ASIAN STUDIES

Jahangirnagar University Journal of Government and Politics

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Asian Studies

Contents

From Liberal Democracy to Global Justice:
A Conceptual Review

Mohammad Nasir Uddin[*]

Abstract: There is an apparent consensus among the Western politicians and policy makers that the central condition for achieving development in the 'third world' countries is to 'institutionalize' liberal democracy which cannot be done without ensuring security. On the other hand, some prominent leaders from Global South as well as critical scholars have claimed that sustainable human development can only be attained by the spread of social welfare, reform of the global governance and eradication of the unequal politics of development. This article gives a deeper look into the conceptual base of these two opposing positions, and argues that the utmost emphasis that is given to universal application of liberal democracy is not well founded, and rather misleading. Instead of placing overarching and politically motivated – emphasis on a particular form of governance, that is, Western liberal democracy, more attention should be directed to bringing about governance systems that might be more in line with the history and culture of a particular nation or region. Instead of wrongly imagining linear connection between democracy and development, more attention and focus should be given to transnational global order. Inequality embedded within the governance structure at global level should be brought under scrutiny with a view to make them more inclusive of developing countries, and thus ways to global justice might be paved.

Introduction

Whereas 'development' as a *mantra* for emancipation of impoverished people has gained almost unequivocal acceptance over the past few decades among the political leaders and development practitioners, what 'development' rally means is still unclear. How the goals of development might be achieved, these questions also remain ever contested. There is an explicit consensus in the Western leadership and international development community that one central condition for international development is the spread of liberal democracy. Others – including leaders from developing countries such as former Venezuelan president Chavez, previous Brazilian president Lula da Silva, or former Malaysian leader Mahathir Mohammad, and critical scholars such as Cox (2002), Payne (2005), and Duffield (2001) – have made the assertion that development can only be achieved by addressing global inequality, by the spread of social welfare, and by reforming the system of transnational governance.

This write-up engages with these two opposing positions: one that attaches insurmountable importance to global practice of liberal democracy, and the other that stresses on the elimination of unequal politics of development and radical reformation of global governance structure. By analysing the constituting elements of these two positions, I try to build an argument that establishment of liberal democracy at the level of nation-states would not necessarily hold the 'only' key to development of

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impoverished people in the contemporary 'globalizing' context. Instead of propagating universalization of liberal democracy what is needed is to make a critical understanding that inequality and injustice are firmly structured at the supra-national level. It also needs to be pointed out that because of its exclusive Western genealogy, liberal democracy cannot be imitated as a 'one size fits all' model of governance across the globe. Given the overwhelming level of inequality at both global and local levels, it is unjustified to give much importance to the question of liberal democracy as it is done by Western leaders and development actors.

There is no doubt that polity and economy are inextricably related. International market structure and global institutions have far reaching impact on the ways in which people around the world access have to resources and enjoy rights. Enterprises to encounter inequality and fight poverty are not conceived and implemented at national or local levels in isolation. When there are cases that show that non-Western models of governance have historically been successful at times to engender increased well-being and greater human security, there are also cases which show that democratization at state level *per se* is not sustainable. After examining the conceptual frameworks, I would argue that instead of propagating a particular brand of liberal democracy in postcolonial countries, more energy and effort should be directed toward critical scrutiny of the institutions of global governance. Radical reorganization and democratization of global institutions should be prioritized. Without creating space for active participation of governments and people from less developed countries in the international politics of development, the system of injustice will prevail.

Questioning Liberal Democracy's Universal Applicability

I will first examine whether liberal democracy and development should be viewed as inextricably interlinked for paving ways to emancipation of people from economic and social sufferings. Is liberal democracy universally applicable as political philosophy and governance system? Is it so that efforts to attain economic progress and ensure human rights embrace to be unviable if formalities and procedures that are at the core of liberalism are not practiced? Drawing on critical review of liberalism as political philosophy, I contemplate to show that such juxtaposition of democracy and development is rather flawed and politically motivated. Uncritical promotion of such simplistic and generalized assumptions is a political act. I also look into the assertion that security needs to be prioritized along with democracy. I first argue that 'security' should better be re-conceptualized as 'human security' for making development more meaningful for masses; and then I highlight how unequal politics of development and discriminating system of global governance are most responsible for the current prevalence of hunger, disease and impoverishment. A total transformation of the ways in which market economy and current global (dis)order is stressed at this point.

The advocates of liberal democracy present the ideological tenets of liberalism and democracy in an unquestionably universal way though critical analysts have shown that liberalism represents a set of essentially Western norms (Thomas 2000). The Western assumptions that underpin liberal democracy are challenged in different ways in diverse countries and contexts of contemporary world. The magnitude of this challenge is more

visible in developing countries; however, the trials that liberal democratic principles go through in the 'home' – that is, in Western contexts – are equally important to be acknowledged.

The forms of uneasiness and conundrum that liberal democracy comes to face in the developing world brings this point to focus that the discourses and propositions associated to liberal political philosophy cannot adequately account for the social, cultural and political diversities that have historically evolved in societies in the developing countries. It has been argued for long that in terms of its conceptual base, the political ideology of liberalism is 'individualistic', and lacks a 'coherent ontology' at its foundation (Gould 1998: 91). Another well-known criticism that the way liberalism draws a line of separation between 'public' and 'private' proves to be too alien to many of the non-Western contexts. It is in the same vain that many commentators (e.g. Leftwich 1993, Khan 2017) have observed that this particular form of democracy is idiosyncratic to the historical developments that took place in Europe and America (Marquand and Nettler 2000). This idiosyncrasy explains why it overplays some of the particular civil rights that are closely linked formation of European modernity.

One feature of liberalism is that it has historically shown intense inclination toward secularism; in fact, separation of religion from domestic and international politics has been one of its main political projects. As Scott observes, it has searched for a cosmopolitan ethic that was originally rooted in the enlightenment rationalism of the West (Scott 2000). Critiques have noted that because of such doctrinal fascination toward secularism, liberal democratic philosophy has failed, and continues to fail, to understand the public character of religion (Asad 1999: 178). That failure becomes most apparent in the contexts of developing world and, in consequence, liberalism faces multifaceted challenges in Oriental value and morality dominated countries. Liberalism is not prepared to address the question: What are the ways in which to account for and accommodate dominant public presence of religion?

In the contexts of developing countries liberal assumptions comes under scrutiny in different other ways. The received historical wisdom that private world of religion has to be separated from the public domain of politics is not practically applicable in many of the Asian and African countries. In fact, the imagined strict disjointing of 'the religious' and 'the secular' is contradicted in the historical record even in the western context – a vivid exploration of this is made in many of the analytical pieces placed in a collected volume (van der Veer and Lehmann (1999).

Since intermixture of religion and politics presents an unsolvable puzzle for the proponents of liberal democracy, there has been renewed interest among scholars in recent decades to uncover connections between religion and politics in different cultures. Talal Asad summarizes a widely held view, when he notes that "the Enlightenment's view of the place of religion in modern life needs to be revised" (Asad 1999: 178). Secularization theory once made the claim that religion would become increasingly marginalized or privatized with the advancement of modernity. By now it has become clear that such hope was never going to be materialized in the developing world – this is

evident from the emergence of religious movements and the phenomenon of political Islam in particular (Ibid.).

'Individual' is at the heart of liberal conception of democracy – all versions of liberalisms are individualistic. The basic proposition is that individual should be the main focus of moral theory and of social, economic and political institutions. Liberalism places importance upon the intrinsic and ultimate value of each individual. In fact, individual is prioritized over society (Ramsay 1997: 4). Such pre-eminence of individual subject in liberal philosophy has been subject to continuous criticism. Spencer (2007: 9) summarizes the view: "The universal subject of post-Enlightenment political theory, we have been repeatedly told in recent years, is not universal at all – 'he' is gendered, white, European, heterosexual – and the appeal of universalism conceals the way in which marks of culture, race, gender, class, all work to exclude certain people from power". In spite of all such criticisms liberal democracy has not been able to substantially move away from its focus on individualism.

This dominant presence of 'individual' raises the key problem what Gould (1998: 91) calls, the lack of a 'coherent ontology' at its philosophical foundation. Gould has characterized this as 'social ontology'. This is what Charles Taylor has criticized as 'atomistic ontology of liberalism' (in Thomas 2000). Ontology refers to a conception of the nature of the entities and relations that constitute social life. What is meant by lack of 'social ontology' or dominance of 'atomistic ontology'? To put it simplistically, liberal political philosophy lack adequate social ontology means that it fails to properly conceptualize the nature of the individual or person and the social relations that exist among them. Because of this failure of conception this philosophy also lacks an adequate and proper conception of the realities that are constituted by such social relations, institutions and their processes. In place of any 'social ontology', the theory of liberal political democracy is presupposed by 'abstract individualism' – what Charles Taylor would call 'atomistic ontology': each individual is understood as an independent ego, seeking to satisfy its own interests or to pursue its happiness. This abstraction 'does not account for the differences among individuals that constitute them as the distinctive beings as they are' (Gould 1998: 94).

This ontology fails to take into account the fact that individuals, in reality, live social lives – they are not separated, but rather they become the individuals that they are through their social relations. This failure becomes so crucial in the context of non-Western countries. Individuals are related to each other not only externally, social relations are fundamentally internal. Moreover, the conception of individuals as isolated and self-seeking does not account for the fact that they often have common purposes which are not reducible to aggregations of their separate self-interests.

Here we can draw on some of the discussions made by Charles Taylor in relation to liberal conception of 'self' while we also can also look into his 'social thesis' including his conception of 'common good' (Taylor 1984, 1985). Following Taylor's analysis, it is argued that Liberal politics not only overemphasize the idea of self and its interest, it also neglects the social precondition necessary for the effective fulfillment of those interests. Taylor (Taylor 1985; also discussed in Kymlicka 1991 and Sandel 1984) claims that

since many liberal political theories are based on 'atomism', these envision individuals as self-sufficient outside of society and hence not in need of the cultural context of choice in order to exercise their 'moral powers' (e.g. to choose a conception of the good life). Taylor argues that such atomistic ontology of liberalism ignores the principals of belonging and obligation necessary to sustain any viable conception of society (Thomas 2000). For him, the liberal individual is 'concerned purely with his individual choices … to the neglect of the matrix in which such choices can be open or closed, rich or meager' (Taylor 1985: 207). Taylor argues instead for the 'social thesis', which says that these capacities can only be developed and exercised in a certain kind of society, with certain kind of social and cultural surrounding.

Another important feature of liberalism, which Charles Taylor feels inadequate in terms of people's engagement, is its insistence on 'neutral political concern'. According to him such a politics of neutral concern has to be abandoned for what he calls 'politics of common good' (Taylor 1986). For him since liberal politics does not pursue a politics of common good it fails to involve civic participation. Hence, participation has less meaning in liberal regimes because of its disconnection from the collective pursuit of shared ends. Kymlicka has argued in the same line and noted that "(t)he lack of participation is an effect of the loss of a politics of the common good" (Kymlicka 1991: 85). In developing world where pursuing of 'common good' has traditionally been one of the defining features of societal life, liberal democracy finds itself at odds since it cannot come up with proper conception that can account for 'common good'.

Charles Taylor's criticism of liberal democracy is generally understood to be related with the popular debate between 'liberals' and 'communitarians' in Western context. In fact, the criticisms of communitarians unveils many of the shortcomings of liberal tradition that are relevant for making better sense of the challenges it faces in developing countries. Communitarians argue that – also, Taylor has argued in his discussions – liberals do not recognize the moral virtues of communities. Communitarians highlight the importance of cultivating such values in the society though they too fail to acknowledge the ways in which religious traditions and communities in different contexts nurture and promote them in diverse ways. This is in this conjunction that Thomas (2000) points the concerns in more precise way: "Where does the sense of belonging and obligation come from, how is it nurtured, encouraged and supported?" – Liberalism's political philosophy is not adequately prepared to address this question, and it is because of this failure that it faces strong predicaments in dealing with challenges put forward by religion and other traditional social systems in developing countries contexts. In opposition to such failure of liberalism to give recognition to and make use of collective values, beliefs and ideas, what is striking about religions and religious traditions is that they are already in very good position to encourage common values, and they also draw on such values.

