation in their eyes. Currently the best way to alleviate these symptoms is to stay indoors.

Delhi is infamous for its acute air pollution, particularly during the winter season when stubble burning in nearby states worsens the situation. The city's Air Quality Index (AQI) often reaches hazardous levels, causing respiratory issues and other health problems for its residents. Emissions from vehicles, industrial activities, and construction dust all contribute to Delhi's poor air quality, making it one of the world's most polluted cities.

In Kolkata, motor vehicles account for 51.4% of air pollution, while industries contribute 24.5%, and dust particles make up 21.1% (West Bengal Pollution Control Board). The city's dense population, improper and insufficient waste management practices further worsen the air quality issues, making it difficult to effectively tackle pollution.

# Climate Change and Air Quality in Major Indian Cities: Implications for SDGs (Cont...)

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## Relation to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The worsening air quality in these cities has significant consequences for several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being, SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities, and SDG 13: Climate Action (Hussain et al, 2023).

**SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being** – Air pollution is a major risk factor for non-communicable diseases such as respiratory diseases, cardiovascular issues, and premature deaths, and addressing it is essential for achieving SDG 3, which aims to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for people of all ages.

**SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities** – Sustainable cities and communities require clean air and a healthy environment. Enhancing air quality in urban areas is crucial for achieving SDG 11, which aims to make cities inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable. Initiatives such as promoting public transportation, creating green spaces, and implementing sustainable urban planning can help reduce air pollution and improve the quality of life for urban residents.

**SDG 13: Climate Action** – Climate action is necessary to mitigate the impacts of climate change on air quality. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions and adopting sustainable practices can help achieve SDG 13, which calls for urgent action to combat climate change and its effects. Measures such as transitioning to renewable energy sources, improving energy efficiency, and embracing sustainable agricultural practices can contribute to better air quality and climate resilience.

Tackling climate change and enhancing air quality in major Indian cities is crucial for meeting the Sustainable Development Goals. It's essential that governments, industries, and communities collaborate to create and enforce policies and practices that foster clean air and a healthy environment. By striving towards these goals, India can secure a sustainable and prosperous future for its people. The synergy of air quality management with climate action and sustainable development strategies is vital for constructing resilient and healthy communities in urban areas across India.

# CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACT ON FISHERIES AND LIVELIHOODS IN BANGLADESH: A CRISIS AT THE INTERSECTION OF HUMAN ACTIVITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION

PRAVEEN SINGH

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Bangladesh, situated at the frontline of climate change, faces an increasingly urgent crisis in its coastal and fishing communities. These communities, particularly those in southeastern Bangladesh, are suffering from both human-driven factors and environmental degradation, which are threatening their livelihoods, food security, and cultural heritage. From the declining hilsa fishery to the devastation caused by massive energy projects, the intertwined impacts of climate change and anthropogenic activities are pushing the most vulnerable further into precarious conditions.



## The Struggles of Fishers and Farmers in Matarbari

In the coastal region of Chattogram, local farmers and fishers are at the mercy of both natural and industrial forces. The construction of large-scale Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) terminals and coal power plants is displacing traditional livelihoods, leaving thousands without a means to feed their families. Hamid Hossain, a fish farmer from Matarbari, poignantly highlights the helplessness of his community, saying, "If need be, we'll give our lives, but we won't compromise," in the face of losing their homesteads and livelihoods to energy infrastructure projects.

The construction of these power plants is compounding the already severe effects of climate change, including rising sea levels, more intense cyclones, and frequent flooding. These shifts in climate are making it increasingly difficult for coastal communities to continue their traditional practices. More than 70,000 farmers in Cox's Bazar, responsible for 95 percent of Bangladesh's salt production, are struggling as the salt farms are submerged or washed away by rising tides and stronger storms. For fishers, the situation is just as dire as the escalating climate crises lead to a reduced catch due to higher salinity and more extreme weather events.

## Declining Hilsa Fishery: A National Crisis

Hilsa fish, Bangladesh's national treasure, represents a critical source of both nutrition and livelihood. The fishery supports millions of people across the country, providing essential protein for the population. However, the fishery is under siege. The combined pressures of climate change, including increased salinity, disruption of water flow from upstream damming, and pollution from agricultural runoff, are threatening the delicate spawning grounds of hilsa fish in major rivers.

Abdul Gaffar Majhi, a fisherman from Patuakhali, recalls the days when hilsa were abundant, but now he reports seeing fewer and fewer of these iconic fish in his fishing channels. Research corroborates his concerns, highlighting the impacts of climate change, such as rising salinity levels and warmer waters, which are disrupting hilsa migration patterns. Although the government has implemented several conservation initiatives, including fishing bans during breeding seasons and the establishment of sanctuaries, these efforts are being overwhelmed by the ongoing environmental degradation.

The government's conservation efforts, including compensation for fishermen during off-seasons, have not been enough to prevent the collapse of this crucial industry. The fishery's decline is not just an environmental issue—it is an economic and food security issue for millions of people who depend on it for their survival. With the hilsa fishery contributing around 12 percent of Bangladesh's total fish production and accounting for a significant portion of the country's GDP, the situation is dire for both the economy and the affected families.

### **Adaptation and Survival: Resilience against crisis**

Despite the immense challenges, fisher communities in southeastern Bangladesh are finding ways to adapt to the changing environment. A study focusing on fisher perceptions of climate change found that fishers are aware of rising temperatures, more intense cyclones, and the increasing salinity of rivers, which have all contributed to the diminishing fish stocks. However, while they are experiencing the direct impacts of climate change, they are also struggling with non-climatic factors, such as government policies, bank erosion, and the dominance of commercial fishers.

Interestingly, while climate change presents an existential threat to their livelihood, most fishers express a strong desire to continue their profession, despite the growing challenges. This resilience underscores the importance of community-driven adaptation strategies, which could include improved social safety nets, alternative livelihood programs during off-seasons, and better policies that balance conservation efforts with the needs of the fishing community.

### **The Need for comprehensive climate action**

The combined effects of climate change and human activities, such as industrial pollution and infrastructure development, are exacerbating the vulnerability of Bangladesh's coastal and fishing communities. The government and international organizations must take a holistic approach that addresses both the immediate needs of these communities and the long-term challenges posed by climate change. This means investing in sustainable energy alternatives, protecting vital ecosystems, and ensuring that the voices of local communities are heard in decision-making processes.

As the situation in Bangladesh continues to worsen, the international community must recognize the importance of supporting adaptation strategies for climate-vulnerable populations, especially those dependent on fisheries and agriculture. While Bangladesh has made strides in conserving its hilsa fishery, the overwhelming pressure from climate change, pollution, and unsustainable development practices threatens to undo these efforts unless comprehensive, multi-pronged solutions are implemented.

### **Conclusion**

Bangladesh's coastal and fishing communities are bearing the brunt of climate change and human-driven environmental degradation. From the destruction of traditional livelihoods due to energy infrastructure projects to the gradual collapse of the hilsa fishery, the impacts of climate change are felt in every aspect of life. However, through resilience and adaptation, these communities continue to struggle for survival. The need for immediate and sustained action to address both climatic and non-climatic challenges has never been more urgent. By supporting local adaptation strategies, enforcing stricter environmental protections, and promoting sustainable development practices, there is hope that Bangladesh's fishing and farming communities can not only survive but thrive in the face of these overwhelming challenges.

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# CULTURAL INFLUENCES ON NUTRITIONAL KNOWLEDGE AND BALANCED DIET AWARENESS IN SOUTH ASIA: CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

**Farjana Akter**

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## **Background**

Nutrition plays a crucial role in maintaining health, yet many South Asians, including those with higher education, lack adequate knowledge about balanced diets (Ahmad et al., 2020). Countries like Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan have deeply rooted cultural food practices that influence eating habits (Bhattacharya & Bose, 2021). Traditional diets are often rich in carbohydrates, unhealthy fats, and sugars while lacking essential nutrients (Ali et al., 2019). The preference for taste, social norms, and a lack of formal nutrition education contribute to poor dietary choices. This paper explores the challenges faced in improving nutritional literacy and proposes strategies to enhance awareness in South Asian communities.

## **Challenges in Nutritional Awareness**

### **Cultural Influence on Eating Habits**

Traditional South Asian cuisine prioritizes taste and satiety over nutritional content (Bhattacharya & Bose, 2021). High consumption of rice, fried foods, and sugary desserts is common (Ali et al., 2019). Spices and heavy cooking methods may reduce the nutritional value of food (Ahmad et al., 2020).

### **Family and Social Norms**

Food is a central part of social gatherings, festivals, and religious ceremonies (Rahman et al., 2022). Hospitality is expressed through rich, calorie-dense meals, making portion control difficult (Ali et al., 2019). Women, especially, may lack autonomy over dietary choices due to traditional roles (Saha et al., 2015).

### **Lack of formal nutrition Education**

School curriculums often neglect comprehensive nutrition education (Zannath, 2004). Even educated individuals, including healthcare professionals, may not have formal training in balanced diets (Ahmad et al., 2020). Misinformation from family traditions often replaces scientific knowledge (Bhattacharya & Bose, 2021).

### **Influence of Processed Foods and Marketing**

Urbanization has led to increased consumption of processed foods (Popkin et al., 2012). Aggressive marketing promotes fast food as modern and convenient (Rahman et al., 2022). Traditional diets are often modified with unhealthy additives for commercial appeal (Ali et al., 2019).

### **Resistance to Change or Challenges in Embracing Change**

Many individuals believe that traditional diets are inherently healthy (Bhattacharya & Bose, 2021). There is skepticism towards Western dietary recommendations (Ahmad et al., 2020). Fear of losing cultural identity discourages adaptation to healthier eating habits (Zannath, 2004).

## Cultural Influences on Nutritional Knowledge (Cont...)

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### How to Minimize the Challenges and Increase Nutritional Literacy

#### Educational Campaigns

Governments and NGOs should conduct workshops and seminars on balanced diets (Rahman et al., 2022). Public health campaigns can target schools, workplaces, and community centers (Saha et al., 2015).

#### Incorporating Nutrition Education in Schools and Colleges

Nutrition should be a core subject in primary and secondary education (Zannath, 2004). Universities should introduce dietetics and nutrition courses for all disciplines (Ahmad et al., 2020).

#### Community Engagement Programs

Collaboration with religious and cultural leaders can help spread awareness (Bhattacharya & Bose, 2021). Culturally sensitive nutritional guidance should be developed (Rahman et al., 2022).

#### Leveraging Social Media and Technology

Nutritionists and dietitians can create awareness through social media platforms (Popkin et al., 2012). Mobile applications can provide meal planning and dietary recommendations (Ali et al., 2019).

#### Modifying Traditional Foods for Better Nutrition

Encouraging minor modifications like using less oil and adding fiber-rich foods (Ahmad et al., 2020). Promotion of local superfoods that are both nutritious and culturally acceptable (Bhattacharya & Bose, 2021).

#### Method

With previous experience working with different non-profit organizations in Bangladesh, I have gained valuable insights into community-based nutrition education. I previously worked in the Nutrition Project at Grassroots Health and Rural Organization for Nutrition Initiative, where I engaged in public awareness campaigns and community outreach. Currently, as a part-time trainer at Green Fund Initiative for the Bangladeshi community, I actively conduct training sessions to enhance nutrition literacy. This article is based on a mixed-method approach, incorporating qualitative interviews with community members and professionals. It also includes a literature review of existing studies on nutrition education in South Asian communities. Data was collected through field observations, interviews, and surveys to assess the gaps in knowledge and the impact of cultural eating habits (Saha et al., 2015). By combining academic research with firsthand experience, this study aims to propose practical solutions to improve balanced diet awareness in South Asian communities.

