



## UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' VIEWS ON THE EXTENT OF OPTIMISM ABOUT THE FUTURE OF RISING BANGLADESH

Md. Harunur Rashid<sup>1\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Jatiya Kabi Kazi Nazrul Islam University, Mymensingh, Bangladesh

Bangladesh achieved tremendous socio-economic progress in the last three decades. This development has generated optimism about the country notably among the youths. The study aims to assess the extent of optimism among the university students about the future status of Bangladesh and to investigate whether there are significant differences in their level of optimism. The study followed quantitative approach and used social survey method. Self-administered structured questionnaire was used to collect primary data. The result shows that nearly 90% respondents were optimistic about the future of the country while only one-tenth of the students were pessimistic. Chi-Square tests revealed no significant differences in their extent of optimism irrespective of variations in their socio-economic backgrounds- educational status, nature of university, family income, residential address, fathers' profession, and the nature of family. To realize this level of optimism towards a developed nation, government needs to take a number of robust initiatives- youth friendly policy framework, adequate investment in education and health sector, creating decent employment opportunities, prudent macro-economic management and genuine measures for ensuring good governance. The findings of the study will give useful insight for policy makers, academia, practitioners, policy advocates, development thinkers and inquisitive learners of governance studies to understand the youths' attitudes towards their country.

**Keywords:** university students, future status, optimism, rising Bangladesh

---

\* Corresponding author: Md. Harunur Rashid, Department of Public Administration and Governance Studies, Jatiya Kabi Kazi Nazrul Islam University, Trishal, Mymensingh-2224, Bangladesh. E-mail: harun\_du.rashid92@yahoo.com.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Achievements and continued progress of Bangladesh in all sectors—manufacturing, social indicators, sports, growing architectural prominence, etc. are revealing the prosperous status of tomorrow's Bangladesh. The country is becoming 28<sup>th</sup> largest economy surpassing Australia, Spain, and Malaysia within 2030 as predicted by PricewaterhouseCoopers (Ashraf, & Haque, 2018). The country's development trajectory gained momentum since the second half of the 1<sup>st</sup> decade of this century. The records on socio-economic indicators are exceptionally sound in the last decades as the country graduated to lower-middle income country from the Least Development Countries (LDCs) progressing towards developing country in 2024. Its aspiration is to become higher middle-income country in 2031 and developed country in 2041. Bangladesh obtained 8% gross domestic product (GDP) growth and \$1909 per capita income in the fiscal year 2018-19. The country has been regarded as one of the fastest growing economies in the world. The rate of reducing poverty is promising— 1.8% from 2000-2005, 1.7% from 2005-2010; and 1.2% from 2010-2016; the rate of lower poverty line is in below 13% and life expectancy stood at 72 years in 2018 (Alam, 2019).

Ministry of Finance (2019) reveals that for Human Resource Development (HRD), one of the top priorities of its development agenda, government allocates around 22 percent of its budgetary resources. The review discloses the country's remarkable achievement in Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) through prioritizing health, nutrition, and population sectors. The programs were able to reduce child and maternal mortality rate and made success in life expectancy. This development has been reflected its position in Human Development Report 2018 as Bangladesh ranked 136<sup>th</sup> among 189 countries in HRD. The interventions are facilitating to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The annual economic review mentions its goals of 7<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan's target to reduce poverty rate at 18.6% in 2020; the National Social Security Strategy (NSSS) boosts social security, BDT 64,174 allocated for social safety-net program, and causes for consistent graduation from poverty line (Ministry of Finance [MOF], 2019).

Despite the devastating impact of COVID-19, Bangladesh achieved 5.24% GDP growth and the per capita income increased to \$2064 in FY 2019-20, according to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics estimation (Ovi, 2020). International Monetary Fund (IMF) forecasts that India's GDP and per capita income will contract by 10.2% and 11.3% respectively in 2020-21 while Bangladesh's GDP will increase by 3.8% in spite of negative impact of the pandemic (Financial Express,

2020). Haider (2019) delivered that Bangladesh has tremendous opportunity ahead because of its demographic dividend; 34% people are aged 15 and younger while 65% people are productive aged between 15 and 64. The four key elements- human resource development, people involvement, civil service and use of technology in business having enthusiastic tech savvy youth generation, digital financial inclusion are translating Digital Bangladesh Vision and transforming towards digital economy posing great prospects ahead (Rashid, 2020).