This is in effect a paramount dilemma for liberal democracy as to how to motivate and organize people to participate in its practice in collective way whereas in theory it constantly refers to 'individualistic' achievements. It has been shown by many that while 'individuals' live their lives in shared ways, liberal doctrine's persisting attachment toward individualistic thinking and policy can cause serious alienation. In course of such alienation, people gradually turn away from liberal discourses and practices. Sometimes

they turn to religiosity, sometimes to cosmological or metaphysical explanations, sometimes to informality and traditional ways of organizing – in many cases liberal democratic practices thus prove to be rather counter-productive.

Another significant consequence of the flawed assumptions that underline liberal democracy is that it fails to account for critical issues such as 'identity' which have become so important across the globe, though in different senses (UNDP 2004). There have been growing demands for people's inclusion in society, for respect of their ethnicity, religion and language. Francis Fukayama (2006: 6) notes that "modern identity politics springs from a hole in the political theory underlying modern liberal democracy". For him this hole is related to the degree of political deference that liberal societies owe to groups rather than to individuals. "The line of modern political theory that begins in some sense with Machiavelli and continues through Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and the American Founding Fathers, understands the issue of political freedom as one that pits the state against individuals rather than groups", Fukayama extends his observation (Fukayama 2006: 6). This clearly highlights the ambivalence of liberal democracy with regard to identity politics and issues of collective movements. Such ambivalence proves that this tradition of thinking is not well-equipped to address the complex interplay that often takes place among religion, ethnicity and nationalism in developing countries.

Liberal political theory thus fails to explain and account for 'identity', 'plurality', 'multiculturalism' etc., which have emerged as pertinent issues in contemporary contexts. One of the key causes for such failure is that these complex phenomena cannot be understood in isolation from the larger question as to how these societies organize themselves. In understanding the organization of these societies one has to recognize the central importance of religion – ironically, making such recognition contradicts the basic assumptions of both liberalism and modernity.

Liberal political philosophy also fails to adequately account for 'culture' – every culture is a system of meaning through which people make sense of themselves and their identity. This system of meaning and interpretation is again significantly informed by the religious values, beliefs, practices and rituals. This we can relate with what Charles Taylor has criticized as modern theories failure to 'provide a basis for men's identification with their society' (Taylor 1984: 191). This is in extension to this failure that liberal theories and practices are faced with challenges of cultural and religious pluralism. Although this challenge is most often articulated in the debate over 'multiculturalism' in North American or European countries, it is really a global issue: 'how can liberal democracy be constructed in polities embedded in non-Western cultural and religious traditions rather than the enlightenment rationalism of the west?' (Thomas 2000).

Another problematic assumption and practice of liberal democracy has been the practices of homogenization. Taylor has observed that, 'modern societies have moved towards much greater homogeneity and greater interdependence, so that partial communities lose their autonomy and to some extent their identity' (Taylor 1984: 193-194). He goes further to comment that homogenization increases minority alienation and resentment.

Liberal democracy's other perils come from its inclination toward materialistic economism and belief in modernization. The promises of modernization have failed to deliver and the dream of science and technology conquering every aspect of human life has already been shattered. This creates a significant vacuum which is taken up in most cases by the re-emergence of widespread faith and spirituality. For example, with such failures there might be situations where recognition of human imperfection may be important and religions bring in that recognition (Alkire 2006). In Western contexts liberal theorists are now searching for 'civil society' and 'social capital' (Putnam 1993) which again proves that it is in fact approaching the conclusion that it cannot do with its obsession with individualism. Religion could be conceived as providing us with the 'capacity to aspire' as Appadurai (2004) argues it with reference to culture.

What is important to note is that liberal democracy's inadequacies does not necessarily imply that 'religion' and 'democracy' are entirely incompatible (Esposito and Voll 1996). Democracy has always been a contested philosophy – we need to continue this contestation and go beyond any monolithic version. Adherence to a monolithic version causes failure to accommodate achievements of different civilizations. 'Indeed, the very idea of democracy, in the form of participatory public reasoning, has appeared in different civilizations at different periods in world history.' (Sen 2004: 21). We have not reached a phase of human history where we can declare 'the end of history' (Fukayama 1992) or can celebrate the triumphant achievement of any particular political philosophy. The assumptions of liberal political philosophy might require significant overhauling; the contents of these assumptions need to be subject to continuous examination and re-examination. Human endeavour cannot cease searching for understandings and practices that would be accommodative to religious and cultural pluralism greater than ever before.

Despite these basic philosophical limitations, liberal democracy – as a form of government – might be adopted in a developing country given the society makes its own choice for it. However, in our current debate, what is more important is the point that the relationship between liberal democracy and development are unduly highlighted by political leadership of the north (Bolton, 2000; Tsai, 2006) – when there are many discontents and contradistinctions with respect to the 'inter-relationship' of the two, in most of the cases it is presented in very simplistic way to show that liberal democracy is the panacea for solving whatever problems people in the developing world face.

The constraints that the developing countries currently experience in their journey toward development are mostly related to the situations and processes which are beyond their territorial boundary. Claiming that spread of democracy would solve the problems of these countries is a wrong representation of the whole scenario. Such claims invoke the assumption that the people of these countries themselves are solely responsible for their sufferings –they could overcome all the odds, if they could practice democracy! Such formulation conceals the role of international actors, and thus 'depoliticizes' the unequal role that global institutions and system of governance play (Cerney, 1999).

The assumptions underlining the importance of liberal democracy in relation to development are problematic in many other ways. In today's globalized world the reality is that a democratic state does not enjoy the autonomy or capabilities to pursue policies

that further the interests of the people; the state is rather constrained by external factors - the democratic state is therefore a limited (Hutchings, 1996; Evans, 2000). The old wisdom that governments remain in control of state borders cannot be sustained under conditions of globalization, where economic flows, ideas, cultural exchanges, social interactions and political interconnectedness make state borders ever more penetrable (Held & McGrew, 1993; 1999); transnational decision making increasingly takes precedence over national decision-making processes. This is evident in the growing intensity of global economic, social and political interconnectedness that threatens the capacity of the state in its role as the guardian of the 'common good' and the national interest. In the wake of globalization, international organizations assume many of the tasks previously undertaken by the state, raising questions concerning the territorial state as the appropriate community for democratization (Held & McGrew 1999).

Another feature of globalization that challenges the dominant conception of democracy is the growing economic power of transnational corporations (TNCs). In the scramble to attract inward investment, the demands of TNCs often take precedence over the needs of the community as a whole. (Evans & Hancock, 1997; Evans, 2000). Furthermore, the need to create and maintain the stable conditions that attract investment often leads a country to accept the constraints imposed by international financial institutions, without regard for the suffering that this might bring to large sections of the community. Structural adjustment programmes are often cited in this regard (Thomas, 1998).

This is against such reality that Johansen comments, 'If the democratic state is no longer fully accountable to the people, if the state is losing its autonomy then the universal acclaim that democracy enjoys at this historic moment does not mean that all is well with democracy' (Johansen, 1993: 213). It is clear that the claim about positive relationship between development and liberal democracy need to be taken with some grain of suspicion and dealt with greater caution.

As this stage we can raise the question as to why some quarters so vigorously promote the point that there is a close relationship between liberal democracy and development. Many argue that these are fully rhetorical claims and promoted for fulfilling defined goals. After cold-war in the changed context the threat of social unrest, which would disrupt the supply of raw materials, restrict investment opportunities and severely damage prospects for exploiting low cost labour, cannot be avoided by using coercive policing and military suppression (Mahbubani, 1992); the promotion of democracy in such context is mostly concerned with the need to create an appropriate global order that provides a stable environment for future economic planning and investment (Evans, 2001).

It has also been argued that democracy is thus used as a form of intervention (Cox, 1997; Pickering and Peceny, 2006). Its intent is to pre-empt either progressive reform or revolutionary change. Beyond seeking to demobilize popular forces, it also seeks to legitimize the status quo. The paradox of such externally imposed democracy is that a civilianised conservative regime can pursue painful and even repressive social and economic policies with more impunity and with less popular resistance than can an openly authoritarian regime (Gills *et al.*, 1993: 8). In this view, democracy and human rights are of limited interest when social unrest threatens the smooth continuation of the

practices of globalization. Thus, questions concerning accountability are rarely asked by decision makers when the maintenance of the global political economy is at stake. The effort to promote the dominant version of democracy has more to do with maintaining an order that serves particular economic interests, rather than the interests of those whose human rights and security are threatened.

While democracy at national level, thus, proves to introduce limited impact for achieving development in greater sense, what is needed is making the decisions and actions of transnational actors democratically accountable (Cox, 1997). Former Secretary General of the Commonwealth Shridath Ramphal has noted the point rhetorically, 'the democracy idea has a larger reach than national frontiers. Democracy at the national level but authoritarianism in the global homeland – these are contradictions in terms' (Ramphal, 1992).

Liberal Democracy and Security

The relationship between liberal democracy and security might also be better understood if put in this global context. In fact, the emphasis upon liberal democracy and juxtaposing the question of security with that emphasis is also a historical understanding – it is described as a characteristic of the post-Cold War widening the meaning of security. Duffeld (2004) has eloquently explored the process as to how development and security became merged. However, if we move beyond the conventional usage of the term and take up the greater conception of 'human security' then it becomes clear that the issues to be taken into account have to be broadened (Thomas 1998; 2000).

If we relate 'human security' with development, it becomes inevitable that the widening gap between rich and poor be considered as the foremost threat for humanity: we need to focus more upon the ever widening inequalities – we have to do in term of global politics of development and global governance. According to the 1998 United Nations Development Report, the top 20% of the world's highest income counties account for 86% of total private consumption, while the poorest 20% account for a mere 1.3%. Furthermore, the richest 20% consume 45% of all meat and fish, compared to the poorest 20% who consume 5%, and 58% of total energy, compared to 4% by the poorest 20% (UNDP, 1998).

Human insecurity results directly from existing power structures that determine who enjoys the entitlement to security and who does not. Such structures can be identified at several levels, ranging from the global, through the regional, the state and finally the local level. Regarding the future prospects for human security, there is a very simple but hugely important question as to whether the mechanisms in place to tackle poverty and to promote wider development are adequate to the task. Emancipation from oppressive power structures, be they global, national or local in origin and scope, is necessary for human security.

Global Order and Inequality

Global governance institutions play crucial role in attaining human security needs of the citizens. A consideration of human security in the contemporary era requires us to

consider humanity embedded not simply within discrete sovereign states, but within a global social structure, the capitalist world economy.

While focusing on the global scenario of development, the issues that appear to be of foremost relevance are related with the nature and consequences of globalization. The questions that have come to the fore quite frequently in recent decades include: What has gone wrong during seven decades of development whereas half of the world's population lives in extreme poverty? What role should the Bretton Woods institutions play in a world haunted by the specter of contagious financial crises? Is the United Nations (UN) system still relevant in the current conjuncture of United States unilateralism? Between superpower disagreements and popular protests, is the World Trade Organization (WTO) viable?

It was after the Second World War that a coherent international economic policy framework was brought into existence (Vines & Gilbert, 2004). However, many factors have dramatically changed the social, economic, and political landscapes at global level during last two decades. In response to this changed situation 'the post-war multilateral institutions have either not evolved fast enough (in matters such as debt relief or human rights) or have gone beyond their original mandates (in international lending for national institutional reforms, for example)' (Chan, 2007: 5).

Since the early 1980s, the World Bank has become an active agent of the Washington Consensus (pact between the US Congress, senior members of the US administration, economic agencies of the US government, the Federal Reserve Board, think tanks, and international financial institutions). At the World Bank, the Consensus was embodied in structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) which, Stiglitz argues, they became "ends in themselves, rather than means to more equitable and sustainable growth" (2002: 53). It became gradually clear that SAPs (dubbed by movement activists as Suffering for African People) were a social disaster. The cumulative result of structural reforms has been a rise in inequality in both developed and developing countries.

