

Publications Digest 2021

CUTS Centre for International Trade, Economics & Environment (CUTS CITEE) produces this document for informing the relevant stakeholders its major publications in 2021.

REPORTS

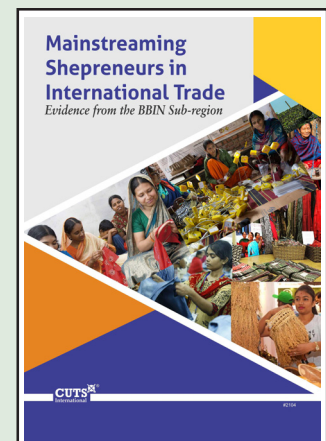
Mainstreaming Shepreneurs in International Trade *Evidence from the BBIN Sub-region*

Gender dimensions of international trade, and the related fields of economics, trade law, and public policy, have gained increased attention from researchers, policymakers, academics, media and civil society groups over the past few years. Social expectations, traditional patriarchal norms, and inadequate access to resources are common challenges affecting women's economic activities. This holds true for the sub-region covering BBIN which conspicuously lack women entrepreneurs in the export-import (EXIM) business.

In this context, CUTS International along with its country partners, Bangladesh Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Dhaka, Bangladesh), Bhutan Media and Communication Institute (Thimphu, Bhutan), and South Asia Watch on Trade, Economics and Environment (Kathmandu, Nepal) with the support from the United Kingdom's FCDO undertook a project titled 'Gender Dimensions of Trade Facilitation: Evidence from Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal'.

The aim of the study was to prepare cases in favour of gender-inclusive trade policies to enhance participation of women from the sub-region, in trade and trade-related income-generating activities. This report highlights the significant challenges women entrepreneurs face when they attempt to step into the export sector and how simple methods can resolve those hurdles.

<https://cuts-citee.org/pdf/research-report-mainstreaming-shepreneurs-in-international-trade.pdf>



Webinars

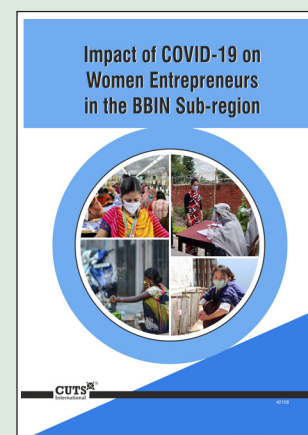
In 2021, CUTS International successfully organised a series of webinars that provided a dynamic, engaging and informative platform for discussions and deliberations by experts on topical and thought-provoking issues.

REPORTS

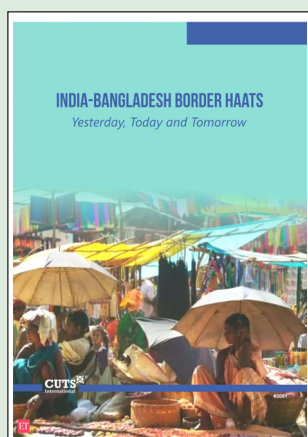
Impact of COVID-19 on Women Entrepreneurs in the BBIN Sub-region

This report attempts to analyse the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on women entrepreneurs in the BBIN sub-region. It highlights the challenges women entrepreneurs faced during the COVID-19 pandemic and how it affected their businesses. Reduced demand, shortage of raw material, inability to meet the working costs and increased stress at home were cited by respondents across the sub-region. Also, the report underpins the emerging role of digital platforms sustaining businesses during the pandemic and its immediate aftermath.

<https://cuts-citee.org/pdf/impact-covid19-on-women-entrepreneures-in-bbin-sub-region.pdf>



COMPENDIUM



India-Bangladesh Border Haats: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow

The border haats have been transformational in the management of the India-Bangladesh border. Traditionally, border management was perceived from the prism of security; therefore, restrictions were imposed on the people in the bordering areas, thus hampering development.

In view of the importance of the border haats for the lives and livelihood of the local communities, there is an urgent need to re-open the border haats, but with necessary on-the ground measures for the health and hygiene safety of the participants. In this regard, there is a need to include an addendum to the existing protocols for their

functioning on the ground.

Given this backdrop, CUTS International has prepared a compendium, which is a collection of briefing papers by a group of eminent experts as an output of a project entitled 'Border Haats Between India and Bangladesh as a Tool to Reduce Informal Cross Border Trade', which is being implemented with the support of the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) of the United Kingdom and in partnership with Unnayan Shamannay, Bangladesh.

<https://cuts-crc.org/pdf/Compendium-India-Bangladesh-Border-Haats-Yesterday-Today-and-Tomorrow.pdf>

BBIN Motor Vehicles Agreement Scope for developing integrated logistics and transport infrastructure and other related services

The BBIN Motor Vehicles Agreement (MVA) was signed in 2015 with a similar goal. The objective of the agreement was to enable smooth and efficient cross-border transport in the sub-region. It has been additionally identified that the framework holds the potential to encompass intermodal linkages and networks in the sub-region, which is a pivotal step in harmonising and simplifying trade and connectivity prospects. However, MVA continues to face operational challenges due to Bhutan's environmental concerns.

With this backdrop, this Discussion Paper discusses the developments with regard to multimodal transport, logistics networks and services to further the regional production links while suggesting a phased execution of the MVA as a catalytic measure to advance that.

<https://cuts-citee.org/pdf/discussion-paper-bbin-motor-vehicles-agreement.pdf>



Linking Inland Waterways with Industrial Corridors and Logistics Parks for Economical and Ecological Freight Movement in BBIN Sub-region



Historically, waterways were the most preferred mode of transport between West Bengal and East Pakistan. After the emergence of independent Bangladesh, Protocol on Inland Water Transit & Trade (PIWTT) was signed between India and Bangladesh to revive the waterways but a lot of focus was placed on developing roadways and railways hence waterways were left behind due to non-utilisation.