In 2020, the total populations of Bangladesh stood at 166.50 million (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics [BBS], 2020). Bangladesh is the 7<sup>th</sup> most populous country in the world and 20% of its population is young aged between 15 to 24 (United Nations Populations Fund [UNFPA], n. d). Around 36 lacs students in 37 public universities and 3.5 lacs students in private universities are studying in Bangladesh till 2017 (Bangladesh University Grants Commission [UGC], 2018). A study conducted by British Council in collaboration with Action Aid and University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB) in 2015 among the youth aged between 15 to 30; they found that more than two-third (72%) youths were optimistic about the future of Bangladesh while only 12% were less optimistic; and majority of the respondents ticked that the country is heading towards right direction ('Young People Optimistic', 2015). International Republican Institute (IRI) revealed their survey findings that 72% Bangladeshi think their economic situation will be improved and 64% think the country is heading towards right direction (IRI, 2015). Nationwide youth survey disclosed that two-thirds youth are optimistic about the political situation (BRAC, 2018).

Target 4.3 of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set by United Nations (UN) in 2015 emphasized for affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education by 2030 (United Nations [UN], 2015). Bangladesh's Perspective Plan 2021 and 2041 set priority on human resource development, consistent economic growth and sustainable development as the country aspired for becoming a developed nation within 2041 (Ministry of Planning [MoP], 2020). Global goals as well as national goals of Bangladesh emphasized on sustainable development. For achieving developmental goals, the country needs to hear the university students' views to undertake the right policy direction towards development trajectory. This study has immense importance for understanding students' outlook about the future status of Bangladesh. The government authorities will get significant insights from the findings of this study whether their development policies, agenda, and strategies are being conducted in right direction.

Previous research works and studies were conducted nationally on youths in Bangladesh but not single research was implemented solely on investigating university students' extent of optimism about the future status of Bangladesh where the present research aims to deal on this particular area. The study aims to know about socio-economic achievements of Bangladesh occurred throughout the decades. The primary purpose of the study is to explore extent of optimism among the university students of Bangladesh about future status of their country and to investigate whether there have significant differences in opinion irrespective of variations in respondents' socio-economic background.

## 2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Bangladesh has made steady economic growth in the last decade; averaged 6.5 percent in every year, and it reduced poverty remarkably with consistency from 44.2 percent to 14.8 percent in FY 2016-17 (World Bank, 2020). The leading lender in the world, The World Bank, praised the achievement of Bangladesh's progress in food production, literacy rate, and life expectancy; the country fulfilled all three criteria for graduation from LDC to lower middle-income country in 2018 aspiring for formal departure from LDC list in 2024. World Health Organization (WHO, 2020) praised the efforts of Bangladesh in the advancement of health indicators, marching on the right track to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially in reducing under-five mortality; it reduced from 36 per 1000 live birth in 2015 to 29 in 2018.

The size of GDP of the country increased from \$102 billion in 2009 to \$274 in 2018 showed in the report of The World Bank; the figure reaches \$300 in mid-June, 2019; while International Monetary Fund (IMF) reports that Bangladesh is the 30<sup>th</sup> largest economy in the world in line with Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) ('GDP growth tops 26 countries', 2019). Tremendous social change has occurred in Bangladesh as the country poised to becoming a developed nation within 2041 known as 'Vision 2041'. The per capita income stood at \$2554 where 6.5% was average GDP growth in last fifteen years in a row regarded as 37<sup>th</sup> largest economy in the world with \$409 billion economy. Since 2001, export growth rate was 11% in every year stood at 38.75 billion US Dollar in FY2021-22 (Mahmood, 2021). Centre for Research and Innovation (CRI) reports that Bangladesh is transforming into tiger as it reduced poverty significantly (80% in early 1970s to 20% in 2019), investment GDP ratio increased at 31.6% in FY 2018-19, received record-\$3.6 billion foreign direct investment (FDI) in 2019, produced 45.4 million metric ton food-grain in 2020, recorded in steady growth in service sector to 6.7%, access to

electricity reached at 99% in 2021, rate of literacy increased at 74.7% in 2019 from 26.8% in 1974 (CRI, 2021).

Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Sheikh Hasina, explains the development miracles at the World Economic Forum (WEF) as the country has 30 million middle and affluent people and the number is increasing rapidly aspiring to translate 'Sonar Bangla'-an exploitation-free and just society; the country has been transforming towards knowledge intensive society. She highlighted a number of key aspects of development- value laden leadership, rapid urbanization as the country's 48% people will live in urban area within 2030, high mobile internet penetration, spreading technological amenities at the grass root level offering new horizon- 600,000 people are engaged in freelancing till now, diversification of export industries freeing from dependency on the apparel industry and so on. The Premier mentioned the achievement in the agricultural sector where Bangladesh has ensured self-sufficiency in food production in many respects such as-world fourth largest rice producer, second largest jute producing nation, fifth largest vegetables producing country (Hasina, 2019).

CRI, a renowned research organization on governance and development in Bangladesh, reveals a report titled- 'A Decade of Development: Bangladesh 2009-2018' in 2018 by summarizing the achievements in the last decade of Bangladesh in various sectors; the report highlights the country's achievement in economic development, human development, health and nutrition, social protection, grain and energy production, and digitalization (CRI, 2018). Chowdhury (2020) opined that Bangladesh has tremendous opportunity to enjoy the positive outcome of demographic dividend; if a country's larger portion of people in working age (15-24) and the smaller part of its people in non-working age (children and older-65+). He mentioned also that if Bangladesh can manage properly its working age people as the country has 106.10 million working people—the actual labor force is 62.1 million excluding either underemployed or fully unemployed, demographic dividend has four benefits- improving labor supply, growth of saving, human capital and, domestic market expansion.

International Republican Institute's (IRI) center revealed their survey outcome on Bangladesh that 75% people are thinking Bangladesh is in right direction while 63% opined that their economic condition is improved; 68% expect better economic condition in the next year (IRI, 2017). 71% people of Bangladesh is optimistic that their children future will be better off than them. The findings were revealed by Washington based 'fact tank' Pew Research Centre (Byron, 2014). World Bank vice-president Philippe Le Houerou is optimistic about Bangladesh for the country's achievement in reduction of poverty, sustainable economic

growth and shared prosperity (“WB Optimistic about Bangladesh”, 2014). According to joint report by British Council and Action Aid, based on research conducted in 2015, 75% youths are optimistic about the future of Bangladesh while only 12% are pessimistic. According to the study, political instability, poor transport system, electricity crisis, inflation, increasing corruption, and lack of job opportunities are the major problems of Bangladesh they think (“Young people optimistic”, 2015). Though unemployment among educated youths is the key issue of concern but youths are optimistic and have strong entrepreneurial spirit, they see future is not so bleak (Melik, 2012). Less educated youths prioritize for bright future for their children and asset accumulation whereas graduates choose for quality education, decent job and success in their business; overwhelming majority of youths aspire for government job (BRAC, 2018).

There is no research or survey is found which has been conducted recently on university students' views about the future of Bangladesh. The previous researches or surveys were conducted by British Council and Action Aid Bangladesh, BRAC, and IRI on general youths throughout the country.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

#### *Research Design*

The study was conducted based on a cross-sectional quantitative design. Social survey was used as research method. Quantitative research design provides numerical explanation of attitudes, behavior and experiences by analyzing the sample of the research population (Babones, 2016). Quantitative research, regarded as the best method, identifies the key influencing factors and variables (Creswell, 2009).

#### *Research Locale, Research Respondents, Sampling procedure, and Ethics*

University students who are studying in different public and private universities in Bangladesh were the study population. The words ‘youths’ and ‘university students’ have been used synonymously and interchangeably throughout the study. Figure 1 shows the map of Bangladesh and the universities located in Bangladesh were included in the study.

The study used probability sampling technique where simple random strategies were applied. A total 95 university students (both public and private) participated in the survey using different internet tools. Though the sample size is small but respondents were the university students; known as critical mass; their opinion matters in governance. The data collection process has progressed amidst

the pandemic. Government imposed mobility restrictions and created constraints for both researcher as well as for respondents.

In conducting the survey, the purpose of the research was relayed to the respondents. Researcher assured that respondents will not face any harm in future for offering their opinion. Written and oral permission were taken during the data collection from the respondents. The research team maintains objectivity in every phase of the study from initiation to the completion of this research work.



Figure 1: Location of the Study (Bangladesh).

Source: Geology.com (2022)

### ***Research Instruments and Data Collection***

Required data and information were collected from both primary and secondary resources. Primary data and information were collected from using different tools and procedures through employing quantitative data collection tools and strategies. Youths, universities students regarded as the respondents of this study, were the sources of primary data collected from the field. On the other hand, sources of secondary resource were published books, journals, research articles, news, newspaper articles, government and international organization reports, various internet resources, and so on.

