

CUTS CRC Activity Report

April-June 2020

ONGOING PROJECTS



Border Haat and their Socio-economic Impact

CUTS International along with its partner Unnayan Shamannay, Bangladesh with support from Department for International Development (DFID), UK is executing a project titled 'Border Haats between India and Bangladesh as a tool to reduce informal cross-border trade' which aims at understanding the prospects of establishing border haats as a tool to reduce informal cross-border trade between India and Bangladesh; and analysing its impact on gender and livelihood.

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in closure of four operational border haats. It is apprehended that prolonged closure of haats will lead to economic impoverishment of the local communities in both India and Bangladesh. This, in turn, may force the local communities to re-engage in informal cross border trade, which was substantially curtailed, due to border haats.

In this context an Expert Group Meeting was organised through virtual platform on June 25, 2020 to discuss the impact of border haats on local communities based on the survey findings; chalk out strategies on how to facilitate long term sustainability and greater scalability of the existing as well as upcoming border haats; and discuss the need to re-open border haats in the post COVID-19 era. One of the immediate recommendation of the meeting was to re-open the border haats at the earliest, in view of the importance of the border haats for the lives and livelihood of the local communities, but with necessary on-the-ground measures for the health and hygiene safety of the participants.

Following the meeting, a Standard Operating Procedure during COVID-19 to facilitate re-opening of the border haats has been prepared and submitted to the respective governments of India and Bangladesh by CUTS International and Unnayan Shamannay.



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Facilitating multi-modal connectivity in BBIN sub-region

CUTS International with support from DFID, UK is executing a project entitled 'Creating an Enabling and Inclusive Policy and Political Economy Discourse for Multi-Modal Connectivity in Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal region'. The objectives of the project are to address implementation challenges of BBIN-MVA; identify gaps in infrastructural and regulatory policies posing hurdles to multi-modal connectivity in this sub-region; and contribute towards formulation of an inclusive transport and transit protocols for an effective multi-modal connectivity in this sub-region through a participatory approach for enhanced growth in this sub-region.

Scoping interviews were conducted with stakeholders in India, Bangladesh and Nepal during May-June 2020, through virtual platforms due to restriction on travel owing to COVID-19. The objective of the scoping interviews was to understand different connectivity initiatives taken by India, Bangladesh and Nepal to facilitate multi-modal connectivity with their neighbouring countries and discuss project objectives with relevant government and private stakeholders.



- Bijaya Roy participated in the webinar entitled 'One decade of ASEAN-India FTA in goods: Achievements and way forward' organised by ASEAN-India Centre on June 29, 2020. She also attended the webinar entitled 'Business Opportunity in Thailand' organised by Indian Chamber of Commerce on June 26, 2020.
- Arnab Ganguly and Bijaya Roy participated in the webinar entitled 'Bangladesh Trade & Investment: Stakeholders Interaction' organised by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry on June 22, 2020.
- Sumanta Biswas participated in a virtual session on the theme 'Dynamic Cyber security in the new normal' organised by Data Security Council of India in partnership with Inspira on May 28, 2020.
- Bijaya Roy participated in a webinar on 'COVID-19's Impact and way forward for India: An Economic Assessment' organised by Bengal Chamber of Commerce & Industry on May 13, 2020.
- Bijaya Roy participated in a webinar on 'Regional Cooperation in Trade Development and Agribusiness: Perspective of Bangladesh and India' organised by South Asian Network on Economic Modeling and Asian Confluence on May 11, 2020.
- Arnab Ganguly, Bijaya Roy and Saswata Mukherjee participated in a webinar entitled 'COVID 19: South Asia's Response' organised by the Asian Confluence on May 02, 2020.
- Arnab Ganguly participated in a webinar entitled 'COVID-19: Leveraging the Gig Economy' organised by the Ola Mobility Institute on April 30, 2020.
- Arnab Ganguly participated in a webinar titled 'COVID-19: Implications in the BIN region' and 'BBIN Co-operation 2.0 in the COVID-19 era' organised by Asian Confluence on April 28 and 22, 2020 respectively.
- Sumanta Biswas participated in a webinar on 'Cyber Threats and Frauds during Work from Home' on April 17, 2020.