

# National SDG Report (VNR) 2025

## Addressing the Interests of LNOB Communities

Keynote presentation

by

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Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh

এসডিজি বাস্তবায়নে নাগরিক প্ল্যাটফর্ম, বাংলাদেশ



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# Recalling the pledge to ‘leave no one behind’

***As we embark on this collective journey, we pledge that no one will be left behind.***

From the second paragraph of the Preamble of the document titled *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 25 September 2015)*

- Article 72 of this SDG resolution document also states:

***A robust, voluntary, effective, participatory, transparent and integrated follow-up and review framework will make a vital contribution to implementation and will help countries to maximize and track progress in implementing this Agenda in order to ensure that no one is left behind.***

- Hence, the spirit of ‘leaving no one behind’ is an integral part of the SDG process and its review and follow-up mechanism (VNR)

United Nations

A/RES/70/1



General Assembly

Distr.: General  
21 October 2015

Seventieth session  
Agenda items 15 and 116

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 25 September 2015

[without reference to a Main Committee (A/70/L.1)]

70/1. Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

*The General Assembly*

*Adopts* the following outcome document of the United Nations summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda:

Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Preamble

This Agenda is a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity. It also seeks to strengthen universal peace in larger freedom. We recognize that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development.

All countries and all stakeholders, acting in collaborative partnership, will implement this plan. We are resolved to free the human race from the tyranny of poverty and want and to heal and secure our planet. We are determined to take the bold and transformative steps which are urgently needed to shift the world on to a sustainable and resilient path. As we embark on this collective journey, we pledge that no one will be left behind.

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 targets which we are announcing today demonstrate the scale and ambition of this new universal Agenda. They seek to build on the Millennium Development Goals and complete what they did not achieve. They seek to realize the human rights of all and to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. They are integrated and indivisible and balance the three dimensions of sustainable development: the economic, social and environmental.

The Goals and targets will stimulate action over the next 15 years in areas of critical importance for humanity and the planet.

15-16301 (E)



Please recycle



# Bangladesh preparing VNR in the new context

- As the world makes a last push to accelerate SDGs, Bangladesh is preparing its **third Voluntary National Review (VNR)** for the High-level Political Forum 2025 (after 2017 and 2020)
- The ‘July uprising’ in Bangladesh gives a unique opportunity to revisit the development narrative from an objective and disaggregated point of view and uphold the interest of the disadvantaged citizens of Bangladesh
- Bangladesh’s previous two VNR processes **revealed key limitations** in both preparation and delivery
- Both **VNRs (2017 and 2020) were more ‘governmental’ than ‘national’** due to the lack of meaningful engagement with non-state actors (NSAs)
- The previous two VNR processes focused more on goal-specific progress and target indicators, **relying solely on official data and lacked disaggregation**
- Despite conducting a few proforma stakeholder consultations, the **VNR process lacked a transparent feedback mechanism** to ensure meaningful integration of citizens’ voices, especially LNOB communities in Bangladesh, contradicting the core spirit of the SDGs

# Learning from ‘good’ cross-country experiences

## Ireland VNR 2023

- Adopted an ‘**open drafting approach**’
- **NSAs received complete autonomy to write a dedicated chapter** (*Chapter 9: Stakeholder Assessments*), which was **published unedited**
- **Assessment of each indicator included separate assessments from civil society** (*which highlights the challenges and recommendations*)

## Mongolia VNR 2019, Austria VNR 2024, and Belize VNR 2024

- **Reported separately on the impact of SDG implementation on LNOB groups** within their national reports.

## Norway VNR 2021, Iceland VNR 2023

- Included **separate goal-specific assessments by civil society alongside the government analysis**

More examples can be taken from Armenia, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, India, Ghana



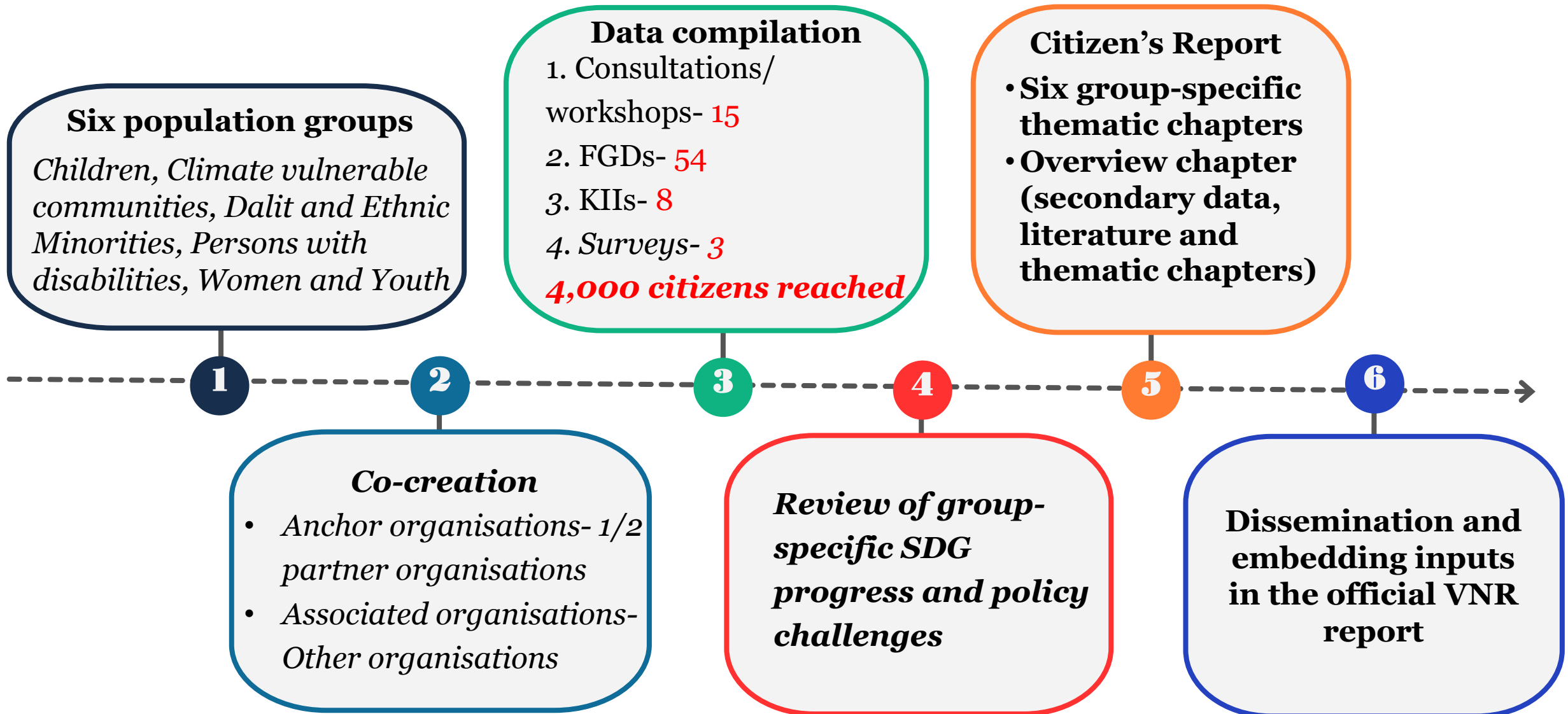
# Understanding the spirit of ‘leaving no one behind’