# Cultural Influences on Nutritional Knowledge (Cont...))

## Recommendations

### Integrating Nutritional Education into Schools and Universities

Ensure students receive hands-on training in healthy eating habits (Zannath, 2004).

### Government Policy Changes

Regulating food marketing to promote healthier alternatives (Rahman et al., 2022). Implementing food labeling policies to increase consumer awareness (Popkin et al., 2012).

### Engaging Healthcare Professionals

Doctors and community health workers should be trained in nutrition counseling (Ahmad et al., 2020).

### Developing Culturally Sensitive Nutrition Programs

Health campaigns should respect cultural values while promoting healthier eating habits (Bhattacharya & Bose, 2021).

## Conclusion

Despite educational advancements, many South Asians lack awareness of balanced diets due to cultural food habits (Ali et al., 2019). Addressing this issue requires a multi-faceted approach, including education, policy changes, and community involvement (Ahmad et al., 2020). By incorporating nutritional literacy into mainstream education and social initiatives, South Asian communities can make informed dietary choices, leading to better health outcomes (Rahman et al., 2022).

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# STATE DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS AND MARGINALIZATION OF THE ADIVASIS OF THE CHITTAGONG HILL TRACTS

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After the creation of Pakistan, the newborn state took vigorous projects to industrialize both parts of the country. Pakistan needed a lot of energy for its industrialization and frantic development projects. Various government records show how acute the energy demand was to run the new mills and factories. The factories in the late 1940s and the 50s often had to go for forced shutdowns due to the lack of power. The CHT was one of the good choices for the state of Pakistan when constructing power plants. This essay examines two such giant development projects in the postcolonial Pakistan states and their consequences for the Adivasis in the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

The state already knew that the British government had planned a hydroelectric project on the Karnaphuli River in the CHT. In 1906-07, the British colonial government first inspected the Karnaphuli River in the CHT region to check the possibility of constructing a dam to produce hydroelectric power. However, we do not know much about that investigation. In November 1922, a temporary engineer, Mr. Grieve, was appointed for further examination and to find a suitable site for the hydroelectric dam. Mr. Grieve, the temporary engineer for the proposed project, conducted a thorough investigation and submitted a detailed report to the concerned department. Mr. Grieve's investigation suggests that approximately between 28,000 KW and 40,000 KW of electricity can be produced after the completion of the hydroelectric project. There was a further investigation in 1945 and 1946 led by the superintendent engineer of East Bengal Circle E.A. Moore. The British colonial government was almost close to the implication of the project. They collected detailed meteorological and other important data relating to the construction of the dam. The Bengal government already proposed the use of electricity in different mills and factories in East Bengal. The government made the decision that which departments were going to carry out the construction of the dam. It also proposed an estimated cost of the project. However, because of the political turmoil in the 1940s, the British colonial government was finally not able to undertake the project. After the making of Pakistan, the state restarted the Karnaphuli hydroelectricity project in 1948. In 1948, besides the local engineers, the Pakistan government hired J.L. Savage, an American engineer, to accelerate the construction of the project. The Karnaphuli hydroelectric scheme was finally sanctioned in June 1951 and the government expected that by the end of 1960, the electricity would be available for sale. It calculated an average continuous power of 40,000 KW during monsoon and 20,000 KW at other times. The government finally started the construction of the Karnaphuli hydroelectric scheme in 1957. It took almost five years to finish the scheme.

Although the government and its associated departments investigated the meteorological, flood control, and financial aspects of the project, they did not find it necessary to consult the Adivasis or the ethnic minorities, the very people who live in this area. The concerned government departments knew that a large number of people would be affected by the construction of the Karnaphuli hydroelectric dam at Kaptai, Rangamati, a district of the CHT region. There was a discussion in the 1950s about the making of the headquarters of the CHT at Kaptai, Rangamati. But fearing the possible inundation of a large portion of land in that area and deterioration of the environment due to the construction of the dam, a good number of government officials were against the decision to establish the headquarters of the CHT at Kaptai. The government officials also apprehended a large-scale violent protest after the construction of the dam. The state knew that apart from the inundation and displacement of a large number of people, the livelihood of the affected people would be at stake. The state even knew that there might be an obvious scarcity of food. The government officials had weird, impractical and narrow plans for the rehabilitation of the affected people of that area.

## STATE DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS (CONT...)

As the then chairman of WAPDA suggested, "There is no need to settle the affected persons on flat land to enable them to undertake plough cultivation of paddy and other food crops. They should be settled on the steep slopes of hills where they can grow fruit trees and tea, and earn enough money to live. Food can be imported for them either from the rest of the province (or from abroad if necessary and they can live quite happily and comfortably."

In the government confidential report, the high officials noted that whatever might have happened, they could not change the plan. The confidential report goes on:

" The chief secretary feels that the rehabilitation plans and programme already settled and approved need not to undergo any material change or disruption, except that care should be taken to avoid constructing any valuable installations (V.I) such as tarred or concrete roads, model town, official headquarters or otherwise hospitals, schools or colleges, Rajbari of Chakma chief and so on below the level upto which water would rise in the event of high flood when the dam is ultimately raised another 13 ft..."

The construction of the Kaptai dam was a massive blow to the *Adivasis* of the CHT. The construction of the dam displaced more than 100,000 *Adivasis* of the CH, which was 25% of the region's population. The government rehabilitation sites further underwent water between 1965 and 1966. More than 40,000 *Adivasis* had to leave the country barefoot to take shelter in Tripura, Assam, and Arunachal Pradesh. It is not that the state did not know the possibility of further inundation even after the completion of the project. The state just remained silent. The government confidential report provides some reflections on this issue:

"The 10,000 acres of flat land reserved in Kassalang for rehabilitation shall also go under water, which means that rehabilitation work in this region must stop. There is no question of planning a model town there. It is scheduled to be taken up next year... There should be no rehabilitation below 133 R.L. The Major portion of the rehabilitation area so far explored and discovered by us and allotted is below 133 R.L... All these have been abandoned. The vast plain between Mahalchari and Panchari will go under water and has to be abandoned."

After the Partition, the Karnaphuli hydroelectric scheme was implemented within a very short time. The construction started in 1957 and was completed by 1962. A swath of arable land, arguably the most fertile land of the CHT, went under water. It is estimated that around 40 percent of the CHT's agrarian land was submerged due to the construction of the Kaptai dam. A government confidential report discusses how difficult it was to make the rehabilitation plan in a very short time:

"It is impossible to alter the rehabilitation plans so drastically on such short notice without taking the people into confidence, and the psychological effects of these changes are going to be colossal and catastrophic. The coffer dam has been closed, and next year water will rise up to 120 ft... People have therefore got to be evacuated somewhere. Even if they are settled on steep hill slopes and persuaded to grow fruit trees and tea, the scheme is not likely to take shape and be approved and commenced for another two years, and will beginto yield results only after 7 or 8 years. During this period, a population of nearly a lakh and a quarter of persons (300 sq. miles of a most densely populated area)"

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## STATE DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS (CONT...)

Apart from the Karnaphuli hydroelectric scheme, the fledgling postcolonial state took on various development projects. One such major project was the construction of Karnaphuli Paper Mills at Chandraghona of the CHT. The Adivasis of the CHT had to bear the double blow for the two giant development projects in the 1950s—Karnaphuli Hydroelectric Project Scheme and Karnaphuli Paper Mills. Both projects evicted a large number of Adivasis and exhausted their livelihood. Even the deputy commissioner of the CHT was not happy about the extensive land acquisition by the Development Department of the state. In his letter to the commissioner of the Chittagong division he writes:

“ The Development Department of the Government of Pakistan have [has] been negotiating with me for some time for land in Chandraghona for a Paper Mill. Their requirements were vastly more at the end than they were expected they were expected to be at the out-set. In fact, when the commissioner and I visited the area last year we thought they would need practically one-quarter of what they now demand. I offered then double of the original area; but they wanted the whole, which included the bazar, a supplies Godown, the Police Station, the Post Office, the C and W.D., an Inspection House and a number of private dwellings and fields. In fact, they demanded the whole of Chandraghona excluding the Baptist Mission Hospital.”

The large-scale land acquired by Karnaphuli Paper Mills was not compensated properly. The Karnaphuli Paper Mills evicted and dispossessed a large number of Jummas from their fertile jum land, leaving them in a vulnerable condition. These poor Adivasis were not rehabilitated properly. The Karnaphuli Paper Mills authority only allocated a nominal amount of money to the 'tribal' chief. However, the jum cultivators were not compensated. Moreover, the labor commissioner of East Pakistan instructed the Karnaphuli Paper Mills authority not to employ 'tribal' people from the CHT. Furthermore, the government proposed to transfer Chandraghona from the CHT region to the Chittagong district so that the state could more conveniently exploit the area.

In its proposal, government administrators also proposed to repeal the Chittagong Hill Tracts Regulation of 1900, which the British colonial government passed. By the Chittagong Hill Tracts Regulation of 1900, the British colonial rulers made the CHT an excluded area. The Regulation, indeed, restricted the flow of Bengali people into the CHT, and at the same time, it isolated the Adivasis of the CHT from other parts of Bengal. Willem van Schell observes, “Far from regional autonomy or a protection of 'tribal' rights (as some would have it) it marked the onset of a process of 'enclavement' in which the hill people were denied access to power and were subordinated and exploited directly by their British overlords.” Still, the Adivasis think that the CHT Regulation of 1900 protected them in many ways. The eviction of this Regulation invited a large flow of the Bengali population to the CHT. However, when the government policymakers brought the proposal, “Proposal for exclusion of C.H.Ts from the category of tribal area”, the state didn't even find it necessary to consult the local people. For the policymakers, the region was extremely poor and backward, and the Adivasis did not have a bit of political training. For them, the Adivasis also lacked political or administrative institutions. Before 1961, there was no district or local board union. They observe that the Adivasis still maintain 'tribal' habits and traditions. For them, before the construction of the Karnaphuli Hydroelectric Scheme, the Adivasis had practically no contact with the outside world. The government's top officials repeatedly stressed that almost all the people of the CHT had no political consciousness to perceive the impact of the change. The government officials were against any referendum because, for them, Chiefs and Headmen of the community would certainly control the wishes of the people.

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## STATE DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS (CONT...)

In their proposal to exclude the CHT from the category of Tribal area, the policy makers' understanding of the Adivasis clearly reflects the attitude of the West's perception of the East as 'Other', as Edward W. Said maintained in his widely popular book *Orientalism*. A confidential report on the "Proposal for exclusion of the CHT from the category of Tribal area" provides us a better perspective on the psyche of the state policymakers :

"Although considerable enlightenment is slowly creeping into tribal life, the bulk of the population continues passionately to adhere to old tribal laws, customs, and traditions, handed down from generation to generation, which even today largely regulate their pattern of living. An overwhelming majority still live in a world of their own and have little in common with the people inhabiting the rest of the country. They have compeers across the border with whom they have far greater ethnical affinity, and even though the lure from outside is greater, they have mostly stuck to their old homes because their old way of life has not been disturbed. The tribals are yet incapable of comprehending political or other fundamental rights. Nonetheless, they enjoy, in quite a large measure, all the fundamental rights exercisable by persons elsewhere in the country."

The Karnaphuli hydroelectric dam at Kaptai impacted the biodiversity and environment the most. However, the damage the dam caused to the environment and the biodiversity of the CHT has not been measured adequately by environmentalists, scholars, or activists. It is not even often discussed. The Karnaphuli hydroelectric dam damaged the environment and biodiversity of the CHT in both direct and indirect ways. Due to the dam's construction, much wildlife was submerged, and their habitats were destroyed. The indirect damage was that the dam inundated a large area and thus put pressure on the wildlife habitats in the other areas of the CHT as the displaced population from the Kaptai region was forced to clear forests in different areas of the CHT, and this meant the shrinkage of wildlife habitats in the CHT as a whole.

