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Editor

Dr. Hasibur Rahaman



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Editorial Note

Welcome to the latest issue of the Social Science Review, a distinguished journal of the Faculty of Social Science at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Science and Technology University in Gopalganj, Bangladesh. As we embark on another journey of intellectual exploration and knowledge dissemination, we are delighted to present a collection of thought-provoking articles that reflect the diverse research interests within the field of social sciences.

In this issue, we are proud to showcase research papers that cover a wide range of subjects, including sociology, anthropology, political science, economics, and psychology. These articles delve into critical societal issues, explore innovative research methodologies, and provide valuable insights into both local and global contexts. Our esteemed contributors have put forth their expertise and scholarship to enhance our understanding of the multifaceted dimensions of the social world.

The Social Science Review aims to foster interdisciplinary dialogue and encourage the exchange of ideas among scholars, practitioners, and policymakers. Our journal serves as a platform for promoting evidence-based research that can contribute to addressing the social challenges faced by our society. By disseminating this knowledge, we hope to influence policy decisions, promote social justice, and advance sustainable development.

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to the authors who have contributed their valuable research to this issue. Their rigorous scholarship and dedication to advancing knowledge in their respective fields have greatly enriched the content of this journal. We also extend our appreciation to the diligent reviewers, whose expertise and critical insights have played a vital role in maintaining the high standards of the Social Science Review.

We would also like to express our appreciation to the editorial board, whose tireless dedication and commitment have been instrumental in the success of the Social Science Review. Their guidance and expertise have been invaluable in shaping the journal's direction and maintaining its academic excellence. As a journal affiliated with Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Science and Technology University, we are committed to upholding the principles of academic integrity, ethical research, and intellectual rigour. The Social Science Review aims to foster a spirit of academic excellence, scholarly collaboration, and intellectual curiosity among our readership.

We encourage researchers, scholars, and practitioners from around the world to submit their original manuscripts to the Social Science Review. By sharing your research and engaging in robust academic discourse, you contribute to the advancement of social science scholarship and help address the multifaceted challenges that our societies face today.

We hope that you find this edition of the Social Science Review both informative and thought-provoking. We invite you to delve into the articles, critically engage with the ideas presented, and join us in shaping the future of social science research.

Dr. Hasibur Rahaman

Editor, Social Science Review

Faculty of Social Science

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Science and Technology University Gopalganj,
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Return Migration in Bangladesh: Questions of Brain Drain, Brain Gain, and Modern Slavery

Naseem Akhter Hussain¹

Abstract

This article is written on the basis of the findings of research that attempted to get insights into return migration and analyze its impact on the society and economy of Bangladesh. This is in relation to the theoretical position that the movement of the migrants and the knowledge they bring with them is a vital component in the process of globalization. The migration phenomenon is interpreted differently by saying that it is not a 'one-way trip' because sending countries are benefited from 'brain gain'. It locates the potential benefits of return migration of professionals with new ideas and knowledge and non-professionals with increased skill and experience. Can the return migrants be agents of change in their country of origin? The generally perceived gains in Bangladesh from international migration include remittance payments to sending countries, reduced unemployment, and skill acquisition overseas which may be used by the return migrants for the development of the country. The process of globalization has raised the issue of 'new brain drains' as the recent phenomenon is the migration of knowledge-skilled people and young students to developed countries from Bangladesh. Another dark side of migration is also explored from the experiences of low-skilled return migrants who faced the atrocities of 'modern slavery' while working in foreign countries.

Keywords: Return Migration, Brain Drain, Brain Gain, Modern Slavery, and Bangladesh.

Introduction

There has been growing attention in the 1990s to the impacts of migration as an agent of development and social change in Bangladesh as a sending country. From the standpoint of global labor mobility, it is observed that the outflow of the workforce in search of higher income to more developed areas has increased. Particularly the emigration of highly educated individuals, talented students, and even children of the return migrants has raised the question of a 'new brain drain' again in Bangladesh. Can this shift be explained by the concept of 'brain circulation' which emphasizes the two-way flow? Can Bangladesh make improvements to the educational and economic situation to prevent knowledge-skilled people from migrating? Can Bangladesh earn benefits from the exchange of intellectual resources in the process of globalization? Can Bangladesh attract

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return migrants to employ their knowledge in advanced studies, high technology, financial resources, and business connections in their home country? These questions with regard to reintegration of return migrants which are relevant to understand the recently changing socio-economic aspects of Bangladesh are addressed in this article. Another aspect of globalization is the re-emergence of slavery in modern form through contract jobs of low-skilled migrants in the host countries. Especially when Bangladeshi female workers return from foreign countries with experiences of torture and humiliation, they face derogatory consequences in their own country as well. Therefore new questions need to be answered. How to stop 'modern slavery' faced by Bangladeshi workers abroad? Can Bangladesh as sending country make agreements with migrant-receiving countries on the issues of making job rules and ensuring job security for low-skilled workers?

The emigration policy of Bangladesh has been reformed over time. After the independence of Bangladesh emigration from the country was regulated and controlled under the 1922 Emigration Act of British colonial rule. With the increase in the flow of temporary labor migration to the Middle Eastern countries, the 1922 Act lost importance, and new policies were envisaged. Migration increased during the 1970s and the Government handed over the recruitment responsibility to private recruiting agencies. In this context, the Emigration Ordinance of 1982 was framed, and later in 2002 new rules were made and in 2006 Overseas Employment policy was formulated. In the 1970s there was no concrete policy to encourage or discourage female migration. In 1981 through a presidential order, certain categories of female workers were barred from migrating overseas for employment. According to this order, professional and skilled women could migrate but semi-skilled and low-skilled women could not migrate. In 1988 Government of Bangladesh withdrew the ban but semi-skilled and low-skilled women could migrate under special permission and it was imposed in 1997. In 2003 semi-skilled and low-skilled female workers of 35 years of age were allowed to migrate and the age was reduced to 25 years in 2006. Since then migration of low-skilled female workers from Bangladesh particularly to the Middle Eastern countries increased.

Bangladeshi working abroad currently come from four skill groups - professionals, skilled, semi-skilled, and low-skilled. Professionals include doctors, engineers, architects, university and college teachers, accountants, computer programmers, pharmacists, nurses, foremen, diploma engineers, paramedics, sales personnel, etc. The skilled workers group includes mechanics, welders, carpenters, electricians, painters, cooks, drivers, plumbers, tailors, blacksmiths, tile fixers, operators, etc. The semi-skilled category includes farmers, gardeners, and helpers in various trades. Low-skilled workers include domestic workers, cleaners, care takers, servants, laborers, general workers, etc. In recent times semi-skilled and low-skilled workers constitute the majority of the migrants from Bangladesh. Migration of Women workers is confined to some

occupations like domestic workers, house keeper, cleaner, care taker, garment worker etc. Destinations for women migrants from Bangladesh are mainly UAE, and Lebanon. Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Libya, Bahrain, Mauritius, Maldives etc. Preferred countries for migration of professionals and skilled workers from Bangladesh are the UK, USA, Canada, Australia, Germany, France, Italy, New Zealand, Belgium, Netherlands, South Africa, Spain, and Japan.

The present research has attempted to unravel the socio-economic aspects of international migration from the perspectives of the returnee migrants in Bangladesh. It is noteworthy that most of the existing literature analyzes the development impacts of return migration. Firstly, it is mentioned that the return migrants bring with them new skills (human capital) acquired through experience, training, and education in host countries. Secondly, it is focused that the return migrants bringing financial capital in the form of savings from abroad. This capital allows returnees to participate as entrepreneurs and investors in Bangladesh. Thirdly, it is discussed that the return migrants contribute through their social network capital that they acquired as a result of their migration experience and living abroad. Fourthly, it is stated that the return migrants can act as social change makers by challenging and changing the existing conditions of societies of Bangladesh which is their country of origin. The argument is that the initial 'brain-drain' is followed by 'brain-return', 'brain gain', and 'brain-circulation' in which skilled people move back and forward within international labor markets. This is a crucial issue and this research is conducted for understanding the impacts of migration on the socio-economic development of Bangladesh. The argument is that the stronger the achievements of economic growth in Bangladesh, the more globalized the economy becomes, the greater will be the role of return migrants in the country of origin.

The overall objective of the research is to explore the impacts of return migration on migrants themselves, communities, and work places. Four types of returnee migrants are selected – low-skilled migrants in rural areas, knowledge-skilled migrants in educational institutions, students migrating for higher studies, and female domestic laborers migrating on a contractual basis. For a collection of data teachers of public universities, private universities and technical institutes who went abroad for higher studies or work are selected. The low-skilled laborers are selected from a village of Tangail which is near urban town and from a remote village of Mitamoin in Haor areas. Among female workers low skilled laborers from Manikganj are selected. The students who are pursuing higher studies in developed countries and their parents are also interviewed. Data collection was conducted through questionnaire, in-depth interviews, formal discussions, online conversation and case studies.

The Concepts of Migration: From ‘Brain Drain’ to ‘Brain Gain’

Brain Drain: International migration gets involved in a complex process created by the issues of brain drain, brain gain, brain circulation, and the effects of diaspora networks on home countries. The complexity is created by the flows of knowledge and technology stemming from the international movement of labor particularly high-skilled persons and their impact on the loss of human capital and technology in least-developed countries. Primarily brain drain is the migration of engineers, physicians, scientists, and highly skilled professionals with university training. Another category included in the brain drain consists of knowledge workers who possess specialized knowledge and are employed in high-productivity jobs that are essential for the knowledge economy. Different types of talents are also included in brain drain. These are 1. directly productive talent - entrepreneurs, executives, managers and technical engineers 2. scientific talent - academics, scientists, and international students 3. health and cultural talent - physicians, nurses, artists, musicians, writers, and media persons. The result of brain drain is the development of a knowledge-based economy because countries that have high levels of human capital grow more quickly (Beire, 2001). On the other hand, brain drain deprives countries of origin of some of the most qualified persons when they have invested in their education and training. It reduces the stock of human capital which is already scarce in developing countries. As a result, brain drain could have the impact of slowing down a developing country’s economic growth rate (Gibson, 2011).

Brain Gain: Since the 1990’s it has been argued that ‘brain drain’ can be beneficial to developing countries through ‘brain gain’ (Mountford, 1997). Brain gain refers to the expansion of human capital, skills, and knowledge which develop in the home country as an indirect effect of migration. This includes the use of remittance for education, temporary return of highly skilled diaspora members, and return of qualified emigrants. A diaspora refers to a community of expatriates outside their homeland. Diaspora can serve as a ‘brain bank’ that can become a source of knowledge sharing and technology transfer within the home country (Sexennial, 2005). Diasporas can also contribute to the development of their home country by facilitating the establishment of business and trade networks between the home and host country, Return migrants can deploy their skills and experience accumulated abroad by working in knowledge-intensive activities like government, consultancies, and managerial positions in firms. They can also maintain relationships that link their societies of origin and destination. Returnees are more likely to be entrepreneurs than those who did not migrate. Returnees can participate in institution building as their actions are enriched by their learning and experience abroad. However, the potential contributions of returnees depend on the level of development of the home country and the range of opportunities for their involvement. All these require the reintegration of return migrants into the society and economy of the home country.

From 'Brain Drain' to 'Brain Circulation'

New Brain Drain: There are newly emerging debates concerning the idea of 'brain drain' in the context of the deterritorialization of cultures. New questions are asked. Is the transnational movement of people a positive phenomenon? Do developing countries benefit when talented young students leave their country to stay permanently in developed countries? Do the developing countries become loser's knowledge-skilled-led people migrate, while the country has invested in their education and skill attainment?

Data based on the in-depth interviews with the parents of the students who left Bangladesh for higher studies in developed countries indicate that the changing structure of the global economy creates opportunities that the students are able to pursue abroad. On the other hand, all the parents said that the existing situation in Bangladesh does not create any incentive for getting international standard education and no surety for building a career in the modern job market. A common expression of all the parents of the migrant students was that 'there is no future for our children in Bangladesh' (*vobishat andhokar*). They mentioned that talent is not enough for building a career (*joggotar mullo nai*). In their view, money, network, lobbying, influence, and power play vital roles in gaining success. Moreover, they are afraid of unemployment and underemployment. In their views, if their children are forced to be in a job that is below their educational standard, this will cause 'brain waste'. It is known from the respondents that they have to go through hardship for their children. Among the respondents, 50% of them have to live in 'broken families' caused by migration. Mothers accompany the children going abroad while fathers stay back in their home country and join them after completing their tenure of jobs in Bangladesh. Among the respondents, 30% have sent all their children abroad and husbands and wives in their old age are staying in Bangladesh. All the respondents mentioned that they had to sell their property and take loans from banks and relatives to support the migration of their children to developed countries for higher studies.

During on line conversations, the students studying in different universities in developed countries expressed self-confidence and strong determination. They said that they believe in achieving satisfactory performance abroad. The students said that they are afraid of the social-economic-political conditions in Bangladesh. From their views, it is understood that all these factors have a negative impact and these are unfavorable for scientific-technological-creative-intellectual development. The students said that after completion of education, they can become professionals and also permanent residents. In their opinion, there are scopes for applying knowledge in those countries and emigration is easier. All the students said that they will look for work anywhere in the global markets. They believe in the concept of a 'career without borders'. They said 'work, earning, money cannot have an identity of home or abroad' (*kaj-uparjon-*

arther kono desh bidesh nei). The question still remains; does Bangladesh gain or lose when its brightest talents go abroad with no intention of returning?

Brain Circulation: Transformation of the ‘brain drain’ phenomenon into ‘brain circulation’ is a recent attempt at reconceptualization. Regarding international migration the idea of ‘brain drain’ was an issue of debate in the 1960s; it was followed by restrictions on emigration in the 1970s; return migration was encouraged for ‘brain gain’ in the 1980s; with the growth of globalization an idea of ‘brain circulation’ is becoming popular which is a trend of facilitating transnational migration of knowledge skilled population in the 1990s. With the changing structure of the global economy opportunities for high technology, entrepreneurship, higher studies, and advanced research are created in developed countries. All these avenues attract students and educated people in developing countries to fulfilling their ambition and build a secure future that they can pursue through migration to developed countries. The reality is that scopes created for international higher education also function as channels for the migration of highly skilled workers.

During interviews with the Bangladeshi students studying abroad, all of them expressed that ‘admission to universities in developed countries means getting tickets for migration’. It is understood in the context of developed economies where constantly new initiatives are undertaken for which a highly qualified workforce is required. This demand of the knowledge economy is met by highly productive and qualified knowledge-skilled emigrants. The researchers found that more than 50% of international students from Asia eventually secure permanent residence in a developed country (Tremblay, 2004). In this context, international migration can be explained by different viewpoints. An economic factor is that all the Bangladeshi students studying at higher education levels are sponsored by their parents. Now who is benefited from ‘brain gain’ when knowledge-skilled persons and knowledge seeker students of developing countries like Bangladesh migrate to developed countries? Is money earned in developed economies by the people who left their home countries arriving at developing countries? Is the country from which qualified people are leaving in search of a better life on the losing side? Economists at the global level think that if the outflow continues, that could lead to dramatic economic and social consequences (Sattaur, 1989). It is noteworthy that in the era of globalization, the international policy of higher education is also biased by commercialization. Previously scholarships were offered to students who had to return after completion of higher education. This also contributed to building good relations between the countries. However, at present most of the students in the universities of developed countries are undertaking higher studies mostly on full-fee-paying basis.

Brain circulation theorists explain the concept by four features, globalization, careers without boundaries, absence of movement barriers, and allowing the possession of dual citizenship. This is thought to be a beneficial structure creating

win-win systems (Tung, 2008). The developed countries gain benefits from the migration of intellectuals because they have a labor market shortage. Developing countries can be benefitted from knowledge-skilled migration if they can guarantee sufficient financial revenue. The migrants will be benefitted from the growth in income after migration to developed countries. This will create job satisfaction for the migrants through opportunities for the application of knowledge that does not exist in developing countries.

Return Migration and Economic Development in Bangladesh

Migration-Development Nexus: The relationship between international migration and economic development in the country of origin is usually explained from two perspectives. One approach primarily points out that emigration leads to an improvement in resource availability and income distribution in countries of origin. Another approach argues that out-migration creates economic dependency and undermines the prospects for development. It is also mentioned by others that migration may stimulate development in the long run because some benefits are not immediately tangible. This perspective emphasizes the impact of migration on economic development by showing remittance, skill acquisition, and higher agricultural productivity in the long run.

Acquisition of Human Capital

Knowledge Skilled Migrants: It is known from interviews with the teachers of public and private universities and technical institutions in Bangladesh that as return migrants they have brought improved knowledge and higher skills. This can be termed as non-economic remittance, for example academic, technical, and technological remittance (Nyberg-Sorensen, 2004). The teachers received Masters' and Ph.D. degrees in developed countries and they mentioned the enhanced interest in academic study and encouragement in lifelong learning. About 70% of the respondents indicated that their overseas study experience made them more interested in pursuing postgraduate studies and conducting research as post-doctoral fellows. All the respondents were positive in expressing that studying abroad has enriched their intellectual qualities and capacities for teaching profession. Among the knowledge skilled migrants 25% had experience of working abroad in educational, technical and industrial institutions which helped them to gain practical experience of applying knowledge. In their views through pursuing education in developed countries they have acquired international standard degree, advanced learning, interest in reading and writing, skills in conducting research, English language, technology especially ICT, progressive world views, exploring different cultures, express personal views, communication skills and seriousness about career plans. Besides acquiring skills that are directly connected with an academic career, respondents also indicated various aspects of influence that relate to personal and social development. About 90% of the respondents agreed that their overseas study

experience allowed them to better value perspectives other than their own and to better understand their own cultural values and biases. According to them this helped them after returning from abroad to respect views of other people especially students. Respondents also expressed that studying abroad has increased their maturity, independence, self-confidence, openness to new ideas and tolerance of ambiguity. They mentioned that studying abroad has increased their creativity and skills of time management, problem solving, leadership skills, which are valuable in the personal as well as professional spheres.

Low-Skilled Laborers: Among the low-skilled laborers 80% have education up to primary level, 10% up to secondary level, 6% up to higher secondary, and 4% up to graduation level. Although a few of them have a better education than others, they accepted work abroad as low-skilled laborers because they were unemployed in Bangladesh. Working abroad is more appreciated than remaining unemployed. About 20% of these respondents had experienced migration for the second time and 5% went to Cyprus, Italy, and Malaysia after returning from the Middle Eastern countries. Most of the low skilled laborers expressed that they were successful in fulfilling their ambition of changing their fortune (*vagger poribartan*). They said that they had to overcome many barriers on their way to find jobs overseas. Some of these are collecting money required for migration, handling the manpower export agent, flying in an airplane for the first time, crossing the border of your homeland, facing a journey towards unknown destination, adjustment with the new workplace abroad, communicating with people of different cultural backgrounds, adjustment with new life style, weather, food, daily routine etc. The low skilled laborers evaluated their work abroad by saying that they acquired experience of working in a foreign country, better skills at work place, learnt discipline and time management, sophisticated ways of behavior, communication with foreigners, different cultural practices, speak language other than Bengali, gathered interest in travel, gained self-confidence and learned to save money and spend in a calculative way. Most of the respondents mentioned that one important lesson from working abroad was to have tolerance in facing humiliation, misbehavior, and torture by employers and to remain strong with determination to earn money. ‘Money is power’ (*artha mane shokti*) they said. All of them faced sufferings abroad at their work places but they strongly believe that if they go to foreign countries again, they will perform better to earn more income.

Acquisition of Financial Capital (Remittance)

Overseas migration is broadly understood as a strategy to overcome poverty-trap. In this perspective, migration is viewed as a costly household subsistence strategy. Therefore, it is perceived that migrant members working abroad can manage uncertainty, diversify their income portfolio and alleviate liquidity constraints through remittances (Stark, 1991) In Bangladesh remittances are usually valuable resources for relatively rural poor people who are mostly in need

of financial capital. Remittances are enhancing welfare among people at the bottom layer of the society in Bangladesh. It is noteworthy that Bangladeshi labor force in different parts of the world is primarily constituted by low skilled and semi-skilled workers (Siddiqui, 2001) while the proportion of professionals is 3 percent (IQM 2005),

Knowledge Skilled Migrants: Among the teachers 60% went abroad for higher studies with full support of scholarships, 20% with partial financial support and 20% without scholarships. Families collected loans from relatives and supported those who got partial scholarships and those who did not get it. These teachers stated that they managed to get part-time jobs in the countries of destination and gradually paid back the loan. Among the knowledge skilled migrants, 50% had experience working abroad. Especially 10 teachers with technical and ICT knowledge earned good salary while others worked as teaching assistants and in research projects. Out of 50 teachers 30 were married, among whom 20 spouses migrated and joined their partners. The spouses (both wife and husband) worked abroad in different kinds of jobs. All the respondents mentioned that they tried to save money and send a part of it to their families staying back home in the country. However, these families do not depend totally on remittance for meeting household expenses. The remittance sent to the families while the teachers studied abroad was spent by the family members mainly for consumption, debt repayment, house making or renovation, ceremonies, and medical costs. After returning to Bangladesh all these teachers got new avenues for financial benefits and their salaries were raised. Among them, 15 migrants got jobs as teachers in private universities. Others got part-time jobs in private universities, donor-funded projects, research institutions, technical institutes, technical firms, and ICT firms. Some of them started business of technical products and established computer service centers. Among the migrants 20 were unmarried who got married after return and built relationship with higher status families. It is reported by the respondents that when the knowledge skilled migrants return, they have a strong motivation to invest the savings in fixed deposits, wage earners bond, purchasing land, housing, etc. which are also sources of income in future. The return migrants also invest their remittance in productive assets like computer, lap top, books etc. Remittance is used to purchase car, furniture, electronic goods and household items because the social status of the return migrants rise and they have to maintain the higher social standard. The return migrants also use remittance for basic consumption and recreation.

Low-Skilled Laborers: All 50 low-skilled laborers had to pay the middle men and others involved in the migration process, passport, visa, air tickets which the families collected as loans. The families consider this payment as a kind of investment. About 30% of the low-skilled laborers collected the money by keeping cultivable land as a security. After the low-skilled laborers migrated they regularly sent remittances to their families which they mostly spent to meet consumption needs, for debt repayment and recovery of their land. The

respondents mentioned that they spend remittance for the education of their children as they are concerned about their future. The return migrants feel obligation to support relatives with money at times of need, medical treatment, payment for dowry and for migration overseas. They are conscious about saving a part of remittance to invest for purchasing modern equipment for agricultural production. Low Skilled laborers of Tangail (12%) invested a part of remittance for small business like grocery shop, restaurants, selling agricultural products in mobile vans. On the other hand, the low skilled laborers of Mitamoin which is a remote village invested remittance (15%) for cattle raising, poultry, fish cultivation. Investment of money in money-lending business is a traditional practice in Mitamoin and a part of remittance is also invested in this. (30%) Among the return migrants some (10%) low skilled laborers temporarily migrated for few months to nearby town to sell fish on mobile vans in urban neighborhoods Return migrants consider it to be a profitable business. Many of them spent remittance for house making, purchasing land, buying vehicle for transport business, purchase television, mobile and solar energy for home consumption.

Return Migration and Social Development in Bangladesh

Return Migrants as Change-Makers: It is observed that migration has improved the living standards of their families at two stages. First while still working abroad workers have influenced social mobility through remittance which the families of the migrants used for improved consumption of daily necessities, house building, land purchase, education, health care, and dowry. These have relevance for raising migrant family's status, particularly in the rural social structure. Second, return migrants have acquired social mobility by using their savings, experiences, and skills gained abroad and they have improved their economic activity and social standing back home. In Bangladesh culturally '*bidesh*' or abroad is constructed as '*unnoti*' or progress, economic transformation, and advancement. Overseas migration is considered to be an easy route to material prosperity (*dhoni hauar shohaj upay*). Therefore it bears the expectation to facilitate a change in social class and status of the return migrants. Piore (1979) comments that migration is not just a 'step out but also a step up'. Gardner (1995) has observed that there are not only economic investments but also qualitative shifts in worldviews, culture and social relationships as a result of migration. It is observed in the present study that both knowledge skilled migrants and low skilled laborers contribute towards improvement of social institutions through innovative ideas.

Changes Brought at the Work Place

Knowledge Skilled Migrants: The status of the return migrants who are teachers is raised because of the common belief that western education system is more developed and opportunities of learning are available there. The

respondents expressed that a difference of identity is created between those who studied abroad and those who did not. Generally it is said that the academics who returned from abroad speak and write better in English language; their personality is more easy-going and free and they have progressive and modern views about society. These teachers are regular in writing articles, publishing in national and international journals and participating in international seminars. All of these activities contribute towards creating a culture of intellectualism and professionalism. All the respondents expressed that their contributions for the development of syllabus and curriculum are appreciated by the academics. Especially use of multimedia in the class room, making the classes interactive between students and teachers, individual research and verbal presentation by the students are widely practiced by the teachers who studied abroad. They are more student- friendly and follow specific time for student consultation. Most of them deliver lectures in English and encourage the students to use English as a medium of answering questions in the examinations. It is said that these teachers with experience from overseas countries are serious about time management for example following schedules for class, examining scripts and preparing results. They engage themselves with programs organized by the students, celebration of festivals and study tours both within and outside the country. However, all the respondents mentioned that a difference is maintained between those who studied abroad and those who did not. They are stigmatized as '*atel*' or satirically expressed as intellectuals. These teachers said that as they are less interested in political activities and more involved in academic activities, their voices remain low in decision making. Thereby they are unable to make changes at the institutional level.

Low Skilled Laborers: The status of the return migrants who are low skilled laborers is raised because there is a general belief that they have brought the money from abroad, although the exact amount of money is unknown. These migrants are also considered to be brave as they have crossed not only the borderline of the village but also the national border. People think that cross-cultural experience and overseas employment have changed the return migrants to be more confident and become change-makers. Because of the raised status of the low-skilled laborer migrants, family expenditure also increased. Therefore they searched for avenues for increasing their income. Through various innovative ways, they were not only self-employed to raise their income, but they also created employment for others and encouraged many others to multiply their income earnings. In Mitamoin where there is no electricity, the return migrants made the use of solar energy popular. They also used innovative technologies for crop cultivation

Changes Brought at the Level of Social Networking

It is observed that the migrants develop qualities for 'double identities' and they acquire qualities of adaptation. They adjust to the situation in the host country

and they have to go through a reintegration process after they return to their country of origin. The respondents mentioned that the community people occasionally address them as '*bideshi*' to make a difference. However, through the migration process, the return migrants get accustomed to living in 'diasporas' among migrants who are anchored socially, culturally, and physically neither in their place of origin nor in their place of destination (Al Ali and Koser, 2002).

Knowledge Skilled Migrants: It needs to be mentioned that the returnees take advantage of their 'double identities'. The returnees apply the identity attributes they acquired abroad with a view to distinguish themselves from the locals who did not migrate. They may face social pressures and feel marginalized by their own original society. But at the same time, the returnees negotiate in society and contribute towards social change on the basis of 'social capital' gained through social networking both within the country and outside. The respondents mentioned that they regularly communicate with residents abroad in the diaspora through e-mail and social media. The teachers keep in contact with teachers and students abroad. Through such contacts return migrant teachers go abroad to participate in seminars and teachers living abroad are also invited to join seminars in Bangladesh. Academics living abroad are also communicated for review and publication of articles in journals as well as to help other students who apply for admission to different universities for higher studies. The teachers of technical institutes mentioned that by using the social network they get assistance from the diaspora towards digitalization efforts in Bangladesh. Some of the teachers of technical institutes are involved in data outsourcing companies which create avenues for the employment of young students skilled in ICT. It can be mentioned that the successful growth of India's software and IT industry owes a great deal to the human and financial capital brought back by returnees along with their strong ties with overseas Indian IT diaspora communities (Jonkers,2008). The development of this sector is not yet fully explored in Bangladesh.

Low-Skilled Laborers: The low-skilled laborers who migrated belong to poor families and through earning remittance, they have overcome the poverty trap at a minimum level. All these change their social mobility to a higher status in the village and people's confidence in the return migrants increases. It is observed that the return migrants in Mitamoin are addressed as '*Dubai wala*' and those in Tangail as '*Saudi wala*'. There are three mechanisms of social capital that facilitate e cooperation and integration of groups - obligation, reciprocity, and solidarity (Faist,2000). It is observed that the low-skilled laborers who migrated from the same area and surrounding areas maintain close networks and help each other in times of need. The return migrants said that they feel obligated to the relatives of the extended family who stood beside them and helped during the pre-migration phase. Therefore, if anybody from the kinship group or the community where the migrants belong wants to migrate for work overseas, the return migrants feel a responsibility to help. As the return migrants faced the

migration process, they know the formal ways of application, manpower export agencies, and the amount of money required to go abroad. The return migrants help the aspiring migrants with information and provide them with communication channels. It is observed that international labor migration is a status symbol and a source of identity that the return migrants can exploit to reconsolidate their social position in the status hierarchy in the rural social context. The return migrants can consolidate their position along with earning the goodwill of the people towards the families and kin groups of the migrants.

Changes Brought at the Family Level

Surveys conducted on Remittance Receiving Families in Bangladesh to draw their socio-economic profiles showed that the majority of the remittance-receiving families are joint families with an average size of six persons (Siddiqui and Abrar, 2006). All the respondents of the present study mentioned that the earnings of migrant workers have a tangible and positive impact on the household economy. The socio-cultural and behavioral aspects of the families of return migrants also changed.

Knowledge Skilled Migrants: The return migrants of this group belong to the middle class and upper middle class. With the remittance sent from abroad the consumption style of the members changed. When the migrants came back they also had to maintain expensive spending for daily consumption. This has an impact on better education, improved health care, better food intake, nutrition, leisure, and entertainment. There were also other behavioral changes like a preference for individual opinion, private space, and personal choice.

Low-Skilled Laborers: While it is observed that individualism grows and is practiced among the members of knowledge-skilled migrants, family bondage and close ties are preferred in the families of the low-skilled laborers who returned from abroad. For them overseas migration is a household strategy for poverty alleviation. Therefore during the time when migrants live abroad and when they return, households remain to be the focal point of development. By using the remittance, the living standards of the families are raised and the return migrants are conscious about maintaining their changed social status. Socio-cultural changes occur along with changing social mobility. The return migrants of this category are conscious about being modern. Their increased communication with urban centers is an act of their aspiration for modernity.

Return Migration and Gender Relations in Bangladesh

Migration and Family Dynamics Emigration in Bangladesh is dominated by men. Cultural restrictions created by the patriarchal social system and legal bans on the emigration of women multiplied by procedural difficulties limit the mobility of women to seek overseas employment. However when legal restrictions were minimized women in Bangladesh were taking up temporary

contract employment in Malaysia and Middle Eastern countries (Huda 2015). It is significant in this context to address the question of whether the increase in the international movement of women from Bangladesh leads to any sustained changes in the direction of more liberal attitudes towards future female migration. The present study has tried to understand the situation in which women migrate independently in their own capacity either to study abroad or as employed workers. It has also looked into the situation when women migrate as a parental couple along with their husbands who migrate and when women stay in the home country and look after households when their husbands go abroad. All these patterns of migration have far-reaching impact on women, family dynamics and gender roles. Women's migration is a multifaceted experience that encompasses opportunities for personal, social, economic development. A common feature is that migration has impact on changing traditional gender roles and this change leads to both positive and negative consequences in the lives of women and men.

Women Who Migrated in Their Own Capacity

Knowledge Skilled Migrants: Among the women who migrated for higher studies 60% were unmarried and 40% were married. Among the married female migrants, 70% had husbands and children with them and in the case of others husbands occasionally visited but children stayed in the home country with extended family. The unmarried female migrants said during interviews that they were independent in decision-making, finding part-time jobs, and communicating with society overseas. However, they mentioned that their parents regularly communicated with them and advised them to maintain traditional cultural values. On this issue, respondents said that they do not consider everything in their own culture to be fair. For example, they mentioned the status of women to be inferior and dependent on men in Bangladesh. While staying abroad these women mostly enjoyed freedom of mobility and expression. When they returned they tried to practice independence and all of them made decisions about their marriage and finding life partners. All these female migrants found jobs in private universities and they continued their jobs after marriage. At the household level they try to establish gender equality, they said. Among the married female migrants who lived with husband and family enjoyed less independence while staying abroad than other married women whose husbands occasionally visited. The husbands of these women who stayed abroad found jobs, earned income but they were not willing to spend money for family's expenses. They said that husbands considered their migration as a sacrifice for their wives who got a chance to study abroad. Therefore these women migrants had less opportunity to save remittance. However these women said that their husbands shared household work and looked after children which they would not do in Bangladesh. Attitudes of these husbands towards women's status and rights to freedom, mobility, expression, decision making also changed as they had positive and affirmative attitudes towards women. These husbands also did not enquire about their wife's income, saving, spending and sending remittance to

wife's parents. Among the married women whose husbands occasionally visited, children were looked after by the extended family. These women regularly sent remittance for the family. Although husbands kept regular supervision on these women's activities abroad, they still were more independent in decision making.

Women Who Migrated as Parental Couple: Among the knowledge skilled male migrants 75% were married. Among these married men 80% lived abroad with wife and children and others managed their wife and children to live with extended families in the home country. All these wives of migrants who stayed abroad found jobs overseas and they tried to save and send remittance to their parents. Their income was less because they were involved in part time low-income jobs. These women faced double burden as they had to work in the household and outside for income. Occasionally their husbands helped them in household activities, they said. All of these women said that they wanted to stay abroad permanently because they enjoyed independence, mobility and prestige as income-earners. Most importantly these women said that the society was liberal towards women, security of women was ensured and nobody criticized them just because they were women. While staying abroad these women were associated with other families in the diaspora. Through social interaction in the diaspora they formed bigger friendship groups who occasionally met in parties and enjoyed together. These women also mentioned that they loved travelling and visiting beautiful places. In every weekend they joined family parties and arranged similar parties in their homes for others. All of them mentioned the joyful days abroad which they rarely get at home. After return 25% women bought flats, 10% women bought land in their own names and 25% women bought flats jointly with their husbands and both of them paid for the purchase.

