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# Individual Income Tax Planning Practices in Bangladesh: An Empirical Study

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### 8 Abstract

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The study strives to explore individual income tax planning practices in Bangladesh using 9 field-level data from 194 assessees. The dichotomous procedure was used to score the items. 10 Analytical results indicate that income tax planning scenario in Bangladesh was in a nascent 11 state as compared to India. In Bangladesh, government and nongovernment employees 12 invested more on investment than on philanthropic items and, they invested more in provident 13 fund, benevolent fund, and group insurance, which were a mandatory for them. Deposit 14 pension scheme (DPS), life insurance, and saving certificate were sequentially top ranking 15 voluntary investment in Bangladesh, whereas life insurance was the highest investment in 16 India. Income tax planning index (ITPI) was towering for tax knowledge seekers, self-return 17 prepares, male and elderly respondents. A positive relationship was observed between tax 18 awareness and individual tax planning that suggests more tax rules conscious individual 19 assessee could enjoy maximum tax rebate in Bangladesh. 20

21

22 Index terms— income tax planning, income tax planning index, individual assessee, bangladesh.

## <sup>23</sup> 1 I. introduction

24 ax is a compulsory payment of assessee to the government with no expectation of direct benefits.

The government imposes a tax in different forms to meet its expenditure. Based on impact and incidence, 25 taxes are classified into direct and indirect, wherein the former is charged directly on the income or wealth of 26 individuals and firms, but the latter is imposed on the price of goods and services. As a direct tax, the burden of 27 income tax cannot be shifted to others. Income tax is imposed on the total income of an assessee for an income 28 year in the relevant assessment year (subsequent financial year of the income year) at promulgated rates, ranges, 29 30 and areas of income. There are some well-defined areas on which investment is considered as allowable investment, 31 and there is an option for an individual assessee to get a tax rebate on that invested amount. Investment by 32 an individual assessee on a limit in any or more of the circulated areas in an income year is a way to minimize 33 her/his tax burden within the legal framework. Tax planning is a way to reduce the tax burden of an assessee through investing in the pronounced areas and philanthropic giving under the tax rules. The concept of tax 34 avoidance is also known as tax planning if it is done with the legal framework. Literature support that tax 35 planning is very common among assessees in India. Conversely, individual tax planning picture in Bangladesh 36 is not so due to insufficient literature. In this context, it is imperative to investigate the present tax planning 37 scenario in Bangladesh using field-level data. 38

## 39 **2** II.

# 40 **3** Background of the Study

Taxes are a compulsory payment to the government without any expectation of direct return in benefit to the 41 assessee (Taylor cited in Shil, Masud & Alam, 2016). Direct and indirect are two types of tax based on the 42 impact and incidence of tax. Direct tax is paid entirely by those citizens on whom it is imposed, and it cannot be 43 shifted to others. Income tax is one of the significant direct taxes that contributes up to 35.3 percent of the total 44 tax revenue in Bangladesh (Shil et al. 2016) as against up to 52 percent in India (Dey & Varma, 2016). Paying 45 income tax by individuals is always a matter of inconvenience, and hence, every individual tries to minimize their 46 tax liabilities through legal means (Dey & Varma, 2016). Tax planning is a strategy of reducing tax liability of 47 individuals or firms by evaluating the tax implications of various options in an income year (Shil et al. 2016). 48 Tax planning is the arrangement of one's financial affairs in such a way that full advantage is taken in the form 49 of tax exemptions, deductions, concessions, rebates, allowances and other reliefs or benefits permitted under the 50 Income Tax Act (Vasanthi, 2015). Efficient tax planning enables an assessee to reduce her/his tax liability to the 51 minimum. This is done by taking legal advantage of all tax exemptions, deductions, rebates, and allowances while 52 ensuring that investments are in line with long-term financial and strategic goals (Savita & Gautam, 2013). The 53 tendency of savings and investment through proper tax planning by individuals is increasing gradually. The small 54 investments of individuals greatly contribute to the development of a nation. In India, households are the largest 55 contributor (around 70 percent of domestic savings) to the national pool of savings (Rajeswari, 2014). That is 56 57 why it is essential to observe individual tax planning practices so that the tax burden of individual assessees can 58 be reduced within the legal framework through increased use of investment allowance on the pronounced areas. 59 In this regard, this study area has been selected to explore and address individual tax planning issues.

