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**This volume of Journal of Social Sciences
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in honor of the Freedom Fighters
in Liberation War of 1971 on
Golden Jubilee of Bangladesh Independence**



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Cell: 01719398694, 01924030933

E-mail: mojibur101092@gmail.com

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Editorial

It is our great pleasure to dedicate the second issue of the faculty journal of the Social Sciences as the Golden Jubilee of Independence edition. This special edition is our humble tribute to the valiant sons of the land, who sacrificed themselves in the Liberation War of 1971 to not only give us the freedom we so dearly cherished but also to embolden our nationhood as an independent entity on the global map. The celebration of the Golden Jubilee of the Independence is therefore a unique opportunity for us to reflect on the fact that Bangladesh has gone a long way in fulfilling the millennial dream of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman under the seasoned leadership of Jononetri Sheikh Hasina, the Prime Minister of Bangladesh. For the last decade or so, the consistency with which Bangladesh has maintained high growth rate in economy and achieved milestones in the empowerment of population, not to mention the revolutionary changes brought in the communication sector, has been nothing short of phenomenal.

We are thankful to Professor Dr. Atiur Rahman for enriching this special edition with his highly insightful article titled ‘Five Decades of Transformative Economic Policy Landscape of Bangladesh’ in which he observes, in great detail, the transformation of socio-economic development and policy formulation of Bangladesh after the independence. We are also grateful to আব্দুল বায়েস for his analytical article titled ‘বঙ্গবন্ধুর বাংলাদেশঃ হতাশা থেকে হতবুদ্ধি’ as he sheds important light on Bangabandhu’s visionary contribution in various fields of national interest in the independent Bangladesh. We take this opportunity to offer special thanks to external editorial members who provided sincere cooperation and useful guidance in all editorial activities.

We have tried to make this ‘Golden Jubilee of Independence’ edition truly interdisciplinary and international in scope and standard. As we celebrate the fifty years of our glorious independence, we solemnly realize that our Independence was achieved at a high cost- blood-strewn sacrifices from our beloved freedom fighters. And it is our fervent hope that researchers will find this special issue as a source of inspiration to usher in qualitative changes within academia and beyond, and take Bangladesh thus close to Bangabandhu’s vision of an intellectually independent and culturally liberal Bangladesh.

Professor Dr. Md. Sadequl Arefin

Dean

The Faculty of Social Sciences

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FIVE DECADES OF TRANSFORMATIVE ECONOMIC POLICY LANDSCAPE OF BANGLADESH

Dr. Atiur Rahman*

1) The Context: Bangladesh has come a long way

Initially dumped as a ‘bottomless basket case’ or a ‘test case’ of development following its difficult birth, Bangladesh has come a long way through many ups and downs. It is now a rising star of vibrant development following the trajectory of the ‘East Asian Miracle’ (Rahman, 2018). In fact, Bangladesh has been continuing its persistent high level of per capita nominal GDP growth trajectory for more than a decade cashing on low-skilled fast-moving apparel industry, increased flow of inward remittances and, of course, productive modern agriculture leading to this desired structural transformation. That the growth has also been inclusive is reflected in its similar achievements in social development parameters (Tripathi, 2021) including faster fall in child and maternal mortality rates resulting in higher level of life expectancy at birth and decline in poverty and hunger indices. Defying all odds of the ongoing pandemic related economic slowdown, Bangladesh has also been facing confidently most of the following challenges of structural transformation like many other emerging nations:

Firstly, ensuring persistent growth for many and not for a few remains a big challenge for Bangladesh as well. Many countries in the world have managed to achieve growth very well but most of the benefits of that growth process were taken over by a handful of people. The growing inequality in income remains a formidable challenge for Bangladesh as well.

Secondly, there is a structural transformation going on throughout the developing world (transformational from agriculture to industry and services for example). Bangladesh is not an exception in this case either. It too has been going through similar process of transformation. Back in 1972-73, 53% of Bangladesh’s GDP came from agriculture and today it is only 13%. Today, almost half of the GDP comes from service sector. And the remaining proportion now comes from the manufacturing sector (GoB, 2021).

Thirdly, while most countries have done quite well in terms of domestic resource mobilization, Bangladesh is certainly lagging much behind its peers on this. The country has been mobilizing domestic resources only at a proportion of upper single digit of GDP. Countries like Vietnam has done very well in terms of mobilizing both internal and external resources and reporting double digit of GDP contribution from the domestic revenue.

Next, the most important challenge for Bangladesh is perhaps how to remain competitive in the knowledge-based economy in an environment of not so steady human resource development. This is particularly true in the context of the fourth industrial revolution including fast-changing information technology. Bangladesh is also working hard to improve the state of the human skills. It now has a Skills Development Policy steered by the newly established National Skills Development Authority.

*The writer is the Bangabandhu Chair Professor of Dhaka University and former Governor of Bangladesh Bank.

Finally, climate change is an important area where most emerging countries are facing problems. Bangladesh is doing better than many other countries in addressing climate change challenges. However, the emergencies like sudden flow of refugees (Rohingyas) have been creating both fiscal and socio-environmental challenges for Bangladesh. The international support for resolving this problem has been simply inadequate.

No doubt, there are challenges related to governance including persistent lack of transparency and policy consistency in Bangladesh. These are legacy problems and may not be uprooted overnight. All this certainly creates uncertainty and hurdles for smooth transformation of the economy. Fortunately, Bangladesh enjoys the benefit of continuation of the government for more than a decade which has been a boon towards completion of several infrastructural projects including some mega ones.

Despite these challenges, Bangladesh has been moving on with its inclusive development strategy. It's very difficult birth through a war of liberation must be kept in the perspective to understand its unprecedented development journey which has now become a role model for many observers. The social capital like the 'fighting spirit' which was instilled in the mindset of the struggling millions of Bengalis by Bangabandhu, Father of the Nation, in its formative days has been the greatest strength of Bangladesh. At the very outset of Bangladesh's journey Bangabandhu clearly delineated the kind of Bangladesh he envisaged (Khan, 2018)-

"If the people of the country do not get fed, if the youth do not get employed, then this independence will be failed- our independence will remain incomplete."

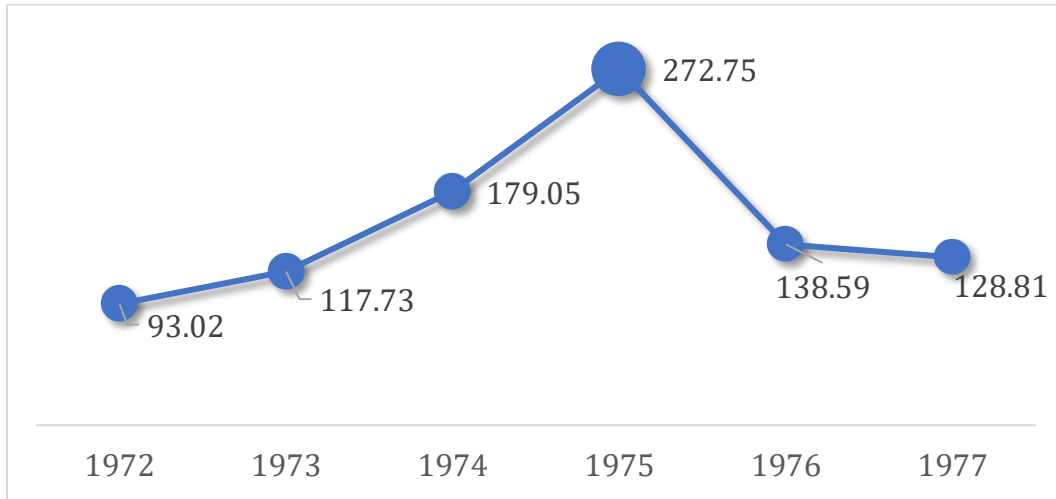
- Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman

10 January 1972 in his speech upon returning to Bangladesh

2) Bangabandhu set the country on the right track

Bangabandhu started rebuilding Bangladesh literally no resources in his hands except the soil and people. In 1972, the size of the economy was USD 8 Billion which is now USD 411 billion. There was no foreign exchange reserve, today it is USD 45 billion. Savings-GDP ratio was only 3%. We had to, therefore, depend more on foreign resources for both survival and development. Investment-GDP ratio was only 9%. Today, it is 32.8% of GDP (Rahman, 2021).

Figure 01: Bangladesh's per capita income (USD) between 1972 and 1977)



Source: Kashem, 2018

Despite these initial structural limitations, Bangladesh made a heroic start of its inclusive development under the courageous leadership of Bangabandhu. Defying this acute resource constraint, thanks to his committed leadership the Bangladesh economy kept on moving forward. It was not certainly easy for Bangabandhu to reconstruct war-ravaged physical and social infrastructures with virtually no regulatory institutions around. There was acute shortage of food grains following persistent natural shocks and nasty international food aid diplomacy instigated by Pakistan. But Bangabandhu led from the front in rebuilding this devastated economy with meagre domestic resources and international humanitarian support.

Re-establishing 'Sonar Bangla' (Golden Bengal) was at the core of his dream, and he left no stone unturned to materialize it.

Re-construction of the war-torn infrastructure was his priority. Thus, we were not surprised to know that Bangabandhu asked for both relief and support for the infrastructural rehabilitation and development to reconstruct his country. He even took ferries from the international NGOs like OXFAM to restore the disrupted transport system.

Apart from the challenge of resettlement of ten million refugees, rebuilding two million burnt houses, he had to rehabilitate hundreds and thousands of war-affected women who were not even accepted by their families. The institutional deficits were no less significant either. The transformation of the provincial government into a central government was the biggest challenge. There was no central bank at that time. The initiative to nationalize the banking sector began at that time. Bangabandhu took the initiative of forming the Planning Commission to start preparing the first Five Year Plan to give policy directions to a newly independent country's government which had hardly any resource. This was a courageous move indeed by a farsighted leadership around that trying time (ibid).

His development journey was challenged by natural disasters on the one hand and rising global oil prices and skyrocketing inflation on the other. Pakistan's vicious diplomacy was hampering US food aid which was accentuating famine condition in the country. However, he was not cowed down by these challenges. Instead, he pursued steadfastly his dream project called Bangladesh which was keen on achieving 'peace, progress and prosperity' which he promised to his people on the very first day (January 10, 1972) of his touching the soil of independent Bangladesh. And he remained focused on this trail of his development journey till his last breath.

3) Bangabandhu ensured balanced prioritization of Agriculture and Industry

Bangabandhu's inspiring leadership made a turnaround of the economy as he continued to focus on simultaneous development of both agriculture and industry. He was rightly walking on two legs to reach his developmental destination. Admittedly, society without exploitation was at core of his development philosophy. This was sharply reflected in one of his early speeches in independent Bangladesh. On December 15, 1973, he said, "This independence will be meaningful to me only when the woes of the farmers, laborer, and the deprived of Bangladesh end" (Khan, 2018). These words echoed the same spirit which he articulated at the Racecourse Maidan on 10, January 1972 on the day of his return to independent Bangladesh.

Bangabandhu rightly prioritized agriculture and industry to move towards a balanced development policy for Bangladesh. He realized that agriculture not only would ensure food for the people but will also remain as the main source of income for them for many more years. To face the shortage of food and to fight against wrecked diplomacy on food aid, he knew that maximum emphasis on agriculture to produce enough food for the people was the only viable policy option for Bangladesh.

At the same time, he was aware of the need for maintaining balance between agriculture and industry. He clearly recognized the merit of walking on two legs- agriculture and industry. Agriculture was then contributing 53% of GDP. Today it is 13%. That means an amazing structural transformation has already taken place in our economy without undermining the level of food production (Rahman, 2021). Thanks to the infusion of modern inputs and technology, a process initiated by Bangabandhu, the agricultural productivity has increased many folds. The food production in Bangladesh increased four and a half times during the last five decades despite falling area of cultivable land. The economy has been sustaining so well based on vibrant agriculture even during the pandemic. Agriculture has been thus safeguarding our macro economy to a large extent. It will be the main driving force of the post-pandemic economic recovery as well as it still provides the largest proportion of employment and domestic demand. Additionally, along with poverty eradication and food security agricultural growth has also been ensuring the supply of raw materials for a growing industrial sector of the country and service sector.

Bangabandhu was equally supportive of the industrial production as well. He went for state-led industrial policy at the beginning due to understandable reasons. The participation of Bengalis

in industrialization was almost missing during the Pakistan period. Most of the industrialists who had production units in East Bengal came from Pakistan. Most of them left for West Pakistan during the last days of the war leaving behind their factories and offices unattended. Bangabandhu had no choice but to nationalize them. Banks and insurance companies had to be nationalized as well to continue finance the industrial units. The industrial production resumed due to this move by the government. But the state could not run the industry efficiently for long even though there was an increase in industrial production in the initial days. So, the government started creating space for the private sector by raising the ceiling of private investment in the later days. Also, many abandoned industrial units were sold to private sector entrepreneurs (ibid).

4) Developing human resources for the emerging nation: Bangabandhu's Approach

Apart from Industry and agriculture, Bangladesh needed human resources for development. Bangabandhu was aware of this and stated that the Golden Bengal could not be achieved without golden human resource. So, he went for an Education Commission led by veteran scientist Dr. Kudrat-e-Khuda. Bangabandhu gave prudent advice to this commission and worked very closely with it. Unfortunately, he did not get enough time to implement the policy suggestions of this prudent Commission. He shared many of these recommendations with the planners of the First Five Year Plan (GoB, 1973). No doubt, the plan document was quite aligned with the recommendations of the Commission. Although Bangabandhu was not able to see its implementation, those recommendations are still a set of valuable policy resource for us. Some of those policy suggestions are as follows:

1. *Developing a workforce that is humane, secular, committed and morally strong:*

These words are still relevant. The way we are thinking of multidimensional development, there is no alternative to making human resources humane.

2. *Instilling leadership, character, and respect for physical labour among the learners:*

Bangabandhu wanted to create a kind of leadership through education which could ensure giving respect/honor to those who earn by physical labor (farmers, laborers). Bangabandhu led the language movement and, consequently, directed Bengali to be the medium of instruction. He directed all administrative activities to be conducted in Bengali and constitution to be formulated in Bengali as well.

3. *Prioritizing science, technology, and women education:*

Bangabandhu emphasized on science and technical education. He gave priority to the education of girls. For example, within the duration of the first five-year plan, Bangabandhu's government aimed to enroll 2.6 million students at the primary level by increasing the boys' enrolment from 76 to 90 per cent and increasing the girls' enrolment from 40 to 55 per cent. For the secondary level, the target was set to increase enrolment to 56 per cent and, thus, enroll a total of 1 million students. The five-year plan also had a target of establishing additional one-hundred colleges at the degree level. It also aimed at increasing the number of primary and secondary school teachers

by 5 per cent. It also planned to increase the number of students in the existing universities in addition to establishing some new universities. Within the first five-year plan period, he also envisaged to increase enrolment in science and technology by 13 per cent per year and implement projects to establish technical education institutions.

4. *Establishing a higher education system that will train wise and compassionate citizens who in turn will work to create equal opportunities for all:*

To better coordinate higher education, Bangabandhu established the University Grants Commission. He gave autonomy to University of Dhaka. The goal of higher education for Bangabandhu was that the highly educated people would work to establish an equitable society and be optimistic about the country. He gave us a fighting spirit that worked in later economic struggles.

5) The Second Round of Pro-People Socio-Economic Journey

Per capita income in 1972 was USD 93 which increased to USD 273 in 1975 (Kashem, 2018). This change was possible in less than 4 years under the strong leadership of Bangabandhu. Bangabandhu did not only do politics, but he also thought about economy. Standing in front of the ruins, he continued to dream of building a golden Bengal.

After the death of Bangabandhu, the journey towards inclusive and sustainable development was halted. This was reflected in the falling per capita income which fell to USD 129 only in 1977. It took a decade to take the same to the level of 1975 (ibid).

So, leadership really matters. This is as true today as it was then. There is no substitute for strong and committed leadership to steer economic progress in the right direction.

Bangabandhu's daughter Sheikh Hasina has been able to restore the pace of development which was lost at the sudden loss of Bangabandhu. She had to struggle hard for this for a long time. After waiting for 21 years, we got back the 'Bangladesh of Liberation War' in 1996. After a long struggle Sheikh Hasina finally won the election and restarted the journey of egalitarian development which was spearheaded by Bangabandhu. She was denied the chance of continuing the journey in 2001 and finally came back to power in 2009 after a protracted struggle for democracy. An amazing socio-economic transformation began since then. Under her strong leadership the country has been moving ahead and is now certified by the UNGA to become developing country. Given her inclusive development strategy the country is poised to become prosperous and as well as egalitarian in the foreseeable future, as dreamt by Bangabandhu. To achieve this goal, Bangladesh needs to maintain the momentum of its journey towards inclusive economic growth, transformation of agriculture into industrial development, skilled and developed workforce, continued peace and harmony in society and polity, alongside financial stability, good governance with social justice, and achieving climate change resilience.

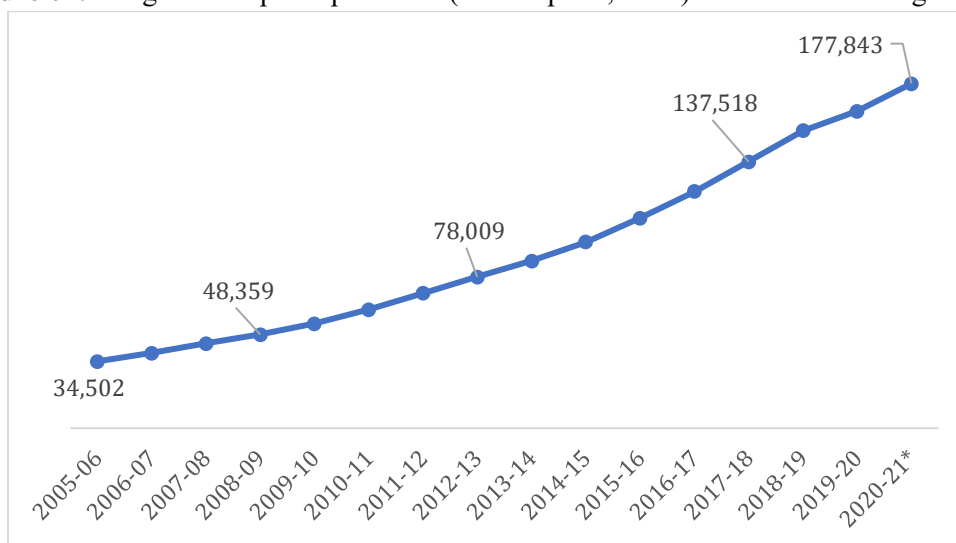
6) Bangladesh indeed, has come a long way

In 1971 Pakistan was 70 percent richer than Bangladesh. Now, Bangladesh is 45 percent richer than Pakistan. The current foreign exchange reserve of Pakistan is USD 12-13 billion (that too

with support from IMF) while Bangladesh has USD 44-46 billion of the same. In 2009, it was only USD 6-7 billion which increased to USD 32 billion in 2016 (Chattopadhyay, 2021). Bangladesh economy is destined to become a trillion-dollar economy in PPP terms by the end of current year, according to the latest IMF forecast. The World Bank is equally upbeat about the prospect of Bangladesh economy.

Bangladesh is indeed moving forward rapidly. Even during this Corona epidemic, per capita income exceeded USD 2,550 in the last fiscal year. The growth in nominal GDP per capita remained the highest in emerging Asia during the last decade beating economic giants like China and India. Export is one of the factors for the progress of Bangladesh. Exports increased by 28 percent in the last six months.

Figure 02: Bangladesh’s per capita GDP (current price, BDT) has been increasing rapidly



Source: GoB 2021

Bangladesh has been maintaining a stunning macroeconomic stability with prudent fiscal deficit of less than 5 percent of GDP, inflation rate below six percent and growing foreign exchange reserve. The foreign debt to GDP ratio remains below 15 percent.

Bangladesh has been making consistent progress in its strength in financial inclusion. The performance of Bangladesh has been more impressive than others in the landscape of financial inclusion (Basu, 2018). The promising domestic consumer market and inclusive development policies of the government, along with the inclusive financing strategy of the developmental central bank, have been providing impetus to the impressive macroeconomic transformation.

Thanks to the fast-growing digital technology, the drive for financial inclusion in most countries including Bangladesh has gained pace. In particular, the omnipresence of mobile phone connectivity has increased the opportunity to provide new innovative financial services to many. This was simply unimaginable earlier.

Moreover, the daily \$165 million inflow to the rural areas through digital financial services including mobile financial service and agent banking which has been enhancing the aggregate expenditure significantly (ACDI VOCA, 2021). All these factors are helping to reduce the rural-urban gap and build up more inclusive society.

Inward foreign remittances have been further bolstering our economy. We are doing better than many in this epidemic due to our strength in remittances.

Another major aspect of Bangladesh's growth is that these benefits are being reached to the 'bottom of the pyramid'. As a result, we experienced 20% poverty rate and 10% extreme poverty rate in Bangladesh before the outbreak of COVID-19. The consumption has also increased simultaneously at the bottom of the pyramid, reflecting nearly halving of the poverty rate and rising life expectancy.

However, the economy has been hit by the COVID epidemic. Employment has been disrupted. Unemployment has risen. As a result, poverty has increased a bit as well. Even then we are trying to create new entrepreneurs. The recovery process is being facilitated by the incentive package provided by Bangladesh Bank and the Government of Bangladesh. The economy remains broadly liquid allowing recovery process as smooth as possible. Of course, there is some upside risk of rising inflation due to mostly supply disruptions. However, our inflation is still under control (around 6 percent). This was about 12 percent in 2009.

Bangladesh followed an inclusive financing policy to increase supply of food and other daily necessities in addition to providing better access to finance by encouraging the central bank to follow accommodative monetary policies. The developmental central banking in Bangladesh can certainly be credited for improving the agricultural productivity and access to finance for the micro, small and medium enterprises.

In Food production Index, the position of Bangladesh is better than China, India, and Vietnam. Bangladesh is doing better in per capita food production. In last 50 years per capita arable land has been decreased to 10 decimals per capita to 28 decimals. However, agricultural production increased by four and a half times during this period. Previously, we could produce about ten million metric tons of food which is now about 46 million metric tons Per capita rice production was 140 kilogram in the 1970s. Now, per capita rice production has gone up to 240 kilograms. Besides, production in fisheries has also increased many folds. This is also true for the livestock, chicken, and vegetable productions (Rahman, 2021).

Digitization, financial inclusion, e-commerce, e-service etc. are also facilitating inclusive development. Despite some trust related challenges, many new entrepreneurs are doing businesses through using social media while sitting at home. Central Bank already has given permission for nano credit. With the initiative of City bank and bKash, loan facility up to Tk. 20,000 is being taken within 3 minutes sitting at home using digital financial services (TBS, 2021).

All such extraordinary things have been made possible by the 'Digital Bangladesh' campaign of the government. In line with that, we have digitalized the banking sector to a great extent.

Bangladesh Bank has been able to develop related infrastructures such as Electronic Fund Transfer (EFT), National Payment Switch, Automated Clearing House, Credit Information Bureau, RTGs etc. The pace of the economy could not be stopped even during this epidemic mainly due to the presence of digital financial services. Thanks to the MFS and Agent Banking, money is being transacted from town to village, from village to town at a fast speed.

Bangladesh has also been investing in our education and health care sector. But, Covid-19 pandemic has caused damages to our education sector a lot. Healthcare has struggled in the beginning but now it has recovered a lot. Vaccination along with booster jabs are continuing as planned. We need to remain focused on the continuation of faster vaccination to keep the pace of the economic recovery onboard.

7) Pro-Poor Development has been Exemplary in Bangladesh

Bangladesh has been a model of pro-poor development for the last one decade. As already stated, the level of poverty has been reduced from 33.4% (in 2009) to just over 20%. Extreme poverty has been reduced from 19.3% to around 10%. The pandemic has, of course, posed a challenge to this amazing journey. But a sustainable recovery is most likely. While the new variant of the Corona (Omicron) is grumbling, we need to develop a culture of living with the COVID along with maintain maximum health protocol including universal masking.

Even amid the pandemic, Bangladesh has reduced hunger significantly. Global Hunger Index score came down to 19.1 in 2021 from 28.6 in 2012. The HUNGER INDEX is such that the less it is, the better and our HUNGER INDEX is better than India and Pakistan.

The Prime Minister talked about our innovative low-cost solutions to developmental challenges while addressing an international conference in Paris a few days ago. She said that Bangladesh can boost on many low-cost solutions in inclusive development and microfinance. Besides, our achievements in agriculture, community health care, non-formal education, reproductive health, disaster management and microfinance have reached out in other parts of the world, she said.

Our armies are engaged in peacekeeping operations in various parts of Africa. In addition, our NGOs are providing these low-cost solutions on inclusive development in many countries. BRAC is working in 12 countries. 'Asha' and various other organizations are working as well. Bangladesh has become a role model of development not only in its own country but all over the world. Our oral saline and mobile financial services are now world famous. In other words, Bangladesh is right on track towards achieving sustainable development. The core elements of the transformative development strategy include high growth with inclusivity, self-reliance along with collaboration and openness to innovation while remaining respectful to our own culture.

We have noticed that our growth has been very positive even during the pandemic. This was 5.3 percent in the last financial year. The World Bank estimates that this will be 6.4 percent in 2021 and 6.8 percent in 2020. Our own estimate for the current fiscal year is more than seven percent. My own hunch is that Bangladesh will be able to achieve this growth rate in the backdrop of its

buoyant export and remittances earnings. Bangladesh recorded 28 percent increase in export growth during July-December 2021. The remittances remain buoyant in the backdrop of additional cash incentives and moderate depreciation of Taka. The growth in import, however, was even stronger at 54% during this period creating pressure on the exchange rate. The good thing is that the growth in import of capital goods, mainly related to export sector, was about 30 percent. All this indicates a robust recovery of the economy which was made possible by focused stimulus packages of about 5% of GDP. The pickup in domestic private credit growth of about 11% at the end of the year also supports this recovery process. The inflation is, however, upbeat due mainly to supply side disruptions and adjustment of oil prices. The macroeconomic stability in Bangladesh remains strong despite some challenges in the external economy.

What is more encouraging is that the country remains the best performer in Asia in terms per capita nominal GDP even amid the pandemic-induced economic slowdown. Nominal GDP per capita growth rate during 2011-2018 was 9.4% compared to that in China was 7%. It was 6.6% in Vietnam and 3.9 percent in neighboring India. The performance of Bangladesh during 2019-21 has also been the best. This rate was 7.8% in Bangladesh compared to 6.9%, 4% and 3.1% in China, Vietnam, and India respectively. Despite some ups and downs due to political turmoil and balance of payment challenges, the overall growth rate in Bangladesh remained robust and the fastest in emerging Asia during the last decade. Indeed, the Bangladesh economy has now become more dynamic and inclusive. Due to liberal and prudent policies, now there is a real possibility of building the 'Golden Bengal'. Setting the right macro-economic priorities is now the call of the hour. Emphasis should be placed on mobilizing one's own resources along with attracting more low-cost long-term resources from international development organizations. The Debt-GDP ratio in Bangladesh remains low and its record of timely repayment of the instalments of the external debt has been always on time. So, Bangladesh remains an attractive stakeholder for these agencies. We must ensure utilization of resources will have to be spent in the priority sector.

8) Concluding Remarks: Bangladesh Moves On

To continue this journey Bangladesh must invest more on infrastructure and involve the private sector as much as possible. Unfortunately, the share of the private sector in infrastructural investment remains only 1.1% of GDP. This ought to be higher for their own sake. The cost of business is still very high compared to other countries in Asia. Even though the pace of handling of containers in our seaports has increased significantly, Bangladesh is still lagging in terms of days spent on executing both export and import orders. For example, it takes nearly 28 days to complete an export order from Bangladesh compared to 18 days in Asia. Similarly, it takes 34 days to execute an import order from abroad by Bangladesh as against 20 days. These delays have costs. Bangladesh must reduce the infrastructural deficits and further improve port management to reduce the import-export related costs to remain competitive in the global market. Certainly, the export-led growth of Bangladesh is likely to sustain further in next 10

years. But a middle-income Bangladesh cannot rely on low-cost labor as its sole competitive edge. We need to develop our capacity, productivity, and skills. It needs an enabling regulatory environment as well which can enhance cost-competitiveness. And enhanced use of technology can, indeed, improve our labor-productivity. It may be noted that 25% increase in technology usage can yield 3% increase in profits per worker.

Export and market diversification initiatives need to be coupled with effective economic diplomacy for ensuring better trade deals and increased FDI. Economic diplomacy is needed to avail the trade benefits from Euro-zone and other importing countries. Europe has already extended the trade facilities enjoyed by Bangladesh until 2029 even after its official graduation to the status of a developing country. Like Vietnam, we can also negotiate Free Trade Agreements with EU and other trade partners to continue our export-led growth momentum.

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বঙ্গবন্ধুর বাংলাদেশ : হতাশা থেকে হতবুদ্ধি আব্দুল বায়েস*

সর্বকালের সর্বশ্রেষ্ঠ বাঙালি, আমাদের জাতির জনক বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমানের শততম জন্ম বার্ষিকীতে শ্রদ্ধা নিবেদন পূর্বক এই নিবন্ধের শুরু। পঁচাত্তরের নৃশংস হত্যাকাণ্ডের কারণে তিনি আমাদের মাঝে নেই কিন্তু তাঁর সুযোগ্য কন্যার দূরদৃষ্টি সম্পন্ন নেতৃত্বের গুণে বাংলাদেশ আজ উন্নয়নের মহাসড়কে।

গেল পঞ্চাশ বছরে আর্থ সামাজিক বিবর্তনের ইতিবাচক এবং নেতিবাচক দিক নিয়ে আজকের এই প্রবন্ধ।

এক।

বাংলাদেশের উন্নয়নকে বলা হয় উন্নয়ন ধাঁধা বা ডেভেলপমেন্ট প্যারাডক্স। বিগত দশকগুলোতে চোখ ধাঁধানো উন্নয়ন না হয়ে থাকলেও যতটুকু অর্জিত হয়েছে তা চোখে ধাঁধা লাগাবার মতোই বলা যেতে পারে। কার কাছে? নিঃসন্দেহে আন্তর্জাতিক সম্প্রদায়ের কাছে যারা, জেনে বা না জেনে, বাংলাদেশের সম্ভাবনা নিয়ে শঙ্কিত ছিল; তারা ভাবতেও পারে নি যে, কোনো এক সময় বাংলাদেশের অর্থনৈতিক উন্নয়ন পৃথিবীতে ‘খবর’ হয়ে উঠবে, সাড়া জাগাবে।

প্রসঙ্গত মনে পড়ে গেলো মার্কিন পররাষ্ট্র সচিব হেনরি কিসিঞ্জারের কথা। তিনি স্বাধীনতার শুরুতে বাংলাদেশে এসে দেশটিকে ‘তলাবিহীন ঝড়ি’ তকমা এঁটে দিয়েছিলেন; সম্ভবত তিনি পরোক্ষভাবে এ কথাটা বোঝাতে চেয়েছিলেন যে বাংলাদেশের জন্য সুড়ঙ্গের শেষ প্রান্তে বাতি নেই। সেই কিসিঞ্জারের অনুসারীরা বাংলাদেশের এখনকার উন্নয়ন দেখে ভ্রু কুঁচকাতে না তো কী করবে। এটাই স্বাভাবিক। কিংবা উন্নয়ন গবেষক ইউস্ট ফ্যাল্যান্ড ও জে পারকিনসনের কাছেও আমাদের উন্নয়ন এক প্রকার ধাঁধা হিসাবে থাকবে কেননা, পঁচাত্তর সালে প্রকাশিত এক বইতে ওই দুজন প্রক্ষেপণ করে বলেছিলেন যে, বাংলাদেশ হচ্ছে উন্নয়নের টেস্ট কেস। অর্থাৎ, সন্দেহের অবকাশ নেই যে এখানে উন্নয়ন সফল হলে অন্য কোথাও তা ব্যর্থ হবে না। অবশ্য, তাঁরা ২০০৭ সালে বাংলাদেশে এসে তাঁদের ভবিষ্যৎবাণীর ভুল স্বীকার করে এটাও বলে গেছেন যে, টেকসই উন্নয়ন বাংলাদেশের হাতের নাগালে, যদিও নিশ্চিত নয়।

যাই হোক, উন্নয়ন সংক্রান্ত গোলক-ধাঁধায় আমরাও কিছুটা পড়িনি তা বোধ হয় হালফ করে বলা যাবেনা। কেউই আশাই করতে পারিনি যে, অর্থনৈতিক প্রবৃদ্ধির হার চার-এর নিচ থেকে আট শতাংশ ছুঁইছুঁই করবে; খাদ্য উৎপাদন তিন গুণ বাড়িয়ে দেশটি ‘সরব দুর্ভিক্ষ’ ঠেকাতে সক্ষম হবে; সম্প্রসারিত টিকাদান কর্মসূচি ও ওর্যাল স্যালাইন বিপ্লব শিশুমৃত্যুর হার ব্যাপক নামিয়ে আনবে; জনসংখ্যার বার্ষিক বৃদ্ধির হার অর্ধেকেরও বেশী নেমে আসবে এবং মোট প্রজনন হার ৬ থেকে ২-তে দাঁড়াবে; স্কুলে মেয়েদের অন্তর্ভুক্তির হার প্রায় একশত ভাগ এবং ছেলেদের চেয়ে বেশী; আয়-দারিদ্র্যের প্রকোপ ৬০ শতাংশ থেকে ২৫ শতাংশে পৌঁছাবে, ঘরে ঘরে মোবাইল সেট, ইত্যাদি ইত্যাদি ইতিবাচক উন্নতি হবে। তাছাড়া, নোবেল জয়ী অমর্ত্যসেনের মতে, বাংলাদেশের অন্যতম অর্জন হচ্ছে কিছু কিছু আর্থসামাজিক নির্দেশকে বাংলাদেশ ভারতকে পেছনে ফেলে এগিয়ে যাচ্ছে যদিওবা মাথাপিছু আয়ের নিরিখে দেশটি ভারতের পেছনে রয়েছে। এক সময় ভারতের গড়পড়তা প্রত্যাশিত জীবন বাংলাদেশের চেয়ে বেশি ছিল আর এখন বাংলাদেশের মানুষ ভারতবাসীর চেয়ে পাঁচ বছর বেশি বাঁচে।

বিশেষত গেল এক থেকে দেড় দশকে প্রবৃদ্ধি ত্বরান্বিত করণে এবং বেশ কিছু মেগা প্রকল্প হাতে নিয়ে যার মধ্যে নিজস্ব অর্থায়নে পদ্মা সেতু নির্মাণ অন্যতম বাংলাদেশ চারিদিকে চমক সৃষ্টি করতে সক্ষম হয়েছে; প্রবৃদ্ধির হারের দিক থেকে বাংলাদেশ এখন শীর্ষে থাকা গুটিকয়েক দেশের অন্যতম দেশ।

*প্রাক্তন অধ্যাপক, অর্থনীতি বিভাগ এবং উপাচার্য জাহাঙ্গীরনগর বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়।

দুই।

বাংলাদেশের উন্নয়নকে তুলনামূলক হিসাবে ন্যাস্ত করা যায় প্রতিবেশীদের সাথে এবং এই কাজটি সম্প্রতি করেছেন বাংলাদেশ উন্নয়ন গবেষণা প্রতিষ্ঠানের মহাপরিচালক ড. বিনায়ক সেন। বিশেষ করে জানতে ইচ্ছা হয়, 'সেই পাকিস্তানের 'তুলনায় বাংলাদেশ ভালো না খারাপ আছে? এমনকি প্রতিবেশী বিশাল দেশ ভারতের চেয়ে? পরিসংখ্যান দিয়ে ব্যাপারগুলো পরিষ্কার করা যাক। ধরুন, নব্বই এর দশকের শুরুতে বাংলাদেশের মাথাপিছু জিএনআই পাকিস্তানের মাথা পিছু জিএনআইয়ের ৫৫ ভাগ ছিল অথচ ২০১০ দশকের শেষের দিকে পাকিস্তানের চেয়ে ১০ শতাংশ বেশি বাংলাদেশের মাথা পিছু জিএনআই। অন্যদিকে, নব্বই এর দশকের শুরুতে বাংলাদেশের মাথা পিছু জিএনআই ছিল ভারতের ৮৭ শতাংশ, পার্থক্যটা বৃদ্ধি পেয়ে ২০০০ এ দাঁড়ায় ৭৪ শতাংশ কিন্তু ২০১০ শেষ দিকে হ্রাস পেয়ে ৮২ শতাংশ- 'ক্যাচিং আপ' ইন্ডিয়া সিড্রোম!