To promote multi-modal connectivity in the BBIN region, the role of waterways should be examined. Also, several industrial hubs have developed around the inland waterway protocol or international sea trade routes due to rapid industrial growth in Southeast Asia.

In this context, this Discussion Paper aims to analyse the state of current infrastructural facilities in the IWT network and nearby industrial hubs lying close to the river network so that an integrated multi-modal corridor can be established within the BBIN sub-region.

It will not only benefit trade but also help employment generation for the local communities and reduce the impact of multiple handling costs and procedural delays.

<https://cuts-citee.org/pdf/discussion-paper-linking-inland-waterways-with-industrial-corridors-and-logistic-parks-bbin-sub-region.pdf>

A Network of Multi-modal Logistics Parks in the BBIN Sub-region

Proposing a Blue Quadrilateral for Enhancing Trade

Of late, governments of the BBIN countries have taken several initiatives to revamp the waterways routes and shift the traffic from road to water. Evidence suggests that using waterways as a mode of transportation is cheaper, greener and provides various other benefits when compared to other modes of transportation. It can also enhance the logistical competence of the region as a whole.

This would, however, require establishing necessary infrastructure in the form of multi-modal logistics parks (MMLPs) with connectivity to different modes of transport to facilitate easier movement and transfer of freights from one mode to others, such as from roadways and railways to waterways, and vice versa.

This Discussion Paper explores the possibility of setting up a network of four interlinked MMLPs in the BBIN sub-region to enhance trade among the member countries through waterways. The authors have identified four locations, namely Jogighopa, Sahibganj, Tribeni (India) and Ashuganj (Bangladesh), taking into account their strategic location in the subregion.

<https://cuts-citee.org/pdf/discussion-paper-a-network-of-multi-modal-logistics-parks-in-the-bbin-sub-region.pdf>



WORKING NOTES



Learning from CAREC Corridors and Connectivity Prospects for BBIN Sub-region

This Working Note takes a comprehensive look at the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) corridors and derives lessons from it for the BBIN sub-region, along with figuring out multi-modal connectivity potentials between them. It gives a special focus to the CAREC Corridor 2 while also looking into the competing and complementary features of the CAREC Corridors 5 and 6 in establishing connectivity between the BBIN sub-region and the CAREC region.

The significant progress of infrastructure development and connectivity initiatives in CAREC corridors, despite the presence of a large number of landlocked countries, makes the BBIN sub-region look into the initiative and learn from it. The BBIN subregion misses the presence of a central knowledge-sharing institution like the CAREC Institute, to help in the evidence-based decision making and quality initiatives in the sub-region. This Working Note highlights several lessons that the BBIN sub-region can learn from the CAREC Programme.

<https://cuts-citee.org/pdf/working-note-learning-from-CAREC-corridors-and-connectivity-prospectsfor-BBIN-sub-region.pdf>

WORKING NOTES

Multimodal Connectivity in BBIN Sub-region *Lessons from the ASEAN Framework*

The concept of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal (BBIN) sub-regional integration and connectivity, an offshoot of the South Asia Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC) formed in 1985, stands in sharp contrast to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

Since 1967, ASEAN has been working to create a fully integrated functional bloc of nations having a shared vision for growth and development through cooperation and connectivity. It has an updated Master Plan for ASEAN Connectivity 2025 to strengthen intra-regional transport connectivity further. But, the BBIN continues to struggle.

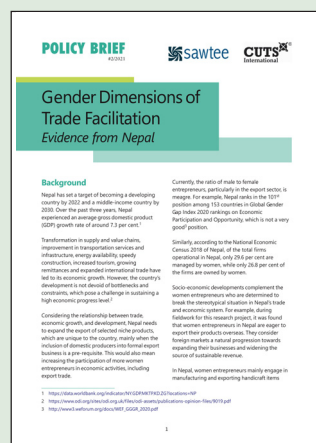
The BBIN Motor Vehicles Agreement (MVA), signed in June 2015, is yet to see the light of the day. It would be interesting to understand what the BBIN sub-region needs to do and learn from ASEAN to expedite economic integration and transport connectivity.

Given this background, this Working Note attempts to discern policy guidance for multimodal connectivity in the BBIN sub-region, taking reference from ASEAN. It focuses on the emergence of ASEAN and lessons for the BBIN sub-region. The ASEAN Framework initiatives for multimodal connectivity provide an overview of the frameworks adopted by ASEAN.

<https://cuts-citee.org/pdf/working-note-multimodal-framework.pdf>



BRIEFS



Gender Dimensions of Trade Facilitation *Evidence from Nepal*

In Nepal, women entrepreneurs mainly engage in manufacturing and exporting handicraft items such as pashmina, carpets, felt products, papers and items made from natural fibres, handbags and herbal-based beauty and skincare products. However, overall, women entrepreneurs' participation in international trade is limited. The reasons for not engaging in trade range from lack of understanding about global standards and quality, concentration on the domestic market, and lack of knowledge about foreign markets and buyers.

This Policy Brief suggests specific recommendations to benefit women entrepreneurs such as incorporating gender-specific components (schemes and incentives) in the trade policies, industrial,

finance, and other economic policies, conducting awareness generation campaigns and capacity-building workshops for women entrepreneurs, gender-sensitive infrastructure and establishing business linkages.