The study employed multi-method data collection tools and strategies. A structured questionnaire was developed and the data was collected from respondents using Google docs' form. Besides e-mail, interviews were also conducted. Due to COVID-19 pandemic, other technological devices-mobile phone, internet tools were used in conducting the study. Likert scale was used in the questionnaire for measuring the degree of optimism in views. This study is conducted in October 2020 amidst COVID-19 pandemic.

### ***Data Analysis***

Collected data and information were converted as input in SPSS 25 version using Microsoft Excel. After essential coding and recoding in software, a number of statistical operations were conducted. As the study was progressed during COVID-19 pandemic having limited funds, researcher was unable to conduct validation process of the questionnaire. The questionnaire used in the study was consistent with a number of similar studies conducted in throughout Bangladesh on youths' outlook about the future by International Republican Institute in 2015, BRAC's youth survey in 2018; British Council, Action Aid Bangladesh and University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh in 2015 titled 'Next Generation Bangladesh 2015 and Beyond'. However, the previous researches were not focused on specifically on university students who are regarded as critical mass of a nation. Respondents' socio-demographic information- educational status, nature of university, faculties, residential status, family income, fathers' profession, and nature of family was considered as independent variables as the study investigated whether their backgrounds influenced on determining extent of optimism (dependent variable) about the future status of Bangladesh. Information related for measuring extent of optimism was collected through a number of statements for measuring level of satisfaction on socio-economic achievements of the country, perception on different sector's prospective performance, and extent of conviction about the prospects to be developed following five points Likert's scale. The research questionnaire consisted of two parts- firstly, information related to independent variables and secondly, information related on dependent variable; both types of information were collected in a structured way. As the both dependent and independent variables were in categorical in nature, Chi-Square tests were chosen to test a number of hypotheses.



## 4. RESULTS

**Respondents' Socio-demographic Information and Level of Optimism**

University students were asked a number of questions including statements to determine their level of optimism about the future prospects of Bangladesh. The study attempted to measure their extent of optimism about the future status of Bangladesh, perception about the prospects of the country, level of satisfaction on the socio-economic achievement, perception about becoming developed country, and attitude towards future status of quality education and health facilities. Table 14 depicts respondents' socio-demographic information and their level of optimism about the future status of Bangladesh.

Table 1. Respondents' Socio-demographic information and their extent of optimism about the future status of Bangladesh. (N = 95; 0 = pessimistic, 1 = optimistic).

<b>Educational Status</b>	1 = Undergrad	2 = Graduate	Total			
0 = pessimistic	6	3	9			
1 = optimistic	64	22	86			
Total	70	25	95			
<b>University Type</b>	1 = Public	2 = Private	Total			
0 = pessimistic	8	1	9			
1 = optimistic	81	5	86			
Total	89	6	95			
<b>Residence</b>	1 = Rural area	2 = Urban area	Total			
0 = pessimistic	5	4	9			
1 = optimistic	51	35	86			
Total	56	39	95			
<b>Faculty Type</b>	1 = Social Science	2 = Business	3 = Arts	4 = Science	5 = Law	Total
0 = pessimistic	4	2	1	2	0	9
1 = optimistic	70	5	7	2	2	86
Total	74	7	8	4	2	95
<b>Family Income in BDT</b>	1 = 10-20K	2 = 20-40K	3 = 40-60K	4 = 60K+	Total	
0 = pessimistic	5	2	1	1	9	
1 = optimistic	44	25	16	1	86	
Total	49	27	17	2	95	

continuation Table 1. Respondents' Socio-demographic information and their extent of optimism about the future status of Bangladesh. (N = 95; 0 = pessimistic, 1 = optimistic).

<b>Number of family member</b>	1 = 3-5	2 = 5-10	3 = 10+	Total	
0 = pessimistic	6	3	0	9	
1 = optimistic	62	22	2	86	
<b>Total</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>95</b>	

  

<b>Fathers' Profession</b>	1 = Agriculture	2 = Business	3 = Service	4 = Others	Total
0 = pessimistic	4	3	2	0	9
1 = optimistic	28	13	43	2	86
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>95</b>

  

<b>Extent of Overall Optimism</b>	Cumulative		
	Frequency	Percent	Percent
0 = pessimistic	9	9.5	9.5
1 = optimistic	86	90.5	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

A total 95 university students- graduates and undergraduates participated in the survey where 74% were undergrads studying in different subjects and more than 90% participants were from public universities. 74 respondents out of 95 were studying in various subjects of social science faculty while rest of them were from science, business, law, arts and humanities faculties. Majority portion (60%) of the students hailed from rural area and rest 40% live in urban areas. Family income range of half of the participants is BDT 10 to 20 thousand (\$1 equivalent to 93 BDT) while approximately one-fourth belongs to BDT 20 to 40 thousand and one-fifth's family income is more than 40 thousand in BDT. Most of the students represent nuclear family (around 70%)- the number of family member was 3 to 5. Diversity was seen in the student's fathers' profession where 47% are involved in service sector and 33% are in agricultural sector.