Low Skilled Laborers: For this research female low skilled return migrants are interviewed who worked as domestic workers in Saudi Arabia. All these women live in Manikganj and people of that area are familiar with migration as many unskilled laborers migrate to the Middle Eastern Countries. They also accept migration as a poverty overcoming strategy. Some members of the kinship groups of these women migrated and returned after completion of the contract. When most of these families lost land for meeting emergencies and had no other way of survival, the families agreed to send their women abroad as migrants. Others agreed to allow women to migrate because they were divorced, suffering from poverty, joblessness causing distress for the members of the families. These women regularly sent remittance which was spent for family consumption. They could also save money which they gave to their husbands.

After they returned these women became extra religious as they started wearing 'hijab' like Middle Eastern women. Actually, they wanted to keep negative experiences of working abroad hidden under the culturally accepted practice of wearing 'hijab'. Usually, women living outside alone without husband are suspected for losing purity. But these women showed themselves to be ideal women by staying home and maintaining patriarchal rules. Five of them said

during interviews that as domestic workers they were sexually harassed and all of them faced violence but they did not disclose it to the villagers. Two other women said during interviews that they heard of women migrants being beaten, injured, sexually harassed and abused. Husbands of these women were criticized as non-masculine as they depended on wife's income and sent them to foreign country when women were out of control. All these women complained that they had to work for long hours and were not allowed to communicate regularly with the families in Bangladesh. They experienced physical violence when they could not comply with the strict rules of the employers. However, all these female return migrants want to migrate again for earning money. As the salary is low for female workers and a good amount is taken away by the contract dealers and foreign employers, it is not possible to save enough money required for the development of the family, they said.

Women Who Stayed in the Home Country While Their Husbands Migrated

Knowledge Skilled Migrants

Among the knowledge skilled migrants whose wives stayed at home, family dynamics also changed for them. These women lived with extended families and remittance was sent in their names by their husbands. As their in-laws supervised their activities, these women were unable to make decisions regarding the use of remittance. However they had regular contact with husbands through mobile, e-mail. Husbands also reinforced the authority of their families over their wives. In absence of the husbands women decided to visit and stay for some time in their parent's home. When asked by the in-laws, they said that they need to go to parent's home for refreshing their mind. When the male knowledge skilled migrants returned, they tried to be liberal towards women's employment. During interviews male return migrants said that they experienced living in a liberal society abroad and found it beneficial to be practiced at home. After return the knowledge skilled migrants encouraged their wives to find jobs or get involved in income-earning activities. During research it was found that many women returnees and women who stayed back home are involved in economic activities. They run small businesses from home, engage in online business, teach students in coaching centers, and associate with NGO activities and social services.

Low-Skilled Laborers

Among the low-skilled male laborers who migrated, 75% were married whose wives stayed in the home country. Among these male migrants, 25% sent remittances directly to their wives and the rest of the migrants sent remittances to their fathers. The economic dependency of the wives who received remittance decreased and consequently, their status within the household was raised. Usually, society considers women to be passive recipients of material resources and they are not perceived to have any decision-making power. Although women

lived with in-laws in the absence of their husbands, the gender dynamics shifted. The in-laws behaved well with these women and consulted with them about household decisions. Regarding spending remittance, the opinion of the wife of the migrant carried extra value. These women purchased mobile phones and communicated with their husbands on a regular basis. All these women invested remittance in productive activities like livestock, and poultry. All of them invested in money-lending businesses through which they earned interest. These women could also build a network of their own who were the beneficiary group. All these women purchased a sewing machine and started tailoring to be self-employed.

While the wives who received remittances had privileges over the uses of remittances, other women who did not receive remittances remained vulnerable and dependent on their in-laws. Moreover, the household activities of these women increased as their husbands were absent. When the husbands were present they partially helped in cattle raising, crop processing, and household maintenance. When husbands are absent wives have the sole responsibility for all the household work. Moreover, the in-laws put extra pressure on the wives. When the wives did not get benefits from remittance and they were unable to face poverty 70% of them got involved in varieties of work in the village. They worked temporarily in other people's houses for crop processing, cooking, cleaning, and farming activities. Regular quarrels, conflicts, and domestic violence against women led most of these women to leave their husband's houses. They went to parental homes although they were also poor, these women started working in NGO-led projects in the village: went to the nearby town to work as domestic workers: left the village, and went to Sylhet along with a group to work in stone collection sites. One sustainable feature of migration for women is that women who started earning income through a variety of activities during the absence of their husbands did not stop their work. Male return migrants adapted to this new avenue of income earning by women. During interviews, the male migrants said that women are going to Middle Eastern countries to earn income. If women can earn an income within the country, they should be allowed to do so, male return migrants said. The standard of living of these migrant families was raised as a result of two-income earnings, male remittance, and female income.

Modern Slavery

Globalization has created a trend of low-skilled labor migration from developing countries with labor surpluses to developed countries with requirements for faster growth and dependency on 'cheap foreign labor'. The concept of 'modern slavery' is appropriate for explaining the labor exchange practices which are discriminatory and exploitative. It covers various forms of slavery including contract labor, bonded labor, forced labor, and human trafficking. Modern slavery is referred to the possession and exploitation of other persons violating

their human rights and depriving them of their individual liberty. The Slavery Convention (League of Nations, 1926, 1956) defined slavery as the status and condition of a person over whom all of the powers attaching to the right of ownership are exercised. Trade and transport of slaves are also included in this definition of slavery. The International Labor Organization (ILO) has defined labor as work that is performed involuntarily and under coercion. ILO has reported modern slavery as a widespread and powerful business as well as one that generates huge numbers of victims (2014).

There is a trend of low skilled labor migration from Bangladesh to major receiving countries in the Middle East. The oil price boom in 1973 was followed by an increasing number of migrant laborers recruited by the Arab Gulf States (United Arab Emirates, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait and Bahrain, comprising the Gulf Cooperation Council or GCC). The temporary foreign contract labor in GCC countries resulted in the creation of modern slavery. When several states of the region abolished slavery in the 1950s, the '*kafala*' system was established in the GCC states which do not conceive of themselves as immigration countries. In these countries the imported labor workforce is not considered to be migrants, but as 'temporary contract workers', 'foreign workers', and 'expatriates'. The Arabic term '*kafala*' means sponsorship and '*kafil*' is the person who is the employer, sponsor, and guarantor of the migrant worker. The '*kafala*' system ties the migrant workers with the '*kafil*' or local employers. There are similarities between the '*kafala*' system and the former patterns of indentured labor which lasted in these countries until 1950s (Longva, 1997) and the recruitment of foreign workers in the Gulf by the British and International Oil Companies in the 1930s (Seccombo and Lawless, 1986). Although originally the '*kafala*' was a form of hospitality with the sponsor, it turned into a system of structural dependence of the migrant workers on the '*kafil*'. When the '*kafil*' has legal and economic power, it creates a situation when migrant workers become victims of vulnerability, abuse and exploitation. The system entails elements of servitude and practices similar to slavery and encourages violence towards migrant workers. The '*kafala*' system realistically turns to be 'privatization of migration governance' (Babar, 2013). The sponsors execute restrictions on personal freedom and mobility of migrant workers who do not have freedom to quit jobs and change employers. If they attempt to do that, they are labeled as 'absconders' and 'runaways', subjected to detention and deportation and punished as criminals. The migrant workers face contract fraud as their original contract is substituted at the airport, non-payment of wages, withholding of passports, physical threats and force to work involuntarily. These situations create a kind of 'debt bondage' for the migrant laborers as they incurred debts before coming and the '*dalal*' (migration broker) and employer charge cost for migration which they adjust from the worker's salary. According to rule the female migrant does not have to pay for her immigration which is paid by the employer. This can also mean slave trade. However all these put them

locked in employment situations where they are treated like commodities, abused emotionally, physically, sexually and even forced into prostitution.

Besides slavery migrant workers face racism when they are employed in '3D-dirty, dangerous and demeaning' the low skilled jobs in the secondary labor markets. When migrant workers join this menial work, the residents consider both the migrant workers and these jobs as 'low standard'. The nationals in these countries refuse to undertake these jobs, although they face poverty and unemployment. Thus the foreign contract workers are excluded as 'other'. This can be explained by the concepts of racism and xenophobia. Racism is based on biological differences and xenophobia is based on cultural differences. Both of these concepts refer to hostility towards immigrants. Institutionally the migrant workers are distinguished and discriminated as inferior. They are also victimized by structural relations of subordination and oppression. In Arabic the term 'Abed' is used for both 'black' person and 'slave' and the same term is used for migrant workers. The female migrant domestic workers are victims of physical, sexual, psychological and emotional abuse. They face degrading treatment on a daily basis with name calling and the common term used for them is 'Hmara' or donkey and the harm caused by such behavior goes unnoticed. Racialised 'otherness' towards migrant workers can be understood by construction of words like '*Sirilankeyeh*' and '*Srilanky*' which mean slave and servant in colloquial Arabic language. The racist fear of getting contaminated from the bodies of the 'other' is known from the migrant female workers while conducting the study. They said that workers were asked to wash their clothes separately; told to scrub the whole bathroom with anti-bacterial products if they use shower and toilet amenities. The migrant domestic workers were fed only with left overs and refrigerators were kept locked and alarms were set to prevent migrant workers from eating good quality food. They expressed that if they broke rules set by the employer, hot boiling water was poured on their bodies. The migrant female workers had to tolerate such maltreatment in silence for being afraid of further victimization.

Victims of 'Modern Slavery'

Male Construction Workers

All the male low skilled workers who came back after two to four years were critical of the '*kafala*' system which forced them to forget human identity (*manush nam vulie diechhe*) and turned them to animals (*haler balad hoye gechhi*). They compared themselves with the situation when in their villages they used cows to plough land and often used stick to beat the animals for better work. Similarly the employers abroad consider contract laborers as their personal property because they have invested money for getting or purchasing laborers. Therefore employers behave rudely and even physically beat them with sticks. They have zero tolerance for mistakes and more work is allotted as punishment.

The male low skilled laborers stayed in labor camps which are outside of cities and away from residential areas. While living in isolation in the labor camps their lives were like captive slaves (*bondi das*) as movements outside camps were not allowed and they were under constant vigilance by the guards. Each small room in the camp was shared by seven and more residents; bathroom and kitchen were commonly used by many people; sanitation was unhealthy; there was lack of electricity and clean running water. Male low skilled workers were employed in construction and service sector and they had to work twelve to fourteen hours every day. As there was no fixed time, employers called them for work any time. The employers were not concerned about the safety of the workers at work place and 10% of the return migrants said that they had accidents while working but the employer did not bear the cost for medical treatment. One significant question is that when laborers experience slavery, do they intend to practice it in the home country? It is observed that 15% of the low skilled return migrants, who are involved in agricultural cultivation, employ laborers on debt-bondage. They lend money on the condition of giving free labor by the family members of the loan receivers until the loan is paid. During interviews all the low skilled male workers said that they want to go abroad again for income earning. As a reason they said, 'there were sufferings abroad but there were opportunities to earn money in exchange of sufferings'. A general comment was 'there are different kinds of sufferings here in Bangladesh but there is no hope for future'.

Female Domestic Workers

Common expressions of the female domestic laborers about working abroad are 'it is not free'; 'it makes people subservient'. All of them were live-in domestic workers whose activities were monitored 24 hours a day. In their opinion household works in Bangladesh and in the Middle East bear the same low status. The only difference is that they earned higher income in foreign country, whereas they earn nothing in return to their hard work at home in Bangladesh. All of them commented that they had to pay high price for earning income in foreign country. They said that there was no freedom of movement; they were confined within the employer's home: they were not allowed to talk to anyone. Only one principle was told by the employer, 'just do the work, obey the order and serve the master'. The female domestic workers complained about long hours of work, average working time 13-14 hours a day, no leisure time, heavy work load, non-stop work, dangerous work environment, low pay, salaries withheld, passport taken away and no fixed hours as they were expected to be available whenever needed.. They mentioned that they were deprived of basic needs, no good accommodation, very little amount of food, medical costs for injury not paid, not allowed to communicate frequently with relatives in Bangladesh. The female workers said that the '*kafil*' is the guardian or '*malik*' and they had to depend on him for shelter, clothing, food, medical care, money. Their safe return to home country also depended on his good will. For all these kinds of dependencies they had to tolerate physical, psychological and sexual abuses. When female domestic

workers tolerate abuse, that creates a permissive environment for more abuse; it continues and gradually escalates. All the female workers said that they have no other option but to continue working abroad ; firstly to pay back the high interest loan they have taken and secondly to save and become owners of money earned by themselves.

Among the female return migrants 80% expressed their desire to go abroad and work in foreign country again. About sufferings they said, 'We are also tortured by the husbands. We also tolerate sufferings of poverty. We do not have opportunity to work and earn income here. We should go abroad if we can change the future for our children'. About the criticism against domestic labor in foreign country female return migrants said, 'it has become a profession in Bangladesh and many women are employed in the domestic sector'. In their opinion there are two categories in Bangladesh, '*bandha bua*' (permanent female household worker) and '*chhuta bua*' (part time female household worker). People criticize permanent domestic workers as 'slaves' and part-time female domestic workers as 'characterless'. Despite being stigmatized many women are employed in this job for earning higher income. On the question whether female migration should be stopped, all of them answered in the negative. They believe that migration to foreign countries as low skilled workers has created avenues for women's self-reliance, self-worth, and self-confidence. A common comment was 'money is valuable and as we can earn money we are also valuable'. They said 'before we went for work abroad our hands were empty. Now our hands are full and we can help other women'.

Conclusion

Major Impacts of Return Migration: Indeed, human and financial capital are needed to speed up the economic development of developing countries like Bangladesh and therefore it is important to reverse the brain drain to brain gain and attract investment. Remittance is the highest amount of net foreign currency earning sector for the economy of Bangladesh. It enhances the economic condition of the migrants as well as ensures the economic development of the country. Return migration reduces the unemployment problem and leads to poverty alleviation. This occurs through development of the capacity of investment for self-employment and entrepreneurship. Through overseas study experience knowledge skilled migrants have increased intellectual competence, intercultural experience, enhanced employability and skills for career, high level of continued contact and international networking and enhanced interest in further study. All these contribute towards development of human capital. Return migration also contributes towards transfer of technology through technical knowledge and expertise acquired by the migrant workers working abroad. Besides economic investments return migration influences social development through qualitative shifts in worldviews, cultural practices and social relationships. It has a positive role in inducing changes in gender roles in the

spheres of division of labor between women and men and women's participation in decision-making. Most of all the role of returnees as social change makers cannot be underestimated.

A relevant question is whether return migration created inequality in society. In rural areas, the return migrants are identified as special categories and distinctions are maintained in daily lives mainly because they purchase land of the marginalized peasants and become entrepreneurs. The professionals in universities also have extra avenues to earn money through research, consultancy, and teaching in private universities. Professionals of technical institutions earn more money from skilled employment and investment in business enterprises. These inequalities along with features of acculturation make return migrants a different category as 'other', which creates a barrier for them to become actors of social transformation. Another positive factor is to observe how the return migrants become agents of change in society. The respondents have expressed an increased realization of the value of family and they help relatives in difficulty as much as they get reintegrated in the community. Many of them concentrate on social service, humanistic activities and get involved with Non-Governmental and Human Rights Organizations. Almost all the respondents have expressed their commitment to the society. They perceive it as a new realization of *nijer desh* (own country) while they stayed abroad and found it necessary for identity formation. Psychologically the return migrants seem to be satisfied when they express that their skills, training, and experiences are valued in the country.

Challenges of Return Migration: Problem of Re-integration

The professionals face problems of readjustment with life when they return in Bangladesh. They complain about the working condition, lack of professionalism, minimum facilities, bureaucratic complexities, indiscipline, corruption, politicization, which appear to be difficult to face as they stayed abroad and became familiar with different situation and work culture. The return migrants confront with adjustment problem which they explain as 'cultural shock' in their own land. Overall the professional return migrants influence the working culture with innovative ideas. In the villages non-professional return migrants are treated as 'foreigner' but people in general have interest for foreign culture which migrants bring with them.

The migrant workers come back with skill, work experience and savings but lack of opportunity for investment and appropriate utilization of their income along with proper counseling hamper the initiative of the migrant workers towards new effective and innovative ventures. Investment of remittance is minimum in Bangladesh due to lack of viable investment opportunities. Empowerment of the return migrants can be possible through appropriate social and economic reintegration. They require information on investment opportunities, saving schemes and arrangement of loan from bank, Skill training on cooperative basis

can be provided to women migrants particularly on market oriented skills, technically employable skills, income generating activities and training for proper utilization of remittance. Research and development initiatives need to be promoted for professionals and academics. Provision of financial support and incentives to students going abroad to study can be made which can influence them to return after completion of study. Counseling can be given to female return migrants who face adversities while working abroad and face difficulties to adjust in the family and society after they return.

Policy Concern: In the 21st century neo-liberal market policies are influenced by deregulation and privatization that characterize global labor markets. This means that exploitation of labor is something that the countries will not be in a position economically to change due to fear of stopping market demand. The sending countries are benefited by getting remittance and receiving countries are benefitted by getting cheap labor. In this context what can be the migration policy of Bangladesh?

Although return migration has become a reality there is no governmental policy to actively encourage return migration and provide incentives for skilled migrants to return to country of origin. Bangladesh is a good example of an economy that has seen benefits from remittance. But there is no policy to transform brain drain to brain gain. The Government of Bangladesh has to maximize the positive impact of return migration. It has not been realized that return migrants with money, skill training, knowledge, experience and new ideas are also a vital resource for socio- economic development. The concerns of women migrants need to be highlighted in planning. The female domestic laborers migrating on contractual basis to the Middle Eastern countries are victimized by racialized otherness and dehumanizing attitudes of the employers. This situation of exploitation is causing 'modern slavery'. Bangladesh government can take a strong stand because modern slavery is antithesis of social justice. The migrant female workers need to be protected by International Labor Laws. Bangladesh can suggest bilateral agreement on labor migration between sending and receiving countries.

It is largely observed that the middle-class people have a strong urge to migrate. Thus there is a continuous out flow of knowledge skilled and trained personnel. The recent trend is migration of talented students to developed countries. The policy makers of Bangladesh cannot avoid this new brain drain. It is a necessity of the time that Bangladesh connects with the brain circulation which is a trend of global process. The new brain drain can be transformed into brain gain through brain circulation which means taking advantage of the strong diaspora. When the qualified personnel migrate from Bangladesh, they can provide necessary assistance to their home country. Many developing countries are formulating programs and policies to attract the experts living abroad for contributing through various forms of exchange towards simultaneously strengthening the economy of their home country. Recent research on brain circulation suggests that

attention can be given to some examples. A good example is India from where qualified workforce migrated to developed countries. This trend has now reversed and experts trained in USA in the areas of IT, finance and management are returning for building cities like Bengalore, Delhi, Hyderabad and Mumbai (Chacko, 2007). China has also adopted a new policy to attract students who are studying abroad and to encourage them to be involved in modernizing their own country. Chinese policy includes, opening centers for post-doctoral studies, employment in the field of high technology, allocations in research centers, and good working conditions for migrants who return. A popular slogan for brain circulation is created, 'Serve the Nation Without Returning to the Nation' (Zweig, Fung and Han, 2008)

The question still remains unanswered, how the skill training of return migrants can be put to effective use for socio-economic development in Bangladesh? Another question is, will the receiving countries consider the migration as a debt to developing countries like Bangladesh? This is because the development wheel cannot move without the human resource supplied by countries like Bangladesh. These are emerging policy concerns in the context of globalization.

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The Multiplicity of Institutions in Rohingya Camps and Its Impacts on Host Communities in Bangladesh

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Abstract

This paper investigates how Forcibly Displaced Myanmar Nationals (FDMN) are transforming and adapting to the refugee camps. There are typically competing demands for cooperation and claims for governance by economic resources, which allow them to create pockets of influence over the host population. They do so through adaptive and transformative coping strategies. We sketched out these strategies and their effect on the host community. The paper draws its finding based on focused group discussions and in-depth interviews with the host communities, refugees, Camp in Charge (CIC), local NGO and INGO members, and civil society members. We argue that the local host community and refugees have a dialectical relationship in various ways and have significant consequences. The refugees are easily exploited and cast off in crimes that have escalated in the local areas, mainly impacting the local host population with increased rivalry and undermining state security. They exercise muscle power by inflicting fear and intimidation on the host population. The welfare non-cash transfers and logistics provided to refugees by development agencies are sold on the local market as they face a monetary crisis as an adaptive strategy. Adaptive strategies are when the refugees subsist with the available resources without subverting the top-down governance of the Bangladesh government and the UNHCR. Furthermore, in search of monetary exposure, refugees also leave camps to work outside as a transformative strategy, trying to transform their lives from passive aid receivers to subverting top-down governance as they are not entitled to free mobility.

Keywords: Refugee; Institution; Governance; Maneuver; Negotiate; Effect; Host Community.

Introduction

“Humanitarian action is paradigmatically regarded as a state of exception - it takes place beyond politics. In this sense, humanitarianism is seen as a moment at which history is suspended and pure humanity is briefly in focus. This is a necessary fiction for the humanitarian enterprise, but as emergencies become prolonged, it becomes a pretense harder to uphold.” (De Waal 2010, p. 135)

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The Rohingya refugee issue has put tremendous strain on local livelihoods, habitats, and basic services; thus, the situation is an added demographic pressure on Bangladesh, as they already have one of the highest populations with scarce resources. Refugee camps are governed by a top-down governance mechanism (Horst, 2006). They are like prisons, warehouses, or seclusion sites (Horst, 2006), and refugees are seen as cunning and docile recipients of assistance in debilitating dependency and limbo (Adelman, 2008) of wasted life (Bauman, 2004), having a second-rate status (Hyndman, 2000). Turner (2005) thinks that refugees' lives are "bare", but their history and politics always come to the surface over the course of the protracted situation. An apolitical space is a highly political environment in which all players need to engage in compromise to find ways forward (Jansen, 2013). Thus, refugee camps have several institutional mechanisms, one of which is their ethnic institutional mechanism, with local and international administration (Jansen, 2011).

Rohingyas seek to maneuver or negotiate to push beyond the hierarchical governance set of rules and standards as an adaptive and transformative coping strategy. They do it by overhauling and destabilizing camp rules and regulations, which range from formal to informal means that create pockets of influence. Most of the academic discourse displays only the refugee position, arguing a humanitarian crisis. However, this paper will reflect on the overall livelihood of settlement regions that include the host populations. Much of the work focuses on a single phenomenon, but the nature of this study examines the multiplicity of manifestations of the diaspora that not only affect refugees but also the host population. Because the host population is not living in a vacuum, Rohingyas and the host population live side by side, and they have interaction, negotiation, compromise, and interdependence as they have to co-exist. Thus, they have a recurring effect on each other. What is significant, therefore, is how this diaspora situation of the Rohingyas affects the host population. The paper advanced to take the views of host communities to check the impact on the host community as a result of the Rohingya refugees' adaptive and transformative coping mechanisms.

Background: Fraction and Force Migration of the Rohingyas

The Rohingyas faced a 50-year military crackdown from 1978, 1991–1992, 2012, 2015, and 2016–2017 (Noor et al., 2018). Throughout World War II, Rohingyas and Burmese had opposing views. According to Milton et al. (2017), the Rohingyas took the side of the British colonists in the Second World War, hoping they would get a separate Muslim state. Conversely, the Burmese majority took sides with the Japanese intruders, hoping they would end British rule. In 1978, "Operation Dragon King" led 200,000 Rohingyas to flee to Bangladesh, from where approximately 170,000 Rohingyas returned to Myanmar. Muslims in Arkan can be traced in Burma between the 8th to 15th centuries (Leider, 2018; Yunus, 1994). Rohingyas were always strategically

pushed out through the claim of being illegal Bangladeshi immigrants (Warzone Initiatives, 2015). In 1982, the Myanmar government listed 135 ethnic groups in the Citizenship Act (ICJ, 2019), but 3 million Rohingyas were not enlisted and thus became a stateless nation (Leider, 2018). In 1991, the Myanmar military launched "Operation Clean and Beautiful Nation," which made 250,000 Rohingyas flee to Bangladesh. Moreover, while living in Myanmar, Rohingyas were denied the right to basic needs like education, health, etc. They were tactically set back by the denial of these rights.

Violence broke out again in 2012 when three Muslim men claimed to have raped and killed a Buddhist woman in Rakhine (Refugee Documentation Center, 2012). As a result, security forces targeted Muslim communities, destroyed homes, and caused their displacement. Myanmar has been denied access to human rights inquiries, and the actual situation cannot be determined, but the situation appears to be a textbook example of ethnic cleansing (ICJ, 2017). Ethnic cleansing is a systematic strategy aimed at using violence and intimidation to remove the civilian population of another ethnic or religious community from a geographical area (United Nations Security Council, 1992). Myanmar's military assaults on the Muslim minority Rohingyas in a majority-Buddhist country are no less different.

Hatred against the Rohingyas and historic action against them was channeled in 2016, when the militant Rohingya party, the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA), emerged and organized small-scale attacks on border police stations. On August 25, 2017, an attack killed 12 police officers. As a consequence of the current crisis against Rohingya civilians (Green et al., 2018). A brutal retaliation by state security forces culminated in deaths and a mass flight of Rohingyas to Bangladesh (Amnesty International, 2018). Half the villages were burned down, and brutal assaults were followed by the fastest-growing humanitarian crisis. In the past seven decades, they have been deprived of their nationality. At this point, it seems the Myanmar government never wants them back. Myanmar had geopolitical and strategic significance in the Rakhine state for China and India. Thus, their expulsion under consecutive episodes of events is predetermined due to this interest (Khan, 2018), culminating in land grabbing that articulates Karl Marx's "Primitive Accumulation."

Forcibly Displaced Persons and the Rohingyas

According to Adewumi, M., Ye, J., DeLuca, P., Haque, O-Boom., Jakobson, N., Yoon, C., & Loving, A (2020), Rohingya Refugees are called *Forcibly Displaced Myanmar Nationals* because Bangladesh does not consider the Rohingyas to be *stateless* as they have ancestral ties with Myanmar. Bangladesh is susceptible to the influx, as it is beyond its capacity to sustain the huge surge, educate Rohingya children, or provide other basic needs even if the camps are not built for the long term. It is theoretically imperative to now understand what forcibly displaced persons (DPs) are, and their management practices. In simple

terms, DPs illustrate the mechanisms that exist alongside international and national policies that form the management of forced migration. According to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), DPs

“those who are forced to move, within or across borders, due to armed conflict, persecution, terrorism, human rights violations and abuses, violence, the adverse effects of climate change, natural disasters, development projects, or a combination of these factors.” (OHCHR, 2018)

Adelman (2008), in the context of 1947, discussed when the Jewish refugees were held in refugee camps, negotiations have taken place in the UN, supported by the United Kingdom and the Arab States, to identify Jewish refugees as *displaced persons*. These people should and could be sent back to the countries from which they had fled for forceful expulsion. Throughout negotiations at the UN, the British and Arab states have lost the battle to identify Jews as displaced persons. Instead, they have been identified as *refugees*, and this proved troublesome because, although the refugee classification was meant to give them a chance to resettle if the resettlement countries decline to recognize them, they will become a *pariah community*. According to the Refugee Convention, there is a law of ‘non-refoulement, which states that UNHCR-recognized refugees cannot be forcefully sent back to the country that persecuted them.

On the other hand, a protracted refugee situation is where refugees are sequestered in refugee camps without mobility or job rights; their lives remain in a state of limbo for a long time. Protracted refugee camps are, in theory, shared spaces where people settle for a while and develop, adapt, or alter governance structures (Jansen, 2011). A protracted refugee camp is an ambiguity; it is a place where complex aid distribution systems support poor people in need and a place where people’s political status is suspended before a hypothetical return home. Refugees have few, if any, prospects for jobs and very limited opportunities to engage in trade. While the threats to their lives might be drastically diminished relative to the situation from which they fled, their lives remain physically and mentally dangerous, sometimes more unstable than they would be if they returned home (Adelman, 2008). Because most protracted emergencies occur in weak or failed states, where governance is continually negotiated between players based on military strength, social affiliation, and financial patronage (De Wall, 2010). According to UNHCR statistics from 2004, there were 6.2 million refugees in 38 countries, predominantly African, who had been living in the refugee crisis for more than five years (Adelman, 2008). For six of these 38 countries, refugees have been completely integrated economically, while the refugee crisis still exists; the refugees themselves have not been in the protracted refugee situation in those six countries. Thus, we can learn how the refugee situation gets molded into getting played by the sides over time through their maneuvering and negotiation skills to maximize their opportunities by using the capacities of their social affiliation, financial patronage, and cultural strengths.

Conceptualizing Multiplicity of Institutions in Refugee Camps

Agamben (1998) refers to refugees as people outside of politics who are in need of humanitarian help to sustain their lives. Bram Jansen (2011) found that the Kenyan government tried to keep refugees out of Kenyan society. Almost all responsibility for refugee treatment rests with international organizations and NGOs. Jansen (2013) demonstrates that the notion of a refugee camp as a top-down, controlled system was legitimized by the governments hosting it, but there is more to it. He explains it through the multiplicity of *institutions*. The study further demonstrated conflicting claims for the governance of the refugee camp, and this is where mutual interests take place. He analyzes forms of transformation, subversion, and adaptation of camp governance by highlighting three broad developments as they emerged in the chronology of the camp's existence and the way they shaped and influenced the governing structure:

Ethnic or Tribal Authority

Ethnic or tribal authority is the governance directed by tribe values and practices. Refugees advocate for traditions and the right to establish cultural values. The Sudanese in Kakuma chose to allow tradition and customs to prevail, which is conclusive to socio-economic and political dynamics. The management style of ethnic authorities emphasizes a decentralized approach that includes community-based problem-solving. 'Vulnerability' in the camp is what Hyndman (2000) refers to as the 'transfer point of power. The Sudanese leadership avoided official UNHCR and Government of Kenya regulations and chose to allow tradition and customs to prevail as a transformative strategy.

Refugee Camp Administrations and Participation

Refugee Camp Administration and Participation are when the refugees are empowered enough to create militancy. Jansen (2011) found that the Sudanese "The Lost Boys" association was brought into action by the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) and was coordinated from the very beginning of their arrival. SPLA's management style was people-centric decentralized community-based support, which is a grassroots perspective that flouts top-down governance. Conversely, Jansen (2011) found that people with less traditional authority in tribal or ethnic groups become part of the formal refugee participation community. The top-down governance of the nation and UNHCR targeted minorities, women, youth, and the disabled for employment, training, and education. As Bankoff (2007) has rightfully put it: "...Social systems generate unequal exposure to risk by making some people more vulnerable than others and these inequalities are largely a function of the power relations (class, age, gender, and ethnicity among others) operative in every society." Powerful groups were better off by establishing their power and defying the top-down approach. On the contrary, weak groups conformed to the top-down approach.

Camp Economy

Somalis who protracted in Kenya had money networks and structures that were essential for the continued functioning of their nascent economy in the camps (Adelman, 2008). Refugees organized themselves on a national level in the form of associations, playing to be part in the camp administration (Jansen, 2011). Hyndman (2000), in his refugee camp study, finds that the member of UNHCR staff finds refugee self-government to be dangerous because it provides the possibility of redirecting this power and re-establishing an older enclave of potentially autocratic rule.

The researchers were interested in this enigmatic social phenomenon of the camp, which in social terms develops into human society, but in political terms remains a temporary humanitarian framework. While UNHCR and NGOs are organizing the camp, the researchers are interested in how refugees organize themselves and how emerging orders co-exist as multiple institutions or parallel authorities that form the social organization of the camp. The identified adaptive and transformative coping mechanisms cause friction in a diaspora situation between the host community and the refugees. Drawing on the three aspects from Jansen's (2011) work, this paper aims to study Rohingya refugee camps and find out the transformative and adaptive strategies, the dynamics of power relations, how refugees try to administer and participate through the maneuvering top-down governance of UNHCR and the Bangladesh government, and if there is any creation of a militant group similar to SPLA. The paper will discuss two different aspects and how they have influenced and modified the governing structure and how they affected the host population and the coping mechanisms as a socio-economic phenomenon that is linked but also autonomous and, in the words of Sally Falk, *'more that produces laws and induces compliance with them'*, but there is also a broader social network that can and does control and disrupt them (Griffiths, 1986, p. 29).

Methodology

This case study draws evidence through a qualitative data collection strategy using inductive reasoning. The data was collected from October 2018 to December 2019 in two phases, both in the refugee camps and in Dhaka, through face-to-face interviews, in-depth interviews, and focused group discussions (FGD). The research was carried out with the respondents from the refugee community, the host community, officials (including INGOs and NGO representatives), and members of civil society to ensure the viability and reliability of the findings. Interviews and FGD sessions with refugees were structured to allow them to expand on (i) their key difficulties after their arrival and (ii) the factors that helped them resolve these difficulties, leading them to address their adaptive and transformational coping mechanisms. The in-depth interview sessions with participants in the host community were structured to enable them to focus on (i) their key difficulties after the Rohingya influx and

(ii) the factors that helped them resolve these difficulties. The in-depth interview sessions with civil society representatives were structured to enable them to expand on (i) the verification of difficulties faced by Rohingyas and the host community after the diaspora situation and (ii) the factors that helped the Rohingyas to resolve the difficulties and how they influenced the host community. In-depth interviews with local leaders of civil society and foreign non-governmental organizations (INGOs) were conducted as they were still closely monitoring the crisis. Therefore, data obtained from the local host group and forcibly displaced Myanmar Nationals (FDMN) could be confirmed. In-depth interviews were taken from representatives of NGOs, INGOs, Camp in Charge (CIC), Refugee Relief and Reparation Commission (RRRC), and Mazi (a Rohingya social leader). Apart from FGD and in-depth interviews, the research also extensively used secondary materials from various journals, reports, conference proceedings, newspapers, and government documents that have been extensively checked for data triangulation.

Evaluating the breakdown of data by a careful reading of each transcript is also known as open coding (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Dey, 2004). It, in turn, allowed the focus to be on past incidents and events that helped explain the adaptive and transformational coping mechanisms of the Rohingyas and how they affected host communities. Participants' perspectives were constantly balanced to identify similarities. Verbatim expressed precise language. As the study progressed, dissimilarities and different patterns in the data emerged, leading to a complementary investigation that helped guide the researchers in the direction of the subject or person to be further examined to determine or contrast the progress of data analysis.