The multiple criticisms that have been made against the inherited global governance structure can be grouped into three interrelated concerns (Chan, 2007): (a) Inefficiency and ineffectiveness (in part due to an overlap of responsibility); (b) Democratic deficits (power beyond mandates, non-transparency, and lack of participation parity); and (c) Market fundamentalism (ignoring human development, freedoms, and the environment).

Now there is agreement among the Bretton Woods institutions, the UN agencies, and civil society that the current governance structure is inefficient and ineffective, even though the definition and focus on 'inefficiency' differ among various actors and proposals (Annan, 1997; World Bank, 1997; Camdessus, 2004). For some, however, the problem lies beyond streamlining bureaucracy. For many critics within and outside the UN system, the crisis in the current multilateral governance structure cannot be resolved merely by the internal structural reforms of individual institutions to make them more efficient, but a complete overhaul of the entire system along the principles of equitable representation, accountability and redress, transparency, and subsidiary/ devolution of power (Woods, 2001).

Another example of the failure of international organizations in pursuing development is likely to be the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In 2000, in a Millennium Declaration signed by 189 countries, the UN General Assembly launched eight Millennium Development Goals with time-bound targets (by 2015). Laudable though the goals, targets, and recommendations for action are, the approach is plagued with problems. It does not necessarily follow that it seeks greater influence for UN agencies and the governments of less developed countries in the decision-making process on aid or that it empowers certain UN agencies to take a leading, coordinating role on aid and development (Manor, 2005). Already some monitoring reports show that the MDG in the areas of health, child and maternity mortality, and basic sanitation, particularly in Africa, are unlikely to be achieved (World Bank, 2004; Bond 2006).

Besides the above mentioned dilemmas, current global institutions for development are failing to address many of the issues of critical importance to developing countries, including international labour mobility, international taxation of capital income, financing mechanism to compensate marginalized countries and social groups, and a mechanism for ensuring policy coherence among industrialized countries and a consequent reduction in the exchange rate volatility among major currencies (UN, 2005).

Conclusion

From the discussion presented above, it becomes clear that while the root causes of persistent inequality and poverty are embedded in the global structures and dynamics, and while liberalization policies and market irregularities have been producing many asymmetries, it is not of much use to keep focusing on exercise of liberal democracy at state level in an isolated and de-linked way. What is needed is addressing the greater causes of increasing inequalities – examining and eliminating the far-reaching asymmetrical results that emanate from the policies and actions of global institutions, market mechanism and the systems of trade and finance. The structures of global governance are to be subjected to radical, participatory and living democratic processes. In addition to human rights, equity, jobs, livelihood, employment, and food security, the principles of living democracy, economic and cultural diversity, and subsidiarity should form integral part of global governance process. In place of upholding the 'national interest' of powerful nations or corporations, the global politics of development should incorporate the principal of shared living and mutual respect – peoples' identity and distinctiveness should be recognized and celebrated. A fundamental recognition and representation of the majority developing world as equal partners in global governance should no more remain a dream, and such representation should mean that pathways to global justice are sought more earnestly.

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Functioning of the Union Parishad- An Analysis from Democratic Perspective

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Abstract: Democracy has become the legitimate demand of all local communities. Available literature suggests that, today more than 70 countries in various parts of the world are in the process of implementing political and administrative reforms aimed at decentralizing and strengthening local governance. In Bangladesh, Union Parishad (UP) is perceived as one of the basic institutions of the central government that is dedicated to strengthen democracy by engaging rural community into the decision making and development process. A local government entity like Union Parishad is considered to be the significant breeding ground for democracy. Over the years, Union Parishad is struggling to make this public institution more democratic through different pro-people initiatives. It is apparent that, colonial mindset of the locally elected representatives; absence of capable elected representatives; practice of party driven elections and absence of unanimous elections without political interference; highest scope of the intervention and control of state government; absence of a strong political will for the effectiveness of the democratization within Union Parishad; fragile economic condition; absence of visionary leadership; gender inequality in mainstreaming political parties; patron-client relationship result in impediment towards persuasive democratic drive of Union Parishad. The paper is concluded with couple of important recommendations to make Union Parishad more vibrant and democratic for the sake of comprehensive development in rural Bangladesh.

Keywords: Democracy, Local Government, Union Parishad, Patron-Client Relations, Colonial Mindset and Political Parties

Introduction

Democratization is a popular theme of the modern world. It is widely accepted as a symbol of good governance as well as an indicator of the promotion of human development leading to sustainable development. Indeed, a democracy works when all people including the most marginalized ones participate in the process of governance, have capability to ask questions and seek accountability. For the developing countries, it is an indispensable pre-condition for sustainable development. According to Bryce, "the best school for democracy and the best guarantee for its success in the practice of Local Self Government". It is generally recognized that the local institutions constitute the school for democracy (Bryce, 1950). Success of democracy largely depends on the successful working of Local Government (LG). National democracy will be successful only when the local self-government functions effectively. It can be said that without a sound democratic system at the basic levels, democratic form of Government cannot have firm roots at the apex; local self-government helps people understand democratic spirit and values, the art of managing things for themselves and ultimately the democratic way of life. Bangladesh is a newly independent unitary state; it achieved her independence in

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1971 through a nine month long liberation struggle .therefore a strong local government is needed to engage people with the governance of this state.

Local Government is considered as a viable institution for socio-economic development at the sub-national and grassroots levels (Ball, 1977) .It is an integral part of the central government of a country, recognized or created under law for the management of local affairs of human settlement with geographic boundaries. In fact Local Government is legally established institutional arrangement for consolidating local democracy, promoting pro-people and participatory developmental process at the grassroots. Capable local institution is deemed as one of the fundamental pre-requisites for sustainable development of the country, which can share and promote people's urge, aspiration and wisdom (Tofail, 1999).Bangladesh is continuously struggling to build the country as democratic and developed nation since its inception as an independent state. Several political ups and downs, introduction of one party system, military rules, and irresponsible competition of political parties to capture power have placed the journey of democracy of the country at stake. The political problems that Bangladesh is suffering is not rooted in the constitution, rather it is totally political. Even, this political culture has jeopardized the journey towards democratization of the local government structure of Bangladesh. The paper attempts to examine the current practices of democracy within the purview of Union Parishad and what sort of problems Union Parishad is facing while upholding democratic approach in its functioning. The paper also strives to know conquer Union Parishad could uphold the spirit of democracy in every course of action for the welfare of the local community.

Democracy: Conceptual Clarifications

Democratization is the transition to a more democratic political regime. It may be the transition from an authoritarian regime to a full democracy, a transition from an authoritarian political system to a semi-democracy or transition from a semi-authoritarian political system to a democratic political system. The outcome may be consolidated (as it was for example in the United Kingdom) or democratization may face frequent reversals (as it has faced for example in Argentina). Different patterns of democratization are often used to explain other political phenomena, such as whether a country goes to a war or whether its economy grows. Democratization itself is influenced by various factors, including economic development, history, and civil society. There is considerable debate about the factors which affect or ultimately limit democratization. A great many things, including economics, culture, and history, have been cited as impacting on the process. Democracy is all about being able to make informed choices. For example, if there are three political parties in an election, one can make a choice from the individual candidates, and/or from the programmes and positions of the parties they represent. In order to make genuinely informed choices, one needs to be able to:

o   Engage meaningfully in open dialogue and debate;

o   Access to relevant and objective information so that your views are informed;

o   Perceive that your participation in the debate and subsequent decision-making has value feeling safe;

o Make a free decision without suffering or fearing harm to citizen or their family (Faizullah, 1987)

Amartya Sen, a Nobel Prize-winning economist from India, provides this view of how these elements combine: 'We must not identify democracy with majority rule. Democracy has complex demands, which certainly include voting and respect for election results but it also requires the protection of liberties and freedoms, respect for legal entitlements and the guaranteeing of free and uncensored distribution of news and fair comment. Even elections can be deeply defective if they occur without the different sides getting an adequate opportunity to present their respective cases or without the electorate enjoying the freedom to obtain news and to consider the views of competing protagonists(Sen, 1999).

More than a form or system of government, democracy has come to assume the status of a fashionable nomenclature. As fashion is a fast changing concept, so are the meanings and contents of democracy in reality, if not always in theory. Allan Ball has identified the following features of liberal democratic system: (Ball, 1977).

- There is more than one political party competing for political power;
- The competition for power is open, not secretive and is based on established and accepted forms of procedure;
- Entry and recruitment to positions of political power are relatively open;
- There are periodic elections based on universal franchise;
- Pressure groups are able to operate to influence government decision. Associations such as trade unions and other voluntary organizations are not subject to close governmental control;
- Civil liberties, such as freedom of speech, religion, freedom from arbitrary arrest, are recognized and protected within the political system. This assumes that there is substantial amount of independence and freedom from government control of the mass media, i.e., radio, television, newspapers;
- There is some form of separation of powers in other words a representative assembly has some form of control over the executive and the judiciary is independent of both executive and legislature.

Democracy is the single governance framework that is consistent with a comprehensive perspective on human development. Democratic governance means that:

- People's human rights and fundamental freedoms are respected, allowing them to live with dignity;
- People have a say in decisions that affect their lives;
- People can hold decision-makers accountable;
- Inclusive and fair rules, institutions and practices govern social interactions;
- Women are equal partners with men in the private and public spheres of life and decision-making;

- People are free from discrimination based in race, ethnicity, class, gender or any other attribute;
- The needs of the future generations are reflected in current policies;
- Economic and social policies are responsive to people's needs and aspirations;
- Economic and social policies aim at eradicating poverty and expanding the choices that all people have in their lives (Sharma,1973)

Current State of Functioning of the Union Parishad: Critical Analysis

Over the past three decades the developing world has seen increasing devolution of political and economic power to local governments. Decentralization is considered an important element of participatory democracy and, along with privatization and deregulation, represents a substantial reduction in the authority of national governments over economic policy (British Government of India, 1930). It is manifest that, central government have allocated some degree of authority to local government but a comprehensive set of indicators that must also take account of institutions for decision-making and politics at this level is lacking. Local Government institutions are the significant unit, for the promotion of democracy. They are committed to assist the people for learning democratic values in many respects. Union Parishad, the lowest tier of the Local Government of Bangladesh provides the rural people opportunities to taste the fruit of freedom and participation. The people generally are more interested in the participation in Union Parishad bodies. They can directly participate in the local bodies in large scale. Union Parishad also works as a training complex of the national leaders. Ernest observes, "UP offers many excellent opportunities for the training of the man and women who may later lead the country in bigger affairs of the national and world politics" (Newman,1968). Success of democracy largely depends on the successful functioning of Union Parishad. While addressing at the first National Conference of Local Government, Nehru, the late prime minister of India said, "LG is and must be the basis of true system of democracy. The democracy may not succeed until it is built on the foundation from below".

Local Government is educative both for the electors and the elected. Educative value largely depends upon the spirit of the local self-governing institutions. Political education is the major part of Local Government. If Local Government does not work democratically, the central government can never be democratic. Democracy at the Centre can work in a better way only if there is a corresponding system of democracy at the local level. No national democracy will have sound footing without grass root democracy. Discussing about the importance of Local Government in democracy, C.D.H Cole has opined that democracy is nothing unless it means, in the last resort, letting the people have their own way, not only in the mass, by means of an aggregate vote in a nation-wide scale, but also in their lesser groups and societies of which the great societies are made up. So, practice of democracy is the part and parcel of Local Government of any state. Local Government is an integral part of the central government in Bangladesh. Local Government contributes to the strengthening of democratic culture in number of ways. The stability, performance and structural continuity of Local Government are

mostly dependent upon the policy and stability of the government at the Centre. Despite the long existence of Local Government in Bangladesh, till today it is confronted with some chronic problems. As a result it could not play effective role to promote democracy. Moreover; these constraints regarding Local Government impinge upon the success of democracy in Bangladesh. The historical account of Local Government of Bangladesh shows that the successive governments felt obliged to establish some kind of the local government structure in order to mobilize support of the rural communities in their favor through providing a little bit of welfare measures. Hence, Local Government could not function properly to provide opportunities for the people irrespective of party affiliation to participate in the development activities of it.