Instead of variation in the socio-demographic information of the university students, around 90% respondents are optimistic about the future status of Bangladesh while only 10% are pessimistic about the future of the country. Participants showed nearly same reaction that Bangladesh's future is bright and the country has countless prospects ahead though there were significant variations in background of the respondents on account of their residence, family income, level of education, father profession and faculty.

**University Students' Extent of Optimism about Bangladesh**

The Chi-square tests was done using SPSS to know whether independent variables- educational status, types of the university, faculty, residential address, family income, number of the family member, and fathers' profession of the respondents have significant influence in determining extent of optimism (dependent variable) about the future of Bangladesh or not have significant influence.

Table 2. Results of Chi-square tests

SL. No.	Hypotheses	P-Value (Chi-Square Value)	df (degrees of freedom)	Inferences
A.	H <sub>0</sub> : There is no significant differences in the extent optimism about future status of Bangladesh among the university students irrespective of their educational status.	>0.05 (.61)	1	Cannot reject null hypothesis (H <sub>0</sub> )
B.	H <sub>0</sub> : There is no significant differences in the extent optimism about future status of Bangladesh among the university students irrespective of their types of university.	> 0.05 (.53)	1	Cannot reject null hypothesis (H <sub>0</sub> )
C.	H <sub>0</sub> : There is no significant differences in the extent optimism about future status of Bangladesh among the university students irrespective of their faculties.	< 0.05 (.01)	4	<b>Reject the null hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>)</b>
D.	H <sub>0</sub> : There is no significant differences in the extent optimism about future status of Bangladesh among the university students irrespective of their residential address.	> 0.05 (.82)	1	Cannot reject null hypothesis (H <sub>0</sub> )

<b>E.</b>	<b>H<sub>0</sub>:</b> There is no significant differences in the extent optimism about future status of Bangladesh among the university students irrespective of their family income.	<b>&gt; 0.05 (.24)</b>	<b>3</b>	Cannot reject null hypothesis (H <sub>0</sub> )
<b>F.</b>	<b>H<sub>0</sub>:</b> There is no significant differences in the extent optimism about future status of Bangladesh among the university students irrespective of nature of their family.	<b>&gt; 0.05 (.80)</b>	<b>2</b>	Cannot reject null hypothesis (H <sub>0</sub> )
<b>G.</b>	<b>H<sub>0</sub>:</b> There is no significant differences in the extent optimism about future status of Bangladesh among the university students irrespective of their fathers' profession.	<b>&gt; 0.05 (.32)</b>	<b>3</b>	Cannot reject null hypothesis (H <sub>0</sub> )

A number of Chi-Square tests with  $\alpha=0.05$  were executed to assess whether variations in respondents' socio-demographic background influence on determining level of optimism about the future status of the country. Tests show that P-Value is greater than 0.05 ( $> 0.05$ ) in all cases having one exception (in hypothesis number C). Results shows that null hypotheses (H<sub>0</sub>) were not rejected except in item C. Results indicate that there is significant difference in the level of optimism among the students studying in different faculties. The results reveal that independent variables have no significant influences except in one case on dependent variable- extent of optimism. Inferences can be drawn that differences in university students' background have no significant influences in determining the level of optimism and there are no significant differences in opinion about the future prospects of the country irrespective of their backgrounds. It can also be claimed on the basis of the findings of the study that university students are optimistic about the future status of Bangladesh.