## **The key findings of the document “who not to be left behind”**

- The gender gap persists though it has been decreasing in certain cases
- Disparities exist between rural and urban areas
- Regions such as the Chittagong Hill Tracts are prone to vulnerability
- Income and wealth inequalities are on the rise
- Individuals with no or little education find fewer opportunities for decent work
- Persons with disabilities perform below average in almost all cases
- Religious and ethnic minority groups are faring worse
- Many vulnerable groups are not being counted in official statistics
- Income poverty contributes significantly towards vulnerability
- **People who meet more vulnerability criteria are more vulnerable in terms of income**



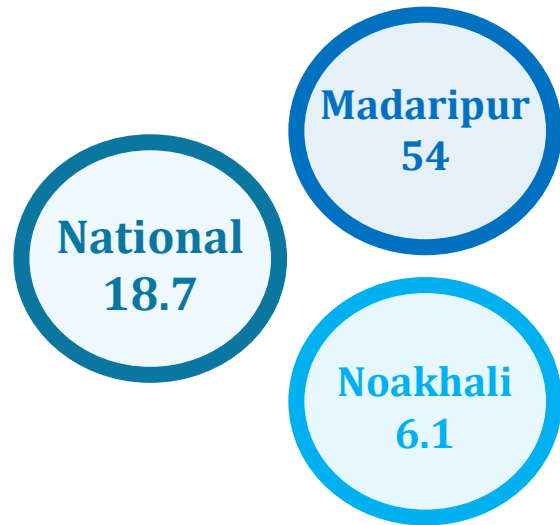
# Citizen's Platform's approach to support the VNR preparation



# Looking into SDG progress through a disaggregated lens

## SDG 1: No Poverty

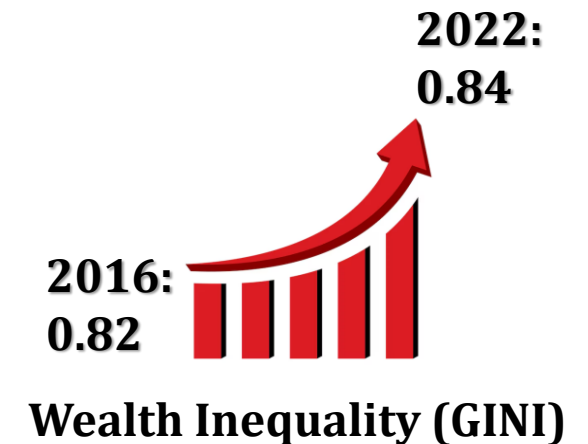
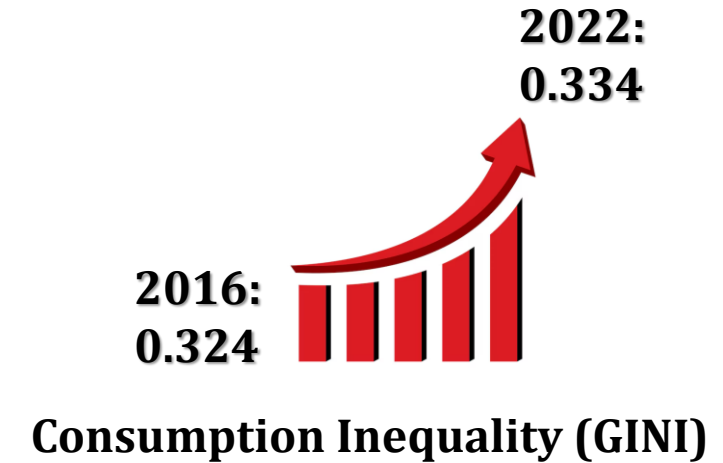
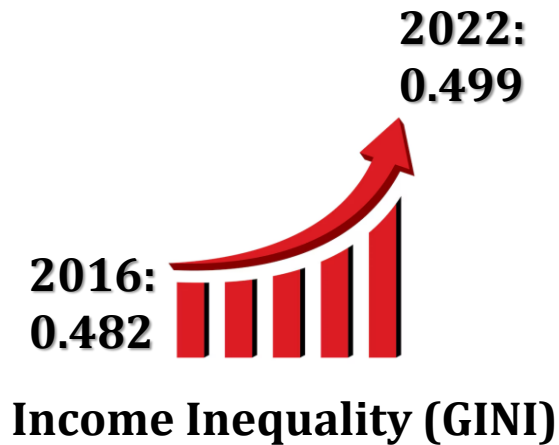
### Poverty Rate (%)



Target by 2030: 0

- The progress of poverty reduction in **Bangladesh is termed “fragile”**
  - The emergence of **new poor in the aftermath of the COVID-19** pandemic
  - Over **20 million people are just two days of missed work** away from falling back into poverty (White Paper Committee, 2024)

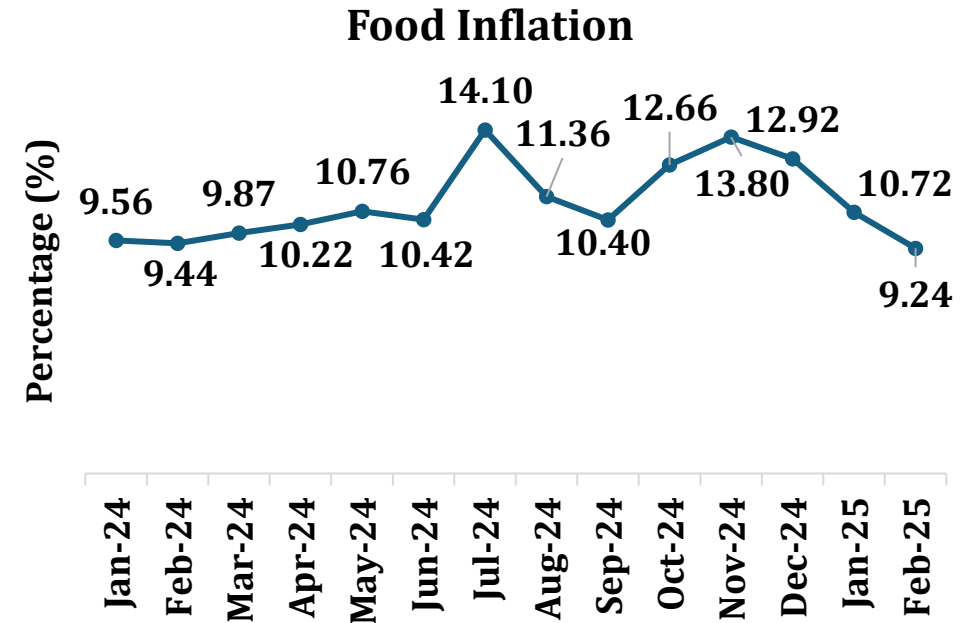
Source: HIES, 2022; White Paper Committee, 2024; Poverty Map, 2022