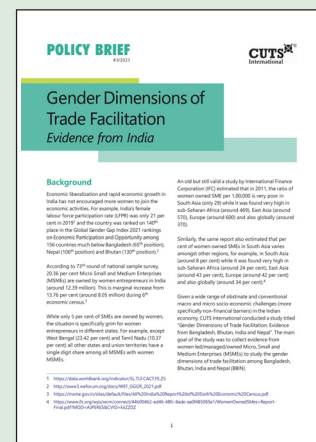
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Gender Dimensions of Trade Facilitation *Evidence from India*

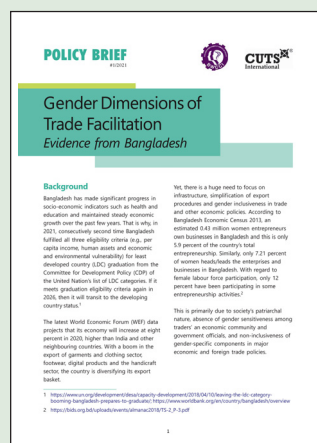
Economic liberalisation and rapid economic growth in India has not encouraged more women to join the economic activities. For example, India's female labour force participation rate (LFPR) was only 21 per cent in 2019 and the country was ranked on 140th place in the Global Gender Gap Index 2021 rankings on Economic Participation and Opportunity among 156 countries much below Bangladesh (65th position), Nepal (106th position) and Bhutan (130th position).

This Policy Brief suggests specific recommendations to benefit women entrepreneurs such as enabling financial sector reforms, awareness generation and training programmes, women-centric policy initiatives and inclusive women entrepreneurship.

<https://cuts-citee.org/pdf/policy-brief-gender-dimensions-of-trade-facilitation-evidence-from-india.pdf>



Gender Dimensions of Trade Facilitation *Evidence from Bangladesh*



The socio-economic situations are changing for women entrepreneurs who are determined to break the stereotypical conditions in Bangladesh's economic system. Still, it is not easy, particularly for women exporters, to start, operate and expand a business in Bangladesh compared to women entrepreneurs of neighbouring countries, such as Nepal or Bhutan.

This Policy Brief suggests specific recommendations to benefit women entrepreneurs such as incorporating gender-specific components (schemes and incentives) in the trade policies, industrial, finance, and other economic policies, providing capacity building programmes for women entrepreneurs, implementing easy and accessible financial schemes for women including provisions for collateral-free loans and discounted interest rates, building gender-sensitive infrastructure and establishing business linkages.

<https://cuts-citee.org/pdf/policy-brief-gender-dimensions-of-trade-facilitation-evidence-frombangladesh.pdf>

Strengthening Railway Networks in Northeast India A Key Driver to Deepen Sub-regional Connectivity and Trade

The Indian railways system has done an incredible job in connecting people and their lives. However, one region within India that has remained the least connected is Northeast India which includes eight states (Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, Tripura). Lately, however, the government has taken several steps to create new and improve existing infrastructure in the Northeast Region. These include concerted efforts to boost air, road, rail, waterways, and telecom connectivity.

This Briefing Paper attempts to understand railways connectivity initiatives in Northeast India and their potential to foster connectivity, trade, and economic cooperation within and outside the region, particularly with Bangladesh, Bhutan, and Nepal.

<https://cuts-citee.org/pdf/briefing-paper-strengthening-railway-networks.pdf>



Freight Digitalisation in India: Possible Way Forward

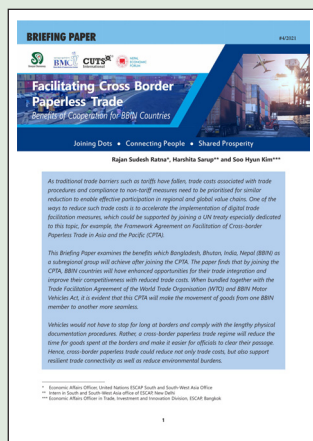
The digitalisation of logistics and supply chain management remains the final frontier for the heavy paper-driven road transport system. The government will build digital platforms and enable Indian startups to build user interfaces to provide hassle-free IT services to clients. A close and successful partnership between the government and the private sector software companies can go a long way towards the 'Digital India' mission.

<https://cuts-citee.org/pdf/briefing-paper-freight-digitalisation-in-india-possible-way-forward.pdf>

Cage Fish Farming in India and Bangladesh: Prospects for Bilateral Cooperation

This Policy Brief analyses the evidence regarding the potentials of enclosed fish culture amongst the local communities of India (particularly the Assam region) and Bangladesh through its cross-border trade prospects. It proposes recommendations to enhance the arena's opportunities and promote the empowerment of local indigenous communities, including youth and women.

<https://cuts-citee.org/pdf/policy-brief-cage-fish-farming.pdf>



Facilitating Cross Border Paperless Trade Benefits of Cooperation for BBIN Countries

This Briefing Paper examines the benefits which Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal (BBIN) as a subregional group will achieve after joining the Cross-border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific (CPTA). The paper finds that by joining the CPTA, BBIN countries will have enhanced opportunities for their trade integration and improve their competitiveness with reduced trade costs.

When bundled together with the Trade Facilitation Agreement of the WTO and BBIN Motor Vehicles Act, it is evident that this CPTA will make the movement of goods from one BBIN member to another more seamless.

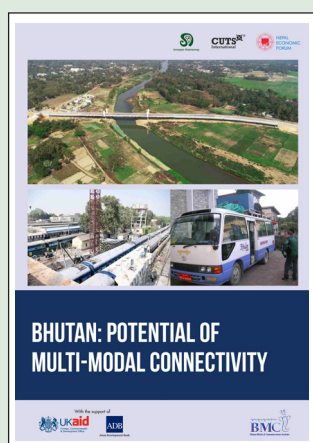
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Bangladesh: Potential of Multi-modal Connectivity

Multimodal transport essentially facilitates door-to-door transport of goods. Bangladesh has immense potential to implement an efficient multimodal transport network thereby facilitating seamless transport of goods between suppliers and receivers. Bangladesh, following an export-led growth model, plans to become a developed nation by 2041 which will invariably strain the already underpressure transport infrastructure.

In light of the reality, multimodal transport system offers itself as potential model to enhance the efficiency of the transport network for Bangladesh by domestic, regional and international integration.