### **Conclusion:**

Frantz Fanon, an Afro-Caribbean French psychiatrist, revolutionary thinker, and philosopher, prophetically apprehended the tribulations of the once colonized and underdeveloped countries. Fanon writes: "The cracks in it explain how easy it is so for young independent countries to switch back from nation to ethnic group and from state to tribe— a regression which is terribly detrimental and prejudicial to the development of the nation and national unity... As we have seen, its [national bourgeoisie of once colonized underdeveloped country] vocation is not to transform the nation but prosaically serve as a conveyor belt for capitalism, forced to camouflage itself behind the mask of neocolonialism." The nature of capitalism in Africa or other colonized regions in the world was different from capitalism in the Western world. Or it is more appropriate to say the Black, non-Western, and Indigenous experience of capitalism is different from that of Western people. More recently, some scholars term the character of this type of capitalism, brought by the colonialists, as 'colonial racial capitalism'. These scholars argue that this nature of capitalism persists these days. Throughout the British colonial intervention and in the postcolonial states of Pakistan and Bangladesh, all the states persistently continued the colonial and neocolonial exploitation of the Adivasis of the CHT through their so-called development projects.

\*All the primary sources used here are from the National Archives of Bangladesh. I am grateful to the staff of the National Archives, particularly Elias Miah, for their generous support.

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# PLASTIC POLLUTION AND THE STRUGGLE FOR A CIRCULAR ECONOMY IN BANGLADESH

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## Introduction

Plastic is one of the most revolutionary yet environmentally destructive materials humanity has ever invented. From packaging to clothing, plastic has become deeply embedded in our daily lives, but its afterlife tells a darker story. In Bangladesh, a country known for both its natural beauty and population density, plastic pollution has become a major threat to ecosystems, human health, and the economy.

Ironically, Bangladesh once stood as a global pioneer in the fight against plastic pollution. In 2002, it became the first country in the world to ban plastic shopping bags after severe drainage blockages caused by polythene waste led to devastating floods. Yet, two decades later, plastic has returned with a vengeance. Single-use plastics dominate local markets, rivers and canals are clogged with waste, and microplastics have entered the food chain.

This article investigates the reasons behind the resurgence of plastic use in Bangladesh and critically examines why efforts to curb its proliferation have fallen short. We will explore the broader challenge of transitioning from a linear to a circular economy where materials are reused, recycled, or repurposed, and assess how Bangladesh can adopt this model to not only reduce plastic waste but also create jobs and promote sustainable growth.

Through case studies, expert insights, and policy analysis, this article sheds light on the complex relationship between convenience, economic necessity, and environmental responsibility. It also highlights the innovative solutions being developed by communities, startups, and NGOs who are turning plastic from a curse into a resource.

The struggle against plastic pollution in Bangladesh is not just an environmental issue; it's a question of sustainable development, economic justice, and global responsibility. As the world races toward meeting the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030, the way Bangladesh addresses its plastic crisis could serve as either a cautionary tale or a beacon of hope.

### Background: Plastic Use in Bangladesh

**From Innovation to Invasion: The Rise of Plastic in Bangladesh:** Plastic entered the Bangladeshi market in the 1980s as a cheap and convenient alternative to traditional materials like jute, clay, and metal. Initially celebrated for its durability, affordability, and versatility, plastic quickly infiltrated every aspect of consumer life. By the late 1990s, polythene shopping bags had become the norm across bazaars and retail shops.

However, the very features that made plastic attractive its light weight, resilience, and low cost also made it difficult to manage once discarded. Littered indiscriminately, plastic bags clogged drainage systems, leading to severe waterlogging and urban flooding, especially in Dhaka. These problems prompted public outcry and ultimately led to one of the most progressive environmental moves in the Global South.

## PLASTIC POLLUTION AND THE STRUGGLE (CONT...)

**A Global First: The 2002 Ban on Polythene Bags:** In 2002, Bangladesh became the first country in the world to implement a national ban on polythene shopping bags. This landmark decision was seen as a model for other developing countries grappling with plastic waste. The government, backed by environmental groups, emphasized the ecological and economic consequences of plastic pollution.

In the short term, the ban appeared to work. Markets began using alternatives like jute, paper, or cloth bags. Awareness campaigns were launched. Urban areas, especially in Dhaka and Chittagong, saw a temporary improvement in drainage conditions and visual cleanliness. But enforcement proved weak. Without long-term planning, investment in biodegradable alternatives, and support for local industries, the policy lost momentum.

**The Plastic Comeback:** By the 2010s, plastic was back and in more forms than ever. Cheap imported plastic goods flooded markets. Local manufacturers resumed production due to relaxed monitoring. Single-use items such as cups, plates, straws, and sachets became ubiquitous, especially in low-income and urban communities where convenience often outweighs environmental concerns. According to a 2020 study by the Department of Environment (DoE) and the World Bank, plastic consumption in urban areas of Bangladesh increased from 5.56 kg per capita in 2005 to 17.24 kg in 2020, a threefold rise in 15 years. Dhaka alone generates over 646 tons of plastic waste daily, of which less than half is recycled.

**Cultural and Economic Drivers:** Several factors contribute to the persistent use of plastic in Bangladesh: Affordability, Plastic is cheaper than eco-friendly alternatives. Informally, most small retailers operate in the informal sector, making regulation difficult. Convenience culture, Takeaway food, fast-moving consumer goods, and mobile lifestyle habits increase dependency on disposable items. Lack of viable alternatives, biodegradable packaging is either unavailable or unaffordable for most small businesses and consumers.

**Informal Recycling Sector: A Double-Edged Sword:** Interestingly, Bangladesh also has a vibrant, though informal, plastic recycling industry. "Tokai" (street waste pickers) collect and sell plastic to local factories, which process and remold it into new products. This sector not only reduces waste but also provides livelihoods to thousands of people, though often at the cost of their health and without any legal protection or benefits.

The recycling sector, however, focuses mostly on high-value plastic like PET bottles, ignoring multilayer plastic and low-quality film plastics, which constitute the bulk of single-use waste.

### **The Scale of the Plastic Pollution Crisis**

**A Country Drowning in Plastic:** Plastic pollution in Bangladesh has escalated to alarming levels over the past decade. Despite the early promise of the 2002 ban, the country is now facing a full-blown plastic crisis. Urban rivers, farmland, rural landscapes, and even coastal zones are heavily polluted with plastic waste. What was once viewed as an environmental issue is now a humanitarian and economic concern, threatening biodiversity, public health, and national development goals.

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## PLASTIC POLLUTION AND THE STRUGGLE (CONT...)

**Rivers Turned Into Dumping Grounds:** One of the most visible signs of the plastic crisis is the choking of urban rivers. In Dhaka, the Buriganga River, once a lifeline for the city, is now one of the most polluted waterways in the country. Plastic bags, sachets, bottles, wrappers, and industrial waste float across its surface.

Similar conditions are seen in the Turag, Balu, and Shitalakkhya rivers, where plastic waste is often dumped directly from homes and factories. In 2021, a survey by the Department of Environment and the World Bank found that approximately 200,000 tons of plastic waste are generated annually in Dhaka city alone, and only 37% of it is recycled. The rest ends up in landfills, rivers, and low-lying areas, creating both solid waste and water pollution crises.

**Plastic in the Food Chain:** Microplastics, tiny plastic fragments smaller than 5 millimeters, are increasingly found in fish, salt, and drinking water, making their way into the human food chain. Studies conducted by Bangladesh Agricultural University and international research teams have confirmed microplastic contamination in popular fish species such as Rui, Tilapia, and Pabda.

The long-term health implications of microplastic ingestion include hormonal disruptions, fertility issues, and even cancer. But with no official monitoring or safety standards in place, the public remains largely unaware of these dangers.

**Urban Flooding and Infrastructure Damage:** Plastic waste, particularly polythene bags, clogs drainage systems across major cities. During monsoon seasons, this results in urban flooding, causing property damage, disrupting transportation, and increasing the risk of waterborne diseases. A 2020 study by the Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) reported that 90% of all drainage blockages in the capital were caused by plastic waste, leading to huge costs in drainage maintenance and emergency response.

**Economic Losses:** The economic consequences of plastic pollution are significant but often underreported. Key sectors affected include: Fisheries, plastic debris reduces fish populations and damages fishing gear. Tourism, Littered beaches in Cox's Bazar, and Saint Martin Island deter visitors. Public health, Poor waste management contributes to the spread of dengue, cholera, and other diseases, increasing healthcare costs. According to a 2022 estimate by the Asian Development Bank, Bangladesh loses around USD 800 million annually due to inefficiencies and environmental damage related to poor plastic waste management.

**The Rural Challenge:** While much of the plastic crisis is concentrated in cities, rural areas are not immune. As access to packaged goods increases in villages, so does the plastic waste, but waste collection systems are virtually non-existent outside of urban zones. This leads to open burning of plastic waste, which releases toxic chemicals like dioxins and furans into the air, posing severe health risks.

**Waste Management Woes:** Bangladesh lacks a unified national waste management strategy. The existing system is fragmented, underfunded, and often reliant on the informal sector. Key issues include: Inadequate infrastructure, Only a few cities have formal recycling plants. Lack of segregation: Households do not sort plastic waste, making recycling inefficient. Untrained workforce, Sanitation workers are poorly trained and poorly paid. Low investment, Waste management is not prioritized in national budgets. Even where policies exist, such as the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) clause proposed in 2020 to hold plastic producers accountable for post-consumer waste, enforcement remains weak.

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## PLASTIC POLLUTION AND THE STRUGGLE (CONT...)

**Public Awareness Gap:** A significant challenge in combating plastic pollution is the low level of public awareness. Most people continue to use single-use plastics out of habit or convenience. Environmental education is largely absent from school curricula, and government campaigns have limited reach, especially in low-income communities.

**Snapshot:** The Plastic Lifecycle in Bangladesh: Here's how plastic typically moves through the economy and environment: Imported Resin or Granules → Used by factories to make packaging and products. Sold to Consumers → Single-use items dominate (bags, cups, wrappers). Used Briefly → Discarded within hours or days.

### Disposal Options:

- Collected by formal services (limited areas only).
- Picked up by informal waste pickers (valuable plastics only).
- Dumped in open spaces, drains, rivers, or burned.
- The cycle is linear, not circular, meaning the plastic is created, used, and disposed of with no plan for reintegration into the production system.

### Government Policies and Their Gaps

**A Strong Start, a Weak Follow-Through:** Bangladesh gained international acclaim in 2002 when it banned polythene shopping bags, becoming the first country in the world to take such a bold step against plastic pollution. The move came after devastating floods in 1988 and 1998 revealed how plastic-clogged drainage systems worsened the disaster. The initial decision was visionary, but its implementation over time has proven inconsistent and unsustainable.

Today, despite the ban, polythene bags and single-use plastics are found in almost every corner of the country, from supermarkets in Dhaka to rural tea stalls in remote districts. The discrepancy between policy and reality highlights a serious gap in enforcement, coordination, and strategic planning.

**Legislation and Regulatory Efforts:** Over the past two decades, Bangladesh has introduced several regulations and strategies to combat plastic pollution:

- Environment Conservation Act (1995): Gave legal basis for protecting ecosystems, including provisions on waste management.
- Polythene Bag Ban (2002): Prohibited the manufacture, sale, and use of polythene bags less than 55 microns thick.
- Plastic Waste Management Rules (2021): Drafted rules to promote recycling, source segregation, and Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), though they remain largely unenforced.
- National 3R Strategy (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, 2010): Set goals for solid waste management and resource recovery.

