

Located in the north-west of Bangladesh, Rajshahi district lies under Rajshahi division, and has an area of 2,407 square kilometres. It is bound by Naogaon district to the north, Natore district to the east, and Chapai Nababganj district and the river Padma to the south. The main rivers are the Padma itself along with Mahananda and Baral. Rajshahi is famous for its mango and silk production. It is widely known as the Silk City of Bangladesh.



BRAC School of indigenous Shaotal community in Kakan Hat, Rajshahi.

Photo credit: BRAC

BRAC operates in Rajshahi with quite a few components such as the microfinance, ultra poor graduation (UPG), health, nutrition and population (HNPP), education (BEP), community empowerment (CEP), human rights and legal aid services (HRLS), and skills development programmes. Among them, microfinance offers three types of loans – dabi (microloan), progoti (enterprise loan) and agricultural loans such as – tenant farmers’ development project (BCUP), northwest crop diversification programme (NCDP), second crop diversification project (SCDP). HNPP provides health education through health volunteers (*shasthya shebika*) and health workers (*shasthya kormi*). BEP identifies children from marginalised families and provides basic education through its informal schools. UPG focuses

on tackling extreme poverty in multiple fronts. HRLS serves the disadvantaged community through its human rights and legal education (HRLE) *shebikas*. They have also started a new project called property rights initiative (PRI) in Rajshahi to protect human rights through legal empowerment. CEP builds and strengthens community institutions to ensure socio-political empowerment of poor people. BRAC’s new initiative, the skills development programme, is providing holistic skills development training and decent employment opportunities to enable young women and men to realise their full potential. A BRAC learning centre (BLC) was also established in Rajshahi. The BLC is a residential centre used as a training centre for BRAC employees.

## General information

Population	2,595,197
Sub-districts	9
Unions	71
Villages	1,727
Children (0-15)	778,559
Primary schools	1,044
Literacy rates	53%
Hospitals	12
Banks	84
Bazaars	283
NGOs	82

## At a glance

(as of December 2018)

### Microfinance

Branches	49
Village organisations	4,609
Members	182,351
Borrowers	87,610

### Progoti

Small enterprise clients	12,690
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### Health, nutrition and population

Health volunteers ( <i>shasthya shebika</i> )	650
Health workers ( <i>shasthya kormi</i> )	65

### Community empowerment

Community-based organisation ( <i>polli shomaj</i> )	278
Union-based organisation ( <i>union shomaj</i> )	58
Popular theatre team	9

## Education

Pre-primary schools	17
Primary schools	47
Shishu niketon	74
ADP Centres	30
Community libraries	7
Education support programme	63

### Human rights and legal aid services

Human rights and legal education (HRLE) <i>shebikas</i>	346
HRLE graduates	82,648
Legal aid clinics	11

### Ultra poor graduation

Group - 1 members	119
Group - 2 members	1,037
Asset and training received	1,037
Health care availed	35
Group - 3 members	763
Asset and training received	763
Health care availed	28

### Skills development

Number of master craft personns (MCPs)	97
Number of trades	7
Number of graduate learners	332