## 5. DISCUSSIONS

The study investigated to explore the level of optimism among the university students about the future status of Bangladesh. Students are highly optimistic about the future of Bangladesh whatever their socio-economic

background; the study found. According to Gallup survey, 74% Bangladeshi people are hopeful about the future of Bangladesh which is making most optimistic nation among the 68 countries in the world (The Dhaka Tribune, 2016). Action Aid, ULAB and British Council conducted a survey among 5,000 young people in Bangladesh titled- 'Next Generation Bangladesh: 2015 and beyond; they found that 75% young people are optimistic about the future of the country and believe the country will be more prosperous 15 years from now (British Council Bangladesh, 2015). The findings of the research- there is no statistically significant differences in the extent of optimism on the future prospects of the country among the university students though their socio-economic backgrounds were different, are similar to the outcome and forecasting of the international think tank organizations on Bangladesh. International Monetary Fund (IMF) ranks Bangladesh as 41<sup>st</sup> largest economy in the world and 2<sup>nd</sup> in South Asia; the country's size of GDP is \$397 billion (Bangla News, 2022). UK think tank organization- Centre for Economics and Business Research forecasts that Bangladesh is heading toward 25<sup>th</sup> largest economy in 2035 and by 2025, it will 34<sup>th</sup> largest economy in the world as well as it will keep second position in South Asia (Ali, 2020).

University students' level of optimism revealed in the study is consistent to the findings of some major studies by eminent research and development organizations which are working in both national and international sphere. Though residential status, economic status of the family, nature of the structure of family, fathers' profession, and educational status of the varsity students are different, nearly nine-tenth portion are hopeful about the future of Bangladesh; the study explored. International Republican Institute (IRI) revealed their study findings that 72% people of Bangladesh believe their personal economic situation will be improved and 62% people think the country is heading toward right direction (IRI, 2015). Majority portion of people are optimistic about the current and future political situation while only one-third are pessimistic (BRAC, 2018). The study found that only one-tenth students are pessimistic; the findings is consistent with the result of previous study by British Council, Action Aid and University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh, they found that 12% youths were pessimistic about the future of Bangladesh while 75% were optimistic ('Young People Optimistic', 2015).

The country achieved tremendous progress in the various indicators of socio-economic development is providing hope and inspiration to the people about the future. Bangladesh has achieved phenomenal human development over the years; it is moving toward official graduation from LDC in 2024; life

expectancy of its people is at 73 years and from 1990 to 2019, Human Development Index (HDI) value improved a lot (from 0.394 to 0.632); infant mortality rate dropped tremendously- 21 per 1,000 live birth and primary enrolment rate stood at 97% in 2019 (Jahan, 2021). Conviction on the country's future prospects among the citizens is being strengthened by the international recognition in many spheres. Bangladesh has made impressive track record in growth and development; poverty decreased from 43.5% in 1991 to 14.3% in 2016 (World Bank [WB], n. d); prospective growth rate will be 6.9% in 2022 and 7.1% in 2023 (Asian Development Bank [ADB], 2022).

## 6. CONCLUSION

Bangladesh has made remarkable progress in the different socio-economic indicators and emerged as a one of the fastest growing nations in the world. The nation aimed at becoming a developed nation in 2041; consistent growth in export, healthy remittance flow, good macro-economic management, women empowerment, and indomitable spirit of the people are the key reasons for overall development. International recognition ingrained the conviction among its citizen that the future of the country is prosperous. Despite the mentionable differences were seen in the socio-economic background of the university students in this study, there were no significant variation in the extent of optimism that overwhelming portion of the participants are optimistic about the future status of Bangladesh; the study explored.

To realize the university student's optimism, Bangladesh needs to be ensured adequate youths' friendly policy environment, at least 6% of GDP investment in educational sector, proper resource allocation in higher education especially in research and development and creation of employment opportunities. For sustaining their optimism, Bangladesh has to be done a lot in present as well as in future. Strong political commitment across the political parties to unleash the full potentials of the prospective graduates of the universities towards a glorious journey of becoming a developed country will play critical role to realize the university students' dream about the country. Keeping the pace of development amidst uncertainty, growing threat for another global economic recession, series of pandemic, war and instability in international sphere; prudent macro-economic management, human resource development, quality of governance, and growing income disparity will be the persistent challenges in the years to come as well as to keep optimism sustainable.

The findings of the study will give significant insights to the policy makers, development strategists, and policy advocates in undertaking right policy measures in the development trajectory of becoming developed country through understanding university students' outlook on future of Bangladesh. The study was conducted amidst COVID pandemic in 2020 though it was challenging to collect data from the respondents as they were in constant panic. Now, it is little bit difficult to generalize the findings of study on all Bangladeshi people as the sample size was relatively small and then the country's context was different. The researcher argues for further study taking larger and diversified sample size concerned with the present changed context and reality. Having limitations, the findings of the study will give significant insight to the policy makers, interested learners, and policy advocates to understand the extent of optimism among the Bangladeshi youth about their country's future status.