## 60 **4** III.

## 61 5 Justification

Government expenditures for economic growth and development as well as balances and social equality heavily 62 depend on tax levy and tax payment mechanisms of a country. There are lots of available opportunities for tax 63 avoidance within the legal framework through contributing to human welfare and investing in different pronounced 64 areas which induce further economic growth and development. From the theoretical and practical point of view 65 the study is important for several reasons. First, this study will enrich the existing stock of knowledge in the field 66 of taxation in Bangladesh. Second, findings would help the policy planners/ decision levels authorities to make 67 suitable policy measures to drive maximum benefits from the increased number of welfare activities by individual 68 assessees. Finally, findings would help to form capital through reducing the tax liability of individual assessees. 69

# <sup>70</sup> 6 IV. Objective and Scope of the Study

The study is an attempt to evaluate the tax planning practices of individual assessees in Bangladesh. The study
also strives to track different tax savings schemes available for individual assessees in Bangladesh. Thus the scope
of the study is limited to tax planning measures adopted by individual assessees in Bangladesh.
V.

# 75 7 Methodology

76 It is empirical research based on both primary and secondary sources of data. It is also a mixed method of 77 research as both qualitative and quantitative data, and methods of analysis have been used. Individual assesses 78 in Bangladesh were the population of the study. The sample size of the study was 194 individual assesses. The 79 primary data was collected through administrating semi-structured questionnaire with the combination of both 80 open ended and close ended questions relating to tax planning practices of individuals.

To find out the levels of income tax planning (ITP) scenario, 28 items (Appendix-1) were selected through 81 a review of related literature and income tax laws. The study considered 'Income Tax Planning Index (ITPI)' 82 as the dependent variable. There are various approaches available to develop a scoring scheme for determining 83 tax planning practices. Among the alternative, unweighted disclosure index approach was used to measure the 84 extent of income tax planning practices. All items of information (compliance information) in the index were 85 considered equally important to the average users. To compute ITPI, a dichotomous procedure was followed 86 87 where each of the compliance items awarded a score of 'one' if the assessee complied with the concerned item and 88 '0' otherwise. Comprising the score of the compliance items a dependent variable was determined as Income Tax 89 Planning Score (ITPS) for each assessee was obtained through accumulating the score of all compliance items of 90 an assessee as follows:ITPS=? di ?? ??=1

Where, d=1 if the assessee practiced the item  $d \ i \ d=0$  if the assessee did not practice item  $d \ i \ n=$  number of items ITPI of each assessee was computed by using the following formula:ITPI = ITPS of Individual Assessee Maximum Possible Score Obtainable  $\times 100$ 

Data were analyzed by using different statistical tools to disclose the results. Frequency and percentile were used through STATA version 14 to get results. As stated earlier, the dependent variable of the study was ITPI.

# 96 **8 VI.**

## 97 9 Review of Literature

Related and relevant available literature at home and abroad was reviewed to find out the research gap,
formulating research questions, and to limit the scope of the research. The outcome of the review of literature is
summarized below.