বাংলাদেশে জিডিপিতে ম্যানুফেকচারিং মূল্য সংযোজনের বিগত পঞ্চাশ বছরে বাংলাদেশের উন্নয়ন যাত্রার একটা তুলনামূলক চিত্র তুলে ধরলেন। তিনি পরিসংখ্যান দিয়ে প্রমাণ করতে চাইলেন কেন বাংলাদেশ বিশ্বদরবারে উন্নয়ন ব্যতিক্রম বা উন্নয়ন ধাঁধা হিসাবে বিবেচিত। তাঁর মতে, বাংলাদেশের উন্নয়ন নিয়ে শুরুতে হতাশার সুর শোনা গিয়েছিল তা মূলত তিনটি ক্ষেত্রে কেন্দ্র করে যথা-(ক) কৃষি ক্ষেত্রে প্রযুক্তি প্রসারের ঘাটতি, বৈষম্য মূলক কৃষি কাঠামো এবং তীব্র খাদ্য স্বল্পতা ও গণ দারিদ্র্য; (খ) জনমিতিক জগতেনব্য-ম্যালথুসিয়ান নিরাশা, নারীর নিচু শিক্ষা, সামাজিক বা পেশাগত অবস্থান এবং ভয়েস এবং (গ) বাজার ব্যবস্থার দুর্বলতা ব্যক্তি উদ্যোক্তার অভাব, দুর্বল রাষ্ট্রে দুর্বল শিল্পনীতি, প্রাথমিক পণ্যের আধিক্যে রপ্তানি হতাশা ইত্যাদি।

বলার অপেক্ষা রাখেনা যে, পরবর্তীতে হতাশাবাদ হটিয়ে আশাবাদের আগমন ঘটেছিল বাংলাদেশের বেলায়। এখন বাংলাদেশের বয়স ৫০ যখন অতীতের আর্থ সামাজিক মূল্যায়ন গুলুর পুনর্বিবেচনা অত্যন্ত প্রয়োজন। বিনায়ক সেনের ধারণা, হতাশা থেকে সফলতার সাথে আশায় উত্তরণের বাংলাদেশের অভিযাত্রাকে মূলত দুটি পথে পরীক্ষা করা যেতে পারে। প্রথমত, এতদ্বাধ্যলের অন্যদের সাথে বাংলাদেশের তুলনা-যেমন পাকিস্তান ও ভারতের সাথে-বিশেষত ১৯৯০-২০২০ সময় কালে পাকিস্তান এবং ভারতের অগ্রগতি বনাম বাংলাদেশের অগ্রগতির গতিপথ অনুসরণ করা- প্রয়োজনে পুরো সময়কে চারটি ভাগে ভাগ করা যায়।

দ্বিতীয় পথটি হচ্ছে পূর্বজারিত/প্রত্যাশিত ও প্রকৃত ফলাফলের তুলনামূলক বিচার-বিশ্লেষণ। নির্দিষ্টভাবে দেয় আয় স্তরে বাংলাদেশের প্রকৃত অগ্রগতির সাথে এর প্রক্ষেপিত অগ্রগতির তুলনা করা তবে বিবেচনায় নিতে হবে অন্যান্য নিম্ন ও নিম্ন এবং নিম্ন-মধ্য আয়ের দেশের অভিজ্ঞতাও।

প্রসঙ্গত বলে রাখি, বিনায়ক সেনের উপস্থাপিত পরিসংখ্যান প্রসূত প্রধান পর্যবেক্ষণ কিছুক্ষণের জন্য হলেও শ্রোতা বা পাঠককে পিনপতন নীরবতায় স্বপ্ন আসনে ধরে রেখে ছিল বৈকি। বলা বাহুল্য, আপাতদৃষ্টে স্বাধীনতার পরবর্তী ভয়ংকর ভবিষ্যত বাণীর প্রেক্ষিতে উপস্থাপিত বাংলাদেশের আর্থসামাজিক উন্নয়ন বিবরণী আরবরজনীর আখ্যান মনে হতেই পারে কারো কাছে।

প্রথমে ধরা যাক বাংলাদেশ বনাম পাকিস্তানের তুলনা। পাকিস্তান আমলে বিচ্যুতি ছিল অগ্রগতিতে। পশ্চিম এগিয়ে ছিল আর পূর্ব অনেক পিছিয়ে। যার ফলে স্বাধীন বাংলাদেশ। এখন ও বিচ্যুতি লক্ষণীয়-বস্ত্রত বাড়ন্ত বিচ্যুতি তবে এবার উলটো দিকে অর্থাৎ বাংলাদেশ অগ্রগামী পাকিস্তানের চেয়ে নানান নির্দেশকে। স্বাধীনতার সময় প্রায় সকল আর্থ সামাজিক নির্দেশকে বাংলাদেশ পাকিস্তান থেকে পিছিয়ে ছিল; ২০১০ সালের শেষে এ সমস্ত ক্ষেত্রে বাংলাদেশ পাকিস্তানকে টপকে গেছে বলে ধারণা দিলেন বিনায়ক সেন।

বাংলাদেশ বনাম ভারতের তুলনাটা এ রকমঃ কিছু ক্ষেত্রে ছুইছুই, অন্যক্ষেত্রে এগিয়ে। যেমন জিডিপিতে ম্যানুফেকচারিং খাতের অবদান, শ্রমবাজারে নারীর অংশ গ্রহণের হার, নগরায়নের হার ইত্যাদিতে ভারতের চেয়ে এগিয়ে রয়েছে বাংলাদেশ, এবং অন্যান্য নির্দেশকে কেন্দ্র ধাবমান সেই দেশটির সমান হতে।

ম্যানুফেকচারিং খাতের ক্রমবর্ধমান অবদান আছে এবং ২০১০ সাল শেষে এই হিস্যাপ্রায় ২০ ভাগ দাঁড়ায়। এর বিপরীতে ভারত ও পাকিস্তানে ওঠানামা নিয়ে ম্যানুফেকচারিং খাতের অবদান যথাক্রমে ১৩ ও ১১ শতাংশ। এটা ব্যাখ্যা করে কী করে বাংলাদেশ আর্থ সামাজিক নির্দেশকে আঞ্চলিক সহগামীর নাগাল ধরল। আর ম্যানুফেকচারিং খাতের সফলতা প্রতিফলিত হতে দেখা যায় নগরায়ণের সফলতায় নব্বইর দশকে সবচেয়ে কম নগরায়ণ থেকে আঞ্চলিক অংশীদারদের ছাপিয়ে যাওয়া কম কৃতিত্বের কথা নয় (অপরিকল্পিত যদিও এবং অন্যান্য সমস্যা থাকা সত্ত্বেও)। দ্বিতীয়ত, আঞ্চলিক প্রতিবেশীদের তুলনায় নারী শ্রমশক্তির অংশগ্রহণের সংগতিপূর্ণ হার বৃদ্ধি পাবার পেছনে জ্বালানী জুগিয়েছে ম্যানুফেকচারিং খাতের সফলতা তুলনীয় সময়ে বাংলাদেশে প্রায় ২৫ থেকে ৩৬ শতাংশ, ভারতে ৩০ থেকে ২১ এবং পাকিস্তানে ১৪ থেকে ২৩ শতাংশ।

সামাজিক নির্দেশকে সার্বিক পর্যবেক্ষণ অমর্ত্য সেনের বিশ্লেষণে উঠে আসলেও বিনায়ক সেন তাঁর স্বকীয় ধারায় দেশগুলোর অবস্থান তুলে ধরেছেন। বলতে চেয়েছেন যে, অধিকাংশ সামাজিক নির্দেশকে পাকিস্তানের আগে অবস্থান বাংলাদেশের শিশু মৃত্যুহার, মৃত্যুহার, মোট প্রজনন হার, প্রত্যাশিত আয়ু, বয়স্ক সাক্ষরতা (মোট এবং মহিলা), এবং মেয়েদের প্রাথমিক ও মাধ্যমিক অন্তর্ভুক্তি প্রভৃতি। বস্তুত, যখন জর্দেজ এবং অমর্ত্যসেন মনে করেন, এসব নির্দেশকের ক্ষেত্রে ভারত সহ অন্যান্য উন্নয়নশীল দেশের জন্য বাংলাদেশ পথ প্রদর্শক তখন গর্বে বাংলাদেশীর বুক ভরে উঠবে বৈকি।

এবার সামাজিক নির্দেশকের তুলনামূলক আলোচনায় একটু নির্দিষ্ট হওয়া যাক। নব্বই এর দশকের শুরুতে ভারতের তুলনায় শিশু মৃত্যুহার বাংলাদেশে বেশী থাকা সত্ত্বেও ২০০০ পরবর্তী সময়ে বাংলাদেশ ভারত ও পাকিস্তানের নিচে শিশু মৃত্যুহার নামাতে পেরেছে (বাংলাদেশ প্রতি হাজারে ১০০ থেকে ২৬, ভারত ৯৯ থেকে ২৮ এবং পাকিস্তান ১০৭ থেকে ৫৫)। পাঁচ বছরের নিচে শিশু মৃত্যুহার হ্রাসে একই প্রবণতা লক্ষণীয় যেমনটি মোট প্রজননের ক্ষেত্রে নব্বই এর শুরুতে প্রতিবেশী দুই দেশের তুলনায় বেশী থেকেও ইদানিং সবচেয়ে কম। খর্বকায় অনুপাত নব্বই এর দশকে প্রতিবেশী দেশ দুটো থেকে বেশি নিয়ে যাত্রা শুরু কিন্তু ইদানিং বাংলাদেশের অগ্রগতি অন্যদের চেয়ে ভালো। নব্বই এর দশকের শুরুতে প্রত্যাশিত আয়ু সবচেয়ে কম ছিল বাংলাদেশে ৫৮ বছর, এখন প্রায় ৭৩ বছর। আর সেই সময় পাকিস্তানে ছিল সবচেয়ে বেশি ৬০ বছর, এখন ৬৭ বছর; ভারত ৫৭ থেকে ৭০ এ তুলতে পেরেছে। অর্থাৎ, পাকিস্তান ও ভারতের তুলনায় বাংলাদেশের মানুষবেশী দিন বাঁচে এখন। অপরদিকে, মোট এবং নারী বয়স্ক সাক্ষরতায় ভারতের পেছনে থেকে ও এখন ভারতকে পেছনে ফেলে এগিয়ে যাচ্ছে বাংলাদেশ যেমনি করে মেয়েদের প্রাথমিক স্কুলে অন্তর্ভুক্তি বেড়েছে। তবে মাধ্যমিকে মধ্যখানে পা পিছলালেও আবার ঘুরে দাঁড়িয়ে ভারতকে পেছনে ফেলেছে বাংলাদেশ।

গত তিন দশকে চিত্তাকর্ষক চিত্র দারিদ্র্য হ্রাসের বেলায় চরম দারিদ্র্য প্রকোপ ভারতের চেয়ে কম এই বাংলাদেশে। স্ববিরাধী মনে হলেও সত্যি যে, আর্থ সামাজিক ক্ষেত্রে কম কৃতিত্ব নিয়েও পাকিস্তানে দারিদ্র্যের হার ৪-৮ শতাংশ যা গবেষকদের ভাবায়।

এই নিবন্ধের শুরুতে জানিয়ে ছিলাম, তুলনামূলক আলোচনার অন্যতম স্তম্ভ হিসাবে বিনায়ক সেন বাংলাদেশের প্রত্যাশিত /পূর্বজারিত (প্রিডিকটেড) ফলাফলের সাথে, অন্যান্য অবস্থা বিবেচনায় নিয়ে যেমন নিম্ন ও নিম্ন মধ্য আয়ের দেশের কৃতিত্ব, প্রকৃত কৃতিত্বের তুলনা বেছে নিয়েছেন এবং রিগ্রেশন ব্যবহার করে সামাজিক নির্দেশক ও মাথাপিছু আয় স্তরের মধ্যকার সম্পর্ক দেখবার চেষ্টা করেছেন। দেখা গেছে বেশ কয়েকটা নির্দেশকে প্রকৃত অর্জন প্রত্যাশাকে বা প্রিডিকটেড মানকে অতিক্রম করেছে, কিছু ক্ষেত্রে করতে পারেনি যার মধ্যে আছে বৈষম্য, নারীর শ্রমবাজারে অংশগ্রহণ, দারিদ্র্য (১.৯ ও ৩.২ আন্তর্জাতিক রেখায়), খর্বতা ইত্যাদি। সব মিলিয়ে, স্মরণ করতে হয় রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর এবং তাঁর একনিষ্ঠ ধারক অমর্ত্য সেনকে :

“আমাদের বাঁচবার উপায় আমাদের নিজের শক্তি সর্বতোভাবে জগ্ৰত করা। আমরা যে আমাদের পূর্ব পুরুষদের সম্পত্তি বসিয়া বসিয়া ফুঁকিতেছি, ইহাই আমাদের গৌরব নহে; আমরা সেই ঐশ্বর্য বিস্তার করিতেছি, ইহাই যখন সমাজের সর্বত্র আমরা উপলব্ধি করিব, তখনই নিজের প্রতি যথার্থ শ্রদ্ধা সঞ্জাত হইয়া আমাদের মোহ ছুটিতে থাকিবে।” -রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর (স্বদেশী সমাজ)।

“----- মাঝে মাঝেই আমরা প্রলুব্ধ হয়ে ভুল পথে এগিয়ে গেছি, কিন্তু তার মধ্যে ঠিক পথে যেটুকু এগিয়ে যাই তা যেন হারিয়ে না ফেলি। এখনও বহু পথ বাকী “- অর্মত্য সেন (জীবনযাত্রা ও অর্থনীতি)।

তিন।

সব আশাব্যঞ্জক গল্পের একটা অন্ধকার দিক থাকে। আশা এবং নিরাশার দোলাচলে আমরা প্রতিনিয়ত দোল খাই। বাংলাদেশের উন্নয়ন যাত্রা তেমনি এক আলো আঁধারির খেলা হিসাবে বোধ করি ভুল হবে না। একদিকে উন্নয়নের ফলে দারিদ্র্য হ্রাস পেয়েছে অথচ, অন্যদিকে, ধনী-গরীব বৈষম্য ব্যাপক বৃদ্ধি পেয়েছে। অর্থনীতিবিদ হারসম্যান ও রথচাইল্ড বলেছেন টানেল প্রভাবের কথাঃ বিদ্যমান কাঠামোতে আয়- বৈষম্যের প্রতি যদি সহনশীলতা কম থাকে, তা হলে ‘আগে বাড়ি, পরে বিতরণ’ এমন তত্ত্ব বিপজ্জনক হতে পারে। বাংলাদেশের বিদ্যমান বৈষম্য ও সহগ (গিনি সহগ) বিপদ সীমার কাছাকাছি। বৈষম্য বেশি হলে দারিদ্র্য নিরসনে প্রবৃদ্ধির প্রভাব খাটো থাকে অর্থাৎ একই প্রবৃদ্ধির হার নিয়ে কম বৈষম্যের সমাজে দারিদ্র্য হ্রাসের হার বেশী হবে বেশি বৈষম্যের সমাজের চেয়ে।

অন্যদিকে, আশা ছিল কুজনেটস এর চুইয়ে পড়া প্রভাব তত্ত্ব (বা ট্রিকল ডাউন ইফেক্ট থিউরি) কাজ দেবে কিন্তু সে আশায় যেন গুড়ে বালি। ট্রিকল ডাউন ইফেক্ট বলতে চায়, প্রবৃদ্ধির প্রারম্ভিক স্তরে বৈষম্য বৃদ্ধি পায়, কিন্তু পরবর্তীতে চুইয়ে পড়া সুফলে বৈষম্য হ্রাস পায়। সেটা খুব একটা কাজ করছে বলে মনে হয় না কিংবা ভবিষ্যতে করবে এমন ইংগিত আপাতত নেই বলে মনে হয়। আর যদি ঘটেও থাকে তা যে খুবই দুর্বল সে কথা বলা বাহুল্য। এদিকে আবার অর্থনৈতিক প্রবৃদ্ধি ঘটছে ঠিকই কিন্তু তা কাম্য স্তরে কর্মসংস্থানের ব্যবস্থা করতে পারছে না; ব্যক্তি বিনিয়োগ ঠায় দাঁড়িয়ে আছে এক জায়গায়।

গত চার দশকের বেশী সময় ধরে ‘অবিশ্বাস্য’ তথা অর্থনৈতিক উন্নয়নের ধাঁধার আড়াল-আবডালে অভাবনীয় উত্থান ঘটেছে কালো এক অর্থনীতির (আন্ডার গ্রাউন্ড ইকোনমি)। মূলত প্রাতিষ্ঠানিক দুর্বলতার কারণে ‘অর্থনৈতিক শয়তানের’ অভাবনীয় আবির্ভাব ঘটেছে। অন্ধকারে থাকা এই অর্থনীতি সরকারকে রাজস্ব থেকে বঞ্চিত রাখছে, রাজনীতিকে কলুষিত করছে, বিকৃত ভোগবাদী সমাজ সৃষ্টিতে জ্বালানী যোগাচ্ছে, সামাজিক মূল্যবোধের অবক্ষয় ঘটছে। লেখাপড়ার উদ্দেশ্য এখন দু হাতে টাকা কামাই করা। মোটা দাগে, এটা একটা টেকসই উন্নয়নের পথে প্রধান প্রতিবন্ধক হিসাবে কাজ করছে।

ক্ষত্র বিশেষে এর ভেতরে অথবা পাশাপাশি অবস্থান নিয়েছে সর্বব্যাপী চরম দুর্নীতি। যদিও এ দেশে দুর্নীতির ইতিহাস বেশ দীর্ঘ, তারপরও বিগত দশকগুলোতে, রাষ্ট্রীয় আনুকূল্যে পুঁজিবাদ প্রসারণে, উত্থান ঘটেছে এক শ্রেণীর দাপুটে, ক্ষমতাবান দুর্নীতিবাজদের। বলা যায়, সমাজের অভিভাবক এখন তারা। দুর্নীতি প্রতিবছর জিডিপির ২ শতাংশের মতো গিলে খায়। তাছাড়া, প্রতিবছর দেশ থেকে অবৈধ পথে পাচার হয় গড়ে ৭০০-৮০০ কোটি ডলার; ২০০৬ থেকে ২০১৫ পর্যন্ত নাকি ৬০০০ কোটি ডলার পাচার হয়েছে বলা হচ্ছে।

সারা অঙ্গে ব্যাথা, ঔষধ দেব কোথায়। এমন কি রক্ষণশীল হিসাবেও ঋণ খেলাপির পরিমাণ দেড় থেকে দুই লক্ষ কোটি টাকা। এদের একটা অংশ বিদ্যমান আইনের ফাঁকফোকরে ইচ্ছাকৃত ঋণ খেলাপি। শেয়ার বাজার লুট করে উত্থান ঘটেছে এক শ্রেণীর ধনী মানুষের। দিনে-দুপুরে ব্যাংক ডাকাতির কথা আপাতত না হয় থাক। তবে বলতেই হবে যে, ঋণ খেলাপি, অর্থ পাচারকারী কিংবা ব্যাংক ডাকাতদের বেশীরভাগ, দেশে অথবা বিদেশে, দাপুটে ও সুখে আছেন। অবৈধ অর্থ আর সম্পদের জোরে তারা কিনে নিয়েছে রাজনৈতিক নেতা এমনকি মিডিয়া ও বুদ্ধিজীবীদের।

অথচ নিয়তির নির্মম পরিহাস এই যে, তাদের কেউ এই দশ-বিশ বছর আগেও হিমশিম খেতো সংসার চালাতে; কেউ ছিল পিয়ন, কেউ দিনমজুর। আনুক্রমিক সরকার গুলোর রাজনৈতিক পৃষ্ঠপোষকতায় এরা হয়ে উঠেছে দানব; সমাজটাকে অন্ধকারে ঠেলে দিয়ে তারা আজ আলোকিত, আলোচিত এমনকি মাঠে ময়দানে অভিভাবক হিসাবে অভিভূত করে অভিভাষণে। অর্থনীতির গ্রেসামস ল’ অনুযায়ী, মন্দ টাকা ভালো টাকাকে বাজার ছাড়া করে, তেমনি আজ এই সমাজে মন্দ লোক ভালো লোককে কোণঠাসা করে রাখছে। রাজনীতি কলুষিত হয়েছে কালোটাকায়; এদের অস্ত্রের ভাষা কেড়ে নিয়েছে আমজনতার ভাষার অস্ত্র। মানুষ বুঝে গেছে অর্থই সকল সুখের মূল-মূল্যবোধ আঁকরে থাকা দুর্বলের ধর্ম।

উন্নয়নের রোল মডেলের গায়ে এসব কলঙ্কের দাগ মানায়?

চার।

দুর্নীতির কালো খাবায় সমাজটা যখন ক্ষত-বিক্ষত, দেয়ালে যখন পিঠ ঠেকে গেছে বলতে হয়, ঠিক তখন মাননীয় প্রধানমন্ত্রীর সরাসরি নির্দেশে চলছে ক্যাসিনোর বিরুদ্ধে অভিযানের মতো একটা মহতী পদক্ষেপ। অভিনন্দন আপনাকে প্রধানমন্ত্রী-ব্যাটার লেট দ্যান নেভার।

সবচেয়ে বড় কথা, শুদ্ধি অভিযান তিনি শুরু করেছেন তাঁর দল থেকে। উক্ত অভিযানের ফলে কালো অর্থনীতির নায়কদের অভাবনীয় উত্থানের সম্যক নমুনা জাতির সামনে আজ উপস্থিত। পত্রিকার পাতা উল্টালে অবৈধ উপায়ে অর্জিত ধন-সম্পদ সম্পর্কে কিঞ্চিৎ ধারণা পাওয়া যায়। কারো কাছে শত শত কোটি টাকার এফডিআর, কোটি কোটি টাকার ব্যাংক ব্যালেন্স, দশ-বারোটি ফ্ল্যাট, পাচার করা অর্থ দিয়ে বিদেশে আলিসান বাড়ি-গাড়ি, মোটা অংকের ব্যাংক ব্যালেন্স ইত্যাদি। রাজনৈতিক দুর্বৃত্তায়নে এই কালো অর্থের প্রভাব অনেক। ভাতের হাঁড়ির কটা ভাত টিপলেই যেমন বোঝা যায় ভাত সেকদ হয়েছে কিনা, তেমনি চলমান অভিযানের ক্ষুদ্র নমুনা থেকে অনুমান করা যায়, দেশব্যাপী অবৈধ সম্পদের পরিমাণ কত হতে পারে। শুধু ক্যাসিনো নয়, আরও অনেক কর্মকাণ্ডে অবৈধ ও অনৈতিক লেনদেন হয় যা উইপোকোর মতো উন্নয়নকে কুঁড়ে কুঁড়ে খাচ্ছে। আর একটা কথা, বাংলাদেশে অর্থনৈতিক উন্নয়ন ঘটছে ঠিকই কিন্তু তাকে টেকসই করবার লক্ষ্যে রাজনৈতিক, সামাজিক ও সাংস্কৃতিক সংস্কার তেমন হচ্ছেনা বিধায় চায়ের কাপ আর ঠোঁটের মধ্যকার ব্যবধান থেকেই যাচ্ছে। বঙ্গবন্ধু বলতেন চাটার দল, শেখ হাসিনা বলেন উইপোকা, তা যে নামেই ডাকা হোক না কেন, উন্নয়নের সুফল খাচ্ছে উইপোকা এটা আজ দিনের আলোর মতোই পরিষ্কার।

পাঁচ।

চলমান অভিযানের জন্য দেশের মানুষ কিছুটা হলেও স্বস্তির নিঃশ্বাস ফেলছে বটে, তবে এই অভিযানের ফলে সংশয়মুক্ত হতে পারছে না কেউই। এর কারণ অতীতের অভিজ্ঞতা খুব একটা সুখকর নয়। দুর্নীতির ও কালো অর্থনীতির শেকড় অনেক গভীরে প্রোথিত এবং সমাজের বিভিন্ন স্তরে বিস্তৃত বিশেষত বর্তমান ও অতীতের ক্ষমতাসীন দলের মন্ত্রী, এমপি, এবং সামরিক ও বেসামরিক আমলারাও এ ক্ষেত্রে কম যায় নি বলে অভিযোগ আছে। প্রধানমন্ত্রীর সকল আন্তরিকতা সত্ত্বেও এত বড় একটা ‘সাদা বিপ্লব’ ঘটবে কিনা তা নিয়ে সন্দেহের অবকাশ থাকতেই পারে। তবে এ কথাও ঠিক যে বঙ্গবন্ধুর কন্যা শেখ হাসিনা ব্যাতিত অন্য কারও পক্ষে ঝুঁকিপূর্ণ অথচ এই মুহূর্তে বাংলাদেশের জন্য দরকার ‘সাদা বিপ্লব’ ঘটানো সম্ভব নয়।

আমরা, আম-জনতা, কায় মনোবাক্যে দুর্নীতি ও কালো অর্থনীতির বিরুদ্ধে পরিচালিত এই অভিযানের সাফল্য কামনা করি। তার প্রধান কারণ আমরা একটা ‘সাদা সমাজ’ চাই যেখানে মেধাবি আর ভালো মানুষেরা রাষ্ট্র পরিচালনা করবে; অর্থ, সম্পদ ও প্রতিপত্তি যেখানে প্রভু না হয়ে চাকর থাকবে। আমরা বর্তমান অবস্থার তথা অমানিশার দ্রুত অবসান চাই।

“অদ্ভুদ আঁধার এক এসেছে এ-পৃথিবীতে আজ,
যারা অন্ধ সবচেয়ে বেশি আজ চোখে দ্যাখে তারা;
যাদের হৃদয়ে কোনো প্রেম নেই-প্রীতি নেই-করণার
আলোড়ন নেই
পৃথিবী অচল আজ তাদের সুপারামর্শ ছাড়া।
যাদের গভীর আস্থা আছে আজো মানুষের প্রতি
এখনো যাদের কাছে স্বাভাবিক বলে মনে হয়
মহৎ সত্য বা রীতি, কিংবা শিক্ষা অথবা সাধনা
শকুন ও শেয়ালের খাদ্য তাদের হৃদয়।”

(কবি জীবনানন্দ দাশ)

ওয়ালস্ট্রীট জার্নালের কলামিস্ট সদানন্দধুম ২০১০ সালের পহেলা অক্টোবর লিখে ছিলেন, ‘প্রায় ৪০ বছর পূর্বে, স্থিতিশীল ও সমৃদ্ধশালী পাকিস্তানের বিপরীতে, একমাত্র সবচেয়ে বেপরোয়া বাজীকর বন্যা-প্রবণ এবং যুদ্ধ বিধস্ত বাংলাদেশের উপর বাজী ধরত। কিন্তু উচ্চতর প্রবৃদ্ধি, পড়ন্ত জনসংখ্যা এবং অধিকতর আন্তর্জাতিক প্রতিযোগিতা মূলক অর্থনীতি নিয়ে গতকালের তলা বিহীন বুড়ি হয়তো শেষ হাসিটা হাসবে।’

(Nearly 40 years ago, only the most reckless optimist would have bet on flood-prone, war-ravaged Bangladesh over relatively stable and prosperous Pakistan. But with a higher growth rate, lower birth rate, and a more internationally competitive economy, yesterdays basket case may have the last laugh).

Social Stigma, Prejudice and Discrimination: A Study on the COVID-19 Patients and Home-Quarantined People in Barisal Metropolitan City of Bangladesh

Md. Sadequr Rahman*, Md. Mahbubur Rahman** and Farhana Yasmin***

Abstract

Social stigma is the well-documented phenomena which are largely caused by negative attitude (prejudice) and behaviour (discrimination). During the COVID-19 pandemic, patients, affected by corona-virus and symptomatic diseases, have been encountered some negative attitudes and behaviours by the family members, close friend, relative and neighbourhood. The study aims at investigating how COVID-19 affected patients and home quarantined people have been socially stigmatized. The research, moreover, focuses on assessing the immediate impacts of social stigma and prejudice on the affected people. We applied qualitative research method to examine the study objectives. A range of qualitative tools, such as, case study, Key Informant Interview (KII) have been applied to explore the research objectives. Employing snow-ball sampling, we have selected 30 informants from a range of group of people, such as, doctor, nurse, teacher, police and students, for carrying out the research. The study found that COVID-19 patients and home quarantined people encountered several negative attitudes by close relatives, vulgar comments from neighbours, enforced social segregation, social boycott, prejudice and discrimination, cultural vagueness and discrimination, misbehave of the office boss and colleagues. The research recommends that human beings need to improve their behaviour while treating with the COVID-19 affected patients to avoid any social unrest and thus contribute to keep peace in the society.

Keywords: COVID-19, Pandemic, Attitude, Prejudice, Social Stigma, Injustice and Discrimination etc.

1. Introduction

COVID-19, or more commonly known as Coronavirus, first appeared in Wuhan city of China on December 31, 2019. Since then, this virus has rapidly spread and infected the people in almost every country across the world (Alam et al. 2020). For its genetic and deadly transformation, there is still no possible cure from this invisible enemy. As this is a contagious disease, physical interaction with the infected makes anyone seriously vulnerable (Chauhan et al. 2020). As a result, governments around the world enacted 'Home Quarantine' 'Self-Isolation' 'Lockdown' and 'Social Distancing' to eliminate the cure of the new physical contagion (Usher et al. 2020). However, COVID-19 affected persons and as well as their

* Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, University of Barishal, Bangladesh, E-mail: msrahman@bu.ac.bd

**Assistant Professor of Development Studies, DBA, International Standard University (ISU)

*** Freelancer and Research Assistant, Department of Sociology, University of Barishal, Bangladesh

caregivers, family and close friends, who faced several discriminations, social stigmas and other negative attitudes by the relatives and communities (UNICEF, 2020).

Bangladesh, a densely populated in the South Asian country, identified the first case of COVID-19 officially on March 8, 2020. Afterwards, it rapidly spread across the country and affected 102292 patients, ranking 18th in the world from the emergence of COVID-19 until 18 June 2020. After that the number of dead and infected people has been increasing day by day (IEDCR, 2020). Moreover, this devastating situation is not only amalgamated with the precarious health concern but also with the devastating of maintaining social relations, cohesions, communications, networking and so on (Mahmud & Islam, 2020). Especially quarantined people and symptomatic of COVID-19 patients are troubled by mental problems than their physical problems because we know the people of Bangladesh believe in rumours a little more and corona is a terror to them. Recently, many studies have shown that even after someone's COVID-19 is positive, his/her neighbours and well-wishers are still abusing him/her. Notably, pandemics such as COVID-19 cause fear, anxiety and overload of stress which can lead to social stigma and discrimination against certain groups, including corona affected persons, symptomatic persons and their family, close friends, and healthcare providers (Turner-Musa, 2020). Fake news, story and video, misconceptions, misinformation, lack of proper knowledge and available access to internet system, and fear of life insecurity are the reasons of this type of negligence behaviours.

On top of that, we need to build trust and confidence on the health system promoting accurate and timely information which will create a positive social and emotional environment (Kumar & Nayar, 2020). Above all, the paper aims at addressing how quarantined people have been socially stigmatized (labelled) and victims of injustice at the end of quarantine life (Das, 2020).

2. Rationale of the Study

The destructive contagious disease (coronavirus) has shaped the changes of normal life, careers and daily routines of the people dramatically. It has also disrupted the economic and financial system of low- middle- and high- classes of people and also continuing that. Besides, home-quarantined people regarding COVID-19 patients have been neglected by prejudices, sufferings and lockdowns at urban area to local area by their relatives and neighbours. In Bangladesh, due to lockdown, virtual meetings and zoom meetings are arranged instead of all kinds of meetings (face to face meetings), gatherings, offices, courts and educational institutions (although now all kinds of institutions are open except for educational institutions) as well as using face mask and maintaining social distancing (physical distance) are ensured to practice for safety regularly (Sotigu & Dobler, 2020).

Staying home-quarantine victims spent most of their time using the internet and a large number of fake and rumoured information was disseminated from the internet at that time which upset them mentally rather than physically. And because of the misinformation, the common people also treated them inhumanely (Silva, 2020). Growing numerous incidences of discrimination and stigma against the dead bodies of corona patients as well as vehicle drivers and families

refusing to come forward for dignified cremation or burial of the dead, although medical experts point out that the bodies are handed over from hospital in zipper bags that will not be the reason of the spread of virus (Time of India, 16th July, 2020). To say more, educated and uneducated people regarded coronavirus as panic or terror to stigmatize, stereotype and discriminate them (Ramaci et al, 2020). Moreover, professionals and volunteer also faced negative attitudes by others for working in the field (Syder et al, 1999).

The level of stigma confined into COVID-19 is based on three main factors; 1) it is a disease that is and still unknown; 2) most of the time we are afraid of the unknown; and 3) it is easy to connect that terror with others. Particularly these factors produce confusion, anxiety, fear, conflict, tension and stress (UNICEF, 2020).

People are less satisfied with a higher level of social stigma and prejudice. For this reason, a person experiences stress, the level of satisfaction decreases (Cannizzaro et al, 2019). In modern times, it is hypothesized that the stigma is related to social identity rather than physical symptoms (Goffman, 1963).

3. Objectives of the Study

The major objective of the study is to find out how the COVID-19 affected persons and quarantined persons have been socially stigmatized and to understand the immediate impacts of social stigma, prejudice and discrimination upon them. The research, moreover, aims at providing some recommendations that will facilitate people to take necessary steps for avoiding such unexpected behaviours.

4. Research Questions of the Study

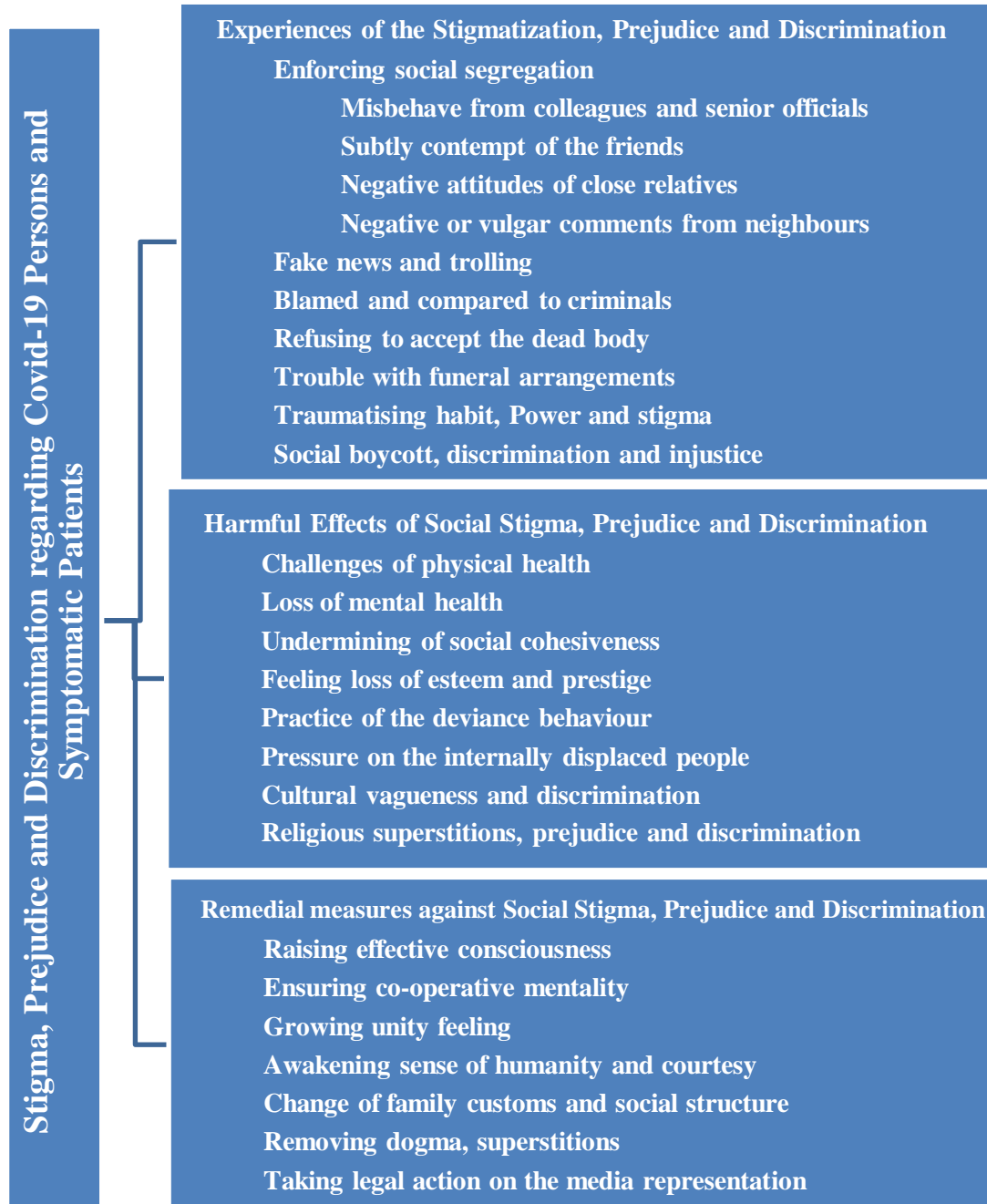
A questionnaire is a systematic planned design for data collection (Abedin, 2018). In this study, researcher followed some unstructured questionnaires to collect data. Some major questions are given below:

- Do you have any experience of Covid-19 and symptomatic behaviours?
- How did your family, close friends, relatives, neighbours, colleagues and senior officials treat you or encountered any kind of stigma, prejudice and discrimination during at COVID-19 time?
- How did those behaviours effect on your physical and mental health then?
- How did you handle or recover those hurdle times?

5. Conceptual Framework

We have developed the following conceptual framework which indicated some factors straightforward connected with social stigma, prejudice and discrimination. We have deeply scrutinized the relevant literatures which shed lights on stigma, prejudices, and discrimination among the Covid-19 patients (Stangl et al., 2019; Shindaini et al., 2021). After critically reviewing the literatures, we found that misbehave family members, close relatives and officials are involved in treating with the covid-19 patients. The social powers, troublesome behaviour

with the dead bodies are associated with existing social prejudice and discrimination. This, further, impacted on the mental and physical health of the COVID-19 affected patients.



