

Sharmin Akter Shitol

Research Associate, BRAC James P. Grant School of Public Health, BRAC University

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Sharmin Akter Shitol is a public health researcher with over seven years of experience in qualitative and mixed-methods research. She is a Ph.D. candidate at Queen's University Belfast, focusing on mobile phone use, mobile financial services, and eye health among rural allowance recipients in Bangladesh. At BRAC James P. Grant School of Public Health, she has contributed to national and international projects on ageing, vision impairment, digital financial inclusion, maternal and child health, TB, and implementation research—covering study design, field team supervision, qualitative data collection, and thematic analysis. She has served as an IRB reviewer, mentored MPH students, and presented her research at national and international conferences. Sharmin holds an MPH from BRAC JPGSPH and a BSc in Public Health from the Asian University for Women. Her work bridges evidence and practice to strengthen research capacity and inform service delivery for underserved populations in Bangladesh.

EDUCATION AND AWARDS

Queen's University Belfast (QUB) Ph.D. candidate Dissertation: Mobile Phone Use, Mobile Financial Services Use, and Eye Health Among Rural Bangladeshi Recipients of Old Age and Widow Allowances	Northern Ireland, UK Dec, 2025 (expected)
BRAC James P. Grant School of Public Health (JPGSPH), BRAC University Master of Public Health <i>Master's Thesis</i> , "Experiences of caregivers of childhood TB patients in two sub-districts of Bangladesh: A secondary analysis of qualitative data." Recipient of Best Graduate Student Thesis Research Excellence Award Awarded high distinction for excellent academic performance Recipient of WHO TDR International Postgraduate Training Scheme Recipient of Quality Journal Publication Award	Dhaka, Bangladesh Nov, 2020-Jan, 2021 July, 2022 Jan, 2021 Jan, 2020 April, 2025
Asian University for Women (AUW) Bachelor of Science in Public Health , Minors: Development Studies, Psychology Recipient of <i>Andy Matsui</i> Award for outstanding academic achievement Awarded <i>Summa Cum Laude</i> honor for academic excellence	Chittagong, Bangladesh May, 2017
International Summer School Bangladesh Scholarship Awarded full scholarship from Indian High Commission Dhaka for academic excellence	New Delhi, India June, 2016

RESEARCH & WORK EXPERIENCE

BRAC JPGSPH, BRAC University Research Associate <ul style="list-style-type: none">Prepared and coordinated study proposals for national research funding applications.	Dhaka, Bangladesh July, 2025- Present
Research Associate , "Transforming Households with Refraction and Innovative Financial Technology" <ul style="list-style-type: none">Trained a group of 8 members on how to conduct qualitative interviews and prepare interview notesSupervised the data collection team and ensured the rigour of the data qualityConducted 30 interviews exploring the experience of the OAA and WA beneficiaries on receiving allowance, their views about ageing, decision-making, use of eyeglasses and smartphonesAnalyzed a dataset of 90 interviews using qualitative content analysis and reflexive thematic analysisConducted a scoping review to understand the impact of vision impairment on smartphone useContributed to data collection tool design and assisted the team in protocol development.Prepared application for ethical approval of the project in BRAC JPGSPH and QUB.Performed the role of reviewer for BRAC JPGSPH's IRB.	Dhaka, Bangladesh July, 2021-May 2025
Research Associate , "Amplifying resilient communities to facilitate a deeper understanding of how vulnerable populations respond to and recover from a crisis, such as COVID-19." <ul style="list-style-type: none">Assisted the team in designing the data collection tools.Conducted 15 IDIs, seven KIIs, and four FGDs among care seekers, health care providers, and community members during COVID-19 and participated in data extraction.Distributed data extraction responsibilities among the team members for all study sites and tracked the progress regularly.	Dhaka, Bangladesh Feb, 2021-June, 2021
Rapporteur , Workshop on "Ensuring 100% Birth Registration and 50% Death Registration by 2024" <ul style="list-style-type: none">Prepared workshop proceedings, including a summary report highlighting the main findings, conclusion, and recommendations.Submitted a workshop report to the CRVS Country Coordinator within four days of the event.	Dhaka, Bangladesh Jan, 2020
Research Assistant , "Evaluation of the Integration and Implementation of Verbal Autopsy in the Civil Registration and Vital Statistics System of Bangladesh" <ul style="list-style-type: none">Translated questionnaire, consent form, information sheet, IDIs, and KIIs. Transcribed IDIs and KIIs.	Dhaka, Bangladesh July, 2018- Jan, 2020

Conducted 3 FGDs in three study areas.
 “Implementation Research on Birth and Death Registration Process in Bangladesh, with a Special Focus on the Kaliganj Model”

- Transcribed, translated, and coded IDIs and KIIs. Supervised a group of 6 transcribers.
- “Embedded implementation research on MNCH programs for FDMNs in Cox’s Bazar, Bangladesh”
- Transcribed, translated, and coded IDIs and KIIs. Supervised a group of 3 transcribers.
 - Collaborated in report writing on the research’s findings of phases I & II.