Tax planning means to create situations and investment portfolios, which are tax efficient. It is about taking 101 maximum advantage of exemptions, deductions, rebates, and reliefs allowed for under the act to reduce the tax 102 liability to its minimum (Mathew, 2016). Tax planning involves efficient use of various provisions and loopholes of 103 tax laws to reduce the rate of tax and tax burden of an assessee (Pallavi & Anuradha, 2017). Tax planning is an 104 assortment of financial activities in such a way that could maximize tax benefit by making the use of all beneficial 105 provisions in the tax laws; it entitles an assessee to avail certain exemptions, deductions, rebates and reliefs to 106 minimize her/his tax liability (Mansuri & Dalvadi, 2012). Tax planning can be defined as an arrangement of 107 one's financial and business affairs by taking lawful benefit of all deductions, exemptions, allowances, and rebates 108 to reduce the tax liability to its minimum (Saravanan & Lakshmi, 2017). Based on the tax benefit received by the 109 assessee, tax planning can be divided into two types: short range tax planning and long-range tax planning. The 110 111 act of longrange tax planning is more beneficial for assessee as well as for the government (Pallavi & Anuradha, 112 2017). Tax avoidance is the legal exploitation of the tax rules to one's advantage and to reduce tax burden within the law (Shil et al. 2016). Tax evasion is unlawful, tax avoidance is not an offense, but tax planning is 113 ethical and lawful. Tax planning is vital for every assessee to reduce their tax liability and compliance with the 114 income tax rules (Dey & Varma, 2016). Tax planning is not for a few, but all honest and prudent assessees. 115 A wrong choice may lead to an agonizing burden while a right step in the right direction through proper tax 116 planning may lead to tax savings (Metha cited in Vasanthi, 2015). All transactions in respects of tax planning 117 must be by the true spirit of statute and should be correct in form and substance (Savita & Gautam, 2013). Tax 118 planning doesn't mean not paying taxes, it just means being smart about where to place money to get maximum 119 investment allowance (Mansuri & Dalvadi, 2012). Tax planning does not mean skipping the payment of income 120 tax; it is just an efficient allocation of earned income in different tax savings investment instruments to attain 121 maximum benefits by an assessee (Kalgutkar, 2018). Tax planning is a process of evaluating the financial profile 122 of individuals and businesses to reduce the tax amount on business income or personal earnings (Mgammal & 123 Ismail. 2015). 124

125 In India, households are the largest contributors to the national pool of savings. Their share in net domestic savings in India remains around 70 percent on an average (Rajeswari, 2014). The highest number of respondents 126 invested in the life insurance policy (41 percent) and the second most preferred tax savings investment is in 127 public provident fund (21 percent) (Jose & Joseph, 2016). In another study on India shows that 88.3 percent of 128 the respondent assesses have invested in the life insurance policy (Arara & Gupta, 2017). Individuals in higher 129 age group, state, and central government employees, and more skilled employees are very cheerful with their tax 130 planning schemes. The level of satisfaction also does not vary among the educational level (Vasanthi, 2014). 131 The most used tax saving device in India is the life insurance policy followed by the provident fund (Savita & 132 Gautam, 2013). 133

Thus it is evident from the review of available literature that many research works have been done on individual tax planning in India. There is some literature on corporate tax evasion and avoidance in Bangladesh. But there is hardly any literature on individual tax planning in Bangladesh context. Here is a research gap, and that's why the present study is an attempt to fill in this gap.

## 138 **10 VII.**

# 139 11 Results and Discussion

The results on individual tax planning practices with a brief discussion are presented in this section. An item-wise frequency distribution on tax planning practices relating to investment and donation is presented in tables, and a brief explanation is given after that. Tax planning practices are analyzed through descriptive statistics.

## <sup>143</sup> 12 a) Actual Investment and Donation

Table ??1 demonstrates that the individual tax planning practices in investment items were higher than donation/ 144 philanthropic items in the promulgated areas. Most of the assesses under the study contributed to benevolent 145 fund (60.31 percent), provident fund for government employees (53.61 percent), group insurance scheme (45.36 146 147 percent), and recognized provident fund (39.18 percent). It should be mentioned here that all of the above 148 mentioned four items were under mandatory investment for individuals employed in government organizations 149 and some private organizations. So, the credit for investment in the abovementioned areas should not go to individual assesses. There were several voluntary investment schemes available to individual assesses, and 150 that should be the focal point of tax planning practices. From this viewpoint, highest investment was made by 151 individual assesses in deposit pension scheme (40.72 percent) followed by life insurance premium (36.60 percent), 152 and investment in saving certificate (31.44 percent) in that order. In India, life insurance was the first tax saving 153 instrument, and the provident fund was the second most adopted tax saving instrument (Savita & Gautam, 154

155 2013). A few individual assesses invested in a superannuation fund (13.40 percent), in stock, shares, etc. (13.40 156 percent), in the desktop computer (20.10 percent), in laptop computer (19.59 percent), and in Government 157 Treasury Bond (0.52 percent).

