

Bangladesh

Status of women

- Relatively high, especially compared to India, other S. Asia
- Female LFPR – 58% (double India)
- Fertility rate = 2.3, fallen from 4.5 in 1990
- Female Prime Minister and 20% Parliament members
- Low maternal mortality and few underweight children

NGOs

- Much of relatively high status of women and social indicators compared to other S. Asian countries due to role of NGOs
- Both Grameen Bank and BRAC originated in Bangladesh

BRAC

- Originally Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee formed in 1970s to rebuild after war/famine
- Employs 100,000 – 70% women – in handicraft, dairy and food production, fisheries
- Funds used to invest in literacy, community centers, community health clinics
- Funds village organizations to assist women, small farmers and landless rural residents
- Funds vocational training for women
- Operates primary schools – 60% female students
- 1000s of clinics provide immunizations, contraception and family planning, help with breast-feeding

Grameen

- Formed in 1974
- To end predatory lending to poor
- Provides micro-credit to form small businesses
- Claims 99% repayment rate and is funded largely through repayments
- 94% ownership by borrowers
- 90% loans to women
- Often requires that borrowers children be enrolled in school
- Encourages savings

Government

- Corrupt – works closely with garment firms
- Most businesses report paying bribes
- Estimated that capital flight = 3x all foreign aid
- Taxes/GDP – 10%, partly due to tax evasion
- Consequently, inadequate revenues >>> fall in health, education funding as %GDP. Health insurance limited, but has invested, with NGOs, in clinics and in sanitation
- Also low infrastructure funding contributes to low FDI