<https://cuts-citee.org/pdf/bangladesh-potential-of-multimodalconnectivity.pdf>



Bhutan: Potential of Multi-modal Connectivity

Bhutan Media and Communications Institute, in association with CUTS International, India, Nepal Economic Forum, Nepal and Unnayan Shamannay, Bangladesh, has undertaken research entitled 'Enabling a Political Economy Discourse for Multimodal Connectivity in the BBIN Subregion (M-Connect)' supported by Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) of the United Kingdom and Asian Development Bank as Knowledge Partner, to understand the challenges and opportunities for the development of multimodal transport network in Bhutan.

This Policy Brief captures the findings of the research conducted under the project in Bhutan.

<https://cuts-citee.org/pdf/bhutan-potential-of-multi-modal-connectivity.pdf>

Nepal: Potential of Multi-modal Connectivity

Nepal Economic Forum, Nepal, in association with CUTS International, India, Unnayan Shamannay, Bangladesh and Bhutan Media and Communication Institute, Bhutan has undertaken research entitled 'Enabling a Political Economy Discourse for Multi-modal Connectivity in the BBIN Sub-region (M-Connect).' The project is supported by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), The UK and Asian Development Bank as a knowledge partner to understand the challenges and opportunities of establishing an efficient multi-modal transport network in Nepal.

This Policy Brief captures the findings of the research conducted under the project in Nepal.

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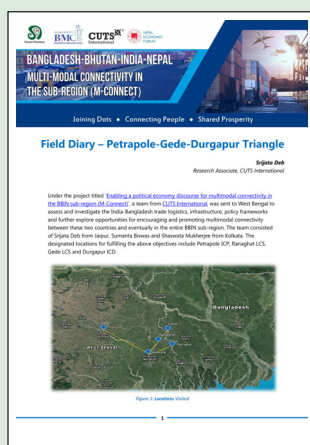
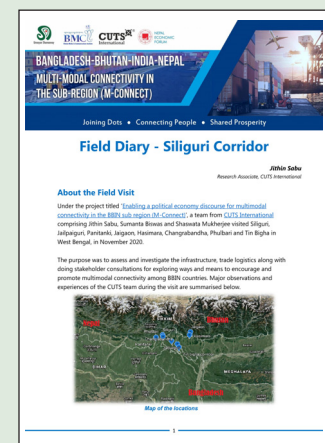


A series of Field Diaries were published under the project entitled, 'Enabling a political economy discourse for multimodal connectivity in the BBIN sub-region (M-Connect).' The project is implemented by CUTS International in partnership with Unnayan Shamannay, Bangladesh, Bhutan Media and Communications Institute and Nepal Economic Forum. It is supported by the United Kingdom's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) under its Asia Regional Trade and Connectivity Programme. The Asian Development Bank is a knowledge partner.

Siliguri Corridor

A team from CUTS International visited the Siliguri Corridor in November 2020. Their Field Diary discusses the scope for socio-economic transformation of this Corridor while keeping in mind trade logistics, infrastructure and transport challenges and opportunities. It also provides a glimpse into the scope for alternative investment opportunities and livelihood generation and women's economic empowerment.

<https://cuts-citee.org/pdf/field-diary-siliguri-corridor.pdf>



Petrapole-Gede-Durgapur Triangle

A team from CUTS International visited Petrapole-Gede-Durgapur Triangle in November. Their Field Diary discusses the scope for improving trade logistic infrastructure and policy framework between India and Bangladesh by highlighting railways and roadways connectivity between the two countries. It also provides a glimpse into the status as well as scope for digitalisation, private sector participation as well as gender sensitive infrastructure provisions.

<https://cuts-citee.org/pdf/field-diary-petrapole-gede-durgapur-triangle.pdf>



Dhubri-Jogighopa-Guwahati Landscape

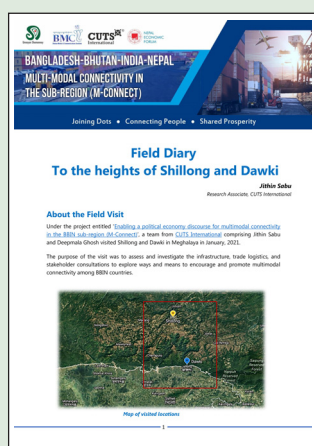
A team from CUTS International visited Dhubri-Jogighopa-Guwahati Landscape in November 2020. The Field Diary discusses the ground realities of the landscape while keeping in mind trade logistics, infrastructure, and transport challenges and opportunities. It also provides a glimpse into the scope for improving stakeholder engagement, livelihood generation and women's economic empowerment.

<https://cuts-citee.org/pdf/field-diary-dhubri-jogighopa-guwahati-landscape.pdf>

Kolkata-Haldia-Kolaghat Triangle

A team from CUTS International visited Kolkata-Haldia-Kolaghat Triangle in November 2020. This Field Diary discusses the potential of developing inland waterways and the practical difficulties of integrating them with other modes of transport in the region. The purpose of the visit was to assess and investigate the infrastructure and undertake stakeholder consultations for exploring ways and means of encouraging and promoting multi-modal connectivity in the region.

<https://cuts-citee.org/pdf/field-diary-kolkata-haldia-kolaghat-triangle.pdf>



To the heights of Shillong and Dawki

A team from CUTS International visited Shillong and Dawki in January 2021. The purpose of the visit was to assess and investigate the infrastructure, trade logistics, and conduct stakeholder consultations to explore ways and means to encourage and promote multimodal connectivity among BBIN countries.

This Field Diary discusses the immense potential of Shillong and Dawki in Meghalaya for facilitating cross border trade between India and Bangladesh. The diary also brings out how the geographic positional advantage of the Meghalaya state is under utilised.

This diary mentions similar issues while it also points out the latest developments in the area of multi-modal connectivity and infrastructure development in the region.