Sampling aimed at optimizing the dissimilarity between participants through analytical and coding improvements (Charmaz, 2000, 2006; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Camp 11: Moynar Ghata, Balukhali, Ukhiya; Camp 15: Jamtoli, Ukhiya, Bazar Cox; Camp 16: Shafiullah Kata, Potibunia, Ukhiya, Bazar Cox. The refugee sample size was 25, and the sample size of the host population living in shelter areas was 20. Moreover, 10 key informant interviews with officials were conducted to ensure the viability and reliability of the research. Finally, common patterns among high-frequency participant narratives explain behavior to the occurrence (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Dimensions and relationships of the established finding were theoretically analyzed until the data became repetitive and gave no further insights. However, theoretical flexibility led the researchers to consider specific variables and relationships without premeditated ideas (Dey, 1999; Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

Rohingya Refugees in the Local Economy

Camp residents have space for flexibility and control in terms of money. The economic environment can be divided into three main sectors: firstly, Rohingyas are employed by INGOs and NGOs or have businesses in the camp economy,

secondly, refugees who are working as laborers outside the camp, and finally, refugees receiving remittances from relatives abroad. These three also coexist, as refugees who receive remittances or a salary from NGOs can invest in enterprises in the camp. The refugee economy evolves due to a decrease in the total reliance of many people on relief over time, and resource accumulation provides space for a maneuver of refugee plight. Every day, camp governance processes are realistically circumvented, which either transforms the top-down system or allows refugees to *adapt* to it on their own.

The first category of income is a means of involvement in the refugee hosting system. Those are positions that are referred to as bonus employment, with wages and other secondary benefits. For example, refugees get recruited in healthcare, water, sanitation, NGO interpreters, cooks, teachers, nurses, food distributors, clerks, etc. We have found a similar case in Cox's Bazar Camp 11, Balukhali, and Ukhiya Upazilas. A 45-year-old father of three sons and two daughters, the youngest only two years old, who was a Hafez while residing in Mongdu, teaching in Madrasha (a hub for Islamic religious studies), and practicing Imamati (those leading Salat). His honorarium was approximately 400,000 Burmese kyat (MNR). Before 2017, when a military crackdown took place in Rakhine state, he prepared to flee with all his belongings from Mongdu, where he lived. He is deposed in a cardboard shed tent measuring 10 by 6 feet. Living conditions bear miserable circumstances in rainy seasons, besides being vulnerable to a landslide. He teaches a few Rohingya children in Maktab (Children's Islamic Religious Study Center) with no honorarium but practices imamate in the nearest mosque, getting around 4000 taka, equal to 64218 kyats. So, we can see how he can manage to earn money by *adapting* to and conforming to the rules of the top-down approach to refugee governance. He is staying inside the camp and breaking no rules, but managing to earn some extra money along with being the recipient of aid.

Legally, the refugees cannot abandon their camps, but they sell their cheap labor inside the camps or neighboring host population areas with economic opportunities. Employers in the host community have verified that they employ Rohingya laborers for seasonal work. It puts pressure on the host country's laborers as refugees provide cheaper labor. Otherwise, host communities could continue their regular economic practices, like working in the paddy fields. A narrative from a 52-year-old Bangladeshi father of two girls located in Thaingkhali Bazar near Balukhali Rohingya Camp further puts light on this occurrence:

Until the Rohingya influx in 2017, he worked on 500-decimal land near Balukhali Bazar. He cultivated vegetables and other seasonal crops. When the Rohingya diaspora started flooding the region, he was forced to temporarily provide his land to NGOs for the humanitarian cause. He gave land for tent-building to the stateless Rohingyas out of compassion. Nonetheless, three years have passed since the Rohingya influx, and the

only piece of land he owned was used as a shelter. He saw no rapid repartition strategy. He was a farmer and was self-sufficient. His surplus farming products were sold on the local market to meet his everyday needs. He is now forced to search for work with little experience or ability to work in another field other than farming. Every day he is looking for a job, but the local area's prospects have become very restrictive. People like him became jobless and are now living a nightmare. (Personal communication, October 26, 2019)

Rohingya people cannot work outside of camps. They are exposed to labor abuse. They have no labor rights, so they cannot complain if they are not paid. When they are found working outside camps, they are sent back to their homes. A case of a few Rohingya girls fleeing to the Lal Monihat area to work as maidservants were identified, and they were sent to camps immediately.

Rohingyas tend to search for other extra earnings, and that is when they discover more *transformative strategies* that subvert the top-down governance of the Bangladesh government and UNHCR. Rohingya try to access financial resources by working outside camps and leaving their young girls in camps. Girl children are insecure because there is a risk of exploitation, especially sexual exploitation. Rohingya ask *Mazi* (the Rohingya social leader) for permission to access financial resources to find jobs. The portion of people selling their cheap labor differs depending on various camp circumstances. Some camp situations are well off, and camps that are worse off have more people working outside camps. They want to accumulate financial resources as they plan to move with their relatives in a stable state to the Middle East and Southeast Asian countries. This is when the refugees adopt a *transformative strategy* and undermine the top-down approach by going outside the camps and joining the informal labor market to *transform* their standard of living altogether. Rohingya massively trade-in camps. A very limited number of Rohingya can trade labor for wage service within the camp on behalf of NGOs because opportunities are limited, which conforms to top-down governance and falls under adaptive strategies.

Mostly, Rohingya get work by using their social capital, which results in financial capital. All Rohingya camps have small shops inside their camps where they sell all kinds of goods and commodities, including surplus aid, vegetables, fish, clothes, jewelry, and imported Myanmar fruits and other artifacts. They have small tea stalls and in-camp "*restura*" (eating places) and "*tongs*" (tea stalls). All these shops trade for money. Their engagement in economic activities springs a dialectical relation between host communities:

First, Rohingya's livelihood mostly concerns its rations, which only cover staple foods such as rice, lentils, and oil without any essential protein source and therefore do not include healthy food. Their diet contains only rice and red chilies. No inclusion of fruit, vegetables, meat, or fish

Second, the host community is largely affected due to the influx, such as when part of the host population that was in agriculture is at a loss because the price of rice has fallen due to the massive selling of ration rice by Rohingyas to host communities. Besides, vast lands were taken up to accommodate them, so rice farmers are altogether unemployed and are looking for alternative jobs. Not just rice farmers, but rather the host population that lived through subsistence farming and other informal employment are all relegated to the fringes of society. However, the refugees adopt these survival strategies as a means to become better off. They either *adapt* to living in the camps by resorting to top-down refugee governance by the Bangladesh Government and UNHCR, or they *subvert* this hierarchical governance and take *transformative strategies*.

Effects on the host population in shelter areas due to *refugee transformative strategies* affecting an oversupply of laborers and high levels of competition have resulted in low salaries, i.e., wages have fallen by half their previous value. The labor supply side had a surplus, and wages kept plunging to the disadvantage of the host community. Again, some new jobs were also created due to the Rohingya crisis; such a case of a host community can be illustrated from the experiences of a 10th-Ukhiya Degree College student.

After the 2017 Rohingya influx in Teknaf and Ukhiya, volunteering in camps became lucrative for young students like her. She and her few friends became volunteers in the Potibunia camp with a remuneration of 15,000 BDT. They had the upper hand in these recruitments because they spoke the local language, which is similar to the Rohingya language, which is a local Chittagong dialect. That is why she became a permanent employee of the international health and hygiene project of an NGO. She thought it was her best option to work in a nearby place, so she dropped out of school like many Cox's Bazar youths and started raising the family in this crisis intermingled with a price hike in settlement regions (Personal communication, October 27, 2019)

Thus, one effect leads to another, and the dropout rate of children, especially girls, has become high due to the increased cost of living. Again, the contrary case was found. Three household in-depth interviews focused on another issue:

More male workers were lost outside Rohingya camps in contrast to more female workers increased inside the Rohingya camps. However, many families did not let the females work inside Rohingya camps as they had to be exposed to a lot of people. Exposed to a lot of males. Thus, it will be "Haram" earning (Forbidden) (Personal communication, 30 October 2019).

So, we can conclude that *refugees' transformative strategies* of joining the informal economy amplified competition for scarce resources, causing depressed ties between them. They are conscious that Bangladeshis hold them responsible

for increased resource-restricted rivalry. Lower-wage Bangladeshis also express resentment about what they perceive as unequal funding from humanitarian agencies, as they are also affected groups in this Rohingya crisis.

Maximizing Goods and Services

Rohingyas *adapted* to camp conditions as they had more family members and, thus, more ration cards, which led to more lentils, oil, and rice. On the local flea market, surplus ration food was sold off, and the cash earned from selling such products was used to buy fish, meat, fruits, and vegetables. This activity falls under adaptive strategy as it does not subvert top-down governance. Thus, in camp areas, lentils, oil, and rice were found to be cheap, while prices of perishable goods were high because of their *adaptive strategies*.

The Rohingyas have tremendous demand for perishable goods, so a market basket of perishable products in shelter areas has twice the value of its original price, such as vegetables, fish, meat, and chicken, which have all doubled in price in shelter areas. Also, the middle class and poor host groups must cut off expenditures and return to a low-quality diet without protein and minerals due to the doubled price increase.

The following narratives from a 32-year-old Bangladeshi sales officer in the country's reputed pharmaceutical company illustrate the situation:

He used to live in a 900-square-foot apartment with a BDT of 7,000. But since the Rohingya influx, various NGO offices have established their project offices in that area for temporary accommodation. As a result, the house rent tripled in 2019. He started his job at BDT 18000, which stands at BDT 28000 now. But his house rent has become 3/4 of his salary. In this situation, it becomes challenging for him to manage his finances. Not only that, but this is the familiar scenario of every lower-middle-class family who lives near the camp area. Thus, they can no longer continue to have the same living standard as before and have to shift to substandard ways of life (personal communication, October 28, 2019).

The further narrative from a 60-year-old *tomtom* driver (motor vehicle) illustrates the effect on the host population:

Locally perishable goods are facing a price hike; these include vegetables, fish, chicken, and meat. His commodity basket currently for daily products and services for four members of his family costs over 600 BDT, which was 300 BDT before the influx. The entire Rohingya influx makes people like him relegated to the fringes of society. Everything changed instantly. He attempts to handle the costs by sacrificing his daughter's high school fees (personal communication, October 25, 2019).

Transnational Socioeconomics: Remittance Transfer

Nicholas Van Hear (2003) discovered a connection between refugees' movements and the exchange of money and information in various refugee countries worldwide. The Rohingya refugees also establish a wide association as such. Nicholas Van Hear (2003) finds that transnational relations involve transmitting remittances along with transnational political, social, and cultural information. Refugees do so in order to improve their lives.

Money transactions are made by remittances brought by hand at various checkpoints, but another alternative is not to physically move the money but to do so via "Hundi." In Hundi, the individual whom is the middleman helping to move money is motivated by goods or an immediate pecuniary good. According to an expert who was interviewed for this research, through Hundi products such as gold, precious possessions, and illicit imports of counterfeit goods such as drugs and narcotics, money is coming into Bangladesh to exchange for these goods. They are involved in the flea market, such as selling their gold inside camps, as remitting money from relatives or friends is not always feasible. Therefore, they liquidate assets by selling their valued possessions to the host community. In these situations, they rely on their gold jewelry. The Rohingyas thereby accumulate liquid capital by being involved in market activities, subverting top-down governance to *transform* their lives. They have a motive to accumulate liquid money. These small ways of earning can help them have a sense of security, a future, and a source of supremacy.

Hence one of the many reasons for them to work outside camps and inside camps, selling their prized possessions, and liquidating money all connect with their need for survival in a crisis, creating a position in the existing situation for survival, and further accumulating both power and wealth to socially and financially secure themselves for the future. *Adaptive and transformative strategies* help maneuver the system by utilizing the pockets of influence of social and financial capital.

Rohingya Refugee Control and Presence in Camp Administration

The paper has been looking at the interfaces between the refugees and host communities and the groups that have evolved over the camp, among them. These mechanisms show competing arguments for governance, and this is where debates of common interest take place. Following Long's (1989, 2001) suggestion, led the researchers to pursue the way people in the camp make their way to find space for maneuver and carve out pockets of influence. These people are standing with one leg in the formal governance system of the international and national agencies and the other in more autonomous orders inside the camp.

To maintain their position, the Rohingyas are implementing these strategies to survive in a crisis. Formation of leadership takes place, which derives power from tribal or racial groups and co-exists more informally. Rohingyas are

adopting *transformative strategies* to transform from *right-based passive recipients of assistance* to active participants. Rohingyas seek strong leadership and support from their own communities to create power among the rest of the communities, thus establishing small youth gangs that threaten the host community. This is their way of gaining *muscle power*. Muscle power is when they instill fear and intimidation over the host population to establish their command over them. Host communities fear rebellion, as 1.1 million Rohingyas make up more than half of the existing Bangladeshis in the settlement regions. In Potibunia camp, three host population households confessed that:

They were scared of the Rohingya Alikkin group (a terror group) instituting muscle power in the camps and threatening to take their lives by beheading them if they did not get along well. Alikkin group intimidates them by cutting electric lines or pulling the bulb light on the porch of the house during the night, so they do not get out of their houses at that hour of the night. These households assume that this terror group is the one that is engaged in all kinds of drug smuggling and counterfeiting during the night and is disguised in daylight, hearing everything they say and mixing up with them (personal communication, October 26, 2019).

Muscle power was instituted with violence, which was prevalent in camps. Even violence against women and rampant violence was causing everyone to live in intimidation and fear. This muscle power is one of their *transformative strategies*, where they are not passive recipients of aid only, but rather active participants, establishing their power over the host population. This was also directed from Rohingyas to Rohingyas to establish power over the weak. Such as gender-based violence establishing power relations.

In the RRRC office, the researcher was conducting an in-depth interview with the Camp in Charge (CIC) when she was interrupted by a Rohingya couple in distress.

The woman was crying and complaining to the CIC about how her husband pulled out the gold earring from her ears with bare hands and almost severed her ears (Personal observation, 27 October 2019).

In another camp, the researcher again witnessed while interviewing the CIC that a Rohingya woman came with a complaint:

My husband got married without my permission. I am being abandoned with five kids. And as I am resisting his second marriage, I am getting abused by my husband (personal communication, October 28, 2019).

People with less traditional authority in tribal or ethnic groups took refuge in formal top-down governance. They were minorities, women, youth, and the disabled who were targeted for employment, training, and education. Therefore, they came to the CIC offices, which are part of top-down governance, to receive

impartiality. Traditions and the right to lay down cultural practices are shared by Rohingyas. However, practices include issues related to polygamy, child marriages, sexual and domestic violence, marital inheritance, and circumcision. Merry (2003) suggests, following Foucault (1978), that 'the creation of subjectivity by law is a particularly intimate focal point for the cycle of dominance and resistance'. Such issues also concern the status of women, children, and minorities and their treatment by men. These behaviors have their roots in institutional customs like heavy drinking, substance addiction, corruption, and domestic violence. Men are inclined to this deviant behavior as they suddenly shrink from being family heads to being dependent on relief and sitting idle. Turner in 1999 drew a similar conclusion: Men displaying destructive actions feel disempowered as they have lost their normal breadwinner title to humanitarian aid. Therefore, they try to establish militancy and create terror by creating dominating positions in and out of their household.

Furthermore, according to an interviewee, '*the local region has an abundance of drugs. They are placed in camps, then distributed to consumers.*' (Personal communication, December 3, 2019) The refugees establish *transformative strategies* by moving from Bangladesh checkpoints to Myanmar checkpoints and smuggling and distributing Burmese goods and even drugs to Bangladesh, subverting top-down refugee governance. Moreover, transformative strategy comprises their trying to travel to the Middle East and Southeast Asian countries to relocate with their relatives or for job opportunities. They try to transform their lives and try to obtain counterfeit passports in hopes of moving to the Middle East or East Asia in the hope of reuniting with their kin. They either diminish in number or are detained at one of several checkpoints in the border region. But they try to exercise their social and financial capital out of desperation, which creates further friction with the host population.

Geographical Proximity and Coping to Integrate with Local People

Spatial convergence occurs with the utmost apathy of the host community towards the prolonged stay of the Rohingyas, the overwhelming influx renders spatial integration by force. Therefore, the Rohingyas exercise an *adaptive strategy* by integrating with local host communities. The Rohingyas try to mix with the host population for a sense of belongingness.

Intermarriage and sexual exploitation prevail. The host group men marry young Rohingya women for sexual exploitation and then abandon them without a trace, contributing to the high fertility rate of Rohingyas. Due to the proximity of living with a group for whom the host community's typical livelihood shifted, the standard of living declined for the majority due to forceful integration with Rohingyas. In this issue, a host community individual was approached, and he said:

here are no privacy or property protection rights of their own ever since the influx. My grown plants and fruits are stolen. My chickens and ducks that freely moved around my household are taken up and eaten. There is no grazing land for my cattle. No privacy or protection exists (personal communication, October 25, 2019).

The host group cannot do animal husbandry, poultry farming, or agricultural activities. Rohingyas cut trees on hills and use timber to build shelter houses. Massive deforestation in an environmentally sensitive region destroys the natural ecosystem. Natural capital is accessible as common goods. It is not excludable, but overconsumption will eventually affect the host group's environment and nature. Therefore, the use of natural resources is detrimental to the host group, and this contributes to landslides due to extensive tree-cutting over the hills. This will have a profound effect on the local host region and its ecological imbalance in the long run.

Host communities feel vulnerable as they become more and more marginalized and become victims of social exclusion. There is a growing problem that Rohingyas will exploit them in the long run as they are the majority in the local region, as distinguishing between a Bangladeshi and a Rohingya is very difficult. So, host communities fear that they will further get relegated to the fringes of society as the Rohingyas can easily replace the host population due to similarities in language, religion, and physique. Rohingyas exercise adaptive strategies to integrate into society. Hence, these factors arose while speaking with the host population about why they feel threatened by Rohingyas. On the other hand, when interviewed, the Rohingyas talked about integrating among Bangladeshis by having a similar local dialect that mixes them with the local host community's working class. Thus, their adaptive strategy further results in transformative strategies, by exercising which they subvert top-down governance and go outside the camps to join the informal economy.

Discussion and Conclusion

Officially, refugees are not permitted to operate and move freely outside the camp. Almost all responsibility for the treatment of Rohingyas rests with foreign organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) serves as the quasi-government of the camp. The political stance shows how the Rohingyas operate in a temporary containment but manages the situation on its side. They establish economic institutions, informal business networks, and transnational links, instituting pockets of influence—even the formation of the *Alikkin* group as a form of *muscle power*, which is instituted through posing fear and intimidation over the host population. These are Rohingya adaptive techniques recognized in a variety of studies, but all of them have been brought together in this paper to demonstrate the overall picture (Horst, 2006; Schechter, 2004; Turner, 2005; Jansen, 2011). As a result of this perceived displacement, combined with the very factual rise

in problems and declining living situations, most host communities experience a strong sense of agitation and bitterness. It strengthens the exponentiation animosity with the Rohingyas, which slowly transforms into oral or corporal violence, and creates a constant underlying tension between the two groups.

The coping strategy to build pockets of influence for Rohingyas challenges the host population, and the early recovery of the situation can be accomplished by taking full account of the host community and including them in "right-based" assistance and support from international agencies. The tension between the host population and Rohingyas can be minimized by debunking the feeling of deprivation among the host population and eliminating the dialectical relationship. The implications of the Rohingyas', adaptive and transformative coping mechanisms are characterized by an overall dilapidation of living standards and livelihood opportunities for host communities of poorer sections. The poorer segment is in a contradictory situation with a massive influx of Rohingyas due to competition for work, housing, and services. The newborn rivalry has led to more unwarranted and less secure jobs, impacting their ability to access or retain adequate housing and food. The majority of host communities in regions covered by this study expressed a sense of injustice in this regard, as they felt that their plight was no better than that of the Rohingyas and that they had become more collateral damage to the entire situation. Even those interviewees whose situations are better off compared to those of the general Rohingyas expressed a sense of wrong at the fact that poorer members of the host community are not receiving any support.

On the other hand, Rohingyas risk being the stooge not only for immediate challenges but also for longer grievances. A voluntary repatriation is a permanent option. But they fear being moved to Myanmar due to the violence that may happen again. They fear that they will get mired in legal limbo if they are identified as "refugees." They all want to return to Myanmar, but they need to be formally enrolled in their ethnic group and therefore given the nationality to defend themselves. However, most of their homes in Myanmar were burned to the ground so they need to be protected with resettlement assistance along with educational and health facilities.

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Community Engagement in Disaster Risk Governance: Role of Union Disaster Management Committee (UDMC) in Bangladesh

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Abstract

Bangladesh is one of the most vulnerable countries in the world to disaster risks. For effective disaster risk reduction, the country has transformed its disaster management goal from post-disaster rehabilitation responses to pre-disaster risk reduction measures. Union Disaster Management Committee (UDMC) is the lowest tier of the disaster governance system of the country that is designed to accommodate community participation and enhance the risk reduction capacities of the communities from the bottom. The paper is designed to advance a systematic investigation of the effectiveness of the UDMCs by examining the functions and mechanisms and finding out the obstacles faced by the UDMCs at lower levels. For doing so, Document study is taken as a study method for qualitative research. The study findings show that UDMCs exhibit strong promises but face some challenges for the weakness of functioning. The low level of engagement of community people, the centralized government system, the client's network, and the dominance of local politics create barriers to connecting the community people to broader governance. However, the UDMCs as a local-level governance body have the potential to effectually impact risk governance through effective participation and capacity building of community people.

Keywords: Community Engagement, Participation, Disaster Risk Governance, Union Disaster Management Committee (UDMC).

Introduction

A vast part of the population of Bangladesh is susceptible to different types of disasters, both natural and human-made. The country is one of the most vulnerable countries to disaster risks geographically, geologically, hydrologically, and meteorologically (Shammin, Firoz, & Hasan, 2022). Floods, cyclones, droughts, landslides, and other kinds of hazards are frequent visitors of the country. Climate change added new threats to the existing vulnerabilities of the country. It is predicted that the changed climate due to global warming might have a catastrophic impact on the agriculture and livelihood of thousands of people in poverty-stricken countries (Rahman, 2018). In this perspective, risk reduction and effective management of hazard issues are important for the nation to achieve resilience to cope with the changing situation. Bangladesh's

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Government has taken a couple of steps focusing on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) as a policy goal to fight the disaster challenges following the internationally accepted framework, the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA). Bangladesh has outlined the standing orders of disaster (SOD) as one of the pioneer nations of South Asia. Disaster Management Act was a big step for the country which was passed in 2012 and subsequently, the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief (MoDMF) of the Bangladesh Government was formed. The ministry has the responsibility to coordinate and monitor all disaster risk management mechanisms of the country. Union Disaster Management Committee (UDMC) is the lower tier of the disaster governance system of the country that facilitates participation from community people, and work for enhancing the capacities of the communities to cope with disaster situation. UDMC has an important role in community-based Risk reduction of the nation and is designed to be involved in the process from the root. The coordination within the committee with its 36 members and between the top administrations is vital for effective risk governance of the country. In this regard, the main objective of the paper is set to evaluate the effectiveness of the UDMC and investigate the working mechanism and functions of the UDMC. This study is designed to investigate the effectiveness of the lowest tier of Disaster risk Governance structure in Bangladesh, the Union Disaster Management Committee by examining the functions and mechanisms of the UDMCs, and finding out the obstacles faced by the UDMCs at lower levels for effective disaster management. With the objective, a conceptual discussion on the disaster risk governance and community engagement is covered in the first part of the article, and then a qualitative investigation on the effectiveness of UDMCs has proceeded to understand the nature of disaster risk governance at the lower tier of the country.

Conceptual Underpinnings:

Disaster Risk Governance

Disaster risk Governance is about the effective management of disaster risks. A paradigm shift has been noticed in the field of managing the process of emergency management or disaster management from post-disaster relief and rehabilitation activities to disaster risk reduction and community-based management (Azad, Uddin, & Zaman, 2019). *The Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA)* accepted by 168 countries in 2005 was a crucial part of the way of disaster management on a global scale that instrumentally impacted by mainstreaming disaster risk reduction as a priority in both developed and developing nations. The next international protocol '*Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction* was set for the timeframe 2015 to 2030 and the first emphasis on the "governance" of disaster risk issues. The framework was accepted by the UN member states in March 2015 at a conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai city of Japan and subsequently, endorsed by the UN General Assembly.

The Framework focuses on four specific priorities for action for the effective management of disasters with a focus on strengthening disaster risk governance. This framework though set a motto on post-disaster management, has given importance to risk and risk governance. Therefore, the apex international protocols have significantly brought disaster risk issues and management priorities to the main discourses of disaster management around the globe.

Disaster Risk governance is about the process and engaging participation in disaster risk reduction and management procedures. The major objectives of a disaster governance system are to ensure participation, transparency, and accountability in the process of risk reduction of disasters. Nevertheless, disaster risk governance is a broad and complex process in regard to a single institution or for a ministry to coordinate or manage (Pal & Shaw, 2018). In a sense, risk governance can be described as coordination procedures among government bodies, public servants, the private sector, media, and civil society in national and regional areas in managing disaster and climate-related risks (UNDP, 2012). The process aims in enhancing institutional capacities and ensuring necessary resources for prevention, preparedness, and recovery from disasters, and connect people by establishing their legal rights and obligations by narrowing their differences (UNDP, 2015). Risk governance, in fact, is seen as a mechanism of risk communication, assessment, and management procedures. The Institute of Risk Governance Council (IRGC) comprehends risk governance ranging from local to a global level and linked with formal- informal relations and socio-economic contexts for risk evaluation by the participation of actors and stakeholders in political and policy platforms (Pal & Shaw, 2018). A comprehensive and systematic development of policies, strategies, and practices can be portrayed with risk governance and disaster risk reduction that aims to reduce hazard risk and lessen the adverse consequences (Pal & Shaw, 2018). UNDP suggested to an inclusive integrated institutional mechanism for multitier, multi-sector, and multi-stakeholder engagement for effective management of the process of disaster risk governance (UNDP, 2017). UNDP also emphasizes on the risk assessment process, achieving international uniform goals and priorities, and tailoring laws for better accountability and access to finance (UNDP, 2017). It is important to ensure different stakeholders' participation with an effective coordination strategy to cope with disaster risk assessment and risk communication. Therefore, Disaster risk governance includes not only laws and institutional requirements but also engaging participation from the root-level community people.

Disaster Risk Governance and Community Engagement

The decentralized governance structure is crucial for effective disaster risk reduction measures as local communities are essentially the first responders to a disaster (Grady, Gersonius, & Makarigakis, 2016). One of the significant features of disaster risk governance is its multi-stakeholder approach. Involving local-level institutions and community engagement is one of the challenges for

enforcing good governance in the process of disaster risk reduction. Nevertheless, local Government can play a key coordinating role in the multi-level, multi-stakeholder platform of disaster risk reduction by engaging citizens and local communities in the process and linking the local concerns to the central government (UN, 2010). Local Government engagement and community-based approach are very significant at the root level to ensure participation and enhance effective coordination from bottom to top administration. It is not only important to involve local bodies of administration but to ensure successful participation from the community. In this context, the idea of a Community-based risk reduction approach (CBDRR) is suggested to engage the community from the root level. The term “*community-based*” means a joint management process with the involvement of community people and it is argued that the approach can be instrumental in the development of important policies for disaster management taking into consideration the particular context of the community (Habiba, Rajib, & Abedin, 2013). Community involvement is important for disaster risk governance as it ensures participation from the bottom tier of administration in a multi-stakeholder and multitier system. The approach is very much important for developing nations to fight against the dual enemies: Poverty and disaster. Disasters cause a significant risk to the development strives of a nation and it has crucial impacts if a country has a persistent poverty rate. Therefore, for a developing country, it is important to involve the local level government and community for achieving disaster resilience and effective management.

Methodology

The research is a secondary data-based qualitative analysis. The objective of the research is to examine the nature of community engagement in disaster governance of the Union Disaster management committee. To Understand the governance mechanism, a Document study is used as the research method of the study to explore the nature of risk governance and community engagement at UDMC, the lower tier of Disaster Risk Governance in Bangladesh. For these purposes, Relevant books and articles, research reports, newspaper sources, Seminar proceedings, government policy papers, and related websites concerning the issues of UDMC governance are followed and systematically reviewed in this study. In the end, some policy suggestions are made following the findings of the paper.

Disaster Risk Profile of Bangladesh

Bangladesh is one of the most vulnerable countries that is susceptible to different kinds of disasters. Nevertheless, the country is depicted by an analyst as the most disaster-prone in the world (Hossain, 2011). He noted, “*The geographical location and the physiographic landscape of Bangladesh spell disaster. Floods, cyclones and tidal surges, tornados, earthquakes, and drought have often visited this country with devastating consequences*” (Hossain, 2011). Natural hazards

are regular visitors to the developing nation that have significant consequences in her development strives. The country is affected by different kinds of hazards throughout history. The Bhola cyclone of 1970 is top listed among the most devastating disasters in the world with a death toll of 300,000 (Coppola, 2017). After the birth of the nation in 1971, Bangladesh has encountered so far around 200 disasters with a loss of more than 600,000 deaths and her economy and livelihood of people are severely affected by those disasters (Hossain, 2011). The country is in risk of different man-made hazards as well. The country has faced several examples of incidents of structure fires and building collapses that resulted deaths of more than two thousand laborers in the past decade (CFE-DM, 2020). Rana plaza collapse which is the deadliest infrastructure failure in world history testimonies the risk of poor infrastructure in the nation. Moreover, climate change added intensive risk to the existing risk profile of the country. Bangladesh is top listed in the risk index due to climate change by the German Watch for the last consecutive years (David Eckstein, 2021). The intensively different hazards are likely to occur due the climate change. Moreover, it is projected that a vast part of the land area of the country will be lost due to sea levels rising. Those altogether can result in creating climate refugees. It is projected that climate change will create more than 20 million climate refugees in the coming days (CFE-DM, 2020).

Institutions and legal Framework for Disaster Management in Bangladesh

The ministry related to disaster and relief went through deferent phases that modified its focus from post-disaster relief to comprehensive disaster management since the independence of the country. In 1972, two different ministries were founded named the *Ministry of Relief and Rehabilitation & Ministry of Food* just after the establishment of the new nation. In 1982, these two ministries were merged under the *Ministry of Food* having two wings: *The Department of Food & Department of Relief and Rehabilitation*. In 1988, again the Department of Relief and Rehabilitation turned into a separate ministry with the name of *Ministry of Relief*. In 1994, the ministry was renamed as *Ministry of Disaster Management & Relief*. In 2004, the *Ministry of Food & Ministry of Disaster Management & Relief* merged again under the name of the *Ministry of Food and Disaster Management*. In 2009, two departments were established named the Department of food & Department of disaster Management and Relief under *the ministry of Food and Disaster Management*. Finally, in 2012, the *Department of disaster management and Relief* turned to a full ministry with the name of *Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief (MoDMR)*.

A complex web of top-to-bottom administrative structures is involved in disaster management in Bangladesh. Ministry of disaster Management and Relief is the apex body to deal with the issues of disaster risk. A series of inter-related institutions are operating at national and local levels with specific responsibilities

an important role to identify the major risk, challenges, and opportunities for disaster management for the period. Another important step from GOB was to pass Disaster Management Act, 2012 that give legal stands for the SOD. Moreover, there are many laws and policies that closely linked with disaster management framework of the nation. It can be said that the country has a well-tailored organizational structure and legal framework to support the disaster risk governance, however, in reality, there is question in working of the system to cope with diverse emergency situation according to the design. The lowest tire of the structure is Union Disaster management committee that is designed to involve community people for risk reduction mechanism and disaster communication.

The Union Disaster Management Committee

The Union Disaster Management committee (UDMC) is headed by the chairman of the Union Parishad comprised by minimum 35 members from representatives from different sectors. The chairperson(chairman of the union) of the Committee can add a maximum of 3 more members in the committee, and form groups and sub-groups in face of specific local situation or for special circumstances. (MoDMR, Standing Orders on Disaster, 2019)The distribution of the member of the committee is given below:

(i)	Union Parishad Chairman	1	Chairperson
(ii)	Members of the Union Parishad	12	Member
(iii)	Teacher Representative (Nominated by Chairman)	1	"
(iv)	Government officials working at Union Level (Sub-Assistant Agriculture Officer, Union Health and Family Planning Centre in-charge, Union Tax Collector (<i>Tahshildar</i>), BRDB Field Worker, Representative of Social welfare department)	7	"
(v)	Representative of Vulnerable Women (Nominated by Chairman)	1	"
(vi)	Representative of the CPP (in appropriate case)	1	"
(vii)	Representative of Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (in appropriate case)	1	"
(viii)	Representatives of NGOs (one representative each from Local, National and International NGOs nominated by the Chairman)	3	"
(ix)	Representative of the Peasant and Fishermen Society (If no society, person will be nominated by Chairman)	2	"
(x)	Socially Reputed Persons or Civil Society Representatives (Nominated by the Chairman)	2	"
(xi)	Representative of Freedom Fighter (Nominated by Upazila Freedom Fighters Command Council)	1	"
(xii)	Imam/Priest/Other religious leader (Nominated by Chairman)	2	"
(xiii)	Representative of Ansar and VDP (Nominated by Upazila Ansar VDP Officer)	1	"
(xiv)	Secretary, Union Parishad	1	Member Secretar

(Source: MoDMR, 2019)

For the participation and effectful engagement of community people, the committee has requirement to engage in meaningful meeting in regular interval. It is binding for the committee to meet once a month in normal period. However, the committee meeting should be arranged more than once a week during warning phase and pre-disaster phase of a disaster. Meeting should be arranged

according to the need of the situation during disaster period. The committee members are to meet once a week during recovery phase of post disaster period. The formal required meeting procedure is devised to conduct the risk assessment concerning the local circumstances and participation from the bottom.