The colonial pattern of administration in Local Government is characterized by elitist and alienated nature. Administrative officials working at different level are mainly bureaucratic in orientation and alienated from the people. Therefore, people cannot take part in different activities of Local Government properly/ actively in Bangladesh. The most serious obstacles in the way of democratic education by Local Government remain the weakness of its socio-economic base. The non-egalitarian economic structure trends to control the local bodies by pro-partied class. They often tend to suit their class interest and purposes. As a result, Local Government cannot render proper services to the people at local level. Beside, general people do not dare to work with Local Government for the presence of local elite. Factional attitude of the people is responsible for the less effectiveness of Local Government in Bangladesh. In rural Bangladesh, there are bitter experiences regarding factional politics that jeopardizes the successful working of Local Government (Moksuder, 2000).

It remains as a major impediment of proper popular participation in local level elections. Such attitude pushes the loser candidates and their supporters in a conflicting situation in post local election. As a result, they do not intend to cooperate with the winner candidates and for that the very functioning of elected council remains problematic. Politico-administrative contradictions often disrupt the very functioning of Local Government units. Administrative wing of the Union Parishad often expects that political leaders should work under their supervision due to their technical expertise. On the other hand, local representatives claim that they are able to work for the development of the people as they can understand problems and find out Union Parishad and therefore people representatives cannot serve the interest of local people.

What we have observed in Bangladesh, local and central government have had a fractious relationship in the past; highly centralized control of budgets and a short-term view of spending priorities have not made for a healthy working atmosphere. While local government has been keen to shift the balance of power for some time, the radical cuts to council funding due to the Government's austerity programme have now made change a necessity. This called for a complete transformation of how funding is distributed from Whitehall to councils including giving local areas greater control of how public money is spent. In fact, local government is not a government system. It is merely public administration system that exists at the lowest level of the state or country. Local government or local bodies act according to the legislation or directions of the higher

level of government or central government. Different countries have a different form of local government such as district, city, township and village council.

The local government system is the best administration system as it relieves the pressure from the central or sub-national government in completing the task, relating to development or welfare of the society. In rural Bangladesh, local government is a vital organization for managing local economy and development and consolidating the democracy at the sub-national and grassroots level of any country. It is an integral part of the central government of a country, recognized or created under law for the management of local affairs of a human settlement, promoting pro-people and participatory development at the field level. Capable local institution is deemed as one of the fundamental pre-requisites for sustainable development of the country, which can share and promote people's urge, aspiration and wisdom.

As we know, major sources of revenue of the Union Parishad are Property tax, Revenues and Grants are depending on all taxes, rates and fees imposed on the citizen in accordance with law; the profit and rent from the property under the control of or managed by the Union Parishad; any fund collected under the Ordinance or other temporary law; funds received from any individual, organization, or local authority; funds received from the income of trusts managed by the Union Parishad; In addition, despite the chairman of the Union Parishad is to be the ex-officio chair of the local market management committee, this post persistently lies outside of his de facto jurisdiction which greatly hampers revenue generation. Absence of effective financial management has made the Union Parishad a weaker institution. Also traditional totalitarian tendency of many Union Parishad chairmen creates problems in decision-making, project formulation and financial management.

Central grant is primarily provided to undertake development and maintenance activities in the shape of ADP block grant and special block grant. Budget preparation is done in a traditional manner. The account section in discussion with the Union Parishad Chairman and Councilors selects projects and allocates funds. The revenue estimates are prepared by totaling arrears and current demand for taxes and by increasing other revenue by a certain percentages. Union Parishad is legally required to have a balanced budget. The municipal expenditures are thus conditioned by the level of resources available. In the Union Parishad area where the receipts are very low, the expenditures are also low. These low expenditures have a crucial impact on the quality and nature of services provided by the municipality. Open budget meetings are held where the budget is shared with the citizenry. Only the local influential people are invited. Common people of Union Parishad have little idea about this practice. Union Parishad members are not aware about the audit report or objections. Copy of the audit report, annual financial statement, tax assessment or annual budget are not displayed or shared with wider population of the Union Parishad.

Even though local government bodies are well situated to incorporate a wide scope of people's participation, the reality is very different. The issue of ensuring accountability and transparency of government finances is a core problem, especially at the local level. Various factors are responsible for an undemocratic mode of government, including

centralized authority, lack of financial resources, improper policy formulation and implementation, as well as an apathy of the people and the government. Ensuring accountability and transparency of local level finance are critical elements for ensuring people's participation in local development. Accountability is a relationship between an actor and a forum, in which the actor has an obligation to explain and to justify his or her conduct, the forum can pose questions and pass judgment, and the actor may face consequences. Accountability entails government at all levels to be held responsible, by both its people and its elected bodies. Accountability also calls for a strict separation of local budgets and entrepreneurial activities at local level.

However, in order to hold government accountable, we also need transparency. Transparency refers to norms and practices for legally legitimate centers of powers to disclose information about their decisions, actions and states of affairs to the public. A transparent public financial accounting policy makes it possible to determine what the government has done and to compare planned with actual financial operations. Transparency denotes free access to governmental political and economic activities and decisions. In Bangladesh, most fiscal decisions are controlled at the national level. The share of local revenues and expenditure in the total public budget is very low. During the last few decades, the share of all Union Parishads total revenues amounted to about one to three percent of the Central Government's total revenue.

Traditional budgets are based on the organizational structure, more specifically, identification of those officers within the government who are held accountable for spending money against budgets local official and people representative of local government. This feature of budgets applies whether budgets are highly aggregated or whether there is significant devolution of budgets—the organizational structure locates the budgets. Budgets tend also to focus on one year, the coming fiscal year of Union Parishad. In local finance, traditional budgets are based on the organizational structure, more specifically, the identification of those officers within the government who are held accountable for spending money against budgets, such as Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) and the representatives of local government.

Budgets tend to focus on one year, the coming fiscal year of Union Parishad. This annual request embodies another common feature of budgets: the request for the coming year is justified in terms of marginal changes from the previous year's budget. The essence of this feature of budgeting is not that budgets must always increase but that budgets are justified by marginal changes from previous years, which may, in principle, be decrements. In local level finance cash-based accounting exclusively emphasizes accounting for transactions. However, what matters are the individual records of each transaction. Periodically, these records are summarized (weekly, monthly, and annual receipts and payments) and classified by category (like salary payments, running expenses, individual and corporate tax receipts) to compare them against budgets. These records are the foundation of all accounting systems, for all kinds of organizations (and individuals). They emphasize an accounting that is based on verification: fact-based verifiable transactions. An important part of this verification is reconciliation of the accounting with the local government's bank accounts.

A Union Parishad's income comes from tax collections on housing, land, agriculture, license fees, income from property, hat-bazars, professional and occupation fees. The key income sources of Union Parishads are a) taxes, fees and charges, b) rents and profits accruing from properties of the union, and c) compensation payment received for services provided by the union. Furthermore, there are some contributions from individuals and institutions, government grants, profits from investments, and receipts accruing from the trusts placed with local bodies, loans raised by a union and proceeds. Union Parishads levy the following seven types of taxes: 1) the Union rate (which is a certain percentage of the annual valuation of households living quarters, buildings and lands), 2) taxes on hearth, 3) lighting rate, 4) drainage rate, 5) conservancy rates, 6) rates for provision of water supply, and 7) rates for the remuneration of village police.

The Union Parishad prepares a valuation list of all buildings within the union through an assessor to be appointed for the purpose by the Union Parishad with prior approval of the relevant authority. Such an assessor may either be a member or any other suitable person. In Bangladesh, a Union Parishad is the grass-root institution for integrating local people into the development process. Since independence, all the development projects undertaken and implemented at grass-root level are done with the supervision of Union Parishads, which are supposed to be run by the people's representatives. Ironically, the outcome of development projects is not significantly visible as most of the projects are not guided by the proposed beneficiaries. A participatory culture in development projects of Union Parishads therefore remains to be far from reality. Instead, the grassroots reality shows that the local power structure in Bangladesh is concentrated in the hands of local elites.

The purpose of a Union Parishad standing committee is to assist with the activities of the Union Parishad. Some matters are not possible to resolve in the Union Parishad office without proper verification. In those cases the Union Parishad standing committees conduct on the spot inspection, take people's opinion, analyze that information gathered and submit them to the Union Parishad. When such a matter is put before the Union Parishad with the analysis and suggestions from the standing committee, then it is easier to implement. The Union Parishad decides the working area of a standing committee. Any decision made by the standing committee has to be approved by the Union Parishad. There are some serious structural and procedural flaws of the standing committees of Union Parishads. Some of these flaws were identified by the respondents as follows: a) meetings of standing committees are not arranged regularly, b) members of the standing committees do not have a clear conception about the functions of the Union Parishad, and c) weaknesses in coordination and interrelation among the different Union Parishad standing committees. It has also been criticized that many members of standing committees stay busy with their personal work and are therefore unable to contribute enough time to the Union Parishad activities. It was also argued that even though standing committees are formed officially, they are not very active because of the lack of sincerity of the chairmen.

In the monitoring system of the financial audit of local level finance assesses the internal control systems that ensure the quality of accounting information and financial reporting. Timely and accurate inspection and auditing is an important part of the local level

finance. The actual process of monitoring local level finance depends on coordinating meetings by local representatives. There is supposed to be one Union Parishad coordinating meeting every month with the presence of the Chairman and other members. In the Union Parishad meeting the total amount of the union rates to be realized from the inhabitants of the union in a year is decided upon. The Union Parishad members of the respective areas are made responsible for levying the union rates on the individual households of the villages in consultation with local leaders.

It is claimed that in fixing the amount of the union rates to be paid by individual households, their economic conditions are always taken into consideration. Local financial accounts can be monitored by personnel understanding the systems, but only if records and systems are maintained accurately and effectively; if policies, timetables, and targets are met; if areas of weakness are identified for action; if errors and fraud are deterred and detected; and if appropriate anticipatory and remedial action are taken. The financial audit of local level finance assesses the internal control systems that ensure the quality of accounting information and financial reporting. Financial audits include financial statements, accounts, accounting, receipts, and other financially related issues. Financial statement audits provide reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements of an audited entity present fairly the financial position, results of operations, and cash flows in conformity with accounting standards.

The media could help to shape public opinion, but they are many times influenced and manipulated by different interest groups in society. The media can promote democracy by educating voters, protecting human rights, promoting tolerance among various social groups, and ensuring that governments are transparent and accountable. Modern-day democrats are as hyperbolic in their praise of the press. Despite the present-day mass media's propensity for sleaze, sensationalism and superficiality, they are still seen as essential democratic tools for ensuring accountability and transparency at local level finance. Civil society could play a variety of roles in ensuring accountability and transparency of local level finance. It could monitor public material, exert advocacy and pressure on governments to publicize certain material, such as information on bid evaluations and awards, and it could directly monitor local financial process. Nevertheless, the power bestowed in civil society and the institutional setup must always be subject to an open and democratic debate.

Bangladesh has gained momentum in participatory local governance development over recent years. The country was established as a parliamentary democracy, but then was under military rule until 1991 when a democratically elected government was reinstated. Fluctuating regime, party, and caretaker government control have led to a series of local government system reforms with greater success in recent years to create deeper participatory local governance. Recent reforms of 2011 introduced mandatory mechanisms for citizen participation in local government. This included citizen charters, ward assemblies, five-year plans and the right to information. The World Bank report "Strengthening Local Governance" identifies several challenges for Bangladesh, including the gap between the desire for political decentralization and the extent to which the current local government system provides real power, functions, and resources for local

governments to operate and allows meaningful citizen oversight of local governments and their services.