<https://cuts-citee.org/pdf/field-diary-to-the-heights-of-shillong-and-dawki.pdf>

Bihar to Facilitate Connectivity in the BBIN Sub-region

In January, 2021, a team from CUTS International visited Bihar. The purpose was to assess and investigate the infrastructure, trade logistics, and conduct stakeholder consultations to explore ways and means to encourage and promote multi-modal connectivity among BBIN countries.

This Field Diary discusses the immense potential of ICP Raxaul and ICP Jogbani in Bihar for facilitating cross border trade between India and Nepal. The diary also brings out the importance of Ghai Ghat and Kalu Ghat in reviving inland waterways.

The diary elicits Bihar's positional advantage in enhancing connectivity in the BBIN Sub-region, initiatives taken by the government to boost multimodal connectivity, stakeholders' perspectives along with some infrastructural challenges the region faces.

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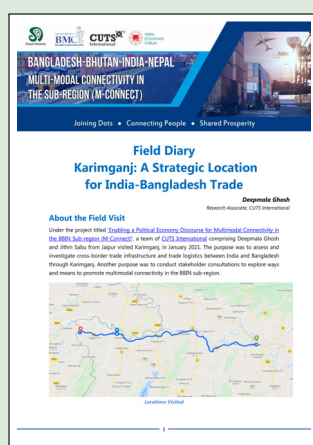
Sahibganj Corridor: Emerging Inland Waterway to Link India-Bangladesh

In December, 2020, a team from CUTS International visited several places in Jharkhand and West Bengal along the river Ganga. The purpose was to assess and investigate the infrastructure, trade logistics, and understand stakeholders' perspectives along with some infrastructural challenges the region faces in multimodal connectivity.

This Field Diary discusses the immense potential of the Sahibganj Multi-modal Terminal for facilitating cross-border trade between India, Bangladesh, and Nepal.

The diary also brings out the importance of several initiatives taken up under the India Bangladesh protocol route with the objective of diverting traffic from roadways to inland waterways.

<https://cuts-citee.org/pdf/field-diary-sahibganj-corridor-emerging-inland-waterway-to-link-indiabangladesh.pdf>



Karimganj: A Strategic Location for India-Bangladesh Trade

In January 2021, a team from CUTS International visited Karimganj in Assam. The purpose was to assess and investigate cross-border trade infrastructure and trade logistics between India and Bangladesh through Karimganj and conduct stakeholder consultations to explore ways and means to encourage and promote multimodal connectivity among BBIN countries.

This Field Diary discusses the immense potential of Mahisashan railway station and ICP Sutarkandi for facilitating cross border trade between India, Myanmar and Bangladesh.

The diary also brings out the importance of Mahisashan railway station in reviving trade through the rail route.

<https://cuts-citee.org/pdf/field-diary-karimganj-a-strategic-location-for-india-bangladesh-trade.pdf>

Uttar Pradesh: Emerging as a Hub for Multimodal Connectivity in the BBIN Sub-region

A team from CUTS International visited Uttar Pradesh in February 2021. The purpose of the visit was to understand and gather information relating to connectivity, trade logistics, infrastructure and transport challenges and opportunities through stakeholder consultations focussing on understanding their views and perception on ways and means to promote multimodal connectivity within India and in the BBIN sub-region as a whole.

This Field Diary discusses the potential of the upcoming multimodal terminal that has connectivity with road, rail and waterways; and the importance of the Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor for India. The diary also highlights the essentiality of an isolated border railway station for cross-border trade between India and Nepal.

<https://cuts-citee.org/pdf/field-diary-up-emerging-as-a-hub-for-m-connect.pdf>

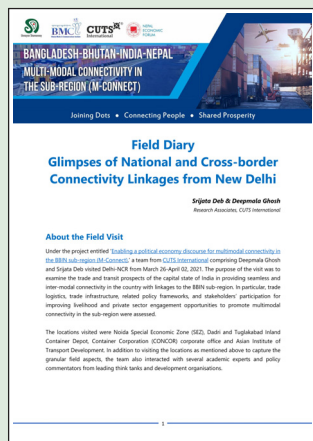


Visakhapatnam: A Catalyst for Multi-modal Connectivity and Port-led Industrialisation

A team from CUTS International visited Visakhapatnam in March 2021. Their Field Diary discusses the role of Visakhapatnam in boosting the multimodal connectivity in the BBIN sub-region along with highlighting its case of port-led industrialisation.

The diary looks into the facilities and prospects of Visakhapatnam Port, which is the second gateway port in India for Nepal bound cargo. It also explains the role of CONCOR in getting more Nepal bound cargo in Visakhapatnam than Kolkata-Haldia, despite double the distance. Apart from Visakhapatnam port, the diary covers the Gangavaram port, which is the deepest port in the country.

<https://cuts-citee.org/pdf/field-diary-visakhapatnam-a-catalyst-m-connect.pdf>



Glimpses of National and Cross-border Connectivity Linkages from New Delhi

A team from CUTS International visited New Delhi in March 2021. Their Field Diary discusses the role of the country's capital in boosting the multimodal connectivity in the BBIN sub-region. New Delhi, in particular, offers insight into initiatives that can potentially catalyse the development of the transportation and logistics landscape in the sub-region.

The diary highlights several connectivity and livelihood initiatives like the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor and the emerging operations at Noida SEZ. It further underlines experts' comments and insights regarding cross-border trade, gender inclusivity and enhancing livelihoods in the sub-region.