“Assessing the Preventive Chemotherapy coverage provided by a Comprehensive Soil-Transmitted Helminthiasis (STH) control Project by BRAC in Syedpur, Bangladesh”

- Calculated the descriptive statistics using STATA, prepared the data display table, and searched for literature relevant to the research project.

“The ethics of health policy experiments: a global framework for design and oversight”

- Transcribed IDIs and KIIs and translated questionnaire, consent form, information sheet, IDIs, and KIIs. Organized a deliberative workshop and wrote a post-workshop summary.

“Implementation Research on Introducing KMC Services in Government Health Facilities in Bangladesh”

- Collected surveys of KMC caregivers assessing KMC fidelity in DMCH and ICMH.
- Prepared daily observation and field reports based on the practice and behavior of caregivers and care providers (nurses and doctors) within the observation period of two weeks in each health facility.
- Conducted, transcribed, coded, and translated IDIs and KIIs in each health facility.
- Accumulated the qualitative data in the data display table.

Innovation for Poverty Action

Intervention Leader, “Evaluation of a Growth Mindset Intervention in Bangladesh Secondary Schools”

- Practiced and piloted the intervention in front of 100 students in two secondary schools. Worked on the draft improvement of the intervention that included listing and preparing presentation materials such as posters or handouts with other intervention leaders.
- Carried out the intervention in 2 schools and provided three 1-hour presentations per week.

The JiVitA Project: A Maternal and Child Health and Nutrition Research Program

Research Trainee, “Design and Methods of Community Trials with the JiVitA Project, an activity of Johns Hopkins Bangladesh”

- Audited several training sessions for the data collection team organized in the main office and project sites. Monitored the data collection process in the project sites.
- Identified and documented the strengths and weaknesses of the project's current phase and provided recommendations to improve the project.

Dhaka, Bangladesh

July, 2017-Aug,2017

Gaibandha,

Bangladesh June, 2017

Teaching and mentorship experience

Co-facilitator, short-course titled “Qualitative Data Analysis Using NVivo”

- Presented on how to identify pattern and themes during qualitative data analysis among a group of 20 participants

Mentor, *Qualitative Research Method*, MPH program

- Guided a group of six students to prepare data collection tools and an a priori codebook.
- Monitored and motivated the students to work as a team.
- Supported the students in organizing the findings and preparing a final presentation.

Mentor, *Qualitative Summative Learning Project (SLP)*, MPH program

- Maintained communication with two students to track their progress and resolve their concern
- Provided constructive feedback to enhance the quality of their SLP report regularly

Dhaka, Bangladesh

July 2025

Dhaka, Bangladesh

May, 2022-June, 2022

Dhaka, Bangladesh

Nov, 2021-Dec, 2021

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Global Public Health Conference

An abstract titled “Perception of Older Adults and Their Family Members on Vision Impairment and Eyecare-seeking in Rural Bangladesh” has been accepted for presentation.

Making Digital Finance Work for Women, BIGD international conference

Presented a poster delineating the research design of the “Transforming Households with Refraction and Innovative Financial Technology” project.

17th World Congress on Public Health

Presented a poster titled “A qualitative exploration of challenges in childhood TB patients identification and diagnosis in Bangladesh.” The abstract can be found in Population Medicine.

Bangkok, Thailand

Sept. 2025

Dhaka, Bangladesh

June, 2023

Rome, Italy

May 2023

LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

1. Shitol SA, Aftab IB, Piyasena P, et al. Transforming Households with Refraction and Innovative Financial Technology (THRIFT): study protocol for a randomized controlled trial of vision interventions and online banking among the elderly in Kurigram. *BMJ Open* 2024;14:e085083. doi:10.1136/bmjopen-2024-085083

2. Shitol SA, Saha A, Barua M, Towhid KMS, Islam A, Sarker M. A qualitative exploration of challenges in childhood TB patients identification and diagnosis in Bangladesh. *Heliyon*. 2023 Sep 30;9(10):e20569. doi: 10.1016/j.heliyon.2023.e20569. PMID: 37818012; PMCID: PMC10560773.
3. Accepted for publication: Shitol SA., Nur S., Barua M., Chan V. F., Lohfeld L., Shonchoy A., Congdon N., & Rabbani A. "Experiences of older adults and widows with the government allowance programs in rural Bangladesh" in *International Journal of Social Welfare*.

OTHER INFORMATION

- **Languages:** Native fluency in Bengali. Advanced proficiency in English.
- **Technical Skills:** Proficient in Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, Excel, Online research, NVivo, and EndNote.

REFERENCE

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