(Source: Researchers' own generated framework)

6. Theoretical Framework

Sociologist Erving Goffman published a book entitled '*Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*' in 1963 that is still the most influential description of the processes of stigmatization. Stigma is a mark of disgrace that sets a person apart from others. In Goffman's theory of social stigma, a stigma is an attribute, behavior, or reputation which is socially discrediting in a particular way: it causes an individual to be mentally classified by others in an undesirable, rejected stereotype rather than in an accepted, normal one. (Goffman 1963: 3). When a person is labelled by their illness they are no longer seen as an individual but as part of a stereotyped group. Negative attitudes and beliefs toward this group create prejudice which leads to negative actions and discrimination. Broadly defined, stigma is discrediting attribute or mark of disgrace that leads others to see us as untrustworthy, 'tainted', or 'incompetent'. Therefore stigma is a socially constructed notion and also a fear of being discredited.

Goffman characterizes three different types of stigma: (1) stigma associated with various physical deformities. (2) stigma associated with mental illness like weak will, domineering or unnatural passions, treacherous and rigid beliefs, and dishonesty, these being inferred as mental disorder, imprisonment, addiction, alcoholism, homosexuality, unemployment, suicidal attempts, and radical political behaviour. (3) stigma attached to identification with a particular race, ethnicity, nation, religion, ideology etc. that can be transmitted through lineages and equally contaminate all members of a family. Thus, it is observed the three main levels of stigma (social stigma, self-stigma, and health professional stigma) on the basis of definition, dimensions, understanding of theory and epistemology.

In general, social stigma refers to supporting stereotypes about individuals with a mental illness. For example, if a student telling his professors that he had bipolar disorder. The professors began talking to him more slowly and even subtly questioned his ability to complete a graduate degree. Stigma and discrimination can contribute to worsening symptoms of mental health problems, delay or impede their getting help and treatment, and their recovery and also reduced likelihood of getting treatment, getting degrees or reaching their goals and stop a person from getting the help they need. Recent extensive review of research found that during and post COVID-19 self-stigma, frustration, social isolation, unemployment, poor housing, poverty, prejudice and discrimination leads to worsening symptoms or negative effects on recovery of their mental illness, suicidal impacts, mental retardation of child etc. Thus, stigma and discrimination can trap people in a cycle of illness and societal impact.

There exists some factors that influence stigma: blame; stereotypes of dangerousness and unpredictability; knowledge about mental and substance use disorders; contact and experience; media portrayals; race ethnicity, and culture.

Goffman mentioned that there are seven things that can do to reduce stigma: (1) know the facts. Educate yourself about mental illness including substance use disorders (2) be aware of your attitudes and behavior... (3) choose your words carefully ... (4) educate others (5) Focus on the positive ... (6) support people ... (7) include everyone.

We construct a stigma theory, an ideology to explain his inferiority and account for the danger (Riesman, 1951). Stigma is always negative. There are a number of diseases that are mostly stigmatized- mental disorders, AIDS, venereal diseases, leprosy, DALY, and certain skin diseases, even it is also relevant to COVID-19 affected persons and symptomatic patient. Thus, COVID-19 and symptomatic patients have struggled with various types of stigma for their illness and severe or acute diseases.

7. Relevant Literature Review

A significant number of study have been studied that shed lights on enhancing our existing knowledge to perceive the COVID-19 and symptomatic patients and their worst experiences during home-quarantine time and post corona period.

Mahmud and Islam (2020) revealed that misinformation, feeling of insecurity, fear of responsibility, administrative malfunction, and lacks of trust on treatment are the main causes of stigma. Residential stigma, organizational stigma, community stigma and apathetical stigma are the different forms of stigma those are the barriers to the community well-being. People are vulnerable regarding health risks, harassment, discrimination, life-insecurity, psychological disorder, loss of social capital and emotional capital, shattering family bond and social solidarity due to the pandemic situation of COVID-19.

Ramaci et al., (2020) analysed a research involved 260 healthcare workers (HCWs) worked in a large hospital in Southern Italy. The role of job claims, although negatively impacted, seems to be diminished compared to the interaction with stigmatized perceptions. Self-efficacy seems to be more related to the processes of sensitivity and satiety than to the responses (fear) and negative consequences. Form this discussion it is clear that stigma has a high impact on employee outcomes. Stigma can affect worker consent and guide epidemiological risk management strategies for HCWs.

Bhanot et al., (2021) highlighted that the stigma attached to an infected patient or an infected person as well as the stigma attached to belonging to a particular racial, religious and social class. It is important to note that stigma reduces health-support, and treatment-seeking behaviours and it needs to be mitigated without a focus on COVID-19 treatment and prevention. The stigma should be alleviated through a multifaceted approach to all stakeholders, including the government, the media and local administrative bodies, as well as hospitals. The study recommended that appropriate information such as physical distance and travel restrictions/public health messages and the imbalance of epidemic control and prevention in communities affected by the epidemic (e.g. women, marginalized, poor) can help reduce stigma. Kumar and Nayar (2020) emphasized on the stigmatization and discrimination in the context of ongoing COVID-19 pandemic regarding the uncontrolled spread of the corona virus led to anxiety, fear, stigma and discrimination. People are afraid of social stigma, social isolation and do not come forward for testing, and fear that they will be blamed, isolated and removed from their family members. It is common during epidemics where people blame others for allaying their fears due to the lack of unknown levels related to the epidemic.

Kanozia et al., (2021) described that COVID-19 is one kind of 'infodemic' because of the spread of fake news and unscientific information related to COVID-19. 'Infodemic' indicates a situation when excessive amounts of information, some right and wrong, make it difficult for people to find reliable sources. So, the outbreak of fake news can probably be seen as a dimension of the existence crisis of this information age. The unpredictable spread of fake messages and the inability to distinguish between authentic and incomplete news have exploited the vulnerability of people sitting at home in isolation due to epidemic fears.

Silva (2020) focused on the reigniting or amplifying sensitive social issues during COVID-19 pandemic. During isolation, victims are mostly in touch through social media and online applications. But the use of social media has also increased misinformation and fake news, which has negative impact on people's health and lives.

Roelen et al. (2020) examined the potential driving factors of COVID-19 related stigma in the low-and middle-income countries. They identified three interconnected driving factors (such as lack of information and misconceptions, fear of contagion, and targeted policies) based on a review of the stigma in other infectious diseases, such as aging, disability, poverty and the knowledge revealed about corona virus related stigma.

Islam et al. (2020) viewed that the accurate and focused on the knowledge of COVID-19 from a valid source can reduce stigma. They found that the data reduced the stigma of certain groups, such as COVID-19 patients and religious minorities, lower-caste groups, and front-line workers (healthcare, police), and reduced the belief that some marginalized social and transition events were more prevalent.

Turner-Musa et al. (2020) addressed some social determinants that may influence COVID-19 incidences and health outcomes in vulnerable people. For example, access to health care is a human right but the fact that rural people and lower income earners are less likely to have access hospitals, pharmacies and wait for days to get urgent care and prescriptions. Cultural and religious beliefs on causes of disease contribute to health behaviours. It is strongly believe that God will protect them from Corona pandemic if they participate of the weekly attendance of a religious service. In this situation, it becomes more difficult to maintain social and physical distancing.

McCauly et al. (2013) pointed out some of the ways in which flu pandemics can be vital elements of the personal and social stress. In addition to individual and family health concerns and disruptions to employment and social relationships, flu related stress can stigmatize marginalized social groups.

Zajackowska (2020) discussed that there is enough research materials to describe that Hindu-Muslim relations have always been complex, challenging and full of anxious compromises. He has tried to explore the consequences of pandemics for the Muslim communities in India during Corona Virus crisis. With one fake news, story or video after another going viral on social media, there is ample evidence that blaming Muslims for the pandemic has turned into a deadly game. Although hate speech against Muslims has already become a common practice in India, research has shown that the outbreak of the pandemic reinforced it.

Beigelman and Castello` (2020) measured that the implementation of the lockdown policy was associated with a 41% increase in the number of calls to the domestic violence emergency hotline compared to the pre-covid period. They further found that the impact of epidemic outbreaks ranged from 30 to 38 percentage higher points in the provinces with the most intense mobility decline during quarantine.

Sotgiu and Dobler (2020) argued that people's normal lives have been spoiled and negatively affected by COVID-19 related suffering and lockdowns at community and household stage. Infectious groups in the early days of the epidemic, super spreaders (those who are responsible for infecting a large number of people) or community outbreaks cause widespread fear among the public. It was speculated that COVID-19 is contagious as measles, deadly Ebola virus and involved a very high mortality rate. Television footage showed military trucks transporting coffins COVID-19 victims were reminded of the deadly Ebola virus epidemic in West Africa a few years ago.

Manik et al. (2021) revealed that the social stigma against nurses who take care of patients with COVID-19. Health workers are the protecting pillars but they are most vulnerable to infection and not free from stigma. The result showed that the highest stigma score of 118 respondents is 37 and the lowest score is zero. The higher the score acquired leads to a higher level of stigma attained. And most of the nurses are socially stigmatized by the colleague, relatives of patients and society that impacts on their psychological feelings.

8. Methods and Materials of the Study

We employed qualitative research method to find out answers of the research objectives. We administered qualitative method to explore quarantined life experiences of the COVID-19 affected patients and symptomatic patients. Based on purposive sampling procedure, we selected Barisal city of Bangladesh to meet some reasons. First of all, we found a number of Corona patients in the particular city. Secondly, given the limited time and resources, we were motivated to choose the study area.

Both primary and secondary data sources were used in this research to collect necessary data. Primary data were collected through case study and Key Informant Interview (KII) methods where we applied interview guide and a checklist. A total of twenty five (25) cases and five (5) key informant interviews have been carried out March 2021 using non-probability, snow-ball sampling. We selected informant from various categories of people; such as, intern doctor, university teacher, students, nurse, police and journalist have been chosen for conducting in-depth interviews. Thematic analysis has been applied to explore people's knowledge, feelings and experiences on the associated topics.

9. Data Analysis and Findings

9.1 Experiences of the Stigmatization, Prejudice and Discrimination

9.1.1 Enforcing social segregation

By normal social segregation we mean the exclusion of the minority group from the activities of the dominant group. Inter personal relation, social relation, contact; communication and bonding are gradually deteriorating for this segregation. This is why, most of the people think of it as a negative phenomenon because it excludes different groups from the mainstreaming. Similarly, society has now excluded and segregated patients with coronavirus and their relatives.

Most of the respondents said that they were aware enough of their existence. Despite staying home after the positive report came, the society severely separated them.

Hosen Ali (University Teacher, key informant) said that:

'Corona not only kept me out of society but also my family. When my brothers went to the market and the street, people would run away when they saw them. It was as if they were fleeing in fear at the sight of a monster. Because of this, my family was forced to choose deviation from the society like me' (A 30-year informant, Own translation).

In the similar question, Kashim (Worker, 35 years age informant) said that, *'Even after coming result of my corona negative, I was forced to stay indoors due to the oppression of the people around me'.*

Jalil (young age student) said that, *'people would not come to our house after I got sick and would not even let my parents go out, my parent would treat them badly whenever they went anywhere. Eventually, parents also started to stay in the home-quarantine like me' (A 24-year informant, Own translation).*

9.1.2 Refusing to accept the dead body

One of the most tragic scenes in the world is the loss of a loved one. But now people are running after seeing the dead body of this loved one due to COVID-19.

Saifur Rahman (Journalist, key informant) said:

'Probably in April-May a tragic incident was happened in a village of Mehendiganj upazila that a man from Dhaka came to his father-in-law's house with corona symptoms. His wife and children were there. He was later not allowed into the house and was allowed to stay in one corner of the yard. The next day, when his throat became swollen, his relatives rushed him to Barishal Sher-e-Bangla Hospital, but he died on the way. They then refused to do the pre-funeral work, including his burial and janaza. After that, the administrative officer of Barishal, the policemen of Mehendiganj police station and the people of Quantum NGO arranged his funeral' (A 27-year informant, Own translation).

Moreover, in this connection, Dilip Kumar (Student, 18 year informant) said that, *'No one came forward to bury my father's body, not even my neighbours. Although my father was not corona patient, he died because of old age'.*

9.1.3 Negative or vulgar comments from neighbours

There is a common word in Bengal that one neighbour cannot bear the happiness of another. This scenery is also seen in this pandemic period.

Popi (Female Student) said that, *'If we ordered items in the market shops, the people in the shops would not bring them our home. No one outside helped. We had to do everything ourselves'* (A 19-year informant, Own translation). Jalil (Student, 24-year informant) told that, *'People in the area used to make bad comments about me. Most of the time my mother is overheard by neighbours. They used to tell my mother that your son used to move carelessly and hang out with people. In this way parents had to be humiliated in many ways. And they used to tell me that I would call this disease home'*. Another respondent named Hosen Mia told the same, *'people around us used to criticize us a little bit but they are educated person. They shouldn't do this bad work'* (A 32-year informant, Own translation).

In the similar way, Raju (Student) said:

'My neighbours used to tell me that you have affected in AIDS'. Moreover, Sazid (student) said that, 'I took my grandfather to the hospital because of his illness. That's why neighbours used to say that you went to corona state and put it on your body. So you should stay away' (A 23-year informant, Own translation).

9.1.4 Negative attitudes of close relatives

Educated and conscious people are taking utmost care as they come with corona positives. Corona is considered as panic and taboo; the common people are constantly doing this kind of inhuman behaviour.

Dilip Kumar (Student, 18-year informant) told:

'My aunts did not come to see my father after hearing the news of my father's death. Even the people of my two sisters-in-law's house did not allow the sisters to come to see my father for the last time'. Raju (Student, 23-year informant) said that, *'About 20 to 22 days after my recovery, I went to Dulabhai's house. Apu and Dulabhai took the matter lightly, but people around them said that the boy had contracted corona a few days ago. Is it okay now? Why are you visiting now?'* Sathi (Employee) said that, *'My elder aunt's family lives in Dhaka. My aunt's corona symptoms are actually her son, the girls admitted her to the hospital and later no one inquired, did not even go to see. Her brothers did not go to see her either'* (A 29-year informant, Own translation).

9.1.5 Subtly contempt of the friends

Patients with corona disease have not been directly abused by their friends but have been subtly neglected. However, at this time, the support of the patient's friends was most needed.

Nodi (Doctor) narrated that, *'The hostel super separated my room when my corona came positive early in Ramadan. Everyone in the room treated me well, but a couple of them treated me a little badly. Sometimes they would throw away my drinking water bottle'* (A 26-year informant, Own translation).

9.1.6 Trouble with funeral arrangements

It is well documented that in every religion mentioned that the funeral of the deceased should be arranged with respect. But people are now more afraid of the corona virus than religion.

Fahim (Driver) said that,

'My father-in-law was a freedom fighter, but my landlord tied his bath, janaza, burial shroud. Later, the people of Quantum NGO came and arranged his janaza and burial shroud with respect (A 52-year informant, Own translation).'

One of the young-age respondents named Dilip Kumar (Student) told that:

'No one came for my father's funeral and no transport was found to take the body to the cremation. Later some people were hired and with the help of local police my father's funeral was arranged (A 18-year informant, Own translation).'

9.1.7 Pressure on the internally displaced people

People move from one city to another city within country for job facilities, income sources and higher living standard. In this pandemic situation, internal migrants are neglected by their landlord (Bariwala).

Sathi (Employee, 29-year informant) said that, *'My younger aunt's family live in a rented house of Barisal city. When their corona was positive, the landlord (Bariwala) closed the roof door to dry clothes'*. Nowmi (Student, 18-year informant) said that, *'One afternoon I climbed on the roof of our house. As soon as the aunt of the next house saw me on the roof, she came down from her roof. It seemed that she saw me and ran away in fear'*. Rahim (Merchant) narrated that, *'After the corona came positive we moved from the rented house to the village house. If it is negative then we go again, the landlord (Bariwala) pressures him to come back home later' (A 45-year informant, Own translation).'*

In answering the related question Hasina (Nursing Student) told that,

'We kept the window glass open for breathing exercises. One day the landlord (Bariwala) called and told us not to open the window glass. Otherwise our breathing will come down. And the people downstairs will also be affected by Corona'. Doctors viewed that 'If we lived in a rented house, the landlord would somehow treat us badly. Because we are in this medical profession, we have to come in contact with our patients which the landlord might not have accepted' (A 23-year informant, Own translation).'

9.1.8 Misbehave from the office boss and colleagues

Corona brings a very bad effect on the economy of Bangladesh. During this pandemic many people became homeless, lost their jobs. At this time the salary rate has been curtailed than the hard work and also got the rudiment and indecent behaviour of superior officer.

Rakib (an employee, 32-year informant) told that,

'I went to the office the day before I received the positive report from Corona. Then I went on vacation. When I came back to the office after recovery, I heard that some colleagues had complained to the boss to come to the office that day'. Another key

informants named Saifur Rahman (Journalist) told alike that, *“Even then the senior colleague in the office treated me badly”* (A 27-year informant, Own translation).

9.1.9 Cultural vagueness and discrimination

Although it is not right to organize cultural ceremony and other programs during this pandemic period, it is still prevalent in rural areas. As these programs are being organized, corona affected people are being neglected by the authorities of this program.

Nowmi (Female student) told:

‘My aunt had a wedding when our corona was positive. People close to us know that we will not go to the wedding and how much we are aware. Even then when they talk to us that if we go they won’t come to the ceremony. In fact, hearing the words, my heart was pounding with difficulty. After the event, food was usually sent for the relatives to near house. But then my relatives did not send any food for us. We didn’t eat all day that day. We ate mashed potatoes and cooked rice’ (A 18-year informant, Own translation).

9.1.10 Religious superstitions, prejudice and discrimination

The word superstition ingrained/pour into our minds. As a result, prejudices came into our mind regarding this corona virus. Some say that it will be broke out in rich people and some say this is a disease in the city area. Mahim (Student, 23-year informant) said that,

‘Let me tell you an incident before my corona became positive. During holiday in March 2020, an aged from local area forbade me to go to the mosque for prayers. About 3 months later I went to the mosque’. Nowmi (Student) said that, *‘An aunt next to our house said these diseases have been given to us by Allah as a punishment because we do less religious deeds and walk in this way’* (A 18-year informant).

9.1.11 Blamed and compared to criminals

During pandemic, it is regarded a COVID-19 symptomatic patient as a criminal without committing a crime. Let’s see some these types of incidents.

Hosen Ali (University Teacher, 30-year key informant) stated:

‘A corona patient is being treated as a criminal. The barricade that is social, it is worse than the institutional prison. These things wreak havoc on a person’s mental health’. Saifur Rahman (Journalist, key informant) told that, *‘Corona patients are being treated inhumanely all the time which may not be the case of differs with a criminal’* (A 27-year informant, Own translation).

9.1.12 Fake news and trolling

Using this misinformation, people are spreading rumour, false information and trolling, and based on this, stigma and traumatic behaviours are being created in humans.

Hosen Ali (University Teacher, 30-year informant) narrated:

‘It seems to me that people get easy access to rumours and baseless information. As a result, the rate of abuse with patients with corona is increasing’. Saifur Rahman

(Journalist, key informant) argued that, *'Even though I was a reporter, I was sometimes terrified of the misinformation and fake news of educated people. For such information, people take corona as a terror'* (A 27-year informant, Own translation).

9.1.13 Social boycott, discrimination and injustice

Social boycott, discrimination and injustice are occurred those are increasing the risk of loneliness, depression and self-harm during this pandemic. Patients of corona disease and their family and symptomatic patients are rudely discriminated and neglected by the normal people. That's why, corona affected patients and their family felt them inferior group.

Raza (Police, 30-year key informant) argued:

'The people I used to associate with a few days ago, they started avoiding me when I got this corona. There was no one to bring the food from the mess to my room'. Hosen Ali (University Teacher) told that, *'I went to the hospital for corona testing, the alarming thing was that there were no cars on the road. Seeing me, all the drivers were walking away. Even two days ago, rickshaw pullers used to call and say, will you go to the market or not? Shall I pick you up?'* (A 30-year key informant, Own translation). Sharif (Student) told that, *'One day I went to the pharmacy to buy medicine but the seller of the pharmacy did not sell the medicine to me and even treated me very badly'* (A 28-year informant, Own translation).

Expressing his own ideas on treating COVID-19 patient, Rahim (Merchant) told:

'After receiving COVID-19 positive reports, me and my wife were forced to move to our village. After staying there for 14 days, we moved back to our rented house in Barisal but the landlords and the neighboured people could not easily accept our return. They even complained to the police and to the secretary of the union council that we were moving outside. Later we moved back to our village home and stay there for one month' (A 45-year informant, Own translation).

9.1.14 Power and stigma

The exercise of power is very common instincts for human being. But excessive abusive power creates the problem.

Mariya (Employee, 38-year informant) said,

'After my husband was brought from the hospital, one of the tenants of my house used to come to see me and inquire about my husband. They have a headache about the fact that a person from the next house has gone to Dhaka (state of corona) for work. But I think rules and honesty should always be the same'.

Fahim (Driver) said that, *'My father-in-law was at our house when I was hospitalized with corona. He did not have corona. He died suddenly due to old age. But then my landlord (Bariwala) did not allow the deceased to take a bath in front of his house'* (A 52-year informant, Own translation).

9.1.15 Love, affection and stigma

Heavenly bliss on the earth is found in love. But that love is withered away by Corona pandemic today. The wife is leaving her husband in the hospital in a sick condition. The husband is leaving the sick wife in the father's house. Yes! These kinds of heart-touching events are happening in this pandemic era.

Mariya (Employee, 38-year informant) said that, *'While I was in the corona unit of the hospital with my husband, a gentleman in the bed next to us admitted his corona-infected wife and left. Later, when she died, he did not come to collect her body. Basically, these deaths are occurred due to carelessness and negligence'*. Sathi (Employee) said that, *"May be love, affection, tenderness are withered away from the earth. Otherwise, how can the children be scared of leaving the sick mother in the hospital without going to see? (A 29-year informant, Own translation).*

9.1.16 Traumatizing habit

At present, patients of corona disease and their relatives are traumatised by the mass people including neighbours, relatives and others.

Mahim (Student, 23-year informant) said, *'After recovery, I was suddenly struck by a man in the market. The push was unintentional. Later he became angry. Seeing his face and behaviour, it seemed that he would be hit by the corona because of the collision with me'*.

Hosen Ali (University Teacher, 30-year key informant) narrated that, *'The human trauma was more horrific than corona's harmful trauma. People create trauma because people don't really know how corona spreads, what its nature is. They have no knowledge of these at all'*. Anjoli (Nurse, key informant) said that, *'Unable to bear the trauma of the landlord of the house I was renting, at one point I left that house' (A 45-year informant, Own translation).*

9.2 Harmful Effects of Social Stigma, Prejudice and Discrimination

9.2.1 Challenges of physical health

Corona disease makes people sick, and people's traumatic behaviour makes them sicker. But the Bengali nation does not try to understand it. They spread rumour and create panic.

Anjoli (Nurse, 45-year key informant) said that, *'I have seen many patients who became more ill due to family neglect than corona disease'*. Hosen Mia (Employee) told that, *'I became very shock when I heard educated friends talking like uneducated people. Thinking about it would start to headache'*. Fahim (Driver, 52-year informant) said that, *'Lying in a hospital bed, when I heard that my father-in-law was leaving trouble with the funeral, I actually fainted'*. Bikash (Student) told that, *'I had a semester final exam when I was slightly ill before the corona came positive. If I hadn't been allowed to take the test, I might have gone crazy. Without a test, my educational career would have been ruined' (A 23-year informant, Own translation).*

9.2.2 Loss of mental health

The stigmatization is taking a heavy toll on the mental health of the quarantined people. All of the respondents are mentally disrupted than physically for the negligence of their neighbours and relatives.

Dilip Kumar (Student, 18-year informant) said that, *'Neighbour's neglect and corona have ruined our mental energy than physical energy in a very bad way'*. Hasina (Student of Nursing, 23-year informant) viewed that, *'We have been deprived of the rights to breathe properly due to the oppression of the landlord (Bariwala)'*. Kashim (Worker, 35-year informant) said that, *'I would get really angry when I heard people talking about me and my mood would get worse'*. Two respondents named Tamim and Shahin (Both Intern Doctor, 23 and 27- year informants) told that, *'Even worse than the corona was the bad behaviour of the people which actually affected the mental health of the patients and their family a lot'*.

9.2.3 Undermining of social cohesiveness

As the rate of coronavirus increases, so decreases the importance of social relationships. Social bonds, contacts and communications are needed to survive in the society. But that attitude of bonding is decreasing day by day during COVID-19.

Sharif (Student) told that, *'The guy at the pharmacy who didn't sell the medicine to me would like to see him later if he gets sick. From this he can understand that a social bond is mixed with our life which is undermining day by day (A 28-year male student, Own Interview)'*. Mariya (Employee, 38-year informant) said that, *'Love, affection of husband and wife are losing in COVID-19'*. Sazid (Student, 26-year informant) told that, *'At the rate which stigma has increased, the social bonds within people will end in an instant'*.

9.2.4 Feeling loss of esteem and prestige

Self-esteem is the greatest asset to a man. But in the midst of this terrible pandemic, people are shaking the confidence and self-esteem.

Hosen Ali (University Teacher, 30-year key informant) said that, *'After being attacked by corona, I just wondered what people were thinking about me'*. Rahim (Merchant, 45-year informant) told that, *'Even after recovery, when our name was reported to the police, we actually felt very esteem less'*. Nowmi (Student, 18-year informant) said that, *'It is difficult to tolerate heard bad words from neighbours about one's parents. Despite that, I was forced to endure'*.

9.2.5 Usage of more Facebook and playing online games

Not only the younger generation but also all age's people spend a lot of their time in social networking sites (SNS) by using Facebook, Internet, YouTube and playing various online games. But this corona period, people are becoming more and more addicted to the SNS world by sharing their own feelings and troubles to Facebook.

Hosen Ali (University Teacher, 30-year key informant) said that, '*Unable to bear this social boycott of the people, I upload 2-3 posts on Facebook about it and 1-2 posts are only me of my Facebook timeline*'. Nodi (Doctor, 26-year informant) said that, '*I didn't spend enough time. I was little worried. So sometimes I would post on the Facebook about this issue*'. Jalil (Student, 24-year informant) told that, '*I was reminded of the Facebook medium to protest all these injustices*'. Nowmi (Student, 18-year informant) said that, '*I didn't like to hear the people around me talking so much. That's why I used to play online games most of the time to divert my attention*'.

Besides, most of the respondents said that they handled this negligence, discrimination and stigma through internet world.

9.2.6 Practice of the deviance behaviour

It is recognised that no one in the world is born to do bad things. We always dislike the perpetrator but do not try to find out the history behind the perpetrator's misdeeds. In fact, the perpetrator is forced to do these things by his surroundings and society. Similarly, we have forced the corona patients to deviant even in the home quarantine.

Mahim (Student) argued that, '*When the man (Local Murobbi) forbade me to go the mosque despite my corona not being positive, I hated and scolded him from of my heart. Later when I shared the matter with my friends, they also scolded him*' (A 23-year informant, Own translation).

9.3 Remedial measures against Social Stigma, Prejudice and Discrimination

9.3.1 Raising effective consciousness

A common solution to all problems is to raise awareness. It is necessary to try to apply it.

Fahim (Driver, 52-year informant) argued that, '*People are abusing corona patients and their families due to unconsciousness. That is why we need to be aware*'. Hasina (Student of Nursing, 23-year informant) viewed that, '*It is not possible to force the thing to be aware. You have to make it yourself*'. Rahim (Merchant) said that, '*Educated people are now unconsciously creating prejudice and discrimination against corona patients. For this, educated people have to be made aware first*' (A 45-year informant, Own translation).

Apart from these, all of the respondents said that we need to be aware in order to eliminate such stigma and inequalities from the society.

9.3.2 Taking legal action on the media representation

Panic and media misrepresentation played huge negative role behind increasing rumour about this corona. Therefore, it is necessary to keep a watchful eye on the ICT Act in this regard.

Saifur Rahman (Journalist, 27-year key informant) said that, '*Educated people go viral with misinformation about viruses. It hurts when I see it. That is why I want the government to be very vigilant in this regard*'. Sathi (Student) told that, '*Extensive and free circulation of information has taken place at present due to which people are*

forgetting the correct information and spreading panic with wrong information' (A 29-year informant, Own translation).

9.3.3 Ensuring co-operative mentality

All kinds of danger can be overcome with helpful mentality and courage. If you lend a helping hand to someone, nature will one day extend a helping hand to your danger.

Popi (Student, 19-year informant) said that, *'People need to be helped more and more in danger. If you can't help, please refrain from criticizing them'*. Anjoli (Nurse) told that, *'You have to make a bet to dedicate yourself to the service of the people. That's why someone said something and it felt bad to hear that, but you have to put that thing aside and start walking again'* (A 45-year informant, Own translation).

9.3.4 Growing unity feeling

Our values are constantly being lost to the unconsciousness, anti-social activity and excessive corona fear of the people during the corona outbreak. Corona epidemic, inequality, contempt, neglect, all can be eliminated only through a united attitude.

Nodi (Doctor, 26-year informant) told that, *'This epidemic and anti-social activities of the people can be eradicated only if everyone works in unity'*. Hosen Mia (Employee) said that, *'Educated, uneducated, rich and poor, high and low, all people have to forget these class divisions and fight together against corona and corona related stigma, prejudice then one day liberation will come'* (A 32-year informant, Own translation).

9.3.5 Awakening sense of humanity and courtesy

Well-manners, etiquette and courtesy advance or forward the society that people learn from their family and surroundings. When manners, etiquette and courtesy among the people deteriorate, the society deteriorates. This well virtue deteriorates in this COVID-19 pandemic situation.

Jalil (Student, 24-year informant) told that, *'In all religious scriptures it is said to be by the side of man in danger. So in such a horrible time, we have to stand by humanity without ignoring anyone.'* Raza (Police) said that, *'Must be humane and tolerant only by doing these behaviours can all problems be solved'* (A 30-year informant, Own translation).

9.3.6 Change of family customs and social structure

It is needed to change the traditional/conventional family/social customs and social structure of our country by enhancing and spreading proper knowledge among the people.

Hosen Ali (University Teacher, key informant) said that, *'The social structure and customs need to change. Bengali fell into the lockdown in sudden like global world. This seems to be the 1st lockdown in the history of Bangladesh. Many epidemics like corona have come to the world before. But people don't really understand what a lockdown system is. Other countries do not know exactly what the lockdown thing is,*

how to maintain social distance and how to keep people separate' (A 30-year informant, Own translation).

9.3.7 Removing dogma, superstitions

Not only do we have to change the superstitions about the corona virus and the corona patient, we need to get rid of all the superstitions in our minds.

Nowmi (Student, 18-year informant) told that, *'The dogmatic beliefs or superstitions should be avoided. At first, when corona came, people thought there was nothing to do. It has been said that no one is burying a dead person even though people know that the body does not contain the virus after more than 3 hours. But there is no headache in living people walking around with corona positives or symptomatic patients'*. Sazid (Student) said that, *'When a person is sick, we remove him from the society, we treat him badly. It is a kind of superstition. We have to refrain from this dogma' (A 26-year informant, Own translation).*

10. Discussion

Social bonding, harmony and humanity are not improving with technological advancement. The modesty and courtesy of both educated and uneducated people towards corona-affected people and their families have been exposed as if it were going to the stage of bribery (Sotgiu & Dobler, 2020). However, it is found from the study that about four-fifth of respondents suffered stigma, prejudice, discrimination, neglect and inhumane treatment in various ways after being infected with COVID-19 and despite of having COVID-19 negative (Mahmud and Islam, 2020). Only one-fifth of the respondents remained in the home quarantine but did not get suffer any humiliation or contempt. And most of the victims experienced of such behaviour by their neighbours.

Apparently speaking, two-fifths of respondents' family members are forced to stay in the home. Because of this they have been deprived of breathing fresh air outside. The landlord did not allow them to open the windows of the house or the balcony because if they were out of breath or others would affect by corona disease. Then only one-fifth of respondents' relatives are commuting chaos for funeral arrangements and only one-fifth respondents are dominated and avoided by their friends subtly.

Consequently, most of the internally displaced people in the study areas are tortured by their landlord (*Bariwala*). Only a few workers are mistreated by their office boss and senior colleagues. Most workers say their colleagues gave them mental support over the phone at the time. People have identified corona and corona patients at this time through various superstitions and different taboos like the 'Dark Ages'. Some have called corona the Resurrection of the World. This lockdown or epidemic has proved how much a husband loves his sick wife and how much a wife loves her sick husband. It also shows that how much the child loves the parents.

In this study, people talk about some of the reasons for social stigma, boycott and inequality, which are shown in the box below:

Table-1: Immediate causes of the social stigma, prejudice and discrimination

Major Findings:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of knowledge and information. ➤ Misconceptions, ➤ Feeling of insecurity, ➤ Fear of responsibility, ➤ Administrative malfunction, ➤ Lack of trust on treatment facilities, ➤ Unconsciousness, ➤ Impressive mentality, ➤ Anti-social thinking and selfish attitude, ➤ And excessive fear about COVID-19.

(Sources: KIIs and Case Study, 2021)

Dehumanizing treatment of corona patients and their families have resulted in more mental problems than physical problems (ILO, 2020). Additionally, anxiety, frustration, shame and degradation have been created among them. Some have become addicted to a lot of online to divert attention from these. Again some have awakened from these to deviance behaviour within themselves.

Finally, learning from the current corona virus, people in the study area have come up with some suggestions so that such an epidemic in the future can be easily protected. Some have said that one should be careful in disseminating information because now is the age of free flow of information. Information should be carefully shared among the people. By collecting a lot of misinformation, many people think that corona is the wrath of the creator. And we need to change our narrow minds and awaken unity, devotion, humanity. Indeed, one-fifth of people say that people are actually behaving like that because of our social customs and social structure. And further research should be needed to grow more and more.

11. Ethical Considerations

Before conducting the in-depth interview, we took oral consents from the interviewee and assured that their responses will be held with strict confidence and shall remain anonymous. We repeated the questions whenever required and examples were added for clarification. We administered 'Member checking', which is known as good technique by many qualitative researchers, as it enhances the credibility of results. We sent the data transcriptions and interpretations back to the selected research participants through mobile us for member checks, which helped us to establish research credibility, reliability, and conformity. Information or

results are returned to informants in order to check for validity and accuracy with their experiences.

12. Conclusion

This study has highlighted some of the incidences in which corona pandemic can be alarming and traumatized issue to the corona patients, symptomatic patients and their families for their illness, stigmatization, prejudice and discrimination which leads to rumours, misinformation, stress, and even suicidal frustrations etc. Our findings showed that, most of the people have spent their quarantine and post quarantine life with fear and anger very immensely. During this time of global pandemic, COVID-19 persons and symptomatic patients undergoes with all the tensions and the uncertainty and insecurity, it is considered enough in the existing context of mental health and related social challenges (Usher et al, 2020).

Experiencing inequality, discrimination and traumatising behaviours of COVID-19 patients like HIV-AIDS patients have been feared all-time. Patients with the lower class (low income, low social capital and support) have suffered more than the patients with the greater personal resources (income, education, social capital and support) in the pandemic critical period.

It is said that stigma, prejudice and discrimination are evident in several perspectives and for several people, yet some appearances remain perpetual. Obligate lessons have been learned in the present COVID-19 response that could be applied to the future pandemic response. The COVID-19 patients lost their confidence and suffered by discrimination in several ways, which considered as one of the main hindrances of overall development of the country. The equal treatment among the patients, irrespective of their socio-economic conditions is crucial for ensuring gender equality for the society and the country as a whole. Therefore, the concerned departments, authority and Government of Bangladesh (GoB) should take necessary steps to stop the stigmatized, prejudice and discriminatory behaviour among the COVID-19 patients.