## 7. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declares no conflict of interest.

## 8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This study was funded by Jatiya Kabi Kazi Nazrul Islam University, Trishal, Mymensingh, Bangladesh.

## 9. REFERENCES

- Alam, S. (2019, November 29). Bangladesh Development Perspectives: Planning Strategies. *The Financial Express*. Retrieved from <https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/views/bangladesh-development-perspectives-implementation-challenges-1575126283>
- Ali, M. (2020, December 27). Bangladesh economy to be 25<sup>th</sup> largest by 2035. *The Business Standard*. Retrieved from <https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/bangladeshs-economy-be-25th-largest-2035-177334>
- Ashraf, K. K., & Haque, U. S. (2018, February 22). Imagining a future of Bangladesh. *The Daily Star*. Retrieved from <https://www.thedailystar.net/supplements/rethinking-urban-spaces/imagining-future-bangladesh-1538086>

- Asian Development Bank (2022). *GDP Growth Rate: Bangladesh*. Retrieved from <https://www.adb.org/countries/bangladesh/economy>
- Babones, S. (2016). Interpretive quantitative method for the social sciences. *Sociology*, 50 (3), 453-459.
- Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics [BBS], (2020). *Bangladesh Statistics 2020*. Retrieved from [https://bbs.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/bbs.portal.gov.bd/page/a1d32f13\\_8553\\_44f1\\_92e6\\_8ff80a4ff82e/2021-05-14-06-22-47723b0e1476ed905d1c121f8f07d935.pdf](https://bbs.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/bbs.portal.gov.bd/page/a1d32f13_8553_44f1_92e6_8ff80a4ff82e/2021-05-14-06-22-47723b0e1476ed905d1c121f8f07d935.pdf)
- Bangla News (2020). Bangladesh economy ranks 41<sup>st</sup> in world, 2<sup>nd</sup> in South Asia. (2022, July 16). *Bangla News 24*. Retrieved from- <https://www.banglanews24.com/english/national/news/bd/96312.details>
- BRAC (2018). *Youth of Bangladesh, Agent of Change? Youth Survey 2018*. [https://www.brac.net/program/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/YOUTH-SURVEY-2018\\_full.pdf](https://www.brac.net/program/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/YOUTH-SURVEY-2018_full.pdf)
- British Council Bangladesh (2015). The next generation is optimistic about Bangladesh's future. (2015, September 09). *British Council Bangladesh*. Retrieved from- <https://www.britishcouncil.org.bd/en/events/next-generation-optimistic-about-bangladeshs-future>
- Byron, K. R. (2014, October 12). Bangladesh promises better future for next generation: survey. *The Daily Star*. Retrieved from <https://www.thedailystar.net/bangladesh-promises-better-future-for-next-generation-survey-45217>
- Centre for Research and Information [CRI], (2021). *What milestones have Bangladesh crossed in 50 years*. Retrieved from <https://cri.org.bd/2021/03/26/what-milestones-have-bangladesh-crossed-in-50-years/>
- Centre for Research and Information [CRI]. (2018). *A Decade of Development: Bangladesh 2009-2018*. Retrieved from [http://cri.org.bd/publication/pub\\_sep\\_2018/bangladesh-development/Bangladesh-Development-and-Progress\\_Sep\\_2018.pdf](http://cri.org.bd/publication/pub_sep_2018/bangladesh-development/Bangladesh-Development-and-Progress_Sep_2018.pdf)
- Chowdhury, S. P. (2020). Demographic dividend: A roadmap to progress. *The Financial Express*, September 16. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/3iZfULk>
- Creswell, W. J. (2009). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches*. Sage Publications Inc. : USA.
- Financial Express. 2020. Why Bangladesh's GDP is projected to Grow despite COVID-19. (2020, October 23). *The Financial Express*. Retrieved from