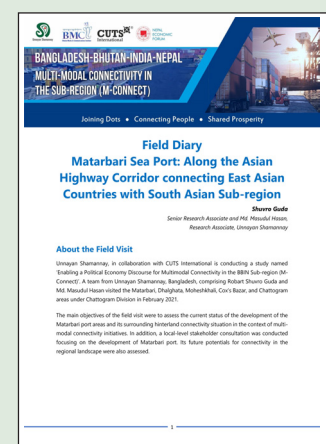
<https://cuts-citee.org/pdf/field-diary-national-and-cross-border-connectivity-linkages-from-new-delhi-m-connect.pdf>

Matarbari Sea Port: Along the Asian Highway Corridor connecting East Asian Countries with South Asian Sub-region

A team from Unnayan Shamannay visited Matarbari, Dhalghata, Moheshkhali, Cox's Bazar, and Chattogram areas in February 2021. Their Field Diary assesses the current status of development of the Matarbari port areas and its surrounding hinterland connectivity situation in the context of multi-modal connectivity initiatives. The future potentials for connectivity in the regional landscape are also evaluated in the diary.

The diary also reflects on the concerns of various stakeholders in the visited areas regarding the new development initiatives taking away their livelihood.

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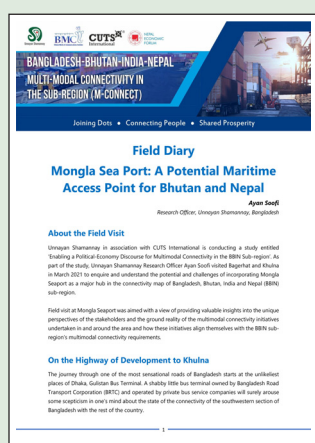
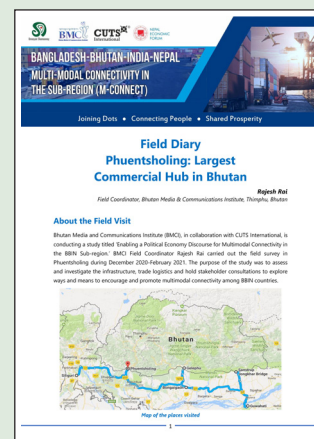


Phuentsholing: Largest Commercial Hub in Bhutan

A team from Bhutan Media & Communications Institute (BMCI) visited Phuentsholing. Their Field Diary assesses the current status of development of the Phuentsholing as a commercial hub and its connectivity to the strategic locations in Bhutan and the neighboring countries. It has been highlighted that the city suffers from inadequate and unutilised trade infrastructure which has dampened trade of agricultural goods, in particular.

The diary further highlights the need to capacitate alternate entry points to the country and decongest Phuentsholing along with enhancing the market linkages to optimise trade and commerce with other BBIN countries.

<https://cuts-citee.org/pdf/field-diary-phuentsholing.pdf>



Mongla Sea Port: A Potential Maritime Access Point for Bhutan and Nepal

A team from Unnayan Shamannay visited the Mongla Sea Port. Their Field Diary is aimed at gathering valuable insights into the unique perspectives of the stakeholders and the on-ground development status of the trade and port infrastructure at Mongla. It additionally highlights the importance of maintaining an ecological balance near the Pasur river given the presence of Sunderbans in the region, alongside the emerging industries.

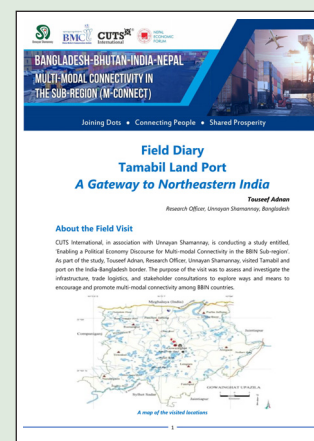
Further, the diary discusses the significance of Mongla-Khulna connectivity and the perspectives of the relevant policymakers situated in Khulna regarding the Mongla sea port.

<https://cuts-citee.org/pdf/field-diary-mongla.pdf>

Tamabil Land Port A Gateway to Northeastern India

Touseef Adnan, Research Officer, Unnayan Shamannay, visited Tamabil and port on the India-Bangladesh border as part of the study. The purpose of the visit was to assess and investigate the infrastructure, trade logistics, and stakeholder consultations to explore ways and means to encourage and promote multi-modal connectivity among Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal (BBIN) countries.

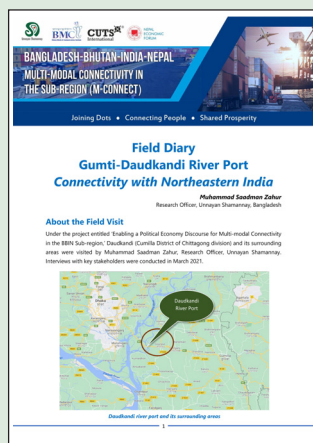
<https://cuts-citee.org/pdf/field-diary-tamabil.pdf>



Ashuganj: A Strategic Location in Bangladesh for Trade and Transit

An officer from Unnayan Shamannay, Muhammad Saadman Zahur visited Ashuganj, Bhairab and Brahmanbaria in Dhaka and Chittagong division in March 2021. The purpose of the visit was to analyse and investigate the policy and protocols associated with the Inland Water Transport (IWT) through the Mongla-Ashuganj and Chittagong-Ashuganj route. In addition, the available infrastructure and trade logistics were studied, along with stakeholder consultations for finding ways to encourage and facilitate multi-modal connectivity among BBIN countries.

<https://cuts-citee.org/pdf/field-diary-ashuganj.pdf>



Gumti-Daudkandi River Port Connectivity with Northeastern India

Muhammad Saadman Zahur, Research Officer, Unnayan Shamannay visited Daudkandi and its surrounding areas in March 2021. The purpose was to investigate and analyse the policy and protocols associated with the Inland Water Transport (IWT) through the Mongla-Daudkandi and Chittagong-Daudkandi route along with any other probable route for trade and transport.

The objective of the visit was also to analyse infrastructure and trade logistics and conduct stakeholder consultations to find ways to encourage and facilitate multi-modal connectivity between BBIN countries.