# Looking into SDG progress through a disaggregated lens

## SDG 2: Zero Hunger

- **Persistent Food Insecurity:** Despite significant economic growth over the past decade, **over 26% of the population, or 23.6 million people, remain food insecure in Bangladesh** (WFP, 2025)
- **Food Insecurity Perception:** About **22% of households perceived themselves as moderately to severely food insecure**, rising to 70% among the poorest households (Food Security Statistics, 2023)
- **Income and Consumption Gap:** In HIES 2022, **81% of households earning below BDT 40,000 per month reported that their consumption expenditures exceeded their income**, up from 74% in HIES 2016 (White Paper Committee, 2024)
- **Chronic malnutrition:** **24% of children aged 6-59 months** (WFP, 2025)



- Food inflation remained above **10 per cent for 10 consecutive months**, however, decreased slightly to below 10 per cent in February 2025

# Looking into SDG progress through a disaggregated lens

## SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being

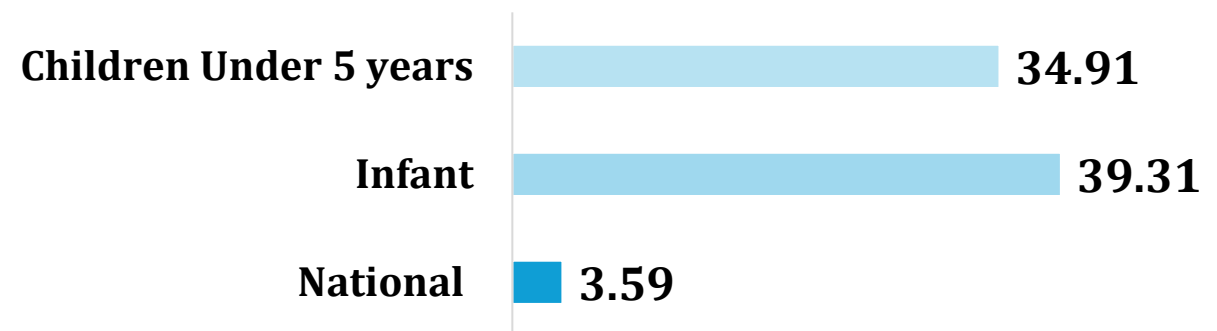
### Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) (per 100,000 live births)



SDG target by 2030: Less than 70 per 100 000 live births

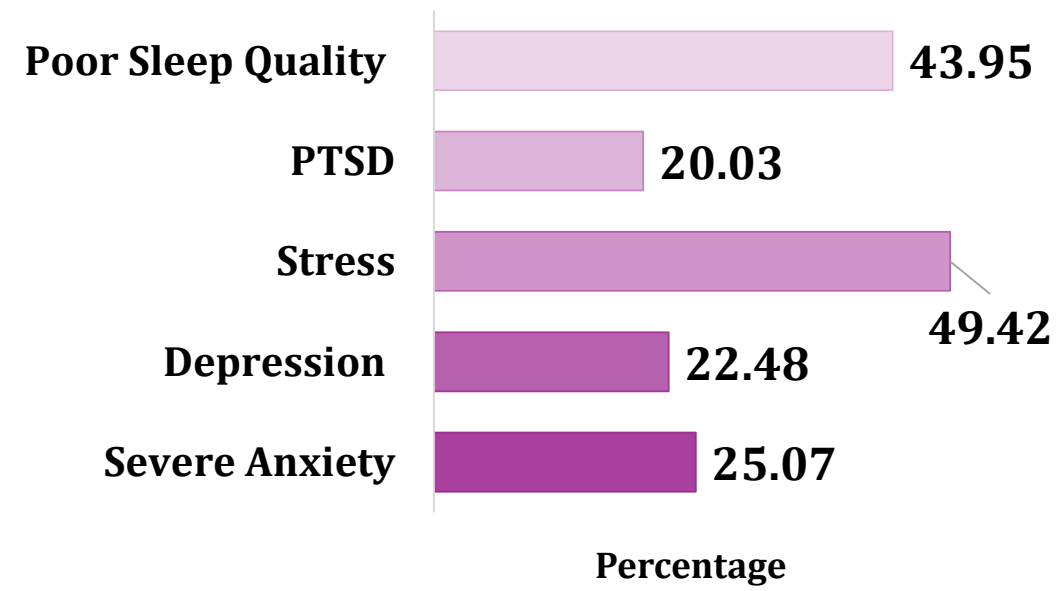
Source: SVRS, 2023

### Percentage Deaths Due to Pneumonia (%)



Source: SVRS, 2023

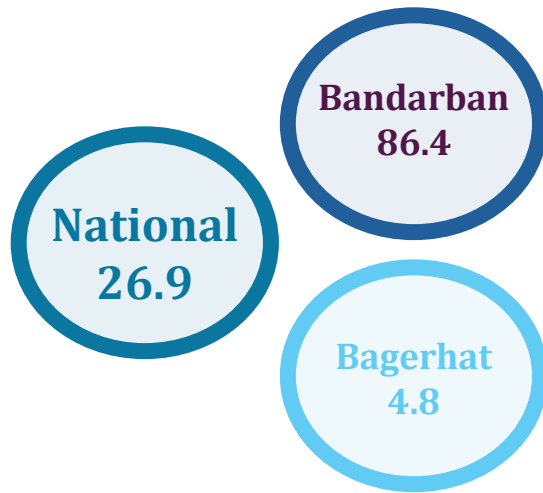
### Prevalence of Mental Health Disorder in Satkhira



# Looking into SDG progress through a disaggregated lens

## SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being (Contd.)

### Infant Mortality Rate per 1000 live births



Target by 2030: 0

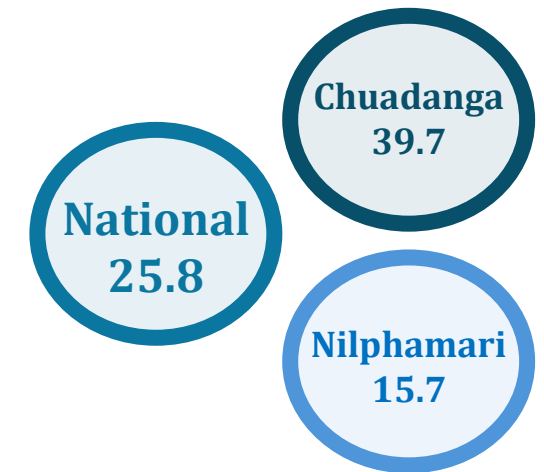
### Neonatal Mortality Rate Per 1000 live births