While these policies look good on paper, implementation has been fragmented across ministries and agencies. Furthermore, penalties for violations are rarely imposed, and inspections are infrequent and often undermined by corruption or lack of political will.

**The Enforcement Gap:** The biggest challenge lies in the enforcement of existing laws. Despite the ban, polythene bags continue to be produced illegally in small-scale factories, often hidden in residential areas. Law enforcement raids are infrequent and usually short-lived in their impact. A report by the Environment and Social Development Organization (ESDO) in 2022 found that over 70% of all single-use plastics in urban markets were technically illegal under existing rules. Yet vendors and consumers alike continue to use them due to their availability, affordability, and lack of alternatives.

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# PLASTIC POLLUTION AND THE STRUGGLE (CONT...))

Even when violations are detected, penalties are minimal, and repeat offenders face little risk. This has normalized the use of banned products and undermined public confidence in the government's environmental commitment.

**Municipal Struggles:** Too Big a Burden: Waste management responsibilities largely fall to city corporations and municipalities, many of which are overwhelmed and underfunded. These local governments often lack:

- Trained staff
- Waste segregation systems
- Land and infrastructure for recycling or composting
- Incentives to partner with private recyclers

As a result, collected waste is usually sent to open dumps or burned in landfills, exacerbating pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.

In Dhaka, for example, the two city corporations (DNCC and DSCC) struggle to manage the daily waste load, and plastic waste is rarely separated at source. Informal sector workers, "tokai" or street scavengers, do much of the collection and sorting, without government support or recognition.

## **Missed Opportunities:**

- Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR): One of the most significant tools to control plastic waste,
- Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) remains underutilized in Bangladesh. EPR shifts the burden of waste collection and recycling to the companies that produce and sell plastic products.

The Plastic Waste Management Rules (2021) included EPR guidelines, but they are yet to be fully implemented. Many large companies, especially multinationals, continue to sell products in plastic sachets and wrappers without contributing to waste recovery programs. Meanwhile, smaller local producers lack the capacity or incentive to comply.

• Countries like India, Vietnam, and Rwanda have made strides in enforcing EPR through mandatory recycling targets and producer take-back systems. Bangladesh has the legal basis, but not the enforcement muscle, to do the same.

- Public Participation and Education: Still Limited: Public education campaigns about the dangers of plastic are sporadic and underfunded. As a result, there is limited public awareness about how to dispose of waste responsibly or the benefits of recycling. Schools rarely include environmental literacy in their curriculum, and adult education efforts have not reached scale.

Moreover, citizen participation in local policymaking, such as waste zoning, segregation schemes, or clean-up drives, remains minimal. Community-led initiatives exist but are isolated and unsupported at scale.

## **The Circular Economy Model: A Missed Opportunity?**

### **From Linear to Circular: What's the Difference?**

Answer: Bangladesh's current plastic economy follows a linear model: extract, produce, consume, and dispose. Products are designed for single use, and their afterlife is either in landfills, rivers, or incineration sites. This not only wastes valuable materials but also creates significant environmental damage.

By contrast, a circular economy keeps resources in use for as long as possible. In this system, products and packaging are:

- Redesigned to minimize waste,
- Reused or repaired where possible,
- Recycled into new materials,
- And biodegrade safely if no longer usable.

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# PLASTIC POLLUTION AND THE STRUGGLE (CONT...)

The model aims to decouple economic growth from environmental degradation. For a country like Bangladesh, facing both climate vulnerability and a growing middle class, the circular economy offers a way to reduce waste, create jobs, and enhance resilience.



## **Missed Momentum:** Why Isn't Bangladesh Embracing Circularity?

**Answer:** Despite the clear benefits, Bangladesh has not fully embraced circular economy principles. Here's why:

1. **Policy Focus Remains Reactive, Not Preventive:** Bangladesh's plastic policy still focuses on banning products rather than redesigning systems. There's limited government support for eco design, packaging innovation, or product take-back schemes. Most policies address waste after it's generated, instead of preventing it in the first place.

2. **Lack of Infrastructure for Collection and Sorting:** For circular systems to work, there must be robust mechanisms for segregating, collecting, and processing materials. In Bangladesh, waste is rarely separated at the household level. The collection is patchy, especially in peri-urban and rural areas. Without input quality, even the best recycling systems fail.

3. **Market Incentives Are Absent:** Incentives for businesses to design sustainably or invest in recycling infrastructure are minimal. Plastic producers face little pressure to improve material quality or packaging efficiency. Meanwhile, consumers often find eco-friendly products more expensive or harder to access.

4. **Informal Sector Remains Excluded:** An estimated 36% of plastic waste in Bangladesh is recycled primarily by the informal sector. Waste pickers collect high-value items like PET bottles or hard plastics and sell them to small-scale recyclers. But the rest of the films, sachets, and contaminated plastic end up in the environment.

In a circular model, the informal sector would be recognized, trained, and integrated into the formal system. This could improve material recovery rates, reduce poverty, and ensure safer working conditions, but such integration remains rare.

5. **Limited Business Innovation:** While startups are growing in other areas of sustainability, eco packaging, zero-waste retail, and reuse-based delivery systems are still extremely rare in Bangladesh. This is largely due to:

- Limited funding for green innovation
- Weak incubation support
- Low consumer demand for sustainable alternatives

**Circular Economy in Practice:** Global Lessons for Bangladesh: Several countries offer examples that Bangladesh could learn from:

- Rwanda has banned single-use plastics and incentivized reusable packaging at the national scale.
- India has mandated EPR and created markets for recycled content through policy and price mechanisms. The Netherlands has adopted a "Circular by Design" strategy, requiring all plastic packaging to be reusable or recyclable by 2025.

These models show that policy, business, and citizen behavior must align and that transition is possible, even in resource-constrained settings.

**Bangladesh's Untapped Potential:** Despite these challenges, Bangladesh holds several strengths that could accelerate circularity.

## PLASTIC POLLUTION AND THE STRUGGLE (CONT...)

Youth entrepreneurship: A new generation of eco-conscious startups is emerging, especially in urban centers.

- NGO capacity: Organizations like ESDO, Waste Concern, and BRAC are piloting circular solutions in waste recovery, composting, and low-tech recycling.

**Jute heritage:** As the “Golden Fiber,” jute could replace plastic in packaging and textiles if scaled strategically.

What’s missing is a cohesive national strategy that ties these efforts together with clear roles, funding, and targets.

**The Economic Case for Circular Economy:** Transitioning to a circular model is not just environmentally sound, it's economically smart. According to a UNDP report (2023), circular economy approaches in plastic management could:

- Reduce landfill costs by 40%
- Create 300,000+ new green jobs by 2030
- Save over USD 1.5 billion in material value annually

This makes it a high-impact area for Bangladesh’s national development and SDG targets.

### Success Stories and Grassroots Innovations:

While Bangladesh’s plastic pollution problem is daunting, it's important to recognise that change is already happening, often from the ground up. Across the country, NGOs, social enterprises, community groups, and individuals are taking bold steps to reduce plastic use, promote recycling, and create circular solutions. These success stories demonstrate that sustainable innovation is possible even in challenging environments.

**Waste Concern:** Turning Waste into Wealth: Founded in 1995, Waste Concern is a social enterprise that pioneered community-based composting and waste recycling in Bangladesh.

Though better known for their work with organic waste, they have also introduced Integrated Resource Recovery Centres (IRRCs), where recyclable materials, including plastics, are sorted and processed.

Their public-private partnership model has not only reduced waste sent to landfills but also created green jobs for urban poor communities. Waste Concern’s work has influenced national policy and drawn global attention to sustainable waste solutions from the Global South.

**ESDO:** Leading the Anti-Plastic Advocacy: The Environment and Social Development Organization (ESDO) has been at the forefront of plastic pollution awareness in Bangladesh. Their campaigns have educated thousands about the dangers of single-use plastics and microplastics in cosmetics and packaging. Notably, ESDO was instrumental in pushing for a ban on microbeads in personal care products and has published extensive research on the impacts of plastic on public health. Through school programs and community outreach, ESDO empowers citizens to make conscious choices and lobby for systemic change.

**Recyclo:** Empowering Informal Waste Workers: Recyclo is a tech-enabled startup aiming to formalize the informal recycling economy in Dhaka. The platform connects households and businesses with verified waste collectors, offering cash-back incentives for properly sorted plastic waste.

By integrating waste pickers (Tokai) into their model and providing them with training and safety gear, Recycling is building a system that is inclusive, efficient, and data-driven. The initiative reduces plastic leakage into the environment while promoting livelihoods.

**Youth Activism:** Fridays for Future Bangladesh: Inspired by the global climate movement, Fridays for Future Bangladesh, led by young environmentalists, regularly organizes clean-up drives, policy discussions, and online campaigns targeting plastic pollution.

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# PLASTIC POLLUTION AND THE STRUGGLE (CONT...)

In coastal areas like Khulna and Satkhira, these youth-led groups conduct “Plastic Audits” on local beaches and advocate for eco-tourism policies that ban single-use plastics in protected areas like Sundarbans.

These efforts show how youth are not just protesting but proposing solutions, and making sustainability part of national conversations.

**Eco Jute and Deshi Crafts: Plastic Alternatives from Nature:** Startups like EcoJute and Deshi Crafts are reviving traditional materials – such as jute, bamboo, and clay as alternatives to plastic in packaging, tableware, and home decor.

By blending traditional skills with modern design, they’re catering to both local and export markets. Importantly, they also support female artisans and marginalized rural communities, linking sustainability to social empowerment.

**Community Initiatives: Plastic-Free Markets:** In 2022, the Barisal City Corporation declared a major public market “plastic-free,” banning the use of single-use polythene bags and styrofoam containers. Instead, vendors were encouraged to use paper, banana leaves, and reusable cloth bags.

With strong community engagement and monitoring, the program has seen positive results, inspiring other cities to consider similar initiatives.

**What These Stories Show:** These examples, while diverse in scale and strategy, share a few critical features:

- Local leadership: Most solutions are community-driven, not top-down.
- Hybrid models: Combining business, social, and environmental goals increases sustainability.
- Inclusion: Involving marginalized groups like informal workers or rural artisans strengthens the impact.
- Scalability: Though many projects start small, they show real potential for replication across districts and even borders.

## Challenges to Implementation

While policy ambitions and grassroots innovations offer glimpses of hope, the road to a plastic-free and circular Bangladesh is riddled with serious implementation challenges. Understanding these barriers is critical to designing realistic, scalable solutions.

**Weak Regulatory Enforcement:** The biggest roadblock is not the absence of laws but their lack of enforcement. Despite the ban on polythene bags, they remain widely available in every market, from small street vendors to large grocery chains. The reasons include:

- Infrequent inspections
- Corruption or political interference
- Inadequate resources for regulatory agencies

Environmental authorities and local government bodies often have overlapping mandates, causing confusion and finger-pointing rather than action.

**Lack of Infrastructure:** A truly circular economy depends on robust collection, sorting, and recycling infrastructure, which Bangladesh lacks in most areas. The current waste management system is largely reactive and rudimentary:

- Few waste segregation programs
- No nationwide Material Recovery Facilities (MRFs)
- Insufficient recycling plants, especially outside urban centers
- Open dumping is still common in peri-urban and rural areas

Without the right infrastructure, even the best laws or public behavior changes will fall short.

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# PLASTIC POLLUTION AND THE STRUGGLE (CONT...)

Dependence on the Informal Sector: Around 400,000 people are estimated to work in the informal waste management sector in Bangladesh. While they play a vital role in collecting and sorting plastic, they do so under exploitative and unsafe conditions.