Local representatives may be elected, but they often do not have de facto authority or the resources available to successfully meet the needs of their constituents. Participatory local governance faces a number of challenges in Bangladesh, in particular, absence of democratic culture and tradition and disengagement of citizens, asymmetric distribution of patronage and weak institutions. In theory, political elites and bureaucrats in Bangladesh advocate democracy, accountability and local-level participation, but in practice, they have an affinity for power and centralized authority. Their reform initiatives seem half-hearted and disjointed restricting the growth of democratic culture and participatory local governance at the local level in Bangladesh.

Moreover, local people cannot provide any sort of inputs in decision making process for their welfare. Since the very beginning of its evolution, the units are being used by both the party in power and the opposition for their narrow political ends. Besides, the national political activities in different ways are foisted upon the grassroots level units. As a result, people at local level divide in political line and they do not get lesion of cooperation and coexistence unlike the national politics prevailing in Bangladesh. Patron-client relationship is also responsible for the less effective role of Union Parishad in democratic development. In Rural Bangladesh patron decides the will of political participation of the client and such trend keeps the vast majority portion apolitical at the local level. Education is one of the major components of political participation. Unfortunately, despite have 41 years of existence of Bangladesh as an independent country her majority people are illiterate. Among them, most of the people living the local areas have no idea about the significance of Union Parishad in strengthening democracy. Women constitute half of the total population in Bangladesh. But they are in backward position due to their ignorance. A number of barriers are responsible for their backwardness such as poor rate of literacy, myths, religious sanction, and patriarchal society above all government negligence and so on. In the backdrop of such a condition of Union Parishad system to strengthen democracy in Bangladesh, there are some positive outlooks are observed. These are mentioned below:

o Regular basis election;
o Women direct representation;
o Increasing the rate of people's participation in local elections;
o Increasing the tendency of the people to participate in different level of development activities of Union Parishad;
o Increasing the rate of literacy;
o Expansion of the activities of NGOs and their pro vital role to socio-economic development of women at local level;
o Expansion of the mass and electronic media at the grass root level;
o Space for the people in order to have access to information at rural Bangladesh;
o Tele-center for the rural community and introduction of community radio;
o Initiation of Union Parishad based budget formulation;
o Activation of village court as alternative dispute resolution option to empowering Union Parishad.

Conclusion

It is well evident that, at the heart of all democracies is an essential trust that the individual places in others to fairly pursue the common affairs of all people. This basic trust, sometimes called "social capital", can only be built from the ground up, from the local level. A vigorous local democratic culture, a vibrant civil society, and an open, inclusive local government, are fundamental to the long-term viability of any democracy. It is apparent from the above discussion that Union Parishad is one of the most important grounds of democracy. Any program of Union Parishad is very significant contributor to democratic development of Bangladesh. It has been assumed by the academics and the policy planners that for democratic development there is no alternative to Union Parishad. Political party in power and the opposition should rethink about the significance of Union Parishad for strengthening democracy and for that they must not use it for their narrow political ends. As peoples outlook in our country is fatalistic and their consciousness about their way of political life is very limited the reason why there is no alternative to the spread of education.

Education is the way of political awareness. Hence, our civil society, media, NGOs must be more active in spreading the education of democracy through social movement and make the people aware of it. The working of grass-root democracy in Bangladesh is facing numerous challenges from many sides' .i.e. legal inadequacies, lack of funds, functions, functionaries and capacity, adverse socio- economic environment, vested political interests and lack of political will. Commitment to decentralization as a political value and the consequent political will to establish it. Institutions of self-government should have recognized as an agency for the preparation and implementation of the development programs of the government in consultation and discussion with different stakeholders within government entities. Grass-root institutions apart from Union Parishad should be empowered to raise their own resources by widening their revenue base as also through other ways. Grass- root Institutions should have their own staff to carry out their work. Massive mobilization support from Non-Government Organizations, academics, political parties and other groups in exerting pressure on government to restore power to the place where it belongs to may be of great help. Efforts should be made to encourage unanimous elections to grass- root institutions. This will help in avoiding political interference and securing village harmony in rural Bangladesh.

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Modi's Neighborhood First Policy: Security Implications for Bangladesh

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Abstract: The paper attempts to explore the security implications for Bangladesh with India's 'neighborhood first' policy which will be examined by following key questions like whether the euphoria which was created by Indian 15th Prime Minister Naredro Modi reflects any changes in India's South Asian foreign policy. How the new government of India will treat its immediate neighbors in general and Bangladesh in particular? What are the ramifications of this change of leadership in the South Asian political landscape in future? The dynamics of India's South Asian neighborhood policy along with policies under various regimes are discussed in the second section. Recent developments followed by the accession to the new government in India are outlined in the third section. The fourth section presents ramifications for Bangladesh. Section five is the conclusion of the paper. The analysis discloses that although the way new government deals with neighbors may indicate changes, the overall objective management of India's regional relations is unlikely to deviate much.

Key words: Neighborhood, India, Bangladesh, Security

1. Introduction

Accession to power of the 15th premier of India, Narendra Modi – a Hindu nationalist, is a remarkable event and it has critical importance for global politics in general and South Asia in particular. With his leadership Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) historic landslide victory in Indian national election of 2014 dumbfounded the world. The margin with which BJP has achieved the right to lead the Indian nation is colossal; earning the party a straight majority in parliament in course of thirty years of history.[1] Nearly after being elected as Prime Minister, inviting South Asian leaders to oath-taking ceremony at presidential palace, Modi has set an extra ordinary example in the political landscape of South Asia. It has been perceived as a new voyage in the dwindling discourse of South Asian politics which gave the new Indian government a privilege to create a congenial ambiance of faith targeted to go beyond the historic records of mistrust by offering an early nod of mutual dealings. South Asian leaders in the neighboring countries responded to this offering of new Indian government very genially which is obviously a good sign of zeal of the parties in the region towards teamwork in the area of persistent issues. Prime Minister Modi has chosen Bhutan and Nepal for his first foreign trips adding more enthusiasm to the euphoria which was created by Modi's early conducts during election campaign. 'Neighborhood first' approach of Indian new government amplify both anticipations and trepidations over how the new government is going to deal with its neighbors. The uneasiness, however, resulted from the fear of escalation in communal violence and the probability of adoption of a hawkish policy by the new government.

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Foregoing context raises the questions like; does this euphoria created by the early conducts reflect changes in the neighborhood policy of India? How the new government will treat its immediate neighbors particularly Bangladesh? And, what are the ramifications of this change of leadership in the South Asian political landscape in the coming days? This paper tries to analyze the early indications of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and finds out the new government's policy priorities in the neighborhood. Geographically, India's neighborhood comprises of the countries with which it shares borders: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. However, analysis in this paper limits its focus within India's South Asian neighbors in general and Bangladesh in particular and excludes analysis of India's policy towards China and Myanmar.

The paper is based predominantly on secondary sources and proceeds as follows. Dynamics of India's South Asian neighborhood along with policies under various regimes are discussed in the second section. Recent developments followed by the accession of the new government in India are outlined in the third section. The fourth section presents ramifications for Bangladesh. Section five is the conclusion of the paper.

2. Comprehending India's "Neighborhood" Policy

To gauge the India's compound neighborhood policy and understand the aims and objectives of new Indian leadership, it requires to know how the region has been perceived by India. Consequently, following discussion looks into the dynamics of India's South Asian neighborhood and the history of conduct and key elements of India's neighborhood first policy under different regimes.

2.1 What is Neighborhood Policy?

Like other country India also designed its foreign policy and neighborhood policy that traces its root to the notion of "a country cannot choose its neighbors"; therefore, what a country can do is to adjust and modify its policy revolving neighborhood and surrounding environment[2]. Neighborhood is the foremost consideration of any foreign policy as it is the point where domestic affairs overlap external affairs directly[3]. Consequently, positive gesture in the policy for neighborhood has been appreciated in history of international relations of independent nations. Franklin D. Roosevelt has been pioneer in advocating 'Good Neighbor Policy' while attending in the Pan American Conference in 1936[4]. Attempt to build up an accommodating neighborhood has been observed in the European Union as well. The European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) is hitherto a pioneer of its kind in the neighborhood policy discourse which aims to avoid dividing lines with its neighbors[5].

Defining neighborhood is critical because it not only rests on geographical or political factors but it also has social and cultural underpinnings. As a term, 'neighbor', which is of West Germanic origin, combines two words, 'near' and 'dweller'[6], i.e., someone who dwells nearby. In the Anglo-Saxon tradition, the term 'neighbor' is measured as a fellow, an associate or a beneficiary. This gives a positive connotation of the expression. However, in some other, like post-communist spaces where Slavic mores dominate,

'neighbor' is explained as a stranger of foreigner. The Russian word for 'neighbor' entails a person who enters another's private space without legitimate authority. Thereby, it has negative connotation of the same expression. There emerges the inherent ambiguity of 'neighbor' as put forward by Chattopadhay, "the neighborhood is a space lodged in between the safe inside of friends and threatening outside of enemies"[7]. Thus, a neighborhood is not limited to territory only; it is also about 'numerous and diverse individuals' and their 'social constructions' who are neither well-known nor a total strangers[8]. This understanding of neighborhood is critical to figure out the dynamics of South Asian region.

2.2 Modi's "Neighborhood First policy" Approach

One of the major policy initiatives taken by Modi government is to focus back on its immediate neighbors in South Asia. Even before becoming the Prime Minister, Narandra Modi hinted that his foreign policy will actively focus on improving ties with India's immediate neighbors which is being termed as neighborhood first policy in the media[9] and he started well by inviting all heads of state/heads of government of South Asian countries in his inauguration and on the second day on office he held bilateral talks with all of them individually which was dubbed as a mini SAARC summit by political analysts[10]. It asserted that "political stability, progress and peace in the region are essential for south Asia's growth and development" and promised that the government would "pursue friendly relations" in the neighborhood and "work towards strengthening Regional forums like SAARC".[11]

Neighborhood is the focal point of Modi's foreign policy[12] which means that stronger relationship with neighbor than that of any previous government.[13] He clarified his stance on "neighborhood fist policy" saying that "Indian foreign policy has many facets, but I want to focus our relations with our neighbors" in his address to the nation on India's Independence Day, 2014[14]. Modi's "neighborhood first" approach, however, encompasses more than South Asia and follows a "proactive foreign policy" in the extended neighborhood. It aims not just to react to events unfolding in Asia but to shape them. Modi has developed personal relationships via high-level visits—24 of his 37 trips through 2015 were to Asian countries; for Foreign Minister Sushma Swaraj the numbers were 21 of 28. Visits have been followed by proposals for cooperation in areas of mutual interest in the economic and strategic domains.[15]

He has made state visits to Bhutan and Nepal within the first one-hundred days of his government. Sushma Swaraj, too, kept, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Nepal among top of her travel itineraries as foreign minister Later during a launch event at ISRO he has asked Indian scientists to take the endeavor to develop a dedicated SAARC Satellite to share the fruits of the technology like telemedicine, e-learning etc. It was important for Narendra Modi to start off on a positive note with neighbors since he is seen somewhat of a hardliner on security and foreign policy issues and his rise, predicted much before the election results were out, had created apprehension if not outright insecurity in the neighborhood[16].

2.3 India's South Asian 'Neighborhood': Determinant Factors

India's neighborhood policy –which is extension of Indian foreign policy – is inspired by Kautilyan Mandala theory (circle of the states) which argues that immediate neighbors are considered to be natural enemy and neighbor's neighbor is the ally[17]. Although India hopes to be surrounded by a group of friends; its foreign policy motivation indicates that neighbor of India is considered by her as enemy[18]. Yet not officially declared, the term 'Indian Neighborhood Policy' could be used to refer to various policy propositions and statement of different Indian regimes concerning India's immediate neighbors providing expression of neighborhood policy[19]. Reaffirming significance of India's South Asian neighborhood, many scholars and political leaders have expressed their concern. S. D. Muni, a former Indian ambassador, noted that "achieving the objective of becoming one of the principal powers of Asia will depend entirely on India's ability to manage its own immediate neighborhood"[20]. C. Raja Mohan, a leading Indian scholar, observed that without enduring primacy in one's own neighborhood, no nation can become a credible power on the global stage[21]. Former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee also acknowledged that friends can change but not neighbors who have to live together. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in 2010 noted that "we cannot realize our growth ambitions unless we ensure peace and stability in South Asia". Such statements substantiate the prominence of South Asian region in India's policy planning[22].