Target by 2030: N/A

### Unmet Need for Family Planning

Percentage of women currently using a modern method of contraception among those who desire it (%)



Target by 2030: 0%

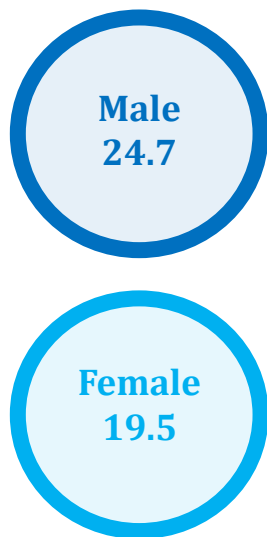
Source: SVRS, 2023

Target by 2030: 25

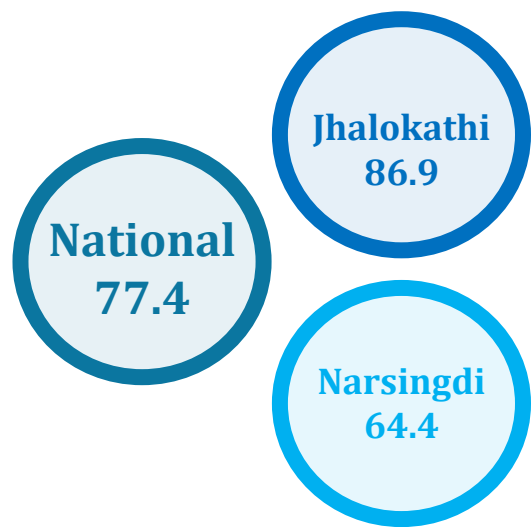
# Looking into SDG progress through a disaggregated lens

## SDG 4: Quality Education

Share of the population with at least secondary education (%)

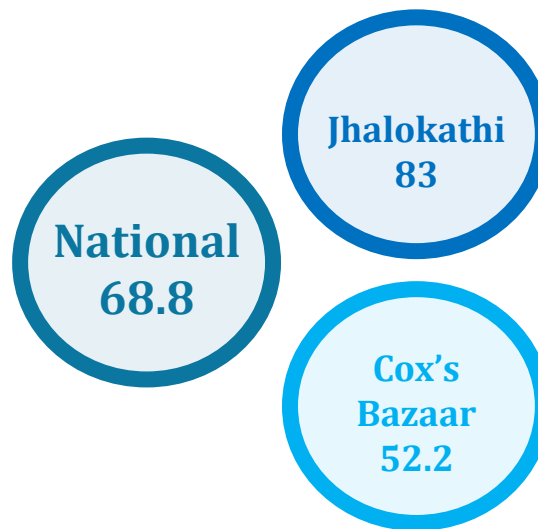


Completion rate: primary education (%)



Target by 2030: 95%

Completion rate: lower secondary education (%)



Target by 2030: 80%

Completion rate: upper secondary education (%)



Target by 2030: 50%

# Looking into SDG progress through a disaggregated lens

## SDG 4: Quality Education

### Percentage distribution of students in grade-specific performance level

	2017	2022
Grade 3 Bangla	47	51
Grade 3 Math	34	39
Grade 5 Bangla	44	50
Grade 5 Math	32	<b>30</b>

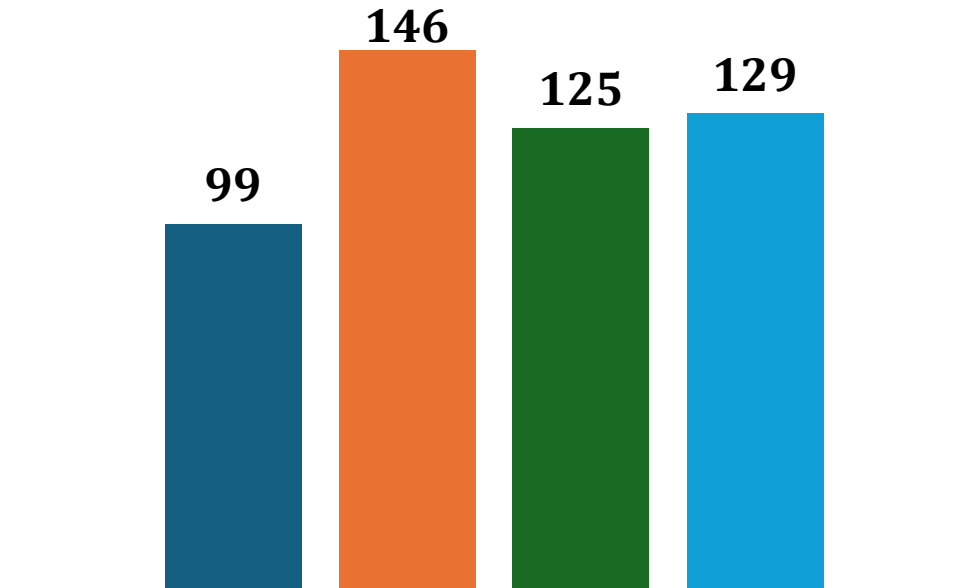
	2017		2022	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Grade 3 Bangla	45	48	47	55
Grade 3 Math	35	33	38	40
Grade 5 Bangla	43	44	47	52
Grade 5 Math	32	34	<b>29</b>	<b>31</b>

Source: National Student Assessment, 2022; White Paper Committee, 2024

- In Bangla, **51% of Grade 3 students and 50% of Grade 5 students** are proficient at grade-level performance, which is **4% and 6% higher**, respectively, than their performance in NSA 2017
- In Mathematics, **39% of Grade 3 students and 30% of Grade 5 students** are proficient at grade-level performance, which is 5% higher for Grade 3 and **2% lower for Grade 5** compared to NSA 2017
- The gender-wise disaggregation reveals that girls are outperforming boys, however, the **disparity between them has slightly increased** compared to the NSA 2017 results.