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14. Appendix

No.	Name (Pseudonym)	Gender	Age	Religion	Education	Occupation	Family Member
01	Hosen Ali	Male	30	Islam	Masters	Teacher	07
02	Rahim	Male	45	Islam	HSC	Merchant	04
03	Dilip Kumar	Male	18	Hindu	Honours running	Student	03
04	SaifurRahman	Male	27	Islam	Honours	journalist	05
05	Jalil	Male	24	Islam	Honours running	Student	05
06	Nowmi	Female	18	Islam	Honours running	Student	03
07	Hasina	Female	23	Islam	Bsc Nursing 3 rd year	Student	04
08	Raju	Female	23	Islam	Honours running	Student	05
09	Sathi	Female	29	Islam	Masters	Employee	05
10	Nodi	Female	36	Islam	Medical passed	Doctor	04
11	Hosen Mia	Male	32	Islam	Masters	Employee	04
12	Mahim	Male	23	Islam	Honours running	Student	05
13	Sazid	Male	26	Islam	Master	Student	04
14	Tamim	Male	27	Islam	Medical running	Intern Doctor	05
15	Sahin	Male	27	Islam	Medical running	Intern Doctor	06
16	Raza	Male	30	Islam	MBA	Police	04
17	Sharif	Male	28	Islam	Masters running	Student	02
18	Kashim	Male	35	Islam	SSC	Worker	04
19	Rakib	Male	32	Islam	Masters	Employee	03
20	Anjoli	Female	45	Hindu	BSc Nursing	Nurse	04
21	Ferdous	Male	50	Islam	BA	Employee	05
22	Popi	Female	19	Islam	Honours running	Student	05
23	Fahim	Male	52	Islam	SSC	Driver	07
24	Biksah	Male	23	Islam	Honours running	Student	05
25	Mariya	Female	38	Islam	Honours passed	Student	04
26	Sifat	Male	45	Islam	SSC	Student	05
27	Murshid	Male	60	Islam	Honours	Student	08
28	Karima	Female	50	Islam	Five passed	Housewife	08

29	Akber	Male	45	Islam	Engineering	Engineer	
30	Suniti	Female	19	Hindu	Honours running	Student	05

(Source: Field Work, 2021)

The Assessment of US-Iran Conflicting Relations Making Sense with Samuel Phillips Huntington's 'The Clash of Civilizations'

Md. Mehedi Hasan Shohag*

Abstract

In the post-cold war period, Samuel Phillips Huntington's 'The Clash of Civilizations' is one of the epoch-making theories in international politics. Many political scientists argued that the ideological conflict between capitalism and socialism had vanished after the cold-war phenomenon. But the important fact is that Samuel P. Huntington took into consideration another conflict related to cultural and civilizational conflict in the post-cold war period in his famous thesis 'The Clash of Civilizations' including major eight civilizations. Among these, he predicted the probable conflict between 'Western Civilization' vis-a-vis 'Islamic-Sinic Civilization' in future. Here the crucial matter is that the research tries to assess the US-Iran conflicting relations on the basis of S. P. Huntington's famous thesis 'The Clash of Civilizations'. It tries to examine Huntington's thesis 'The Clash of Civilizations' focusing on the major civilizations and the civilizational clash and also tries to examine the different cultural and civilizational issues and facts between the United States of America and Iran in the post-cold war period that contribute to hostile relations.

Key Words: The Clash of Civilizations, Major Civilizations, Civilizational Clash, Cultural Indicators, Civilizational Indicators, Cold War in Post-Cold War Period, USA and Iran.

Introduction

The termination of World War II had institutionalized a bipolar world history¹ in the history of international politics. The down fall of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) in the decade of 90s not only made sure the end of bipolarity but also the termination of cold war in international politics. Many scholars imagined that the ideological conflict² had vanished. The world became the witness of unipolar world led by only one superpower the United States of America (USA). One of the prominent scholars of the post-cold war period named Francis Fukuyama, student of S. P. Huntington, wrote a book on this coincidence named 'The End of History and the Last Man' in 1992. In reaction to his student's book, S. P. Huntington wrote his famous thesis 'The Clash of Civilizations' in 'Foreign Affairs' in 1993. Here he has examined

¹After World War II, the world became witness of a bipolar history including the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, present Russia.

²In the history of bipolarity, the world was divided into two blocs. One was led by the United States of America including democracy and capitalism and the other was led by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics including communism and socialism.

*Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Barishal, Bangladesh. E-mail: shohag.du9@gmail.com

major eight civilizations³ and predicted the possibility of clash between ‘Western Civilization’ vis-à-vis ‘Islamic-Sinic Civilization’ (Huntington, 1993).

After World War II in the cold-war and post-cold war period, Western civilization has been represented by the United States of America including Britain, France and others in American umbrella doctrine. In the year of 1978, China under leadership of Deng Xiaoping was doing well enough in terms of economic and military indicators including four modernizations (Tisdell, 2008: 2). The important fact is that in 1979 after the Islamic revolution, Iran is doing well enough till present. Actually Iran has the glaze and glory of ancient Persian culture and civilization. The Islamic Republic of Iran is more conscious, well informed and enthusiastic about its ancient culture and civilizations and also its Islamic norms and values.

After the Islamic revolution, Iran switched back from the Western belt and adopted the policy of isolation since it has had well developed and well flourished culture and civilizations from Zorthrostriian legacy to the clergy in modern Islamic Republic of Iran. The important fact is that after the revolution, Iran put importance on its ancient culture and civilizations and also its Islamic norms and values (Curtis and Hooglund, 2008). The Iranian ancient culture and civilization were more aristocratic and advanced than the Western culture and civilizations. The splendor and legacy of Persian culture and civilization are still dominant in Iran.⁴ Iran tries to make sure the repetition of glorious Persian history in 21st century’s international politics.

The main objective of this research is to assess US-Iran relations in light of S. P. Huntington’s famous thesis ‘The Clash of Civilizations’. It tries to explain S. P. Huntington’s famous thesis ‘The Clash of Civilizations’ at a glance. It makes an attempt to examine Iran’s ancient and present cultural and civilizational roots and supremacy since Iran is the representative of glorious and famous Persian civilization and the USA is the representative of Western civilization after World War II. Finally, it also tries to explain the different conflicting issues between the United States of America and the Islamic Republic of Iran in terms of culture and civilization.

Samuel Phillips Huntington’s ‘The Clash of Civilizations’: At a Glance

After the end of the cold war period, Samuel P. Huntington had stated that world politics has become a new history and intellectuals don’t hesitate to think a new vision, of course it may be the termination of history. The important fact is about the conflict among different nation states led to the termination and rebirth of nation states in history of international politics. Actually, it is the product of tribal politics and politics of globalism. The world politics is going to be witnessed of a new phenomenon (Huntington, 1993: 22). He wanted to mean that the world may

³These include Western, Sinic/Confucian, Japanese, Islamic, Hindu, Slavic-Orthodox, Latin American and possibly African civilization.

⁴The Iranian people think about their previous glorious glaze, aristocracy and supremacy of the Persian civilizations.

have neither ideological nor economic conflict but the important fact may be massive fission among human world and the further conflict will be social, cultural and civilizational in terms of its nature. The cultural and civilizational affairs will be the indicator of next future conflict and clash. Different countries of the world will be concerned and well-motivated for their own culture and civilizations.

In the post-cold war period among the different nation states, conflict will occur among nations and different groups of cultures and civilizations. The fault lines between civilizations will be the battle lines of the future. Civilizational conflict among states is latest phase in conflict history of modern world. The first peace treaty of human civilization was the 'Peace Treaty of Westphalia'.⁵ After the creation of nation states near to French Revolution there was practice of conflict between nations not between the princes. The wars of Kings were over and the wars of people began among the nation states. It lasted until World War 1. International politics became the witness of another paradigm shift after Bolshevik Revolution and the counter action against it. Here conflict of nations shifted to conflict of ideologies⁶ (Huntington, 1993: 23). During the cold war period, a new experience emerged including the concept of iron curtain and the emergence of two superpowers, one the United States of America from capitalism and liberal democratic belt and another the Soviet Union from socialism and communist belt.

After cold war, international politics became less western influence oriented and a new trend has been noticed like the non-Western orientation (Huntington, 1993: 23). The politics of civilizations creates a new history where people, governments and institutions of non-Western civilizations will not sustain as suppressed, oppressed and depressed in history of Western colonialism. After the end of World War II, Western colonialism was replaced by Western imperialism. It is also regarded as indirect colonialism, the repetition of colonial legacy to make sure resource exploration. Many countries joined the West as movers and re-shapers of colonial history with their own culture and civilizations. But the fact has become different in the post-cold war international politics; the decadence of the western civilization gets started with the politics of imperialism. The history of imperialism is nothing but the representative part of Western colonialism. The anti-imperialist sentiment has become dominant in the post-cold war period that embellishes the non-western nations to be more conscious and enthusiastic of their own glorious ancient culture and civilizations.

Civilization is undoubtedly culture oriented. It not only focuses on villages, territory and ethnic groups but also nationalities, regionalism and religious groups. Cultures have distinct level of heterogeneity, advocacy and supremacy (Huntington, 1993: 23-24). European culture

⁵It was signed on October 24, 1648 to make sure peace among the nation states. The conflicts of Western world included large princes, emperors, absolute monarchy and constitutional monarchy trying to enhance their bureaucracies, mercantilism etc.

⁶First was among communism, fascism-nazism and liberal democracy and then between communism and liberal democracy.

undoubtedly has some distinct cultural features that are also true for the Arabian, Chinese and other cultures.⁷ Civilizations undoubtedly jumble, overlap, revamp and may also have sub-civilizations. Civilizations are tendinous, they elevate and collapse, they share and mingle and sometimes civilizations vanish and are buried in the course of time. Different nation states may be the portions of a civilization including examples of Western, Latin American and Arabian civilizations; a nation with a civilization is like the Japanese civilization.

The important fact is that the identity fueled from civilization will be consecutively crucial in future. The world will have pragmatic experience of interactions among seven or eight major civilizations including Western, Sinic/Confucian, Japanese, Islamic, Hindu, Slavic-Orthodox, Latin American and something like that African civilization (Huntington, 1993: 25). The Western civilization is a dominant civilization including the United States of America, Canada, Mexico, Western and Central Europe, Australia, New Zealand and other countries of Oceania. The Western Christian Catholic and Protestant cultures and traditions are considered as the roots of Western civilization.

The Sinic/Confucian civilization of China is one of the ultimate counterparts of the Western civilization (Mahbubani, 1993). It encircles Peoples Republic of China as well as Korea, Singapore, Taiwan and Vietnam. It subsumes the Buddhist culture and tradition including Bhutan, Cambodia, Laos, Mongolia, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Thailand. The Japanese civilization is an aristocratic civilization. World War I and World War II not only bring the Japanese defeat⁸ but also signify the supremacy and distinctiveness of Japanese civilization. After World War II, Japan became a foreign aid and debt oriented country but after the 1970s Japan became a donor from a recipient county because of its distinct civilization (Takagi, 1995).

The important fact is that S. P. Huntington has shown perturbation to Islamic civilization and argued that the Western civilization has to be concerned about the Islamic civilization in future which incorporates the Middle East, Central Asia, Northern West Africa, Albania, Bangladesh, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brunei, Comoros, Indonesia, Malaysia and Maldives.⁹ The Hindu civilization includes India, Sri Lanka, Bhutan and Nepal and cultural point of view adhered to global Indian diaspora. The Orthodox civilization subsumes the then Soviet Union present Russia, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Georgia, Greece, Romania and Yugoslavia. The Latin American civilization includes South America, Central America, Cuba and the Dominican Republic. It may be considered as a part of Western civilization. The African civilization comprises

⁷It is understood by common elements including history, language, religion, institutions and customs and also by self-identification of different personalities.

⁸In the World War I and II, Japan was defeated and the fate of the Japanese people was not so much lucky at all. They had to have the taste of defeat and sorrow inspite of having massive military power. For example: The Little Boy dropped in Hiroshima on August 6, 1945 and the Fat Man dropped in Nagasaki on August 9, 1945 destroyed Japan and Japanese people.

⁹ It excludes the countries like Armenia, Cyprus, Ethiopia, Georgia, Israel, Malta and South Sudan.

Southern Africa, Middle Africa, East Africa, Cape Verde, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Liberia and Sierra Leone. It is considered as the eight civilizations of S. P. Huntington.

The fault lines of culture among the different nations will be the source of future conflict. This coincidence will make sure civilizational separation and civilizational clash focusing on cultural advocacy, inferiority, superiority and supremacy. Huntington offers six explanations for civilizational clash (Huntington, 1993). The important fact is that culture and civilization has become the dominant issue between Western and non-Western worlds.

First, Civilizational differences are basic; History, culture, language, tradition and religion play important roles to make sure civilizational differences. We find the reflections of ancient civilizations in the nation states and no nation state is beyond this mechanism.¹⁰

Second, the large communication boundary of the world is becoming smaller and interactions between different nations are increasing day by day. As a result, the world has become just like a global village that intensifies consciousness and awareness among the different cultures and civilizations. As a result, the glaze of Western civilization to the non-Western is being decoded because of Western civilizational dictatorship.

Third, because of economic modernization, cultural degeneration, self-interest maximization, social change and alienation people are parted from local identities and facts. Religion is important to create identity and commitment among the people that outstrips prejudice and strengthens civilizations. The civilizations of the nation states are being united in a way that strengthens their own ancient history, culture and tradition.

Fourth, the duality of the Western culture and politics enhances massive growth of civilizational consciousness among the non-Western nations. The fact is that West is undoubtedly at a peak of power. It is just like a return to the roots phenomenon which is occurring among non-Western civilizations. The will, resource and sense of belongingness of the non-Western people will shape the world in non-Western ways.

Fifth, the culture of a nation state is undoubtedly different from the culture of other nation states.¹¹ For example, the European culture is different from the culture of Asia and the culture of Africa is also different from the culture of Latin America.

Sixth, the economic regionalism is increasing in a consecutive process. Civilizational consciousness is motivated with economic regionalism that may be fruitful with a common culture and civilization (Huntington, 1993: 25-27).

Huntington gives a hint that in the future there will be possibility of clash between Western and non-Western civilizations. It is in another way just like the conflict between the West and the Rest. He focuses on three actions that the other civilizations may perform against Western civilization. First, non-Western has the possibility to be isolated to preserve norms, values,

¹⁰The different aspects of civilizations are undoubtedly product of centuries. One civilization is distinct from another because of its own character and style.

¹¹The matter of fact is that cultural aspects are less mutable and there is few way of compromise since different culture has different aspects and criteria.

traditions ensuring protection from Western colonial legacy and imperialist invasion. But the crucial fact is that the cost of this action is high. Second, the theory of 'Band Wagoning' helps non-Western countries to join and accept Western values making sense with their own interest maximization. Third, non-Western countries can have an attempt to balance Western power through modernization making sense with flourishing their ancient history, culture and traditions (Huntington, 1993). They can develop economic power, military power and cooperate with other non-Western countries against the West.¹²

The Western civilizations will have to face the power of non-Western civilizations. The Western people always think that West is always supreme and others are inferior. But the good thing is that the non-Western world is trying to have different initiatives to make a good future. The crucial fact is that among the eight civilizations, S. P. Huntington has delivered a clear message to the West about future clash between 'Western Civilization' vis-à-vis 'Islamic-Sinic Civilization'.

The US-Iran Conflicting Relations in Light of Samuel Phillips Huntington's 'The Clash of Civilizations': A Brief Assessment

Samuel P. Huntington in his famous thesis 'The Clash of Civilizations' has discussed about eight major civilizations and civilizational clash with different examples from the history of international politics. Here he has wanted to mean that in the post-cold war period the ideological conflict has been finished but this doesn't mean that the history has ended. The reality is that the world history will have a new experience of civilizational clash. He predicted the possibility of major clash between the 'Western Civilization' vis-a-vis 'Islamic-Sinic Civilization'. More cooperation between Islamic civilization and Sinic civilization will enable them to fight against the Western civilization.

After the end of World War II, the United States of America has become the representative part of Western civilization including Britain, France and others under the US umbrella.¹³ China has a glorious ancient history, traditions and after the declaration of China as a 'People's Republic of China' in 1949 by its charismatic leader Mao Zedong with his concept of 'Great Leap Forward' it was made sure that the Chinese people would think themselves distinct from the West. Later the socio-political and economic reformation of Deng Xiaoping helped China to fight against the Western civilization. The important fact is that the glorious ancient Persian history, culture, tradition and finally the 'Islamic Revolution',¹⁴ in 1979 including the Iranian people have made Iran the representative part of Islamic civilization.

¹²It will be only for preserving their own values, culture, traditions and institutions to make them distinct from the West to fight against Western colonialism, imperialism and hegemony.

¹³Most of the Western countries are under the US led alliance named NATO after World War II.

¹⁴The Islamic Revolution/Iranian Revolution led by Iranian Islamic leader Ayatollah Rohullah Khamenei was a series of coincidences that made sure the termination of Pahlavi dynasty. It dated back from

After 1993, the US foreign policy became based on S. P. Huntington's famous thesis 'The Clash of civilizations'. The US policy makers consider both Iran and China as their enemy and always patronize the anti-Iran and anti-China forces in international politics. Here the study tries to find out the clash between 'Western Civilization (USA) vis-a-vis Islamic Civilization (Iran)'. However, the relationship between the United States and Iran remains problematic and the future prospects unknown because of the cultural and civilizational distinctiveness (Zanchetta, 2009: 2).

Iran became the policeman of the Persian Gulf and the strongest US ally in the Middle East with the departure of Britain. Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi became dominant in Iran with US support and assistance and the reality was that US involvement in Iran ultimately grew stronger. Not only the nationalist but also the Islamic clergy did not take the increasing American involvement in Iran positively. The Shah government became more assertive regionally but more repressive domestically (Hunter, 1990: 46-54). The Shah regime was supported by USA and day by day its credibility was decreasing to the Iranian people because of massive US involvement in the domestic and international affairs of Iran.

As a result, a charismatic nationalist leader, Md. Mossadeg came to power replacing Reza Shah in 1953 and took different nationalist and anti-American policies and US policy makers did not like it. As a result, the fate of Prime Minister Mossadeg was not so lucky at all. He was removed from Iranian power in spite of having massive support of the Iranian people and Shah again came to power of Iran with US conspiracy. At that time, the Iranian people had become witness of US imperialism in Iran and the Shah government remained silent.

Because of massive US involvement in Iran and the silent attitude of Shah's government, the nationalist and the clergy were annoyed very much. They tried to make sure a revolution. The charismatic religious leader Ayatollah Rohullah Khamenei made sure an Islamic Revolution including the absolute support of the Iranian people. As a result, the US influence was vanished with the start of a new regime in Iran. After revolution, the revolutionary government put importance on Iranian people's demand and adopted the policy of isolation to ensure socio-economic and political stability and sustainability. It adopted a new constitution.¹⁵ This regime remained its ancient Persian culture and civilization and Islamic norms and values to shape a great future history in international politics.

The important matter is that US-Iran relations are conflictual in terms of different conflicting issues since the Islamic Revolution in 1979. The animosity is imbedded in the US-hostage crisis, freezing of Iranian assets and difference in the security architecture¹⁶ of the Middle East

January 7, 1978 to February 11, 1979 and supported by the leftists, rightists, students and overall Iranian people.

¹⁵The Iranian Constitution adopted the Persian Constitution of 1906 with referendum to practice the glory of the Persian culture and civilization.

¹⁶Both Iran and United States are in an intricate security relationship that creates faith crises between these two countries (Hussain, 2015: 30).

(Hussain, 2015: 29-30). The US-Iran conflicting relations have been fueled with the convergence of interests, cultural-civilizational diversity, military expansionism, weapons arrangements, economic underdevelopment, resource exploration, cultural supremacy, hegemony, regional security conflict, faith crisis, global terrorism, politics of dominance, colonial legacy and imperialism, nuclear controversy and so on.

The important fact is that the revolutionary Iran followed the policy of neither the West nor the East and denounced the prevailing bipolar global politics (Ramzani, 1988: 21-22). The Islamic Republic of Iran follows the policy of isolation and practices the ancient cultures, traditions and Islamic norms and values. Iran subsumes the expansion of its own technology to make sure sustainability in terms of its social safety-net system, economic expansion, military empowerment, satellite enlargement and sustainable defense system. Most of the arms and weapons of Iran are made with Iranian technology. As a result, Iran can use its weapons without the consent of other countries. Here an example can be used like the heavy arms and weapons of Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Egypt and some other countries are imported from the United States of America. As a result, these countries cannot use these arms and weapons without the consent of the United States of America but Iran does not need to have any consent.

The fact is that Iran has adopted advanced and smart nuclear components to maximize nuclear power (Kibaroglu, 2006). The large dispute started from that time. The United States of America always suspects Iran in terms of nuclear energy expansion. The US policy makers think that in the name of peaceful nuclear energy management, Iran wants to make sure nuclear weapons which are very harmful for regional security maintenance. The real fact is that if Iran gets the nuclear weapons what will happen in terms of Israel? The United States is very concerned about the security of Israel in the Middle East and it always tries to put back Iran from having nuclear weapons.

Both Iran and USA apply negative terminology like Iran treats USA as the ‘Great Satan’ and the United States treats Iran as the ‘Islamic Fundamentalist’ ‘Rogue State’ and also the ‘Axis of Evil’. This undoubtedly fueled the fire in US-Iran relations (Murray, 2010). George H. W. Bush and Bill Clinton¹⁷ administrations imposed sanctions against Iran. The Iran-Iraq Arms Non-proliferation Act was passed in the Congress in 1992. Congress levied sanctions with a complete oil and trade embargo on Iran in 1995. The deal between Iranian oil ministry and Conoco was halted within weeks because Clinton administration reacted quickly that’s why the US energy firms working in Iran was interdicted (The New York Times, 1995). The US policy makers and Israel welcomed President Clinton’s policies to create pressure on Iran since Iran is only the rival of United States in the Middle East.

The 1996 Iran and Libya sanctions Act imposed an embargo against non-American companies that invested more than \$20 million per year in Iranian oil and gas sectors (Clawson, 2016).

¹⁷Clinton’s special assistant for the Middle East Martin Indyk had as early as May 1993 called Iran a ‘bad investment (Gause, 1994).

During 1998 the UN General Assembly at the Six-Plus-Two talks, there was a discussion between the Secretary of State Madeleine Albright¹⁸ and the Iran's deputy foreign minister. It was considered as the highest level of US-Iran discussion since 1979. Actually, the nationalist Mossadeg government's policies were pro-Iranian and anti-American that's why the United States kicked out this regime to make sure US interest not only in Iran but also in the Middle East.

Like the Predecessors, G. W. Bush in 2002 narrated Iran, Iraq and North Korea as 'axis of evil' (Vantanka, 2016: 5). He alleged that Iran tries to invent mass destruction weapons and export terror and some unelected personality persecute Iranian people and the Iranian people's human rights¹⁹ are at stake. The government of Iran discontinued secret meetings with the US. The crucial fact is that the revelation of Iranian nuclear program in 2002 was undoubtedly a source of conflict between the United States and Iran. Here Israel always motivates the United States about the nuclear project of Iran since it thinks Iran as its direct enemy and future threat.

Iran asserted the right to use nuclear energy under non-proliferation treaty while the United States accused Iran of pursuit of mass destruction nuclear weapons. The agreement on additional protocol to the NPT and the UN imposed regime sanctions against Iran since 2006 were seen as counter-productive by Iran (Maleki and Afrasiabi, 2003). Actually there is a faith crisis between Iran and the United States. Iran claims about the peaceful use of nuclear resources for its energy sustainability; on the other hand the United States always plays blame game on Iran about making nuclear weapons to create security imbalance in the Middle East.

Iran argued that their nuclear program is only for peaceful purposes to use nuclear energy only although the United States does not believe the Iranian stance and takes concern with advanced facilities like 'Enrichment Plants'. In the UN Security Council, the global anxieties were manifested that's why a series of sanctions against Iran was passed since 2006 (Kerr, 2011). The main fact is that the United States always tries to put pressure to create political, economic and military deficit in Iran.

Congress discarded the decision of the President and its hardline position on nuclear dealings P5+1. The Iranian President Mahmud Ahmadenejad blamed Israel as the main culprit of Middle East (Hussain, 2015: 34). The US policy makers are always concerned about the sustainable security of Israel in the Middle East and they always treat Iran as the ultimate threat for Israel. The Israel lobby is strong enough in the United States of America since the Jews are enough powerful in the top level of US administration.

¹⁸Albright in April 2000 confessed the United States' role in Mossadeg government's overthrow and expressed the anti-Iranian policy.

¹⁹The United States always blame that the Iranian people are not in good position in Iran and their human rights are at stake. The freedom of thought, expression and freedom of other religions and other opinion are crippled.

The Arab Spring 2010-2011 in the region uprooted the long-lasting US credibility in the name of democracy vs. stability and accelerated the Iranian influence in the Middle East that's why the US had to rethink its policy of denial to engagement with Iran. The Iranian economy was worsening because of the continued UN sanctions²⁰ and the social phenomena within Iran led the Iranian to rethink their future. The important matter is that in 2013 a pragmatist Hasan Rouhani became the Iranian President and he became famous for his policy of shrewd moderation, constructive engagement and heroic flexibility (Zarif, 2014). He adopted moderation to sustain Iran's economic progress lifting the consecutive UN sanctions. Here the reality is that Obama appreciated the deal for leading Iran not to have a nuclear bomb while Rouhani took it as a political victory for Iran.

Israel is a barrier to any normalized relations between the US and Iran. Iran and the US administration until 2012, was intending on military option when it was being accentuated that 'all options are on the table' (Bumiller, 2012). The US-Iran bilateral relations are motivated by a large number of issues bilaterally, regionally and globally. Among the different issues, the key issue is nuclear controversy that creates trust deficit between the US and Iran. Because of the Israeli conspiracy, the US alleged Iran of supporting the terrorist activities and opposition to Middle East security management.

President Barak Obama led the comprehensive framework which was considered as a good deal to reduce Iran's nuclear ambitions. Barak Obama informed King Salman of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) about the different issues of Iran. He also called Benjamin Netanyahu and assured that the deal would reduce Iranian attempt to have bombs (Gordon and Sanger: 2015). Actually, the United States tries to put back Iran from having nuclear weapons in the name of security maintenance in Middle East but the real fact is that if Iran makes sure the nuclear weapons, the US hegemony in Middle East will not be last long.

There was worse relation between the US and Iran in the Trump administration. Mr. Trump, President of the United States, withdrew the US from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and imposed maximum pressure to put back Iran from nuclear weapons creation on May 8, 2018. Trump's decision was condemned by arms control experts and European allies but many Republican Party's lawmakers, Israel and Saudi Arabia applauded it as a good signal. Iran always claims that the nuclear project of Iran is just only to use nuclear energy peacefully for the welfare and betterment of Iranian people. Different sanctions and military escalation have been imposed on Iran in the Trump administration.

Trump labeled the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) a terrorist organization and blamed the IRGC of giving fund for the different terrorist groups in Middle East on April, 15, 2019. Benjamin Netanyahu, Prime Minister of Israel congratulated Donald Trump for that kind of decision. The Iranian President Hasan Rouhani confirmed that the action would only increase

²⁰It led to the interim nuclear deal in November 24, 2013, freezing the Iranian nuclear program and easing of sanctions, raised the hopes of a long desired rapprochement between the US and Iran (Kinzer, 2014).

the IRGC's professionalism and popularity.²¹ It has the capacity and ability to face any kinds of domestic and foreign attacks since this guard is only liable to the supreme leader and the constitution of Iran.

On June 13, 2019, the Iranian Navy arrested two oil tankers near the 'Strait of Hormuz' because of sea border crossing about a month after four commercial ships were seized in the same area. The US warned Iran for the attacks and President Trump declared Iran a terror state to the international media. The Trump administration announced sending one thousand troops to the Middle East to response. After two days of declaration, the IRGC downed a US surveillance drone. The US censured Iran for the offense on oil tankers and tried to seize an Iranian vessel that was sailing near the British Gibraltar territory.

A burning issue emerged because of the drone attack on Saudi Aramco oil facilities, the country's second largest oil field in Eastern Saudi Arabia which is a crucial crude oil stabilization center in Saudi Arabia. The invasion interrupted half the country's oil supply and caused a sudden jump in prices of Brent crude. Trump endorsed the existence of US troops to protect Saudi air and missile defense system²² at Saudi Arabia's request. The interesting fact was that both the US and Saudi Arabia condemned Iran.

The Iran-backed militias and Iraqi demonstrators made an effort to seize the US Embassy at Bagdad because an air strike killed militia members. The fighters shouted the 'death of America' and demanded the withdrawal of United States troops from Iraq. To give a counter of this incidence, President Trump had tweeted that Iran will have to pay a very big price for the loss of life and property in the US surveillance.

Qasem Soleimani the commander of the IRGC's elite Quds Force, was killed by the United States of America on January 3, 2020 at Bagdad in Iraq. The important fact is that Soleimani was considered as Iran's second most powerful person after the Supreme leader. He was only liable to the supreme leader not even to the President. He worked to make sure regional peace and security in Iraq and Syria. Iran promised to have revenge²³ of Qasem Soleimani killing and illustrated that this incidence will encourage the Iranians to cope up with unethical US sanctions to make sure people's welfare and betterment.

Iran inaugurated its first military satellite on April 22, 2020 to inform the United States about Iran's long distance missile capacities. The US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo informed that Congress thought to put back multilateral sanctions on Iran with a resolution of Security Council. Russia a signatory of the JCPOA, explained that the United States violated the duration

²¹The IRGC is working for security maintenance of Iran and not for regional and global terrorism.

²²The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is liable to the United States of America since the US troops always support the Saudi Royal family to carry on Monarchy in the age of democracy.

²³ To take revenge Iran invaded multiple US military troops settled in Iraq and wounded dozens of US military personnel and Iraqi culprits.

of the deal since the Trump administration had re-imposed sanctions which has not been taken in a proper sense.

In May 2020, because of the internal shortage in Venezuela, Iran tries to deliver oil in spite of having US sanctions on these two countries. In June, the Trump administration imposed sanctions on five Iranian captains who are involved in the shipment actually to discourage Iran-Venezuela trade. In October 2020, the White House wanted to extend UN arms embargo²⁴ on Iran. But at the UN Security Council, a US backed resolution to make sure extension of the embargo was not fruitful and the attempt of the United States to re-impose international sanctions on Iran under JCPOA's snapback mechanism failed.

Mohsen Fakhrizadeh a top nuclear scientist of Iran was assassinated on November 27, 2020. As a result, the Iranian parliament approved a bill to improve uranium enrichment to 20 percent very far from the JCPOA's percentage. It also made attempts to expel the inspectors of International Atomic Energy Agency if the ongoing sanctions on oil and banking sectors of Iran are not removed within 60 days. The bill was passed with the Supreme leader's consent though President Hasan Rouhani opposed that bill. Iran reproached Israel for the killing of Mohsen Fakhrizadeh.

In April, 2021 the signatories of JCPOA started discussion in Vienna to take the United States and Iran put back in fostering the agreement.²⁵ The officials of the U.S. and Iran came to the meetings to swap ideas and a hope to back the deal. Both side insisted that the other should be the first to explain the obligations and they attempted to amplify expectations for ultimate progress. The meeting pointed at a detonation at Iran's Natanz nuclear facility. Iran made allegation against Israel for the plan of this kind of explosion at Natanz nuclear centre in Iran and Israel proclaimed about Iran's high enrichment of uranium at a high flow of 60 percent purity.

Major General Husain Salami the commander in chief of IRGC on May 30, 2021 has stated that in the reign of President Joe Biden there is no possibility of peace in the Middle East. President Joe Biden will behave just like the predecessor and US foreign policy will just be encircled with Israel and Saudi Arabia. The US foreign policy in Middle East will be same but the strategy may be changed in the Presidentship of Joe Biden. The another crucial fact is that the voting right of Iran in United Nations has been taken away on June 4, 2021 and Israel, the most trusted ally of the US in Middle East has used a negative terminology about the newly elected Iranian President Mr. Ebrahim Raisi²⁶ as 'Kasai of Tehran' on June 20, 2021. What is the culture? Of

²⁴The crucial fact is that the past arms embargo will expire in October under the JCPOA. So the US wanted to re-impose embargo and sanctions to create pressure on Iran.

²⁵The signatories of JCPOA try to make sure sustainability and fruitfulness of the agreement and hope to have mutual respects, cooperation and commitment between Iran and the United States of America.

²⁶ The full name of Raisi is Syad Ebrahim Raisul Sadati. He has completed his responsibility as the Chief Justice of Iran and then has been elected as the President of Iran on June 18, 2021 with the popular vote of Iranian people who is very powerful and most trusted to the Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

course it is not good at all. The existing cultural and civilizational facts and scenario between the United States and Iran are just like the repetition of iron curtain and cold war. It is just like the cold war situation between the United States of America and Iran in the 21st century international politics.

Conclusion

Samuel Phillips Huntington discusses another conflict related to cultural and civilizational conflict in the post-cold war period in his famous thesis 'The Clash of Civilizations', 1993 including major eight civilizations. Among these, he predicted the probable conflict between 'Western Civilization' vis-a-vis 'Islamic-Sinic Civilization'. Actually this study tries to find out the clash between Western civilizations (USA) vis-à-vis Islamic civilizations (Iran). After the end of the Second World War, in the cold war period and post-cold war period western civilization was represented by the United States of America including Britain, France and others in American umbrella doctrine. In 1979 after the Islamic revolution, Iran is doing well till present. The Islamic Republic of Iran is more conscious, well informed and enthusiastic about its ancient culture and civilizations and also its Islamic norms and values.

The important matter is that after the publication of Samuel P. Huntington's thesis 'The Clash of Civilizations' the foreign policy of the United States of America is totally based on it. After 1993, the US policy makers thought Iran as their enemy because of Huntington's assumption since after the Islamic revolution, Iran has practised the legacy of its ancient Persian culture, tradition, civilization and also the dominant Islamic norms and values. Iran is doing well domestically and internationally. Iran subsumes the expansion of its own technology to make sure sustainability in terms of its social safety-net system, economic expansionism, military empowerment, satellite enlargement and sustainable defense system. Most of the arms and weapons of Iran are constructed in Iranian technology. As a result, Iran can use its weapon without the consent of other countries. As a result, Iran has become a threat to the United States of America and its allies in the Middle East security maintenance.

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Bangabandhu's Philosophy at the United Nations Stage: A Framework of International Relations in the Light of Liberal Theory

Md. Sunbin Islam*

Abstract

This article examines the discipline of liberalism in international relations where Bangabandhu's agenda on the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) remained the dominant focus to write down the liberalist perspective of Bangladesh towards the world. By documenting the local, national, and international memory projects, the study interprets the statement of Bangabandhu which is especially given in UNGA stages. The study also analyses how Bangabandhu followed the liberalist framework of foreign relations which deals with cooperation and the peace-centric principle called "Friendship to all, malice towards none." To make that argument, the paper highlights the small states seek to pursue political influence in multilateral organizations like the United Nations (UN). First, Bangabandhu addressed Bangladesh in UNO through the statement of how friendship and peace being the important pillar of the architect of relations among the nations. Second, the paper also reveals how Bangabandhu underpin the political ideas in the international stage as a representative from a small state and materializing that ideas as the forefront activities of world peace and institutions of the UN. Third, the paper evaluates the theoretical outlooks of liberalism of Bangabandhu that underlined cooperation, friendship, and international institutions.

Key-words: Bangabandhu, International Relations, Liberalism, Small States, Diplomacy, United Nations

Introduction

In the interconnected world, cooperation and multilateralism have been staged as one of the influential forces for the small states like Bangladesh to exercise and act independently in international arena (Tarp and Hansen, 2013). As a newly independent nation, Bangladesh, led by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, had proliferated its presence in the United Nations (UN) regarding the issue of comprehensive dimensions in the field of political, economic, and social aspects. The speech of Bangabandhu in the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) is profoundly based on the ideological and political framework of international relations that can be taken into account as the international diplomacy of Bangladesh in the international echelon. This diplomatic relations have been dramatic changes from the 1970s and turned fully into a radical transfer in the international politics after the cold war in the 1990s. The power shifting strategy in the policy-making of a country has raised concern by the 'realists' and led to the

* Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Barishal, Barishal Email: msbislam@bu.ac.bd

affirmation on the liberality, insularity, resilience, and dependence as significant factors in making an impression about small state engagement in the international structure.

This paper looks into the role of Bangladesh as a small state within the UN. Bangladesh has followed the UN Charter resolution where territorial integrity and political independence of any state would be ensured (UN Charter, 2020). Bangladesh has been acquiesced an independent and non-aligned policy with all states of the universe that drives friendship based on territorial integrity, sovereignty, non-interference and equality. The leadership of Bangladesh formed proper characteristics and behavior of their states with UNGA where it had represented the fundamental value and principles which deal with the cornerstone of legal norms, initiatives, collaboration and institutions (Psaila, 2010). That's why former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan said that (United Nations, 1998): the small states have been forming an alliance with global forces to a lead the world together. Their cumulative effect in the global communication, trade and business can be considered as a strong tide of the path. The large and powerful countries have knowledge and access in the resources, weaponry and labor but small countries have not to play as remote and out-raced in the global power. Though they are holding more capable role internationally and they have been ringing of more progressive universal co-operation for the common good.

Bangabandhu lead his life against colonial and Pakistani power for making the people of Bengalees free from political, social and economic disparity that considered him as one of the charismatic leaders in the world (Jahan, 2019). Bangabandhu penned on May 3, 1973 "as a man, what concerns mankind concerns me. As a Bengalee, I am deeply involved in all that concerns Bengalees. This abiding involvement is born of and nourished by love, enduring love, which gives meaning to my politics and my very being" (Rahman, 2012). Bangabandhu's peaceful co-existence and national development' approach in foreign policymaking elaborates on the meanings of peace for development, and security. After liberation from Pakistan, Bangladesh emerged as a new strategically significant country in the politics of South Asia. In the time of global power transformation with the formation of the Indo-Soviet axis vis-a-vis Sino-American rapprochement, there was a huge impact on the system of the foreign relations of Bangladesh. Keeping its foreign affairs from any kind of influence, Bangabandhu tried to pursue the objective from superpowers' rivalry through joining in Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). NAM was created to make the world politics for the small states not to become pawns of the power struggle among the major powers (Islam, 2020). By following the objective of "support of self-determination", "Independent and respect for the sovereignty of all nations", "resistance against colonialism, neo-colonialism, foreign occupation, and domination", non-interference into the internal affairs of states, and peaceful co-existence among all countries" (Islam, 2020) Bangladesh has adopted a non-aligned foreign policy. Bangabandhu directly

cleared that Bangladesh follows that policy which deals with mutual respect, territorial integrity, non-interference and sovereignty.

Objectives of the Study

This paper explores the formation of the liberal approach of Bangladesh as a state by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman through its multi-layered historical journey. The study analyses how Bangabandhu followed the liberalist framework of foreign relations which deals with cooperation and peace-centric principle.