The government has yet to:

- Recognize informal workers legally

- Offer safety gear, fair wages, or training

- Include them in urban planning or plastic policy

Without integration, a significant portion of plastic recovery remains unaccounted for and unsustainable.

Consumer Behavior and Awareness Gaps: Consumer habits shaped by convenience, cost, and culture continue to drive demand for single-use plastics. Key issues include:

- Low awareness of environmental and health impacts

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# EFFECTS OF ORGANIC AND INORGANIC FERTILIZERS ON THE GROWTH OF GARCINIA KOLA (HECKEL) SEEDLINGS

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## ABSTRACT

This study investigated the effects of Granite rock dust (GRD), Cow dung (CD), and Inorganic fertilizer (NPK 15:15:15) on the growth of seedlings of *Garcinia kola*, a popular but endangered forest fruit tree characterized by slow growth. Little effort has been made towards its artificial regeneration, and so it is still restricted to the wild. It is needful, therefore, to determine the appropriate and optimum level of fertilizer requirement of the plant, to improve its growth performance in the nursery as a prelude to its field establishment. The experiment consisted of 3 treatment combinations and a control replicated 4 times, and was laid out in a completely randomized design (CRD). Data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics and analysis of variance (ANOVA). Results revealed significant differences in all the parameters assessed across the treatments. However, T1 (GRD) had the best growth performance in terms of shoot height, collar diameter, and leaf production at 95% probability level; T3 (CD) had the least growth performance in terms of collar diameter and leaf production, while T2 (NPK) had the least growth performance in terms of shoot height. The investigation revealed that the application of GRD to potted *G. kola* seedlings is beneficial for increasing their vegetative growth at the nursery stage. Thus, GRD can be used to boost the seedling performance of this plant with the aim of inducing early seedling maturity and reducing the time spent by the seedlings in the nursery preparatory to planting out in the field.

**Key-words:** *Garcinia kola* seedlings, organic fertilizer, granite rock dust, inorganic fertilizer, growth parameters.

## INTRODUCTION

*Garcinia kola* is a medium-sized tree belonging to the genera *Garcinia* in the family *Guttiferae* growing in the rainforests of West Africa (Wikipedia, 2015). The tree grows up to 12m in height with a girth of about 1.8m. The Trees are dioecious (sexes on separate trees) and in several cases apomictic (reproduce asexually).

It is one of the most cherished tree species in Nigeria because of its economic and medicinal qualities. It is also known as bitter kola because of the bitterness of its seed. *G. kola* is identified for its therapeutic abilities to cure bacterial, viral, and microbial diseases. The seeds of *G. kola* have pharmacological uses in treating coughs, throat infections, bronchitis, hepatitis (inflammation of the liver), and liver disorders (Farombi et al., 2005). Bitter kola is highly valued because of its wide range of uses, which include the fruits, the seeds, the stems and the roots (Moyin-Jesu and Adeofun, 2008).

*Garcinia kola* is identified as one of the most threatened tree species, in fact, going into extinction (Moyin-Jesu and Adeofun, 2008). Ladipo (1995) reported *Garcinia kola* as a tropical fruit tree species, characterized by a slow rate of growth. Plantation work begins from the nursery. Plant growth is enhanced by nutrients, among other things. The use of organic and inorganic fertilizers has been recognized as an effective silvicultural tool for improving the quality of planting stock in the nursery and enhancing the growth of forest plantations (Fagbenro and Aluko, 1987). NPK fertilizer, granite dust, and cow dung are known soil boosters because of their abilities to impact growth performance on plants. According to Mandal et al. (2013), integration of inorganic, organics and bio-fertilizers into the soil can produce 50.92% more yield in Aonla (*Phyllanthus emblica* L.)

## EFFECTS OF ORGANIC (CONT...)

Quality rock dust provides a slow, natural release of elements and minerals into the soil (Joanna Campe et al., 2012). The microbes in the soil help convert the minerals in the rock dust into humus, and deeper humus means more nutrient availability to the plant and better absorption of carbon dioxide from the air (Afolabi et al., 2012).

Fulhage (2000) reported that manure contains the three major plant nutrients, nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium (NPK), as well as many essential nutrients such as Ca, Mg, S, Zn, B, Cu, Mn, etc. This indicates that the application of cow dung to the soil increases soil nutrients.

Stefano et al. (2004) revealed the ability of Inorganic fertilizer to exert a strong influence on plant growth, development, and yield, but have negative effects on yields because of their toxicity. *Garcinia kola*'s slow growth has discouraged many farmers from growing it. There is no known effort or proof of its domestication or cultivation, yet it is a highly valuable crop. As a result of this, employing boosters to speed up its growth rate at the nursery stage is considered an important prerequisite. This prompted the necessity to carry out investigations into the silvicultural requirements of raising the seedlings of this species with an ultimate aim of embarking on its plantation establishment.

This study revealed the abilities of the amendments to enhance the growth and performance of this slow-growing plant and promote its potential for plantation establishment.

### **MATERIALS AND METHODS:**

Four-month-old potted seedlings of *G. kola* were transplanted into nursery pots filled with 3kg of topsoil and dosed with 3 different soil amendments, viz.: 3 g of NPK 15:15:15, 30 g of Granite Rock Dust, and 15 g of Cow dung. The experiment consisted of 3 treatment combinations and a control laid out in a Completely Randomized Design (CRD). The treatments are;

T0 – Control (CT) T1 – Granite Rock Dust (GRD)

T2 -- NPK T3 – Cow Dung (CD)

Each treatment was replicated 4 times, with each replicate made up of 5 potted plants to give a total of 80 treatment units.

After being allowed to stabilize for two weeks to deal with transplanting shock, the seedlings were subjected to an assessment of growth parameters like Shoot height, Collar diameter, and Leaf production on fortnight basis within a period of 16 weeks after transplanting. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics and ANOVA F-test using IBM SPSS.

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Table 1 shows that there were appreciable mean differences in the shoot height within the period of the experiment, with GRD showing the highest mean of 17.70cm compared to CD, NPK, and CT with 17.28cm, 16.84cm and 17.09cm, respectively.

However, when the results were subjected to analysis of variance, it showed that the different means of the shoot height were not significantly different at 5% level of probability. This does not agree with the findings of Moyin-Jesu et al. (2008) that plant height, stem girth, leaf area, leaf number, and shoot weight (growth parameters) of bitter kola seedlings increased significantly ( $P < 0.05$ ) under different organic fertilizer treatments compared to the control treatment.

Comparing the collar diameter means shows that there were significant differences ( $P < 0.05$ ) in *G. kola* collar diameter when subjected to the treatments. This agrees with the findings of Okunomo et al. (2006) that there was a significant difference in collar diameter of *Gambaya albida* four weeks after transplanting when subjected to different soil amendments, which was due to the higher concentration of Potassium in Ash than the rest of the treatments. GRD showed the highest mean (0.59cm) compared to CT (0.56cm), NPK (0.52cm), and CD the least mean (0.50cm) (Table 1), which is in agreement with Lombia et al. (1991) who rated Cow Dung (CD) manure low among the different sources of organic manure.

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## EFFECTS OF ORGANIC (CONT...)

Fig. 1, 2, and 3 show that there were appreciable increases in shoot heights fortnightly within the period of the study. Also, an appreciable increase was seen in the mean leaf production for all the treatments 10 weeks after planting, and this continued steadily for the rest of the observations (Fig. 2). However, the mean leaf production for the different treatment combinations has no significant difference ( $P>0.05$ ) when subjected to ANOVA.

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This study has shown that *G. kola* seedlings' growth performance can generally be improved through fertilizer application to enhance the sustainable cultivation of bitter kola seedlings on a commercial basis.

However, granite rock dust improved the growth performance of treated plants over the control. It produced better growth attributes, such as shoot height, collar girth, and leaf production, than its counterparts. Application of finely ground 30g of GRD considerably increased the different parameters assessed in this experiment. Thus, the application of GRD, derived from local sources, has to be considered seriously as an organic farming practice. Its use will promote the production of healthier and vigorous crops with no chemical residue, which can be harmful for human consumption.

Further research work using other varieties of rock dust at different application levels should also be initiated to promote their usage in organic farming practice in Nigeria.

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# EFFECTS OF ORGANIC (CONT...)

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# EMPOWERING INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN CANADA: GROWTH, CHALLENGES, AND PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS



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Canada has become one of the top places for international students, known for its world-class education system, multicultural atmosphere, and growth opportunities. In the last decade, there has been a significant increase in the number of international students in Canada, with reports showing that over 800,000 international students were studying at post-secondary institutions in 2023. The nation's commitment to global education is reflected in this growth. Still, it also highlights international students' specific struggles as they adjust to life in a new country.

## The Appeal of Studying in Canada

International students are attracted to Canada because of its reputation as a hub for academic excellence. The world's finest institutions include the University of Toronto, McGill University, and the University of British Columbia. Students seeking long-term opportunities can benefit from Canada's immigration policies, which include the Post-Graduation Work Permit (PGWP) and pathways to permanent residency, not just academics.

Another reason to visit the country is its cultural diversity. Many students can experience inclusivity, meet people from different backgrounds, and gain exposure to diverse perspectives by studying in Canada. Students from diverse economic backgrounds find Canada attractive due to its relatively affordable tuition fees and living costs, compared to countries like the United States and the United Kingdom.

## The Growth of International Students in Canada

Canada has experienced significant benefits due to the influx of international students. Over \$22 billion is contributed to the economy by international students annually, which supports jobs and local businesses. Their diverse cultures, languages, and traditions enrich Canadian communities socially, fostering global connections and understanding.

Due to this growth, stronger infrastructure and policies are needed to ensure that international students receive adequate support. The system's shortcomings, including housing shortages and limited access to mental health resources, have been highlighted by the rising numbers, which are necessary to ensure the success and well-being of international students.

## Challenges Faced by International Students

Despite the opportunities, international students face a range of hardships as they transition to life in Canada. Key challenges include:

- **Financial Strain:** High tuition fees, living expenses, and limited access to financial aid are often a struggle for many international students. Although part-time work opportunities can be beneficial, they frequently come with restrictions on the amount of time students can work.
- **Mental Health Struggles:** Mental health can be affected by being away from family and familiar support systems. It is common for international students to experience feelings of isolation, homesickness, and challenges in cultural adjustment.

# EMPOWERING INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS (CONT...)

- **Housing Issues:** Many students are struggling to find affordable and safe accommodations due to housing shortages and rising rental costs in cities like Toronto and Vancouver, with growing urban populations.
- **Academic Pressure:** It can be a challenge to adapt to a new education system with varying academic requirements. The learning process is further complicated for many students due to language barriers.
- **Immigration Uncertainty:** Navigating Canada's immigration system can be a daunting task. The process of programs like the PGWP and Express Entry may present opportunities, but it can also be complicated and stressful



## Pathways to Success: Supporting International Students.

To empower international students and address these challenges, a multi-stakeholder approach is essential. Here are some actionable steps:

1. **Enhanced Financial Support:** Educational institutions and governments should expand scholarship opportunities, reduce tuition fees, and provide financial literacy workshops to help students manage their expenses effectively.
2. **Accessible Mental Health Services:** Institutions should prioritize mental health by offering culturally sensitive counseling services, peer support groups, and wellness programs tailored to international students.
3. **Affordable Housing Solutions:** Governments and universities can collaborate to develop affordable housing options, including expanding on-campus residences and creating rental subsidies for students.
4. **Academic Support Programs:** Establishing mentorship programs, language support services, and workshops on academic skills can help international students succeed in their studies.
5. **Streamlined Immigration Processes:** Simplifying immigration pathways and providing clear, transparent guidelines will help ease the uncertainty that international students often face.