# Looking into SDG progress through a disaggregated lens

## SDG 5: Gender Equality



Bangladesh Ranking Among 146 Countries

- Global Gender Gap Index
- Economic Participation and Opportunity
- Educational Attainment
- Health and Survival

Source: Global Gender Gap Index 2024

### Climate Vulnerable

- **About 71% of women** in climate-vulnerable areas experienced increased abuse during floods, with 52.3% of them enduring physical violence
- Gender-based violence surged **by 65% in Cyclone Amphan-affected areas**

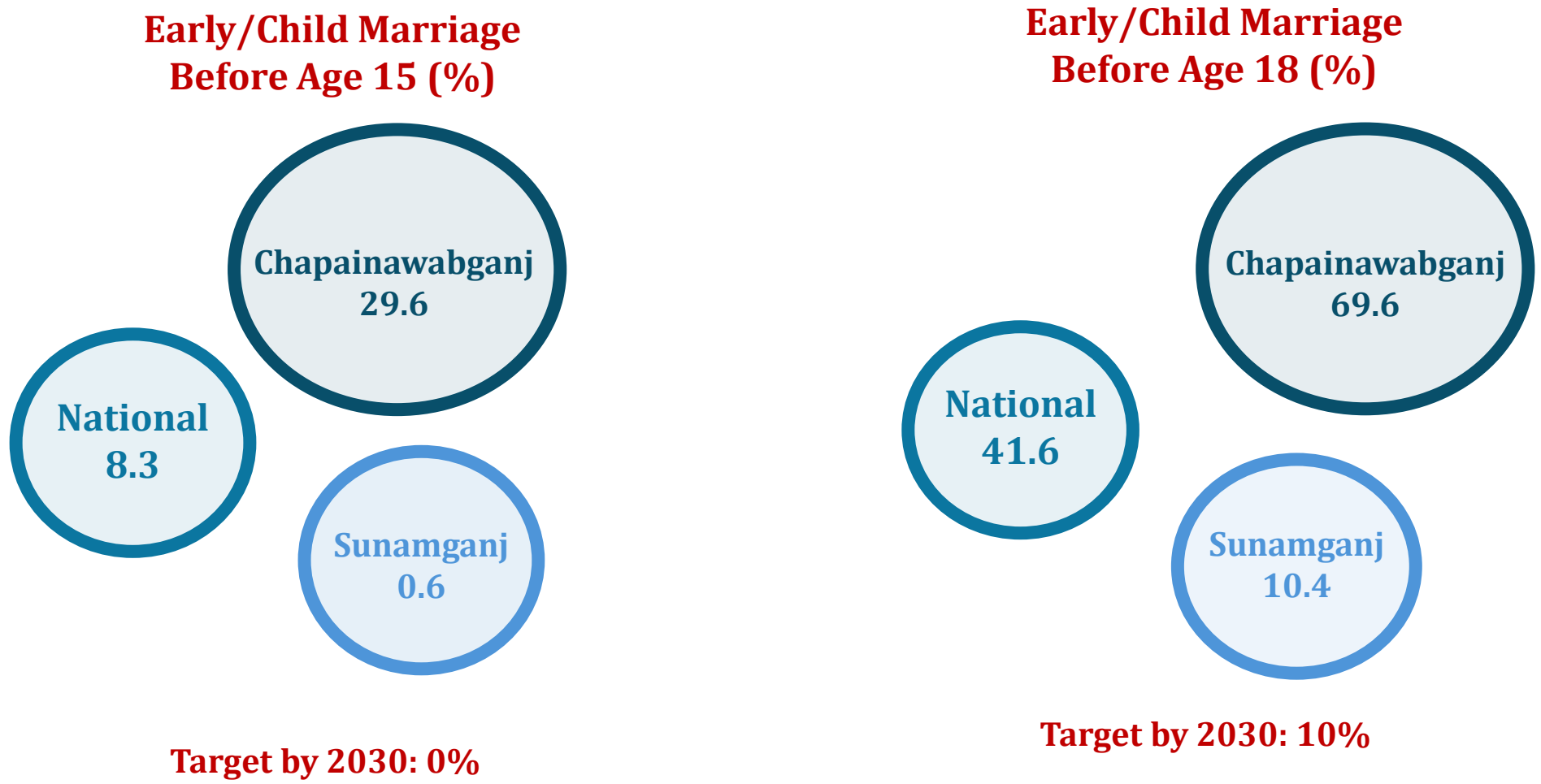
### Dalit and Ethnic Minorities

- Women from ethnic minorities' groups, particularly in the CHT, face compounded **issues such as domestic violence, unregistered marriages, and displacement from ancestral lands** due to conflicts. Many plain-land ethnic minority groups' women, predominantly Hindus or Christians, are subject to discriminatory religious family laws concerning marriage, inheritance, and property rights



# Looking into SDG progress through a disaggregated lens

## SDG 5: Gender Equality (Contd.)



Source: SVRS 2023

# Looking into SDG progress through a disaggregated lens

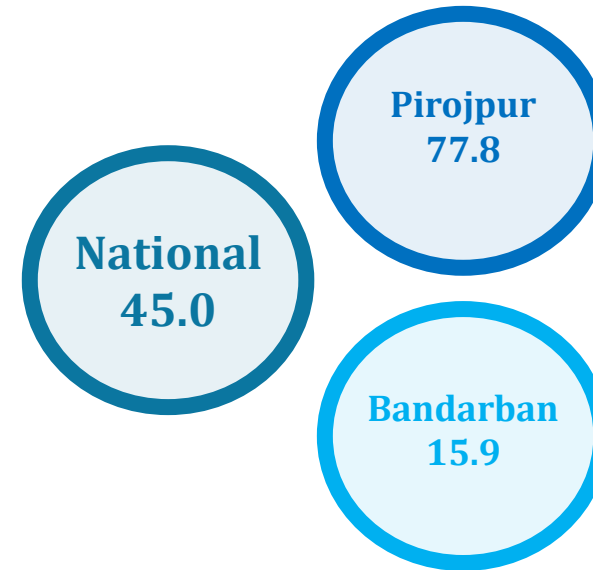
## SDG 6: Affordable and Clean Energy

**Percentage of population using safe drinking water services**



**Target by 2030: 100%**

**Percentage of population have access to proper sanitation services**



**Target by 2030: 80%**

# Looking into SDG progress through a disaggregated lens

## SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth

			Per cent
Sector of employment	Male	Female	Total
Unemployment Rate	3.56	<b>6.14</b>	4.15
Labour Force Participation Rate	79.50	<b>22.96</b>	50.92
Formal Sector	22.06	<b>4.3</b>	15.93
Informal Sector	77.94	<b>95.7</b>	<b>84.07</b>
	Youth (15-29)		
Informal Sector Employment	29.32	<b>52.2</b>	<b>38.31</b>
Unemployment Rate	<b>9.64</b>	4.78	7.25
NEET	15.4	<b>22.1</b>	18.9

Source: LFS, 2023

# Looking into SDG progress through a disaggregated lens

## SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth (Contd.)

### Dalit and Ethnic Minorities

- A study by Christian Aid et al. (2017) found that **77% of Dalits are at risk of unemployment**
- They are trapped in traditional occupations due to **entrenched caste based discrimination, stigma, and limited access to education and skill development**, restricting their participation in broader job markets