Firstly, Bangabandhu addressed Bangladesh in the United Nations through the statement of how friendship and peace being the important pillar of the architect of relations among the nations.

Secondly, the paper also reveals how Bangabandhu underpin the political ideas in the international stage as a representative from a small state and materializing those ideas as the forefront activities of world peace, institutions, and negotiations of the UN.

Thirdly, the paper evaluates the theoretical outlooks of liberalism of Bangabandhu that emphasized cooperation, friendship, international institutions in their international relations which are hardly studied in Bangladesh as well as in the discipline of international relations.

Methodology

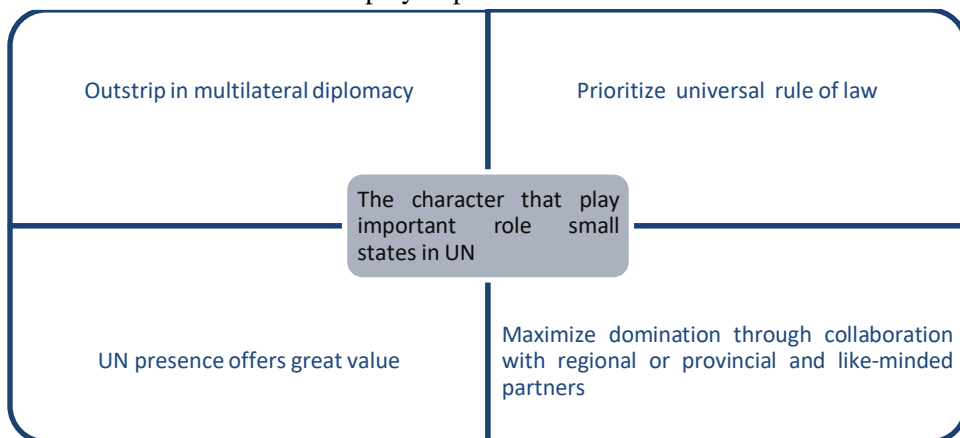
The analysis of this study is qualitative. For the analysis of liberalism policy of Bangabandhu in the United Nations (UN), I use “the address of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the former Prime Minister of Bangladesh” in the 29th session of UN General Assembly in 1974. For analysis of the statements, speeches and general debates given by Bangabandhu especially the primary data are collected from the website of the United Nations (<https://gadebate.un.org/en/sessions-archive>) and permanent mission of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh to the United Nations (<https://bdun.org/>). And there are some other primary sources such as different books and articles on international relations and Bangladesh and different dailies like the Prothom Alo, the Daily Star, the bdnews24.com, and the Dhaka Tribune. While selecting the author considers wider coverage and political/ideological biases of the newspapers. There is a systematic review of the statement, speech, and debate events of Bangladesh in the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). The data has also collected from the books of Bangabandhu- The Unfinished Memoirs, The Prison Diaries, Amar Dekha Noya Chin, and Secret Documents of Intelligence Branch on Father of the Nation of Bangladesh Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

This study based on the objective of liberalism selected some terminologies of International Relations (IR) including international cooperation, international institutions, and interdependence, international interconnectivity, international diplomacy through a non-violent approach, international interactions for cultural, economic, security, and military means. These elements applied for analyzing the agenda of Bangabandhu given in the stage of the UN.

The Theoretical Framework of the Statement

The realistic theory, one of the international relations theories, came into the point of debate and criticism due to the power-centric concept of international politics. The small states and their behaviors in the context of external factors cannot be explained through the hypothesis of the realistic theories. In particular, the developing world like Qatar and other small states have not physical powers to deal with the superpowers. Albeit, they have some elements such as the leadership of the politicians and the variable of perception and non-outward degree of power that will affect the external role (Galal, 2020). The way small states survive and integrate by the institutions, regulation, and policy of the strong power of the world; however the power competition by the superpowers in Europe and in Asia have changed the dynamics of small states importance on the world stage (Long, 2017). Understandably, small states incline to place high ponderosity on the doctrine of sovereign equality, harmony and the rules-based multilateralism on which the UN rests (Suilleabhain, 2014).The character that plays an important role for the small states and its leaderships in the UN stages as an international actor (Suilleabhain,2014):

Chart 01: the character that play important role small states in UN



Source: O. A. Suilleabain (2014). “Small States at the United Nations: Diverse Perspectives, Shared Opportunities.” *International Peace Institute*.

Mohamed Shaleby wrote in his book “Foreign Policy of Small States: Jordan and External behavior of small states 39 the Process of the Settlement of Arab-Israeli Conflict (1979-1994)” that the small states’ foreign policies generated from “a perceptual image and acting a mediator”. The Study of Al-Ani (2013) titled “The Foreign Policy of Small States: The Foreign Policy of Kingdom of Bahrain as A Case Study from 2003 to 2009” concluded that the state which categorizes in small size manufacture its policy regarding international relations by making a bountiful performance to regional and international organizations. The study of Giorgi Gavalia (2013) titled “Thinking outside the Bloc: Explaining the Foreign Policies of Small States” argued that ideas and thought formulate the operation of the foreign policy-making of

small states. The study of Miriam Fendius Elman (1995) titled “The Foreign Policies of Small States: Challenging Neorealism in Its Own Backyard” concluded that the foreign policy of small states has its sources in domestic policies. The study of Peter R. Baehr (1975) titled “Small States: A Tool for Analyses” concluded that the intended size of the state is the size of power, not space. The second section includes studies that focus on the impact of the international environment on small states’ external behavior. For example, the study of Michael Handel titled “Weak State in International System” concluded that the international factor is the most influential in the internal behavior of small states (Handel, 1990). The study of Jeanne A. K. Hey titled “The Small States in World Politics: Explaining Foreign Policy Behavior” argued that small states are forceless, debilitated and void in international sapience and mechanism. The personal characteristics of the leader, i.e. beliefs, motives, decision style, and interpersonal style become critical in understanding the foreign policy behavior of a state (Hermann, 2011).

International Relations and Liberalism

Liberalism is one of the IR theories that focus on democracy and cooperation: a positive view on human nature, IR can be cooperative rather than conflictual, a brief in progress. The mutual benefits and international cooperation and international organizations for policy choices are the fundamental principles that reject the power politics that branded as the warfare outcome of global politics. Taking the morality as one of the basis, liberalism follows the right to liberty, life and property of a person which must be the supreme goal of government. The institutions, community, fraternity and norms in the international arena (expected behaviors) of this global procedure are built on the same cornerstone as home-grown liberal institutions, organizations and norms. Liberal norms favor international cooperation, human rights, democracy, and rule of law. In briefly, liberalism is a school of thought that deals with international cooperation and mutual benefits, international institutions that deal with a non-violent issue such as the United Nations (UN), international economic connectivity through international trade and increasing interdependence, international diplomacy that maximize prosperity and minimize conflict, international law that moderate or constrain the state behavior in terms of international politics and ‘international mind’ that particularly enlighten the peace policy and awakening practice international relations (Shiraev,2014).

“While maintaining cordial friendships with the powerful, Mujib never forgot about the oppressed in the world, with whom he naturally identified. As he traveled the globe, he met with the leaders of other developing nations and their peoples, from Cuba to Palestine, extending not just words of solidarity but also tangible expressions of Bangladesh’s goodwill” (Ali& Ali,2020). “In this case, if the world would follow Bangabandhu’s peace-centric foreign policy principle i.e. ‘Friendship to all and malice towards none’ the world would be more peaceful and stable. There would be no inter-state war if every country would follow Bangabandhu’s peace-centric foreign policy as peace-centric foreign policy promotes friendship

and cooperation. And friendship and cooperation lessen distrust and probability of war” (Islam, 2018).

Bangabandhu at the United Nations

“Friendship to all, malice to none” is what Bangabandhu articulated in the 1972 constitution still consequential with the liberal policy of international relations. It was self-evident reflections that Bangladesh adopted principles that are rooted belong to Abraham Lincoln’s civil war-era politics. Bangabandhu incorporated the dynamism of idealism which already constituted in the Bengali foreign policy immediately after the liberation war in 1971 (Ahsan, 2019). “Bangabandhu was also acutely aware of the stark reality, that Bangladesh was born amid not only a very deeply divided subcontinent but also a very extremely divided world, and that states do not live or survive in isolation. They are all part of the greater comity of nations. Bangladesh's birth was after all midwives, and its politics nurtured, so to say, by the Cold War. He was better aware than most that his newly independent nation-state had to navigate through treacherous waters and numerous hidden shoals that lay ahead in its course to viable consolidation” (Karim, 2020). “His commitment to non-alignment stemmed from the deep-rooted belief that it was not in Bangladesh's interest to be caught as a vulnerable nut in the nut-cracker jaws of the contesting powers. He made several allusions to Bangladesh becoming the ‘Switzerland of the east’, not merely in the sense of promoting tourism. I do believe that he understood full well that neutrality entailed not getting enmeshed in the cut-throat rivalries of fiercely contesting great powers, whether between the powers in his immediate neighborhood (India and China) or the superpowers that dominated a deeply divided world (US-USSR)” (Karim, 2020). From 1971 to 1974, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman presented Bangladesh through a bold and strong voice in UNGA by which the world can be assured of the rights and responsibilities of all peoples throughout the world. The historical 1974 speech dignified him as the leader of liberal international order.

Struggle for International Peace

Bangabandhu as the leader for struggle always fights for justice, equality, and exceptionally the foothold to self-determination. The speech which Bangabandhu has delivered to the UN stage on September 25, 1974, set the tone of fundamental principles of foreign policy. He notices frequently to the disapproving significance of assuring peace and justice for all peoples in the world. He again asserts that Bangladesh's struggle for peace and justice against colonial and Pakistani power is the symbol of universal rights for all peoples all over the world. Even though the succession of depression and violence from the previous has to be paid off, we are encountered by the imperious dissent of the future. The world with an adverse position has been challenged with critical juncture. The sagacity of the people will get on whether the mankind will march into a world which is haunted by the dread of extinction, appalled by the nuclear warfare, stayed with diminution of human affliction on a horrific category, and noted by mass

famine, lassitude, and the inferiority of concentrating impoverishment, or whether we take the challenge to make the world for human creativity and achievements in the sector of science, technology, education and resources for a better future for all so that men in all respects can begin to pass through the minimum periphery of a compatible life (Karim, 2020).

Profoundly discreet of the deadfall of adopting positions in a treacherous, rhetoric and breakneck confrontment among superpowers, developed and their respective coalition in this deeply and bitterly partitioned universe, Bangabandhu's affinity for non-alignment, cooperation and getting off any exhibition of support that is able to examine deadly to Bangladesh was narrated in effectively all common explanation at every bilateral, multilateral discussion in the international factors and encapsulated to the UN speech (Karim, 2020). From its emergence, Bangladesh has a greater commitment to deal with peace that makes the environment free from all kinds of whips of poorness, dearth, malady, and unemployment (Karim, 2020). Bangabandhu's well-known articulated maxim on foreign policy regarding the bedrock of "friendship towards all, and malice towards none", hence is barely a picaresque idiom instinct by Lincoln; it emanates from his cognitions as set forth upon (Karim, 2020). Bangladesh has taken the side of oppressed in the world from its inception. Since the establishment of UN, it follows an ideal which has shown stringent battle against appalling affiliation. The concept of self-determination that incorporated in the UN charter liberated and energized the millions of dauntless freedom combatant of the independence movement in Asia, Africa and Latin America. The battle still keeps on against illegal aggression, against the unscriptural force to the people's rights and against the exercise the ethnic discrimination and segregation. Bangladesh and several other countries prove that the history struggle is always on the arm of people who finally get the test of triumphs (UNGA, 1974). Bangabandhu continues to glorify against the struggle of injustice and oppression which inspired and liberated the Arab and African brethren from aggression and occupation. Playing and interacting as a critical role, Sheikh Mujib established himself as the people of the margin which help him to move anti-colonial struggle that represents non-violent nature until Pakistan attacked.

International Economic Order

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman has appealed for the urgency of building an international economic order during the 1970's economic upheavals. Bangabandhu established himself as a fighter not only for the political rights of people but also for the economic and social rights of the general people. That's why he indicated in the Six-point movement about 'the two economics policy' in then Pakistan. As a leader, Bangabandhu concentrated to end the devastating disparity among the people of Bangladesh. His 'Golden Bangla' term did not mention any political rhetoric due to the past glory of Bangladesh which was treasure blossom of riches nearly a few years ago. Taking robust challenges for the devastating economy, infrastructural ruins, and geopolitical factors, Bangabandhu did not fight back any foreign aid but do not want to receive a contract

that may miss out on the dignity of Bangladesh. In the 1974 UNGA session, he said that Bangladesh was born from the wreckage of a war that was devastated frequently by natural calamities, unprecedented floods. Bangladesh as the newly liberated country is fully grateful to the UN and its sister organization for their contributory role in all sectors especially the economic division. Though the natural disasters not only restrained the journey towards Bangladesh's economic and political advancement but have also left the state in a near-famine instance (UNGA, 1974). Through establishing a concrete economic order, he organized the poor and middle-class societies to be self-sufficient in food production albeit the inflation across the world. Unless the countries of the universe can adjuncts minimum action and initiative to face global economic recovery, human affliction will be prolonged on a scale unfamiliar with history. As a matter of fact, there would be no filed assimilation of like that human suffering having to be endured by so many sides by side with such new-fashioned target of wealth and success tasted by so few. The human compactness, fraternity, and the recognition of interdependence can only be a solution and immediate sketch that staved off the human catastrophe (UNGA, 1974). By epitomizing Bangladesh through economic emancipation, Bangabandhu firmly believed in an international economic system that corresponds to all peoples who fight against poverty by practicing an inclusive and sustainable policy of development. That order can change the structure of economic disparity all over the world by leading under a universal economic organization where the oppressed people have a voice to establish an equity-based society.

International Cooperation, Peaceful Co-existence, and Non-interference

The United Nations has been taken the challenge which blended a reasoning and pragmatic international order that helps marshal the forces logically. That mandate establishes the sovereignty of all member and non-member states over its natural and super-natural resources and building a cooperative framework of unique interest for a durable and neutral economic and social system. Thereby, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights guaranteed a universal responsibility to all for enjoying the rights in the sectors of social, economic, and culture which is imperative for the stature and freedom of personality development (UNGA, 1974). "This responsibility, according to the Universal Declaration, should extend to ensuring everyone the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and his family" (UNGA, 1974). That's why Bangabandhu determined to ensure peace for the majority of people by preserving the liberty and integrity of states just like Bangladesh. Bangladesh will hold out to take up arms for good-neighborly bracing with its neighbors founded on the doctrines of imperturbable coexistence, reverence for territorial unity and sovereignty, and non-interference about the intimate and inward matters of a state. In a world that is full of struggle, rivalry, and distress, the United Nations still focuses on the promise and prospect of people. Notwithstanding, the drawback and impediment deposited in its way, the UN has meaningfully lead to the achievement and advancement of humans in all fields during its existence of nearly a

century (UNGA, 1974). The cooperative competition in the context of international relations sustains the policy orientation of Bangladesh where peaceful coexistence has inspired the nations and peoples to live under systems of peace and harmony. Although Bangladesh's birth and its nurtured by the time of the cold war, there was the stark reality that Bangladesh never meets directly with deeply divided subcontinent and the world. In the meantime, in that confrontational world, Bangabandhu pursued the constructive liberal policy where living and staying under the shoulder to shoulder can impress the achievement of people with neighbors and regions.

Peace: mandatory for the uplift of human

Bangabandhu, as an undisputed leader, strive for peace for people which made him a charismatic figure on the world stage. He affirmed that

“Peace is imperative for human to survive with liberty and audacity; it illustrates the subtle longing of men, women and all other groups throughout the globe. It to promise must, albeit, be peace founded upon equity, impartiality and justice. It was our consolidated faith that the uprising of Bangladesh would in fact subscribe towards the formation of a constitution of peace, justness and stability in our subcontinent and that the confrontation, conflict, disagreement and strife of the past could be relocated by assertion of friendship, alliance, attachment and co-operation for the well-being of all our peoples. Not only have we developed good-neighborly relations with our immediate neighbors, India, Burma, and Nepal, but we have also striven to turn away from the past and to open a new chapter in our relations with Pakistan” (UNGA, 1974).

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman encapsulated regional desires that the resilience, animation, and discernment of the general people are the decisive firmness in facing the obstacles of development and survival. That why self-reliant goals encompass the united efforts and path for making the task and reason less onerous and curtailing the value of human hardship. Bangabandhu believed the ultimate and concerted efforts of the oppressed peoples in the emerging world who can encircle the doom and destiny for leading a better future (Karim, 2020).

International Institutions

The international institutions play as catalysts for constructing a coalition, for shaping an environment of peace, for arbitrating political agenda and bargaining, and for mediating a role as political initiators. It also mobilized the joint effort in the international system to tackle the catastrophic. Bangabandhu holds with that accomplishing the incredible and bringing down the indomitable odds by the people can carry out the credit and credence through steady prowess. The nations have been sustained based on battle and sacrifice which is the pathway of the emerging world. Due to sufferings from struggle, these emerging domains can never die

(UNGA, 1974). From its emergence as a nation-state, Bangabandhu expressed his deep interest to be engaged with international policy orientation diplomatically where the international institutions perpetuate the fundamental rights, equity, and transparency for all classes of the society from small to middle to rich countries. Under the liberal policy of Bangabandhu, the international organizations kept it compromises and recognized Bangladesh as an independent state by activating as a member state in most of the UN institutions. That's why Sheikh Mujib believed that an international organ with promising its rights and value can explore the dignity and human creativity.

Conclusion

The formulation and erection of international policies and their execution and perfection builds on the political prudence, philosophy and ontology of a country's leadership and its equation of rapport with neighboring and other countries of the globe. The success and advance of external policies can not only be gained by constituting potential and powerful international relations but it requires strong direction of statesman. A state's prosperity in international relations relies on the dimensions of interrelation between its foreign policy and leadership. Bangladesh is not an exception to that (Rahman, 2017). Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman committed to the UN principles and ideals that focused on the foreign policy of Bangladesh through précising the charter of democracy, independence, justice, and fundamental human rights. Bangladesh has been in the front door for developing the policies and principles to make the world a better place for the exploited people by establishing bonds of friendship and international cooperation among nations. These friendship, peace, and cooperation are achieved through the policy of a liberal international framework that always ensures fair deal among the small states like Bangladesh in the international stages. Bangabandhu as the architect of Bangladesh's foreign policy led this country with deepening and expanding cooperation across the world that conglomerated the liberal perspective of international relations.

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Right-Wing Populism in India and the Risks for Bangladesh: An Analysis of the Regime of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)

Manira Akhter*

Abstract

Though the populism is capturing politics across the world, the non-European countries, especially the south Asian nations, largely remain unexplored in the comparative research work on populism. Ascending to the power in 2014, the Bharatiya Janata Party ((BJP – Indian People’s Party) of India, based on the Hindutva ideology, is ruling the country for a second consecutive term. The right-wing party is directing the nation in such a way which can be identified as a populist regime, creating enormous impacts within the country and beyond, especially for its neighboring states. This paper attempts to investigate BJP’s right-wing populist characters from an ideational approach. Analyzing the major events executed by the BJP regime and its propaganda, it tries to explore the impacts on India’s predominantly Muslim neighboring country Bangladesh. The article also intends to find out the possible risks and threats for Bangladesh begetting from India’s BJP-led government’s actions. It finds that there are reasons for Bangladesh to be concerned over India’s current regime.

Keywords: Right-Wing, Populism, Hindu Nationalism, NRC, CAA, BJP

Introduction

Populism is a well-known term in the world politics. From west to east, most of the countries’ politics have been captured by populist parties and populist political leaders. As well as, populism exists both in left-wing and right-wing political spectrum. Generally, populists are people-centrist and anti-elitist. They present ‘the elite’ as corrupt and self-serving; and ‘the people’ as the good. While the first group possess the political, economic and cultural establishment dominating as a ‘homogenous entity’ in the society who are seen to prefer placing their own interests against the well-being of ‘the people’, the later, populists claim, are the only patriot who belong to the same ideology populist leaders want to establish. To explain populism a popular framework is used which is ideational approach. According to this approach populism is an ideology which featuring of its conceptions of ‘the people’, ‘the elite’ and ‘the other’. Populist parties are mainly managed by some charismatic figures and they pretend as the real fellow of the people. But interestingly, they are always anti-pluralist. Like many other countries emerged in the past century, populism possesses an important place in the political history of independent India. Political scientists and historians identify populist politics on two levels in India – the national level and the regional level. For example, on national level, the Indian National Congress’s (INC) interwar politics and Indira Gandhi’s regime are identified to be

*Lecturer, Department of Political Science, University of Barishal, Bangladesh.

influenced by populism. On the other hand, there are movements and parties represented by particular caste and linguistic groups can also be placed under populist category (Subramanian, 2007). In the national level, Indira Gandhi used an anti-elitist strategy, claiming to represent not only the people, but also the Indian country as a whole (Guha, 2007, p. 548). Her leadership is popular for the rise of religious, caste and tribal based politics in the 1980s (Hansen, 1999). In the context of India, sometimes the government led by Manmohan Singh was also called populist but he never revealed Indira's anti-elitism and anti-pluralism policy. However, in Indian politics, Nehru-Gandhi's Congress party embodies as India's political elite.

Similarly, the government under the Prime Minister Narendra Modi is clearly known as populist because his party Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) embodies the two core principles of populism: anti-elitism and anti-pluralism. Populism has earned new dimension in India, with the winning of BJP in 2014's general election. The main elements of his election success were the end of the India's dynastic politics and leaving out the corrupt elites. In the same time, BJP tries to postulate new characteristics of 'the people', 'the elite' and 'the other'. The party depicts the Hindu community as 'the people', in other words, the only patriot. It also labels the INC, leftists, English-language based media, NGOs, Judges and Academics as 'the elite'; and dalits (untouchable), religious minorities, especially the Muslim community, immigrants/foreigners as 'the other' (McDonnell & Cabrera, 2018). Now the question is what kinds of policies do populists execute once they are in power? As a populist leader Modi has promised to take various policies in his election manifestos in the last two general elections [e.g. combating infiltration, implementing Citizenship Amendment Bill, abrogation of Article 370] (Election Manifesto of BJP, 2019). In a single year, the party passed National Register of Citizen (NRC) in Assam which left 1.9 million people on their fates over citizenship (Chanakya, 2018) and Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and abrogated Article 370 from the constitution of India. All those events were the party's election's commitments. This paper scrutinizes the party's ideological roots, Hindutva nationalism, policies executed by the party and legal justifications for those policies. After that, this study attempts to analyze the steps of Modi government and their consequences for the neighborhoods. Furthermore, this study aims to determine how the BJP's policies affect Bangladesh and what elements contribute to the creation of fear in Bangladesh. Bangladesh is a Muslim-majority country and India's neighbor; India's policies have a significant impact on Bangladesh. Especially through NRC and CAA policies. India has portrayed Bangladesh as an oppressive country to the rest of the world through CAA, which has tarnished Bangladesh's secular image. Furthermore, if another exodus of stateless people from India to Bangladesh occurs as a result of the NRC and CAA, Bangladesh will face a major threat. From this perspective this research study is critical. However, there was a scarcity of data when doing this study. Furthermore, no specific recommendations have been made to address Bangladesh's concerns. This is merely a representation of the Indian government's policies and its impacts on Bangladesh.

Definition of Key Concepts

Right-Wing refers to the section of a political party or a political system that follows private ownership and free enterprise, as well as favors traditional social values. It generally involves fiscal and social conservatives.

Populism refers to a political movement or program that claims to be a champion. It aims to appeal to ordinary people who think that the elite are the negative force for society. This approach allows common people to analyze the political reality.

Hindu nationalism is commonly referred to as Hindutava. It is a political ideology which initially argues that India is only for the Hindus, who make up the majority of the population. It is also an extreme form of ethnic absolutism or conservatism.

The National Register of Citizens or NRC is a database that contains information on all Indian citizens. It was established under the Citizenship Act of 1955, which was amended in 2003. Its goal is to register all India's legitimate citizens while also tracking down unlawful immigration. In Assam, it was initially deployed in 2013-2014.

The Citizenship (Amendment) Act or CAA was passed by the Indian Parliament on December 11, 2019. By amending 1955's Citizenship Act, persecuted religious minorities from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and Pakistan who are Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis, or Christians and arrived in India before December 31, 2014 will have a road to Indian citizenship. According to this law, Muslims are ineligible.

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is a Hindu nationalist political party in India. Since 2014, it has been the Republic of India's ruling political party. It is a right-wing party whose policies have historically reflected Hindu nationalist views.

Theoretical Framework

This study used idea from the ideational approach of populism. During the last three decades, many approaches have been used to define populism and one of them is ideational approach. According to this approach, populism is an ideology. It portrays 'the people' as excellent force while places 'the elite' against it. However populists contradict in how 'the people' are defined, but they define the group based on only class, ethnic, or national identity. For De la Torre (2017) Populism is a Manichean rhetoric that separates society and politics as a struggle between two irreconcilable and opposite camps: the populace and the oligarchy. Besides, Populists introduce a mental map to control the political domain (Mudde, 2017). Additionally, Mudde said that populism is more moralistic than programmatic. It promotes a binary view where all are separated into 'friends and foes' where latter being considered as 'bad' (Mudde, 2004, p. 544). The ideas of populism differ from one another. Some have narrated it as an ideology or movement; (Mudde, 2007) others have described it as a distinct style of politics. In this sense, it is a binary doctrine that reinstates on the difference between two identical 'the pure people' and inimical groups 'the corrupt elite', whether politics should be a manifestation of the 'the people's' 'general will' (Kriesi, 2016). Weyland characterized populism as a political strategy through which a personalistic leader exerts government power by immediate,

unmediated, un-institutionalized support from a huge number of generally disorganized fellows (Weyland, 2001). Anselmi (2018) described populism as a "homogeneous community-people" that "perceives itself as the absolute possessor of popular sovereignty" and "expresses an anti-establishment stance." On the other hand, Muller argues, the populist determines who the real people are, and everyone who refuses to unite on the populist's terms is entirely and completely ostracized (Muller, 2017). To identify the pure people and its adversaries, populists vote themselves. It is their duty to restore the sovereignty, which is gripped by elite. They believe that 'the people' are the real owners of the sovereignty.

Research Questions

1. What kinds of populist policies did BJP execute so far and what are their impacts?
2. What factors do cause the making of fear for Bangladesh and what are its impacts?

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are;

1. To determine how Modi government has formulated and expanded Hindutva ideology.
2. To explore the policies India witnessed during current BJP regime.
3. To find out the impacts of the BJP regime.
4. To identify the factors that causes the making of fear for Bangladesh.

Methods and Materials

This study has conducted a qualitative analysis. For this purpose, BJP's electoral manifestos (1996's and 2019's election manifesto) and other documents related to elections have been analyzed in this study. Moreover, it reviewed the secondary data derived from books, journals, articles, websites, newspapers and other sources for acquiring and generalizing relevant knowledge.

Review of the Previous Study

There are plenty of research works on populism in India that are related to this study. Piero Ignazi (2006) identified five features that are related with present political parties of India: racism, nationalism and natives, new forms of democratic governance, xenophobia and demands for a powerful state and leader (Ignazi, 2006). These features and demands are connected with the perceived crisis of India.

Mudde says to establish order in society; right-wing populist parties always support authoritarian policies. They also fight against the dangerous 'others'. Because they think the 'others' are threat to the 'true people' (Mudde, 2007).

Jan-Werner Muller argued on 'What is Populism', that populists do not support pluralist's society. Populists claim to be the only ones who speak for the people. Here, he also notes that the populists 'authentically identify and represent this real or true people' (Muller, 2016).

Subramanian argued that 'populism' refers to characterize movement, parties and regime that distinguish between 'the people' who are supposed to have limited access to spheres to

influence and 'the elite,' who are thought to be powerful in this sphere and culturally different from the general people (Subramanian, 2007).

McDonnell and Cabrera identified the 'true Indian people' as Hindu community (BJP's ideological fellow) whose sovereignty and welfare is at risk for 'bad and corrupt elites. Moreover, 'the others' include anti-nationals and Muslims who don't share the same ideology of 'the true people' (McDonnell & Cabrera, 2018).

Surel and others argued on 'The Constitutive Ambiguity of Populism', they have focused that populist therefore speak and act as though democracy meant the people's power, and only the people's power. Thus, they imbibe the gap between the idea of real democracy (e.g. as of Abraham Lincoln said, 'government of the people, by the people, for the people') and the liberal democracy (e.g. narrow and sober majority rule in the name of the people) (Yves & Yves, 2002).

Margaret Canovan stated that without exception all from of populism comprise some kind of elation and appeal to 'the people' and all are 'anti-elitist' and 'anti-pluralists'(Canovan, 1981).

Discussions and Findings of the Study

Populism in India

The BJP blends both right and left-wing populism ideals. As a right wing populist party, BJP presents different conceptions of 'the people', 'the elite' and 'the others' as well as, this party has taken various policy to identify the true people and its enemies (e.g. National Register of Citizens (NRC), Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) and Abrogation of Article 370 of the Indian Constitution).

Modi's Hindutva-populism

Hindutava is an eminent form of Hindu nationalism (Savarkar, 1923). It is championed by Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), the Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP), the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), and other organizations, collectively known as the Sangh Parivar (Ananth, 2010). The phrase Hindutva encompasses the BJP's primary ideology. It is a political ideology that fundamentally claims that India is only for majority Hindu community. Indian Constitution adopted in 1950, recognized India such a country where multi-religion and ethno-cultural people can peacefully live together and get equal citizen rights. But a large number of political commentators argue that the massive election victories of Narendra Modi-led Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), first in the 2014 and later in 2019, destroyed secular democracy and introduce Hindutava based populism. One of the prominent Hindutava ideologues, Vinayak Damoder Savarker argued that someone is Hindu if he/she regards India as a holy land and his/her fatherland and motherland. Hindu, Sikhs, Jains, and Buddhists fulfill two criteria, but Christians, Jews, Persis and Muslims don't, because, BJP claim, people of these religious communities do not consider India as a holy land (Ranjan, 2020). Hence, these communities are not true people. According to Prime Minister Narendra Modi 'pure people' are only Hindus. BJP narrated Muslim and Christians in the Indian history as invaders who destroyed the glorious past of

India. Even after independence, Indian National Congress (INC) has been withheld the Hindus. They (INC) engaged with other left-liberal elites who are their ideological fellows to sustain their interests. In the name of secularism, they placated the minorities like Muslims and enemies of Hindus. These elites do not represent the ‘pure people’ as well as they have soft corner to Pakistan.

The following table shows the right-wing populist classification of BJP.

Table 1: The right-wing populism of the BJP

The People	The Elite	The Others
Hindu Patriots	Congress & Communist Parties Academics Judges NGOs English-language Media	Muslims Anti-Nationals Dalits

Source: McDonnell & Cabrera, (2018).

After BJP’s ascending to the state power, Hindutava nationalism is becoming more and more dominant with positive idea of their power. During his (Narendra Modi) foreign tours, copies of the Bhagwant Geeta have been presenting by Modi can be seen to those countries’ dignitaries. Former foreign minister of India, Sushma Swaraj wanted to incorporate the Bhagwant Geeta in the national textbook of the country. As a part of the school curriculum Bhagwant Geeta has introduced by Khattar, Chief Minister of Haryana in India (Dhillon, 2015).

National Register of Citizens (NRC)

Illegal immigration has been one of the dominant issues in the Indian politics for decades, especially the border states of West Bengal and Assam. There is no reliable estimate of the number of illegal immigrants and the figures vary from 4 or 5 million to 10 or 14 million (Das, 2008). Though the BJP has been campaigning for a '3D' (Detection, Deletion, and Deportation) solution of the problem since 1996 (Election Manifesto of BJP, 1996, n. 32). Indeed, the legal developments largely occurred during INC regimes.

Combating infiltration was BJP’s one of the prominent electoral manifestos for decades. The party has repeatedly vowed to implement the NRC in all parts of the country. In 2019’s manifesto, BJP stated, ‘There has been a huge change in the cultural and linguistic identity of some areas due to illegal immigration, resulting in an adverse impact on local people’s livelihood and employment.’ The party promised to ‘expeditiously complete’ the NRC process in those territories with a priority basis. The party also vowed implements this project in stages across the rest of the country (Election Manifesto of BJP, 2019, n. 7). It also pledged to make ‘effective steps; to halt illegal immigration in the country’s northeastern states by strengthening ‘border security’ (Election Manifesto of BJP, 2019, n. 8).

Indian Citizenship has a gradual history. In 1950, Indian constitution was enacted that guaranteeing citizenship to all Indian and prohibiting discrimination due to religion (Jaffrelot,

2019). The Indian government issued its first Citizenship Act in 1955 which gave foreigners two options for obtaining Indian citizenship. Firstly, it permitted citizenship to them who were living in undivided India for 7 years and secondly, foreigners, who live in India for 12 years, were given a means of naturalization (Roy, 2010). 1980s political developments brought a change of 1955's Citizenship as a result of violent Assam movement (Sharma, 2019). After the signing of Assam Accord, the citizenship act was first amended where Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's government approved to identify the foreigners and to remove their electoral rights and expel them from the country (Poddar, 2018). After that the citizenship act was amended several times (i.e. 1992, 2003, 2005 and 2015). In 2003, National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government led by BJP passed the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2003.

This act introduced a notion 'illegal immigrants rendering them unfit to apply for citizenship (registration or naturalization) as well as declaring their children to be illegal immigrants (Roy, 2010). It defined illegal immigrants as foreign nationals who entered India without having potent travel documents. They can be jailed or deported ("Citizenship Amendment Bill", 2019). The Illegal Migrants Act, 1983 (decided by Tribunal) was passed to establish an Investigative Tribunal Process in Assam to detect illegal migrants. In 2005, Indian Supreme Court declared it unconstitutional and after that Indian government approved to update the NRC in Assam. But, after a decade, the updated process of NRC in Assam was unfinished and as a result, the Supreme Court began guiding and overseeing the procedure in 2013 (Regan et al., 2019).

According to the Citizenship Rules of 2003, the Indian central government has the authority to issue an order for the preparation of the National Population Register (NPR) and the creation of the National Register of Citizens (NRC) based on the NPR data ((Regan et al., 2019). The updated process of NRC in Assam was started in 2013, as per order of the Supreme Court under the monitoring of the Apex Court. The application process started at the end of May 2015 and ended on 31 August 2015. On 30 July 2018, a complete draft was published which included 2,89,83,677 persons and 3626630 persons applied for against the exclusion ("Union Cabinet approves over", 2019). The final list for Assam, published on 31 August 2019, included 31 million people out of 33 million and denied 1.9 million regarding them stateless (Chanakya, 2018). As the first step for implementing the NRC, the union cabinet approved 39.41 billion rupees for updating the NPR (Mishra & Jain, 2019). The NPR was scheduled to take place between Aprils to September of 2020 over India except Assam (Mishra & Jain, 2019).

Citizenship Status in Assam

There are a decade's over history of anti-Bangladeshi/ Bengali sentiments in Assam. With a change in demographic structure, Assam's anti-immigrants sentiment has roots back to the colonial history of India. Bengali peasants who were Muslims were brought to Assam to increase the production of agriculture, and Bengali Hindus were settled there to take up administrative posts. However, Assamese nationalists killed hundreds of Bengalis on Nellie massacre in 1983. After that, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi wanted to create a register of citizens with the Assamese nationalists. So he signed an accord with them in 1985. This is popular as

National Register of Citizens (NRC) and its aim was to end the violence in Assam. For this, anybody who entered into India after the mid night of 24 March 1971 would be a foreigner. But before BJP's intervention in the state of Assam in 2016, there was no real progress on the registry. Citizenship discrimination had been a reality in Assam long before the office of BJP beside the progress of NRC. Within the state, there created an exceptional class. They are 'doubtful' voters. Their citizenship status was put under question. Then the politics and events around NRC process continued to marginalize a particular group of people- the Bengali Muslims. They live in the reverie areas, where birth registration rate is minimal and literacy rate is 19 percent. However, this process not only exempted the lower class but also higher. Mohammad Sanaulaah, a Bengali Muslim and former army officer was marked as a foreigner by the 'foreigner tribunals'. Interestingly, the final results were an unexpected situation for Indian government because NRC's final draft excluded 1.9 million Bengali people whom a substantial number were Hindu. That created tensions between BJP and local Assamese party and movements, as BJP vows to offer citizenship to the illegal Hindus, while local Assamese treat any Bengali speaker as hostile irrespective their religion. There is similarity between the denaturalization process of Bengali Muslims in Assam and Rohingya in Myanmar, since both communities were gradually stripped off their citizenship rights what made them stateless (Shahid& Patel, 2020).

Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA)

Indian parliament enacted the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 on 11 December 2019 which amends the Citizenship Act, 1955 to offer citizenship to illegal migrants of six religions- Hindu, Buddhist, Christian, Sikh, Jain and Parsi, fled from Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan before December 2014 facing religious persecution ("Citizenship Amendment Bill," 2019). But Muslims were not eligible for this (Regan et al., 2019). First time India used religious identity as a criterion for citizenship (Sharma, 2019). Interestingly, BJP vowed to do this in its election manifesto in 2014. On that time, BJP promised natural home to Hindu Refugees who were persecuted in their home countries. The residence requirement for naturalization was similarly reduced from twelve to six years. According to the records of Intelligence Bureau, at least 30,000 persons were supposed to be benefited from this bill immediately (Saha, 2019). The bill was proposed by the BJP's last government in 2016 ("Lok Sabha passes Citizenship", 2019).