It is also evident from table-1 that the actual scenario of donation by individual assesses was very insignificant 158 in Bangladesh. Highest by individual assesses was in Zakat Fund (5.67 percent) followed by jointly in prime 159 minister's relief fund (3.09 percent) and welfare institutions for disabled people (3.09 percent). No donation was 160 made to Aga Khan Development Network, ICDDRB, CRP Savar, and Asiatic Society of Bangladesh. Only 161 0.52 percent individual assesses invested in a charitable hospital approved by National Board of Revenue 162 (NBR), Muktijuddho Jadughor, Ahsania Mission Cancer Hospital, National level institutions set up for the 163 commemoration of the liberation war, Science and Technology Fund under the Ministry of Science and Technology, 164 etc. Source: Analysis of primary data b) Tax Planning Index Tax planning index is analyzed from different 165 viewpoints, and a brief explanation is presented below. 166

i. Summary of ITPI It is evident from Table-2 that the mean ITPI was 14.08, which was very low in Bangladesh
as compared to India because 81 percent of Indian respondents had planned their tax (Mansuri & Dalvadi, 2012).
There are high variations of ITPI among the individual assesses as the standard deviation (7.34), and range (50)
are high. It should be mentioned here that the minimum practice index is zero (0) under the study. The variation
implies that the mean alone is not able to represent the overall scenario due to the high standard deviation of

172 ITPI among the respondents.

# 173 **13** iv. ITPI based on Education Level

Table-5 demonstrates that ITPI of the respondents of other education levels (Ph.D., MPhil, Second Masters, etc.) is the highest (16.90). ITPI is very low for the respondents who had Higher Secondary education. It should be mentioned here that the ITPI of the respondents of the graduation level education **??**11.16) and master's level education **??**13.98) are less than the overall ITPI of 14.08 under the study. In India, the satisfaction level on tax planning schemes did not differ among the educational level (Vasanthi, 2014).

# <sup>179</sup> 14 Source: Analysis of primary data v. ITPI based on Gender

180 It is evident from table-6 that the ITPI of male respondents (14.38) is higher than the female respondents (12.48)

under the study. But the variability of ITPI among male respondents is higher than female respondents in terms of SD, CV, and range but lower in terms of SE of mean. So, the male respondents had applied more tax

planning than female respondents under the study. Similar results were observed in the India context, where

male respondents used more tax planning measures than female (Vasanthi, 2014).

# <sup>185</sup> 15 vii. ITPI based on Tax Payment Period

Table-8 demonstrates that the assessees who have been paying tax from 9 to 12 years (18.03) showed the highest

187 ITPI followed by 13 to 16 years (15.91), and 5 to 8 years (14.85) in that order. It should be mentioned here that 188 ITPI of the above mentioned three groups of respondents is higher than the overall ITPI of 14.08. ITPI of the

respondents of 1 to 4 years and 17 to 20 years under the study are lower than the overall ITPI of 14.08.

# 190 16 Findings

After analysis and interpretation of results, some mentionable findings are summarized. ITPI was very low in 191 Bangladesh as compared to India. ITPI of an engineer, government job holders, lawyers, and other professions 192 were higher than overall ITPI. Income tax planning on donation items was very insignificant as compared to 193 investment items for the tax rebate. There was a positive relationship between income tax planning and seeking 194 tax knowledge as well as between income tax planning and preparers of own tax return. ITPIs of the respondents 195 in the categories of business, science, and medical education background was higher than the overall ITPI whereas 196 ITPIs of all other education disciplines were lower than overall ITPI. Male respondents were involved in more tax 197 planning than female respondents to reduce tax burden through investing in the pronounced allowable investment 198 areas. ITPI was higher for the respondents who got maximum tax rebate than who did not get a maximum tax 199 rebate. Aged respondents were involved in more tax planning than low aged respondents. ITPI was higher of 200 the respondents who had been paying tax for a long period under the study. 201