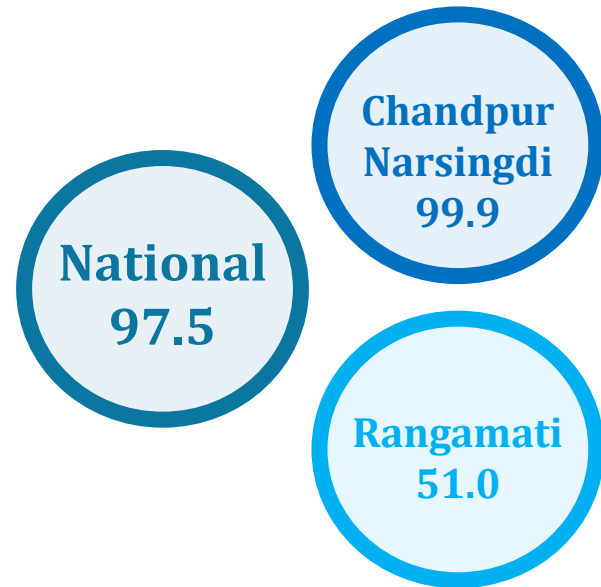
### Child Labour

- According to the National Child Labour Survey (NCLS) 2022, approximately **3.54 million children aged 5 to 17 or 8.9% of the total children** engaged in economic work
- **One-third or 1.07 million**, are involved in hazardous work, putting their health, safety and development at risk
- Save the Children (n.d.) indicates that the budget share for 17 identified child-focused programs within the SSNP **decreased to 6.9% in 2023** from 7.7% in the fiscal year 2022

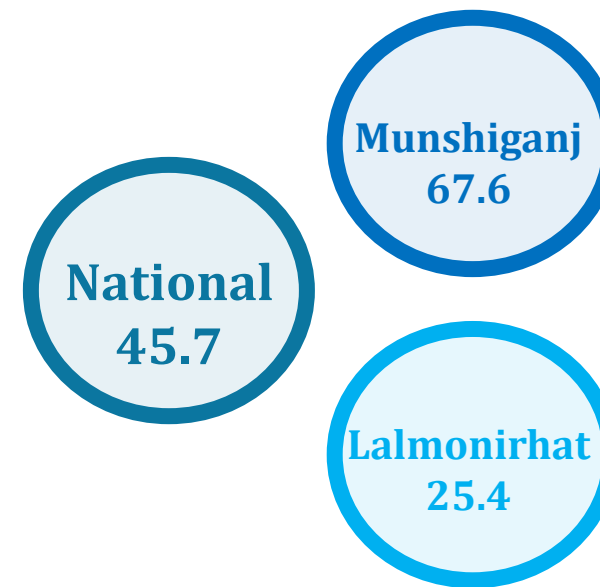
# Looking into SDG progress through a disaggregated lens

## SDG 9: Innovation and Infrastructure

Percentage of Population have  
Access to Electricity



Percentage of Population have  
Access to Internet (5+ years)



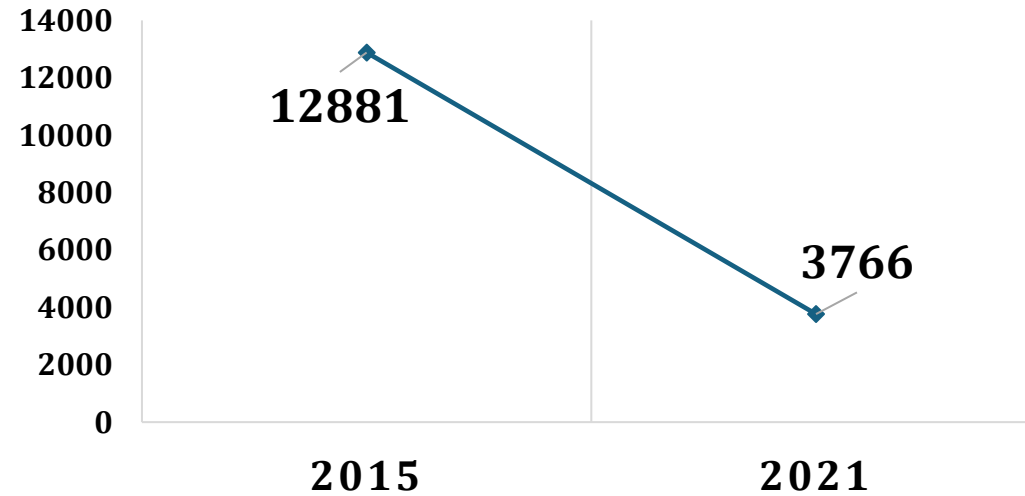
- In all three CHT districts 50-60 per cent of the population has access to electricity

Source: SVRS 2023

# Looking into SDG progress through a disaggregated lens

## SDG 13-15: Climate and Environment

NUMBER OF DEATHS, MISSING PERSONS DUE TO DISASTERS PER 100,000 POPULATION



**SDG Target:**

2025: **2000**

2030: **1500**

Source: SDG Tracker Bangladesh

# Looking into SDG progress through a disaggregated lens

## SDG 13-15: Climate and Environment (Contd.)

Bangladesh ranks as the **6th-most polluted country** globally for plastic and polythene water pollution, with **2 million tons of plastic** entering the Bay of Bengal annually, harming marine biodiversity (Mim, Islam, & Abdullah, 2024)

The **shipbreaking industry** contributes **20% of marine pollution** by releasing heavy metals like lead and mercury, threatening marine ecosystems and coastal livelihoods (Bangladesh Shipbreakers Association, 2023)

The Sundarbans' mangrove forest has declined by **6% over the last two decades** due to shrimp farming and illegal deforestation, reducing essential ecosystem services for vulnerable communities (FAO, 2021)