Despite the facts that the region bears great significance for India, she cannot uphold relations up to expectation with her neighbors. Among other crucial issues, power disparity between India and her neighbors and geographical size add to mistrust and suspicion undermining affable neighborhood relations[23]. In contrast, India's anxiety is if the smaller neighbors will take 'free ride' on its resources in the plea of collaboration and cooperation. Maintaining and deepening their relations with extra-regional powers these smeller neighbors counterbalance India's influence in the region; which further damage the relation more. This appears to India as attempts of smaller neighbors to gang up against the larger neighbor. Another factor which adds hurdles to this complex security landscape is fright of India's Akhand Bharat (united India) policy, where India will take the control of critical issues like security. For smaller countries, multilateralism is comfortable platform in settling the issues, where as India insists bilateral mechanism[24]. Accordingly, India failed to achieve its envisaged regional leadership.

These complex dynamics undermines the neighborhood networks of South Asian region. For India, the crucial challenge is to get over the anti-Indian sentiment prevailing in its strategic neighborhood. For the neighbor countries, the challenge is to keep Indian 'hegemony' to a minimum. This dynamics of South Asia lies at the heart of the hearth of the complexity of the region[25].

3. New Government in the Office and Recent Developments

With a landslide victory in the general election of 2014, National Democratic Alliance (NDA) led by BJP has assumed the office in India. The government is headed by Narendra Modi who is both disputed for his alleged role in communal riots of Gujarat in 2002 and renowned for marvelous leadership as chief minister for economic

development[26]. It's his leadership charisma which was the deriving factors leading Indians to choose BJP as ruling party[27]. Unexpected overwhelming victory and his proved strategy with respect to economic development magically changed the mind of one million plus[28]. Additionally, his earlier gesture revolving election campaign and oath-taking ceremony is fairly mesmeric for South Asian neighbors.

In election manifesto, BJP outlined its foreign policy marking economy in priority. It reads, "We will engage proactively on our own with countries in the neighborhood and beyond and create a web of allies to mutually further our interests"[29]. The manifesto of BJP also made pledges to reinforce regional forum like South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and insisted on regional cooperation and connectivity. This can be considered as a portent of the new government's reverence for neighboring countries' contemplations[30]. In his Independence Day Speech on August 15, 2015, Modi reaffirmed his governmental pledges to work together for economic development with immediate neighbors. Responding positively to the invitation in the swearing-in ceremony of Narendra Modi South Asian neighbors gave a cogent signal of what they expect from their larger neighbor.

The swearing-in ceremony of Narendra Modi was a crucial indication of the Indian government's intentions to bolster relations with countries of South Asian region. It was a signal that India is willing to look towards its immediate neighbors through a new lens in order to bring it back on track. By inviting leaders from all South Asian countries, the Prime Minister has given an ample clue to the global community of his priorities of neighborhood. On the other side, acceptance of invitation is another cogent signal of what the South Asian neighbors expect from India, i.e., a more responsible role and a break away from its hegemonic attitude. Narendra Modi had maintained the momentum of 'swearing-in diplomacy'[31] by follow up visits that reconfirmed the determination of commitment. In June 2014, Indian External Affairs Minister had also chaired a meeting of India's top envoys from neighboring countries to maintain the momentum and strengthen bilateral ties[32].

In his first foreign visit to Bhutan, stressing 'special relation' between the two neighbors, Modi called Bhutan as natural choice. The trip was highlighted by commitment of cooperation in hydropower, trade and commerce, scholarship for Bhutanese students and in extensive economic development[33].

Modi's second visit to Nepal was termed as a 'historic' one as he offered $ 1 billion for infrastructure development, delivered speech in Nepali parliament and met opposition; where cooperation, connectivity, culture and constitution got the priority in discussion[34]. He also performed a special *puja* (prayer) at the Pashupatinath temple that demonstrated his prudence to uphold the cultural bonds sharing both countries[35]. It must also be noted that the new PM's celebration of the religio-cultural affinity between the two nations was a smart move aimed to win the hearts and minds of Nepali people[36].

The incumbent government properly choose to visit Dhaka as very strategic neighbor and time tested friend since independence of Bangladesh. Indian external affair minister, Sushama Swaraj as her maiden bilateral visit to Dhaka, met leaders from both government and opposition. Even though, it was a visit by a minister rather than Prime

Minister, it bears great meaning in terms of neighborhood dynamics as she talked to the people of Bangladesh about the vision of new government[37]. Later, on June 6-7, 2015 Indian Premier Narendra Modi visited Bangladesh which opened a new chapter in India-Bangladesh relation. The visit concluded with signing 22 agreements and an announcement of a fresh line of credit of $ 2 billion to the neighboring country including on cooperation in maritime safety and to curb human trafficking and fake Indian currency[38]. The highlight of the Modi's visit to Dhaka was the exchange of document related to the Land Boundary Agreement (LBA), which paves the way for exchanging territories to settle the 41- year-old border dispute which has been an irritant.

Visiting Kabul by Sushama Swaraj amidst the Taliban insurgency, political turmoil and 2014 election crisis, India proves that she would be side of her unstable strategic neighbor with given commitment[39]. This visit at the crucial juncture implied that stability in Kabul would be in the priority list of Delhi. Two times visit (December 25, 2015 and June 4, 2016) to Afghanistan by Indian Prime minister implied the significance of Kabul for Delhi.

During his first visit, Modi inaugurated the Afghan new parliament building that was constructed by India at a cost of USD 90 million[40]. In his address to the Parliament in Afghanistan, indicating new parliament building PM said "It will stand as an enduring symbol of the ties of emotions and values, of affection and aspirations that bind us in a special relationship"[41]. Calling India and Afghanistan's friendship antiquated and "bound by a thousand ties"[42], Ghani acknowledged the India's cooperation for economic development in Afghanistan. Later, PM and President led delegation level talks titled "Deepening India-Afghan friendship" over breakfast at Dilkosha Palace[43]. Prior to Modi's visit, India delivered three Mi 25 attack helicopters to Afghanistan, in what is seen as a shift in its strategy towards the strife-torn country[44]. Again on June 4, 2016, Modi visited Kabul for second time, proving deep-rooted ties with Afghanistan. He termed the relations between both neighbors as 'timeless friendship'[45]. He also inaugurated the Salma Dam – India-Afghanistan Friendship Dam - which will irrigate 75, 000 hectares of land and generate 42 MW power[46].

After his visit to Kabul, he has rightly chosen his next visit to Sri Lanka making its historic sign. Following the state visit to India by Sri Lankan president Maithripala Sirisena, Modi's visit to Sri Lanka is the first stand-alone bilateral tour by an Indian Prime Minister since 1987[47]. During his visit Sri Lanka's appreciation on India's development assistance valued at US $ 1.6 Billion including in areas of housing, transport infrastructure, health, was re-iterated by President Sirisena, Prime Minister Modi in turn expressed India's willingness to extend further cooperation on Sri Lanka's needs. The Indian Premier announced an additional credit line for the railway sector valued at US $ 318 million. A currency swap worth US $ 1.5 billion between the Central Bank of Sri Lanka and the Reserve Bank of India was also announced[48].

It's true that Modi did not have any state visit to Pakistan, but had surprise visit which is a significant sign the icy relationship between the two neighbors is thawing[49]. It was a goodwill visit and the two sides decided to understand each other's reservations and restart the comprehensive dialogue in a positive manner[50]. It was decided that as a part of

the comprehensive dialogue, the foreign secretaries of the two countries will meet in the mid of following January. Two sides consented to collectively work towards the common goal of fighting poverty and increase people to people contact in order to open new avenues for peace and mutual cooperation between the two neighboring countries. Tensions between the two nuclear-armed neighbors were high in recent years but relations have begun to improve. Before that visit the pair met briefly in Paris last month on the sidelines of the COP21 climate change conference. Both sides are hopeful to hold comprehensive dialogue again. So it is evident that even though it was an unscheduled sudden visit but it helped melt ice of rigidness.

The incumbent government was very insightful selecting the two immediate Himalayan neighbors for maiden foreign trips. Long-time, the two countries were missing the visits of Indian Heads of State and Government[51]. Nevertheless, bilateral relations between the neighbors were smooth and charming. Thus, beginning the journey to woo neighbors with these two countries could not be more productive. Choosing any other neighbor could have added to already held apprehension by other smaller neighbors in the region. The visit to Bangladesh was essential to propel the sentiment that close rapport of Dhaka with the UPA government would not come in way of the new government's priority. Attending Kabul demonstrated that Delhi would not let standalone its strategic partner Kabul during this transition period. All these developments are decisive to understand the willingness of the incumbent government to put flesh to the electoral promises and to fathom the implications of the new leadership in India for South Asian neighbors.

4. Security Implications for Bangladesh

Security has been a major driving force of India's neighborhood policy[52]. India's relations with Bangladesh have gone through several ups and downs over the past 40 years .Tensions have tended to recur periodically and have not allowed an atmosphere of mutual trust to prevail. At the root of threat to security lies a variety of forces that have become global in scope and more serious in their effects. There is no doubt that Bangladesh has faced immense security challenges with India dates back its independence. It confronted both conventional and non-conventional security challenges from internal as well as external sources. With respect to India, despite an enormous improvement of relations, there are certain issues that continue to keep the two countries wary of each other. The potential transnational threats from India are trans-border terrorism, drug trafficking, border killing, human trafficking, environmental degradation and water sharing crisis that threaten the security of the region in general and Bangladesh in particular.

Geography dictates that the destinies of India and Bangladesh are, and will always remain, inextricably intertwined[53]. Bangladesh shares over 4,096 Kilometers (km) of a porous land boundary with India of which 6.5 km are yet to be demarcated[54]. All these areas remain undemarcated because of differing technical positions taken by India-Bangladesh[55]; which might exceedingly be prone to criminal activities. Additionally, the river borders pose a different kind of problems because the shifting river routes, soil erosion or frequent floods make it difficult to demarcate borders. The porous nature of the land and maritime border are congenial to extensive smuggling activities between the

two countries[56]. Both Prime Ministers visits to each other country and signing a good number of agreements and MoUs are surely a milestone for bilateral relations but many security issues are yet to be addressed.

The killing of Bangladeshi nationals by Indian Border Security Forces (BSF) has become most irritant between the two countries. India-Bangladesh border is probably the most vulnerable and bloodiest border in the world[57]. It has evoked strong public sentiments and acrimonies in Bangladeshi people. The violence is routine and arbitrary in the border line of India and Bangladesh. Indian officials – particularly BSF personnel - endorse shooting people who attempt to cross the border illegally, even if they are unarmed[58]. BSF has carried out a shoot-to-kill policy– even on unarmed local villagers. The toll has been huge. Over the past 10 years Indian security forces have killed almost 1,000 people, mostly Bangladeshis, turning the border area into a south Asian killing fields[59]. Apart from the killing innocent and unarmed Bangladeshi people, there are various kinds of atrocities – abduction, rape, missing, injury and looting – in the border line of the two neighbors (see table: 1). For last sixteen years, the border line has badly been marked and became headline in the media for killing of 112, injuring 1027, abducting 1329, missing 111, rape 15 people and 157 snatching/looting case[60].

Table-1: Atrocities by Indian Border Security Force (BSF) against Bangladeshi Citizens January 1, 2000 - February 2017[61].