NRC and CAA are closely related to each other. There is a vast number of Hindus who were declared non-Indians or illegal immigrants under NRC project. They have chances to have legal residency with citizenship in India with the help of CAA, as it allow illegal immigrants of particular faiths to apply for Indian citizenship. Sociologist Niraja Gopal Jayal said that NRC and CAA together are transforming the country into a 'majoritarian polity' with division in citizenship right (Jayal, 2019).

The CAA and the NRC together mark a change in the country's position on the principles of international laws regarding human, refugee and customary rights. CAA directly violates with International human rights law, especially the International Covenant on Civil and Political

Rights (ICCPR). And for that, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights has already submitted an intervention application in Indian Supreme Court to challenge the constitutionality of act. But objecting the challenge Modi government has called it an intrusion on the country's sovereignty (Ranjan, 2020).

Abrogation of Article 370

Abrogation of Article 370 of the Indian constitution was another electoral manifesto of BJP's 2019 General Election. There BJP stated:

'in the last five years, we have made all necessary efforts to ensure peace in Jammu and Kashmir through decisive actions and firm policy. We are committed to overcome all obstacles that come in the way of development and provide adequate financial resources to all the region of the state. We reiterate our position since the time of the Jan Sangh to the abrogation of article 370' (Election Manifesto of BJP, 2019, n. 14).

To fulfill the electoral commitment, nationalist-populist Modi government abrogated Article 370 of the Indian constitution that granted autonomy to the state of Jammu and Kashmir. Before the abrogation the state was divided into two federal administrative units. Hindu Nationalist movements have always rejected the special constitutional status of Kashmir. Not only Kashmir, few other states of India enjoy the same status because of the dissimilar character of India's federal policy. But others are not on the evil eye of Hindu Nationalists. They have made a myth that Kashmir is a land of terrorist and that is because only for Article 370. Consequently, they proposed to correct the historical blunder of corrupt elite of the INC by reading down Article 370. Not only Hindu Nationalists, many constitutional lawyers believe that the special status of Kashmir is unconstitutional. And finally, the reading down of Article 370 has resulted the Kashmir lockdown of several month, massive communication and internet blackout and arrests thousands of political activists in the state (Ranjan, 2020).

The Risks for Bangladesh

Threat to the Sovereignty of Bangladesh

Hindus are the largest minority community in Bangladesh. According to the 2011 census of Bangladesh, there are around 14 million Hindu people making up about 8.5% of the total population (BBS, 2011). There is a popular narrative that they are in the risk in Bangladesh and fundamentalists as well as Jamaat forces are tempting to expel them from Bangladesh ("Vulnerable' Bangladeshi Hindus," 2016). As India is a Hindu majority state, a portion of Bangladeshi Hindus might expect Modi's intervention in Bangladesh for their security. Its best proof is the statement of Rana Das Gupta, General Secretary of the Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Unity Council. He stated, 'We feel that India, as a Hindu majority country, should do something'. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has our highest hopes. He should take action and raise the issue with the Bangladeshi government to safeguard Hindus' safety and security.' ("Vulnerable' Bangladeshi Hindus want," 2016). But Bangladesh government took various

steps for the development and security of minority communities. Sheikh Hasina's government has increased the amount of Hindu Religious Welfare Trust from tk 1 crore to tk. 100 crore. Temple based children's education is being operated all over the country (Mostofa, 2020).

If people of Hindu community are persecuted in Bangladesh, then they can appeal to the government of Bangladesh for safety and seek legal justice. Even if the government of Bangladesh failed to stop these incidents, there is open door to go to the International Organization of minority rights where Bangladesh is a signatory state. But when a portion of a particular minority community complained to a particular state about safety and security that leaves a question of sovereignty for that country. This leaning is not a detached incident; it is linked to the populist and Hinduism activities of Modi government.

Fear of Minority Persecution and Communal Conflict

Both the CAA and NRC have negative impacts on Bangladesh. Although, the government of Bangladesh said CAA is a domestic issue of India, but the activists and political commentators of Bangladesh argue that CAA will create dangerous consequences for Bangladesh in future, especially it will create massive identity politics in religious line.

Shahab Enam Khan, Professor of International Relation says that the perception of Bangladeshi people about India will deteriorate as a result of the current scenario. He also said, Anti-Indian sentiment has risen, because the Indian media negatively presents Bangladesh as 'India's backyard' (Sarker, 2019). Professor Asif Nazrul said that the CAA will severely harm Bangladesh. 'The debate that preceded the promulgation of this legislation, as well as the content of this act, have already left significant wounds on the Bangladeshi people's brains,' he argues. This act not only discriminates Muslims but also snubbing their lives and security. This issue will enrage the people who have also distrust India because of many issues like; water-sharing, border killing, free-transit and others (Sarkar, 2019).

Like others, distinguished professor at Illinois State University, Ali Riaz said the composition of NRC and the passage of CAA have fueled the anti-Indian sentiments among Bangladeshis. Because they have arrived on the heels of bogus charges of mass migration from Bangladesh. He added, secularists of Bangladesh are afraid, if India transforms into a Hindu Rashtra (Hindu state), then religion based political forces will be encouraged in Bangladesh (Mahmud, 2020).

Bangladeshi intellectuals also think that NRC and CAA have double danger. On one side, India may push back Bengali speaking people into Bangladesh, on the other side; the extremists may attack the minority community in Bangladesh. Dr. Amena Mohsin, said, there is a huge possibility that communal conflict may break out if CAA is implemented. The conflict even might cross the border of India and extend in Bangladesh (Anik, 2020). Touhid Hossain, former foreign secretary of Bangladesh thinks, India's new citizenship act will encourage Bangladeshi Hindu people to leave Bangladesh and their entry to India. Because they think, they might be fine in a Hindu Rashtra. As well as, the opportunists will look for scopes to occupy the wealth of Hindu people. Ultimately it might create communal conflict in Bangladesh.

India-Bangladesh Relations

Academics in Bangladesh present NRC and CAA as a harsh time for Bangladesh. The uncompromising stand of the Indian government on NRC and CAA will spoil the ‘neighborhood first’ policy between Bangladesh and India. It may blunder the long term deep relations between the two countries. Mr. A K Abdul Momen, Foreign Minister of Bangladesh, said, ‘apart from Bangladesh citizens (if any) we will not accept any other illegal citizens from India (Chowdhury, 2020). Member of the Advisory Council of the Awami League, Inam Ahmed Chowdhury said, the main concern of Bangladesh about CAA is that in the time of discussion about CAA, the name of Bangladesh comes over and again (Chowdhury, 2019). He again noted that the main anxiety of Bangladesh about the Citizenship Amendment Bill is that India directly mentioned Bangladesh beside Pakistan and Afghanistan. Furthermore, he noted that Bangladesh is a well-known secular state as well as it wants to establish a secular sub-continent. But in this time India certified Bangladesh as an oppressive state regarding religious identity. Like others, Hosssain said, BJP leader and Home Minister of India Amit Shah insulted and dishonored Bangladesh by putting Bangladesh in the same line of Pakistan and Afghanistan in terms of minority persecution. But it’s not new. The propaganda in India was more severe in election time. They did this only to grab the Hindu votes. But it is a matter of both nations to drag the neighbor relations into the internal issues as a tool for Politics (Swapan, 2019).

The CAA will create distrust between Bangladesh and India. After enactment of CAA, the foreign minister of Bangladesh cancelled his visit to India in December. Subsequently, home minister Asaduzzaman Khan also halted his visit to Maghalaya, North-eastern state of India. On the other hand, Indian media circulated questionable news about the relationships between the two. The Hindu stated that Sheikh Hasina had refused to meet with the Indian envoy (Bhattacharjee, 2020). As well as, Sheikh Hasina has also shown her displeasure regarding the CAA. She said to the Gulf News in Abu Dhabi, we don’t know why Indian government did it. It wasn’t required (Bhattacharjee, 2020).

Refugee’s Overload

Both NRC and CAA have negative impacts on Bangladesh. Bangladesh is now hosting around 1.2 million Rohingya People. On the other hand, Around 1.9 million Bengali speaking people have already been rejected from the NRC in Assam. Although, there was no massive reaction initially in Bangladesh for CAA but the mood was change after November when the illegal border crossing from India to Bangladesh increased. Being the closest neighbor to India, Bangladesh is at risk of another massive influx into it due to CAA and NRC. Bangladesh Border Guard (BGB) detained 1002 people in 2019- 258 women, 606 men, 135 children and three brokers-with 445. They entering alone November and December (Anik, 2020).

In November 2019, BGB detained more than 300 Indian intruders and most of them were Muslims (“BGB detains over 300 intruders”, 2019). Local people said the amount of detainees is more than the actual number. They claimed that everyday 50 to100 intruders entered Bangladesh through Maheshpur border (Sarker, 2019).

People are already fleeing India for fear of ending up in detention cells, according to the figures above. Already, over 1000 ‘foreigners’ have already been detained in Assam’s jail and detention centers. Additionally, a mentionable number of new detention centers are being constructed where these ‘stateless’ persons may be held permanently (Anik, 2020). Maybe these ‘illegal’ persons will be ‘pushed’ beyond Bangladesh’s border in the future. With over a million of Rohingya people, it is clear that Bangladesh cannot afford a similar situation created from India. However, the NRC threatens to cause a larger crisis for Bangladesh than of Myanmar’s eviction of the Rohingya (Chowdhury, 2019).

Bangladesh Image in the International Community

Bangladesh is constitutionally a secular state. There are four fundamental principles of state policies and Secularism is one of them. According to the Bangladesh Constitution’s article 12, the state never discriminates against the persons practicing a particular religion, nor does it allow doors to persecute them. Bangladesh always tries to ensure minority rights. But CAA of India certifies Bangladesh as an oppressive state as it says persecuted people of a particular religion from Bangladesh will be granted citizenship. And in doing this, India has put Bangladesh in the same square of Pakistan and Afghanistan. This destroyed Bangladesh’s positive impression as a secular state in the world stage.

Concluding Remarks

In the view of ideational approach, BJP’s policies are purely aligned with to the principles of right-wing populism. On the one hand, BJP champion true people (Hindu) at core of its policies, on the other hand, it is anti-pluralist. It tries to attract true people by promoting Hindutava nationalism as well as by saying that the elite failed to fulfill their aspiration. So they should be in power to execute agendas out lined in their election manifestos. After winning the election, BJP implemented their commitments by abrogating of Article 370, implementing the NRC and enacting CAA. But through this, BJP has ruined the democratic tradition of India as well as secular principle of the country’s Constitution. In 2019’s election manifesto, BJP committed to ensure justice for ‘all’, but the ‘all’ means the ‘true people’ and NRC and CAA are the best examples of this. BJP tries to establish Hindutava nationalism in India. But this policy of BJP not only affects the people of India, but also is creating the risks for Bangladesh. India certified Bangladesh as an oppressive country in CAA which ruined the secular image of Bangladesh over the world. Most importantly, India put Bangladesh on the same line of Pakistan. It will damage the neighborhood policy between the countries. Furthermore, it will be a massive threat for Bangladesh if it faces another massive influx like Rohingyas. As BJP wants to establish a Hindu state by kicking out a number of Muslims from India, it may encourage religious-political force in Bangladesh to attack the minority community in the country, which might create communal conflicts. So it can be said that the policy of right-wing populist BJP of India is creating terrible impacts on Bangladesh.

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Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Households Expenditure: Empirical Evidence from Barishal Division, Bangladesh

Rejoana Islam*, Nahida Sultana*, Mohammad Nasir Hossain**,
Ummey Salma*** and Md. Motiur Rahaman Mitu****

Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic adversely affects the socioeconomic structure in Bangladesh. The aim of this study is to appraise the impact of COVID-19 on the household expenditure of households in the Barishal division. This study is mainly based on primary data, which comes from carrying out both the field survey and the questionnaire survey using convenience sampling. For this study, statistical tools such as descriptive statistics and regression analysis using the Ordinal Least Squares (OLS) method have been used to assess the objectives. In this study, a comparison of income in the COVID-19 circumstances is made with the situation before the COVID-19 was introduced. This study finds a significant drop in income due to COVID-19. On the other hand, consumption expenditure increases. This study contributes to understand the circumstances of the vulnerable population of Bangladesh due to COVID-19, which helps to identify the adaptive strategies to reduce the economic damage.

Keywords: COVID-19, Bangladesh, Socioeconomic Status, Income, Consumption Expenditure, Vulnerable Population

1. Introduction

The newly emerged SARS virus, which belongs to the Corona virus family, is not the first time it has appeared in the world. In December 2019, a new Corona virus strain was discovered in Wuhan, China. The virus was given the name COVID-19 by the World Health Organization (WHO). Although COVID-19 was first discovered in Wuhan, China, the number of people infected has steadily climbed over the course of a month and is now spreading around the world. As a result, this outbreak is a Public Health Emergency of International Concern, and the WHO declared it a pandemic on March 11, 2020. However, the arrival of COVID-19 has created unprecedented challenges for the world. Prior to considering the effect of COVID-19 on Bangladesh's economy, the country's economy relied more upon foreign investment, trade, and foreign remittances (Mahbub & Jongwanich, 2019; Qamruzzaman *et al.*, 2019). It is understood that the effect of COVID-19 on the worldwide economy could be serious and the worldwide economy might fall into a downturn. The abrupt closure of numerous manufacturing plants and production ranches caused a great deal of interruption in supply chain administration. The pandemic resulted in the worst global economic depression ever, with almost 33% of the world's population at the time being quarantined (WHO, 2021). The worldwide economy

* Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, University of Barishal, Barishal Sadar, Barishal, Bangladesh.

** Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, Comilla University, Cumilla-3506, Bangladesh.

*** Research Assistant, Department of Economics, University of Barishal, Barishal Sadar, Barishal, Bangladesh

**** Senior Officer, Bangladesh House Building Finance Corporation, Bangladesh.

confronted supply deficiencies, worldwide financial exchanges fell, food deficiencies, high of product price, and interruption to business sectors, the travel industry, worldwide meetings and proceedings across innovation, culture and sports are being dropped or delayed. Moreover, the economy of Bangladesh is under threat due to COVID-19. The pandemic is disproportionately impacting the poorest and most vulnerable in Bangladesh. However, the two main drivers of Bangladesh's economy are exports (RMG) and remittances (Siddique *et al.*, 2012; Kumar & Stauvermann, 2014; Rahman & Habib, 2021). The income of workers in the country's industries will be reduced or jobs will be in jeopardy as export earnings decline. On the other hand, if migrant workers cut back on remittances, their families will be unable to spend as much in the country as they once did due to a lack of income. These have a negative influence on trade and commerce. If the demand decreases, the consumer goods manufacturing companies has face losses which is responsible for market instability. The number of poor people in Bangladesh has increased due to declining income due to COVID-19. As a result, the overall poverty rate has risen to 35%. In addition, inequality of income and consumption has also increased (CPD, 2021). According to the BBS (2017) the poverty rate was 24.5%. At the end of 2019, it is estimated to be 20%. Due to COVID-19, the number of unemployed people has increased and people's income has decreased. As a result, the poverty rate has also increased. Consumption inequality has increased by 35 points due to COVID-19. In 2016 it was 32 points. Similarly, income inequality has increased by 52 points. As of 2016, it was 48 points. Consumer expenditure highly depends on their income level. The particular income efficiency depends on job security, working environment, workers health and institutional efficiency. Due to pandemic, household income reduces at an alarming rate that is why the expenditure of household affected largely. Due to supply chain crisis, the supply of daily commodity and necessities product has been hampered which is key responsible factor for price hike and inflation nationally and globally.

Moreover, this paper attempts to analyze the impact of COVID-19 on the household's expenditure in Barishal division, Bangladesh. This study able to contribute in existing literature and the stakeholders would be beneficiaries through particular policies and actions to recover the economic crisis in study area.

2. Research Objectives

The main objective of this study is to evaluate the impact of COVID-19 on the household's expenditure in Barishal division. In this study, we have surveyed on 100 respondents in Barishal division. The specific objectives of this study are as follows;

- i. To compare the annual income of the respondent between pre COVID-19 and COVID-19 period.
- ii. To analyze the impact of COVID-19 on respondents' expenditure with respect to annual income.

Research Questions:

The research questions are as follows;

- i. What are the socioeconomic characteristics of the population in southern part (Barishal division) of Bangladesh under the situation of COVID-19?
- ii. Has the annual income dropped significantly? And does COVID-19 have significant impact on respondent's expenditure?

3. Literature Review

The Chinese government's policy to the COVID-19 outbreak in China echoes our experience with the 2003 SARS epidemic (McCloskey & Heymann, 2020), which wreaked havoc on the economy and resulted in a global loss of 59 billion dollars, as well as the collapse of the US, European, and Asian markets (Baric, 2008). The United Nations' ambitions have been hampered by COVID-19. Altig *et al.* (2020) found that COVID-19 is causing great economic uncertainty and economic fallout. The study by Sumner *et al.* (2020) shows that there might be a 20% drop in income and consumption, increasing the number of people living below the poverty line by 420–580 million. According to Utami and Prafitri (2021), the spread of COVID-19, which has spread generally to different areas of the planet, has affected various perspectives where wellbeing viewpoints are impacted and normal for the Indonesian economy, like exchange and the travel industry, to speculation. The social perspective is indistinguishable from COVID-19, where the entire world, including Indonesia, has been impacted by the restriction of get-togethers or gatherings. The boycott completed by numerous nations on the planet is likewise called "social separating" and "physical removing," which is staying away from one another. Keeping this separation is one of the public authorities' endeavors and the local area's to break the coronavirus infection chain's spread. Furthermore, keeping this separation is also the way to halt the flare-up of this dangerous infection. According to Ruiz Estrada and Koutronas (2020), both the prevalence and intensity of epidemics are linked to economic dynamics in the respective region. Rendahl (2016) suggests that increasing government expenditure could improve the economy and enhance output both during and after the crisis. COVID-19's socioeconomic effect should be minimised, which will necessitate a proactive management approach (Evans, 2020). Many counties are being prompted by the COVID-19 crisis to strengthen their public health sector while also repairing their economies with financial assistance (Ozili & Arun, 2020). According to Sands *et al.* (2016), an inflammatory health disease should not be overlooked. According to Ataguba (2020), the government should raise public health spending to combat the virus from an African perspective. Moreover, the pandemic increases the level of poverty and reduces the income level of the people (Cuesta & Pico, 2020; Pereira & Oliveira, 2020; Zar *et al.*, 2020; Chitiga-Mabugu *et al.*, 2021; Dang & Nguyen, 2021). Ludvigson *et al.* (2020) found that the multi-period shock would produce a 12% monthly loss of industrial output and a 55% monthly loss of service sector jobs in the US for the first 12 months after the pandemic began (February/March 2020). According to empirical research, an epidemic breakout reduces consumer spending (Jung *et al.*, 2016). According to WB (2020), there is widespread belief that the COVID-19 epidemic has increased global pay gap, with poor countries' per capita earnings falling more than rich countries'. According to

Kanu (2020), the economic disruption in Nigeria appears to be job losses, financial market and business sector disruptions, income loss, and a slow recession. Loss of job in pandemic situation reduces the foreign remittance in Bangladesh (Karim *et al.*, 2020; Islam *et al.*, 2021; Majumder *et al.*, 2020; Chowdhury & Chakraborty, 2021). Remittance inflows and COVID-19 crisis are examined by Gupta *et al.*, (2021) and Rajan *et al.* (2021). Whatever, COVID-19 has impact to raise price level (Balleer *et al.*, 2020; Altig *et al.*, 2020; Barua, 2021; Padhan & Prabheesh, 2021; Victor *et al.*, 2021; Fang & Zhang, 2021).

However, as per our study knowledge, there is no study found which is related to measuring the impact of COVID-19 on households' expenditure in the particular study area or in Bangladesh. So, this study will be appropriated to contribute to relevant fields and existing literature.

4. Methodology

4.1 Research Design and Study Area

For the purpose of carrying out the study and to attain the objectives, this study has been chosen Barishal division as the study area. Quantitative design implied to complete this task where the data was collected by questionnaire and face to face interview. In the questionnaire, two types of questions are included like as open ended question and close ended question.

4.2 Sample Size and Sampling Method

The primary data was collected from 100 respondents that indicate the sample size was 100 households. The convenience sampling method was used to collect data which method is appropriate wings of non-random sampling method.

4.3 Analysis Process and Technology

This study was based on number of contracts study design, specifically the before and after (with pandemic crisis and without pandemic crisis) study design considering the respondent opinion about fiscal year (FY) with pandemic crisis and without pandemic crisis. In descriptive analysis section contains bar graph, descriptive statistics and multiple tabulation method. However, the regression analysis considers the Ordinal Least Squares (OLS) method to know the particular effect or coefficient value of identical fiscal year (FY) 2018-19 and FY 2020-21. In addition, this study was analyzed the data by using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software.

5. Results and Discussions

5.1 Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

In the selected study area, the majority of household heads (male 82% and female 18%) are involved in agriculture occupation. The evidence about the demographic characteristics of the respondents is presented in Table 01. Average age of these household heads is 46 years old and their average education level 6 years in school. The average household members are 5 and the working members are 2. The majority of these communities access to credit (access 69% and no access 31%). 60% households get aid from various government and non-government organizations.

Table 01: Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Category	Percentage/Number	Category	Percentage/Number
Male	82%	Average Working Members	02
Female	18%	Access to Credit	69%
Average age	46 Years	No Credit Access	31%
Education Level	6 Years	Get Aid	60%
Average Family Members	05	Get No Aid	40%

Source: Author's Field Survey (2021)

5.2 Annual Income of the Respondents (without and with COVID-19 period)

Table 02 shows the annual income in FY 2018-19 (without COVID-19) and FY 2020-21 (with COVID-19), the data for annual income of the respondents, which was on an average BDT 123200 in FY 2018-19 (without COVID-19) and in FY 2020-21 (with COVID-19 pandemic) it is BDT 113800. In 2018-19 annual income of the respondents were BDT 100000, BDT 120000, BDT 130000, BDT 140000 and BDT 150000 respectively for 21%, 32%, 14%, 15% and 12% of households, whereas in FY 2020-21 these incomes are respectively BDT 90000, BDT 100000, BDT 110000, BDT 120000 and BDT 140000 for 15%, 12%, 26%, 27% and 11% of these communities. Note that Figure 01 shows the graphical representation of Table 02.

Thus, it can be said that due to COVID-19 pandemic the actual annual income of these communities' falls.

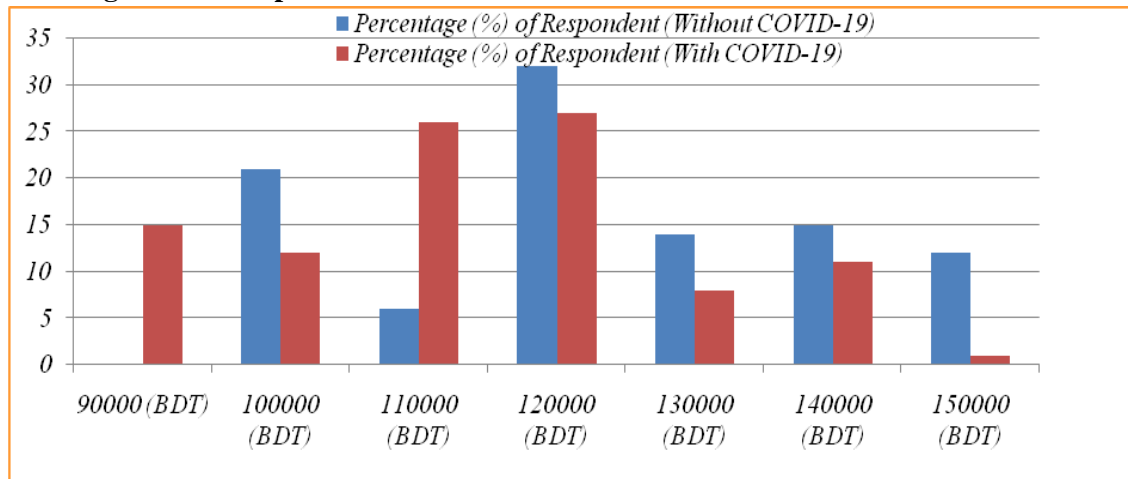
Table 02: Annual Income in FY 2018-19 (without COVID-19) and FY 2020-21 (with COVID-19)

<i>Annual Income in FY 2018-19 (without COVID-19)</i>		
<i>Annual income (in BDT)</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
90000	0	0
100000	21	21
110000	6	6
120000	32	32
130000	14	14
140000	15	15
150000	12	12
Total	100	100
<i>Annual Income in FY 2020-21 (with COVID-19)</i>		
90000	15	15
100000	12	12
110000	26	26
120000	27	27

130000	8	8
140000	11	11
150000	1	1
Total	100	100

Source: Author's Field Survey (2021)

Figure 01: Comparison between Annual Income in FY 2018-19 and FY 2020-21



Source: Author's Field Survey (2021)

From the Figure 01, it can be said that the actual annual income falls in the COVID-19 period. Since income reduced, it is predicted that consumption and saving also reduced. But total consumption expenditure increases in COVID-19 period. Note: When income falls, disposable income falls and consumer buy fewer goods, so consumption expenditure decreases. Together with consumption expenditure, saving also decreases. However, in the pandemic situation, household's monthly health expenditure and other expenditures increase. Thus, total annual consumption expenditure increases.

Now, Table 03 explains the annual consumption expenditure of the respondents in FY 2018-19 and FY 2020-21. In FY 2020-21 (with COVID-19) the average annual consumption expenditure was BDT 108700, whereas in FY 2018-19 (without COVID-19) it was BDT 99600. In 2018-19 annual consumption expenditures were BDT 80000, BDT 90000, BDT 100000, BDT 110000, BDT 120000, BDT 130000 and BDT 140000 for 6%, 14%, 18%, 25%, 26%, 8% and 3% of households, whereas in FY 2020-21 these expenditures are respectively BDT 70000, BDT 80000, BDT 90000, BDT 100000, BDT 110000, BDT 120000 and BDT 130000 respectively for 2%, 15%, 17%, 34%, 17%, 13% and 2% of these communities. Note that Figure 02 shows the graphical representation of Table 03.

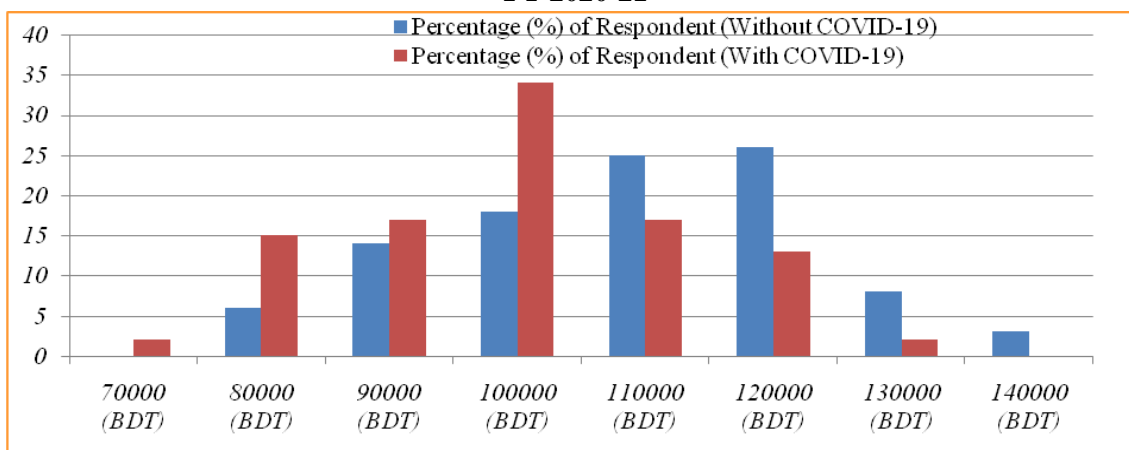
Therefore, it can be said that there was instability in annual consumption expenditure due to COVID-19 pandemic.

Table 03: Annual Consumption Expenditure in FY 2018-19 (without COVID-19) and FY 2020-21 (with COVID-19)

<i>Annual Consumption Expenditure in FY 2018-19 (without COVID-19)</i>		
<i>Annual Consumption Expenditure (in BDT)</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
80000	6	6.0
90000	14	14.0
100000	18	18.0
110000	25	25.0
120000	26	26.0
130000	8	8.0
140000	3	3.0
<i>Total</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100.0</i>
<i>Annual Consumption Expenditure in FY 2020-21 (with COVID-19)</i>		
70000	2	2.0
80000	15	15.0
90000	17	17.0
100000	34	34.0
110000	17	17.0
120000	13	13.0
130000	2	2.0
<i>Total</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100.0</i>

Source: Author's Field Survey (2021)

Figure 02: Comparison between Annual Consumption Expenditure in FY 2018-19 and FY 2020-21



Source: Author's Field Survey (2021)

From the Figure 02, it can be concluded that there was instability in annual consumption expenditure due to COVID-19 pandemic period.

In the COVID-19 pandemic situation, household's monthly hygiene related expenditure and expenditure due to illness increase. In FY 2018-19 (Before COVID-19) the average annual health expenditures was BDT 8900, whereas in FY 2020-21 (After numerous waves of COVID-19) it was BDT 13900. Other expenditure increases as well, even though the changes in magnitudes are different to various groups of the society. Eventually total annual consumption expenditure of these communities' increases. Remember that annual income level in COVID-19 period has dropped significantly.

Therefore, there is a negative trend in annual income due to COVID-19 pandemic. On the other hand, total consumption expenditure increases.

5.3 Regression Analysis: Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) Method

In this study, two regression models were estimated, which were simple linear regression model considering FY 2018-19 and FY 2020-21. The OLS estimation assumed the annual consumption expenditure was the dependent variable and annual income was the independent variable for the particular fiscal year.

The first model of OLS regression considers the annual income without COVID-19 situation as independent variable and annual consumption expenditure without COVID-19 situation as dependent variable, which was based on respondents' opinion for FY 2018-19.

The first regression model;

$$Y_i = \alpha_1 + \alpha_2 X_i + u_i \quad \text{[for FY 2018-19]} \quad \dots\dots\dots(1)$$

Where,

X = Annual income in FY 2018-19 (without COVID-19)

Y = Annual consumption expenditure in FY 2018-19 (without COVID-19)

u_i = Residual term in regression.

At the same time, the second model of OLS regression considers the annual income with COVID-19 situation as independent variable and annual consumption expenditure in with COVID-19 situation as dependent variable, which was based on respondents' opinion for FY 2020-21.

The second regression model;

$$Y_i = \beta_1 + \beta_2 X_i + u_i \quad \text{[for FY 2020-21]} \quad \dots\dots\dots(2)$$

Where,

X = Annual income in FY 2020-21 (with COVID-19)

Y = Annual consumption expenditure FY 2020-21 (with COVID-19)

u_i = Residual term in regression.

Table 04: Results of OLS Estimation for FY 2018-19 and FY 2020-21

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Co-efficient</i>	<i>Standard Error</i>	<i>t-Statistic</i>	<i>P-Value</i>
<i>Dependent Variable: Annual consumption expenditure in FY 2018-19</i>				
<i>Constant</i>	2258.85***	270.65	11.284	0
<i>Annual income in FY 2018-19</i>	0.625***	0.112	17.492	0
<i>R²</i>			0.69	
<i>Adj R²</i>			0.69	
<i>Dependent Variable: Annual consumption expenditure in FY 2020-21</i>				
<i>Constant</i>	2958.83***	210.95	10.265	0
<i>Annual income in FY 2020-21</i>	1.021***	0.5	17.537	0
<i>R²</i>			0.71	
<i>Adj R²</i>			0.72	
*** indicates the 5% level of significance				

Source: Author's Calculation

From the evidence of Table 04, annual income without COVID-19 situation as independent variable and annual consumption expenditure without COVID-19 situation as dependent variable make up the second model of OLS regression model, which is biased on respondent opinion in FY 2018-19. The linear model between annual income and annual consumption expenditure in without COVID-19 case illustrated a significant linear relationship with a significant P-Value and the R^2 value of this model is also acceptable, which was about 0.697 which means this model can predict about 70% of the cases. The co-efficient of the variable without COVID-19 period, coefficient of annual income was 0.625, which funds there was a positive relation between annual income and annual consumption expenditure in normal cases. This coefficient can be construed as: if annual income rises by 1 unit then annual consumption expenditure will increase by, on an average, about 0.625 units; similar impact in case of decreasing income, expenditure will also decrease.

However, annual income with COVID-19 situation as independent variable and annual consumption expenditure with COVID-19 situation as dependent variable make up the second model of OLS regression model, which is biased on respondent opinion in FY 2020-21. In the COVID-19 case, the linear model between annual income and annual consumption expenditure revealed a significant linear relationship with a significant P-Value, and the R^2 value of this model was also satisfactory, at around 0.719, indicating that this model can predict about 72% of the cases. Yearly income had a co-efficient of 1.021 with COVID-19, indicating that there was a positive relationship between annual income and annual consumer expenditure in normal cases. This coefficient can be translated as follows: if annual income increases by one unit, annual consumption expenditure increases on an average by around 1.021 units on an average; similarly, if income decreases, expenditure decreases.

The findings of both models were similar; however there was a significant discrepancy in the coefficient of independent variable. The magnitude of change in the second model is greater than the first. The positive and substantial association between OLS models 1 and 2 revealed that in the COVID-19 situation, consumption expenditure increased due to a decrease in income, an increase in the price level, and other macroeconomic factors caused by COVID-19 crisis.

Hence, it can be concluded that the socioeconomic structure of the households with respect to COVID-19 pandemic is not improving and day by day it turns to the worse position. The level of household expenditure rises which leads to reduce the living standard. The higher level of consumption expenditure also leads to lower level of saving which indicates the economic crisis for particular individuals as well as national economy.

6. Recommendations

The findings of this research can help to develop long-term adaptability strategies and programs to successfully manage local community susceptibility to COVID-19 consequences in the country.

Some of the recommendations are as follows;

- Government should take steps to protect health service and system during the crisis.
- The government must think about what needs to be done to maintain social and economic order in the prevention of corona. An integrated plan of local people's representatives, administration, and experts needs to be worked out.
- Floating and low-income people need to plan for economic protection. If necessary, every upazila has to make arrangements for the sale of daily necessities at affordable prices for the people. If necessary, a subsidy has to be given or a ration card has to be arranged. At this time, the tendency for unnecessary storage at the consumer level should be prevented. This will help to reduce the pressure on the supply of daily necessities.
- Social protection and basic services should be taken by the government. Government should also be taken steps to protect small and medium sized enterprises, and informal sector workers.
- The government should be aware of unscrupulous traders who have a tendency to raise commodity prices by creating unnecessary artificial crises in the commodity stock market. The benefit of this is that it will ensure the supply of goods in the consumer market and, at the same time, the price of goods will be within the purchasing power of low-income people as well as the middle-income group.
- Macroeconomic response, multilateral collaboration, social cohesion and community resilience are important to tackle the COVID-19 crisis.

Thus, through integrated planning, it is possible to maintain economic crisis as well as social crisis in the COVID-19 pandemic situation.

7. Conclusion

COVID-19 poses a serious social and economic crisis in Bangladesh. As a developing country, this pandemic has a severe impact on the overall economy of the country. This paper has analysed the selected categorical variables of the sampled vulnerable population in the southern part (Barishal division) of Bangladesh, which can help to overall understand the circumstances in a reorganized approach. It has found a significant drop in income due to COVID-19. On the other hand, household consumption expenditure increased significantly. In that situation, households face financial crisis, and the level of poverty in the study area can be affected by the declining income level. Therefore, during this pandemic period the policymakers should take necessary steps to reduce the economic damage.

8. References

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Socio-economic Conditions of Rakhine Buddhist Community: An Exploratory Study in Kuakata

Hasan Mahmud Kamran* and Md. Sadequr Rahman**

Abstract

This study aims to explore the contemporary socio-economic condition of Rakhine Buddhist community as a decadent tribe who settled in the region more than 200 years ago in Kuakata. Despite having distinct socio-economic structures, they are treated as a minority, which significantly impacts on their livelihood. The qualitative descriptive research design including 15 case studies, 05 key informant interviews (KII) and 02 focus group discussion (FGD) have been employed in this study. The study areas eg. Misripara, Rakhine Mohila Market, and Kalachanpara in Kuakata have been chosen purposively beside the shore of the Bay of Bengal. The study finds out the substantive situations of Rakhine, who are separated geographically from the mainstream society and treated unequally by politics and development practices. Collected data has been interpreted manually to know their challenges and vulnerabilities, religious practices and obstacles, livelihood strategies, demographic structure and socio-cultural rituals; It also reveals the discriminatory treatments they facing in daily life. This study could be helpful for policy makers to formulate a development process targeting the Rakhine Buddhist minorities group.