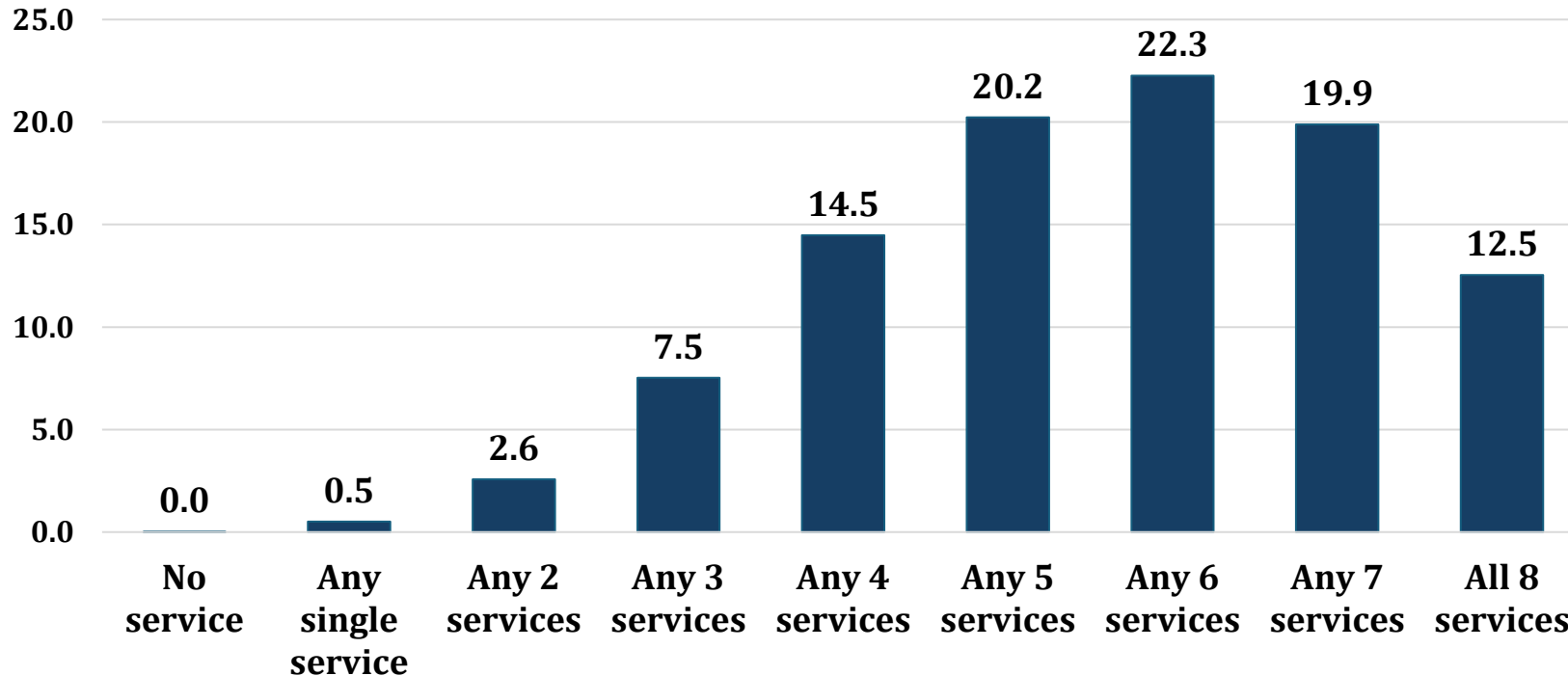
Climate change's impact on fisheries and marine tourism is projected to reach **US\$146 billion by 2050**, posing a major economic threat (Barua & Barua, 2024)

**Bureaucratic delays** and leaseholder conflicts prevent small fishing communities from accessing government-leased water bodies, worsening poverty and vulnerability

**Unregulated Rohingya settlements** in Chattogram have damaged the hilly and forest ecosystem, increasing pollution and reducing the potential for sustainable tourism (TIB, 2017)

# Looking into SDG progress through a disaggregated lens

Access to Basic Services (%)



Basic services include **8 key services**:

1. Basic Drinking Water
2. Basic Sanitation Services
3. Basic Hygiene Facilities
4. Clean Fuels and Technology
5. Basic Education (Literacy)
6. Basic Information Services (Internet Access)
7. Basic Mobility in Both Rural and Urban context
8. Basic Waste Collection Services

Source: SVRS 2023

❖ **About 15 crores (151 million) citizens of Bangladesh (87.5% of the total population) lack access to all eight basic services**



# Review of SDG progress from the perspectives of six LNOB groups

LNOB Group	Disaggregated data availability	Key Challenges	Most Affected SDGs	Comments
<b>Children</b>	Lack of disaggregated data Among the 42 Child-specific indicators, many remain off-track/outdated	Rising malnutrition, increasing child labour particularly among the marginalised groups, reversal in neonatal and under-five mortality, and child marriage	SDG 2 (Hunger), SDG 3 (Health), SDG 5 (Gender), SDG 8 (Decent Work)	Moderate progress, however, <b>concerns as regards reversals in health &amp; nutrition</b>
<b>Climate-Vulnerable Communities</b>	Absence of disaggregated data	High displacement, health vulnerabilities, rising child labour in climate-vulnerable areas, worsening gender violence, lack of climate finance access	SDG 1 (Poverty), SDG 13 (Climate), SDG 5 (Gender), SDG 3 (Health)	One of the <b>most vulnerable groups due to climate shocks</b>
<b>Dalit &amp; Ethnic Minorities</b>	Absence of disaggregated data Data manipulation	Discrimination in access to jobs, healthcare, land rights, existing gender disparity, exclusion from decision-making	SDG 1 (Poverty), SDG 5 (Gender), SDG 10 (Inequality), SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Institutions)	<b>Most politically and economically marginalised</b>

# Review of SDG progress from the perspectives of six LNOB groups

LNOB Group	Disaggregated data availability	Key Challenges	Most Affected SDGs	Comments
<b>Persons with disabilities (PWDs)</b>	Data discrepancies between official statistics and realities  Lack of disaggregated data	Limited access to healthcare, employment, severe gender employment gap	SDG 3 (Health), SDG 5 (Gender), SDG 8 (Employment),	<b>Least included in terms of access to opportunities</b>
<b>Women</b>	Underreporting and delays in data collection, particularly on gender-based violence issue  Lack of disaggregated data	High gender gap, increased share in informal employment declining contraceptive use, lack of political representation	SDG 5 (Gender), SDG 8 (Employment), SDG 16 (Governance)	Strong policy focus, however, <b>persistent institutional loopholes and structural barriers</b>

# Review of SDG progress from the perspectives of six LNOB groups

LNOB Group	Disaggregated data availability	Key Challenges	Most Affected SDGs	Comments
<b>Youth</b>	Absence of disaggregated data	Education-to-employment gap, digital divide, informal job precarity, rising female NEET youth unemployment, lack of representation of marginalised youth	SDG 4 (Education), SDG 5 (Gender), SDG 8 (Employment), SDG 9 (Innovation), SDG 16 (Governance)	Moderate improvements, however, <b>gender disparity remains a challenge.</b> <b>Concerns remains regarding the participation and representation of marginalised youth</b>

# Barriers to accelerating SDG progress for LNOB groups

## □ Existing policies concerning the six thematic groups and their current status

The legal framework in Bangladesh provides a foundation for addressing systemic inequalities, yet the absence of enforcement mechanisms and the persistence of legal loopholes undermine its effectiveness while some critical legal reforms and follow-up actions are missing

- The Children Act, 2013 (amended in 2018) and National Children Policy, 2011 protect children's rights, but the enforcement of child labour laws and exceptions under Article 19 of the Child Marriage Prevention Act continue to enable harmful practices.
- The Women and Children Repression Prevention Act (2020) addresses gender-based violence; however, enforcement challenges and social stigma hinder justice.
- The Sexual Harassment Prevention and Protection Law (2021) and Anti-Discrimination Bill (2022) remain in draft form, leaving marginalised groups, especially Dalits and Ethnic Minority Groups, without necessary legal safeguards.
- While the Persons with Disabilities Rights and Protection Act (2013) and National Disability Policy (2006) establish rights and protections, accessibility barriers, inadequate service implementation, and lack of disability-inclusive employment policies hinder progress.