<https://cuts-citee.org/pdf/field-diary-daudkandi.pdf>

Banglabandha: A Dynamic Connectivity Hub in the BBIN Sub-region

A team from Unnayan Shamannay visited Panchagarh Town, Banglabandha, and adjacent locations in March 2021. The purpose of the visit was to assess and investigate the infrastructure and trade logistics and do stakeholder consultations to explore ways and means to encourage and promote multi-modal connectivity in the BBIN sub-region.

<https://cuts-citee.org/pdf/field-diary-banglabandha.pdf>



Chattogram Port: Transition from National to Regional Transportation Hub

A team from Unnayan Shamannay visited Chattogram port and other critical infrastructure in the port city of Bangladesh. The purpose of the visit was to understand policy, planning, and infrastructure related to connectivity that facilitates trade and commerce at Chattogram. With nearly 90 per cent of Bangladesh's trade taking place through Chattogram Port, it can be considered the maritime gateway of Bangladesh. Thus, it is poised to play an essential role in any multimodal connectivity initiative in BBIN sub-region.

<https://cuts-citee.org/pdf/field-diary-chattogram.pdf>



Muktarpur Port: First Private Inland Container Terminal in Bangladesh

A minor field visit was undertaken at Inland Container Terminal in Muktarpur, run by Summit Alliance Port Limited (SAPL) and nearby areas. The purpose was to visit Muktarpur River Port, a private river port that is an extended port of call between Bangladesh and India. SAPL is a Bangladeshi company that provides off-dock services. In addition to its facilities in the Chattogram Port, it also has a river terminal situated on the bank of Dhaleshwari River in Muktarpur in Munshiganj. SAPL also operates and manages three river terminals in India as well.

<https://cuts-citee.org/pdf/field-diary-muktarpur.pdf>

Benapole: Transformation from Bangladesh-India Trade Artery to a Major BBIN Gateway

A team from Unnayan Shamannay conducted a field visit at Benapole, Sharsha Upazila, to get a comprehensive understanding of the potential for multi-modal connectivity in the region. The field visit was conducted to assess and investigate the infrastructure, trade logistics and conducting stakeholder consultations for exploring ways and means to encourage and promote multi-modal connectivity between BBIN countries.

<https://cuts-citee.org/pdf/field-diary-benapole.pdf>

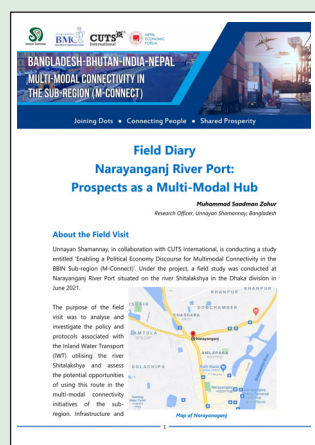
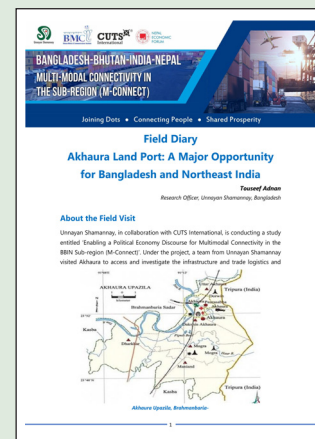


Akhaura Land Port: A Major Opportunity for Bangladesh and Northeast India

A team from Unnayan Shamannay visited Akhaura to access and investigate the infrastructure and trade logistics and Akhaura Upazila, Brahmanbaria- 2 conduct stakeholder consultation to explore ways and means to encourage and promote multi-modal connectivity in the BBIN sub-region.

Akhaura is an Upazilla of Brahmanbaria district under the Chittagong division in the east of Dhaka and it is the adjoining area to the North Eastern Indian State Tripura. Trade and passenger transit occurs through the Akhaura-Agartala check post.

<https://cuts-citee.org/pdf/field-diary-akhaura-land-port.pdf>



Narayanganj River Port: Prospects as a Multi-Modal Hub

A field study was conducted at Narayanganj River Port situated on the river Shitalakshya in the Dhaka division in June 2021. The purpose of the field visit was to analyse and investigate the policy and protocols associated with the Inland Water Transport utilising the river Shitalakshya and assess the potential opportunities of using this route in the multi-modal connectivity initiatives of the subregion.

Infrastructure and trade logistics were studied, while stakeholder consultations were conducted to encourage and facilitate multi-modal connectivity between BBIN countries.

<https://cuts-citee.org/pdf/field-diary-narayanganj-river-port.pdf>

BBIN Motor Vehicles Agreement Implementation Concerns and Available Safeguards

The BBIN Motor Vehicles Agreement is a milestone for these countries in the South Asia region. The Agreement was signed by the four countries in June 2015 to enable seamless movement of passenger and cargo vehicles across borders among them. It was also expected that the Agreement would bring the four countries closer and aid trade and economic integration.

For its implementation, the Agreement required its ratification by the parliaments of the four countries, followed by the signing of two protocols – one for passenger vehicles and another for cargo vehicles.

While the Agreement has been ratified by the three countries, namely Bangladesh, India and Nepal, Bhutan's Parliament withheld its ratification. However, the Government of Bhutan gave its consent for the implementation of the Agreement among the other three countries, with Bhutan to join at a later stage after due ratification by its Parliament.

A major issue that appears to adversely affect the implementation of the Agreement is perceived concerns of stakeholders, whose economic lives and activities are thought to be affected. In addition to some genuine concerns, there appears to be an inter-play of a number of other perceived issues, which are hampering its progress towards implementation – many of these could be misplaced as well – considering safeguards available in the BBIN MVA itself.

Therefore, the purpose of this document is to shed light on available safeguards in the BBIN MVA as against perceived concerns of relevant stakeholders.