Keywords: *Rakhine Buddhism, Socio-economic conditions, minority group, discrimination, ceremonies, education, and women.*

Background of the Study

Rakhine is the name of a tribal population of Bangladesh and Myanmar. Sometimes, they are addressed as *Mugs* (Amin, 2009). They are also known as a South-east Asian ethnic group of Myanmar who forms the majority along the coastal region of present-day Rakhine state previously officially known as Arakan. They constitute more than 5% of Myanmar's total population. Historically by the end of the eighteenth century, they migrated from Arakan to Bangladesh and settled in the coastal districts of Cox's Bazar and Patuakhali (Karim, 2020). The Majority of Rakhine people living in Bangladesh are concentrated in Cox's Bazar municipality, Kharangkhali, Khuruskul, Chowfall-dandi, Ramu Sadar, Panerchhara, Ashkor Kata, Ashkor Kata, Teknaf Sadar, Hneela, Harbang of Chakoria, Gorokhghata of Maheskhali, Khepupara, and Kuakata of Patuakhali (Hasan, 2015). Some Rakhine communities live in Chittagong hill tracts introducing themselves as Marma (Amin, 2009). Apart from those, some of them also live at Taltoti in Barguna and also scatter in Patuakhali. Rakhine people mainly believe in Buddhism. More specifically, they are mainly the followers of Theravada Buddhists. Theravada is the most commonly accepted name of Buddhism's oldest existing school.

* Research Assistant, TIB & Post Graduate, Department of Sociology, University of Barishal, Bangladesh.

** Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, University of Barishal, Bangladesh. Corresponding Author's
Email: msrahman@bu.ac.bd

Followers of this school have preserved the teachings and vision of Gautama Buddha for over a thousand years (Gyatso, 2005). Considering the size of population, Buddhists are one of the smallest communities in Bangladesh at present though it is treated as third among the four major religions (Barua, 2010). Mainly, the *Pala* dynasty developed Buddhism in ancient Bangla (Majumder, 1955; Barua, 2010). Now, about 0.6% of Buddhist people live in Bangladesh (Bangladesh Population and Housing Census, 2011).

Kuakata known as a tourist attracting spot in a small town of south-eastern Bangladesh for her panoramic sea beach, and beautifies for the charming of both the sunrise and sunset. It is a place of pilgrimage for the Hindu and Buddhist communities. Devotees come here during full moon festivals (Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation, 2011). This place has been born and expanded with the hand of the indigenous Rakhine Buddhist community. However, at present, most of the Rakhine families almost have been separated from Kuakata tourism. Over time, they have lost their population, land, cultural heritage and become a small exploited minority group. An ICDP-Rakhaine survey run by '*Caritas*' showed in 2014 that the Rakhine Buddhist population is about 2561 who are living in the coastal area of Barishal division where previously their population was around 35,000 in 1900-1948 A.D. . After talking with the elderly, it has been known that there were about 237 Rakhine villages. But now, only 26 Rakhine villages are existed in Kalapara Upazila of Patualhali district, 4 in the Galachipa Upazila, and 13 Rakhine villages in Taltoli Upazila in Barguna district. About 80% of Rakhine villages have been evicted, and the population has shrunk about 95% in the greater Barishal region (The Daily Prothom Alo, April 22, 2018). A report of Kalapara Upazila Parishad shows that there were about 7000 Rakhine families in Kalapara at 2018, now it has come down to 1100 people (The Daily Prothom Alo, March 19, 2018). They have lost their livelihood strategy. As an ethnic minority, they continuously become victims of different types of discrimination, harassment, land grabbing, women rape, violations of religious practices, and indirect pressure etc. Those violations have been found in various newspaper reports published from 2010-2020, and many of them have remained unsolved.

The Rakhine of ethnic community have a long history and culture of several thousand years old. The word 'Rakhain' is derived from a Pali word *Arakhah*, which means '*Raksho*' or '*Rakshok*' (protector), synonymous with the Burmese '*Bilu*' (Amin, 2009; Hasan, 2015; Ranta, 2007). Rakhine is an ethno religious affiliation. Their ethnicity is Mongoloid and their religion is Buddhism. However, neither race nor faith alone constitutes the unique breed of Rakhine. Of Mongoloid stock, Rakhine sprung from the Tibeto-Burman group along with Burmese and other Proto-Burmese races who migrated from Central Asia (Charney, 2005). Genealogically, they are a branch of Tibeto-Burman also. Some Rakhine writers have shown that their origin in the Indo-Aryan people of Danyawaddy and Wethali, with whom they have mixed up to a limited extent (Amin, 2009). They believed that they were the inhabitants of the ancient Magadha and later migrated to Rokhong, Rokhaingpi, Arkhang, Rosang, Rakhainpray, or Arakan. These

immigrants were known to the local people as Magadhi or Magh. Rakhine claims themselves as Aryans, and they were worshippers of nature (Hasan, 2015).

Rakhine and some indigenous people of CHT came under the Mughal empire in 1715 (Riaz & Rahman, 2016). Initially, the Burmese king 'Bodopra' conquered Arakan State. Fearing his victory, a large number of Rakhine people fled and entered Bangladesh by some boats. They sailed their boats on Rangabali Island in Patuakhali. After setting on this island they began to cultivate land by planting paddy and horticulture. As the population increased, they spread to different parts of this country, including Chhota Bisdia, Tiakhali, Barabysdia, Baliyatali, Kuakata, Bogi. Another group of Rakhine sailed their boat in Cox's Bazar when the Konbaung Kingdom of Barma appended Arakan later in the 18th century. During the British period, Mr. Hiram Cox, a British East Indian Company captain, distributed the land among 100 thousand refugees in 1776. They were settled in Cox's Bazar, Chittagong Hill Tracts, and Patuakhali (Hasan, 2015).

Significance of the Study

The Rakhine communities are Buddhist ethnic-religious groups in Bangladesh. Most Buddhist ethnic groups are socially and geographically isolated, living in the coastal sea areas and Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT). The total amount of Buddhist people in Bangladesh are only 898,635 among the population of 149,772,364 (Bangladesh Population and Housing Census, 2011). Many research works have been carried out on Bangladeshi Buddhists focusing on their religious life, cultural ceremonies, and religious preachings. Besides, some indigenous communities belong to Buddhism, including Chakma, Marma, and some small ethnic groups whose rites and rituals are closer to Buddhism. Some research works are conducted on Chakma and Marma as well as other living on the hill areas. But Rakhine, living on flatland in Kuakata under Patuakhali District, cannot draw much specific attention of researchers. A few works have been conducted in their areas, but those are Rakhine market and historical place related. A little focus has been concentrated on Rakhine Buddhist people and their social life based on their religion as well as ethnicity. A significant number of Rakhine people in Bangladesh are decreasing day by day, which has been shown in the national census from 1940 to 2011. The community had around one lakh people several decades back, but now it is only around 2,500. There were 144 *paras* (regional locality) in Barguna and 93 in Patuakhali in 1948, but now the number has come down to 26 and 13, respectively. There were 19 Buddhist temples in the areas, but now there is only one. They have some disparities/differences from the other Buddhist religious minorities. Beside this, a recent trend is found in the community of this area to migrate to other parts in Bangladesh or other countries because of land grabbing and better livelihood.

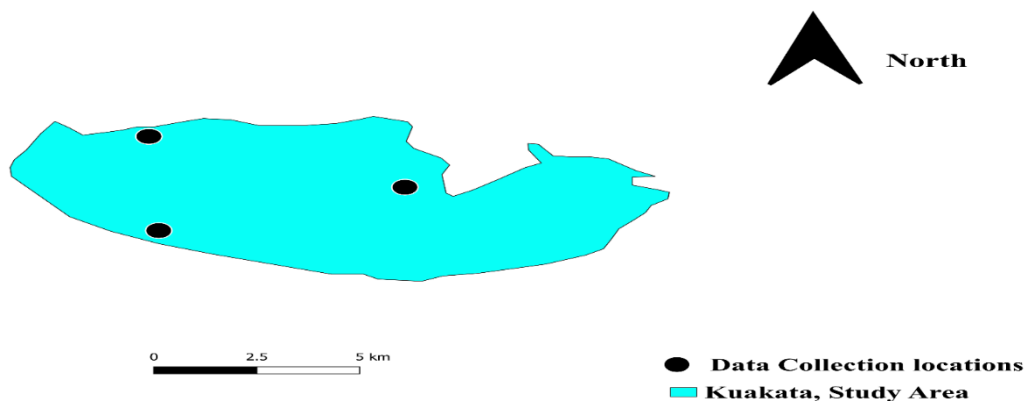
This study has been conducted a field survey on Rakhine Buddhist (an ethnic-religious minority) people who are living in the Kuakata area. We have tried to know the existing social structure of dominating *Bangali* influences on their lives, social activities and ceremonies,

occupations, educational system, various socio-cultural ceremonies, livelihood strategies, challenges and obstacles and to know their existing conditions.

Sources of the data

This study was exploratory and involved a qualitative research by using non-probable purposive sampling technique of the Rakhine religious-ethnic community. The study area has been chosen from Kuakata under Kolapara Upazila of Patuakhali District. Data were collected from Misripara, Kalchanpara Rakhine Polli, and Rakhine Mohila Market, where Rakhine Buddhist communities live and lead their livelihood for many years. Both primary and secondary data have been applied in this study. This study mainly focused on the primary intervention. A range of tools and techniques including case studies, key informant interview (KII), and focus group discussion (FGD) have been applied to collect data and generate detailed information. 15 case studies, 5 KIIs, and 2 FGDs have been conducted from 10 November 2019 to 17 November 2019. In the present study, Case studies and KIIs were conducted through in-depth interviews. In two FGDs, one was conducted for males and another one for females. Rakhine ethnic Buddhist men and women, traditional household or landowners, different service providers were our primary respondents. Formal and informal discussion, as well as personal observation, have been incorporated. The right to privacy of collected data was maintained. The respondents were informed clearly that the sensitive information they provided during the case studies would be kept in strict confidence as those do not harm their lifestyle or community. Participation in the study was voluntary. The respondents could agree to answer questions or refuse to participate at any time.

Figure: Data collection locations & the study area



Result and Discussion

Socio-economic and demographic information

Regarding gender of the participants, almost half of the total participants were found as female which is observed in the table 1. There is seen at ages of variety in studied area which is seen in

the table 1. Based on occupation, half of the respondents were involved in small-scale cloth business, one-fifths were destitute people and having tea stall. The other portions were involved different types of occupations. At the education level, only one-fifth completed secondary school level. Others have shown respectively through frequency in the table 1.

Table 1: Socio-demographic information of participants

Variables	Level	Frequency
Sex	Male	18
	Female	14
Ages	25-39	06
	40-54	13
	55-69	11
	70-84	02
Educational Qualification	Illiterate	06
	Primary	06
	Secondary	07
	SSC	05
	HSC	03
	Honours	04
	Masters	01
Occupation	Small scale cloth business	14
	Destitute People	04
	Cake Maker	02
	Tea-stall	03
	Shop owner	01
	Cloth Weaver	01
	Farmer	02
	Religious Leader	01
	Businessman	01
	Contractor	01
	Shopkeeper	02

(Source: Fieldwork, 2019)

This chapter has opened with a discussion about the study's main findings and tried to present a comparative analysis between the findings of this study and those which were also provided in other studies that supported the view that the Rakhine community have a glorious culture as well as heritage and resided in Patuakhali district but now faces the same crisis as other ethnic groups of the country face.

Table 2: Case-specific information of the study participants

Case No:	Location	Sex	Age	Educational Qualification	Occupation
01	Misri Para	Male	63	Primary	Small scale cloth business
02	Misri Para	Male	65	Illiterate	Small scale cloth business
03	Misri Para	Female	40	Primary	Small scale cloth business & Housewife
04	Misri Para	Male	70	Illiterate	Destitute People
05	Misri Para	Female	42	Secondary	Cake Maker
06	Misri Para	Female	53	Primary	Small scale cloth business & Housewife
07	Misri Para	Female	35	Secondary	Teal-stall
08	Rakhine Mohilla Market	Female	52	Secondary	Cloth shopkeeper
09	Rakhine Mohila Market	Male	37	SSC	Shopkeeper
10	Kalachan Para	Male	63	Illiterate	Destitute People
11	Rakhine Mohila Market	Female	25	Honours	Shop worker and Student
12	Rakhine Mohila Market	Male	50	HSC	Cloth-shop owner
13	Kalachan Para	Male	55	SSC	Cloth Weaver
14	Kalachan Para	Female	45	Primary	Shopkeeper
15	Kalachan Para	Male	51	SSC	Farmer

(Source: Fieldwork, 2019)

Religious Beliefs, Practices, and Obstacles/Challenges

The Rakhine are historically Theravada Buddhists. They believe that they are one of the first groups to become followers of Theravada Buddhism in Southeast Asia. Rakhine people converted to Theravada Buddhism after the Sri Lankan Mon people (Zhang, 2016). This school believes that there is no omnipotent creator God what separated them from the main theme of almighty God concept of Judaism, Islam, and Christianity. According to their view, God exists as various types of spiritual beings with limited powers. Supernatural power cannot solve the spiritual problems of human beings rather; they are fetters of the path. Theravada Buddhists emphasize on meditation to enlighten themselves (BBC, 2002). But we found some basic differences among Rakhine Buddhists. Like, many of them believe there is an almighty God who controls everything. *“One supreme God must have who control the universal. We cannot disobey him”* (Case: 7; Age: 35). A destitute man said, *“I have got positive results many times by using 'Tabiz', 'jhar-fuk'. Sometimes, I go to the Imam (religious leader of Islam) to get rid of sickness from any deviant or evil power, and it is well worked”* (Case: 10; Age: 63).

Their prominent religious leader (locally known as *Thakur* or *Bantti*) of the historical *Seema Buddha Temple* mentioned the reason for such thinking in a KII though he is not a member of the Rakhine community. “*When Rakhine Buddhists interacted with Bangali Muslim, they gradually received some of the thoughts of Islam including one almighty God which is not accepted in Buddhism*” (KII: 2; Age 65).

According to the approach of Buddhism, an individual may enlighten with proper practice, wisdom, and mediation (BBC, 2002; Agarwal, 2015). But most of the cases narrated that meditation is a huge time-consuming matter. One destitute aged male said, “*Despite meditation is an important part of our religion, most of the common people have no much time for it. The practice is being the matter of the religious gurus and those old men who have nothing to do*” (Case: 4; Age: 70). Their daily religious practices are the prayer for betterment of their community by reading the *Tripitak* (the holy book of Buddhism written in Rakhine language) two times in a day, the selected times are before the sunrise and after the sunset. But one case study informant mentioned a little different: *they have three-time prayers in a day those times are before early sunrise, then in the middle noon, and at last after the sunset* (Case: 13; Age: 55).

The main annual religious festivals are ‘*Maghi Purnama*’, ‘*Ashari Purnama*’, ‘*Boishaki Purnama*’. There is a four-month fasting system as Muslims do during Ramadan. “*When a member dies, the funeral of his/her dead body is done by two ways; one is burring of the dead body like Hinduism or a grave system like Muslim or Christian. It depends on the willing of the dead person what she/he said before his/her death. Sometimes it also depends on their economic status. Wealthy families like the system of burning and low-income families use the grave system*” (KII: 1; Age: 63).

Challenges: Most of the participants mentioned that they do not face discrimination or obstacles during maintain of their religious practices. But in a focus group discussion with men, some upheld the real scenarios and said that when an outsider comes to this small community, they do not want to give information about the discrimination or obstacles because it can further be a threat for them. They alluded that they have no right to enter the Muslim mosque, but most of the time during Rakhine monthly or any religious practices Muslim and other religious people enter the Buddha temple and make noise that creates a big hamper in prayer. The curious mind of the Bengali makes a great hamper during their religious practices. They cannot openly invite other people or cannot use a microphone during their religious practices. One female respondent said, “*We lose our concentration during prayer when the Bengali enters in the temple*” (Case: 6; Age: 53). They are gradually losing their historical Buddhist monastery land. They claimed 99% land of the century-old in Kuakata Buddhist monastery had been occupied. There were 190 Buddhist temples in 1908; now, only one temple survives in some way (Rakhine in the south, 2014). The religious leader of *Seema Temple* said, *some local unscrupulous people occupied the land in front of Seema Bihar and built shops and houses.*

Although previously the temple authority gave them access to those constructions for humanitarian, now they claim themselves as the owner of the land (KII: 2; Age: 65).

Table 3: Information of Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)

KII No:	Location	Sex	Age	Education	Occupation	Social Status
KII – 01	Misripara, Kuakata	Male	63	Masters	Owner cloth-shop	Well educated Man
KII – 02	Misripara, Kuakata	Male	65	Honours	Religious Leader	Buddhist religious Leader
KII – 03	Misripara, Kuakata	Male	80	Illiterate	Destitute People	Community Leader
KII – 04	Kalachanpara, Kuakata	Male	50	Honours	Businessman	Chairman of the Union Perished
KII – 05	Kalachanpara, Kuakata	Male	59	HSC	Contractor	Member of the Union Perished

(Source: Fieldwork, 2019)

Social festivals, activities and ceremonies

When we discussed their socio- cultural activities, most participants showed a linkup between religion and culture. Their cultural activities are grown up through religious rules and rituals. It is true that Buddhism, as an ancient religion, has spread throughout Asia in a matter of centuries and has had a rare kind of influence on the social and cultural transformation of the Asian peoples (Heera, 2007). As *Maghi Purnama*, *Ashari Purnama*, *Boishaki Purnama* are their main religious festivals, those are also treated as cultural ceremonies. They arrange different types of cultural programs related to those festivals. Some of the cases/informants cannot ignore the impact of modern Bengali culture. A male participant said, “*The social and cultural activities are as usual as Bengali though some basic differences are found. Like, we enjoy three types of new-year celebration: the first day of English calendar, the Bangla Noboborsho, and most importantly, the celebration of the Rakhine New Year according to Rakhine Calendar*” (Case: 2; Age: 65). This Rakhine new-year celebration holds in the middle time of April month. Many of them keep an ambiguous concept regarding the Rakhine new year celebration. “*Rakhine new year celebration is not surely arranged on the first day of the Rakhine new year. It may be arranged in a day among the last two days of the previous year or fast two days of the New Year. It depends on the astrology*” (KII: 1; Age: 63). Water festival (locally known as *Jol-keli*) is one of the most joyful parts of the New Year celebration for the young generation, which is arranged targeting Rakhine new year. Water festival can be defined as pay respect to the elderly by splashing water at one another as part of the cleansing ritual to welcome the New Year (Agarwal, 2015). Traditionally people celebrate it as a symbol of respect. They believe that it will remove bad luck and bring blessings and good wishes. Some participants said that this program increases group solidarity, strong fraternity/brotherhood (brother-sister relationship) and has a religious implication also. But the modern generation takes it as a way to select their life partners. The majority upholds it as part of religious practices, but their main religious

leader of *Seema* temple refused the concept. He said, ‘*The water festival is not any religious activities, but it is one of the main social activities of Rakhine not only for the Rakhine but also for the Chakma, Marma of Chittagong Hill Tract (CHT)*’ (KII: 2; Age: 65).

Lantern festival is another important celebration where most of the members of the Rakhine community join and gather on the shore of the Bay of Bengal in the evening during the Purnima. It is believed that *Gautama Buddha* started preaching on this full moon (The Daily Star, 2020). A female participant described that, “*many outsiders including Bengali comes in this festival and creates huge noise that greatly hampers the beauty of the festival. We do not enjoy it according to our customs, norms, and rituals*” (Case: 8; Age: 52).

Name giving ceremony is another social festival arranged when a baby is born. Most of the newborn baby is named by their custom and norms. Parents will invite their neighbours who help them to give a name to their newborn baby. Sometimes those names have meaning or meaningless, but they must be selected according to their Rakhine language and rituals.

Marriage System

Marriage occurs according to their customs; after choosing the bride, the bridegroom will offer a marriage proposal to the bride’s family. If the bride's family accepts the proposal, the bridegroom will give *Sona-Kapur*, which means engagement. After marriage, the bride or bridegroom both can shift to their father-in-law’s house. There is no mandatory rule that determines who must shift. “*There is no rule for bride and bridegroom who will shift. It depends on their economic status*” (Case: 15; Age: 51). There is no system of dowry.

Table 4: Information of Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

Category	Classification	Frequency
Sex	Male	05
	Female	07
Age	25-39	03
	40-54	05
	55-69	04
Educational Qualification	Illiterate	02
	Primary	02
	Secondary	04
	SSC	02
	HSC	01
	Honours	01
Occupation	Small Cloth Shopkeeper	07
	Destitute People	01
	Cake Maker	01
	Farmer	01
	Tea-stall	02

(Source: Fieldwork, 2019)

Occupational status and their livelihood strategies

Nowadays, we have found that most of the Rakhine lead their lives based on their small-scale weaving industry in Kuakata. Besides, some of them are fishermen, farmers, small shopkeepers, or owners of small tea-stall. They are being separated from the mainstream society.

Most of the cases give their miserable conditions regarding their livelihood strategies. Before the India partition in 1947, the majority of people of the Kuakata were Rakhine. However, after the independence of Bangladesh, they were starting to lose their glorious history. In the twentieth century, most of the land of Kuakata was under Rakhine ownership (The Daily Star, 2015). They cultivated various types of paddy, potato, vegetables and also engaged with many trades and businesses. When Bengali started to migrate in the Kuakata, pressure was led down on their community, and most of the area is being separated from their lands and occupation. Gradually they lost their social position. As a result, they transmitted their livelihood strategy from agricultural to small weaving industry. Another reason was natural disasters; the land loses its fertility because of salty floodwater intruded through sea flood, cyclone and strong storm surges. *“The main livelihood strategies of the Rakhine Buddhist Community are small weaving business, fishing, agriculture production, daily labour, etc. Most of the members of the Rakhine community have no or little land for farming (KII: 1; Age: 63). “The main occupation of our community was agriculture earlier. With the time of passage, we lost our agricultural land for salinity and land grabbing by local people. Now we become the textile-based labour” (Case: 13; Age: 55).*

Because of a lack of formal education, they cannot enter into the modern government service sectors. *“You can find a little portion in the government service sector which has come from Rakhine community if one or two you find they are leading their livelihood by doing third or fourth class jobs”* as one said (Case: 2; Age: 65). Officially they are recognized as an ingenious group. But they are not so much communicative or proficient at getting access or getting very little access to the quota system in the job market and education system, as they expressed. They are not only discriminated against in the government service sectors but also they become victims in their traditional markets. *“If in Rakhine market 50 cloth shops are opened, half of these shops are owned by Bengali or Outsiders”* (Case: 1; Age: 63). It was found an exceptional data that they mentioned some Rakhine earn their livelihood by day labour. But we did not find any day labour in Misripara and Kalacanpara. When we asked their ethnic leader of the Rakhine community about the reason behind it, he mentioned, *“Rakhine cannot cope with the Bengali day labour in the workforce, and in some cases they get less payment than Bengali labour forces”* (KII: 3; Age: 80). They also drew the condition of their waving industry. They claimed some discriminatory problems like giving high prices for raw materials, not getting a fair price, etc. One cloth weaver said, *“It takes three days to make a ‘Sharee’. It costs 300 to 350 taka, which is sold to wholesalers for 400 taka. But the ‘Sharee’ is sold in the markets of Dhaka for 1000 to 1200 taka”* (Case: 13; Age: 55). As a minority group, they are being discriminated for financially and also in their labour.

Legal and Political Rights

Most of the participants mentioned that they have no access to get any government allowances. For example, the older men and women in the Rakhine community do not get *old-age allowances*, and the persons with disabilities also the victim of the same situation as they said. The vulnerable and marginal women do not get any facility from the Vulnerable Group Development (VGD) program by which they can change their miserable condition. They described it as a curse of being a minority. Although the constitution of Bangladesh mentioned some basic rights, those legitimates are not implemented at the local level. Some discriminatory laws have been continuously enforced on them. For example, if any members of the Rakhine community want to sell their land to Bengali or outsiders, they must need permission from Deputy Commissioner. That is not applicable for mainstream Bengali. Sometimes, powerful local people take advantage of this law. A well-educated Rakhine said, *“Rakhine people cannot sell their land without permission of Deputy Commissioner of the district, which comes from the British Government. It sometimes happens that one Rakhine wants to sell five acre of land, due to illiteracy, the flattery landlord or the buyer takes the opportunity of ten acre’s permission with the help of corrupted officers/ staffs of Assistant Commissioner of land office without consent of the seller”* (KII: 1; Age: 63).

During the historic cyclone and tidal surges of 1970 and 1991, a considerable amount of land was under the sea, and river water flowed when some of the land plunderers took advantage by using this law (FGD-2).

They have legal, political rights as the constitution have given. They have access to cast their votes and also have the right to participate in any election in local or national. But in reality, if any Rakhine stands for any position in any election, the mainstream society does not take it positively and creates a fear of social and psychological threats over their community. Besides this, for being a small minority, they will not get the victory from Bengali vote banks though this candidate will be more qualified. One Key informant narrated, *“In my student life, I was involved with student politics in Barishal city. Despite having better quality than other political activists, I never selected as leader of the political party to which I belonged”* (KII: 1; Age: 63).

Housing and Residence Conditions

Rakhine people build their houses over a high platform. This platform is generally 2 to 3 meters high. Traditionally they called this platform ‘*Tong*’, meaning a storied house whose ground floor remains vacuum. This vacuum space is used for storing something like fuel wood; agricultural products. This traditional system protects them from flood water and wild animals and snakes. But because of urbanization, they have not enough *Tong* making materials. For public transportations, roads and culverts are not sufficient good as they needed. Somewhere conditions of those public infrastructures are much worse those can be considered as unusable. Our observation noticed that the mobile network was not working in the area properly. *“Once in the year of 2004 during the ruling government, 30 houses were built for Rakhine community in*

Kuakata” (Case: 3; Age: 40). Different types of NGOs are helping them economically to build their houses. But those bits of help are insufficient.

There is no cyclone shelter near. As a result, in the period of natural disasters, they have to go far away to take shelter, sometimes they cannot go. Older members and disabled people cannot cover this distance. Another major problem in the area is the lack of a pure water supply. They have to collect potable water from far away. The water of river sometimes become so salty what they do not use it in their daily life. As they are separated from the mainstream, they do not get any benefit from the city. For medical services, they have to go to Patuakali city. Roads are as narrow as an ambulance cannot enter their geographic area.

Educational System

In Patuakhali, there are eight to ten spaces that the Rakhine community can live, and around three thousand Rakhine people live presently. But there is no educational institution for maintaining their own culture and traditions. In the 20th century, the Rakhine language was taught at a community-level school run by Rakhine people at the local Buddha pagoda. But the century-old school was closed in 1998 due to a lack of funds (Reopen the lone Rakhine language school, 2011).

Later some educated young generation tries to reopen some informal community-based schools. For example, they collected Rakhine books from Chittagong Hill Tract (CHT) and Myanmar to introduce their mother tongue among Rakhine children, but it is also closed within few years due to the fund crisis (Reopen the lone Rakhine language school, 2011).

“Previously, we were economically well established, we were able to take attempted to hold our traditional educational system. Today, we lead a miserable life. So it is not possible for us to reopen those schools by self-funding” (Case: 12; Age: 50). Because of decreasing the size of population, they also lose their traditional Rakhine teachers. The new generation can gather a scant knowledge about their own culture and traditions reserved in the Rakhine language. In modern education at primary, high school, and college-level, there exists a subject based on religion like Islamic study, Hindu Study, but most schools avoid the subject of Buddhist study. A female student mentioned, *“Some reasons behind this are systemic. School or institutional authorities do not want to appoint only a teacher for Buddhist study. Most of the time, the post for Buddhism study is not created in a primary or secondary school”* (Case: 11; Age: 25).

The Government has taken some initiatives to ensure basic education for children of the ethnic communities in CHTs area through their mother tongue. Implementation of those policies for the CHTs area is still under observation and has faced many problems (Dhar, Makin, & Das, 2019; Rashid, 2020). But the Rakhine community still cannot draw the attention of policy makers. Different types of NGOs (Save the Children etc.) are working with Government and other stakeholders at policy and practical levels to ensure the educational rights of the ethnic communities of the CHTs. They are conducting to promote mother tongue-based multilingual education for the children of ethnic minority communities (Murshed & Imtiaz, 2020; Rashid, 2020). But this opportunity also absents in the northern part of Bangladesh.

Different information has been come out in one case, “*sometimes we find that the young generations are more interested in the Bengali cultural and modern educational system as they help to enter to any private or public job sectors*” (Case: 5; Age: 42).

The constitution of Bangladesh keeps an opportunity of quota system for indigenous people, but in college and university, it is so hard for the Rakhine community to get this opportunity, and most of the time, they cannot take advantage of this quota system because of opaque.

Status of Women

In comparison with men, women are not facing any discrimination in Rakhine society. Rakhine family is not a paternal nor maternal family in the society. Women are hard worker than men. Most of the time, they control both household chores and economic works. We found that more women were engaged in economic activities.

In the Rakhine market, most of the stalls of Rakhine are run by female members. There is no division of labour base on gender or sex. Male members are comparatively lazy than women. There is no mandatory rule for a new couple who will shift after marriage. So, unlike Bengali, a female can remain in her parental family without shifting to the bridegroom family, which is socially acceptable. The wealth of a family is divided equally between male and female members.

One single woman can spend her whole life without marriage. Rakhine society accepts well this. But the mainstream Bengali society blames her with different negative dogmas. An unmarried Rakhine woman expressed that “*it is widespread in Bengali society to treat an unmarried Rakhine woman as a prostitute or with other social dogmas. But she faces no barrier in her community*” (Case: 5; Age: 42). Besides, many Rakhine women have been trafficking for making sex labour in prostitution in different parts of Bangladesh. As a minority, they do not take the necessary steps when they realize one woman has missed their community.

Decreasing the number of Rakhine people

During the British period, Rakhine people were more than twenty-five thousand, including around 220 geographical *paras* (localities) in Patuakhali District. But at present, this number has come down to around three thousand in the Patuakhali area, including not more than ten localities. Several decades ago, the community numbered about 100000, but now it is only about 2500. Most of the Rakhines were forced to leave the country and migrated to Myanmar due to suppression and land grabbing (Thousands of Rakhine, 2015). We have found the truth about this statement: force migration, land grabbing, lack of a way to lead their livelihood, social discrimination, and natural disasters are the leading causes. Their traditional family structure is broken down. One destitute man mentioned, “*In the time of his childhood, the Rakhine community was self-sufficient. But after the independence of 1971, a massive Bengali group continuously entered this area and created many social pressures and tensions. As a result, many of them left the place in search of better livelihood*” (Case: 4; Age: 70).

Conclusion and Recommendation

In the present study, we found some insight perceptions and problems regarding the socio-economic conditions of the Rakhine Buddhist community living Kuakata area what they are facing in daily life. The study revealed that they had been victims of various types of discrimination from the pre-independent period. Some of the issues impact directly on their lives and livelihood. But this discrimination has reached its extreme level after the Indian partition. The majority of them have migrated to other places or other countries in search of better living conditions. Land grabbers have taken their land without facing any legal prevention. They were not so much educated to fight with the legal systems. Some discriminatory rules have made them more vulnerable. For being a little community, they have not much workforce to protect themselves socially. Sometimes, if they have raised their voice, they could have been isolated from mainstream society. They do not get any facilities from the municipality like better transportation system, modern health facilities, or pure drinking water supply.

They transformed their livelihood strategy from agriculture to the small weaving industry, which has made them more marginalized. Rakhine women are becoming the victim of trafficking for sex labour. Even they do not want to disclose their miserable conditions for fear of new violence. The constitution of Bangladesh has reserved fundamental rights of the ethnic minority groups, but those are hardly found in the area. They do not get any governmental allowances like old man allowance or allowance of disable person or any VGD facilities. Their traditions, customs, traditional sages go under a negative change. It can be said that the Rakhine people in Kuakata are struggling for their existence due to different types of socio-economic, cultural and political discrimination and instability.

This study disclosed some undisclosed conditions about the Rakhine community's livelihood strategy and conditions of their socio-cultural structure. The Rakhine Buddhist community as an ethnic minority, has faced lots of discrimination. Their low income already has created an extreme vulnerability that affects their quality of life. They were ancient habitants of Kuakata who made this area livable. But gradually, they are losing their glorious history, including the history of trade, history of rules, and history of rich culture. Their cultural and social ceremonies have lost their traditional forms by mixing with dominant Bengali culture. But still, now, they are trying to preserve their historical, cultural diversity, which makes them unique. Government should need to give more attention on this isolated minority group. The legislation about indigenous people what will act as a protector for unequal treatment of minority, harassment and discriminatory behaviour in everyday life must be enforced effectively. Educationists or policy planners should become more concerned about the Rakhine system of education. The initiative should be taken for preserving their traditional educational systems where they give the option to continue education system according to their native language. Rakhine language school should be reopened by giving minimum funds to run. To make easy access to the quota system of unprivileged minority group, legal complexity should be reduced for their

betterment and provide more job opportunities according to their job skills and qualifications. If possible, a different local government system may be introduced for their community what was implemented in the CHTs area. They need to ensure more security about their wealth, lands, and women trafficking. Overall the Government should increase the observation and support the Rakhine Buddhist community and change the policy where it will be needed.

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Rural Livelihood Diversification under Salinity Intrusion in Southwest Region of Bangladesh

Satyajit Roy*, Sudipa Basu**† and Apurba Roy**

Abstract

Salinity intrusion has become one of the emerging concerns in the coastal region of Bangladesh. The study aims to analyze the effects of salinity intrusion on the livelihood diversification of rural households in coastal areas. A multi-stage random sampling has been used to select the study area, and a total of 134 respondents have been chosen using a simple random sampling method from the study area. A set of statistical techniques and the Simpson Diversity Index (SDI) have been utilized to fulfill the research objective. The descriptive statistics show that salinity intrusion negatively affects household income and livelihood status. The extent of household livelihood diversification is identified above the medium level. Several factors, including lack of financial support and environmental shocks, are the main constraints to adopting diversified activities.

Keywords: Salinity Intrusion, Livelihood Diversification, Simpson Index, Coastal Region

Introduction

Livelihood diversification (LD) refers to the process through which each household maintains and improves its living standard (Ellis, 1998). It denotes a structural shift in the rural economy from agriculture to non-agricultural activity (Islam et al., 2014; Mertz et al., 2009; Stark & Lucas, 1988; Tompkins et al., 2020). Households in developing countries attempt to diversify their livelihood activities to protect themselves from risk and cope with environmental shocks (Baird & Hartter, 2017; Gautam & Andersen, 2016; Martin & Lorenzen, 2016). Frequent heat stress, drought, saline intrusion, and flooding are becoming more common, implying climate change negatively impacts livelihood day by day (Rogelj et al., 2012). Livelihood diversification helps to relieve environmental pressure (De Sherbinin et al., 2008; Hao et al., 2015), improve livelihood resilience and sustainability (Speranza et al., 2014; Wan et al., 2016), and alleviate poverty (Dzanku, 2015; Hua et al., 2017).

Salinity intrusion in canals and rivers has hampered people's access to freshwater sources, lowering agricultural production in the coastal areas (Afroz & Alam, 2013). It is usually considered to have an adverse effect on agriculture, reducing plant growth and lowering output (Rahman, 2010). Households often diversify non-farm livelihood activities rather than relying solely on farming to improve incomes, food security, and agricultural production in order to better cope with salinity-related impacts (Barrett et al., 2001; Hoang et al., 2014; Liu et al.,

*Research Assistant, Development Studies Discipline, Khulna University, Khulna-9208, Bangladesh.

**Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, University of Barishal, Barishal-8200, Bangladesh.

†Corresponding Author: Sudipa Basu, Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, University of Barishal. Email: joysupti@gmail.com

2008). Several factors influence the adaptation of diverse activities, including education level, household income, and farming experiences (Akhtar et al., 2019). Furthermore, agriculture in small coastal regions is susceptible to salinity and climate-induced factors (Cannon, 2014; Seo & Mendelsohn, 2007).

Bangladesh has been subjected to frequent floods, riverbank erosion, cyclones, fluctuating rainfall, drought, and salinity intrusion due to its geographical settings (Alam et al., 2020; Rahman, 2010; Sarker et al., 2019). Farmers in coastal areas are being pushed to change or diversify their agricultural activities in order to cope with climate-related threats (Burchfield & de la Poterie, 2018). Climate change has also increased the frequency and intensity of climatic extremes such as cyclones, tidal surges, and flooding (Hossain et al., 2018; Penning-Rowsell et al., 2013). Climate change has harmed not only the country's total agricultural production but also, to a more extent, its economic development. Salinization and its consequences have compelled people to adopt some adaptation actions, such as cultivating salt-tolerant crops, changing cropping times, livelihood rearing, etc. as well as non-farm activities like wage employment, short-term migration, tertiary jobs, and so on to mitigate losses from farming activities (Hossain et al., 2018; Kabir et al., 2017).

Several studies on livelihoods, diversification, and changing livelihood patterns have been found among the 'Char' inhabitants of Bangladesh (Alam et al., 2020; Onneshan, 2012; Sarker et al., 2019). Furthermore, a few studies have shown that farmers' ability to engage in agriculture is disrupted (Deb, 1998). Deb and Haque (2016) studied the livelihood diversification option of Bangladeshi fishery communities. They found that small-scale farmers rely heavily on financial, social, and institutional aspects to cope with climate change's negative effects (Sarker et al., 2020). Smith et al. (2001) found that middle-income households varied the most off-farm, while low and high-income households had a few diversified activities. Several prior studies also have employed the sustainable livelihood framework (SLF) as the guiding principle for livelihood analysis (Diana et al., 2019; Hua et al., 2017; Wang et al., 2010).