Years (s)	Killed	Injured	*Abducted	Missing	Rape	Snatching/ Looting
2017 (Jan-Feb)	4	12	6	0	0	0
2016	29	36	22	0	0	0
2015	44	60	27	1	0	0
2014	35	68	99	2	0	0
2013	29	79	127	0	1	77
2012	38	100	74	1	0	9
2011	31	62	23	0	0	0
2010	74	72	43	2	0	1
2009	98	77	25	13	1	1
2008	61	46	81	0	0	3
2007	118	82	92	9	3	5
2006	155	121	160	32	2	9
2005	88	53	78	14	3	4
2004	72	30	73	0	0	5
2003	27	41	120	7	2	8
2002	94	42	118	30	0	12
2001	84	29	55	0	1	10
2000	31	17	106	0	2	13
Grand Total	**1112**	**1027**	**1329**	**111**	**15**	**157**

Source: Odhikar - 2017

No one has been prosecuted for any of these killings, in spite of evidence in many cases that makes it clear the killings were in cold blood against unarmed and defenseless local residents. Rather in that case BSF claimed self-defense. Individuals were illegally entering Indian Territory, often at night, they were "not innocent" and therefore were a legitimate target. Bangladeshi border officials have also suggested that such killings are acceptable if the victim was engaged in smuggling[62]. Unlike officials of both country's security force, Bangladeshi people do not receive it so easy. The barbed wire fence and "shoot-to-kill" policy may not make good friend; rather it incurs revulsion and animosity amidst the Bangladeshi nationals[63].

Four Indian northeastern states of Tripura, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Assam share 1,880-km border with Bangladesh[64]. The border area between India and Bangladesh is heavily populated and acutely poor. Illegal cross-border activities, such as cattle-rustling, illegal immigrants and trafficking in persons and narcotics, have flourished. The mountainous terrain, dense forests and other hindrances make the unfenced borders porous and vulnerable for cross border illegal activities without any hurdle. Statistics of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB)-2012 demonstrates that BGB seized different types of smuggled items valued BDT 5925933039; of them, the items of valued BDT 5603237789 was incoming, and outgoing was BDT 322695609[65]. Some 27 674 cases was filed in connection with smuggling. 1849 smuggler were arrested. The statistics also shows that 405 women and children were rescued during trafficking in 2012. Of them 301 were women and 104 were children. 10 human trafficker have been detained during the incidents. In the same year, 605455 bottles of *phensedyl*, 126652 liters of wine, 76678 liters of *cholai mod*, 22634 bottles of bear, 9481 kg of Gaja (Hemp), 33 kg and 302 gram of heroin (see table: 2) have been seized[66].

Table-2: Smuggling statistics for the year of 2012

Item	Amount
Phensedyl (Cough Syrup)	605455 bottles
Wine	126652 liters
Cholai mod (local wine)	76678 liters
Bear	22634 bottles
Gaja (Hemp)	9481 kg
Heroin	33 kg and 302 gram

Source: Daily Prothom alo, Daily Inqilub, Daily Shongram

Trade deficit is another blemish in Bangladesh-India relations. It has swelled in recent years with import continuously rising while export hitting rock bottom for barriers created on the neighboring market. Currently, Bangladesh has trade deficit of US$ 5.579 billion with India[67]. It increased almost 4 times last ten years. In 2005-2006 fiscal years, the trade gap between two countries was 1.61 billion dollars. After ten years, however, it reached at 5.579 millions of dollars[68]. Especially in the last five years, it reached its all-time high and reflecting a galloping economic imbalance between the two close neighboring countries[69]. Last 2014-2015 fiscal years, Bangladesh imported 6.5 billion

dollars goods from India at the same time Bangladesh exported to India only 527 million dollars items[70].

India emerged as one of the largest sources of raw materials for Bangladeshi manufacturing industries, resulting in the import surge. At the same time, Bangladeshi exports hit various non-tariff barriers like products quality to enter the Indian market. Some economists think that India is big country, the trade gap is natural while entrepreneurs think it should be rational. India's market size is 250 billion dollars, but Bangladesh's export there only one percent of six hundred. India exports to Bangladesh more than 250 items. The country's export basket is mainly led by apparel industry while small income is coming from export of agricultural products, frozen fishes, jute and jute goods, leather and leather goods and light engineering items and RMG items. India gave duty free access for readymade garments but surprisingly, Bangladesh still has to face the state and other hidden taxes, and the state taxes are almost 12 percent. Moreover, the Indians buyer payment system is very poor according to industry insiders of RMG sector of Bangladesh[71].

South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) countries signed for the South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA) agreement to develop trade and economic co-operation in 6th January, 2004[72]. Following that agreement, process of removing duties started from 1st July 2006[73]. But it failed on expectation. That time SAFTA countries made list of sensitive items. India listed 480 items as sensitive for least and non-least developed countries. India marked 868 sensitive items[74]. They banned the sensitive items to import from other countries. India has cut short their sensitive items list for Bangladesh. They made 25 sensitive items on that time. Not only that, India declared 46 Bangladeshi items' duty free market access to India. Country's business leaders and exporters are continuously demanding that India remove non-tariff and para-tariff barriers to help Bangladesh increase its exports to the country to reduce the galloping trade gap between the two next-door neighbors. The lack of initiatives to negotiate different trade-related issues is hindering the export potentiality to India.

Another major challenge is, a bilateral agreement between Bangladesh and India would not be a viable solution because problems arise from outdated regulations in the trade policies, implementation of import policies in Bangladesh and Countervailing Duties (CVD) which is trade import duties imposed under World Trade Organization (WTO) rules to neutralize the negative effects of subsidies[75]. However, there needs to be a level playing ground so that Bangladesh can increase its exports to India without facing tariff and non-tariff barriers. Bangladesh government sources maintain that the Bangladesh government has been trying to solve the concerning issues. Yet the business route is rarely smooth for Bangladeshi businessmen in Indian market of one billion plus population.

With the new Prime Minister Narendra Modi, a Hindu nationalist, renowned for his impressive management of Gujarat's economy as Chief Minister is now the leader of the one billion plus population. New developments, especially inviting all South Asian leaders in Indian Prime Minister's oath-taking ceremony and choosing South Asian Himalayan countries for opening foreign visits, have stirred up exhilaration regarding

possibilities of re-energizing the flagging discourse of South Asian neighborhood. Security and development of North-East India is directly linked with Bangladesh, so is the success of India's 'Look East' and connectivity policies. Bangladesh is a strategic country in the policy propositions of India. It is India's most important neighbor by all considerations -- security, cross-border migration, sharing of common resources[76].

Modi's visit in his neighboring Bangladesh has been seen as new chapter of India-Bangladesh relations[77]. It was evident that Bangladesh figures prominently in the foreign policy agenda of the new government. During his visit 22 deals have been signed including greater regional connectivity, security and development, bilateral trade, foreign aid, blue economy and maritime cooperation[78]. Definitely, the visit is glaringly marked by signing of Land Boundary Agreement (LBA) ending the contentious bilateral issue that has been lingering since 1974. Among the issues, of course, security is one of the major concerns of two neighbors. MoU on human trafficking, Bangladesh-India coast guards for maritime security and smuggling and circulation of fake currency note have been signed. Prime Minister Hasina's visit to Delhi was also marked by 7 agreements and 15 MoUs ranging from trade and commerce, education, judicial affairs, security to military affairs[79]. Her visit to India was highly marked by defense deals between the two neighbors and drew a mass criticism from various quarters of Bangladesh especially for military agreement. Many security experts, diplomats and others in Bangladesh think the signed agreement would not benefit Bangladesh and could even go against the country's interests[80]. However, bilateral visits of both Prime Ministers and signed deals during their visit create new hope for both nations. The singed agreements and deals will pave the way to work and cooperate each other. Still, the apprehension of Indian invasion in the name of cooperation and collaboration is revolving in the mind of Bangladeshi people. Hence, India has to play major role to create a congenial atmosphere of mutual trust and respect.

In the initial days of PM Modi assuming power, there were apprehensions among Bangladeshi political community that relations with India may be strained due to the close rapport of the current administration of Dhaka with the immediate past administration in New Delhi. In addition, in his election speeches, Narendra Modi has been heating up debate on the issues of Bangladeshi 'infiltrators' calling for tighter border controls and denunciating Bangladeshi Muslim migrants[81].

However, the positive approach regarding the bilateral issues including maritime boundary verdict, LBA, trade and commerce, civil and military relations bring Bangladeshi people to a position of relief. Very interestingly, Prime Minister Modi, who earlier opposed the LBA bill in parliament, headed the parliament to pass the bill[82].

In this context, the incumbent government is anticipated to demonstrate inclination to deal with these issues importance to the regional and sub-regional role of Bangladesh. Since Bangladesh has been very forthcoming to address issues like extremism, terrorism and connectivity hand in hand with India, it is time that India come up to add to the confidence of this strategic neighbor. India's Border Security Force (BSF) is still regularly shooting Bangladeshi nationals, while Bangladeshi exports to India face a multitude of non-tariff barriers. Talks over Teesta Accord are still stalled, though

assurance has been provided to sign the water-sharing treaty soon. However, as evident in the land boundary agreement, bringing all the actors on board is the posture of the new leadership. But no discussion has taken place over this with the West Bengal unit. Therefore, relations between Bangladesh and India would maintain its momentum but implementation of mutual concerns might take a long time.

5. Conclusion

Post-independence India's foreign policy has been defined more by continuity than by change[83]. Contemporary Indian foreign policy is focused largely on the promotion of economic interests, India's progression to the high table of international relations and enhancing its security within immediate neighborhood[84]. For South Asia, Modi's foreign policy seems rare deviation from India's historic route of external affairs journey. Mr. Modi also emphasize people to people contacts to booster tie with neighbors. His government already shows fervor to retie the loosened connectivity at people's level to realize the shared prosperity. The sense of shared prosperity is also central to enhance the security and promote political reconciliation[85]. The swearing in diplomacy was part of New Delhi's realization that further flexibility is required of India to accommodate neighbors. These short term tactical shifts to bring countries of South Asia in its radar with carrot of economic development and sweetness of 'equal partnership' might also unleash as 'sugar coated hegemony'[86].

As a close ally, Bangladesh expect more equal respect and honor, mutual trust and generosity from India. To foster the young tree of neighborhood, India has to sidestep route of mistrust, big boss attitude, violence and hegemonic shadow. Rightly maintaining the clause of Gangs treaty by India, fixing just amount of tax for naval and road transit, stop killing Bangladeshi nationals at border, Tista river treaty, reducing huge trade deficit are the pressing issues for Bangladesh. Taking advantages of the neighborhood policy and historic friendly relation between both nations, Bangladesh may resolve these above mentioned pending issues with her neighbor.

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Bangladesh-India Relations: Challenges and Opportunities

Muhammad Kamruzzaman[*]

Abstract: Bangladesh -India relationship has been prized with strong historical and cultural background. But both sides seem to be cautious about keeping this relationship. Bangladesh shares 4094 kilometers of land border with India on three sides, the fourth side being open to the Bay of Bengal. Despite lot of success over the years, various issues are still unsettled which need to be resolved in order to continue this relationship. These include sharing the water of 54 international rivers that flow from India to Bangladesh, controlling terrorism and promoting economic development as well as building neighboring relationship. This paper attempts to investigate emerging issues. i.e. border dispute, drug and human trafficking, smugglings, trade and investment, water disputes, environmental degradation which are apparent bases of divergence in the pursuit of bilateral relations between Bangladesh and India.

Key Words: Bilateral Relations, Conflict of Interest, Trade Deals, Border Conflict, First Neighborhood, Geo-Politics, Domestic Politics.