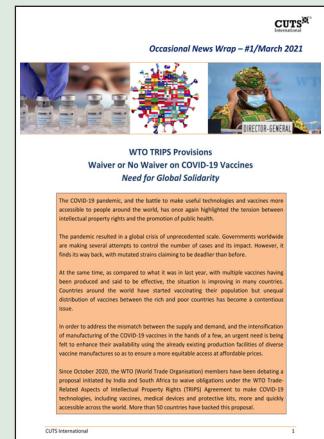
<https://cuts-citee.org/pdf/mconnect-implementation-concerns-and-available-safeguards.pdf>



WTO TRIPs Provisions Waiver or No Waiver on COVID-19 Vaccines: *Need for Global Solidarity*

The COVID-19 pandemic and the battle to make useful technologies and vaccines more accessible to people worldwide have highlighted the tension between intellectual property rights and public health promotion. The pandemic resulted in a global crisis of unprecedented scale. Governments worldwide are making several attempts to control the number of cases and their impact. However, it finds its way back, with mutated strains claiming to be deadlier than before.

<https://cuts-citee.org/pdf/onw-1-wto.pdf>



WTO TRIPs | Waiver on COVID-19 vaccines *Nobody is safe until everyone is safe*

A new COVID-19 variant is on an outbreak leading to a deadlier and infectious strain spreading around the globe. Millions are getting infected and dying every day. The need for affordable and accessible healthcare has become more crucial than last year. Even though eight vaccine candidates from around the world are made available in the market in less than one year of the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak, the world is still facing a shortage of medical supplies.

To control the current situation, more than 70 per cent of the world population, i.e., 05 billion people, needs to be vaccinated against the novel coronavirus to develop herd immunity. With two doses each, this amounts to 10 billion doses of vaccines.

<https://cuts-citee.org/pdf/onw-2-wto.pdf>

WTO TRIPs | Waiver on COVID-19 vaccines *Promoting One World, One Health*

After the outbreak of new COVID-19 variants, which are more infectious and deadly, the world saw a catastrophic impact on developing countries like India. We witnessed the most unfortunate sight of people suffering due to inadequate supply of oxygen, ventilators, beds, medical staff and other medical equipment. Collapsing healthcare system brought out the vulnerabilities of low- and middle-income countries to this pandemic.

The current situation has intensified scary prospects of future waves of the COVID and the only resort is vaccination. Despite eight vaccines worldwide in the market in less than one year of the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak, India is facing shortages and inequitable distribution of the vaccines.

<https://cuts-citee.org/pdf/onw-3-wto.pdf>



Catalytic Multimodal Connectivity Initiatives

This Dossier on Catalytic Multimodal Connectivity Initiatives in the BBIN sub-region reviews four stories, one each for the four countries. It aims to underscore the scale and impact of contemporary infrastructure connectivity initiatives. They reflect in-depth assessments in view of their national, cross-border, sub-regional and inter-regional dimensions of connectivity and include food for thought.

This initiative is a part of the 'Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal: Creating a Political Economy Discourse for Multimodal Connectivity' project, supported by the United Kingdom's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) under its Asia Regional Trade and Connectivity Programme and being implemented by CUTS International in partnership with Unnayan Shamannay, Bangladesh, Bhutan Media and Communications Institute and Nepal Economic Forum. The Asian Development Bank is a Knowledge Partner of this initiative.

<https://cuts-citee.org/pdf/dossier-2-catalytic-multimodal-connectivity-initiatives.pdf>



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Preferential Trade Agreements

Since 2007, CUTS International has been producing a Quarterly Dossier on "Preferential Trade Agreements & India." This Dossier does not cover PTAs that India has entered into or expected to enter in future. Selectively, it covers PTAs of other countries which can have implications on the Indian economy in general and trade in particular.

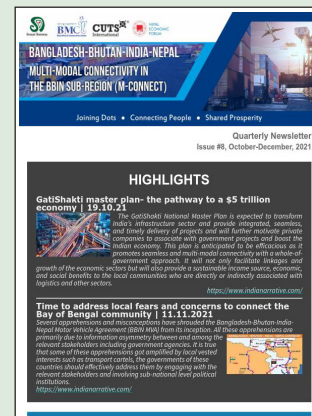
<https://cuts-citee.org/dossier-on-preferential-trade-agreements-ptas/>

BBIN M-Connect Quarterly Newsletter

With support from the UK's FCDO under its Asia Regional Trade and Connectivity Programme and in partnership with Unnayan Shamannay, Bangladesh, Bhutan Media and Communications Institute and Nepal Economic Forum, CUTS International together with its partners is implementing a project on Multi-modal Connectivity in the BBIN Sub-region.

The Asian Development Bank is a knowledge partner as this project will complement the work of its Transport Division in the SASEC (South Asian Sub-regional Economic Cooperation) region. As part of various activities under this project, this Newsletter, is published highlighting various developments and initiatives for promoting connectivity in this sub-region.

<https://cuts-citee.org/enabling-a-political-economy-discourse-for-multi-modal-connectivity-in-the-bbin-bangladesh-bhutan-india-nepal-sub-region/>



CUTS CITEE in Action

This quarterly report summarises major activities undertaken by the Centre during the period. It provides a quick overview of various operations of the Centre and corresponding outputs.

www.cuts-citee.org/CUTS_CITEE_in_Action.htm

E-FORUMS

CUTS Trade Forum

‘CUTS-TradeForum’ is an e-platform to exchange views and opinions on contemporary issues of international trade, trade-related regulations and economic development. It helps its stakeholders to share information and participate in regular discussions and debates.

www.groups.google.com/forum/?fromgroups#!forum/cuts-tradeforum

CUTS South Asia E-Group

‘CUTS South Asia E-Group’ provides an e-platform to discuss, share views and opinions on trade and economics among relevant stakeholders from the South.

www.groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/CUTS-SouthAsia/info