In Standing Order on Disaster (SOD), UDMC is deliberated to perform several responsibilities comprising of risk reduction measures and emergency response activities in disaster and post disaster time. One of the key concerns for risk reduction measures is to make that local people informed of the situation and enhance their capabilities of taking measures for risk reduction at household and community level. (MoDMR, Standing Orders on Disaster, 2019)The UDMC focuses on training and workshops on regular basis for risk awareness and enhance capacity building with coordinate with Upazila Disaster management Committee and different stakeholders. The Committee should prepare ‘Union Disaster Management Plan’ for the purpose of risk reduction and emergency response by community participations including the vulnerable groups (Habiba, Rajib, & Abedin, 2013). The UDMCs also will collaborate with local NGOs for awareness, training, and will conduct risk assessment (Barua, Mitra, & Eslamian, 2021). During warning period, UDMC set focuses to disseminate warning and security messages to alert the population. The committee will work to evacuate the vulnerable portion of people if needed and will monitor the last moment preparation of rescue team (MoDMR, Standing Orders on Disaster, 2019). During the disaster time, UDMC will organize emergency rescue work utilizing available facilities at the place as per the need and also will assist another rescue work. In post disaster period, UDMC will gather periodic data of the disaster and calculate losses incurred in the disaster according to the guidelines of ministry, and send the disaster assessment to Upazila DMC. The committee will also take initiative for rehabilitation by distributing reliefs sourced from central government and received from local sources following the guidelines of ministry and direction of the Upazila DMC (MoDMR, Standing Orders on Disaster, 2019).

The Effectiveness of the Union Disaster Management Committee

The Union Disaster Management Committee (UDMC) works from local-level to enforce effective management of disaster risks. In the multitier settings of the disaster management mechanism, UDMC is designed to involve community participation. Community people face different magnitudes of difficulties due to disasters, and community effort involving local government can be an effective option to cope with disaster situation. For this instance, UDMC is projected to have an important role in the risk governance procedures in the country. The UDMC has the responsibilities to involve people and networked with other stakeholders. In real time situation, UDMC demonstrates mixed results. The Government of Bangladesh has developed Comprehensive Disaster Management Program (CDMP) with the partnership of UNDP and different

donor agencies that aims to strengthen the disaster management system of the country by institutionalization and mainstreaming of disaster risk reduction procedures. The program was implemented on two stages of which phase 2 was completed in 2014 (MoDMR). A study was conducted on CDMP as a process to examine the performance of the Union Disaster Management Committees (UDMC) in light of the expected roles of the committee that covered 100 unions of 35 Upazilas under 21 districts (Khan & Jonsson, 2013). The study examined the functionalities and capacities of those UDMCs and the study result shows 17% of the UDMCs performing 'good', 38% are 'moderately capable' and rest 45% are 'weak' according to the used study indicators (Khan & Jonsson, 2013). The study also reviewed the UDMCs in two categories: 1) UDMC that received Local Disaster Risk Reduction Fund (LDRRF) under CDMP program and 2) those which did not received the fund. The study shows that the LDRRF unions performed better in compare with those that did not receive the fund of which only 34% are considered weak (Khan & Jonsson, 2013). Among those UDMC which did not get LDRRF, none of the UDMCs found good performing, however, 36% of the UDMC found as moderate performing, and the rest 64% are rated as dissatisfactory and weak (Khan & Jonsson, 2013). The study results suggested that program like CDMP with funding can enhance the functionality of the UDMCs. Another research suggested that UDMC can play effective role as it has funds to contribute in the society with people's participation (Khan M. M., 2022). However, still, a good portion of the UDMCs were not performing that found in different studies. In a study 43 Upazila Nirbahi Officers (UNO) were interviewed, and 76% of them opined that the UDMCs were not appeared effective to them. (Aminuzzaman, 2014) It is found in a household survey that 75% of households in an area didn't know the existence of UDMC as body of local government, though the researcher found the coordination role of UDMC in the area was effective (Islam, Walkerden, & Amati, 2016). In another study, it was alleged that UDMCs can not contribute effectively in coordination and monitoring because of 'political nepotism, corruption, irregularity of meetings, and centralization of power' (Islam & Walkerden, 2017). However, there are some good signs of working of the system. UDMC shows some positive indications to bring the people aware of the situation. In a report on the disaster management in 2013, it is found that UDMC members have significant roles to provide the people early warning in warning period of Cyclone Mahasen along with media and local people (announcement from mosque). (DDM, 2014) The Report also denotes that UDMC has good role in preparedness activities for the cyclone (Barua, Mitra, & Eslamian, 2021). In another research, effective responses of UDMC of Goroikhali union Parishad of Paikgacha upazila under Khulna district is recorded. When tropical cyclone Fani was approaching in May, 2019, the members of ward disaster management committee (WDMC) of ward 4 informed the UDMC members about the possible breach of embankment of Shibsha River. An emergency meeting of UDMC was called and responsible Upazilla committee and Water development Board were informed. They started

working to repair the embankment engaging 100 people using their own fund and completed the primary repair within 3 days. Delay in the initiative might cause possible inundation of the areas of four unions (Shammin, Firoz, & Hasan, 2022). This incident is a clear example of strength of UDMC to work from the root and community engagement. Moreover, UDMC has a contributing role in empowering women and bridging gender gap in the local government mechanism as well. It is mandated to have at least five-woman members in the committee of which three are elected women members. In a research, it was found that 9 members were coopted in a committee which is encouraging, and the study also found noteworthy participation of women in the working of UDMC (Khan M. M., 2022). However, low attendance of women members is noticed in the meeting of UDMC in the same study due to delay in sending notice, farming time, transport issues, household activities, and for raining (Khan M. M., 2022). In another study of 20 UDMCs, it is also claimed that the women are mere attendants of the meeting, not playing any effective role (UNWOMEN, 2015). However, the same study mentioned some examples of women role in disaster management in locality and emphasis on *'uncovered positive potential for future exploration'* by women (UNWOMEN, 2015).

One of the significant barriers of effective risk governance by the UDMC is the irregularity of the meeting procedures that is thought to be the main mechanism of ensuring community participation. In a research report, UDMC of studied areas found to be not involved in any disaster management activities during pre-disaster period, and the members lack knowledge of their regulated roles and responsibilities of the committee (Ahmed, Moroto, Sakamoto, Matsuyama, & Akiko, 2016). It is found in the study that no meeting was held during the warning and recovery periods in those UDMC, and also those committees failed to organize adequate meeting during disaster period as prescribed by the SOD (Ahmed, Moroto, Sakamoto, Matsuyama, & Akiko, 2016). In another study of two unions of Chattagram district, it also shows that UDMC meeting were held irregularly (Barua, Mitra, & Eslamian, 2021). Therefore, lack of regular involvement from people shows the weakness of the whole system. In fact, many responsibilities and network requirements are guaranteed in documents, but very few have been seen implemented in real time experiences. It is identified that a large gap exists between the policy and implementation stages for disaster management in Bangladesh (Ahmed, Moroto, Sakamoto, Matsuyama, & Akiko, 2016). One of the responsibilities of UDMC is to prepare disaster management plan by the active participation of community members including vulnerable groups. However, the plan sometimes prepared by the NGOs. For example, it is identified in a study that disaster management Plan of Baharchara Union of Banshkhali Upazilla under Chattagram district was prepared by an NGO, 'Save the Children USA' (Barua, Mitra, & Eslamian, 2021). Nevertheless, effective NGO role is suggested in the SOD to enhance the capacities of the NGOs. In a study of 2 Unions, it is found that several NGOs were helping UDMCs to enhance technical capacities, and planning and budgeting activities (Azad A. ,

Uddin, Zaman, & Ashraf, 2020). Union Disaster Management Committee is believed to be one of effective body to response to disaster and climate risks and is a part of a bigger network of Disaster mechanism of the country. Coordination among different bodies of the arrangement from top to bottom and in between is the crucial device for working of the system. In a culture of dominancy by the bureaucracy and centralized governance, it is tough to accommodate different stakeholders and community people within a hierarchical system of unwilling bureaucracy. Bangladesh bureaucracy is highly centralized and the relationship is very much tailored according to the top bottom system. An inclusive system designed in a highly bureaucratic system, therefore, lacks coordination and participation from the bottom. One observer pointed that the challenges lie in the coordination among large stakeholders as the disaster management system of the nation work within '*various forums at different levels and a complex system of government committees*' (Islam M. T., 2018). Dominance of Upazila administration is a big hindrance for the UDMC to work from root and generate meaningful participation. Moreover, it has also given many responsibilities without concerning the workload of a Union parishad at local context. The responsibilities of UDMC are mainly to coordinate with Upazila administration and emergency response activities. However, it has limited financial source to collect fund to meet the expense and as a volunteer body, its members do not get any payment (Islam, Walkerden, & Amati, 2016).

The UDMC is most important public disaster management observing body at local level where role of Community is supposed to be significant but reality tells otherwise. It supposed to be 35 members (minimum) committee with a full dominance of Union Parishad (UP) chairman who is given the authority to nominate most of the members. It is highly centralized body dominated by the chairman and other UP members. Though, representatives of the Peasant and Fishermen community are proposed in the committee, option is open to nominate member in case of unavailability of such community. In a highly client patronage system in rural Bangladesh (Islam M. M., 2013), it is apparent that this structure will give little space to operate from a community initiative. For example, it is supposed that the committee will update the member list every year. In a study, it is found that the committee did not update their member list and they also did not know about the criteria of committee members (Ahmed, Moroto, Sakamoto, Matsuyama, & Akiko, 2016). The UDMC is institutionally weak and the chairman dominated the whole organization by his position, other members have little space to play role in the committee. (Islam, Walkerden, & Amati, 2016) Nevertheless, local political leaders and MP play a defining role on the disbursing of relief funds for the people. In a study of Khankhanabad Union of Banshkhal Upazila under Chattogram, it showed that Upazila party Leaders and local MP controls the funding projects and relief distribution (Barua, Mitra, & Eslamian, 2021). Nevertheless, corruption is a major good governance challenge for the working of the system of Bangladesh government. UDMCs are not free from the challenge. In the study of Khankhanabad Union found that UDMC

members are less confident on the chairman due to the alleged nepotism and corruption by him (Barua, Mitra, & Eslamian, 2021). It is alleged that the UDMCs members are interested in the distribution of relief goods for themselves and for their networks (MR, 2010). Therefore, corruption is a major challenge for effective participation of community people in disaster governance in local level as informal networks of clientist relation works in a complex social system in rural areas.

Conclusion

Bangladesh can be depicted as a very successful country in term of taking legal measures and administrative arrangement for effective disaster management. A complex network of organizations has been established to generate effective governance for the goal of disaster risk reduction. The country already transformed her disaster management goal from post-disaster rehabilitation responses to pre-disaster risk reduction activities by taking policy changes and also transform governance mechanism, Union Disaster Management committee is the lowest tier of the whole coping system for disaster governance of the country that designed to accommodate community participation and enhance the risk reduction capacities of the communities from the bottom. Through the organization of the UDMC, it is apparent the local people from community level have the opportunities to contribute disaster management of their locality and also play as a coordination instrument to upper bodies for risk assessment and taking proper action. The process also generates women empowerment as it accommodates women in the committee and also, creates space to voice the women. Therefore, UDMC is an important tool for the multi-level disaster governance of the country that creates space for awareness, participation and planning from community level as body of local level government. However, the working of UDMCs shows weakness because of lack of participation from community and local political structure. The centralized government system, clientism and dominance of local politics create barrier to connect the community people to broader governance from local level by the UDMC. However, the UDMCs as local level governance body has the potential to effectually impact on the risk governance process of the nation and create a risk informed community from the bottom. In this perspective, strong initiatives are suggested to strengthen the UDMC system of the local governance system of the nation.

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Development and Validation of a Scale Measuring Social Stigma of Mental Illness in Bangladesh

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Abstract

The present study aimed to develop and validate a scale for measuring the social stigma of mental illness among the general people of Bangladesh. Group interviews were conducted focusing on social stigma with the general people of Bangladesh (n = 12), from which 40 representative quotations were identified. Cognitive interviews with health professionals and general people (n = 8) identified 18 items for the Social Stigma of Mental Illness Questionnaire (SSMIQ) scale. Two items were dropped on the basis of expert opinion. The final 16-item 1616-item SMIQ (n = 240) was completed by a representative sample of the population. The SSMIQ was found to have excellent test-retest and internal consistency reliability. The test-retest reliability of the scale was found to be .784. Due to its single-factor structure, a 15-item version was created. The study also aimed to identify the key factors associated with stigma. Results indicated that there were significant gender differences in social stigma score (t = -2.32, p < .001) and previous history of mental illness, (t = -2.99, p < .001). The result also indicates a statistically significant difference in social stigma scores (F = 19.56, p < .05) for educational level, (F = 11.46, p < .05) for the living area, (F = 19.87, p < .05) for socioeconomic status and (F = 22.62, p < .05) for age. The SSMIQ are valid and reliable instruments that can be used in clinical and research settings.

Keywords: Stigma, Social, Mental Illness, Public Attitudes.

Introduction

According to the American Psychiatric Association ‘a mental disorder’ is a condition described as a disturbance in an individual's emotional regulation, cognition, or behavior that indicates a dysfunction in the biological, psychological, or developmental processes essential for mental functioning” (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). A wide variety of harmful, disease-

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related effects are associated with these types of diseases. For instance, according to research by Prince et al. (2007), mental illness accounts for around 14% of the worldwide burden of disease. Additionally, it was noted that in 2017, mental illnesses were the sixth leading cause of disability-adjusted life years (DALYs) and the second leading cause of years lived with disability (YLDs) worldwide, posing a significant threat to health systems, especially in low- and middle-income nations (Sagar et al., 2020). A systematic review conducted by Didar et al. (2014) reported that in Bangladesh, the prevalence of mental disorders was 34–21.9 percent in children and 65–31.0 percent in adults (Didar et al., 2014). As a result, mental health is now recognized as one of the top concerns in health policies around the globe and has been incorporated into the Sustainable Development Goals (Chokshi et al., 2014; Kyu et al., 2017). In spite of this high prevalence of mental health disorders, there are several potential reasons why there is much less participation in treatment. Stigma is considered one of the major obstacles to successful treatment involvement, including seeking and sustaining participation in services. Additionally, Bangladesh rarely addresses the significant morbidity of psychiatric disease as a public health issue. A systematic review conducted by Anwar and colleagues (2015) showed a need to address stigma in the context of mental disorders in Bangladesh (Anwar et al., 2015).

Stigma is stereotypes or negative attitudes ascribed to a person or groups of people when their individuality or behaviors are considered as different from or inferior to societal norms defined by (Dudley, 2000). Erving Goffman (1963) stated in his seminal work: One of the main obstacles to successfully pursuing treatment is a stigma about mental illness, including seeking and sustaining participation in services. The stigma associated with mental illness reveals a deeply dishonorable social attitude and a state of public shame (Goffman, 1963). As a result, people with mental illnesses have to deal not only with their sickness but also with the stigma that society and the general public attach to them. The two significant dimensions of stigma surrounding mental illness are self-stigma and public stigma. When people with mental illnesses internalize stereotypes and adopt the attitudes toward themselves, they experience self-stigma, which results in poorer self-esteem and decreased self-efficacy (Corrigan et al., 2006; Link et al., 1989). Public stigma, on the other hand, develops when a considerable portion of the general public agrees with negative stereotypes (Jones et al., 1984; Rabiner et al., 1983).

In the Western world, stigmas around mental illness appear to have broad public support. Several studies suggest that, in the United States the majority of people have stigmatizing beliefs regarding mental illness. (Link, 1987; Rabkin, 1974; Phelan et al., 2000 and Roman, 1981). The stigma associated with mental illness, according to Sartorius (2012), exacerbates problems and has been considered to be worse than the condition itself (Sartorius, 2012). In addition, public stigma discourages mentally ill people to seek treatment found in a study conducted by

(Mojtabai, 2010). Another study showed that social stigma is one of the major barriers to accessing mental health services (Arboleda-Florez, 2003; Fogel, 2005), and reduces their possibilities for finding a job (Corrigan et al., 2002; Williams et al., 2008) also makes it difficult to find private accommodations (Penn & Wykes, 2003).

There are a number of studies that indicated several factors that are associated with public stigma causation. One study conducted by Björkman et al. (2008), reported that gender is an important factor of public stigma (Björkman et al., 2008). Other studies reported that factors such as; level of education and marital condition are associated with social stigma (Papadopoulos et al., 2012). Some studies also indicated that religiosity and age are also associated with social stigma (Wisneski et al., 2009; Segal et al., 2005). Numerous studies have shown mental illness knowledge, prior experience, and contact with the mentally ill to be particularly potent moderating factors. For example, Addison and Thorpe (2004) concluded from their study that persons who had personal relationships with those who suffered from mental illness had much more favorable thoughts toward them (Addison and Thorpe, 2004). The most successful strategy for reducing stigma, according to Thornicroft, evaluation of stigma-reduction interventions, is boosting direct social interaction with people who have mental illness. (Thornicroft et al., 2008).

In Bangladesh, mental health care is impeded by a lack of public facilities, qualified professionals, staff, and financial resources, as well as widespread stigma and discrimination. The lack of competent governance to create and implement mental health policy is at the root of these problems. Moreover, the public stigma associated with mental illness in society has unfavorable effects on help-seeking behavior. Many persons who suffer from severe mental illness face two challenges. On the one hand, people battle with the disease's symptoms and accompanying impairments. On the other hand, they deal with the stereotypes and discrimination of society that result from misconceptions about these illnesses. As a result, people with mental illnesses were denied access to chances that define a high standard of living, including suitable employment, secure housing, adequate health treatment, and participation in a diverse range of social activities. Therefore, the objective of the present study was to develop a scale to measure the public stigma about mental illness among the general population of Bangladesh. The study also aimed to identify the key factors in order to recognize which groups of people are more or less likely to stigmatize the mentally ill.

Method

Scale Development Overview: Over a number of phases, we adhered to an organized method with both inductive and deductive elements. In phase I, we employed an inductive group interview-based approach to generate a broad range of prospective scale items. To choose items for the initial draft of the scale, we

deductively evaluated prospective scale items in phase II in light of the theoretical construction of stigma associated with Bangladeshi culture. Phase III involved the use of feedback from eight people's cognitive interviews consisting of 5 general people and 3 mental health professionals to reduce the number of scale items and then we send these items for expert review. Lastly, the resulting 16-item scale was verified in phase IV in a group of 240 Bangladeshi citizens. In compliance with the Helsinki Declaration and its later amendments, this study was carried out.

Phase I: *Item generation:* Two group interviews were conducted with participants, including three females and three males of different ages. Each group interview lasted for two hours, had a semi-structured format, and the conversation centered on stigma. To check the accuracy interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. Each transcript was examined by two team members separately to find quotations. The reviewers utilized an inclusive, consensus-based approach to choose 40 quotations as prospective scale items.

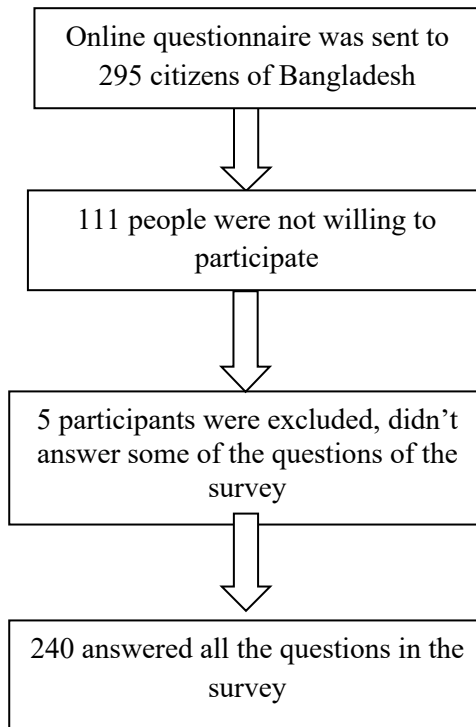
Phase II: *item selection:* Each of the 40 quotations identified as potential scale items were reviewed by four members of the team. We reached the consensus that none of the important aspects were missing. 26 quotations were selected to generate the first draft of the scale. We also confirmed that all interview groups were represented. Then, we carefully changed the wording to clarify meaning and reframed the 26 quotations such that they could be replied to using a Likert scale response, ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5), to create our first draft of the scale.

Phase III: *item reduction:* Cognitive interviews were conducted with 8 individuals consisting of 5 general people and 3 mental health professionals. Participants in the interview discussed how they responded to each of the 26 draft scale questions and gave input on their clarity and relevance. The remarks made by participants on each item were written down. Once more, four team members worked together to examine the information from the cognitive interviews and eliminate or change any information that the respondents had said was unimportant, problematic, or unnecessary. Through this procedure, the 26 items were shortened into an 18-item scale. and this 18-item scale was then sent for expert review. Two items were excluded based on the opinion of the expert committee. Finally, in the validation phase of the study, a 16-item scale was piloted.

Phase IV: We wanted to recruit above 200 participants. Along with the 16-item SSMIQ scale, participants had to complete a demographic information questionnaire. To evaluate the test-retest reliability of the SSMIQ; a sample of 40 people completed the questionnaire for the second time with an interval of 15 days.

Participants

The subjects of the present study were 240 general people of Bangladesh. Among them 135 were males and 101 were females (mean age = 25, SD = 1). The convenient sampling technique was utilized to recruit participants from Bangladesh. The participants came from lower-class to upper-class family backgrounds, with the majority coming from middle-class families (64.3%), followed by lower middle-class families (20.1%). Among them, 31.7% were living in rural areas, 29.3% were in suburban areas and 39% were in urban areas. Among participants, 40% were highly educated, 30.1% were moderately educated and 30.3% were uneducated among the participants. Around 57.8% of participants never suffer from any mental problem and 60.2% of participants didn't have any family member who faced any mental problem. The data of this study were collected by using an online Google form from the selected subjects. Before collecting the data they were provided with clear instructions and informed consent was obtained. 360 people in total were invited to take part in this survey. A total of 249 of them responded to the study invitation, and 245 of them gave their approval to take part. A total of 5 responders out of 245 were disqualified for missing responses. Figure 1 depicts specific participation data in detail.



(Figure 1: Details of the participant's selection of the present study)

Measures

Personal Information Form (PIF): A demographic information sheet that included questions regarding age, education levels, residence area, socio-economic status, mental health history, etc.

Social Stigma of Mental Illness Questionnaire (SSMIQ)

Social Stigma of Mental Illness Questionnaire (SSMIQ) (Sharmin, Sultana, and Islam, 2021) to be used to assess the negative attitudes towards people with mental illness among the general population of Bangladesh. The scale was a self-report measure consisting of 15 items which were designed to assess people's negative perceptions of mental illness. Participants rated each item based on a five-point Likert scale ranging from (1 for "Strongly Disagree", 2 for "Disagree", 3 for "Uncertain", 4 for "Agree" and 5 for "Strongly Agree"). The lowest score on the scale was 15 and the highest score was 75. The Social Stigma of Mental Illness Questionnaire was prepared by Sharmin, Sultana, and Islam, (2021) in Bangladesh. In the present study, this scale demonstrated very good internal consistency reliabilities (ω ranged between .31 and .85). The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for the scale was .95.

Data Processing and Statistical Analysis

Version 20 of IBM's Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software was used for the analysis of this study. To examine the relationships between social stigma and gender, age, education, living area, socio-economic status, etc. simple correlation was calculated. In order to test the reliability of the scale, data were calculated for Cronbach α value and test-retest reliability. An average item-total correlation >0.3 was considered liable. A Cronbach's alpha value of >0.9 was seen as excellent, and a correlation of less than 0 meant to significant construct existed (Streiner, Norman, & Cairney, 2015). Following that, the Kaiser Meyer Olkin (KMO) measure value was used to evaluate the sampling's adequacy, and Bartlett's test of sphericity was applied to determine whether the data were appropriate. The KMO value was .94 which was 0.50 (Bollen, 1989) for factor analysis, a significant Bartlett's test of sphericity with a p-value of 0.05 was judged appropriate. Then, to investigate the dimensionality and construct validity, principal axis factoring (PAF) with varimax rotation (Eigenvalue larger than 1) was carried out. Only variables with values below 0.40 were considered. Items with poor loadings were excluded, including those with general loadings of 0.40 on several components and failing to load above 0.39 on any component.

Results

To construct and validate the social stigma of mental illness questionnaire collected data was subjected to factor analysis. To better understand which groups of people are more or less likely to be stigmatized, correlations with

people with mental illness were calculated to examine the impact of potential mitigating factors. Independent sample t-test and One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were conducted to investigate the impact of education levels, living area, socioeconomic status, age, gender, etc. on social stigma of mental illness.

Table-1. Item level psychometric properties of the Social Stigma of Mental Illness Questionnaire (SSMIQ)

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
item1	33.35	218.941	.477	.333	.958
item2	34.28	212.158	.641	.496	.956
Item3	34.57	206.489	.829	.740	.952
item4	34.69	208.040	.810	.728	.952
item5	34.78	207.830	.795	.712	.953
item6	34.37	209.522	.706	.606	.954
item7	33.78	214.606	.621	.450	.956
item8	34.30	211.859	.694	.585	.954
item9	34.82	209.930	.762	.669	.953
item10	34.84	210.862	.768	.710	.953
item11	34.89	209.938	.804	.754	.953
item12	34.29	205.923	.769	.663	.953
item13	34.56	210.691	.719	.652	.954
item14	34.70	206.999	.824	.783	.952
item15	34.55	207.361	.837	.804	.952
item16	34.66	205.321	.851	.788	.951

Table 1 indicated that all the items were retained for the final version of the Social Stigma of Mental Illness Questionnaire (SSMIQ) as they have accepted the corrected item-total correlation above (Everitt, 2002; Field, 2005). All the items were highly correlated with Cronbach's Alpha value and Cronbach's based on the Standardized Item Value.

Table-2: Inter-item correlation matrix of the Social Stigma of Mental Illness Questionnaire (SSMIQ)

Item1	item2	item3	item4	item5	item6	item7	item8	item9	item10	item11	item12	item13	item14	item15	item16
item1															
item2	1.00														
item3	.550	1.00													
item4	.534	.756	1.000												
item5	.555	.675	.736	1.000											
item6	.575	.646	.561	.691	1.000										
item7	.428	.556	.503	.459	.504	1.000									
item8	.432	.663	.599	.522	.448	.448	1.000								
item9	.461	.615	.653	.642	.548	.437	.633	1.000							
item10	.499	.670	.619	.646	.582	.530	.519	.678	1.000						
item11	.510	.670	.620	.670	.611	.467	.578	.735	.802	1.000					
item12	.498	.641	.646	.615	.524	.559	.633	.600	.566	.622	1.000				
item13	.460	.579	.605	.559	.528	.458	.452	.604	.559	.615	.620	1.000			
item14	.550	.657	.724	.716	.565	.476	.562	.701	.682	.716	.621	.769	1.00		
item15	.486	.745	.742	.679	.548	.554	.658	.623	.634	.679	.749	.628	.743	1.00	
item16	.506	.739	.745	.681	.589	.569	.643	.669	.668	.704	.710	.655	.742	.850	1.00

Table 2 shows that this scale had good internal consistency reliabilities (ω ranged between .428 and .850). There is no value of the item less than .3. So, all the items were reliable and valid indicated by the factor analysis.

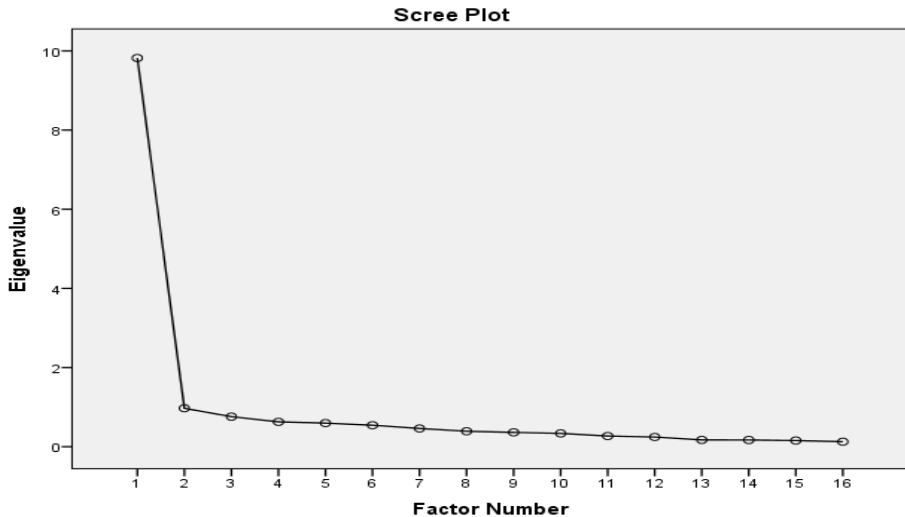
Test–retest reliability: In order to assess the test-retest reliability of the scale, a sample of 40 people completed the questionnaire for the second time with an interval of fifteen days. The test-retest reliability of the scale was found to be .784.

Table-3. Total Variance Explained by the SSMIQ

Factor	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	9.580	63.864	63.864	9.214	61.427	61.427
2	.778	5.187	69.051			
3	.727	4.848	73.899			
4	.598	3.988	77.888			
5	.584	3.891	81.779			
6	.487	3.248	85.027			
7	.401	2.676	87.703			
8	.362	2.411	90.114			
9	.338	2.253	92.367			
10	.270	1.801	94.168			
11	.245	1.631	95.799			
12	.177	1.181	96.981			
13	.169	1.126	98.107			
14	.158	1.057	99.163			
15	.126	.837	100.000			

The potential structure of social stigma in the Mental Illness Questionnaire (SSMIQ) was examined using principal axis factorization (PAF) with Promax rotation. The minimum Kaiser criteria of 0.5 were far exceeded by the KMO measure of sample adequacy of 0.948 (chi-square: 3086.779, degrees of freedom = 105, $p < 0.001$), confirming sample validity and compactness of the correlation pattern. Further evidence that the R matrix was not the identity matrix came from a substantial Bartlett test for sphericity. We used the principal component method for extraction and determined the number of factors that could most effectively account for the observed within-dataset covariance matrix. Following the extraction item number 1 was dropped out. The result of the initial analysis revealed one factor with Eigenvalue over 1, explaining 61.427% of the variance. For the first component, the scree plot indicated a very high eigenvalue, and after that, the curve started to progressively flatten down. [Figure 2]. The factor component matrix presented information from the initial unrotated solution and also supported scree plots by extracting the three components that explained

61.42% of the total variance [Table 3]. Following the best practices of item retention outlined at the outset, 15 items were retained for the final SSMIQ with one latent factor.



(Figure-2: Scree Plot)

Table 4. The mean difference in social stigma of mental illness scores between male and female students, the mean difference of previous history of mental illness, and family history of mental illness.

	Sex	N	Mean	SD	<i>t</i>
Social Stigma	male	136	34.72	14.41	-2.320*
	female	104	39.42	16.34	
Previous history of mental illness	Yes	103	33.52	12.18	-2.998*
	No	137	39.19	17.11	
Family history of mental illness	Yes	98	35.8061	14.8231	-.807*
	No	142	37.4225	15.8482	

* $p < .001$

An independent-samples *t*-test was used to compare mean differences between males and females in a sample ($n = 240$), history of mental illness, and family history of mental illness. The *t*-test was statistically significant for the mean difference between males and females, and females had significantly higher mean social stigma scores ($M=39.4231$, $SD=16.34$) (mean difference -4.69 , 95% CI $[- 8.68, -. 704]$), then male ($M = 34.72$, $SD = 14.41$), $t = -2.32$, $p < 0.001$ two-tailed. The *t*-test was also statistically significant for previous history of mental illness, with mean social stigma score for people who have not previous history of mental illness ($M=39.19$, $SD=17.11$) was significantly higher (mean

difference -5.67, 95% CI [-9.40, -1.94]), than the people who have a previous history of mental illness ($M=33.52$, $SD=12.18$), $t=-2.99$, $p<.001$ two-tailed. The t -test was also statistically significant for family history of mental illness, with the mean social stigma score for people who have no family members with a previous history of mental illness ($M=37.42$, $SD=15.84$) was significantly higher (mean difference -1.61, 95% CI [-5.56, -2.33]), than the people who have family members with a previous history of mental illness ($M=35.80$, $SD=14.82$), $t=-.807$, $p<.001$ two-tailed.

Table-5. One-Way Analysis of Variance of the social stigma of mental illness by education level, living area, socioeconomic status and age.

	Source	df	SS	MS	F	<i>p</i>
Education Level	Between groups	6	19050.581	3175.097	19.556	.000
	Within groups	233	37828.881	162.356		
	Total	239	56879.462			
Living Area	Between groups	2	5015.452	2507.726	11.459	.000
	Within groups	237	51864.011	218.835		
	Total	239	56879.462			
Socioeconomic status	Between groups	3	11444.582	3814.861	19.870	.000
	Within groups	235	45118.054	191.992		
	Total	238	56562.636			
Age	Between groups	3	12703.951	4234.650	22.623	.000
	Within groups	236	44175.512	187.184		
	Total	239	56879.462			

* $p<.05$

A one-way between subject's ANOVA was used to investigate the impact of education levels (below SSC, SSC, HSC, honors, masters and PhD), living area (urban, suburban, rural), socioeconomic status (upper middle class, middle class, lower middle class, lower class), age (21-30, 31-40, 41-50, above 50) on the social stigma of mental illness. Social stigma scores for the six groups differed statistically significantly at the $p<.05$ levels: $F(6,233) = 19.56$, $p= .000$ for educational level, the $p<.05$ levels in social stigma scores for the three groups: $F(2,237) = 11.46$, $p= .000$ for the living area, the $p<.05$ levels in social stigma scores for the four groups: $F(5,235) = 19.87$, $p= .000$ for socioeconomic status and the $p<.05$ levels in social stigma scores for the four groups: $F(3,236) = 22.62$, $p= .000$ for age was found.

Discussion

The present study aimed to develop and validate a scale for measuring the social stigma of mental illness among the general people of Bangladesh. Therefore, using a mixed-methods approach we developed a novel, comprehensive measure of social stigma about mental illness questionnaire (SSMIQ) for the general

population of Bangladesh. This scale consisted of 15- items with excellent internal consistency and reliability. Cronbach's Alpha was used to calculate the internal consistency, using data from the respondents from the initial administration (N=240). The test-retest reliability of the scale was found to be .784. Across all analyses, it seemed reasonable to conclude that the new scale is optimal for understanding a single overarching construct.