# 202 **17** IX.

# 203 18 Conclusion

Individual tax planning is the process of reducing the tax burden by investing in the pronounced allowable sector within the legal frame. The objective of public finance is to meet the funding requirements of the government. A mentionable part of public finance comes from taxes. An individual assessee tries to reduce her/his tax burden in different ways. Some of the ways are within the legal frame, and some of those are not supported by tax laws, rules, etc. By using primary sources of data, collected through administering the semi-structured questionnaire, the study has strived to find out the level of individual tax planning practices following tax laws. The study results indicate that the ITPIs of different categories of individual assessee is very low and fluctuating in Bangladesh as compared to India. Increased number of tax planning may help augment capital formation, enhance tax payment propensity, and rapid development of the country because individual assessees get the chance of tax reduction through tax planning. The study has discovered a new avenue of research on tax planning of individual assesse in the context of developing countries like Bangladesh. Future researches may research to measure the impact of tax planning on individual assessees, the contribution of tax planning in capital formation, corporate tax planning practices, the impact of corporate tax planning on firm performance and value.

1

	Frequency			Percent	
Yes	No	Tota l	Yes	No	Total

### Figure 1: Table 1 :

 $\mathbf{2}$ 

Statistics Mean Standard Deviation Standard Error CV	Result 14.08 7.34 .53 .52
Maximum Minimum	.52 50.00 0
Range	50.00
Source: Analysis of primary data © 2019 Global Journals 1	

[Note: Dii.]

Figure 2: Table 2 :

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Profession	Mean	Stand	aSÆ
		De-	(Mean)
		via-	
		tion	
Government Job	15.95	8.78	1.13
Private Job	11.52	6.05	.83
Doctor	13.69	7.29	2.98
Engineer	19.64	10.31	5.15
Teacher	13.89	6.16	.78
Business	8.52	4.12	2.38
Lawyer	17.86		
Others	20.54	3.42	1.71
Total	14.08	7.34	.53

iii. ITPI based on Study Discipline Table-4 indicates that ITPI of the respondents of law educational backgr

Figure 3: Table 3 :

### $\mathbf{4}$

Study	Mean	Standard	SE	CV	Maxima	Minima	Range	Number
Discipline		Deviation	(Mean)					
Science	15.73	5.80	.89	.37	28.57	3.57	25.00	42
Engineering	12.38	8.52	2.20	.69	28.57	0	28.57	15
Medical	14.73	8.63	3.05	.59	28.57	3.57	25.00	8
Law	23.21	7.58	5.36	.33	28.57	17.86	10.71	2
Business	14.77	8.28	1.15	.56	50.00	3.57	46.43	52
Social Science	13.13	7.24	1.19	.55	35.71	0	35.71	37
Arts	13.54	6.57	1.22	.48	28.57	0	28.57	29
Others	8.33	3.99	1.33	.48	14.29	3.57	10.71	9
Total	14.08	7.34	.53	.52	50.00	0	50.00	194
						Courses Ar	alardia of mui	manne data

Source: Analysis of primary data

Figure 4: Table 4 :

5								
Education Level	Mean	Standard Deviation	SE (Mean)	CV	Maxima	Minim	na Range	Number
HSC	8.93	2.53	1.79	.28	10.71	7.14	3.57	2
Graduation	11.16	6.10	1.52	.55	21.43	0	21.43	16
Masters	13.98	7.52	.61	.54	50.00	0	50.00	150
Others	16.90	6.35	1.25	.38	28.57	3.57	25.00	26
Total	14.08	7.34	.53	.52	50.00	0	50.00	194

Figure 5: Table 5 :

## 3

Gender	Mean	Standard Deviation	SE (Mean)	CV	Maxima I	Minima	Range	Number
Female	12.84	6.27	1.03	.49	28.57	3.57	25.00	37
Male	14.38	7.55	.60	.53	50.00	0	50.00	157
Total	14.08	7.34	.53	.52	50.00	0	50.00	194
						Source: Ana	alysis of prima	ry data
vi.								-