However, research regarding the impact of saline intrusion on life and livelihood diversification and sustainable adaptive livelihood measures by farmers is under-studied, especially in the context of coastal Bangladesh. The current study attempts to fill the gap by selecting Paikgacha Upazila in Khulna District, which is located on the south-western coast of Bangladesh and is very vulnerable to climatic-induced natural disasters, primarily saline intrusion. The study aims to examine the effects of salinity intrusion on the life and livelihood diversification of the rural households living in the study area.

Methods

Study Area Selection

This research was conducted in the Paikgacha Upazila (sub-district) of Khulna District in Bangladesh (Figure 1). The study area is *Halder Chak* village under *Lata Union* of Paikgacha Upazila. The selected area is near the coastal belt and is extremely exposed to natural

disasters such as cyclones, floods, salinity intrusion, etc. For these reasons, the households adopt diversified income-generating activities in the face of a gradual increase in salinity level.

[Insert Figure 1 Here]

Sample Selection

The primary data were collected through a questionnaire survey. Besides, focus group discussion (FGD), key informant interview (KII), and observation methods were also applied to collect socio-demographic information. Lata union was chosen using a random sampling method. This study collected data from a sample survey from *Halder Chak* village in Lata Union (Figure 1). The total population of the village is 394. A random sampling technique was used to select the 134 respondents. In order to choose the sample of the population, Yamane sampling formula (Yamane, 1967) was used as given in Equation 1. This formula is popular and widely used in determining sample size in the context of a finite population scenario. The total number of people in this study area is 394, which is finite.

$$n = \frac{N}{(1+Ne^2)} \dots (1)$$

Here, n is the sample size, N denotes population size, and e represents the level of precision. In this case, the level of precision is set to 0.07 based on the research condition. At a 7 percent precision level, the desired level sample size is 134. Data were collected through personal interviews from finally selected 134 people. The questionnaire survey was conducted among 30 to 60 years old, both men and women in the chosen area. The part of the analysis was the household head; in the absence of the head, the household members were considered, especially among the farmers, day laborers, shrimp cultivators, and business people. The fixed age group was selected to fulfill the objective of the study. The final data collection was done during March 2019.

Data Analysis

We have used some statistical methods to analyze the collected data. The approaches are descriptive statistics, t-test, weighted mean index, specialized techniques including Sustainable Livelihood Framework (SLF), and Simpson Diversity Index (SDI). A short description of these methods is given below.

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics such as mean, average, standard deviation, maximum and minimum have been used to estimate the socio-economic condition of the respondents. We also use range, percentage, and cumulative percentage to summarize the demographic profile.

Hypothesis Testing (t-test)

To test whether salinity intrusion has any adverse effect on household income in the study area, a t-test has been used to justify a research hypothesis as given below:

Research Hypothesis:

H_0 : Saline intrusion has no effect on household income.

H_1 : Saline intrusion has an effect on household income.

Sustainable Livelihood Framework (SLF)

The Sustainable Livelihood Framework (SLF) is a novel approach used to understand the overall livelihood conditions of poor households. The SLF helps to identify factors associated with the livelihoods of poor people either positively or negatively. In addition, this framework assists in taking relevant plans and policies regarding the development of the living standard in a sustainable way. With the help of the framework, it is possible to organize the different household assets and compare their relative importance on maintaining sustainable livelihoods by coping with external shocks and stress. The SLF consists of five significant indicators: human capital, natural capital, physical capital, financial capital, and social capital, accompanied by several sub-components under each indicator. A modified Sustainable Livelihood Framework (SLF) is adopted following Serrat (2017) as given below.

- i) Human Capital Index: Disaster-related Training, Farming Experience, Exposing Idea in Group Meeting, Education Level.
- ii) Natural Capital Index: Natural Grazing Land, Access to Fishing in the River, Sufficiency Water for Irrigation, Available Safe Drinking Water.
- iii) Physical Capital Index: Boat, Fishing Net, Radio, TV.
- iv) Financial Capital Index: Loan from NGO/Bank, Having Deposit Money in the Bank, Price of All Crops, Monetary Value of All Livelihoods.
- v) Social Capital Index: Health and Family Planning, NGOs, Access to Union Parishads, Membership in Political Parties, Community Group Membership.

Simpson Diversity Index (SDI)

There are some indices used to measure the range of livelihood diversification level. The Simpson Diversity Index (SDI) is popular and widely used. Hence, we have formulated SDI given below (Equation 2):

$$SDI = 1 - \sum_{i=1}^n (P_i^2) \dots (2)$$

Here, N is the total number of income sources, and P_i is the proportion of income from the i^{th} source. The value of SDI ranges from 0 to 1. A higher SDI value indicates a higher level of income diversification and vice-versa. For instance, if the SDI value is below 0.25, it shows a

low level of diversification; from 0.26 to 0.50, it indicates a medium level of diversification, and above 0.50, it demonstrates a higher level of diversification (Ahmed et al., 2018; Sarker et al., 2020).

Priority Index

Priority index is used to rank the limitations to adopting diversified activities which are given in Equation 3.

$$P.I = \sum S_i f_i / n \dots (3) \quad (0 \leq P.I \leq 1)$$

Where $P.I$ = Priority Index, S_i = Scale value of i^{th} priority, f_i = Frequency of i^{th} priority, N = Total number of observations. A five-point scale is used to construct the index. The index value ranges from 1 to 0, including the priority 1st to 5th, respectively.

Results and Discussion

Socio-demographic Profile

Table 1 shows the socio-demographic profile of the respondents. We notice that the respondent's father heads the majority of the households (54 percent), and about 33 percent of respondents act as a household head during the survey period. Almost 66 percent of the respondents are male, and the rest are female. The respondents' age distribution indicates that about 73 percent belong to 30 to 40 years. The family size of the surveyed households ranges from 3 to 10 members. More than half of the households (55 percent) have family members between 6 to 8 people.

[Insert Table 1 Here]

In terms of educational qualification, only 40 percent of them completed secondary education, and 30 percent finished higher secondary level. Most of the surveyed households (about 62 percent) have their land ownership, and only 29 percent reported they work on other lands. A small number of the respondents (9 percent) have no land at all. The size of the landholdings of almost 61 percent of the households ranges from 4 to 6 *bigha* (1 acre = 3 *bigha*). In addition, 21 percent of the respondents own less than three *bighas*, and the rest hold land sizes between 7 to 12 *bigha*. The main occupations of the respondents are shrimp farming (40 percent), day laborer (26 percent), and small business (25 percent). The primary source of drinking water is tube-well in the study area. However, respondents also collect water from rain and bottled water.

Sustainable Livelihood Framework

We adopted an innovative approach to understanding the livelihood condition of the respondents by utilizing the Sustainable Livelihood Framework (SLF). The SLF approach uses five major indicators to construct the corresponding indices. Each major indicator includes several sub-components. We summarized each sub-component, calculated the average score

value, and finally computed the index value of each indicator. We also rank the sub-components based on their calculated score to understand the significance of the components. The natural capital index (score 1.41) ranks among the five major indices, followed by the human capital index (score 1.32). However, the score of other indices such as financial capital index (score 0.72), social capital index (score 1.11), and physical capital index (score 1.18) is comparatively small. Overall, scores of different indicators show that the livelihood of the people living in the area is below standard level.

[Insert Table 2 Here]

Causes of Adopting Livelihood Diversification Activities

Some factors influence a household to adopt new diversification activities. Table 3 lists important factors that influenced the households to diversify their income-earning activities. The factors have been ranked according to their level of significance. It has been seen from Table 3 that salinity intrusion has the highest score and has become the top most important factor that influences household diversification strategies. The other significant influencing factors are limited income from agricultural activities, lack of financial support, large family, and decline in household income. Elmqvist and Olsson (2006) have shown that migration is a widely used diversification strategy during the dry season. Besides, some indirect causes, such as prices, drought, and precipitation, were responsible for livelihood diversification.

[Insert Table 3 and Table 4 Here]

Impact of Salinity Intrusion on Income and Occupation

We have analyzed the impact of salinity intrusion on the monthly income and occupation of the respondents and presented the findings in Table 4. From Table 4, it has been seen that the average household monthly income before the salinity intrusion was higher than the income after the salinity intrusion. The difference in income is statistically significant as the t-value is high. The result indicates that salinity intrusion has a negative effect on household income. We also show the changes in occupation before and after salinity intrusion. The findings also express that crop farming was widely prevalent among the respondents before the salinity intrusion. Before salinity intrusion, 54 percent of respondents were engaged in crop farming, whereas only 8 percent of them are currently occupied in this occupation. However, there is a 70 percent increase in shrimp cultivations after salinity intrusion. In addition, there is around a 20 percent increase in small businesses after salinity intrusion compared with before salinity intrusion. Rice production decreases day by day due to the rise in the salinity of soil and water in the coastal region of Bangladesh (Dasgupta et al., 2018). Similarly, Salam et al. (2019) also reported that any non-farm event increases household income and well-being in northern rural Bangladesh.

The Extent of Livelihood Diversification

Table 5 outlines the estimated livelihood diversification index using the Simpson Diversity Index (SDI). It has been seen that the value of SDI score is 0.70, meaning the income diversification status of the household is above the medium level. Although the score is above medium level, it is not close to the highest attainable complete diversification level 1. It indicates that salinity intrusion has led the household to increase the number of diversified income activities. People rely less on crop farming to earn their livelihood. Instead, they move to shrimp cultivation, micro-business, or even day labor to maintain their livelihood after salinity intrusion. Ayana et al. (2021) have found that households earning from highly diversified income activities score top SDI value while households earning from a few income-generating activities have small SDI value.

[Insert Table 5 and Table 6 Here]

Constraints to Livelihood Diversification

We have identified significant constraints to adopt new diversified activities by the respondents. These constraints are ranked in terms of significance and presented in Table 6. Table 6 shows that substantial constraints to adopting diversification strategies are lack of credit facilities, awareness, relevant training, environmental impacts, and limited assistance from government and non-government organizations. Khatun and Roy (2012) have found that little access to asset and credit facilities, insufficient training facilities, poor rural infrastructure, and lack of opportunities in non-farm sectors are main constraints in the households. Ewebiyi and Meludu (2013) have found that low farm productivity due to the environmental degradation had made rural dwellers diversify into other businesses besides agricultural production to liberate them from poverty.

Concluding Remarks

Over the last decades, natural disasters have accelerated the level of water and soil salinity in the coastal areas of Bangladesh. The study assesses the effects of salinity intrusion on livelihood and income-generating diversification activities of the households affected by salinity intrusion. It has been found that the livelihood condition of the people is below standard level. Salinity intrusion and other factors forced the households to adopt new income-generating activities since household income started declining after salinity intrusion in the area. The level of household diversion has been increased to above the medium level to cope with the adverse effects of the increase in water and soil salinity. There is still scope for extension of income diversification. Several factors such as limited financial support from government and non-government sources and environmental stress cause disruption to maintain the diversified activities.

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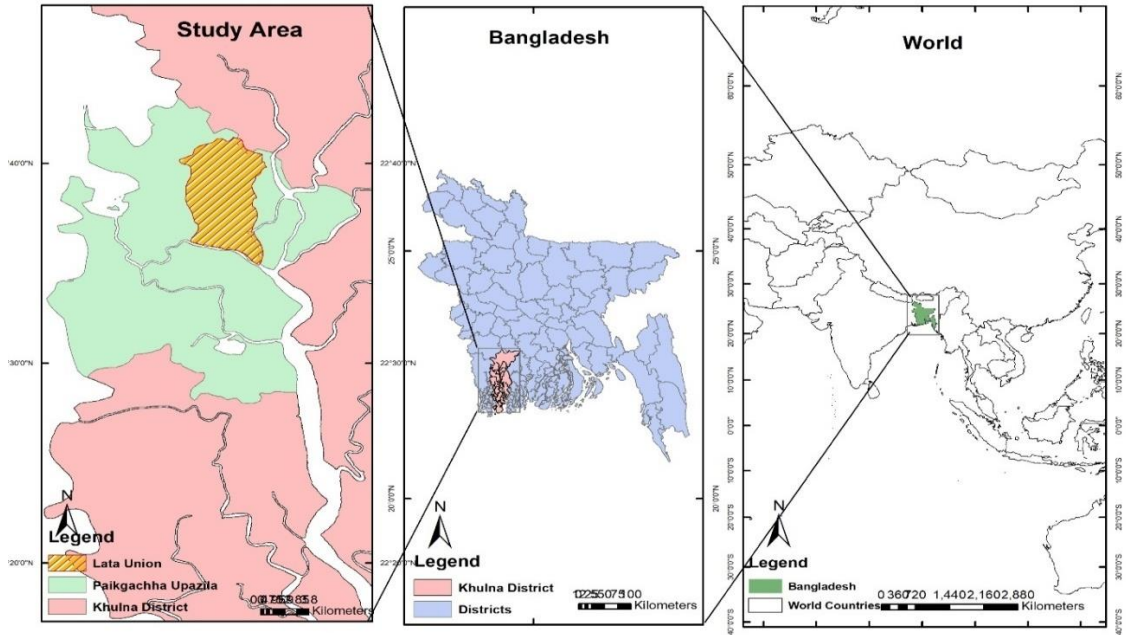
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Appendix

Figure 1: The Study Area



Source: Authors' compilation.

Table 1: Socio-demographic Profile

Category	Frequency (N = 134)	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Head of the Family			
Father	72	54%	54%
Mother	18	13%	67%
Self	44	33%	100%
Total	134	100.00	
Gender of the Respondent			
Male	89	66%	66%
Female	45	34%	100%
Total	134		
Age of the Respondent (In Year)			
30 - 40	98	73%	73%
41 - 50	27	20%	93%
51 - 60	9	7%	100%
Total	134	100.00	
Number of Family Member (In Number)			
3-5	58	43%	43%

6-8	74	55%	99%
9-10	2	1%	100%
Total	134	100.00	
Educational Status of the Respondents			
Primary	32	24%	24%
Secondary	53	40%	63%
Higher Secondary	40	30%	93%
Tertiary	9	7%	100%
Total	134	100.00	
Land Ownership			
Own Land	83	62%	62%
Lease	39	29%	91%
Without Land	12	9%	100%
Total	134		
Land Size (in Bigha*)			
0-3	28	21%	21%
4-6	82	61%	82%
7-9	15	11%	93%
10-12	9	7%	100%
Total	134	100%	
Occupation of the Respondent			
Farming	12	9%	9%
Day Labour	35	26%	35%
Shrimp Cultivation	53	40%	75%
Small Business	34	25%	100%
Total	134	100%	
Source of Drinking Water			
Tube-well	51	38%	38%
Rainy Water	52	39%	77%
Bottle Water (Purchased)	31	23%	100%
Total	134	100%	

* 1 Acre = 3 Bigha

Source: Authors' compilation.

Table 2: Analysis of Livelihood through Sustainable Livelihood Framework

Serial No.	Human Capital Indicators	Mean Score	Rank
a)	Disaster Related Training	1.46	i
b)	Farming Experience	1.35	ii

c)	Exposing Idea in Group Meeting	1.26	iii
d)	Education Level	1.21	iv
Human Capital Index		1.32	
Natural Capital Indicators			
a)	Natural Gazing Land	1.6	i
b)	Access to Fishing in the River	1.46	ii
c)	Sufficiency Water for Irrigation	1.36	iii
d)	Available Safe Drinking Water	1.21	iv
Natural Capital Index		1.41	
Physical Capital Indicators			
a)	Boat	1.63	i
b)	Fishing Net	1.42	ii
c)	Radio	1.08	iii
d)	TV	0.60	iv
Physical Capital Index		1.18	
Financial Capital Indicators			
a)	Loan from NGO/Bank	1.45	i
b)	Having Deposit Money in the Bank	1.27	ii
c)	Price of All Crops	0.14	iii
d)	Monetary Value of All Livelihoods	0.03	iv
Financial Capital Index		0.72	
Social Capital Indicators			
a)	Health and Family Planning	1.43	i
b)	NGOs	1.41	ii
c)	Access to Union Parishads	1.36	iii
d)	Membership in Political Parties	0.27	iv
e)	Community Group Membership	1.06	v
Social Capital Index		1.11	

Source: Authors' compilation.

Table 3: Factors Influencing Livelihood Diversification

Serial No.	Factors	Mean Score	Rank
a)	Salinity Intrusion	1.52	i
b)	Limited Agricultural Income	1.48	ii
c)	Availability of Non-firm Opportunities	1.41	iii
d)	Expand Income Sources	1.41	iv
e)	Large Family	1.34	v
f)	Income-level Decrease	1.10	vi

Source: Authors' compilation.

Table 4: Changes in Income and Occupation

Variable Name	Descriptive Statistics				Difference	
	Mean	S.D.	Min	Max		
Household Income (monthly)	Before Salinity Intrusion	10798.51	2870.07	3000	16000	-5238.80*** (t = -14.17)
	After Salinity Intrusion	5559.70	3175.35	3000	16000	

Note: *** denotes 1% significance level respectively.

Occupation	Frequency (N = 134)	Percent	Difference	
Farming	Before Salinity Intrusion	73	54	-46
	After Salinity Intrusion	11	8	
Day Labour	Before Salinity Intrusion	20	15	+8
	After Salinity Intrusion	31	23	
Shrimp Cultivation	Before Salinity Intrusion	36	27	+17
	After Salinity Intrusion	58	44	
Small Business	Before Salinity Intrusion	5	4	+20
	After Salinity Intrusion	34	25	

Source: Authors' compilation.

Table 5: Estimation of Livelihood Diversification Index

Serial No.	Income Sources	Number(N)	n(n-1)
a)	Farming	11	110
b)	Day Laborer	31	930
c)	Shrimp Cultivation	58	3306
d)	Small Business	34	1122
	Total	N=134	Σn(n - 1)=5468

Simpson Diversification Index = 0.70

Source: Authors' compilation.

Table 6: Constraints to Livelihood Diversification Strategies

Constraints	Score	Rank
Lack of Credit Facilities	0.98	i
Lack of NGO Initiatives	0.89	ii
Lack of Income Generating Activities	0.88	iii
Environmental Disruption (cyclone, salinity)	0.81	iv
Lack of Government Initiatives	0.69	v
Lack of Awareness and Training	0.63	vi

Source: Authors' compilation.

A Review of the Socio-Economic Impacts of the Rohingya Refugees on the Local Community in Cox's Bazar

Md. Masum Sikdar

Abstract

For several decades, the Rohingyas have been suffering from ethnic and religious persecution in the Arakan state of Myanmar. There are an estimated 3.5 million Rohingya dispersed worldwide. More than 1 million Rohingya refugees are now living in Cox's Bazar, the Southeast part of Bangladesh. These Rohingyas are being deprived of education, jobs, proper food, regular clean water and adequate sanitation. The new influx of Rohingya in Cox's Bazar has severe impacts on the local community. These people are living in the Ukhia, Teknaf and Bandarban but, I have concentrated only on Ukhia and Teknaf districts. To carry out this study, I have collected secondary and qualitative data. The study has also investigated the incomes and aids of the Rohingya refugees living in the Southeast region of Bangladesh. The study has exchanged views with the different development partners, NGOs and the different administrative wings of the Government of Bangladesh (GOB) to collect secondary data on the socio-economic and political effects of the Rohingyas on local community in Cox's Bazar.

Introduction

According to the statistical report in Ukhia and Teknaf, the number of Rohingyas is very high compared to the local people; locals are now a minority ethnic group in the Southeast Bangladesh (McAuliffe & Ruhs, 2018). The number of Rohingya refugees is calculated at about 882,676. Among them, the children are more than half. Adults and the elderly people are about 3 percent. The prices of daily commodities are hiking very rapidly; and local job markets are being controlled by the Rohingya community through cheap labor. Forest resources are being depleted by the refugees and the different NGOs. The Rohingya refugees are posing serious threat to the environment; and local sewerage system has been jeopardized. A study carried out in 2018, has estimated that more than 18,000 Rohingya women and girls were raped by military forces and some raped women and girls were killed as well. '116,000 Rohingya people were beaten by security forces indiscriminately in the state of Arakan. 36,000 Rohingya people were thrown into burning fire by the armed forces. These people are the citizens of Myanmar for several hundred years; but now the Burmese government doesn't recognize them as their citizen. (Herald-Whigs, 2017). Rohingya people live in Arakan state which has direct border with Ukhia, Teknaf and Bandarban; now the Rohingya people have settled in Ukhia, Teknaf and Bandarban with the status of refugee hood. Due to the Rohingyas' presence in Cox's Bazar, the tourism business has been seriously hampered; and foreign tourist and local tourist are not coming in Cox's bazar for tourism purposes (Paul, 2017).

A Historical Background of the Rohingya Issue

The Rohingya trace their origins in the region to the fifteenth century, when thousands of Muslims came to the former Arakan Kingdom. Many others arrived during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when Rakhine was governed by colonial rule as part of British India (Albert & Maizland, 2020). In Rakhine state, it is assessed that 59.7% of the 3.8 million people are Buddhist, 35.6% are Rohingya Muslim minority, and the rest are from other religious and ethnic groups. The Rohingya Muslims are mixture of diversified ethnic groups including Moghuls, Arab, Afghan, Turkish, and Bengalis (Alam, 2013). There are seven million Muslims living in Myanmar which are fifty percent of total population of the country (Jaha, 1994). Buddhist nationalism in Myanmar was started to arise in reply to British colonial rule in the country. During the British colonial period, the Burmese military junta and the organizers of several militaries including Aung San were supported and trained by the military forces of the imperial Japan to the British colonials and their allied military forces (Zarni, 2013). The crisis of the Rohingya refugees is not only religious but also an economic as well as political one (Shams, 2015). The Buddhist in the state of Rakhine have been confronting with the Rohingyas for several decades where the military junta is supporting the Buddhists. The Buddhists think that the country of Myanmar is surrounded by the Muslim countries of Malaysia, Indonesia and Bangladesh. The Buddhists think that if any Islamic country attacks Myanmar, the Rohingya will fight against Myanmar. Therefore, they think that they are culturally differentiated, economically subjugated, and politically shelved by the government of Myanmar (Wolf, 2017). The Buddhists think that the Rohingyas are illegal immigrants from the bordering Bangladesh (Saw, 2011; Ahmed, 2012). On the other hand, they are native in Arakan, and are descendants of the original Muslim who converted on Ramree Island (Bahar, 2010a; Forster, 2011). At present, more than one million Rohingyas are living in Bangladesh with the financial supports from the different international organizations including the UN and Bangladesh (United Nation's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, UNOCHA, 2018).

Pugh pointed out that the Rohingya should be given the rights of citizenship in order to find a durable solution to the crisis in the state of Rakhine (Pugh, 2013). In view of Atikur Rahman the Rohingya conflict begins due to the denial of their citizen and human rights (Rahman, 2015). The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), has surveyed and found out that homes, villages and assets of the Rohingya have been devastated by the military junta and Buddhist people in Rakhine. It is also indicated that the Rohingyas are the victims of disappearances, killings, tortures, rapes and other forms of sexual harassment in the state of Rakhine (OHCHR, 2017). Al Amin Rabby observed that the Myanmar has forced the ethnic Rohingyas to leave their country, some of them were killed, some of them were compelled in forced labor, and most of them face deportation from their homeland (Rabby, 2016). Md. Salman Sohel has observed that the military junta and Buddhist treat the Rohingya minority as like as they are ugly animals (Sohel, 2017). Santiago Ripoll and his co-authors also carried out research and they suggested that there are very few facilities for the Rohingya in terms of health

services, water, sanitation, mental health and nutrition in both Myanmar and in the refugee camps in Bangladesh (Ripoll et al., 2017).

Impact of the Rohingya Refugees on the Local Economy of Cox's Bazar

The economy of Bangladesh is rapidly growing with the growth rate of 7.1 percent. The country is very keen in achieving millennium development goals with other rapidly growing economies. The government of Bangladesh has to look after the Rohingya besides the International NGOs financially. It has huge population who need to be employed; but in this critical situation, the government is compelled to look after refugees with its revenues (Alam, 2018). According to the report of the UNDP, it is really very tough for Bangladesh to look after this huge number of refugees. Also, the law and order situation has deteriorated due to refugee influx in Cox's bazar. Weak infrastructure of Cox's bazar, has been seriously hampered due to over transportation in the highway. About 2500 local family fell into extreme poverty due to loss of job to the Rohingya people. A large area of forest have been destroyed in Ukhia and Teknaf and 1,500 hectares of wildlife habitation damaged. (Alam, 2018), has pointed out that the poverty has increased three percent in the local host community. The local fishermen who are used to fishing in the Naf river, are not allowed to catch fish in the river for security reasons. Around 35000 fishermen have lost their job in Ukhia and Teknaf. According to the study, the refugee repatriation process will take 6 to 7 years; and the cost of repatriation would be more than 4 billion U.S dollar (Hashim, opinion, 2018)

In the first three weeks of the influx (Asia, 2020), Bangladesh has received more refugees than all of European countries did in 2016 at the stature of the Syrian crisis. Putting that into viewpoint, Bangladesh which has less than 0.31 percent of the World's total population, hosts 4.7 percent of its total refugees. This is really a big burden on the neck of Bangladesh and its economy (Hashim, opinion, 2018).

Hill areas in Ukhia and Teknaf have been cut down indiscriminately for the construction of camps, hospitals, charity organizations, schools and different offices. According to data from the Department of Agriculture Extension (DoAE), between August 2017 and March 2018, at least 200 (ha) of agricultural land in the Ukhia and Teknaf area was damaged for the refugee settlements. About 5,000 acres of land have been rendered worthless because of sandy soil flowing down from the mountains' slopes, which are being used for refugee accommodation purposes. Also, the grazing land has been destroyed through the different establishments. Around 7000 acres of land have been destroyed for the various activities in the forest areas in Ukhia and Teknaf (Hashim, opinion 2018).

Clashes between the Rohingya and local people are regular occurrences in Ukhia and Teknaf for their business interest in the refugee camps. Being foreign nationals, Rohingya people are involved in business activities in and around the refugee camps. Many observers think that the Bangladesh government has to formulate new policies to control Rohingya activities in the country (Chowdhury, 2018).

Impacts of the Rohingya Refugee Influx on Host Communities

According to the survey of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2019), the Rohingya influx has created a huge problem for the local community such as price hiking of daily commodity, increasing in poverty rate among the host community, social unrest, dacoit, robbery, land grab, killing and deforestation in the Southeast Bangladesh. It has also played a negative role in the local for maintaining friendly relations between the local people and the different agencies that a huge number of Rohingya people have been employed by the different agencies instead of the local people. There is lack of trust between the local people and Rohingya that Rohingya people don't take the local people into that local people are minority in terms of the Rohingya in the area. And this is creating security threats for the government as well as for the local people.

Political Impact

In future the Rohingya will create great problems in the Southeast Bangladesh that Rohingya people are now majority in Ukhia and Teknaf. After their stay in the area for long time, they might seek freedom and self -autonomy in the region. And even they might seek citizenship rights in Bangladesh which would be a big threat for Bangladesh. Though many writers consider that Rohingya people are as like as Chittagonian, this notion is not true at all. Culturally, ethnically and traditionally Rohingya are quite different from the Chittagonian people. Already there have begun huge a number of clashes between the local people and the Rohingya people (Alam, 2018). When the military started attacking the Rohingya, they have fled from Myanmar and crossed into Southeast Bangladesh. At the very beginning of the influx, the Bangladesh government was reluctant to receive them. But due to international pressure, the government accepted the Rohingya. Now Bangladesh is suffering seriously due to the Rohingya issue. The government has to spend a huge amount of revenues for them. Besides, the government and the people of Bangladesh are now under tremendous pressure in terms of geopolitical and economic aspects that border relations between Myanmar and Bangladesh are under stagnation due to refugee influx. The government has to take new policy to deal with the refugee issue for its betterment (Alam, 2018)

Security Challenges

Bangladesh is now facing security challenges that a large number of Rohingya people are militant and they are involved in militant activities. Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army, ARSA, carried out attacks on security forces, they are trained and capable of carrying out attacks in Bangladesh. In the refugee camps, they are now attacking the rival groups. There is report of regular clashes among their different groups. Local people and security forces in Ukhia and Teknaf are in very dangerous situation that they might be attacked by the Rohingya militant group al-yakin. Al-yakin militant group is very powerful in the refugee camps; and they are now

trying to dominate in the refugee camps and adjacent areas. Thus, Bangladesh government has to be very careful about the Rohingya militant group active in the camps (Alam, 2018).

Social Problems

The Rohingyas are creating various kinds of social problems in the camps and surrounding local areas. Birth rate among the Rohingya is very high; yearly they give birth to 50000 children which is a big burden on Bangladesh. Many Rohingya are marrying Bangladesh's people which is also a problem for the locality. Later, they will suffer in identity crisis. They will try to collect Bangladesh's passports to travel to many foreign countries through which they are tarnishing the image of Bangladesh. Rohingya are involved in the different crimes in Ukhia and Teknaf. They are the main perpetrator of yaaba trade in Bangladesh. A huge number of refugees are involved in yaaba trade in Myanmar and Bangladesh. They are main supplier of yaaba in the country. Security forces of Myanmar and Bangladesh are also involved in the yaaba trade. However, there are incidences of clashes between the Rohingya and local people in Ukhia and Teknaf. Abul Kashem, head of Help Cox's Bazar, a local nongovernmental organization working to stop trafficking and raise consciousness among youth, warns that planned crime networks are eager to use those displaced by the crisis (Alam, 2018).

Deforestation and Environmental Degradation

Bangladesh is an environmentally susceptible country to the climate change. Soil erosion, rise of sea levels, natural disasters are very frequent including cyclones and floods. Landslides are also common in the whole of the country. If any landslide happens in the hilly areas of refugee camps, there will be a massacre of human losses. Ground water level is also decreasing due to the over exploitation by the Rohingya refugees. Various water borne diseases are observed in the surrounding areas of Ukhia and Teknaf. Air pollution is also observed in the area through hill and trees burning. Many human haulers are seen running in Ukhia and Teknaf through which roads and highways are destroyed (Alam, 2018). Moreover, the key cause for the encroachment is the fact that nearly 6,800 tons of fuel wood is collected each month, and each Rohingya family uses on an average 60 bamboo culms to construct their temporary shelters (Thomson, 2019). According to many observers, there should have clear demarcation between the refugee camps and local villages so that anyone can easily identify the house of refugee and local community (Mehdi Chowdhury, 2018).

Health Issues of Rohingya People and Threats to Local People and Economy

The Rohingya refugees are mentally and physically ill because they have been persecuted by the military junta in Myanmar. They are living in Bangladesh in an unhygienic condition in the refugee camps. Various kinds of diseases are being noticed among them. Water pollution, air pollution and climatic hazards are observed in the refugee camps (Rana & Tahir, 2019). *There are some NGOs working on the improvement of the refugees' mental health; but they don't have*

enough staff, money, space and facilities to provide support to the refugees. There are remaining many problems in providing mental health services to the refugees. Many suggest that the concerning authorities should concentrate on the improvement of mental health of the Rohingya refugees so that they might not be a security threat to the people of Bangladesh (Andrew, Varner, Ventevogel, TaimurHasan, & Welton-Mitchell, 2017). Nonetheless, there are observed many diseases such as “explosive annoyance, psychotic-like symptoms, somatic or medically inexplicable symptoms, impaired function and suicidal ideation,” along with a familiar history of reported high anxiety, hyper vigilance, despair, and appetite loss within the population (ibid,2017).

Moreover, lack of sanitation and clean water is another problem in the refugee camps through which the refugees along with the local people are being infected with various diseases (Mahmood, Wroe, Fuller, & Leaning, 2017). Also, improper infrastructure in the refugee camps may not be enough to protect the refugees and local people from the cyclones, torpedoes and landslides (Ahmed, et al., 2018).

‘The disease which are prevalent among the refugees are, cholera, hepatitis A, hepatitis E, and typhoid. Currently, diarrheal diseases contribute significantly to health morbidity in the Rohingya camp, (Chan, Chiu, & Chan, Medical and health risks associated with communicable diseases of Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh 2017, 2018).

Low quality of life, poor sanitation, lack of sewerage system and various kinds of infectious diseases are common in the refugee camps which might be a big threat to public health officials and to the local people (Summers, et al., 2018). As of 2018, there have been 5,710 reported cases of infection and 35 reported deaths owing to diphtheria ((Jalloh, et al., 2019).

That there are examples of huge numbers of sexually transmitted diseases is another health problem among the refugees. Yaaba trade and another drug trafficking are prevalent in the refugee camps. A huge number of young people of the refugees are yaaba dealer. Also Bangladesh will have to face a serious health problem regarding the HIV, since a big number of Rohingya men and women are infected with HIV. The most concerning matter is that many Bangladeshi people are marrying the Rohingya women; and also a big number of Rohigya young people are marring local women through which the HIV is spreading in Bangladesh ((Gerbi, et al., 2015). ‘In addition, 236,696 children under 5 years of age were too vaccinated against polio. However, Rohingya refugees arriving after the mass vaccination stay undefended. As a result, a new cholera vaccination campaign began in May 2018 (Firdausi Qadri, 2018). In both refugee camps and local villages vaccination program was carried out to protect from the various diseases. Malnutrition among the refugee children is also very common due to the lack adequate food intake (Patinkin, 2018).

Malnutrition is liable for the lack of healthy food, unhygienic living condition, lack of clean water, very congested living condition ((Moynes, 2018)). In order to make both refugee camps and local villages free from malnutrition, supply of nutritious food is very important by the concerning authorities (White, 2017). Also the rate of divorce among the refugees is very high;

these divorced women face a long term mental trauma in the society. Rohingya people are very dogmatic and fanatic in terms of religious perspective, and gender equality doesn't exist among the Rohingya people (Hutchinson, 2017).

Child marriage is another problem in the Rohingya society. They do not accept any contraceptive method because they think that it is against of religion; or it may lead to infertility and even may lead to death of pregnant women, (Ainul, Haque, Amin, Rob, Melnikas, & Falcone, 2019). At present there are 19 facilities in the refugee camps for the reproductive health. But it requires more facilities for the reproductive health (Wadia, 2018).

Repatriation of the Rohingya Refugees

It is important to note here that long term refugee settlement in Bangladesh would be a great problem for Bangladesh as far as politics, security, environment and health issues are concerned. It is high time to take necessary steps to send back the refugees to their homeland. The Rohingya should realize that Bangladesh is not their homeland; and they will not be allowed to settle down here permanently. Already Bangladesh's Southeastern society has been tremendously jeopardized due to Rohingya influx. Several meetings have been held between the officials of Bangladesh and Myanmar; but no decision and ultimate goal of repatriation has been so far achieved. Bangladesh is so skeptical about the intention of Myanmar that Myanmar might not be willing to take back the Rohingya in Myanmar. China and India are also playing dubious role in the repatriation process. Because both countries have their geopolitical, geostrategic and economic interest in Myanmar. Bangladesh has to realize this issue. In this circumstance Bangladesh needs to improve its relationship with Myanmar to resolve the bilateral issues including the refugee issue. Here it should be mentioned that Southeast Bangladesh and the state of Rakhine are very important for both China and India; China has already built a deep seaport in Kyukpyu through which it has been carrying its products into the southern province, Yunnan. It has invested about 20 billion of US dollar in mining, power plantation, special economic zone, garment sectors, oil and gas and gas pipelines. Thus, Myanmar is important for China's geopolitical and economic interest; that's why China is taking side of Myanmar in terms of diplomatic vacuum between Bangladesh and Myanmar. On the other hands, India has geopolitical and economic interest in Myanmar, thus it has built a deep seaport in Sittwe in Arakan state through which it is transporting its goods and chattels into the Northeastern states of India. India had also invested in the different sectors of Myanmar such as mining, coal, power plantations, roads and highways, special economic zones, oil and gas. Also Myanmar is very important to implement India's Multi-modal transport project which will be connected with Southeast Asia. Moreover, Myanmar is providing all kinds supports to the Indian government in tackling the insurgency in the Northeastern states of India bordering with Myanmar. Thus in any critical situation, because India's geopolitical and economic interest it supports Myanmar. Therefore, Bangladesh should realize this issue; and should come ahead to improve its relationship with China, India and Myanmar. Without the support of these countries Rohingya issue can never be resolved.

Conclusion:

As it has been mentioned earlier that Rohingya is a great burden on Bangladesh. Bangladesh requires adopting policy on how to deal with the refugee issues; it has also to adopt new policy on how to deal with Myanmar, China and India. Without the cooperation of these three countries Rohingya issue can never be resolved. Myanmar is an important country for Bangladesh too hence. Myanmar is a gateway for Bangladesh for its access to Southeast Asia and China and Northeast Asia and Northeast India. If Bangladesh can continue friendly relations with Myanmar it would be greatly benefitted. Bangladesh is a developing country with huge population; but Myanmar is vast country with small number of population where Bangladesh can play an important role in the agricultural and industrial sectors (Mahmud, 2018). Bangladesh is an important country for both China and India because of its Bay of Bengal that both China and India are interested in building deep sea ports in the Southeast Bangladesh. Geopolitically Cox's bazar is very important for the World including China, Southeast Asia and Northeast India; thus, Bangladesh should adopt policy on building deep seaports in the Southeast Bangladesh where Bangladesh would be greatly beneficiary in terms of economic development. Also, both China and India would be beneficiary in terms of their trade and investment, economic corridor, development cooperation and regional connectivity and exports and imports of their goods and chattels. Rohingya issue which is a serious burden on the local community of Cox's Bazar and Bangladesh, should be resolved through trade and investment, regional connectivity, and Bangladesh's look east policy, (Hashim, S. M. 2018).

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