## Conclusion:

Not only academic institutions but also the broader community benefit from the contributions of international students, who are an integral part of Canada's social and economic fabric. The challenges they face cannot be overlooked, even though their journey is often marked by growth and resilience. Canada can remain a global leader in education by addressing these barriers and creating a supportive environment, so international students can reach their full potential.

Fostering an environment that supports international students' success is crucial as Canada welcomes more international students, ensuring they can thrive academically, socially, and economically. Building a more inclusive and sustainable future that benefits everyone is possible through this action.

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# COMPETITION IN SCHOOLS

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Our current and most universal school system is recognized for being notably imperfect. School system critics are reasonably much easier to find than advocates. Among the system's advertised shortcomings lies the concern of the embedded and binding nature of competition in schools. It is no secret that competition is hard to overcome; it is guaranteed to bring forth challenge. Accepting, genuinely attempting, and preparing for the potential undesirable outcome are not painless feats. Students will undergo many difficult experiences because of competition, but with the right guidance/mindset, those same difficult experiences can transform into the most irreplaceable weapons.

Accepting challenges in the form of competition is an intimidating task, especially in a school environment where there is constant pressure to be among the best. The two types of competition that schools provide are "natural" and "voluntary". An obligatory test that will certainly entail the competition of scores, naturally. An invitation to a sports try-out that you have the option to decline; voluntary. To accept a voluntary competition is not a complex idea because it is a recognized fact that you are to compete with others and aim to be better than them. Scary but understandable enough to take precautions, though self-esteem issues and related issues can easily get entangled. The recurring inevitable/natural competition, however, isn't something to notice. It is human nature to compare scores, even if tests and other similar devices are to be treated as tools for self-growth and not trophies. Not signing up for a self-deprecation-inducing competition but being thrown into one anyway is not easy. Accepting these hidden challenges, even if a choice isn't available, is essential to taking care of it right.

A genuine attempt follows a sincere acceptance. It is humane to feel instantaneous overwhelming emotions after entering the realm of school competition; teammates, opponents, plans of action, final results, balance of home/social life, and so on. A general sort of ignorance is required to be able to handle the task at hand; to ignore the distractions of others and instead monitor oneself and the current situation. Not to completely disregard the future and outside ideas, but to keep a safe distance from them. Though strenuous, fixating attention on anything otherwise will leave you feeling disheartened, and the product quality will reflect that. A disheartened attitude will not demonstrate a genuine attempt, and a build-up of it threatens internal conflict. It is difficult to forget the competition and concentrate on the task. Finding a heartfelt motivation in something after being forced so much is a sweet treat for students, which then enhances whatever their final product may be.

Following chronological order, it is now "post-submission." After giving the chore everything you believe possible, there is a suit of armour you need to place upon your heart and mind. It is very possible that you will not receive a desirable outcome. It is similarly possible that others will do the task to a higher degree of effectiveness. The pain of failure, both literally and individually, in a spirited heart and a confident mind, is traumatising, and that is something that not enough people/students are aware of. If you are able to put up defences for the sting of "failure," you will either be safe or pleasantly surprised once your efforts pay off. You will finally be able to practice this cycle repeatedly, as expected, with minimal consternation.

## COMPETITION IN SCHOOLS (CONT...)

In conclusion, the consistency of school competition is a tall mountain for generally fragile-minded students, despite its necessity to take part in providing a realistic overview of the atmospheric commonalities of the world outside of school.

It is a serious problem if the mere internal acceptance of competition is an uncommonly practiced practice; not to mention the subsequent majority of challenges involved with competition that follows, such as making efforts and taking strong mental and emotional stances. To be able to master the art of competition is a very necessary yet uncommon ability within students; the future inhabitants of this world. To ease the concept of contest in the minds of youth is important to help advance our society, but first and foremost, to advance our rather infamous school system.

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# MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS OF TEENAGERS: A BIG CHALLENGE NOW

**Rahinur Muntakim**

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The mental health crisis among teenagers has become an increasingly urgent issue in recent years, with rising concerns about the emotional and psychological well-being of young people. Several factors contribute to this crisis, including social pressures, academic stress, changes in family dynamics, and the impact of social media.

Contributing Factors Of Mental Health Crisis:

1/Social Media and Cyberbullying: Social media platforms, while offering ways to connect, can also lead to feelings of inadequacy, anxiety, and depression. Cyberbullying is particularly harmful, as it can happen 24/7, affecting a teenager's sense of safety and self-worth.

2/Academic Pressure: The pressure to perform well academically, whether from parents, teachers, or peers, can lead to stress and anxiety. Many teenagers feel overwhelmed by the expectations placed on them to succeed in school and extracurricular activities.

3/Family Dynamics: Family problems, such as divorce, financial stress, or lack of emotional support, can significantly affect a teenager's mental health. In some cases, these stressors may lead to feelings of isolation, anger, or sadness.

## **Mental health issues in teens**

### **Depression:**

Feeling sad or low most of the time, loss of interest in hobbies and activities, feeling hopeless and helpless, irritability, anger, or frustration.

### **Anxiety:**

Feeling scared, nervous, or tense all the time, feeling like you're in danger even when there is no real threat, feeling on edge, or like you can't relax.

### **Eating disorders:**

Unhealthy attitudes and behaviours towards food and body image, extreme dieting or binge eating followed by purging (vomiting), using laxatives or diuretics to lose weight, and obsessively counting calories.

### **Low self-esteem:**

Feeling not good enough or like you don't measure up, feeling inferior to others, avoiding social situations or activities you enjoy.

### **Low sense of identity:**

Not sure who you are or what you stand for, feeling lost or like you don't belong.

### **Peer pressure:**

Feeling like you have to conform to what your friends or peers are doing, even if you don't want to.

### **Body dysmorphia:**

Obsessively thinking about and criticising your appearance, feeling like you're never good enough or that you don't look "normal".

### **Self-harm:**

Deliberately harming yourself as a way of dealing with difficult emotions. This can include cutting, burning, scratching, or hitting yourself.

### **Suicide:**

Feeling so overwhelmed by negative emotions that you see no other way out than to end your life.

# MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS (CONT...)

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## Impact of Mental Health Issues for Teens:

Mental health problems can have a significant impact on every aspect of a young person's life.

1/Education: Mental health problems can affect concentration, memory and motivation, making it difficult to succeed at school or college. Mental illness

can also lead to absenteeism, as well as suspension or expulsion from educational institutions.

2/Employment: Mental health issues can make it difficult to find or keep a job. Mental illness may also lead to poor performance at work, as well as absenteeism.

3/Relationships: Mental health problems can make it hard to maintain healthy personal relationships. Mental illness may cause arguments and conflict, as well as social isolation and loneliness.

4/Physical health: Mental health issues can lead to physical health problems, such as sleep disorders, gastrointestinal problems and headaches. Mental illness may also make it difficult to manage chronic physical health conditions.

5/Finances: Mental health problems can lead to financial difficulties, as well as debt and poverty. Mental illness may make it hard to work or study, which can impact a person's ability to earn an income.

## Mental Health Support

Education really is the key to a society that honours mental health. Without proper education, misconceptions and stigmas can impact how mental health is viewed, and stop people from getting the help they need. Mental health is just as integral to your well-being as physical health. Knowing how to recognise the signs and symptoms of mental ill-health early can ensure that people get timely help. This intervention can prevent mental health crises, which can be life-threatening events. Completing a Mental Health Support Course gives you the knowledge and tools to recognise when someone is struggling or in a crisis, and how to help.

## CONCLUSION

The mental health crisis among teenagers is driven by factors like social media, academic pressure, and family issues, leading to increased anxiety and depression. Stigma surrounding mental health often prevents teens from seeking help. Addressing this crisis requires better education, open communication, and increased access to mental health resources. Families, schools, and healthcare providers must work together to offer support and coping strategies. By fostering a supportive environment, we can help teens navigate their emotional challenges and improve their well-being.

## Resources:

Learn from: <https://images.app.goo.gl/fQtGWAdCrt5F5eru6>

Additional Resources

For more information on how to develop mental fitness in young people, head to our Resource Library. You will also find tips and tricks for building mental fitness in children, and for rebuilding mental fitness after the COVID-19 pandemic.

# THE HOUSING AFFORDABILITY CRISIS IN CANADA: A GROWING CHALLENGE

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Canada, known for its great quality of life and strong social services, is facing a housing affordability crisis that undermines the country's social fabric. Many Canadians are finding it difficult to find stable and affordable homes as a result of the sharp increase in housing expenses over the last ten years. With the use of pertinent research and data, this article examines the origins, effects, and possible solutions to this persistent problem.

## The State of Housing Affordability in Canada

Housing affordability refers to an individual's or family's capacity to pay for housing expenses, such as rent or mortgage payments, without jeopardizing essential living necessities. For numerous individuals in Canada, it has been harder and harder. The average cost of a home in Canada has risen to almost \$700,000, significantly surpassing the growth in household wages, according to a 2023 report published by the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC). The average property price in large cities like Toronto and Vancouver has surpassed \$1 million.

According to a National Bank of Canada report, a typical home in a big city currently costs more than 60% of the income of a median household. Compared to just ten years ago, when housing expenses comprised a large portion of

[Read the CMHC report here](#)

[Read the article from the National Bank of Canada](#)

## Root Causes of the Crisis

Several key factors have contributed to the affordability crisis in Canada:

- **Supply Shortages:** Canada has not developed enough houses to accommodate its rising population. According to the CMHC, in order to restore affordability, Canada will need to build an extra 3.5 million houses by 2030.
- **Rising Demand:** The country's population has grown rapidly, driven in part by high levels of immigration. While immigration boosts the economy, it also places additional pressure on housing markets, especially in major urban areas.
- **Speculation and Investment:** Both foreign and domestic investors have increasingly purchased real estate for investment purposes, contributing to inflated prices and reducing the availability of homes for first-time buyers.
- **Zoning and Regulatory Barriers:** Restrictive zoning laws and lengthy approval processes have hindered the construction of new housing, particularly high-density housing, further exacerbating the supply issue.
- **Low Interest Rates:** Historically low interest rates in the past decade made borrowing cheaper, fueling increased demand for housing but also contributing to rising prices.

## The Impact on Canadians

The housing affordability crisis has a range of consequences:

- **Rising Homelessness:** As housing costs outpace incomes, more Canadians are at risk of homelessness. According to the Homeless Hub, homelessness has increased across Canada, particularly in major cities like Toronto and Vancouver.
- **Intergenerational Inequality:** Young Canadians are particularly affected, with many unable to afford homes or forced to take on massive debt. This has widened the wealth gap between older homeowners and younger renters.

## THE HOUSING AFFORDABILITY (CONT...)

● **Mental Health Strain:** The stress of unaffordable housing has had a detrimental effect on mental health. A study by the Canadian Mental Health Association found that housing insecurity is a major contributor to anxiety, depression, and overall poor mental health.

### Potential Solutions

Addressing the housing affordability crisis requires comprehensive and multi-faceted solutions:

1. **Increase Housing Supply:** Governments must prioritize building affordable housing, especially high-density units in urban centers. The CMHC has called for large investments in housing infrastructure to address the gap.
2. **Regulate Speculation:** Implementing measures like the Speculation and Vacancy Tax in British Columbia can help curb speculative real estate purchases and prevent homes from being left vacant, making them available for more Canadians.
3. **Reform Zoning Laws:** Municipalities should revise zoning laws to allow for the development of more affordable housing options, including duplexes, townhouses, and apartment buildings.
4. **Support for Renters:** Expanding rent control and funding for rental assistance programs can provide immediate relief to renters facing skyrocketing costs.
5. **Address Income Inequality:** Policies aimed at increasing wages and reducing income inequality will allow more Canadians to afford housing without overburdening their finances.