The study also aimed to identify those critical elements that might be used to determine which social groupings are more or less prone to stigmatize those who have mental illnesses. Results indicated that gender is an important factor in social stigma. The *t*-test was statistically significant for the mean difference between males and females, with the mean social stigma score of females (M=39.4231, SD=16. was significantly higher (mean difference -4.69, 95% CI [-8.68, -.704]), than the males (M= 34.72, SD=14.41), $t = -2.32, p < .001$ two-tailed. These results confirm those that were previously reported by (Björkman et al., 2008), who reported from his findings that gender is an important factor of public stigma (Björkman et al., 2008). Other studies reported that factors such as; educational level and age (Papadopoulos et al., 2012; Segal et al., 2005) are associated with social stigma. From this study, we found statistically significant differences in social stigma scores ($F=19.56, p < .05$) for educational level, ($F = 11.46, p < .05$) for the living area, ($F = 19.87, p < .05$) for socioeconomic status and ($F = 22.62, p < .05$) for age.

The results of our also indicated that there were significant gender differences in social stigma score ($t = -2.32, p < .001$) and previous history of mental illness, ($t = -2.99, p < .001$). Previous experiences and contact with people with mental illness have been found to be particularly strong mitigating factors in many studies (Corrigan et al. 2001 (Angermeyer et al. 2004, Pinto-Foltz et al. 2011). For example, a study by Addison (2004) discovered that persons who interacted personally with those who had mental illness had a more favorable opinion of them. (Addison and Thorpe, 2004).

Limitations and Implications

Although the conclusions of this study can be considered to imply that the Social Stigma of Mental Illness Questionnaire (SSMIQ) is suitable for assessing social stigma among the general population of Bangladesh, but as with many other studies, the study suffers from a number of limitations. Data was collected from a sample of small size and furthermore, people from some districts of Bangladesh were included as a sample. A bigger and more extensive sample from a diverse population all over Bangladesh would be considered for future research.

Community understanding and attitudes to mental illness are critical to mental health, as community members seek prevention, disease, and treatment, play a role in reinforcing adherence behaviors, and serve as specialized rehabilitation for chronic illness. In developing countries like Bangladesh, where mental health

facilities are inadequate, social stigma can delay people seeking treatment for mental illness. The results of this study will allow organizations that provide mental health services to pinpoint the causes of these unfavorable sentiments and create education campaigns to lessen stigma among the general population. Additionally, the research helps mental health professionals identify issues related to the stigma surrounding mental illness, as well as knowledge of local cultures. This is important because mental health professionals need to provide advice to patients on how to deal with stigma, but that advice needs to be culturally sensitive and knowledgeable.

Conclusion

Higher levels of education were associated with fewer stigmas. Interventions to combat the social stigma of mental illness should target rural communities. Stigma decreased as people were more exposed to information about mental illness and had higher levels of education. Interventions should also target those with higher incomes but lower levels of education. Mental health information, education, and community communication efforts are effective in reducing the stigma associated with mental illness.

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Social Standing of the Members of Public Accounts Committee in Bangladesh: The Case of Eighth and Ninth Parliament

Md. Abu Saleh¹

Abstract

The social standing of PAC members in Bangladesh has been identified in this study as the level of values, ability to understand their role in the committee and the parliament as a whole, and the capacity to secure financial accountability of the executive. The social standing of PAC members depends on various factors like the level of education, profession, age, and experience of members. The variation of the level of education, occupation, and professional experience makes a mixture of PAC roles in the eighth and ninth parliament of Bangladesh. Such differences in members' social standing keep an impact on the performance of PAC in numerous ways. These include improper debate and less outcome from PAC decisions, low frequency and duration of PAC meetings, poor attendance of members in the meeting, and the leadership role of the chairperson. Poor attendance of PAC members revealed the unwillingness of the members from the behavioral aspect to participate in the meetings.

Keywords: Social Standing, Professional Values, Leadership, Oversight Role, Accountability.

Introduction

The committee system is one of the notable creations in the functioning of the elected parliament of democratic states (Hasanuzzaman, 2007). It has become nowadays a global phenomenon (Shaw, 1997). The modern parliament has to carry out multifarious functions as the volume of welfare activities of government increasing day by day. Parliament uses its committees to scrutinize legislative activities concerning accountability and the lawmaking process as well as government actions and policy. Thus, the committee system emerged as a significant tool of a modern parliament. Considering the role of the Committees, one US Congressman has regarded it as the “eyes, ears, hands and even brain of the Parliament” (Shepsle & Weingast, 1987). The Public Accounts Committee, also known as PAC, is a parliamentary committee tasked with overseeing the public spending and financial management of the government.

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Social standing is defined as the values, authority and capacity of an individual that determines his role in the arena of society or institution. The social standing of PAC member depends on various factors like the level of education, profession, age, and experience of members. This article aims to understand the social standing of members of the Public Accounts Committee in Bangladesh and its impact on the workings of the PAC.

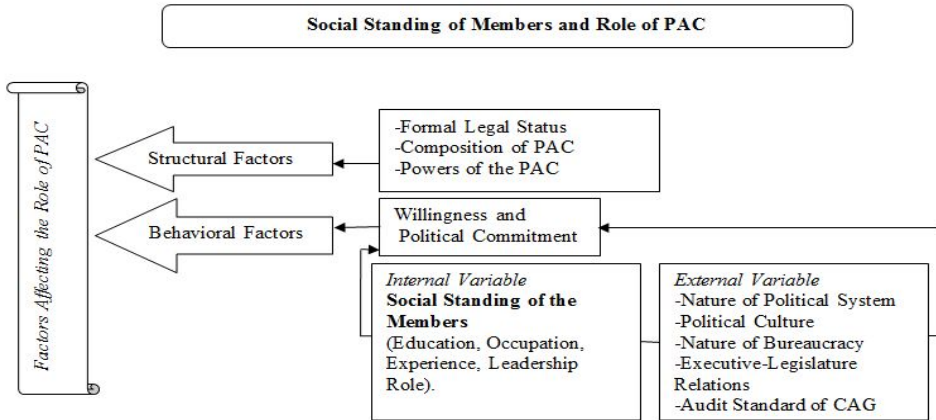
Methods of the Study

The study is primarily qualitative and the data collected for this study is qualitative. The relevant data were gathered both from primary and secondary sources. Secondary sources of data include documents on the legal framework concerning parliament, the parliamentary committee system and PAC, proceedings of the parliament and meeting minutes of committees, published reports, press reports, related books, journals and monographs. On the other hand, primary sources of data incorporate in-depth interviews with the chairman and members of the committee, committee officials, academicians, researchers, experts, civil society members and some other key actors concerned with the overseeing process of the parliament. The data collection period of this study ranges from the journey of the 8th parliament (28 October 2001) to the end of the duration of the 9th parliament (24 January 2014).

Analytical Framework of the Study

The financial accountability of parliament depends on the proper functioning of various legislative organs, especially on the oversight role of the Public Accounts Committee. The performance of PAC depends on several issues. "These can be broadly grouped into two categories: Structural and Behavioral factors"(Ahmed, 2000). Structural factors involve the formal-legal status, nature of composition and powers, which provide the area of jurisdiction and role of the committee. It also defines the outline of the member's parliamentary conducts and activities. However, it may practically vary from what is mentioned in codified law and procedure. On the other hand, Behavioural aspects are influenced by some variables: internal and external variables (Ahmed, 2000). The internal variable includes the social standing of committee members, (education, occupation, age and experience, leadership role to perform assigned duties as a trustee). External variable includes the bureaucratic culture and nature of governance, the nature of the members' constituency and the general political culture of a state (Ahmed, 2000). The behavioural factors depend on members' political commitment and ability. Political commitment means here the enthusiasm of members to implement electoral promise for what people elected him as an MP during the election; while ability denotes the member's level of skill in parliamentary business. Committees play its role effectively when political commitment and the ability of members make a functional nexus with each other. Conversely, it reveals mostly ineffective when these two differ from each other. The social

standing of PAC members works as a linchpin between political commitment and the ability of members.



(Ahmed, 2000; Saleh, 2020)

Social Standing of MPs in the Eighth and Ninth Parliament

An effective parliament needs a group of skilled, experienced and enthusiastic MPs who have very sound academic credentials, impartial image, strong leadership and professional values to handle the dynamic works of Parliament (Saleh, 2020). Noted scholars T. Stratmann (Stratmann & Baur, 2002), H. Kaack (Kaack, 2019) and R.H. Davidson (Frankland, 1977) have also emphasized social background (experience, education, length of a political career, leadership pattern, attachment of intraparty organizations and loyalty to the party) of members of parliament for their effective role. Political parties work as a means of political socialization and recruitment of their followers and prepare possible candidates for election through social interactions, political communication, political culture, political training as well as organizational experience which are very important for the smooth functioning of the political system (Norris, 2005). Developed democracies like Australia, Germany, New Zealand, the USA and Scandinavian countries select their candidates with a very standard social background of MPs through electoral laws in parliamentary election (Mahiuddin, 2009). “Selection of candidates to contest elections is one of the functions that separate parties from other organizations that may try to influence electoral outcomes and governmental decisions, but also in the sense that the candidates it nominates play an important role in defining what the party is” (Katz, 2001). But in Bangladesh, there is no constitutionally defined law for nominating a candidate in the election. However, some changes were incorporated from time to time in the RPO to conduct free and fair elections. The military-backed caretaker government in 2007 had taken some initiatives as a part of bringing political and electoral reforms to the RPO. Such rules made mandatory provisions for the political parties to be registered with the Election Commission.

The revised RPO also made the provision for the political parties to select their candidate for the election with the recommendations of field-level party workers. These amended provisions of RPO, however, were not fully executed in the general elections held in December 2008 (Mahiuddin, 2009).

As a result, in most cases, candidates were getting the nomination from the parties in consideration of the strength and ability of the individual candidate to win the election, and capacity to bear the enormous election expenses (Mahiuddin, 2009). In particular, those who offered excessive financial contributions to party funds and maintained a close rapport with the party stalwarts were preferred. The parties as such way hardly heisted to ignore the candidature of dedicated candidates, their political experience and seniority (Mahiuddin, 2010). It is also observed that political parties even sold nominations to affluent sections or businessmen who had contributed a huge amount of money to get the nomination without having any political background (Karim, 2004). Traditionally, the legislatures were dominated by members who had served their parties for a long time and acquired experience in professional politics.

But the situation changed to a considerable extent with the coming of extra-political elements in politics in the post-coup 1975 period and this trend continued even after the restoration of parliamentary democracy in 1991 (Mahiuddin, 2009). As a result, money and muscle connections had allegedly been an important phenomenon and in the course of such nomination trade, numerous businessmen and moneyed persons managed to obtain nomination and be elected as the Members of Parliament (Hasanuzzaman, 2009). There is a relationship between the social background of MPs and their roles, especially in parliamentary oversight activities. The social standing of MPs in the fifth, seventh and eighth and ninth parliament is mentioned in Table-1.

The professional background of the MPs shows that businessmen and industrialists dominated in all the parliaments since the first parliament. This domination also appeared to be more entrenched in the eighth and ninth parliament than in the past. They constituted 57 and 56 per cent of the total member in the eighth and ninth parliaments respectively. Available evidence shows that the number of businessmen and industrialists increased from four per cent in 1954 to 24 per cent in 1973 (Maniruzzaman, 1992) and 28 per cent in 1979 (Alam, 1993). While the number of lawyers and professional politicians has substantially decreased. It has decreased from 42 per cent in the first parliament to 22 per cent in the ninth parliament (Jahan & Amundsen, 2012). The number of full-time politicians decreased in the parliament from 13 per cent in the first parliament to 5 per cent in the ninth parliament (Jahan & Amundsen, 2012). Businessmen and industrialists also dominated the rank of all major political parties. In contrast, retired civil and military bureaucrats were increasingly getting elected to the parliament from 3 per cent in the constituent assembly elected in 1970 to 10 per cent in the ninth parliament (Jahan & Amundsen, 2012).

Table-1

Social Standing of MPs		Parliament			
Categories in %		5th	7th	8th	9th
Profession	Businessmen/Industrialist	53	48	57	56
	Civil/Military Bureaucrat	8	8	8	10
	Lawyer	19	17	11	15
	Professional	14	9	11	7
	Politics	2	4	7	5
	Others	4	14	6	7
Education	Post Graduate	38	40	42	37
	Graduate	46	45	47	45
	Undergraduate	16	11	10	15
	Others	0	4	1	3
Parliamentary Experience	Five terms experience	0	0	1	0
	Four terms experience	4	0	4	2
	Three terms experience	4	0	11	3
	Two terms experience	7	33	27	8
	One term experience	17	27	28	16
	No experience	68	40	29	55

Source: (Hasanuzzaman & Alam, 2010) for Fifth to Eighth Parliament; Researcher calculated from National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI, 2009) for 9th Parliament.

Maniruzzaman (1992) finds two specific reasons-the inflow of foreign aid and the policy of patrimonialism followed by the successive governments-as responsible for the preponderance of business and industrial classes in the politics of Bangladesh. The inflow of foreign aid helped foster the growth of a new nouveau riche class of beneficiaries consisting of private intermediaries, industrialists, construction contractors and bureaucratic bourgeoisie who now want to have power for themselves; while the policy of patrimonialism pursued by the successive governments has accelerated the growth of the class (Maniruzzaman, 1992). One of the negative consequences of the rise of business interest to political prominence is that it has led to the marginalization of professionals' roles in parliamentary politics. It has also caused a serious imbalance in the social composition of the JS (Ahmed, 2002).

Regarding education, Table-1 shows that increasingly urban-based, educated and wealthy people are getting elected to the parliament and people with limited resources or those based primarily in rural-based, can no longer aspire to win in parliamentary elections (Jahan & Amundsen, 2012). In the parliamentary experience of the MPs, it is found that more than 50 per cent of MPs are elected from freshers who have no previous experience in the ninth parliament. An interesting phenomenon is found in this regard. When the democratic process is running smoothly and elections are held as per due routine, a higher percentage of MPs with previous parliamentary experiences tend to get elected. But when there is a break in the ongoing democratic system, new faces get the nomination and are elected the fresher as an MP. For example, in the fifth parliament, 68 per cent MP was the newcomer in parliament and ninth parliament 55 per cent MPs

were newcomers having no previous experience. But in the seventh and eighth parliaments when the democratic process was ongoing, we found a higher percentage of MPs were elected two or three times with previous experience.

Social Standing of PAC Members in the Eighth and Ninth Parliament

The above-mentioned social composition of the parliament is also reflected in the composition of the PAC. The highest number of PAC members in the eighth and ninth parliament were appointed from the business or industrialist profession (eighth parliament 46.66 % and ninth parliament 40%) and the number of professional politicians is seen very poor in percentage (Table-2) in both the parliaments. The former civil-military bureaucrats were also quite high in the PAC of the seventh, eighth and ninth parliament, especially compared to their number in the JS. Thus professional varieties of members (especially increasing numbers of businessmen and industrialists) exert their influence in the decision of the committee in favour of their interest. Besides the members coming from the business or industrialist profession are more interested to give more attention to their commercial gain than in the committee or other parliamentary activities. Even if they do not have a better understanding of their due roles.

Table-2
Social Standing of PAC Members

Background of Members		Parliament			
Categories in %		5 th	7 th	8 th	9 th
Profession	Businessman/Industrialist	46.7	46.7	46.66	40
	Civil/Military Bureaucrat	0	26.6	19.99	26.66
	Lawyer	13.3	6.7	20	20
	Professional	20	13.3	13.3	6.66
	Politics	13.3	0	0	0
	Others	6.7	6.7	0	6.66
Education	Post Graduate	66.7	53.3	73.33	60
	Graduate	33.3	46.7	26.66	33.33
	Undergraduate	0	0	0	6.7
	Others	0	0	0	0
Parliamentary ² Experience	Former PAC Member	0	0	6.66	20
	Former member of DPC	40	17.7	40	86.66
	Former Minister	0	17.7	26.66	33.33
	More than five terms MP	0	0	0	13.33
	Five terms MP	0	0	6.66	13.33
	Fourth terms MP	0	0	26.66	20
	Third term MP	0	0	26.66	20
	Second term MP	0	46.66	20	20
Newcomer MP	60	58.8	20	20	

Source: (Mahiuddin, 2009) for Fifth to Seventh Parliament; Researcher calculated from the Autobiography of the Member of Parliament for Eighth and Ninth Parliament.

² Parliamentary experience is considered in this study as a determinant of social standing as it helps to build capacity, authority of an individual MP and to understand his role in the parliament.

On the other hand, the educational background of PAC members in the eighth and ninth parliaments revealed that the highest 73.33% of members of PAC in the eighth parliament and 60% in the ninth parliament had a post-graduate level of education. 26.6% of members of PAC in the eighth parliament and 33.3% of members in the ninth parliament have a graduate level of education. But in the ninth parliament, 6.7% of members of PAC had completed the undergraduate level of education only (Table: 2).

The personal experience of PAC members also affects the performance of the committee. It is seen from the personal experience of PAC members (Table-2) that among the fifth, seventh, eighth and ninth parliaments, only 20% of PAC members in the ninth parliament have previous experience working in PAC. Members' experience to work in DPC was the highest (86.6%) in the ninth parliament and the lowest (17.7%) in the seventh parliament. On the other hand, only 26.66% and 33.3% of members in the eighth and ninth parliaments were experienced working as a minister. In addition to that, it is seen from Table-2 that several PAC members in the eighth and ninth parliament have one more time experience to be elected as an MP in various parliaments. In the eighth and ninth parliaments, 6.66% and 13.33% of PAC members have the experience to be elected as an MP more than five times, 26.66% and 20% of PAC members have the experience to be elected as an MP more than fourth time, again, 26.66% and 20% PAC members were elected for the third time and 20% members in both parliaments were elected for the second time as an MP. But in the seventh parliament, 46% of members were elected for the second time as MP.

It is worth mentioning here that a large number of members (60% and 58.8%) in the fifth and seventh parliaments who were first time appointed as a member of PAC have not any previous experience working in parliament. On the other hand, in the eighth and ninth parliament, there were 20% of PAC members were a newcomer to the parliament as MP and appointed as a PAC member. This variation of the level of age, education, occupation and professional experience makes a mixture of PAC roles in eighth and ninth parliaments of Bangladesh.

Impact of Members' Social Standing on PAC Performance

The social standing of PAC members keeps an impact on its performance in numerous ways. Social standing can affect a member's ability to perform their duties effectively, as it can influence their perspectives on public spending and their connections and relationships with people in power. There are also concerns that members with close ties to business or political elites may be influenced by their connections, and this can undermine their ability to act independently and impartially. The impact of member's social standing has been analyzed in the following sections:

Improper Debate and Less Outcome from PAC Decision

One of the major functions of PAC is to ensure the financial accountability of different ministries/departments as a part of its *ex-post* scrutiny process. The financial issues dealt with by the PAC are a kind of technical in nature. Members need to be experienced and well-educated to understand those issues. Lack of experienced, skilled and highly educated members in the PAC in Bangladesh and improper debate held in the meetings (see, Table-2). Former Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) of Bangladesh Mr. Asif Ali Khan mentioned, “The quality of the debate is related to the selection of the agenda based on the priority of the issues and time management in the discussion. There should have an operational manual for the PAC to work effectively. It may have an audit report and audit findings in an agenda. The audit report and audit findings are not similar. The audit report is a book which may constitute 20 audit paragraphs and every individual paragraph is discussed in the PAC meeting. The meeting of the PAC is held for 2 to 3 hours long and its being possible to discuss at least 10 paragraphs in a meeting. As a result, the quality of the debate is being compromised”(Ali, 2014). Thus, the improper debate of the PAC meeting affects the decision of the PAC.

Table-3
PAC Decisions in the Eighth and Ninth Parliament

Amount of money (BDT in Millions)				
Types of activities	8 th Parliament		9 th Parliament	
Recovery	637.70	0.48%	11784.6	7.8%
Adjustment	1577.2	1.19%	1322.4	0.87%
Departmental Action	367.8	0.27%	39139.7	25.9%
Objection Settled	359.1	0.27%	13794.2	9.13%
Re discussion	2788.9	2.12%	60408.2	40%
Realization	125814.2	95.64%	25668.9	17%
Total Amount of money involved	131545.2		150970.2	

Source: Data compiled by the researcher from the PAC report of 8th and 9th Parliament

The decisions of the PAC are usually given as a recommendation as it is the general norm of Westminster forms of government. Likewise, the decision of PAC is given in the same manner in the parliament of Bangladesh. These recommendations of PAC publish in the following six manners: recovery, adjustment, objection settled, departmental Action, re-discussion and realization of money. Among the six categories of decisions, objection settled and re-discussion is directly implemented by the PAC itself through bi-party or tri-party meetings in its table. On the other hand, categories of decisions like Adjustment, Recovery, Departmental Action, and Realization of money are implemented by the concerned ministries/ departments. The social standing of members also keeps an impact on the working procedure of the PAC. It is seen that members

having previous experience to work in PAC or other committees and coming from rich professional/political backgrounds played a vital role in working of the committee on the 8th and 9th parliament. They understand their desired role and participate in the debate of the committee meeting consistently. It is also seen that all the members of PAC did not participate in the debate of the meeting specially members who are not full-time politicians or not coming from professional backgrounds. Such a scenario of the PAC members in the meeting is a major ambiguity of its successful operation. Because fifteen members committee is a team and when they will work together, it will bring the ultimate success for the committee. But if it does not work as a team and only 7-9 members remain vigilant and the rest of them remain inactive and even remain absent in the meeting (see table-4), it lost the coherence of the committee. As a result, it is seen that the committee failed to adopt any follow-up mechanism and strategy to assess the implementation status of PAC recommendation. Professor Dr. Nizam Ahmed mentioned in an interview “There is no follow-up mechanism of PAC in Bangladesh and it is one of the major downsides to ensure financial accountability effectively.

The overall performance trend of PAC is not bad. However, still, there are a number of spaces to develop its performance. Some of the initiatives may start from a personal level and the rest of the initiative may start from the institutional level.” He also mentioned, “The social background of member keeps an impact on the performance of PAC. Sometimes, it makes a conflict of interest to work in the committee. Members are not interested to work in the committee as an instrument of accountability until they find their personal and constituency interest”(Ahmed, 2014).

Low Frequency and Duration of PAC Meetings

For mapping out the PAC performance in the 8th and 9th parliament, the only report of PAC in the eighth parliament and four reports of PAC in the ninth parliament have been analyzed. It is found that the PAC in the eighth parliament convened 25 meetings and 79 sub-committee meetings in its tenure (Saleh, 2020). On the other hand, PAC in the 9th Parliament convened 125 meetings and 122 sub-committee meetings in its tenure (Saleh, 2020). Table-4 and 5 provide a comparative perspective on the three variables of the frequency of the meetings, attendance of the members and duration of the meetings. The average frequency of the PAC meetings was in the eighth and ninth parliament respectively 22.8 and 12.43 days which proved that the committee meets at least one time per month in the eighth parliament and two times in the ninth parliament. But the average meeting duration in the eighth parliament (167 minutes) was found to be longer than the ninth Parliament (115 minutes) (Saleh, 2020).

The study conducted by the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) among the PAC of 70 Commonwealth countries revealed that the meeting frequency of PAC fluctuated from 1 meeting every year to 10 meetings every

month (Wehner, 2002). In the British House of Commons, the select committees meet once a week during parliament remains in sitting and they spent at least 60-90 minutes in each meeting (Ahmed & Norton, 1999). In Indian Parliament, the PAC met regularly and the average interval of a meeting was 27 days that means it arranged at least one meeting each month and the average duration was 96 minutes in each sitting. In the context of the parliament of Sri Lanka, it is obvious that the COPA used to meet frequently and regularly and it held four meetings each month. The average duration of each sitting was 110 minutes. The level of meeting frequency and duration seems standard in regards to the British Parliament and Indian Parliament as the leadership and members of the PAC have been appointed from a very strong social standing.

Table-4

Frequency of the PAC Meetings and Attendance of the PAC Members in 8th and 9th Parliament					
Parliament	Meetings Frequency (Average)	Total Meetings Held	Members Attended (Average)	Percentage Attended (Average)	Meetings Duration (Average)
8th	22.8	25	9	60%	167 minutes
9th	12.43 days	125	7	47%	115 Minutes

Table-5

Average Frequency of Subcommittee Meetings and Attendance of the Members in 9th parliament				
Sub-Committee	Meetings Frequency (Average)	Total Meetings Held	Members Attended (Average)	Percentage Attended
Sub-Committee -1	34.78 days	41	2.34 out of 5	46.8
Sub-Committee -2	35	5	3 out of 4	75
Sub-Committee -3	62.2	5	2 out of 3	66.3
Sub-Committee -4	19.12	71	1.52 out of 3	50.66

(The researcher compiled the data from the PAC reports of the Ninth Parliament).

Comparing with the above-mentioned cases, the meeting frequency and duration of the PAC in the ninth parliament of Bangladesh is found satisfactory. It meets an average two times per month which was moderate and standard. On the other hand, the frequency of PAC in the eighth parliament was only one time per month. So regarding the meeting frequency, the PAC in the ninth parliament is found more active than that of the previous one.

According to former C&AG Mr. Hafiz Uddin Khan, “the PAC in the 7th parliament was very active as its chair Mr. S.M. Akram M.P came from a very strong social standing. On the other hand, PAC in the 8th parliament was not too much vigilant comparing with previous one as its chair Mr. Harun or Rashid has come from comparatively a less strong social standing. Even he did not have very

good understanding about the technical issues of the PAC. However, PAC in the 9th parliament appeared as a strong one because of its dynamic leadership by the Mr. M. K Alomgir M.P”(Khan, 2014).

Poor Attendance of PAC Members in Meeting

The attendance of the members in the meeting is one of the significant indicators in regard to playing an effective role of the committee to ensure the financial accountability of the executive. In the eighth and ninth parliament respectively, 60% and 47% of members of PAC on average attended the meeting among 15 members of the committee (Table-4). It denotes that the percentage of attendance of the members in the meetings is alarmingly very low in the majority of the meetings of PAC in both the parliament. In the eighth parliament, in 19 cases out of 25 meetings, the attendance of the members crossed 50% per cent (PAC, 2005) in which, only 2 cases, attendance of the members reached the level of three-fourths of the total membership of the committee and only in 11 occasions, attendance of the members crossed 60%. In only 2 cases among 25 meetings, the attendance of the members was below 40%. In no one case in all the 25 meetings, the attendance of the members reach the level of 100% (PAC, 2005). On the other hand, in the ninth parliament, only in 36 cases out of 125 meetings, the attendance of the members crossed 50% per cent (PAC, 2013). In which only 4 cases, attendance of the members reached the level of three-fourths of the total membership of the committee. Out of 125 meetings, there are only 21 occasions where in attendance of the members crossed 60%. In 33 meetings, the attendance of the members was below 40%. In no one case in all the 125 meetings, attendance of the members reached the level of 100% (PAC, 2013).

The individual attendance of the members in the meeting demonstrates the same scenario. It is seen that the chairman of the PAC was present regularly in every meeting of both the parliament. But the attendance of the individual members was not satisfactory. In regards to the eighth parliament, three members Mr Showkat Ali, MP, Kazi Shah Mofazzel Hussain and Dr Ziaul Haq Mollah secured very low scores as they were present only 13%, 40% and 44% meeting respectively of the total meeting (PAC, 2005). On the other hand, five members like Major (Retd.) Manjur Kader, Sayed Moazzem Hossain Aalal, Mr Md. Sultan Mahmud Babu, Mr A. S. H. K. Sadek and Advocate Mostafizur Rahman were present for more than 80% of the total meetings and the maximum meetings of PAC in the eighth parliament were held in the presence of these five members (PAC, 2005). In addition, six members (Mr Md. Abdul Gani, Dr Md. Salek Chowdhury, Mr Md. Mashiur Rahman Ranga, Chowdhury Akmal Ibne Yousuf, Mr Samsul Alam Pramanik) attended 50% of the total meeting (PAC, 2005).

Regarding the ninth parliament, Mr Khandoker Asaduzzaman MP, one of the most senior members of the PAC secured the lowest score attending only 6 out of 125 meetings which is 4.8% of the total meeting (PAC, 2013).

On the other hand, there were only two members (Prof. Md. Ali Ashraf MP and Mosammat Farida Akter, MP) who attended more than 80% of total meetings. There were two more members (Mr Narayon Chandra Chondo MP and Mr Khan Tipu Sultan) who crossed the level of 70% presence in the meetings. Mr Md. Emaz Uddin Pramanik, MP one of the most senior members attended 50% of total meetings (PAC, 2013). The attendance of the rest of the 8 members (Mr Md. Abdus Shahid MP, Mr Salah Uddin Quader Chowdhury MP, Dr T.I.M Fazlay Rabbi, MP, Mr M.K. Anwar, MP, Mr Md. Sayedul Haque, MP, Mr A.K.M. Rahmatullah, MP, Major General Abdus Salam, MP, Mr Dhirendro Chandro Debnath, MP) was also very poor. The level of their presence was below 50 per cent (PAC, 2013). In the sub-committee meetings, except for the chairman of the sub-committee, the attendances of the members are not satisfactory. No one secured an above 50% score except the member Mr Narayon Chandra Chondo MP (Table-5). This poor status of the attendance of the members in the meetings of PAC may identify as a serious churning of the process and pattern of membership in the committees. It is influenced a lot by the social standing of the members.

Leadership Role of the PAC Chairman

The failure or success of the committee largely depends on the role of the leadership of the committee chairperson. The chairperson works as a linchpin of the committee and motivated the members to perform the desired role properly. Besides the chairperson of the committee creates a team spirit among the members that create a congenial environment to work with and to make a decision based on consensus. Moreover, the role of the chairman of the committee is very important for an effective PAC. If we look at the performance of PAC in 7th, 8th and 9th parliament, it seems that the PAC in the 7th and 9th parliament was more effective in terms of its number of meetings, reports and way of working than that of the eighth parliament (Saleh, 2020). The main reason behind the successful operation of PAC in the 7th and 9th parliament is the strong leadership role to coordinate the committee by its chairpersons. Mr S.M Akram, MP and Dr Mohiuddin Khan Alomgir, MP chaired the PAC in the 7th and 9th parliament respectively. Both were ex-veteran bureaucrats and experienced dealing with the issues when they were in service. So they had practical experience and knowledge about the ins and outs of the possible complications that are raised by the government officials/departments. Mr Mohiuddin Khan Alomgir, MP, the chairman of PAC in the ninth parliament was working efficiently through his dynamic leadership. As a result, the PAC resolved 98% of backlog issues in the ninth parliament which was a significant achievement in the history of PAC in Bangladesh. On the other hand, Advocate Haroon Al-Rashid, Chairman of PAC in the eighth parliament, has fifth term experience as an MP, the PAC did not achieve its desired success under his leadership. It is because of the absence of experience and strong political leadership. So, the

social standing of a chairperson of a PAC is very significant for its effective workings.

“The chairman of PAC must know about the financial regulation and how to spend money from the government purse so that he may easily find out which one is an objectionable item and which one is not. Ex-government officials have those practical experiences to deal with so many complications in his/her service period that an advocate or other professionals may not have”(Khan, 2014). “Chairperson appointed from other professions also may have such skills but it takes time to understand all the procedures regarding PAC activities”(Khan, 2014). While asking Mr S.M. Akram about the mystery of his successful leadership as a chair of PAC in the 7th parliament, he mentioned, “As I was immediately retired from civil service and just join in the parliament as an MP. I had an added advantage in that all the secretaries/ heads of the ministries/departments were my ex-colleagues/batch mates or immediate juniors in civil service. They considered me as their friend. So when the committee delivered any recommendations against audit objection placed to the table of PAC for any ministries/ departments, as a chair, I used the incentives my relations with them to follow up on the status of the committee recommendations. Therefore, they seriously informed me about the progress of the given recommendations officially”(Akram, 2014).

On the other hand, “I was very much harsh about the regulation and discipline of the committee and I enjoyed my full jurisdiction in a very proactive manner. Besides, I was strict in ensuring the attendance of the head of ministries/departments. If the secretary /head of the department sent his deputy/ next man, I did not make the meeting at all. Secretary must come and have to report to me and thus I ensured it”, he added (Akram, 2014). Therefore, appointing a chairperson with strong leadership qualities is a challenge for an effective PAC in Bangladesh. The leadership role of the chairperson is also influenced by the social standing of the committee chair.

Conclusion

The social standing of the member of PAC is very significant as it helps to understand the desired role of the members. In regards to the social standing of the members in Bangladesh, it is seen that a significant number of members (46.66 % and 40%) have been appointed from the business/industrialist profession and no professional politicians were appointed in both the eighth and ninth parliament. However, the highest number of former civil-military bureaucrats were appointed in the PAC of the seventh, eighth and ninth parliament. Such professional varieties of members (especially an increasing number of businessman and industrialist) exert their influence in the decision of the committee in favour of their interest. It also found a mixed record of PAC members’ educational backgrounds both in the eighth and ninth parliaments (Table: 2).

Personal experience of PAC members also affects the performance of the committee. Most of the members in both the 8th and 9th parliaments have one more time parliamentary experience but few of them (20%) have previous experience working in PAC. Such variation in the level of education, occupation and professional experience makes a mixture of PAC roles in the eighth and ninth parliaments of Bangladesh. These variations of members' social standing keep an impact on the performance of PAC in numerous ways. These include improper debate and less outcome from PAC decisions, low frequency and duration of PAC meetings, poor attendance of members in the meeting and the leadership role of the chairperson.

Therefore, the social standing of PAC members mentioned in the above section influenced the role of the PAC in both the 8th and 9th Parliament. As a result, there is no visible identical pattern of PAC role in Bangladesh, rather it is found a mixed performance of PAC in the entire parliament since its formation in the first parliament. So, the social standing of PAC members should take into consideration seriously for a better understanding of their role while members are nominated.

Last, but not least, it can be mentioned that the success or failure of the PAC largely depends on the social standing of the members as it determines the ability and willingness of the members to perform their desired roles.