Figure	6:	Table	<b>6</b>	:
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 $\mathbf{7}$ 

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Age group (in Year)	Mean	Standard Deviation	SE (Mean)	CV	Maxima	Minima	Range	Number
25-30	11.58	5.54	1.03	.48	21.43	0	21.43	29
30-35	13.34	7.74	1.11	.58	28.57	0	28.57	49
35-40	14.21	6.45	.95	.45	28.57	3.57	25.00	46
40-45	15.70	7.31	1.19	.47	35.71	3.57	32.14	38
45-50	14.04	11.09	2.86	.79	50.00	3.57	46.43	15
50 - 55	16.07	6.79	2.15	.42	25.00	3.57	21.43	10
55-60	17.35	6.33	2.39	.36	28.57	10.71	17.86	7
Total	14.08	7.34	.53	.52	50.00	0	50.00	194
						C 1	· c ·	1 /

Source: Analysis of primary data

Figure 7: Table 7 :

## 8

Period of tax payment (in	Mean	Standa	r <b>8</b> E	CV	Maxim	aMinima	Range	e Nu
Year)		Devi- ation	(Mean)					
1-4	12.77	6.47	.64	.51	28.57	0	28.57	101
5-8	14.85	8.08	1.07	.54	50.00	3.57	46.43	57
9-12	18.03	8.02	1.75	.45	35.71	3.57	32.14	21
13-16	15.91	7.88	2.38	.50	25.00	3.57	21.43	11
17-20	10.71	2.92	1.46	.27	14.29	7.14	7.14	4
Total	14.08	7.34	.53	.52	50.00	0	50.00	194
						Source:	Analysi	s of

viii. ITPI based on Return Prepared by the Assesseenot their taTable-9 indicates that ITPI of the respondents ispositive relation

higher who prepare their tax return  $\left(14.31\right)$  than who do

not their tax return (13.49) under the study. So positive relationship between income tax return preparation and ITPI.

Figure 8: Table 8 :

## 9

Self Return	Mean	Standard De-	SE	CV	Maxima	Minim	a Range	Number
Filled Up		viation	(Mean)					
Yes	14.31	7.17	.61	.50	35.71	0	35.71	140
No	13.49	7.78	1.06	.58	50.00	3.57	46.43	54
Total	14.08	7.34	.53	.52	50	0	50.00	194

[Note: Source: Analysis of primary data ix.]

Figure 9: Table 9 :

### $\mathbf{10}$

Seeking Knowledge	MeanStand	la <b>S</b> Æ	CV	MaxinMainima	Rang
	De-	(Mean)			
	via-				
	tion				
Yes	14.547.86	.63	.54	50.000	50.00
No	12.163.99	.66	.33	21.433.57	17.80
Total	14.087.34	.53	.52	50.000	50.00
				Source:	Anal
x ITPI based on Getting	o Maximum Tax	Rebate in AY	assessment year (AY) 20	17-2018 than who di	d not

x. ITPI based on Getting Maximum Tax Rebate in AY 2017-2018Table-11 testimony that ITPI is higher (15.03) for

the respondents who got a maximum tax rebate in the

assessment year (AY) 2017-2018 than who did not maximum tax rebate (12.84) during the same peri the amount of tax rebate depends on the level of t planning (ITPI) by the assesses.

Figure 10: Table 10 :

Getting Maxi-	Mean	Standard	SE	CV	Maxima I	Minima	Range	Number
mum Rebate		Deviation	(Mean)					
Yes	15.03	8.32	.79	.55	50.00	0	50.00	110
No	12.84	5.60	.61	.44	28.57	0	28.57	84
Total	14.08	7.34	.53	.52	50.00	0	50.00	194
						Source:	Analysis of prin	nary data

VIII.

 $\mathbf{11}$ 

Figure 11: Table 11 :

- List of income tax planning information items are-No.
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