- <https://www.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/economy/bangladesh/why-bangladeshs-gdp-is-projected-to-grow-despite-covid-19-1603459837>  
GDP growth tops 26 countries. (2019, September 03). *The Daily Star*. Retrieved from <https://www.thedailystar.net/business/bangladesh-recorded-the-highest-gdp-growth-1794736>
- Geology (2022). <https://geology.com/world/bangladesh-satellite-image.shtml>
- Haider, A. A. (2019). 'Demographic dividend' could turn into 'demographic disaster'. *The Daily Star*. Retrieved from <https://www.thedailystar.net/lifestyle/perspective/news/demographic-dividend-could-turn-demographic-disaster-1709272>
- Hasina, S. (2019). Bangladesh is Booming-and here's why, says the Prime Minister. World Economic Forum. Retrieved from <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2019/10/bangladesh-is-booming/>
- International Republican Institute (IRI) (2017). *New Poll: Bangladeshis Optimistic for the Future; Support for More Inclusive Government*. Retrieved from <https://www.iri.org/resources/new-poll-bangladeshis-optimistic-for-the-future-support-more-inclusive-government/>
- Jahan, S. (2021, June 01). Human development in Bangladesh: what do statistics tell us? *The Daily Star*. Retrieved from <https://www.thedailystar.net/opinion/news/human-development-bangladesh-what-do-the-statistics-tell-us-2102405>
- Mahmood, M. (2021, December 11). Bangladesh at 50: Economic Achievements and Challenges Ahead. *The Financial Express*. Retrieved from <https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/views/bangladesh-at-50-economic-achievements-and-challenges-ahead-1639232800>
- Melik, J. (2012). What future awaits Bangladeshi youths? *BBC World Service*. Retrieved from <https://www.bbc.com/news/business-20501072>
- Ministry of Finance, (2019). *Bangladesh Economic Review-2019*. Retrieved from [www.mof.gov.bd](http://www.mof.gov.bd)
- Ministry of Planning [MoP], (2020). Making Vision 2041 a Reality Perspective Plan of Bangladesh 2021-2041. P. 53-54. [http://plancomm.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/plancomm.portal.gov.bd/files/10509d1f\\_aa05\\_4f93\\_9215\\_f81fcd233167/2020-08-31-16-08-8f1650eb12f9c273466583c165a315a4.pdf](http://plancomm.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/plancomm.portal.gov.bd/files/10509d1f_aa05_4f93_9215_f81fcd233167/2020-08-31-16-08-8f1650eb12f9c273466583c165a315a4.pdf)
- Ovi, H. I. (2020, August 16). Bangladesh economy to recover faster than others. *The Dhaka Tribune*. Retrieved from <https://www.dhakatribune.com/business/economy/2020/08/16/bangladesh-defies-expectations-posting-a-5-24-gdp-growth>

- Rashid, H. M. (2020). Prospects of Digital Financial Services in Bangladesh in the Context of Fourth Industrial Revolution. *Asian Journal of Social Science and Legal Studies*, 2(5), p. 88-95. <https://doi.org/10.34104/ajssls.020.088095>
- The Dhaka Tribune (2016). Live up to the people's optimism. (2016, January 13). *The Dhaka Tribune*. Retrieved from-  
[https://archive.dhakatribune.com/uncategorized/2016/01/13/live-up-to-the-peoples-optimism\](https://archive.dhakatribune.com/uncategorized/2016/01/13/live-up-to-the-peoples-optimism/)
- University Grants Commission [UGC], (2018). '*Bangladesh's Achievement in Higher Education 2009-2018*'. Retrieved from  
[http://www.ugc.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/ugc.portal.gov.bd/publications/8e681540\\_daa9\\_4844\\_a09c\\_a8b269364912/Higher%20Education%20Achievement%202018.pdf](http://www.ugc.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/ugc.portal.gov.bd/publications/8e681540_daa9_4844_a09c_a8b269364912/Higher%20Education%20Achievement%202018.pdf)
- United Nations [UN], (2015). *Sustainable Development Goals*. Retrieved from  
<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/education/>
- United Nations Population Fund [UNFPA], (n. d.). *Bangladesh: Population Trends*. Retrieved from <https://bangladesh.unfpa.org/en/node/24314>
- WB Optimistic about Bangladesh's Future (2014, April 02). bdnews24.com. Retrieved from <https://bdnews24.com/economy/wb-optimistic-about-bangladeshs-future>
- World Bank. (2020). *The World Bank in Bangladesh: Overview*. Retrieved from <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/bangladesh/overview>
- World Bank (n.d). *The World Bank in Bangladesh: Overview*. Retrieved from <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/bangladesh/overview>
- World Health Organization (WHO). (2020). *Bangladesh Makes Consistent Progress Achieving SDGs Health Indicators*. Retrieved from  
<https://www.who.int/bangladesh/news/detail/05-03-2020-bangladesh-makes-consistent-progress-achieving-sdgs-health-indicators>
- Young people optimistic about future (2015, September 10). *The Daily Star*. Retrieved from <https://www.thedailystar.net/frontpage/young-people-optimistic-about-future-140539>