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Media Representation of Domestic Violence and Victim Blaming: A Theoretical Perspective

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Abstract

The news media shapes society's opinions of domestic abuse. This study examines how the media's portrayals of women as domestic violence victims raise awareness, sometimes mislead and sensationalize the issue for profit, and blame victims. The search for victims' acts, violence's causes, and fault has dominated media coverage. This image helps abusers rationalize their behaviour and makes it hard for victims, while public opinion perceives victims negatively. Since the media exposes their identities and characteristics, victims focus on proving their innocence rather than seeking justice. These findings encourage gender-inclusive domestic violence prevalence discussions. The findings show that media coverage of domestic violence emphasizes spectacular news and high-profile occurrences while downplaying the issue's gravity. This strategy may lead to incorrect reporting, victim blaming, and character assassination, distracting from justice and inspiring sympathy for offenders. Thus, the media fails to present domestic violence as a pattern of planned assault, perpetuating harmful stereotypes and hindering effective solutions. These findings suggest critically analyzing media representations of domestic abuse and advocating for more responsible as well as equitable reporting.

Keywords: Domestic Violence, Media Representation, Victimization of Women, and Victim Blaming.

Introduction

Domestic violence, while not a new topic, has received varied degrees of public attention and acknowledgment throughout the years. This variance has been highlighted as a primary influencer by the media (Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Straus, Gelles, & Steinmetz, 2017; Kozol, 1995; Gordon, 2022). The importance of the media in moulding public opinion and promoting social change is well known (Wallack, Dorfman, Jernigan, & Themba-Nixon, 1993). Media discourse influences social views toward sensitive subjects such as intimate partner abuse (Smith, Bond, & Jeffries, 2019). Increased media exposure has the ability to influence societal attitudes toward and acceptance of domestic violence. However, media coverage frequently emphasizes sensationalism, high-profile instances, and victim-blaming, which can stymie efforts to seek justice and perpetuate harmful stereotypes. Comstock (1991), Postman (1985), and Gitlin

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(1980) have all noted the media's potential to mould public opinion and impact governmental choices. Advocacy through the media has been critical in increasing awareness, influencing public discussions, and putting pressure on politicians to address domestic violence concerns (Wallack, Dorfman, Jernigan, & Themba-Nixon, 1993).

The mass media is a significant social force. The power of the mass media to define the public agenda and magnify and legitimise the voices and perspectives of nations' political discussions makes them vital actors in any sort of social change (Wallack, Dorfman, Jernigan & Themba-Nixon, 1993). The media's discourse has a tremendous impact on public opinion, especially when it comes to sensitive matters like intimate partner abuse (Smith, Bond & Jeffries, 2019). Increased media exposure could influence public views regarding domestic violence. An increase in violence occurrence or a shift in gender norms may result in higher or decreased acceptance of violence, respectively. Gerbner (1992) asserts that if you can explain a nation's tales, you don't have to worry about who creates its laws. Advocacy through the media was extremely effective in shaping public opinion and putting pressure on officials. The media may influence the volume of government attention and policy emphasis as well as generate demand for new legislation (Wallack, Dorfman, Jernigan, & Themba-Nixon, 1993). Advocacy in the media played a significant role in the development of domestic abuse policies in several nations. Because of the unique core concepts and values that underpin it, media, in general, has the potential to make a difference.

Domestic violence events have received special attention in the Bangladeshi media. Domestic abuse, which had hitherto gone unnoticed in Bangladeshi policy, has come to the attention of policymakers with the passage of the Domestic Abuse (Prevention and Protection) Act in 2010. To protect victims from societal shame, Bangladesh has a provision that requires them not to reveal their identities. Even when the media is aware of the offenders' names, they prefer to avoid accentuating the abusers' personal information. In most circumstances, the media covers victim news in such a manner that anybody may grasp the victim's identity. In 2010, the wife of a powerful politician in Bangladesh called the police in the middle of the night to file a complaint against her husband, a parliamentarian. Immediately, electronic and print media headlined the story as breaking news, complete with victim details. In an interview, the victim stated that her marriage was in jeopardy because she revealed her identity and divulged every aspect of her husband's personal life under a false, sensual title. Finally, she withdrew the complaint and reached an agreement with her husband after pleading for forgiveness. She stated that she had asked the police not to reveal the identities of herself and her spouse. However, this did not occur. She suffered further challenges in her personal life as a result of making it public.

Despite a Bangladesh court's decision not to expose the identities of victims, numerous media sites disobeyed the order and published the victims' identities. In Bangladesh, media coverage of domestic abuse has frequently concentrated on revealing the identities of victims, despite court orders to keep them anonymous. This approach, which is prevalent not only in Bangladesh but around the world, further victimizes victims and diverts focus away from the pursuit of justice. This is not only an issue in Bangladesh; it is an issue all around the world. The media's focus on the victim's name and the cause of her victimization causes further pain for the victim of domestic violence. Rather than seeking justice, they must defend their innocence before the public or dispel rumors about them. Instead of being able to focus on their recuperation, victims find themselves explaining their innocence to the public and refuting rumors against them. It is critical for victims' healing to ensure institutional responsibility while also protecting their privacy (De Ponte, 2016). Those who oppose secrecy or privacy should be held accountable, putting the victimized woman's recovery at risk, given that informing authorities has been shown to be the most effective method of dealing with the situation (De Ponte, 2016). This study looks into how media depictions of victims may raise public awareness about domestic violence and how false headlines can further victimise victims. The researchers believe that understanding gender-inclusive speech in the media can influence public sentiment against violence.

It is certain that the media has played an essential role in numerous situations throughout the world in raising the voice against violence. The media coverage of the Nirbhaya rape case triggered a popular protest in India. The 2012 Delhi gang rape and murder, known colloquially as the Nirbhaya case, included a rape and deadly attack on December 16, 2012. In that event, a 22-year-old physiotherapy intern was beaten, gang-raped, and tortured while riding in a private bus with a male companion. The event received considerable national and international publicity, and it was highly denounced both in India and beyond. Following that, public protests against governments for failing to provide proper protection for women took place in New Delhi, with thousands of protesters taking part. Protests of a similar nature took place in major cities around the country. Because Indian law prohibits the press from publishing the identity of a rape victim, the victim was widely known as Nirbhaya, which means "fearless," and her battle and death became a symbol of women's resistance to rape across the world. Due to popular pressure, the Indian government approved new legislation that mandated the death penalty for rape.

This study explores the representation of domestic abuse in media communications in light of feminist activists' and academics' constant complaints that domestic violence news coverage is insufficient or distorted in the media. The examination of the representation of women's roles in social media pieces is critical. To obtain justice for this heinous crime, it is critical to promote the presentation of real facts over victim-blaming. In several situations throughout

the world, such as the Nirbhaya rape case in India, considerable media attention and public demonstrations led to legislative revisions addressing women's protection and imposing harsher sentences for rape. In view of feminist activists' and academics' constant criticism of the insufficient attention and distortion of domestic violence in media coverage, this study focuses on analysing the portrayal of domestic violence in media communications. Examining the roles assigned to women in various media depictions is critical in order to prioritise the distribution of factual information and counteract victim-blaming, ultimately moving towards justice for this heinous crime.

Objectives of the Study

The purpose of this study is to look into how media portrayals of domestic abuse victims might enhance public awareness while also potentially worsening victimisation through deceptive headlines and a focus on victims' identities. This study aims to examine the representation of domestic violence in the media. It explores how the media portrays a victim and how this results in victim blaming and sympathy for criminals in a variety of situations. It also looks at how the media portrays domestic violence and how it affects public opinion.

Research Methodology

To examine how media coverage of domestic violence affects victim blaming, this qualitative study technique uses content analysis, theme analysis, and a literature review. The study concentrated on a specific sample of media sources in order to give insights into the wider issue. A comprehensive content study of media coverage of domestic violence has been carried out. This entails studying articles, news stories, and other pertinent materials in order to uncover patterns, themes, and frames utilised in the representation of domestic abuse. A thematic analysis of the gathered media pieces was performed to look for common themes, messages, and storylines about domestic abuse. The data have been analysed and interpreted using qualitative data analysis and interpretation.

Significance of the Study

This study's findings will give a more in-depth understanding of how the media has framed the problem. It also aids in understanding the influence of media coverage on victims as well as raising public awareness of domestic violence. The research can transmit the message of possible hazards and influences by analysing the representation of domestic violence in the media. It has the potential to promote ethical reporting while also addressing damaging narratives that perpetuate victim blame. The media's reporting on domestic violence discourse greatly influences public opinion and priorities. The research can reveal possible issues such as victim blaming and stereotyping by identifying and analyzing the various media frames used in the portrayal of domestic violence. This study can help find a solution to the common practise of blaming women

for violence and ignoring the people who do the violence unless it is a serious case.

Literature Review

A thorough literature analysis has been done to investigate current studies, theories, and viewpoints on domestic violence, victim blaming, and public opinion on victims and offenders. This review assists in situating the research within the current body of knowledge and identifying research needs. Previous research, mostly conducted internationally, has highlighted how print media representations of domestic violence often reinforce patriarchal norms and normalize violence against women (Smith, Bond, & Jeffries, 2019). This research aims to theoretically analyse how domestic violence is portrayed in the media, how the news coverage impacted victim blaming, and raise awareness against domestic abuse. Police, as the custodians of criminal incident data, usually present crime news from a perspective that aligns with their own understanding of crime and its solutions (Chermak, 1995; Ericson, 1989; Fishman, 1981; Surette, 2007). However, when law enforcement diverges from the perspectives of social service providers, victim advocates, and academics, it can create problems (Taylor, 2009). Regrettably, this issue often arises in domestic violence reporting as it fails to consider the social context of domestic violence and lacks a holistic approach to addressing the issue. (Gillespie, Richards, Givens, & Smith, 2013).

Findings of the Study

The media framework influences public perception and priorities significantly. To find causes and answers to social problems, many frameworks are employed. In the case of domestic violence, the following media frames have been identified: blaming the victim or excusing the perpetrator; normalising the event as commonplace; implying it was an isolated incident; portraying the individuals involved as out of the ordinary; and labelling perpetrators as "disordered" and easily identifiable. These frameworks influence how individuals see domestic violence and may encourage victim blaming, trivialization, and stereotyping. Police forces serve as information gatekeepers, and as a result, crime news is often provided from a police viewpoint on crime and its remedies (Surette, 2007). When law enforcement viewpoints conflict with those of social service providers, victim advocates, and academics, this can be problematic (Gillespie, Richards, Givens, & Smith, 2013). When there is a filed case or a police complaint, the media typically relies on information from the police or court proceedings in situations of domestic violence. However, if journalists do not perform thorough investigations, the news may be distorted or incomplete (Bullock & Cubert, 2002).

The media is widely acknowledged as having a significant role in legitimising certain points of view while marginalising others. To appropriately represent

intimate partner violence, journalists should avoid victim blaming and use different terminology (Smith, Bond, & Jeffries, 2019). Furthermore, in situations of domestic violence, the media frequently looks to neighbours for convenience, even if they do not have a strong relationship with the victim or offender, rather than seeking opinions from close friends or family members (Taylor, 2009).

The current study looks at the portrayal of domestic violence in media content. According to Savage, Scarduzio, and Milne's (2022) research, the way the media creates a news item's narrative has a considerable influence on the general public's attitudes and perceptions about the transmitted subject matter. Frames have the ability to impact the target audience's ideas. According to Entman (1993), media framing may help determine the costs and advantages of an issue. It aids in pinpointing the source of the problem and studying its consequences. The phenomenon of media framing has the potential to spread a more broadly accepted viewpoint within a particular culture (Savage, Scarduzio, & Milne, 2022). According to Nelson and Kinder (1996), the media has the power to create a cognitive framework that can change community attitudes. The use of frames by communication providers can help the general public understand complex issues. Gross (2008) describes episodic framing as the technique of depicting events as separate occurrences or unique case studies. When tackling a specific issue, the interpretation of the media frame might be considered a strategy that prioritises individuals. Media tales encourage the attribution of accountability to a character. The journalistic practice of thematic framing involves situating a news story within a broader socio-ecological framework, thereby providing a context for the overall narrative (Savage, Scarduzio, & Milne, 2022). According to Coleman and Thorson (2002), the use of thematic framing has the potential to influence the general public's view by including contextual information, risk factors, and preventative techniques. Gordon (2022), Lindsay-Brisbin, DePrince, and Welton-Mitchell (2014), McCarthy (1994), and Rebovich (1996) demonstrate that the amount of literature on the media's framing of domestic violence is growing. Scholars such as Kelly and Payton (2019) and Gilmore (1994) have performed academic studies on the topic of framing in regional newspapers. Furthermore, Smith, Bond, and Jeffries (2019) investigated the topic of victim blaming in newspapers, while Savage, Scarduzio, and Milne (2022) and Spencer and Limperos (2020) investigated the thematic framing of domestic abuse tales. According to the results of Carlyle, Scarduzio, and Slater (2014), female offenders were shown to be more likely than male perpetrators to be motivated by factors such as victim infidelity, self-defence, emotional pain, and financial gain. They also indicate that female perpetrators were represented as overly emotional and more likely to use stabbing as a form of violence than their male counterparts.

Several academic studies have found that the media regularly empathises with criminals, rationalises their conduct, and downplays the gravity of their crimes (Fairbairn & Dawson, 2013). According to research on the media's portrayal of

violence against women, male and female perpetrators are commonly shown in opposing ways, suggesting patriarchal framing. Furthermore, the media employs novel approaches that have the ability to influence how the general public views particular topics.

The media has the ability to raise public awareness about a given issue through its narratives. Maxwell, Huxford, Borum, and Hornik (2000) explain how media narratives may captivate the public's attention and provoke widespread protests around domestic abuse. Stereotypical victimisation in the media has raised concerns about how the media influences public perception and, consequently, policy (Dukes & Gaither, 2017). According to research, the sort of information made public about a victim can have a substantial influence on how others perceive the victim and the perpetrator of the crime (Dukes & Gaither, 2017). The case of O.J. Simpson exemplifies how constant media coverage and sensationalized narrative presentation may enhance public attention and produce a reaction to certain societal concerns, such as domestic abuse. From 1994 through December 1995, the media intensively followed the homicides of Nicole Brown Simpson and Ron Goldman. The testimony of these notable individuals gives evidence that domestic violence is a pervasive problem that may impact people from many walks of life (McCarthy, 1994). The issue under review is domestic violence involving persons who are well-known and renowned in the public domain. The O.J. Simpson trial drew widespread public attention and had a significant influence on domestic violence judicial processes in the United States.

Media exposure may be a powerful strategy for changing cultural norms (Bhushan & Singh, 2014). Media exposure might be an effective approach for altering cultural norms. Domestic violence depictions in the media continue to be a topic of concern. There is minimal research on incorrect representations of domestic violence victims. Many women who have been abused prefer not to report it to the authorities for fear of being recognised. It occurred prior to the advancement of women's movements; thus, the proclivity for victim identification and victim blaming is not a new issue. Women's movements made a point of not victimising or naming victims. According to a study, a victim of domestic abuse often seeks to resolve their family issues right up until the last minute. They were scared that revealing the family event in public would bring shame and lead to divorce. Even after making a police report, the victim's wife chooses to resolve family disputes through symbolic punishment or the abuser's comfort. According to this point of view, the majority of domestic violence victims choose to find a solution on their own without making their condition public. Feder (2013) discovered that no study has ever caught the true number of domestic violence incidents in the past. According to a reputable study (Hirschel, Hutchinson, & Dean, 1992), victim interview surveys caught more domestic violence episodes than the police. Victims may be reluctant to confess their victimisations owing to shame or fear of retaliation, which is a problem (Feder,

1999). Women who are abused by their spouses or partners may not report the violence as a crime, resulting in an undercount of victims (Dutton, 1986; Dutton, 2001).

The current study investigates how the media reframes societal issues into plotlines that are most likely to appeal to its target audience across a range of platforms, including print, and television. How the public views social issues as a result of media narratives have an influence on public policy. The domestic violence is not a new phenomenon. Nonetheless, not everyone has always seen this as a societal issue. In a number of historical and cultural contexts, it was normal for certain family members to use physical hostility against others. The domestic violence did not become a generally recognised problem until the 1970s. The domestic violence has grown as a major societal concern in recent decades, as De Ponte (2016) points out. The first step towards this goal was the involvement of feminists in addressing the issue of intimate partner abuse. As a result, feminists launched a campaign to encourage public intervention to address this issue. This is accomplished largely via the use of different types of control, including physical, sexual, economic, and psychological abuse, as well as intimidation and isolation methods. According to the authors, these variables lead to the continuation of male violence towards women in intimate relationships. The investigation of power dynamics and the vocalization of resistance to incidents of abuse were the driving forces behind feminist action.

The feminist paradigm for analysing domestic violence challenged cultural conventions that maintained women's subordination. The adoption of a critical perspective in connection with the feminist paradigm is a significant advancement in the field of domestic violence research. Negative, stereotyped representations of domestic violence victims in the media might justify the proclivity to blame the abusers for their mistreatment. To the best of our knowledge, no research has examined directly how preconceptions affect experimental domestic abuse instances where the victim is blamed. According to Berns (2004), domestic violence is a good illustration of how a social issue may be seen from several angles. There are several concerns, facts, and circumstances surrounding domestic violence or other societal issues. While ignoring others, the media frequently favors one or a few frames. This is critical since the majority of people use the media to learn more about societal issues. The intended audiences of various media channels influence how they frame news. Additional research shows that media depictions of social concerns such as crime and aggression distort public perception (Dobash, Dobash, Cavanagh, & Lewis, 1999). The media's representation of societal problems has an influence on how people see society. This study will assist readers in comprehending the bigger picture of media and politics, as well as shaping their comprehension of and response to societal problems. When a societal problem is influenced by media that encourages amusement and makes money, it is critical to be wary of the themes underlying the news and coverage. The significance of this process of

constructing and comprehending societal problems becomes clear when we consider how the media portrays victims' images to the public (Berns, 2004). Domestic violence becomes an issue for the victims. Most news reports concentrate on the victim. The victim is either praised for having the bravery to leave the violent relationship or criticized for remaining and allowing the violence to continue. Berns (2004) mentions that most of the time, the violence and the perpetrators have gone unnoticed. Domestic violence is rarely portrayed as a societal problem for perpetrators. As a result, we don't talk much about abusers. And, because domestic violence has not surfaced as a problem in the social and cultural milieu that tolerates and nurtures it, we do not discuss it.

Since the 1970s, the battered women's movement has worked to expose the structural and cultural roots of domestic abuse. It was common to blame the victim for their mistreatment. People used to question the victim about why she had been mistreated and why her partner had injured or wounded her. Both society and authorities begin to question the victim in order to discover the causes of abuse. This is an unfair trend since it permits offenders to justify their actions. The scholarly examination of sexual assault portrayals in the media shows the issue's frequently restricted reach. It is critical to remember that traditional images of strangers or group rapes dominate media depictions of rape and women (Gershoff, 2002). According to the research findings, media frames have a major influence on public perception and priorities around domestic abuse. The media's many perspectives contribute to victim blame, trivialization, and stereotyping. Blaming the victim, normalising the event, isolating it as an isolated incident, portraying the individuals involved as different from the norm, and labelling perpetrators as disordered are some of the media frames identified in domestic violence cases. These frames shape how people perceive domestic violence and can create conflicts between law enforcement perspectives and those of social service providers, victim advocates, and academics. Factors like news sources, the language employed, and the context of episodes all have an impact on how the media covers domestic violence. The media frequently relies on information from police or court procedures, yet insufficient investigations might result in distorted or incomplete news reporting.

The media has the ability to legitimize certain points of view while marginalizing others. Journalists should avoid victim-blaming and use language that appropriately depicts domestic violence. The employment of frames in the media may impact the general public's attitudes and views, presenting diverse viewpoints and potential answers. Media framing has the potential to impact public perception and create cognitive frameworks that alter community sentiments. Thematic framing places news items inside a larger socio-ecological framework, offering context and aiding comprehension of complicated subjects. Thematic framing in the media can influence public opinion by including contextual information, risk factors, and preventative techniques. The media frequently presents female domestic violence abusers differently than male

perpetrators, exhibiting patriarchal framing. The media typically displays empathy and minimises perpetrators' acts, while victims are depicted as victims, sustaining patriarchal behaviour. Domestic abuse coverage in the media, such as the O.J. Simpson case, has the potential to garner substantial public attention and affect societal concerns such as domestic abuse. However, media representations of domestic violence can mislead and oversimplify its intricacies.

The function of narratives in creating a public understanding of domestic abuse is crucial. Media narratives have the potential to capture the public's attention and stimulate conversations about societal concerns such as domestic abuse. Although media exposure may be a strong instrument for influencing societal norms, there are still concerns regarding inaccurate representations of domestic violence victims. Many victims prefer not to reveal their abuse for fear of being identified, shamed, or retaliated against. Surveys may underestimate the true number of domestic violence episodes because victims may not disclose the abuse to authorities. Women who have experienced abuse may not recognize it as a crime or reveal it, resulting in an undercount of victims. The framing of domestic abuse in the media is critical to affecting public knowledge and response to the issue. The focus on victims in domestic violence coverage might create support for victim aid programs, but it can also obstruct a better understanding of the socioeconomic background and larger societal change. Concerns about conventional social and cultural standards prevented the media from escaping the masculine story patterns when reporting on domestic violence.

Conclusion

The findings of the analysis reveal that both domestic violence (DV) and societal representations are constructed and not inherent. The abundance of information and perceptions related to acceptance, shame, and victimization are human constructions. It is suggested that the media can redirect focus from the perpetrators to the victims to create social awareness against domestic violence. The media has the power to condemn offenders and contribute to social consciousness. The media's reliance on popular social and cultural interpretations of culture is evident in their representation methods. The study aimed to establish a comprehensive social framework by providing a concise overview of the social discourse and highlighting the defining characteristics of the cultural phenomenon. The paper primarily focuses on male violence against females as the most prevalent form of domestic violence. The media's representation of domestic violence remains predominantly negative, often emphasizing sensational aspects or involving socially prominent individuals. Many incidents in Bangladesh have gone unnoticed due to the media's failure to give them attention, despite their potential to raise public awareness. Although domestic violence has been prevalent, it has only recently gained substantial media coverage through high-profile abuse cases. The contemporary role of the media is influenced by various factors, including political, commercial, and other

biases. Media coverage of a particular issue is influenced by the significance and sensitivity of the topic, such as domestic abuse, which tends to elicit strong reactions. The media could shift attention from the perpetrators to the victims. Despite the fact that they have the potential to help bring a certain problem to the attention of the public. Social concerns are frequently added to the policy agenda by the media. Even though domestic violence is prevalent, it has not been extensively discussed in the media until recent years, when high-profile cases of abuse came to light. The contemporary role of media is subject to bias from various factors. The extent to which a particular issue garners media coverage is contingent upon a range of factors, including political, commercial, and other influences. For example, talking about domestic abuse tends to get strong reactions from the media when it involves important or sensitive topics. The gender of the victim and the perpetrator and the type of stereotypical information are also factors in determining media attention. Media has huge power that may have on individuals to affect the minds of the great majority of people via their stories on domestic abuse. Perspectives on gender equality are consistently covered by Bangladeshi media.

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Public Participation in Local Government Budgeting: A Study on Joypurhat and Dhaka District

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Md Nasir Uddin²

Abstract

Participatory Budgeting in local government is considered very significant for establishing good governance, enhancing social accountability, and legitimizing ruling power. The budgeting process promises quality service against the popular demand at the local level as well. The local government structure of Bangladesh is also actively establishing different avenues of public participation in the governance for initiating democratic decentralization. Among them, the Open Budget Meeting (OBM) is considered significant to connect the popular demand and local-level resource allocation at once. However, this study aims to measure the level of public participation in the local government (Union Parishad) budgeting process, to identify the major obstacles, and assess the spaces of participation left untouched. Following a cross-sectional quantitative approach, Arnstein's ladder of public participation has been used in this study to fulfill the research objectives. A total of 392 samples were collected using the survey method from Joypurhat and Dhaka district of Bangladesh following a semi-structured questionnaire. Major findings of the study showed that the public participation quality in the local government budgeting context is at the "therapy level". Results represent that the existing public participatory mechanism in the local government budgeting contexts (OBM) is merely eye-washing rather than ensuring actual citizen participation. People cannot influence budgeting decisions through the existing open budget meetings at all. The therapy level of public participation indicates that the OBM is set only for projecting to the people that they have an opportunity to participate and attain public trust, legitimacy, and support for the government rather than using OBM to enhance actual public participation indeed. However, the government of Bangladesh must re-examine and bring contextual amendments to the legal backgrounds of OBM- the Local Government Act (Union Parishad)-2009 as well as the operational manual for OBM at large. Furthermore, other respective authorities and related bodies must need to make necessary initiatives for ensuring effective public participation in the local government budgeting of Bangladesh.

Keywords: Public Participation, Participatory Budgeting, Local Government, Bangladesh.

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Introduction

In recent decades, Bangladesh's unprecedented economic growth created by modernization and adaptation of digital technologies following the agenda of "Digital Bangladesh" enhanced the living standards of the Bangladeshi people. However, the political and administrative system is yet to be transformed. The essence of direct democracy through public participation bears the potential for filling this gap. In making similar inputs, since 1989 contemporary world started utilizing an innovative approach of direct democracy and social inclusion in the name of Participatory Budgeting or PB. Several types of research have shown that contemporary representative democracies have absolute deficiencies in promoting public voice and interests, a major portion of the population gets excluded by the fewer engagement points. Here, the PB not only provides an opportunity for the public to take part in contextual budgeting and influence the allocation of resources but also in strengthening good governance as well (Shah, 2007). Guthrie (2003) coined this context of engaged governance as to be the latest version of "Good Governance" where the practices of PB acts as one of the core agenda indeed, connecting citizens to the policy-making process and promoting social equity, reducing- clientelism, social exclusion, and corruption (Wampler, 2000). Thus, public participation in local government budgeting stands as an important step toward social accountability, development, and protection of fundamental rights. Such participatory avenues not only enable the public to participate in the process but also stand for active democracy and public-oriented bureaucracy (Arnstein, 1969). Public participation in the local government budgeting in Bangladesh shares an experience from 2000- the Sirajganj Local Government Development Fund Project (SLGDFP) with "UP Operational Manual-2012" and the "Local Government (UP) Act 2009" following the prescribed Open Budget Meeting (OBM). The OBM at the union parishad level stands by a combination of two sessions per year- One open pre-budget meeting session and the final budget meeting with at least 5% participation of the total voter's count. However, it is still unclear whether the OBM at the local government (union parishad) public participation is genuinely public representative or simply a tool of bureaucracy for its own ends. Unless the participatory power is redistributed and the public is empowered precisely, the OBM may build a frustrating one indeed. Therefore, efforts have been made in this research paper to measure the quality of public participation in the local government (UP) budgeting preferences and identify the challenges while running OBM by the local representatives; allowing the policymakers to grasp the actual scenario of people's participation in budgeting in Bangladesh.

Literature Review

"If liberty and equality, as is thought by some, are chiefly to be found in democracy, they will be best attained when all persons alike share in the

government to the utmost" [Quoted from the "Politics" (350 BC) by Aristotle, a Greek Philosopher (384BC-322BC)]

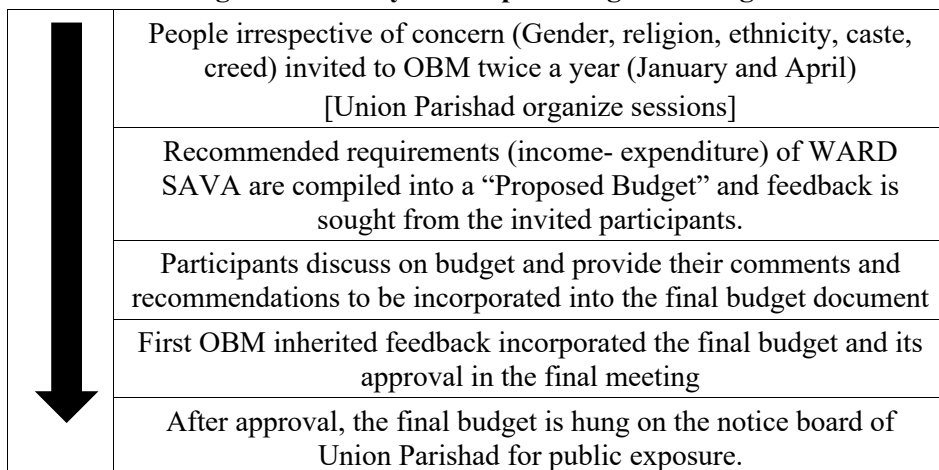
Public participation, the accelerating concept of democracy is an inclusive process of exercising the marginal public voice- notably significant in terms of local government institutions, owning the opportunity to serve citizens directly. Public participation turns more viable at the local level than the national ones of the scope of small-scale limited institutions having better participatory opportunities and greater capacity for making appropriate responses (Beetham, 1996). However, for effective public participation, it requires decentralization with the induction of devolution in practice. Public participation includes the public in the influencing node and the public bargaining power followed by a distribution of decision-making power and a sense of ownership (Khan et al., 2009). Global Initiative for Fiscal Transparency, (GIFT, 2016) defines the concept through 10 principles-Accessibility, Openness, Inclusiveness, Respect for self-expression, Timeliness, Depth, Proportionality, Sustainability, Complementarity, and Reciprocity. However, public participation in the local-level budgeting contexts has evolved as the latest thought of democracy. It is an innovative policy-making process with direct public involvement in the called meetings throughout the year to attain diversified priorities over broad social policies and holds social accountability. The practice is gaining populist support in governance, a "New Governance" indeed (Bingham et al., 2005). Public participation in Budgeting turned into a paradigm shift in public governance as well (Wampler, 2000).

The theory of public participation in public administration is narrative by nature that is about to grow as participation must increase (Shybalkina, 2021; Bryson et al., 2013). Public participation in the budget-making process is often treated as a voice-giving process to the citizens (Van Speier, 2009). Participatory Budgeting is basically a direct democratic procedure around the allocation of public resources (Shah, 2007). The initiatives of public participation in the budget-making process empower the citizenry in core aspects of organizing and implementing the concern with chances of making influence over the entire procedure; from budget making to implementation and evaluating decisions indeed. Public participation in budgeting poses the potential of enriching public leadership capabilities by making further demands of accountability and most importantly- transparency in procedural systems too (Cheema and Rondinelli, 2007). Public participation in the budgeting works further introduces advanced democratic accountability, favoring pro-poor politics (Bassett, 2016). As the most practical tool for transparency and drawing citizenry connection- participatory budgeting acts as a strong change agent of enriched social accountability- bringing citizens closer to the public budget issues, gaining access to central government resources, and creating a social bond among the officials and taxpayers with enhanced transparency, accountability of financial and administrative management systems and

increased public trust on local government bodies (Wijesundara, 2015). The practice turned influential in determining priorities for public spending and monitoring public expenditure, leading the local government towards sustainable, impact-oriented innovations and development in the country, satisfying the demand for good governance and reducing social inequality, clientelism, and corruption (Hossain, 2019), (Hao et al., 2022). Public participation in the budget-making process further poses a positive relationship with the quality of the budget. So as the planning and resources distribution (Kandie, 2020); improving the local government legitimacy (Wu and Wang, 2012); enhancing mutual trust between the stakeholders of the state, and fostering transparency in public administration (Gatto & Sadik-Zada, 2021) so as the development work performance by the local bodies (Makwela 2012).

Participatory budgeting, the newest form of participatory mechanism in the field of political science optimizes the fullest benefit only after the availability of both systems and structures at a time (Brinkerhoff, *et al.*, 2007). Participatory mechanisms for the participatory budgeting process include- town hall meetings, and public hearings for direct public engagement in budgetary (Esonu & Kavanamur, 2011). In the case of Bangladesh, Open Budget Meetings (OBM) performs as true a replica of participatory budgeting in practice (Uddin, 2009). The local government (UP) act-2009 (section 57) speaks in following the light of constitutional provision; Article 60 of the constitution of 1972 combinedly empowers the local government bodies into preparing budgets upon necessity and seeking local-level financial autonomy. The major responsibility of OBM is to discuss and debate local demands, set their perspective budgetary priorities, and prepare a new and approve the last Budget (Uddin, 2019).

Figure 1: Life Cycle of Open Budget Meetings



Source: Article 57 of UP Act-2009.

However, in 2021 Bangladesh scored 13 out of 100 in the public participation parameter in the *Open Budget Survey (OBS)* where the global average was 14. The report sought vulnerable and underrepresented population inclusion as well as assisting the public in audit as a probable way-out case for Bangladesh. It was observed that, owing to a gap in the reviews of the existing laws of participatory budgeting, the legal validities were found less influential for overall effective participatory budget process activation.

Tagging the process as a potential gangplank between politicians and the public- efficient but not effective from experiences, Uddin (2019) explored that the OBM is not functioning properly. These are being made only by the local elites and political leaders in an in-house setting, ignoring the democratic perspective and bearing a different administrative motive indeed. The “Surplus Budget” making tendency in each annum represents the knowledge and expertise gap among the policy makers too (Chowdhury, 2018; Ahmed et al., 2016; Siddique, K. 2013; Biswas, 2016; Pandey, 2011; Rahman et al., 2004).

The legally established framework for enhancing public participation through the inclusion mechanism of Bangladesh seems great but the practices are not. Tokenistic public participation is frequent in the local government contexts in Bangladesh (Hossain, 2019; Ahmed et al., 2016). The conflict of power-politics restricted by the “unchanged power structure”, imperious central-local relationship, little citizenry involvement to check and monitoring stages, political malfunction- unwillingness, and bureaucratic inertia turned a culture of the participation process (Wahed, 2010). Absolute absence of development funding, the existence of religion and patriarchal dimensions a subsidiary with issues like lack of fiscal decentralization, and participation nodes without capacity building led the process as meaningless in most cases. The public perception of local government institutions as discriminatory, oppressive, and biased with the rent-seeking attitude among the officials and the fear of getting indulged into the complexities people in general refrain from participatory process (Siddique, 2013). Apart from this, the roles of the informal local actors i.e., civil societies, interest/pressure groups, and local elites are also often seen as ineffective. In short, they are in no way aware of this mass budget formulation. Budgeting, thus, is still considered administrative procedure based, not the mandated public one (Uddin, 2019; Chowdhury, 2020; (Holdo, 2016; Rahman & Ahmed, 2015; He, B., 2011).

The core motive of this research is to measure the degree of public participation in local government budgeting preferences in Bangladesh, which is being treated as an administrative procedure, let alone the citizen-centric one to date. It is still a hazy area whether public participation in rural local government budgeting in Bangladesh is genuinely representative or just a tool of tokenism by the state for its own ends.