[Learn more about BC's Speculation and Vacancy Tax](#)

### Conclusion

The housing affordability situation in Canada is a complicated subject that requires immediate attention. Many Canadians are having difficulty finding safe and affordable homes due to the sharp increase in housing expenses, low wages, and a limited supply of available dwellings. Long-term solutions would necessitate a more comprehensive approach that also addresses economic inequality and mental health issues associated with home insecurity, even while government initiatives like expanding the housing supply and controlling speculation can help ease some of these pressures.

Canada can progress toward a future where everyone has access to secure, affordable housing by tackling these underlying issues and putting comprehensive solutions into place, resulting in a more just and sustainable society.

For further reading, explore these resources:

[CMHC Housing Market Outlook](#)

[National Bank of Canada Housing Affordability Monitor](#)

[Homeless Hub Research](#)

[Canadian Mental Health Association Reports](#)

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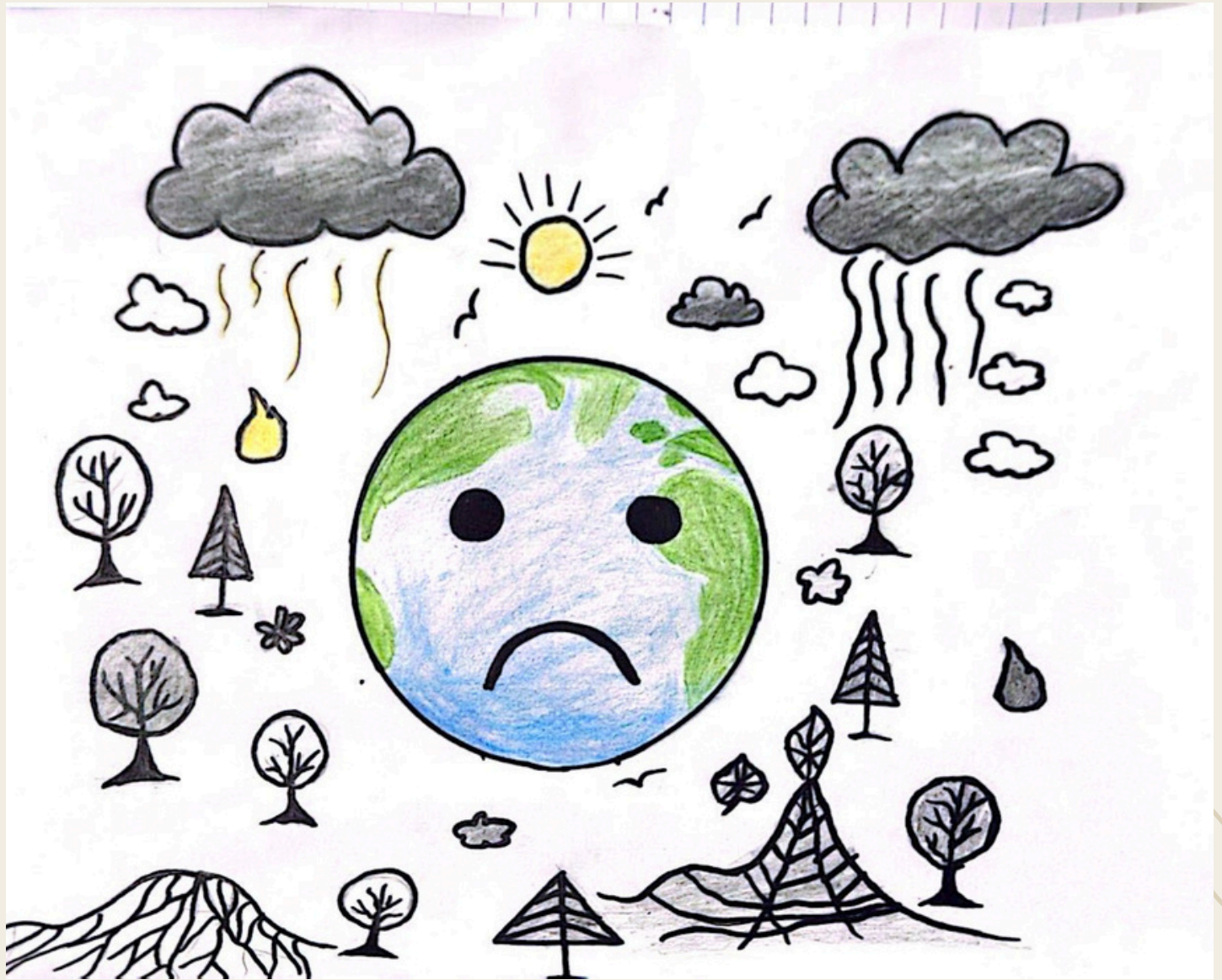
# OUR ENVIRONMENT

Faiza Akter, Birchmount Park Colligate Institute

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# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT / SDG-RELATED ACTIVITIES FROM AROUND THE WORLD IN JULY-DECEMBER 2025

**Nafiz Faiyaz**

Youth Worker at Bangladeshi Canadian Community Services and Mechanical Engineering graduate from McGill University

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Date	Organizer(s)	What the activity/project did
<p><b>July 9, 2025</b></p>	<p><b>UNDP China</b></p>	<p>Opened <i>Re:Think 2025 Innovation Week</i> in Chengdu under the theme "Harnessing Creativity for a Sustainable Future". Brought together creatives, policy makers, social entrepreneurs to explore inclusive urban futures; included a capacity building event for SMEs to learn international sustainability standards, with a focus on cultural &amp; creative sectors. (UNDP)</p>
<p><b>July 14-23, 2025</b></p>	<p><b>UNITAR &amp; UN DESA (with CIFAL centres)</b></p>	<p>Ran the "SDG Learning, Training and Practice" series (SDGs in Practice) during the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF). These virtual sessions shared tools, knowledge, and practical solutions towards implementing the 2030 Agenda. (UNITAR)</p>

Date	Organizer(s)	What the activity/project did
<p><b>July 15, 2025</b></p>	<p><b>United Nations Centre for Regional Development (UNCRD), UN DESA, Permanent Missions of Maldives, Philippines, Japan, UN-Habitat, Ministry of Environment Japan, APPG Malaysia</b></p>	<p>Side event at HLPF: "3R (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle) and Circular Economy towards Sustainable and Resilient Coastal and Marine Ecosystems in Asia and the Pacific—Implications for SDG 14 (Life Below Water)". Explored circular economy strategies for protecting coastal/marine ecosystems. (<a href="https://uncrd.un.org">uncrd.un.org</a>)</p>
<p><b>July 21, 2025</b></p>	<p><b>UAE / National Committee on SDGs, UN DESA</b></p>	<p>Launched the 2025 edition of the UAE's "2045 SDG Report" at the UN HQ in New York, as part of HLPF. The report &amp; survey aimed to shape the UAE's sustainable development future with data and insights. (<a href="#">Arab Herald</a>)</p>
<p><b>July 16, 2025</b></p>	<p><b>WFP, Government of Pakistan, Green Climate Fund</b></p>	<p>Launched the <i>Integrated Climate Risk Management for Strengthened Resilience to Climate</i> project in Buner &amp; Shangla districts (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa). Funded ~US\$9.8 million to protect flood-prone communities: establishing early warning systems, improving communication &amp; coordination among government departments, training communities in interpreting warnings and preparing for climate shocks. (<a href="#">The United Nations in Pakistan</a>)</p>

Date	Organizer(s)	What the activity/project did
<p><b>August 19, 2025</b></p>	<p><b>CKC (Vietnam), Oxfam in Vietnam, EU (via Women-led Green Partnership Programme)</b></p>	<p>CKC joined the “Project on Supporting Women-Led Green Initiatives” (PWG). In Phong Dinh Ward, Hue City, they developed a women-led, eco-friendly craft village supply chain (handicrafts, tourism / textile) to empower local women, build sustainable livelihoods, and promote circular economy practices. (<a href="#">CKC</a>)</p>
<p><b>August 23, 2025</b></p>	<p><b>UNDP Jordan, UN Volunteers (UNV), Danish-Arab Partnership Programme (DAPP), Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark</b></p>	<p>Launched Youth4Sustainability 2025 Network in Aqaba. Workshop engaged youth as sustainability ambassadors; the network provides framework/tools for youth to lead in green growth and climate action in their communities. (<a href="#">UNDP</a>)</p>
<p><b>September 4, 2025</b></p>	<p><b>WWF-Canada, with several post-secondary institutions across Canada</b></p>	<p>WWF-Canada’s Living Campuses 2025 certification. Seven universities/colleges earned the certification, having done projects like planting ~1,700 native trees/shrubs, removing invasive species from wetlands (&gt;31,000 m<sup>2</sup>), applying bird-safe window art etc. (<a href="#">WWF.CA</a>)</p>

<b>Date</b>	<b>Organizer(s)</b>	<b>What the activity/project did</b>
<b>September 16, 2025</b>	<b>Grey Sauble Conservation Authority (GSCA), Canada</b>	Launched or promoted its Tree Planting Program aimed at landowners for Spring 2026: helping with windbreaks, riparian buffer zones, larger tree planting, offering financial support via the Forests Canada's "50 Million Tree Program" (grants for up to 90%) to enhance biodiversity, improve watershed health, etc. ( <a href="http://greysauble.on.ca">greysauble.on.ca</a> )

Date	Organizer(s)	What the activity/project did
<b>20–24 October, 2025</b>	<b>UN-GGIM &amp; partners</b>	United Nations Geospatial Knowledge & Innovation Week (UN GeoNow 2025) – global dialogue on advancing geospatial knowledge and innovation to support the SDGs with participants from gov't, academia, private sector. ( <a href="http://ggim.un.org">ggim.un.org</a> )
<b>26–27 October, 2025</b>	<b>Habitat &amp; Shanghai gov't</b>	2025 SDG Cities Global Conference – focused on people-centered smart cities and innovative sustainable urban development, with themed sessions and public engagement. ( <a href="#">GlobeNewswire</a> )
<b>29 October, 2025</b>	<b>UN SDG Action Campaign</b>	UN SDG Action Awards Ceremony in Rome – showcased creative and impactful initiatives from across 190+ countries advancing SDG progress. ( <a href="#">UN SDG Action Awards</a> )

Date	Organizer(s)	What the activity/project did
<b>November 4–6, 2025</b>	<b>United Nations &amp; partners</b>	Second World Summit for Social Development (WSSD2) – intergovernmental summit to advance social justice, inclusive economic policies, and shared solutions for sustainable development (UNDESA/UN events calendar). ( <a href="#">Sustainable Development Goals</a> )
<b>December 2–4, 2025</b>	<b>United Nations</b>	UN Water Conference – global gatherings to accelerate actions on water security, sanitation, and sustainable freshwater management. ( <a href="#">United Nations</a> )
<b>Dec 8–12, 2025</b>	<b>UNEP / UN Member States</b>	UN Environment Assembly (UNEA-7) in Nairobi – high-level discussions and resolutions on environmental protection, climate resilience, biodiversity, pollution and sustainable economies. ( <a href="#">Geneva Environment</a> )

<b>Date</b>	<b>Organizer(s)</b>	<b>What the activity/project did</b>
<b>Throughout Q4 2025</b>	<b>Various UN bodies</b>	SDG observance days & themed global events (World Cities Day, World Food Day, World Toilet Day, etc.), mobilizing awareness, policy action, stakeholder dialogues tied to SDGs. ( <u>United Nations</u> )

# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT / SDG-RELATED ACTIVITIES WITHIN CANADA IN JULY-DECEMBER 2025

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## Nafiz Faiyaz

Youth Worker at Bangladeshi Canadian Community Services and Mechanical Engineering graduate from McGill University

Date	Organizer(s)	What the activity/project did
July 15, 2025	Government of Canada + Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM)	Invested \$16,886,020 to plant ~77,500 new trees via 27 projects across multiple provinces (PEI, NS, NB, ON, MB, SK, AB, BC). Activities include restoring/increasing urban/rural canopy, planting trees in residential/private institutional lands, parks, etc. ( <a href="#">Federation of Canadian Municipalities</a> )
July 22, 2025	Environment and Climate Change Canada	Invested over \$14.4 million into 17 projects to foster youth environmental literacy across Canada: combining western science and Indigenous knowledge, school- and community-based education, teacher training, hands-on/outdoor programming. ( <a href="#">Canada.ca</a> )

Date	Organizer(s)	What the activity/project did
<p><b>July 21, 2025</b></p>	<p><b>Government of Canada + Our Land for the Future Trust / Indigenous partners</b></p>	<p>Signed a grant of \$300 million (plus philanthropic funds) for NWT: Our Land for the Future, one of the largest Indigenous-led land conservation projects in the world—stewardship &amp; conservation across ~380,000 km<sup>2</sup> in Northwest Territories (boreal/tundra), protecting terrestrial &amp; freshwater areas. (<a href="#">Cantech Letter</a>)</p>
<p><b>August 7, 2025</b></p>	<p><b>Government of Canada / Natural Resources Canada</b></p>	<p>Invested \$8.2 million into the Sisson Project in New Brunswick to support feasibility study &amp; engineering design of a tungsten-molybdenum mine, under the Critical Minerals Strategy—helping strengthen mineral supply chain for clean energy etc. (<a href="#">Canada.ca</a>)</p>
<p><b>August 12, 2025</b></p>	<p><b>Natural Resources Canada</b></p>	<p>Announced \$45.7 million via the Build and Mobilize Foundational Wildland Fire Knowledge program for 30 projects nationwide—research, risk assessments, mitigation and Indigenous-led fire stewardship to better understand and respond to wildfire risk. (<a href="#">Canada.ca</a>)</p>

Date	Organizer(s)	What the activity/project did
<b>August 15, 2025</b>	<b>Natural Resources Canada</b>	Invested over \$13 million in five Ontario clean energy / grid-modernization projects via the Energy Innovation Program (Smart Grids Demonstration). These help integrate things like solar, batteries, make grids "smarter" (e.g. allowing customers with solar panels/batteries to interact with electricity markets). ( <a href="https://www.canada.ca">Canada.ca</a> )
<b>August 18, 2025</b>	<b>Natural Resources Canada</b>	\$540,300 for wildfire-fighter training in Saskatchewan and Manitoba via the Fighting and Managing Wildfires in a Changing Climate (FMWCC) Program. These include community members and First Nations; integrating traditional knowledge; building local wildfire response capacity. ( <a href="https://www.canada.ca">Canada.ca</a> )
<b>August 22, 2025</b>	<b>Environment and Climate Change Canada + FCM (Green Municipal Fund)</b>	Around \$5.2 million to support 70 municipalities to develop climate adaptation plans, risk assessments, and climate-aware asset management under the Local Leadership for Climate Adaptation initiative. ( <a href="https://www.canada.ca">Canada.ca</a> )

Date	Organizer(s)	What the activity/project did
<b>August 26, 2025</b>	<b>Natural Resources Canada</b>	\$33 million to the George Gordon First Nation (Wicehtowak Solar Ltd.) to build a 32 MW Indigenous- owned solar farm near Regina, SK; includes a pilot for electricity sales to industrial customers via power purchase agreement. ( <a href="https://www.canada.ca">Canada.ca</a> )
<b>August 26, 2025</b>	<b>Environment and Climate Change Canada + Metro Vancouver etc.</b>	Invested \$2.5 million in climate action in Metro Vancouver's Waste-to-Energy District energy project in Burnaby, BC. The project captures steam from existing processes to provide heating/hot water for up to 50,000 homes, cutting ~70,000 tonnes of GHGs per year. ( <a href="https://www.canada.ca">Canada.ca</a> )
<b>August 22, 2025</b>	<b>Environment and Climate Change Canada + FCM (Green Municipal Fund)</b>	Around \$5.2 million to support 70 municipalities to develop climate adaptation plans, risk assessments, and climate-aware asset management under the Local Leadership for Climate Adaptation initiative. ( <a href="https://www.canada.ca">Canada.ca</a> )

Date	Organizer(s)	What the activity/project did
<p><b>September 10, 2025</b></p>	<p><b>Government of Canada + FCM</b></p>	<p>Announced \$85.5 million investment for sustainable affordable housing through the Green Municipal Fund's Sustainable Affordable Housing initiative. Funds split between capital/pilot projects and planning/feasibility studies, to retrofit/build energy-efficient, affordable housing. (<a href="#">Federation of Canadian Municipalities</a>)</p>
<p><b>September 25, 2025</b></p>	<p><b>Housing, Infrastructure &amp; Communities Canada</b></p>	<p>~\$1.3 million to enhance natural infrastructure in Alberta: ecological restoration, green roofs, restoring native plants, stormwater retention/diversion, park restoration etc. (<a href="#">Canada.ca</a>)</p>
<p><b>September 29, 2025</b></p>	<p><b>Canadian Space Agency</b></p>	<p>\$5 million to fund 20 projects using satellite data &amp; AI to monitor and protect biodiversity/natural heritage : habitat degradation, invasive species detection, water quality, migratory birds etc. Some projects are in collaboration with Indigenous organizations. (<a href="#">Canada.ca</a>)</p>

Date	Organizer(s)	What the activity/project did
<p><b>October, 2025</b></p>	<p><b>Toronto Climate Week &amp; partners</b></p>	<p>Launch of Toronto Climate Week – multi-day event with 100+ climate &amp; clean tech activities to strengthen Canada’s sustainable innovation ecosystem. (<a href="#">Reddit</a>)</p>
<p><b>November 14, 2025</b></p>	<p><b>Canada Water Agency</b></p>	<p>Freshwater Ecosystem Initiatives calls for projects – funding opportunities (closing Dec 4–19) for community-led freshwater protection and restoration across key waterbodies (Great Lakes, St. Lawrence, Fraser, Wolastoq, Lake Winnipeg). (<a href="#">Canada</a>)</p>
<p><b>2025(Multiple )</b></p>	<p><b>Canada Green Building Council</b></p>	<p>2025 CAGBC Awards – celebrated sustainable building innovations like deep carbon retrofit projects (e.g., Fairmont Royal York decarbonization) showcasing GHG-reduction and heritage preservation. (<a href="#">Canada Green Building Council (CAGBC)</a>)</p>

# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT / SDG-RELATED ACTIVITIES WITHIN BANGLADESH IN JULY-DECEMBER 2025

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Youth Worker at Bangladeshi Canadian Community Services and Mechanical Engineering Graduate from McGill University

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<p><b>July 3, 2025</b></p>	<p><b>MoEFCC (Ministry of Environment, Forest &amp; Climate Change), DoE (Department of Environment), BFD (Bangladesh Forest Department), supported by SIDA (Sweden)</b></p>	<p>Signed a grant agreement for a project titled "Strengthening Capacity of MoEFCC, DoE, and BFD for Natural Resource Management and Improved Climate Resilience". The project will build institutional capacity, improve monitoring of Ecologically Critical Areas (ECAs), conduct ecological restoration, and establish Bangladesh's first Wildlife Trust Fund. (<a href="#">Dazzling Dawn</a>)</p>
<p><b>July 13, 2025</b></p>	<p><b>United Nations Youth Advisory Group (UNYAG), UN Country Team, youth members from across Bangladesh</b></p>	<p>First workshop of UNYAG in Bangladesh at UN House, Dhaka. Brought youth from across the country for a full-day session to integrate youth perspectives into Bangladesh's Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework and SDG-related policies. (<a href="#">The United Nations in Bangladesh</a>)</p>

Date	Organizer(s)	What the activity/project did
<p><b>12–18 August 2025</b></p>	<p><b>YPSA (Young Power in Social Action) through its Centre for Youth and Development (CYD), Department of Youth Development, with support from youth- and development-oriented CSOs (YOSD, YASID, THP, SSD Youth Foundation)</b></p>	<p>Observed International &amp; National Youth Day (IYD) with events under theme “Local Youth Actions for the SDGs and Beyond”. Activities included awareness programs, youth dialogues on SDG localization, women’s empowerment, environmental awareness, distribution of training certificates and youth loan checks. Emphasis on collaboration between government, civil society, and youth for sustainable development. (<u>Young Power in Social Action (YPSA)</u>)</p>
<p><b>August 14, 2025</b></p>	<p><b>UNOPS Bangladesh + UN Resident Coordinator’s Office (UNRCO), with youth participants</b></p>	<p>Hosted the 16th SDG Café in Dhaka on International Youth Day. Theme: “Moment of Opportunity: Youth initiatives in Climate and Clean Energy.” Platform for youth to share initiatives, challenges, and ideas for clean energy / climate action. (<u>The United Nations in Bangladesh</u>)</p>

Date	Organizer(s)	What the activity/project did
<b>August 5, 2025</b>	<b>Government of Bangladesh / General Economics Division, Planning Commission (VNR report)</b>	Released the Voluntary National Review (VNR) 2025 which assesses the country's progress toward the SDGs. Identified that Bangladesh needs US\$132.59 billion extra annually to stay on track for achieving the SDGs by 2030; highlighted successes (poverty reduction, clean energy, sanitation, infrastructure) as well as areas lagging (inequalities, gender equality, sustainable cities). ( <a href="#">The Business Standard</a> )
<b>24-25 September, 2025</b>	<b>BAYA (Bangladesh APFSD Youth Alliance), Young Power in Social Action (YPSA) as Secretariat, civil society, youth leaders, academics, policymakers</b>	Organized the Global SDG Youth Summit 2025 in Dhaka under theme "Shaping the Future: Together for SDG 2025". Over 300 participants. Focused on youth leadership, climate justice, green innovation, and mobilizing youth for local SDG action. ( <a href="#">Young Power in Social Action (YPSA)</a> )
<b>September 20, 2025</b>	<b>World Bank, Environment Adviser Syeda Rizwana Hasan, Department of Environment (DoE)</b>	Seminar titled "Strengthening Environmental Regulatory and Enforcement Capacity for a Sustainable Bangladesh" in Sreepur, Gazipur. Emphasis on stronger enforcement of environmental regulation, transparency, institutional capacity, and ending faulty environmental clearances in polluting industries (dyeing, brick kilns, cement). (Bangladesh News Gazette)

Date	Organizer(s)	What the activity/project did
<b>November 2, 2025</b>	<b>Government of Bangladesh &amp; UNDP</b>	Launched low-carbon urban development initiative with GEF funding to advance energy-efficient, climate-resilient transformation in urban centres. ( <a href="#">UNDP</a> )
<b>Nov/Dec 2025 (Planned)</b>	<b>UN &amp; Bangladesh Partners</b>	Joint Steering Committee meeting and SDG progress planning to accelerate SDG implementation with focus on inclusivity, resilience and climate action. ( <a href="#">The United Nation</a> )
<b>Throughout 2025</b>	<b>Joint SDG Fund</b>	Accelerate SDG Localization in Bangladesh programme supporting gender-responsive local SDG action, community-led planning and youth engagement (implementation ongoing into late 2025). ( <a href="#">Homepage   Joint SDG Fund</a> ).