# Barriers to accelerating SDG progress for LNOB groups

- Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (BCCSAP, 2009) and the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) outline strategies for adaptation and mitigation yet fail to prioritise gender inclusion and the needs of marginalised communities.
- The Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) Accord (1997), intended to secure indigenous land ownership and self-governance, has not been fully implemented, leading to continued land dispossession and exclusion from governance.
- The State Acquisition and Tenancy Act (1950) marginalises ethnic minority groups by not recognising indigenous land claims.
- Moreover, the Jalmahal Policy excludes Dalit and Ethnic Minority Groups fisherfolk from accessing water resources, limiting their livelihoods.
- The National Youth Policy (2017, Draft) remains unfinalised, despite its potential to support skills development and employment opportunities.
- Bangladesh maintains reservations on Articles 2 and 16 (1) (c) of CEDAW, which hinders women's equal inheritance rights

# Barriers to accelerating SDG progress for LNOB groups

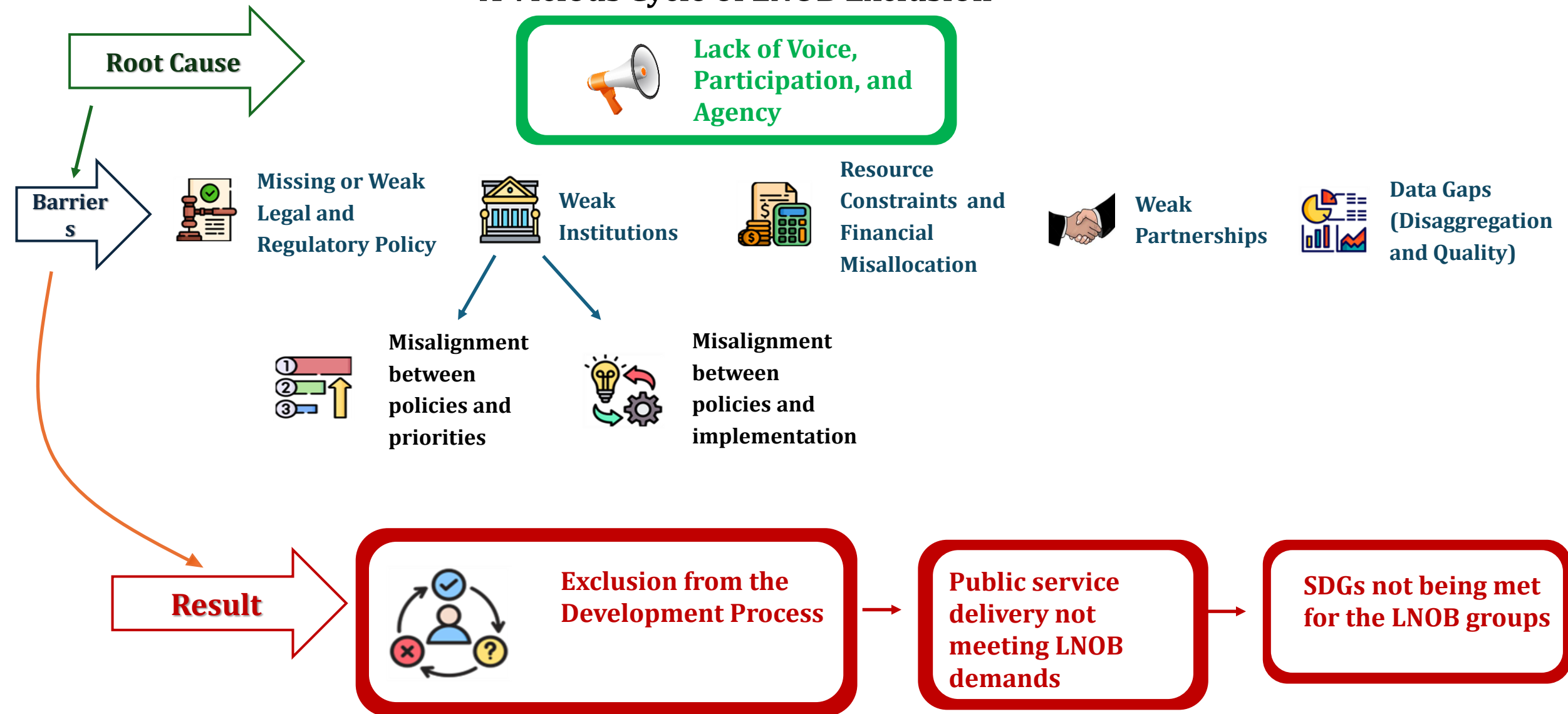
- Bangladesh is one of the bottom countries to provide allocation to education, health and social protection (as % of GDP) as its tax collection is also very low
- LNOB priority sectors received only half of the planned ADP allocation in 8FYP, bearing 98% of the allocation differences, while physical infrastructure received more than planned

ADP Allocation for FY2025: Plan vs Reality

Sectors	Share of ADP in FY25 (%)	Share of ADP in FY25 as per 8FYP (%)	Allocation in ADP FY25 (Crore Tk.)	Allocation planned for ADP FY25 in 8FYP (Crore Tk.)	Difference between actual allocation vs 8FYP (Crore Tk.)
Transportation and Communication, Power and Fuel, Housing and Community Facilities, Industrial and Economic Services, Environment, Climate Change and Water Resources	60.34	36.19	153,889	133,020	20,869
<b>Education, Health, Agriculture, Local Government and Rural Development, Science and ICT, Social Protection</b>	<b>35.88</b>	<b>54.92</b>	<b>91,509</b>	<b>201,840</b>	<b>-110,331</b>
General Government Services, Defence, Public Order and Safety, Religion, Culture and Entertainment	3.78	8.89	9,643	32,670	-23,027

# Barriers to accelerating SDG progress for LNOB groups

## A Vicious Cycle of LNOB Exclusion





# Recommendations to accelerate actions

## *Bangladesh, in the present new context, must truly uphold the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)*

- Improve coverage and enforcement of anti-discrimination rights by maintaining international standard
- Emphasise quality and inclusive public service delivery (e.g., education, health, social protection) to address the needs of the LNOB groups and prioritise access to common properties and public assets for vulnerable groups
- Make the best use of financial resources and improve fiscal space
- Establish a national LNOB Data Framework to generate more disaggregated data and allow citizen-generated data to improve policymaking
- Strengthen partnership among all state and non-state actors to truly uphold the principle of the ‘whole of society’ approach
- Institutionalise the voice and participation of LNOB groups in decision-making



# Recommendations to accelerate actions

- Without improving the overall governance ecosystem and global partnership, these deliveries will remain challenging
- **An inclusive democratic society will help deliver SDGs for the LNOB groups**
- **Delivering SDGs for LNOB groups must resonate in the election manifestos**

# Thank You



[www.bdplatform4sdgs.net](http://www.bdplatform4sdgs.net)



BDPlatform4SDGs



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