Theoretical Framework

The public partnership typology of the government of Sherry R. Arnstein (1969) was followed in this study following the trend of similar studies in the field of participation, the public engagement in the government (Yani et al., 2017), (Yasmin & Kamal, 2021), (Makhdum et al., 2022).

Figure 2: Eight Layers of public participation quality

Citizen Power	Citizen Control
	Delegated Power
	Partnership
Tokenism	Placation
	Consultation
	Informing
Nonparticipation	Therapy
	Manipulation

Source: (Arnstein, 1969).

The eight (8) rung public participation layers represented the degree of public engagement and policy influence (Gershman, 2013). These are- Citizen Control, Delegated Power, Partnership (Citizen Power); Placation, Consultation, Informing (Tokenism); Therapy, and Manipulation (Nonparticipation). Citizen control, the top tier of the ladder states a context where the public as participants of any system or residents under any authority can run and govern any program, an institution in full charge of managing policies and managerial aspects, able to negotiate decisions. Subsequently, the lowest form of participation, the manipulation denotes the context where the public hardly poses any interest in participation and their decisions rarely get acceptance. Arnstein perceived that this ladder of participation could determine the quality of public participation in local-level planning especially in budgeting (Arnstein, 1969). Thus, the results of this study were analyzed following Arnstein's ladder of public participation to quantify the quality of public participation in the local government budgeting in reference to Bangladesh with an adopted framework from Yani et al. (2017). The study further addressed the four components, namely- access, awareness, benefit, and citizen control for addressing the destined public participation quality. Access is associated with the meaning of encouraging citizens, channeling their involvement into the core actions alike- participation in policy discussions, planning, monitoring, negotiating priorities, and reflecting demands. If the access space is high, the quality of citizen participation will be greater. Awareness refers to a state where the citizens understand their position as a part of the state's democratic framework. If the citizens' understanding is lower, that means the people are pessimistic and they will not engage at all. But the

higher range of awareness promotes active participation indeed. Control is associated with the platform for negotiating the respective needs-demands of the public and making a way for them, to take part in local-level decision-making.

If the citizenry responses show that the level of control is in the comparatively less category then it can be said that- citizens are tending to limit their engagement, and they're having less authority to change decisions as well. But if the controlling mechanism is high- citizens may actively participate in the procedure indeed. The component of "Benefit" relates to the citizen's perception of their participation. If the citizens observe that their participation is admired and their decisions are considered while making the final direction, they will feel positive about the benefits of participation and will be encouraged to engage in the process actively (Gershman, 2013).

Methodology

The study maintained a cross-sectional research design. Therefore, a quantitative research approach was followed to attain a meaningful valuation of public participation quality following the adopted theoretical framework. Thereby, for attaining a quick snapshot of the study problem and results that portray the contexts, a semi-structured questionnaire was deployed through a social survey initiative based on the related literature and research works in this area of interest. The primary data is collected from six union parishad chosen conveniently from the Dhaka and Joypurhat district of Bangladesh. The study attempted to explore the actual public participation scenario in the local government budgeting by the inclusion of diversity; the presence of both the privileged region- Dhaka and the rest- Joypurhat at a single study. Along with a socio-demographic information section, the survey questionnaire presented four subsections following the theoretical framework of the study (Access, Awareness, Control, and Benefit). Each of these subsections comprised five close-ended questions. The sample size from the infinite population is measured through Godden's sample size formula (Godden, 2004). With a 95% confidence level, the sample size was found 384. However, to attain more data validity and credibility 400 samples were chosen following the convenience sampling technique for presenting higher population representation with varied preferences (Creswell, 2007). Additionally, the reviewed and collected secondary data were analyzed in this study for supporting the primary data and evidence.

Data Analysis and Results

The survey questionnaire covered 4 sections; namely- Access, Awareness, Control, and Benefit aspects had 5 questions each with 5 answer options ranging from 1-5. They were meant as- 1=very low, 2=low, 3=moderate, 4=high & 5=very high. In each of the 4 sections, individually one respondent's

minimum score of response was 5 (Score 1*5 Questions) and the maximum score was 25 (Score 5*5 questions). The distance of the interval score in between the ladder was determined by the distance of minimum and the maximum score, which was $\{(maximum, 25 - minimum 5)/ladder count, 8\} = 2.5$. In each of the 4 sections of this study- the total score of the respondent was divided by the sample number (n= 392) to reach the average score of that section. The sum of the minimum score of the 4 sections was 20 and the sum of the maximum number of the 4 sections was 100. The interval score in the ladder of participation typology was 10. The typology of public participation in the local government budgeting was determined by the sum average of all sections.

Table 1: Data Analysis Table

Scores	Typology scores	Ladder Participation
22.5 - 25	90 - 100	Citizen Control
20 - 22.5	80 - 90	Delegated Power
17.5 -20	70 - 80	Partnership
15 - 17.5	60 - 70	Placation
12.5 -15	50 - 60	Consultation
10 -12.5	40 - 50	Informing
7.5 - 10	30 - 40	Therapy
5 -7.5	20 - 30	Manipulation

(Source: Author of the Study)

Table 2: General characteristics of participants (N = 392)

Demographics	Variables	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Joypurhat District	Bhadsha	66	16.8%
	Mohammadabad	65	16.6%
	Jamalpur	65	16.6%
Dhaka District	Birulia	65	16.6%
	Savar	65	16.6%
	Amin Bazar	66	16.8%
Sex	Male	278	70.9%
	Female	114	20%

Demographics	Variables	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Age	18- 28	49	12.5%
	28-38	67	17%
	38-48	145	37%
	48-58	74	19%
	58+	57	14.5%
Level of Education	Illiterate	46	11.7%
	Primary school	78	19.9%
	Secondary school	91	23.2%
	Higher Secondary	129	32.9%
	Graduate, Postgraduate & above	48	12.2%
Respondents Profession	Student	51	13%
	Farmer	137	35%
	Public Service	82	21%
	Businessman & others	122	31%

(Source: Field Survey)

A total of 392 complete surveys were included in the final analysis. Of them, 70.92% were males and 29.08% were females, indicating the gender-based participation dynamics of Bangladesh. Most of the responses (36.99%) were recorded from the 38-48 age group and the lowest portion of responses were recorded by the youth- including the first-time voters (12.5%). Most had higher secondary levels of education (49.6%). The study traced; illiteracy (11.7%) is still prevailing in the context of the study. The majority (35%) were involved in farming and another (21%) in public services with (13%) responses by students as well. This section of the study expresses the descriptive statistics in accordance with the 4 dimensions, determining the quality of public participation in local government in Bangladesh.

Access to the Local Government’s Budgeting

The core of the participatory initiative is the access opportunities that refer to the concept where the legally entitled people can avail or get engaged in different tiers of budgeting mechanisms in-person. Results show that- in this study, the access parameter falls into the “Therapy” level of public participation (Score 7.54) presented in Table 3. The quality represents a context where the mass population does not have any clear demonstration of access to the

respective budgeting process or, traces of engagement and influence in the decision-making procedures indeed. A score of 1.43 ranging between poor and very poor at the parameter of voices keeping in budget decisions indicate that people rarely get the chance to participate. Scores of 1.66 on whether the citizenry is being informed about joining Open Budget Meetings or not reflect the same poor stances. A very poor rate of invitation is a practice to the study area too which can be understood in its parameters through the score of 1.44. Those, who are participating are also less informed on budget issues (1.50) which is in between the very low to a low category, resulting in a breakdown in the public opportunity to negotiate, determine or decide on priorities (1.51). The overall performance of this “Access” parameter represents that, the mentioned OBM is merely for eye-washing. Only favored, selected few personals are invited into the process keeping mass people avoided. However, As the participants do not have any clear idea about participatory budgeting at all, ultimately OBM brings no success in public representative participation indeed.

Table 3: Access to Local Government Budgeting

Statement	Score
Informed about Open Budget Meetings	1.66
Invited to join at Open Budget Meetings	1.44
Informed on key Information of Budget issues	1.50
Opportunity to negotiate, determine and decide on budget priorities	1.51
The voice kept at the final budget	1.43
Total value =	7.54

(Source: Field Survey)

Awareness of Local Government Budgeting

The concept of awareness covers that element of participation that seeks individuals into the process itself. That means, grabbing people into participation for budgeting purposes is thoroughly covered under this aspect. The total value of awareness is 12.20, which means the awareness is at the Informing level presented in Table 4. The result represents that- the context turned into a vehicle of one-way information sharing instead of public participation through maintaining dual ends. The public is selectively addressed and called to just listen. A low score of 2.44 which is almost in the moderate category represents a dual-contextual dilemma. Firstly, the rise of educated awareness in the study area and then the rival political elitism, legalistic jargon, and the prestige of officials - restricting the practice of citizenship as prescribed. The people hardly experienced any practices but heard of a few participatory budgeting practices by any other authorities indeed (score 2.44). Pubic are less interested in the political, economic, social & budgetary issues at

the union parishad (score 2.43) as by experience they learned that their advice will not be considered for final budgeting at all.

Table 4: Awareness of Local Government Budgeting

Statement	Score
Care about Political/ economic/ social/ budget issues of UP	2.43
Open Budget Meetings of Participatory Budgeting at UP fit my interest	2.59
I know about my basic rights as a citizen to involve and determine budgetary priorities	2.44
I know about other public body that has developed the budget through participation	2.44
Active involvement and participation at Open Budget Meetings	2.30
Total value =	12.20

(Source: Field Survey)

Control over Local Government Budgeting

The control aspect covers the position on which citizens have authority to rule over or, complete power to influence over the decision-making mechanisms while connecting public interest into the process. Table 5 presents that, the total score of control is 7.82 which belongs to the range of “Therapy”. Such a result represents the context of no trace of public control over budgetary decisions indeed. Instead, the political leaders and the interest group deal with every aspect of the budgeting alone. Hardly any public responded positively after the issues of public consultation existence or other settings of public involvement, framing the budget and the spending priorities (score 1.76 & 1.44). though the government created space but is not clear at all (Score 1.68). Amidst this hazy area, the public rarely had any chance of budgetary decision determination (score 1.43). Though the Government of Bangladesh has created the OBM mechanism for total inclusion and representation, people have no such experience at all (score 1.51). There is a vast gap between concepts, prescriptions, and practices indeed.

Table 5: Control over Local Government Budgeting

Statement	Score
UP consulted the public on setting broad budget priorities	1.76
The public could involve in putting spending priorities	1.44
Government-created budget priorities defining discussion platform	1.68
People determined all budget decisions	1.43
UP ever formatted participatory budget	1.51
Total value =	7.82

(Source: Field Survey)

Perceived Benefits from Local Government Budgeting

Benefit refers to the public’s perception of benefits from the initiatives being adopted. Here, the score of 12.21, representing the Informing level of public participation covers the issues of benefit perception by the public from the OBM mechanism. As presented in Table 6, With the contextual experience of elitists domination, a bite of the public agreed only in the aspect that the OBM reflects the public needs and demands (Score 1.76), creating a path for social inclusion of underrepresented with the mandate of improved democracy (Score 2.59) considering their experienced preferences. The informing level scoring projects that the benefits are informed to the public rather than experienced by them in actual means.

Table 6: Perceived Benefits from Local Government Budgeting

Statement	Score
Reflection of public needs and demands in the Budget	1.76
Improves accountability: local resources mobilization and utilization	2.59
Social inclusion of underrepresents and vulnerable & improvement of Democracy by participatory budgeting	2.59
Only a few people or small groups benefitted from participatory budgeting	2.83
Satisfaction on PB/ expectations met by community empowerment	2.44
Total value =	12.21

(Source: Field Survey)

Key Findings and Summary

The total score of 4 aspects (Access, Awareness, Benefit, and Control) following the typology presented in Table 7 is 39.77 which indicates that the level of public participation in the local government budgeting preferences is of the therapy category. This therapy level means that the participatory budgeting mechanism through OBM is a failed attempt of the government to empower the citizenry, reflecting respective desires and demands specifically. Therefore, it can be stated that though the govt. took this initiative for satisfying the purpose of social inclusion and improve democracy, the esteemed Open Budget Meetings (OBM) are not serving the purpose of public participation as expected at all.

Table 7: Degree of Citizen Participation in Local Government Budgeting

Variable	Score	Degree of Participation
Access	7.54	Therapy
Awareness	12.20	Informing
Control	7.82	Therapy
Benefit	12.21	Informing
Typological score =	39.77	Therapy

The Local Government (UP) Act of 2009 pronounces 5% population inclusion into OBM, but their selection process is hardly maintained in the contexts. With the vague law and no directory rules, OBM became a sacred tool for practicing political controversies and elitism. The public is found missing in the public participation itself, which the results also speak the access concerns. Through OBM, the government of Bangladesh supports the legalities but ignores democracy indeed (Siddique, 2012). With the contextual lack of political commitment, experiences of treating the public as the problem of participation itself support the theme (Hasan et al., 2014), (Pandey, 2009), (Uddin, 2009). Following the statements of (Rahman, 2015) and the poor level of the public participatory mechanism through eye-washing OMB structure as found in this study, the union parishad is surely missing some advantages which might be possible if adaptation was institutionalized properly. To begin with- chances of quick, responsive, and concerned estimation of local-level development project expenditure are missing surely. Furthermore, the transparent allocation, mobilization, and utilization of local resources might be possible with OBM, found missing in the study. Not just this, in Bangladesh, the Local government missed chances of attaining more extensive government legitimacy, public trust, balanced politics, and advanced democracies with enhanced accountability (He, 2011; Wu and Wang, 2012; Gatto and Sadik-Zada, 2021; Bassett, 2016) on the way like Korea reached the peak in the open budget survey (Kang and Min, 2013). Here in Bangladesh, the Union Parishad has got huge potential though, just needs to act properly and precisely in accordance with the existing laws, acts, and regulations of participatory budgeting in the local government contexts of Bangladesh.

Conclusion

Budgeting is among the core functions of local governments in Bangladesh, especially at the Union Parishads. It is an undeniable fact that to ensure democracy and social inclusion, there is barely any alternative to public participation. Turning the process is very crucial for the interests of good governance and public accountability too. Though, the government of Bangladesh is putting its best to invite public participation in the UP-level budget-making process with reference to the Local Government (UP) Act-2009

and “UP Operational Manual-2012”); the typology score of 37.74 (Therapy Level) advocates OBM as nothing but eye-washing and of tokenistic public participation oriented. The public can hardly participate in the process, engage freely, and contribute properly. OBM turned out as set just for projecting the public participation opportunity and perceived benefits, not initiating participation in actual means at all. Although OBM is entirely effective in encouraging decentralization for governance, it has not been fully implemented or extensively adapted in Bangladesh. The study suggested that- the hinders of public participation in OBM must be removed by facilitating citizens, and public awareness and providing information. The limited study area and induction of quantitative techniques only are the weakness of this study. Where the time-visit-cost was the major obstacle ahead to conducting the study on a broader scale. However, the findings of this study will help the government and its concerns by portraying the real public participation scenario of the budgeting works from the local governments in Bangladesh. The study will assist in policy-making activities as well.

Recommendations

Public participation through OBM in local government budgeting is very crucial in respect of governance, social accountability, transparency, and efficiency of local resources planning and allocation. Despite having legal and institutional support, the study explored that the OBM is not making way for public inclusion at all. It became an alternative tool of elitist domination indeed. Some measures need to be taken for effective OBM activation and efficient service delivery. Thereby, a few contextual recommendations are proposed for initiating the growth in the quality of public participation in the local government (UP) budgeting preferences indeed. Those are as follows-

- Strategic plans, clearly directing the OBM activation and performance-based grant allocation system could be adopted. Initiation of participation appraisals for the public might enhance public motivation indeed.
- Political leadership could be provided with absolute authority and control in the budgetary decisions with the initiation of political openness, bureaucratic neutrality, and democratic practices.
- The Local government act (UP)-2009 could be revised and thoroughly reexamined. Initiatives could be taken to increase for increasing public trust and accountability through other avenues (Ward Sava and Village Court) of participation)
- Building political awareness through quality civic education might be an asset. Initiation of village-to-village peer education practices and NGO activation could be proposed. Pieces of training could be provided to the local government budgeting concerned officials (UP councilors, Secretary and Chairman) as well.

- A separate, independent “Local Government Commission” could be re-established for collaboration and budget performance review purposes. A computerized database system could be established to improve efficiency and integrity in the budgeting contexts of UP. Electronic Participatory Budgeting (e-PB) could be adopted as well.

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The Link between Connectivity and Security: The Bangladesh Case

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Abstract

This paper presents the relationship between transportation and national security in different aspects. The main research question is - What is the relationship between transportation and national security? The qualitative methodology has been applied in this research and is based on a literature review. Bangladesh has been considered as a case in the research. The finding is that the relationship between transportation and national security is very much complex. Both liberalism and realist theories support the positive relationship between transportation and traditional and non-traditional security, and at the same time, they also showed the negative relationship between them. Both theories argued the antagonistic relationship between environmental security (non-traditional) and transportation. From Bangladesh's perspective, traditional security's most valuable part is economic security, which is benefited from internal and external transportation, but transportation makes a massive threat to every non-traditional security sector.

Keywords: Transportation, Security, Traditional Security, and Non-traditional Security.

Introduction

Globalization makes the necessity of communication, and communication is the heart of development. How far a country is developed depends on how bright its communication capacity. Communication is not only for internal but also international, cross borders. Global communication meaning is so vast. Transportation is the essential communication for carrying goods. International transportation is used to move people and goods from one country to another. Usually, three types of transportation ways land (road and rail), air, or water, are used in the country for communication and moving in globalization areas. Economic globalization contains flows of services and export across borders, flows of international capital, trade, and taxes berries are regressions, decline complications of immigration, spreading of technology, and knowledge out of boundaries (Samimi & Jenatabadi, 2014). For the global economy and the supply chain, transportation is one of the most significant factors, and it is also a tool for moving the product to create product value. (Lietuvnikė et al., 2017). The concept of 'National Security' is an essential issue and a vast topic; it covers individual to

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international sectors. It has two dimensions: conventional security and non-conventional or non-traditional security. Where traditional or conventional security is associated with safeguarding marine or territorial reserve areas and nations and the non-traditional security or non-conventional security related with huge terms like economy, environment, terrorism, drugs, foods, human trafficking, immigration, social security, etc.

Transportation has two types of impacts in two aspects. Two aspects are democratic or internal transportation technology and overseas transportation, linking the country with regional and international sectors. Transportation's impact-related dimensions are positive impact and negative impact. So, it can say that there are four links between the security and transportation relation. First is democratic or internal transportation's positive impact on traditional national security, second is the domestic transportation's adverse effect on conventional security, third is the external transportation's positive impact on non-traditional security, and last is the external transportation's negative impact on non-traditional security. Some research has focused on both internal and external transportation's positive impact on traditional and non-traditional security and analyzes the importance of transportation in human life to the world position. Many essential services are served by transportation in human life like work, medical care, babysitting, education, accommodation, etc. (Triplett & Johnson, 2011). Other scholars (Fattah et al., 2016; Schaefer et al., 2009) showed the transportation's negative impacts on air pollution which are related to the non-conventional national security threat. CO₂ emissions are growing around 75% of the global net in the city, and about 17.5% of them came from transport (Fattah et al., 2016). Public transport (taxis and vehicles) has a higher impact on urban pollution, noise, and fuel economy, need concern about transportation's growing role in a more natural and sustainable urban upward mobility. (Pereirinha et al., 2018). And employers also need to understand the high levels of threat and security facts in the transportation sector (Mineta, 2001). From Bangladesh's perspective, several studies (Rahman, 2014; Saber, 2008; Talukder, 2021) have been conducted on focusing on the impacts of transit and transportation on social and economic sectors, but not any work has been found on the relationship between transportation and national security. Based on this understanding, the aim of this paper is to identify the relationship between transportation and national security in different aspects. Focusing on this objective raises the research question: What is the relationship between transportation and national security?

Methodology

The qualitative methodology has been applied in this research and is based on a literature review. National and international articles, reports, and books have been used as secondary data. The study has been completed in two sectors. Firstly, it has tried to find the relation between transportation and national

security throws the two international relations theories; realism and liberalism. Secondly, in Bangladesh's case, it has been analyzed by focusing on three types of transportation links they are Land roads, Ship ports, and Airports.

Theory Review

Connectivity is a very potential element for any state and it is a measuring component of state power in national and international sectors. Connectivity has two forms; soft connectivity and hard connectivity. Soft connectivity is conducted by networking systems and diplomacy. Hard connectivity serves by the geographic connection through transit and transportation. Though national security is considered as military issue, it has been established that other soft issues are more vital and sensitive to national security like economic security, environmental issues, transitional crime, and terrorism. And after 1991, the national security's softer issues (social, political, economic, environmental, etc.) are became more focused rather than national security's hard parts like military security (Swanstrom, 2010). Transit and transportation are the strong components of the hard connectivity in the globalization area, and they are not only geographic issues but also political issues and are strongly connected as national security issues for the state. Transportation hits hard security as well as it knockouts the softer security issues. Moreover, the softer issues particularly social, economic, and environmental securities are determined by transportation in the domestic and international sectors transportation enhances economic development and at the same time it creates environmental demurrages. In that scene, transportation is considered as a security issue and this study will find the linkage between transportation and national security throw the theories and in the Bangladesh case.

Review of Liberalism Theory on Transportation and National Security

The modern liberalism theory supports universal hospitality, which becomes commercial liberalism, often known as complex interdependence. According to this theory, the state's interests are multiple and changing. Here, free trade is one of the critical variables. Commercial liberalist Keohane and Joseph Nye (1973) describe the relations between states as becoming increasingly deep and complex. These webs of interdependence undermine state power and elevate the influence of transnational non-state actors while decreasing the likelihood of war. Transportation is an element of free trade, making an interdependent relationship. So, it could say that transportation can reduce the intention of war by establishing accessible business and interdependent relations among the connecting countries. Conflict is related to national security; transportation decreases war, and decreasing war increases national security. So, the relationship between transportation and traditional national security is positive.

Liberalism theories show that globalization makes the world market, raising the transitional network and creating a rapid communication technology. Globalization involves the development of networks of interdependence (Keohane & Nye, 1987). It makes the world a new format where Walt (1998) said that the world had become a social and economic net for communication and technology. Economic globalization of developed countries is increasing more than developing countries through exporting and importing goods and services. A logistic system could not bring its characteristics interested in whole to compete without globalization transportation (Kherbash & Mocan, 2015). When transportation is not sufficient and perfect for logistic supply, the economy becomes challenging and uncertain. Longer transport routes most certainly dictate a greater exposure of goods to the risks in the external environment. Moreover, the company's expected business outcome becomes a threat to the mismanagement of the logistic chain and a lack of infrastructure (G. Veselko, 2009). The transportation confirms the logistic chain. So, it could also say that transportation, economic development, and social security are interrelated and positively related.

Another aspect of transportation in the non-conventional or non-military is not so good as economic security. By making noise, vehicles are the most significant contributor to atmospheric pollution. The transport sector accounts for nearly a quarter of the world's CO₂ emissions from fossil fuel combustion and 13% of overall GHG emissions (Muzones et al., 2010, p.245). A scholar argues about substantial negative impacts Epidemiological studies show that air pollution costs thousands of deaths and leads to several health problems in cities (Dhakal & Schipper, 2005). This discussion shows that transportation and environmental security has a negative relationship.

Review of Realism Theory on Transportation and National Security

Classical realist Morgenthau (1948) said that states are primarily motivated by the desire for military and economic power to ensure security rather than ideas or ethics. Neo-realist Kenneth Waltz (1979) showed two types of balance systems are the most peaceful system in the international relation: The internal balance is confirmed by the military and economy, and the external balance depends on alliances. States try to standardize diplomatic affairs, border openness and possible economic prospects, and national security (Cho,2021). Transportation creates an opportunity for economic development. As Walth's argument, the economy is the element of creating an internal balance. The balancing system decreases the possibility of war and increases national security. Transitional network and communication technology focus on economic development and social security rather than military security (Walt, 1998). So, according to realism theory, transportation, and traditional security have a positive relationship, and a positive relation between transport and non-traditional economic security.

Another aspect is that international alliance formulation is a significant part of realism theory. It is one of the attributes of capability distribution (Waltz, 1979). The country's strength is measured by its strategic alliance status. Who is its friend, and which alliance is the opposition? For making an international strategic alliance, air transportation is the potential factor (Kazakova et al., 2018). However, there are several restrictions for practicing the global airline alliance. The airport delivers service to continue the coalition. It has a benefit like a collaboration between the airline companies and countries. It makes opportunities to increase relations and the opportunity to become beneficiaries (Yang et al., 2021). It is proved that external balance from alliancing is also motivated and developed by transportation, and we can see a positive relationship here. But in practice, the transportation system is used for violence by the terrorist. Jenkins (2001) argued that the public transportation system is tremendously threatened because terrorists might use chemical and biological weapons in this sector, becoming more threat. So, it is clear that transportation and alliance have a positive relationship, making the state internationally powerful.

Summary of Liberalist and Realist Arguments on Relationship and Transportation Technology and National Security

Transportation technology is the gift of globalization which is strongly related to liberalization. Liberalist theorists support that transportation is a positive element of liberalism. Theorists argue that transitional networks and communication technology focus on economic development and social security rather than military security (Walt, 1998). It makes an opportunity to develop economic development is a significant part of national security. Economic solvencies ensure human safety and as well as an essential part of national security. So, it can say that transportation technology and national security carried a positive relationship. At the same time, other security aspect liberalists show the antagonistic relation between transportation technology and security. Environmental protection hits national security. If citizens suffer from climate change and face threats to health and property, national security will be affected.

Transportation technology works as the measurement and effector of national security. According to realism theory, the alliance is considered the states' strength and strategy of diplomacy. Communication makes a state stronger or weaker in global and international politics. Like, an airline develops with a country in which the relationship is good either trade or political aspect. So, it is clear that there is a strong relationship between transportation and national security. Now needs to discuss what types of relation on which perspective.

Liberalism and realist theory support the positive relationship between transportation and traditional and non-traditional security, and at the same time, it also showed the negative relationship among them. Both theories argued the

antagonistic relationship between environmental security (non-traditional) and transportation.

The Case of Bangladesh

Bangladesh is a developing country. For the last two decades, it is becoming a model country for economic development, and recently it has been considered a middle-income country. Bangladesh takes several strategies for continuing its GDP growth. Communication building is one of the essential strategies of government diplomacy. Geographically it has a tremendous significant stand in the Asian community and the world. The Bangladesh government has already taken various infrastructure projects for developmental success, and transportation development is one. The transportation sector has been emphasized on growth in the internal industry and a significant project on external sectors. External transportation increases the connectivity with the regional and international arena-most of the borders are connected with the neighbor, India. India used to communicate with its territory via Bangladesh. India uses Bangladesh's land and transportation as transit to secure and carry goods and services to its parts. Now the research Question is - what is the relationship between transportation and national security in Bangladesh? And the supplementary research question is - Why does Bangladesh adopt certain large-scale transportation technologies but not others?

Literature review on Bangladesh Transportation and Security

Bangladesh emphasizes transport development in budget allocation. Bangladesh's government considers transportation a vital issue for the country's socio-economic change and economic liberation and development. Rahman (2014) said that "while concentrating on economic development, national security-related issues should not be overlooked which may result in compromise and exposing too much vulnerability" (P.61). Bangladesh has a transitional security threat which is from terrorism to organized crime. Others are drug, armed, smuggling, climate security, human trafficking, and financial crime (Talukder, 2021; Sarkar, 2018). Rahman (2014) shows that Bangladesh is the favorite transit route for arms trafficking. A report showed that around 5% of the world's drug trafficking is 'routed through Bangladesh (Rahman, 2014).

Land-Roads

Bangladesh is ongoing a vast number of transportation projects: internal and external. External transportation makes connectivity with neighbors and regions. There are five initially Bangladesh regional connectivity in Bangladesh where Bangladesh land is used as a corridor in the restricted area: Asian Highway (AH), SAARC highway corridor (SHC), SASEC road corridor (SRC), BIMSTEC road corridor (BRC), and BCIM Corridor (BCIM-EC). According to the Regional Road Connectivity Bangladesh perspective, prepared by the Road Transport and Highways Division in 2016, Bangladesh will have three Asian Highway (AH)

routes: AH1 (Tamiabil-Benapol 49km), AH2 (Tamiabil-Banglabandha 517 km), and AH41 (Teknaf-Monglla 762km) (Saif& Rahman, 2021). Bangladesh already earned a handsome profit from the transit and transshipment charges. One study showed that vast revenue of US \$ 400 to the US \$ 500 million per annum to Bangladesh on transshipment charges (for every truck trip rate is \$550) (Rahman, 2014).

Bangladesh increases land-related transportation because of its profitable stand. One estimate shows that over the 31 years, the benefit from road users is around million 1,295,840 taka (\$18,512 million). Another, the Padma Bridge is the most beneficiary sector of government, road and rail link accessing to the Padma Bridge makes it full benefited (Rahman, 2014). "An estimate of multiplier effects on the Padma bridge investment shows the bridge increasing the national GDP growth rate by 1.2% and the gross product in the southwest region by 35%, as well as generating additional employment opportunities of 743,000 persons per year, which equals 1.2% of the total labor force of Bangladesh"(Rahman, 2014). This estimate shows the positive impact of transportation on economic development. But there has another part.

The insurgent groups also target Bangladesh at a transit point. CHT has a 172 km porous border with India and Myanmar (Rahman, 2003), which increases the opportunity to make transit and India's need for direct access through the regular land route of Bangladesh, and it also wants to use Chittagong land port, the "seven sisters" issue. The transit creates the insurgency problem in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), which can also turn into a conflict (Saber, 2008), and it is directly related to national security threats. Another critical issue is land, transit, and smuggling. ATTF (Tripura based All Tripura Tiger Force), NLFT (National Liberation Front of Tripura), and ULFA (United Liberation Front of Asom)-these groups are trafficking arms from China to India and other countries through Bangladesh transit. 'The arms smuggling creates a national threat for the country and the neighboring countries as well' (Talukder, 2021). Bangladesh land transit is also used for drug smuggling. Important is these most drugs come from neighboring countries, India and Myanmar. A table has been provided below for understanding the drug trafficking areas.

Table: Drug Trafficking Border Point through Bangladesh

Regions	Country	Border Crossing Points
Western	India	Benapol, Dorshona, Dogachi, Parsha, Hilly, Birol, Balubari, Banglabandha.
Eastern	India and Myanmar	Latu, Ahamadabad, Akhaura, Koshba, Amratoly, Razapur, Braymmapara, Bibirbazar, Chaddagram, Suagazi, Mirjanagar, Ramghar, Barkal, Ukhia, Teknaf
Northern	India	Tinbiga Corridor, Patgram, Mogholhat, Ailatoly, Tamabil
In Comilla (Eastern region)	India and Myanmar	Amratoly, Razapur, Braymmapara, Bibirbazar, Chaddagram, Suagazi

(Source: Rahaman, M. (2014). Drug trafficking in South Asia: A case study on Bangladesh. *Asian Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies*, 2(9), P.180.)

Transportation enhances transactions, and transactions are responsible for human trafficking. Human being transaction is going up between Bangladesh and India. From 1999 to 2009, around 300,000 Bangladeshi women and children were trafficked in India. And another report showed that 200,000 girls and women were sold in Pakistan. (Talukder, 2021). And the popular trafficking route is thus Dhaka-Mumbai-Karachi- Dubai, which is the worst gift of transportation.

Ship Ports

Bangladesh has a robust water root relating from the beginning. In 1972, Bangladesh and India first made a transit relationship (Shafiul, 2007). Water transportation is more favorable for economic benefit, and it enhances the excellent opportunity for large trade. The second largest port -the Mongla Port made the sea-born trade with around 2.6 billion tons, and this trade earned the maximum of almost 95% of the total traffic from imports in 2012 (Rahman, 2014). It is a significant contribution of transportation to the economy.

There has been no complaint regarding the illegal smuggling of such items through the river route. (Shafiul, 2007), but the reality is different. International Maritime Bureau (IMB) indicated Bangladesh as 'one of the most dangerous points of the world' (Rahman, 2014, p.2). Chittagong is the most crucial port for Bangladesh trade, covering around 80% export, but it is marked as the second most vulnerable port by the IMB. Illicit drug trafficking is a common scenario for the port. Bangladesh faces a security threat from India through sea-controlling activities. Mohammad Saber said that 'any alliance of Bangladesh with a regional or extra-regional power unfriendly to India is likely to threaten Indian dominance in the Indian Ocean and endanger the Shiliguri Corridor' (Saber, 2008).

Airport

Airport transportation is very much concerned about smuggling activities. A considerable amount of drug smuggling is happening in the international airport, and it is becoming a threat zone for the country. Though the Bangladesh government has a successful chapter from 2005 to 2007 about controlling drug smuggling (Rahman, 2014), its location is a vulnerable position- between two valuable routes of smuggling named Golden Crescent and Golden Triangle. This trafficking route was driven smoothly by these corrupt traders for a year, and amphetamine powder of around 12.32 kg was seized from the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport's cargo village area. Using the airport opportunity as a drug smuggling route has arrived by the lack of technical support. (Talukder, 2021)

Discussion

Barry Buzan (1988) has mentioned that a state must tackle five types of threats: military, economic, environmental, political, and societal; they are all part of

national security. From the discussion, it has been clear that there is a strong relationship between transportation and national security. The security sectors have shown two types of relations: positive and negative. Liberalism and realism argued a robust positive relationship between them in the traditional security system. Still, the theories showed a negative association in the non-traditional sectors most of the time. Especially in the environmental security sector, it offers a robust negative relationship.

In Bangladesh's perspective, traditional security's most valuable part is economic security which benefited from internal and external transportation, but transportation makes a massive threat to every non-traditional security sector. Bangladesh transit is used for drug trafficking, human trafficking, smuggling, and arms in the regional sector. These issues make the less important of transportation's positive contribution. However, there is no way to surrender the monetary gift of transportation; it is also essential to think about transportation's opposite activities. Bangladeshis' ongoing infrastructure projects will improve its' carrier, and Jamilur Reza Choudhury (2022) said that Bangladesh needs to assess this development from a historical perspective. Because in history, Pakistan had an inequality of outcome. As a result, it created dissatisfaction. So, if the current infrastructure development is not well distributed, it would cause dissatisfaction. And this type of dissatisfaction can be grown as a threat to national security. Asian Highway-the international connectivity network needs to be a concern. Its' root plan was to Asam (Karimganj) to Manipur to Myanmar. But Myanmar government is not interested in cooperating with the project (Chaudhury, 2022).

The availability of arms and drugs affected the young generation, and it might be a worthy cause of a long-term catastrophe for Bangladesh. Youths become drug addicts and are engaged in several criminal activities (Rahman, 2014). Defiantly it makes a threat to national security. Why Bangladesh adopts certain large-scale transportation technologies. This research identifies internal and external factors to answer this question. The inner aspect is a national interest related to economic development, infrastructure development, communication, urbanization, etc. And the external factors are financial influence from international institutions and developed countries. Like, about \$9,750mn investment has come from China for Bangladeshi transportation projects (Khatun & Saddat, 2020). Bangladesh has no alternative to increasing transportation in internal and external connectivity for development, and that's why the government takes on a vast number of transportation projects. But this research argues that it concerns transportation's negative impacts, but that means not avoiding transit and transportation. So, this research thinks now it is challenging for the Bangladesh government to develop a strategy or diplomacy to maintain development projects and at the same time to protect against national security threats.

Conclusion

Drug trafficking, smuggling, and climate change issues are not the solving issues in particular. These are interrelated dependent issues. So, it needs to take action together with the border-linked countries. Transit and transportation are the demand of globalization and time. No country can survive individually. That's why it is essential to build a democratic and international strategy to make ground when both development and security factors are secure. This research tries to identify the relationship between transportation and national security. Most of the study focused on the transit and transportation's positive relation; this research finds both relation patterns and tried to define where the link is positive or negative. In the Bangladesh sector, this research found the impacts of transportation on non-traditional security issues and defined how the negative impact becomes a threat to national security. It also found why and how transportation is essential for its economic development and national security, and this understanding makes a perception about identifying new problems and the research arena.

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Bangladesh-Myanmar Relations: Understanding Strategic Dimension

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Abstract

Bangladesh and Myanmar are close neighbors sharing both land and maritime border. Historically, the southern part of Bangladesh had been linked with the Rakhine state of Myanmar. After the independence of Bangladesh, the official relations between the countries commenced in 1972 following Myanmar's recognition. After that many visits of state leaders took place but the relationship can't develop more due to some issues like Myanmar's military rule, the Rohingya crisis etc. It is rational that the neighboring countries can have some bilateral disputes but that does not mean that they will be away from economic and other engagements. In the age of globalization, all states are interrelated and interconnected to each other. From this point of view, the study is designed to understand the strategic significance of Bangladesh-Myanmar bilateral relations. The study deals with the two research questions-why are Bangladesh-Myanmar relations strategically important? And how can both countries develop relations with each other? The study is qualitative in nature and based on descriptive and narrative methods. The study takes secondary data by reviewing newspapers, related articles, books, international organizations reports, and government reports. The study uncovered that from both geo-political and economic points of view, Bangladesh and Myanmar are significant to each other. Despite the Rohingya crisis both countries need to work together. Myanmar is important for Bangladesh to attain its strategic objective aiming at fostering connectivity with China and ASEAN countries. Conversely, Bangladesh is significant to Myanmar for its geostrategic location. Myanmar may utilize the Chittagong port and the upcoming deep-sea port of Bangladesh for her imported products which will reduce cargo costs. Additionally, in recent times Bangladesh has experienced remarkable economic growth and amazing development in the agro-economic sector that may attract Myanmar to flourish in its agro-economic sector.

Keywords: Bangladesh, Myanmar, Strategic, Connectivity, Economy.

Introduction

Myanmar is one of the largest countries in Southeast Asia. It gained liberation from the British on 4 January 1948 (Maung, 1979, p. 23). Myanmar is not only a neighbor of Bangladesh; it is a natural partner of Bangladesh. Both Bangladesh and Myanmar share about 271 kilometers of common border. Bangladesh-

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Myanmar official relations began on 13 January 1972 following Myanmar's recognition which is the 7th country to recognize Bangladesh (Rashid, 2015, p. 331). After the independence of Bangladesh, the exchange of many high-profile visits took place between the countries to develop bilateral relations. Since the 1970s except for the caretaker governments all the heads or government of Bangladesh visited Myanmar. In 2011, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina visited Myanmar which labels the priority of making robust relationship with Myanmar. Despite all these high profile visits, the relation is not going smoothly due to lack of Myanmar government's political will and mutual trust and confidence of the countries regarding Rohingya refugee issue, border tension and transnational crimes. Furthermore, the current political and economic reforms in Myanmar like inclusive economic policy, economic up-gradation, and submission to Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) have added new hopes to develop the relations of the countries. But the major influx of Rohingya refugees following military operation in Myanmar regarding border post attack on 25 August 2017 has strained the bilateral relations of the countries. The Rohingya refugee crisis has emerged as security threat to Bangladesh. Though Bangladesh and Myanmar signed agreement with Myanmar and the UNHCR for the repatriation of the Rohingyas but due to the negligence of Myanmar government the repatriation is yet started.

Again, Since August 2022, the relentless gunfire and mortar shelling by the Myanmar military in Bangladesh territory has erupted tension between the countries (*The Daily Star*, 2022, September 17). At one side no Rohingya repatriation to Myanmar albeit the agreement and the other side the border violence have complicated the bilateral relationship. In this connection, the paper is an attempt to understand the strategic importance of Bangladesh-Myanmar relationship to strengthen the bilateral relations of the countries.

It is mentionable that in recent years Bangladesh-Myanmar relations has gained attention to many academics and researchers. Some scholars like Imtiaz Ahmed (2010), David Scott Mathieson (2009), Kei Nomote (2005), Parnini (2013) have focused on Rohingya refugee crisis conceptualizing historical exclusion of the Rohingyas, statelessness and refugeehood, border tension and security dilemma in the host country, Bangladesh. They also explored that Bangladesh-Myanmar relations are being interrupted by the Rohingya refugee crisis and argued that the problem should be addressed through inclusive approach to include the local and international communities. The other scholars like Uddhin (2014), Yesmin (2016) have focused on the challenges to the way of developing bilateral relations. The existing literatures did not take into account the strategic importance of Bangladesh-Myanmar bilateral relationship based on regional implications. The paper is, therefore, seeks to highlight the strategic importance of the Bangladesh-Myanmar bilateral relationship based on regional implications. The study argues that in terms of a strategic point of view, both countries are significant to each

other and to venture the strategic opportunities both countries should reciprocate in the same way through intensive cooperation. The significance of the study lies in the fact it has valuable insights for academicians and policymakers. It will help academics and policymakers to better understand the necessity of the relationship along with revisiting the policy or course of action regarding the Bangladesh-Myanmar relationship.

Objectives of the Study

The study has been designed to understand the strategic importance of the Bangladesh-Myanmar bilateral relationship based on regional implications. The other objectives are-1. To explore the essence of Myanmar to regional powers India and China; and 2. To explore the essence of Bangladesh to regional powers India and China; Under these objectives, two research questions are: 1. why is Bangladesh-Myanmar relations strategically important? 2. how can both countries develop relations with each other?

Methodology of the Study

The study is qualitative in nature and based on descriptive and interpretative methods. The data and information have been collected from secondary sources like books, published articles, survey reports, research works, working papers, e-journals and internet sources. Besides, reports from different electronic and printing media, reports of government and non-government agencies and expert interview published in the media have been utilized for preparing the study.

Historical Background of Bangladesh-Myanmar Bilateral Relations

Just after independence, Bangladesh launched diplomatic relations with Myanmar at the highest level as the appointed senior diplomat K.M. Kaiser as its ambassador to Myanmar. And for the first time, Bangladesh Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad visited Myanmar in May 1972. Again in 1973 Bangladesh Foreign Secretary visited Myanmar and both the countries signed General Trade Agreement on 3 August 1973. Moreover, Myanmar president Ne Win with his Foreign Minister HLA Phon first visited Bangladesh on 26 April 1974 and it was the Myanmar president's first visit in independent Bangladesh. Ne Win emphasized that Bangladesh and Myanmar were "close neighbours, linked with geography, history and culture and the friendship would be interminable" (Ahmed, 2008, p.97).

In 1976 President Ziaur Rahman came to power and subsequently many high level visits took place between the countries which consolidated bilateral relations. President Ziaur Rahman visited Myanmar in 1977 and this was the first visit of Bangladesh Head of State to Myanmar. But, in 1978 during the reign of military ruler Ne Win, Bangladesh for the first time experienced the refugee crisis due to Nagamin operation of Burma which is also known as Dragon King

operation. Actually, it was a military operation conducted by the armed forces and immigration officials of then Burma to register citizens in northern Arakan (the present Rakhine state of Myanmar) and oust alleged immigrants from the area before national census. As a result, in the year 1978 about 200,000 Rohingya entered Bangladesh, although the Myanmar government claimed that the number was 150,000 (Ahmed, 2008, p.99). So, at the time the political relations of the two countries came under strain.

However, at the invitation of President Ziaur Rahman, Myanmar president Ne-win again made three-day state visit to Dhaka city in May 1979 which had a number of positive results like-

- Refugee Repatriation agreement (1978)
- Land Boundary agreement (1979)
- Agreement to expand and develop trade relations.

In February 1982, President Abdus Sattar visited Myanmar and emphasized on expanding trade and strengthening economic co-operation between the two countries. On 12 August 1985, Dhaka and Yangon strengthened their ties with specific demarcation of 123 miles of common land boundary which was finalized jointly by the Survey departments of the two countries (Ahmed, 2008, pp.102-103). During the year 1991-1992, the second massive Rohingya refugee influx to Bangladesh strained the bi-lateral relationship. At that time nearly 250,000 Rohingya refugees had fled to Bangladesh to escape persecution (Ragland, 1994, p.310). In November 1991, Bangladesh Foreign Minister Mustafizur Rahman visited Myanmar and met his counterpart U Ohn Gyan to talk about the crisis and forced for the repatriation of the refugees. Eventually, the UNHCR negotiated with the Myanmar and Bangladesh Government for a peaceful settlement to the Rohingya crisis and finally signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on 28 April 1992 to resolve the crisis (Yesmin, 2015, p.78). By December 1999 about 200,000 Rohingya's were returned to their motherland (Ahmed, 2008, p.104). This exposed Bangladesh government's matured and fruitful handling of a large crisis with neighbor.

During Khaleda Zia period (2002-2006) the bilateral relation was strengthened by the visit of chairman of the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) of the Union of Myanmar on 17-18 December 2002. Begum Khaleda Zia also visited Myanmar on 19-21 March 2003. During the visit, three agreements- Coastal Shipping, Trade Account System and Joint Business Council Agreements were settled to improve bilateral trade. In the same year a trade fair of Bangladesh with 100 stalls also took place in Myanmar for the second time. A cultural group of Bangladesh comprised of 116 members made their cultural show for four days. The visit was fruitful to accelerate bilateral trade, establishing direct road and coastal shipping links, and avoiding double taxation. The visit was also productive with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) by the Foreign Ministers U Win Aung and Morshed Khan

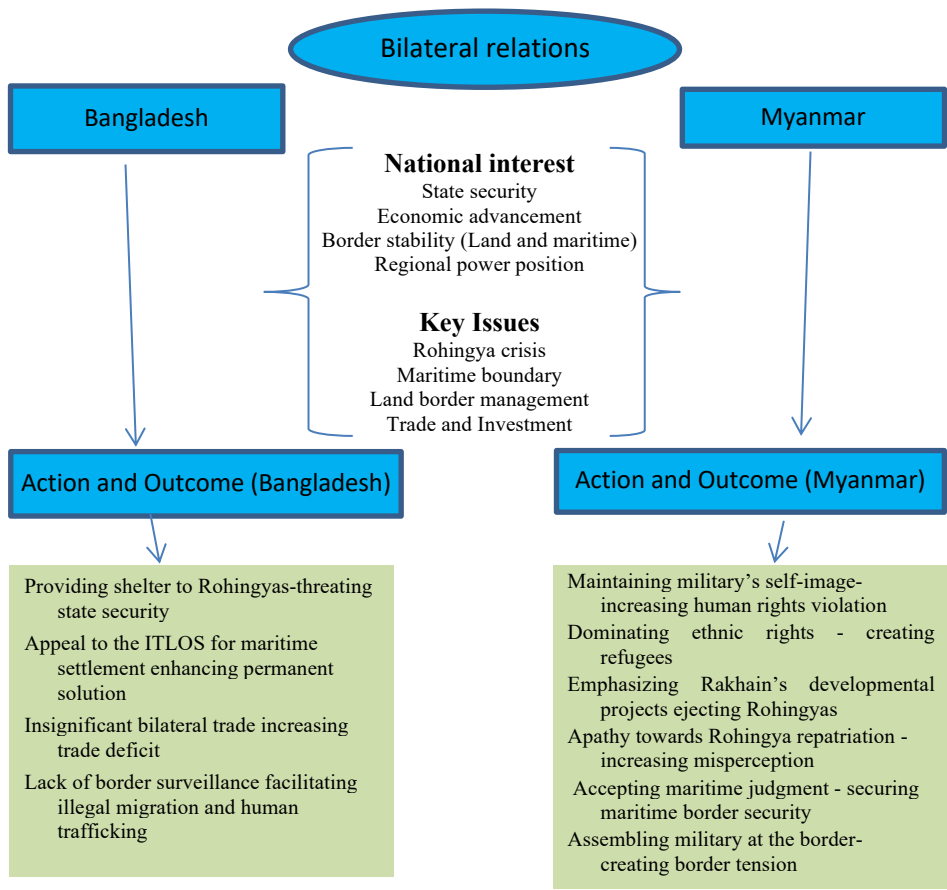
on annual consultations between them (Rashid,2015,pp.332-333). After two years of intense negotiations, the road link agreement was concluded on 27 July 2007 in Dhaka. Major M.A. Matin, the caretaker government's adviser for communication and Major Gen. Saw Tun, Myanmar Construction Minister signed the agreement on behalf of their respective governments.

After assuming power by Sheikh Hasina on 6 January 2009, Bangladesh Foreign Minister Dipu Moni held official talks with Myanmar Foreign Minister U Hyan Winz on 14-17 May 2009. Both the Foreign Minister debated a lot of issues, including the repatriation of Rohingya refugees, relaxation of visa requirement, demarcation of the maritime boundary, acceleration of the banking services, increasing border trade, road link between the two countries up to china, direct air link, exporting surplus power to Bangladesh, border fencing etc. (Rashid, 2015,p.334). On 5-7 December 2011, the official visit of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to Myanmar began a new era in bi-lateral relations. The visit took place at a time when the Myanmar government had been transforming toward democracy. The Prime Minister met with the President of Myanmar on 6 December 2011 and both the leaders agreed to enhance cooperation in the fields of trade and commerce, defense, investment, energy, agriculture and border supervision. Bangladesh Prime Minister also met with Myanmar Foreign Minister U Wunna Maung Lwin. During the visit, many agreements were signed to enhance connectivity and other areas. Both the countries signed an agreement to form Joint Commission at the level of Foreign Ministers and an Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to establish Joint Business Council between the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industries (FBCCI) and Union of Myanmar Chambers of Commerce and Industries (UMFCCI) (Foreign office briefing notes, 2011, December, Issue, 4,web: <http://www.mofa.gov.bd>).

In March 2012, the peaceful maritime settlement by the ITLOS has flourished optimism in developing bilateral relations. But, on 25 August 2017 following the attack on Border Guard Police of Myanmar by Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA), the Myanmarese army has carried out a bloody crackdown in Rakhine which caused a major influx of Rohingyas to Bangladesh. It is estimated that about 700,000 Rohingyas fled to Bangladesh following the brutal military campaign of Myanmar since 25 August 2017 and at present about 10 lakh Rohingyas are living in Bangladesh including 300,000 other Rohingyas who entered Bangladesh in the previous years. (*The Daily Star*, 2018, February 17). After that many ministerial talks took place but the repatriation process didn't start. The countries have agreed to stop the Rohingya influx to Bangladesh and to form a joint working group for starting repatriation process (*The Reuters*, 2017, October 24). On 16 February 2018, Bangladesh handed over a list of 8,032 Rohingyas of 1,673 families to Myanmar with a view to starting repatriation process (*The Daily Star*, 2018 February 17). But, the present situation of Myanmar that is involved with severe internal conflicts indicates that the repatriation process will not be started in early future. Actually, the huge number

of Rohingya refugees is a matter of serious security concern for the host country, Bangladesh. The refugees are being involved in serious crimes including terrorism, drug and human trafficking, smuggling, robbery and other organized crimes which threaten security and stability of the country.

Figure 1. Bangladesh-Myanmar Relations: An Overview



Source: Made by the Author

Significance of the Relations

Bangladesh and Myanmar are linked by history, culture and geography. After India, Myanmar occupies the second most important position for Bangladesh. Any incident in one country greatly influence the others country, e.g. the Rohingya crisis in Myanmar are severely distressing Bangladesh. Myanmar is the largest country of Southeast Asia which lies at the point of three regions-East, Southeast and South Asia. It occupies a critical geostrategic position where the spheres of influence of China and India overlap. Myanmar is of special importance to Bangladesh's 'Look East policy' which can offer an alternative land route opening towards China and Asian led countries.

Moreover, Myanmar is rich in oil, natural gas, coal, zinc, copper, precious stones, timber and hydropower which have the potentiality to be a major Southeast Asian player. Myanmar has become an attraction of foreign direct investment following the current political and economic reforms in Myanmar which brings opportunities for Bangladeshi investors too. Besides, Bangladesh is a food-deficit and natural disaster prone country. The demand for foodstuffs is increasing due to its population growth and in this respect Myanmar can be the main source of importing food for Bangladesh.

Conversely, Bangladesh is also significant to Myanmar. The topographical areas, actual contiguity to India, helpful work and region to the Bay of Bengal have impressive ramifications for local international relations. Bangladesh is the lone topographical way to associate South Asia with Southeast Asia which can be source for Myanmar to interface eastern India and different pieces of South Asia. As far as geo-monetary point of view the geostrategic area of Bangladesh gives the occasion to assume the predominant job in trans-provincial financial activity for example the Chittagong-Kunming availability could bring advantage for Myanmar through procuring parcel charges from the nations of three sub-locales of Asia. Bangladesh has gained notoriety for peacekeeping and microcredit exercises and in these zones Myanmar can look for collaboration from Bangladesh that will assist Myanmar with advancing human asset advancement in the regressive regions like the Rakhine state.

Map 1. Geographical Location of Bangladesh, Myanmar, China and India



Source: www.altapedia.com

Essence of Myanmar to Regional Powers

Major Powers of the region comprising of India and China have direct impact on peace, stability and economic development of Myanmar. Each country has undertaken many strategies to strengthen ties with Myanmar.

Overview of China-Myanmar Connectivity

Myanmar is strategically important for China's People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) to arrive at the Pacific and the Indian Oceans through the Myanmar-controlled Coco Islands, which are around 30 km north of the Indian Andaman Islands. Myanmar's location at China's southwest will make it easy to arrive at the Indian Ocean by the use of Myanmar controlled Islands. Regarding transportation, Myanmar is the unique route for China to arrive at South Asia and Indian Ocean. Through accessing the Indian Oceans the PLAN would have the option to abbreviate the distance and reliance on South China Sea and the Strait of Malacca.

In terms of geo-economic interest, Myanmar is significant for China to revive its 'Southwest silk street' from Yunnan territory to Myanmar and toward the west to Bangladesh, India and the West. The linkage with Myanmar could assist China to expand trade with the developing economies of South Asia and India. Besides, Myanmar is significant for China to improve its western advancement methodology. Since 1990s China dispatched its arrangement to build up the western district through the two sub-territorial improvement plans named Greater Mekong Sub-area (GMS) advancement devise and the Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar (BCIM) regional economic cooperation. Specially, Kunming will be benefitted economically through trade and investments by linking up with Myanmar (Mallick,1997:53).

Regarding energy security Myanmar is an essential turn to China. Myanmar isn't just a supply route bypassing the Malacca Strait, additionally an essential organizing point for controlling entrance to Malacca Strait's western practices. The Strait of Malacca is the essential chokepoint in Asia. It is supposed that recently around 85% and 90% of yearly oil moves through this chokepoint. To build bypass alternatives through the Strait of Malacca, China and Myanmar exceptionally made the Myanmar-China gas pipeline in 2013 that extends from Myanmar's ports in the Bay of Bengal to the Yunnan area of China. Moreover, Myanmar is affluent in oil, gas, wood and gemstones. China is putting vigorously in foundation, mining ventures, hydropower dams and oil and-gas pipelines to meet up its growing energy needs. Many Chinese organizations have begun oil and gas investigation ventures in Myanmar and major Chinese investments contain the Sino-Myanmar oil pipeline and the \$ 3.6 billion questionable Myitstone dam (Smith, 2018). China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC), Sinopec and China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC) have also begun oil investigation schemes in Myanmar to access new gas fields. In November 2008, CNPC and the Ministry of Energy of Myanmar consented to an arrangement to construct a USD 2.3 billion raw oil pipeline and USD 2 billion natural gas pipelines and the development began in October 2009 and enclosed with 2015 (Zaho,2011). Myanmar is substantial for China particularly with regards to its Belt and Road Initiative. Chinese organizations are building a profound water business seaport at Kyaukpyu's normal harbor and furthermore

creating extraordinary financial zones and energy plants. This would fulfill China's requirement for energy security with connection to Bay of Bengal and Indian Ocean. Kyauk Phyu is significant for China in light of the fact that the port is the passage point for a Chinese oil and gas pipeline which gives it an alternate track for energy imports from the Middle East evading the Malacca Strait.

Map 2. China-Myanmar Oil and Gas Pipeline



Source: Hilton (2013).China in Myanmar: Implications for the Future, Norwegian Peace Building Resource Centre,Oslo,p.6.

Furthermore border security, arms and drug smuggling, money laundering are vital issues for both countries. China is playing a major role in managing internal ethnic conflicts of Myanmar which greatly influence the border security of China.

In sum, Myanmar and China are maintaining close diplomatic, political and security ties since 1988. Myanmar's geostrategic position at the tri-junction of East Asia, Southeast Asia and South Asia is imperative for China that offers marvelous advantages for the countries of the region. Myanmar is substantial to meet up China's energy needs and to develop its western region.

Overview of Indo- Myanmar Connectivity

Myanmar shares around 1331 km land border with India and it contains around 2276 km long coastline that offers certain portions of the Bay of Bengal, the adjoining areas of the Coco Islands and the Andaman ocean, which is vital for India's strategic considerations (Routary, 2011, p.300). Besides, the four north-eastern states of India named Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur and

Mizoram are topographically touching to Myanmar and Myanmar's ports offer India the short and easy route to India's several north-eastern states. Additionally, Myanmar, being China's neighbor, also offers India a travel course to southern China. Indian policy makers termed Myanmar as "near-neighbor" which represents great opportunity for India.

For India, Myanmar is important to strengthen New Delhi's geopolitical position in Southeast Asia. Myanmar is central to India's "Look East policy" which looks for to develop political, financial and security bonds with ASEAN. India's ambitious for land connectivity to Southeast Asia will be filled through Myanmar. India's most significant connectivity projects are the improvement of Sittwe harbor of Myanmar and Kaladan Multi-Modal scheme to develop bilateral highway. Besides, India, Myanmar and Thailand are jointly developing a 1,360 km highway – aiming to link the three countries and improve connectivity between India and ASEAN states (Slanki, 2018). India's connectivity projects with Myanmar also include the Bangladesh–China–India–Myanmar (BCIM) Economic Corridor. All the countries have agreed to enhance economic cooperation through the BCIM corridor.

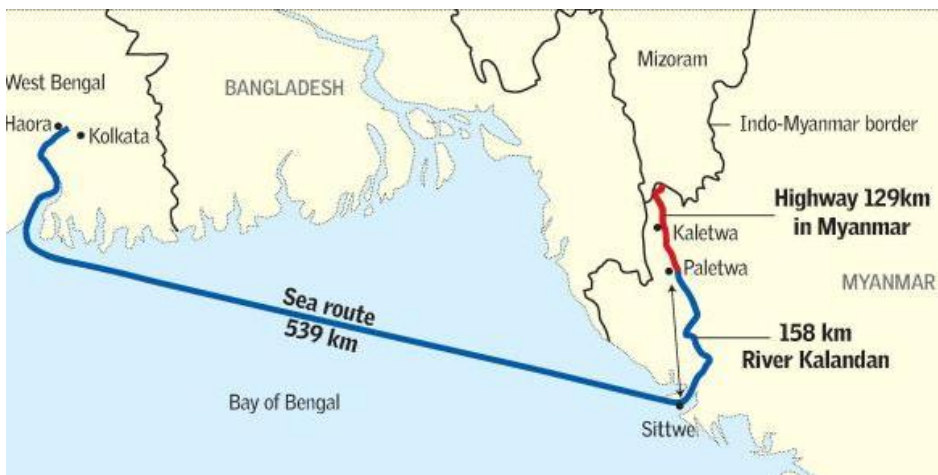
India is one of the largest markets for Burmese exports. In 2010, India was Myanmar's third-largest export market after Thailand and China. Myanmar's exports to India are largely agricultural products and India exports Myanmar steel products and pharmaceuticals. Both the governments of India and Myanmar aimed to achieve \$1 billion and bilateral trade touched USD 1.3 billion by 2017. In terms of foreign investment Indian FDI into Myanmar was \$192 million from the year 1996-2013, 98 percent of which was invested within the oil and Gas segment. The government of India is working sincerely to reinforce trade dealings with Myanmar and set up a gas pipeline. They are continuing cooperation to develop mutual aid in horticulture, broadcast communications, information technology, steel, oil, natural gas and hydrocarbons. Moreover, India may be a net energy dealer due to its disproportion between oil generation and utilization. Myanmar's oil and gas reservation bear great significance for Myanmar for India's future energy requirement. India has been undermined in its endeavors to attain direct entrance to Myanmar due to India's sharp relations with Bangladesh and China's capacity to move more quickly. The national Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Videsh Ltd.(OVL) and Gas Authority of India Ltd. attained a combined 30 percent stake in the A-1 and A-3 blocks off Myanmar's Rakhine coast in 2002 and 2005 respectively. In December 2005, Myanmar rather than India committed to transport gas from these arenas to Petro China under a 30 year contract. In June 2013, Myanmar restored India's trusts with a proposition for a pipeline utilizing the same course as the to-be completed Kaladan Multi-modal Transport Project, from Sittwe port to India's northeast (Lee,2014,p.299). Actually, India seeks to balance the role of China in Asia-pacific region. The main objective of India is to reduce China's growing presence and influence in Myanmar and South Asia. To gain that strategic objective, India

shifted its policy from liberal to realist policy based on strategic interests. From India's perspective, India's engagement with Myanmar will benefit in combating insurgency and instability in its northeast. Besides, closer ties with Myanmar may persuade Naypyidaw to revoke permission for suspected Chinese electronic listening posts on its Bay of Bengal coastline. In spite of improving political ties and bilateral trade between China and India, India still perceives China as a threat to regional supremacy.

Significance for Bangladesh

Myanmar is the major competitor of Bangladesh in utilizing the benefit of geo-strategic location which also offers transit facilities to India, China and other Southeast Asian countries. After the present political reconciliation and economic revisions, Myanmar has become the attraction of foreign investment and attained remarkable economic growth. China has been reinforcing its relations with Myanmar through infrastructural development and politico-military support. The country is being benefited through expanding economic links with Myanmar. China is the biggest investor in Myanmar which has significant contribution in all sectors like energy, mining, tourism, agriculture, communication, trade and commerce etc. If Bangladesh can be integrated into the Sino-Myanmar connectivity, it will improve relations with Myanmar as well as South-east Asian countries. At the same time, India with its "look East policy" is strengthening her relations with Myanmar. In 2008 India and Myanmar signed Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project (KMTT) which will link India's north-eastern Mizoram state with the Sittwe Sea port of Myanmar (Alam, 2018).

Map 3. Kaladan Gateway Project of India in Myanmar



Source: , H.V. (6 March 2019). The Geostrategic location of Myanmar and its Influence on the Rohingya Conflicts, *International Centre for Cultural Studies (ICCS)* <http://iics.blog.nctu.edu.tw/the-geostrategic-location-of-myanmar-and-its-influence-on-the-rohingya-conflict/>

Bangladesh should venture the opportunities with Myanmar following India and China for the sake of national interest. Keeping this in mind Bangladesh should devise a strategy that allows Myanmar to cooperate economically with her.

Strategic Importance of Bangladesh to Regional Powers

In terms of geography Bangladesh is surrounded by India on the east, west and north and by the Bay of Bengal on the south. There is also a slight strip of border with Burma on the southeastern portion. Though Bangladesh does not share border with Nepal and Bhutan, both are very close neighbors of Bangladesh. Around 20-mile wide Indian domain separates Bangladesh's northern border from the nations. Moreover, China is only about 100 miles away from the northwest frontier of Bangladesh. This unique geostrategic location provides opportunity for Bangladesh to play the central role in the region.

Geographically, Bangladesh overlaps between South and Southeast Asia. It has two neighboring states, India and Myanmar. However, the state envisions the Bay of Bengal as the third neighbor, which is one of the crucial wings of the Indian Ocean. As Bangladesh shares the world's fifth-longest land border with India and provides geographic proximity with the economic giant China, it has the vast range of potential to be one of the Asian tigers. In addition, through the maritime victory against Myanmar in 2012 and against India in 2014, the country has attractively restructured her geopolitical landscape.

For India, Bangladesh is vital for its national security as well as political reasons. Bangladesh plays crucial role to enhance the connection between mainland India and its northeast region. India has the only small corridor named Siliguri corridor to communicate with the northeastern part of India. From the period of independence, Bangladesh is being utilized as a transit track by rail and inland waterways between India's two portions which benefits India in terms of fast

Movement of goods and less shipping cost. As a result, India's main strategic aim to take corridor facilities through land and to use Chittagong port of Bangladesh. Moreover, for the fulfillment of Asian highway, Bangladesh plays noteworthy part as it connects India with southeastern states.

In terms of China, China's energy quest has increased the strategic importance of Bangladesh. Bangladesh, due to its geographic position in the Bay of Bengal, has been the beneficiary to China. Bangladesh is imperative for China's 'string of pearls' theory, which simplifies how China intends to wield dominance in the region of the Malacca Strait and Indian Ocean through developmental investment and infrastructural projects around Indian Ocean brim states.

At present China has diverted its attention towards South Asia, a region including one-fourth of the world's population which denotes a profitable market for Chinese products. Bangladesh is the suitable way for China to reach South Asian market and the mainland India. Besides, to motivate the Bangladesh-China-India

Myanmar (BCIM) sub-regional corridor, it is crucial to bring Bangladesh on board. In this regard, China plans to attract Bangladesh through substantial infrastructural investment and developmental projects that has been advertised by experts as China's 'checkbook diplomacy.'

In this context, China seeks to develop the Chittagong port with a view to constructing a parallel pipeline connecting Chittagong-Kyakpiu-Kunming. If India, with US backing, encompasses the Malacca chokepoint through the Andaman Sea, it will impede Chinese assembling base. Subsequently, it is critical for China to acquire impact in the Indian Ocean district through financing infrastructural interest in the waterfront countries. Additionally, China is so determinedly pushing for super ventures, for example, the One Belt One Road (OBOR). Bangladesh is midway arranged along the BCIM Economic Corridor and keeps an essential situation along the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road with Chittagong port as a significant sea turn through the Indian Ocean.

Besides, Bangladesh is the largest recipient of Chinese arms which will make Bangladesh more reliant on China. It is estimated that between 2011 and 2015, 71 percent of Chinese arms exports were to Pakistan, Myanmar, and Bangladesh – states proximate to both India and China. For China, the largest market of selling armaments proximate to India will fulfill two purposes –one is collecting revenue and checking Indian dominance in the region.

In words, in terms of commerce and connectivity Bangladesh is one of the most vital countries for China and India which has great influence in the region.

Significance for Myanmar

Bangladesh has become an important player in the South Asian region. Bangladesh holds an important geopolitical strategic position in the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) of China and important transit route for India's backward northeastern part. Keeping the geo-political significance in mind both China and India are making alliance with Bangladesh. Myanmar should undertake the opportunities with Bangladesh following China and India. Myanmar may utilize the Chittagong port and upcoming deep-sea port for her imported products which will reduce cargo cost. In recent times Bangladesh has experienced remarkable economic growth and amazing development in agro-economic sector that may attract Myanmar to flourish her agro-economic sector. Bangladesh can encourage Myanmar on issues like microcredit, women empowerment and vocational training which can play significant role in promoting human resource development in the remote areas of Myanmar (Alam, 2018). Both the countries can cooperate for developing maritime infrastructure and the construction of deep sea ports which will benefit them to integrate into the sub-region.

Conclusion

The study is aimed to focus on the strategic importance of Bangladesh-Myanmar relationship based on regional implications. The study finds that in terms of geo-political and geo-economic point of view, both Bangladesh and Myanmar are significant to each other. But, the countries have failed to utilize the strategic opportunities whereas the regional powers- India and China are being benefitted through enhancing connectivity with them. Actually, both the countries hold strategic location in the Asia-pacific region. Myanmar is situated at the tri-conjuncture of East Asia, South-east Asia and South Asia and Bangladesh also acts as a gateway between South and South-east Asia. As a result, the strategic policy of India and China overlap in both Myanmar and Bangladesh. Connectivity is the top priority of the countries for their land locked provinces. Although China and India are competing in terms of gaining benefits from Myanmar; there is no conflict or threat to national interest of the countries. Both the countries have paying attention to strengthen relation with the coastal countries- Bangladesh and Myanmar. In this perspective, the study recommends that both Bangladesh and Myanmar should venture the strategic opportunities to reinforce the bilateral relations following China and India. In terms of enhancing connectivity between them, Myanmar will be able to connect with eastern India and other parts of South Asia through Bangladesh. Similarly, Bangladesh will be able to connect itself with China and other South-east Asian countries through using the territory of Myanmar. Finally, establishing mutual trust and confidence through resolving bilateral issues is imperative for strengthening Bangladesh-Myanmar bilateral relationship.

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