Introduction

Bangladesh and India both shares historical relations. India has been the standing partner which helped the people of Bangladesh in the Liberation war in 1971.Moreover Bangladesh and India are two significant countries in South Asia. Both of the countries were ruled for a long time by the British colonial power. In 1947 Indian sub-continent first got Independence from British colonial rule and was divided into two independent states; one is India and another is Pakistan, But in 1971 one of the major parts of Pakistan known as East Pakistan got independence from Pakistan through Liberation war. This paper attempts to investigate some issues, challenges and recent developments of Bangladesh - India relations. The circumstances and limited choices of both the countries during liberation war in 1971 brought these two countries closer. During those turbulent days people of Bangladesh needed help and cooperation from India, India on the other hand, had extended all out cooperation to the freedom loving people of Bangladesh. After nine months war and surrender of 90 thousand Pakistani occupation soldiers, the War ended. It was estimated that Bangladesh had lost 30 lakh valuable lives and chastity of 3 lakh Bangladeshi women. At the same time India also had lost 12 thousand trained patriotic soldiers who joined in the last phase of Liberation war. The study has been conducted on the basis of literature review and information gathered from newspapers and other primary sources.

Bangladesh-India Bilateral Relations: Why Some Issues Remain Unsettled?

1) Insurgency

Insurgency has been playing the role in straining of India with Bangladesh. Northeast India has been facing insurgency since 1956 due to ethnic separatism among its

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inhabitants is operating with the support of Bangladesh. National liberation Front of Tripura[1] (NLFT), United Liberation front of Assam[2] (ULFA) and the National Democratic Front of Bodoland[3] (NDFM) are major insurgent group in Northeast India. There are some various that ULFA has several lucrative income generating projects in Bangladesh to sustain its insurgency activities in India (Ghosh: 2013)

11) Border Disputes

India's land border with Bangladesh as per the ministry of Defence is 4351 k.m running through five states, viz., West Bengal (2217 kms) Assam (262 kms), Mehgalaya (443 kms), Tripura (856kms) and Mizoram (318kms), including nearby 781 kms of reverine border. The border traverses through 25 districts. The border is mostly used for smuggling goods from India to Bangladesh like livestock, drug trafficking, women trafficking and food items. Sometimes a group of illegal immigrants from Bangladesh cross the border to India in search of improving their livelihood. Because of a large number of illegal immigrants from Bangladesh into India, a controversial shoot on-sight policy has been implemented in border by the Indian Border Security Force (BSF). Several times Bangladesh and India border security force meet at flag meetings for resolving push in and push back issues. While operating in the border there are occurrences of violence between the illegal migrants and Indian soldiers. The border has also witnessed occasional skirmishes between the Indian Border Security Force (BSF) and the Border Guards of Bangladesh (BGB), during the period of 2001-2006. (Dutta: 2009)

The historical land Boundary demarcation agreement between Bangladesh and India and related matters was signed in May 1974. This historical agreement is a sign of depth friendship, goodwill and mutual trust and above all, the vision of peace and harmony of two great leaders, the Father of the Nation of Bangladesh Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibar Rahman and Smt Indira Gandhi, the Prime Minister of India. Article 9 of the Indo - Bangladesh Friendship Treaty provides for mutual consultation between the two signatories in order to remove a threat if either of them is attacked. This agreement is a milestone in the history of Indo - Bangladesh relations. This comprehensive agreement was intended to resolve all lingering and vexing problems. Killing of Bangladeshi people by Border Security Force (BSF) of India has become a high nerve-racking issue in recent times. Public sentiments has been evoked largely in Bangladesh on this issue. Human

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[1] The National Liberation Front of Tripura (abbreviated NLFT) is a Tripuri nationalist organization based in Tripura, India. It has an estimated 550 to 850 members. The NLFT seeks to secede from India and establish an independent Tripuri state, and is an active participant in the Insurgency in Northeast India. The NLFT manifethesto says that they want to expand what they describe as the Kingdom of God and Jesus Christ in Tripura.]The NLFT is currently designated as a terrorist organization in India.

[2] The United Liberation Front of Assam is a separatist outfit operating in Assam, North East India.[1][2] It seeks to establish a sovereign Assam with an armed struggle in the Assam conflict. The government of India banned the organization in 1990 citing it as a terrorist organization, while the United States Department of State lists it under "other groups of concern.

[3] The National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB) is an armed christian separatist outfit which seeks to obtain a sovereign Bodoland for the Bodo people in Assam, India. It is designated as a terrorist organisation by the Government of India.

Rights Organization like as Odhikar published that from 1, January 2001 to 30, December 2015,1809 Bangladeshis were killed by BSF. In September 2011, the demarcation of land boundary agreement was signed between Bangladesh and Indian Government during the state visit of the Prime Minister of Bangladesh. The Agreement has settled the long standing land boundary issues related to demarcation of 6.1 kms; territories in adverse possession; and exchange of enclaves.

II1) Maritime Border

While Bangladesh, having hollow coast liner, delimits its sea border southward from the edge of its land boundary, India stretches its claim southeast wards, covering thousands of miles in the Bay of Bengal. Due to competing claims of the two countries, delimitation of the sea boundary determining Bangladesh's exclusive economic Zones have remained unresolved. Moreover, in terms of determining the continental shelf, the presence of the Andaman's and Nicobar islands puts India, in a favorable position. (Harun : 2010**)**

IV) Drug Trafficking

Now a days, Bangladesh is used as a transit point by drug dealers as well as drug mafia, that dispatches yabba, heroin, opium, coken, fensidil from Myanmar, Afghanistan and other neighboring countries of the golden triangle to different destinations. As a result, Bangladesh's Department of Narcotics Control has come under the scanner several times and invited criticism. Bangladesh has become the prime transit route for trafficking heroin to Europe from South Asia, according to a report from International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) 2007 in the annual Report. INCB notes that the most common methods and routes for smuggling heroin into Bangladesh are by courier from Pakistan, commercial vehicles and trains from India and via sea routes through the Bay of Bengal or overland by truck or public transport from Barma.

V) Trade and Investment

The trade relationship has a detrimental effect on bilateral relationships. Bangladesh is an important trading partner for India. The two-way trade in FY 2011-2012 was US$5.242 billion with India's exports to Bangladesh accounting for US$4.743 billion and imports US$0.498 million. The geographical proximity of Bangladesh and India has made it one of its biggest trading partners. There are pressing concerns in Bangladesh regarding the large bilateral trade deficit with India and the large volumes of informal imports from India across the land border which avoid Bangladesh's import duties . The bilateral trade deficit with India has been increasing rapidly on an average of about 9.5% annually. The trade deficit with India is frequently highlighted by Bangladesh as a major contentious issue. Trade deficit for Bangladesh is more than $4 billion. For long, Bangladesh has been urging India to reduce this gap by lifting the tariff barriers as they were major impediments to the growth of Bangladesh's exports to India. By responding to Bangladesh's concern, in November 2011, India granted duty free access to all products, except 10 tobacco and liquor items from Bangladesh which amounts to 30% of Bangladesh's export. As much as 98 percent of Bangladeshi products enjoy zero duty benefits in the Indian market. Bangladesh's exports to India are expected to cross $1

billion in 2012**. (The Daily Star: August, 2012)** Political discontent in Bangladesh tends to focus on the issue that India has a lot of non trade barriers for Bangladeshi exports. Although exports from Bangladesh are growing at a healthy pace, there is no sign of reducing this trade gap. (Farooq: 2006)

Table-1 Bangladesh-India Trade in different financial years (in million US Dollar)

Financial Year	Import	Export	Balance
2001-2002	1018.90	50.19	(-) 968.71
2002-2003	1357.79	83.81	(-) 1274.18
2003-2004	1602.55	89.32	(-)1513.23
2004-2005	2025.78	144.19	(-) 1881.59
2005-2006	1868.00	241.96	(-)1626.04
2006-2007	269.00	289.41	(-)1979.59
2007-2008	3393.00	358.08	(-)3034.82
2008-2009	2843.00	245.14	(-)2597.86
2009-2010	3213.70	304.63	(-)2909.07
2010-2011	4574.90	512.5	(-)4062.40
2011-2012	4758.89	490.42	(-)4268.47
2012-2013	4776.9	563.96	(-)4212.94
2013-2014	6035.5	456.633	(-)5578.867

Source**:** http://www.dhakachamber.com/Bilateral/India-Bangladesh%20Bilateral%20Trade%20 Statistics. Pdf and Ministry of Commerce, Government of Bangladesh.

The causes of this large gap could be attributed to some trade and non-trade barriers. The non-trade barriers, as pointed by Bangladesh commerce ministry include:

a) Laboratory tests in Bangladesh, especially for food products, cosmetics and leather and textile products.

b) Packaging requirements

c) Inadequate infrastructure facilities such as warehousing, transshipment yard, passing yard

d) Connecting Roads at land customs stations also hinders exports from Bangladeshi; The land border trade is subject to very administrative constraints in Bangladesh. The most important customs clearance post is at Beanpole, which borders petrapole on the Indian side and which is on the main roads linking Kolkata with Jessore and Dhaka. On the other hand as per the report of the Bangladesh Commence Ministry, trade barriers include: (a) imposition of state tax, (b) anti-dumping which is one of the WTO's measures introduced by India. During 1990's because of countervailing duties 90% of industrial tariffs has come down to 12.5%. It is far lower and far more uniform than they were ever in the past 50 years from the perspective of SAARC[4] For

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[4] The **South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation** (**SAARC**) is the regional intergovernmental organization and geopolitical union of nations in South Asia. Its member states include Afghanistan,

Bangladesh, these changes mean that Indian domestic markets, for most manufactured goods are highly competitive with complete release from Indian tariffs under bilateral or multilateral free trade arrangements. Porous land border between Bangladesh and India adds to the trade deficit, dating back to the initial years of Bangladesh's birth. (Farooq : 2006) The substantial, informal and unrecorded trade, carried across the Indo-Bangladesh border is more guasi legal in nature and is often described as 'informal' rather than illegal. (Rajpal: 2003)

According to recently signed agreement India has agreed to remove several items many of which relate to the garment sector from the negative list of imports from Bangladesh. The Indian textile industry demanded more "protection". But New Delhi had to take a wider view of its interests. India's exports to Bangladesh in the 'fiscal year 2013-2014 stood at $ 6035.5 million while its imports from Bangladesh amounted to $ 456.633 million. The Indian customs Department published a circular on November 9,2011 to the effect that India has given duty free access to 15 Bangladeshi products, Within three months, India has given the facility to Bangladesh for 61 products. This was a long time demand from the Bangladesh side. However the overall balance of bilateral trade is heavily tilted towards India's favors. India is Bangladesh's second most important import source after china and ranks fifth as Bangladesh's export destination.

V1) Water Disputes

Sharing of Ganges water is one of the sources of conflict between India and Bangladesh. This conflict between two countries arose when India decided to construct Farakka barrage to divert water from Ganges to Hooglay River in India. Ganga is a trans-boundary river of India and Bangladesh. The 2,525 km (1,569 m) river rises in the western Himalayas in the Indian state of Uttarkhand and flows south and east through the Gangetic plain of North India into Bangladesh where it empties into the Bay of Bengal. It is the second largest river in the Indian sub-continent by discharge. The aim of construction of the Farakka Barrage was to increase the lean period flow of the Bhagirthi-Hoogly branch of Ganga to increase the water depth at Kolkata port which was threatened by siltation. (Harun: 2010) As irrigation withdrawals increased in Bangladesh conflicts arose over the question of sharing water flow at Farrakka. The inadequacy of water during the slant season to meet the assessed demands in the two countries is the root of cause of the conflict. (Farooq : 2006) Bangladesh government feels that the reduction in flow caused damage to agriculture, industry and ecology in Bangladesh. The Government of India feels that such misgivings are misplaced. Because of the inability of the concerned governments to come to any lasting agreement over the last few decades on sharing the river water, this problem has grown. Now it is also viewed as a case of upstream-downstream dispute**.** (Artheur:1990)

Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, the Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. SAARC comprises 3% of the world's area, 21% of the world's population and 3.8% (US$ 2.9 trillion) of the global economy, as of 2015. SAARC was founded in Dhaka on 8th December, 1985. Its secretariat is based in Kathmandu, Nepal. The organization promotes development of economic and regional integration. It launched the South Asian Free Trade Area in 2006. SAARC maintains permanent diplomatic relations at the United Nations as an observer and has developed links with multilateral entities, including the European Union.
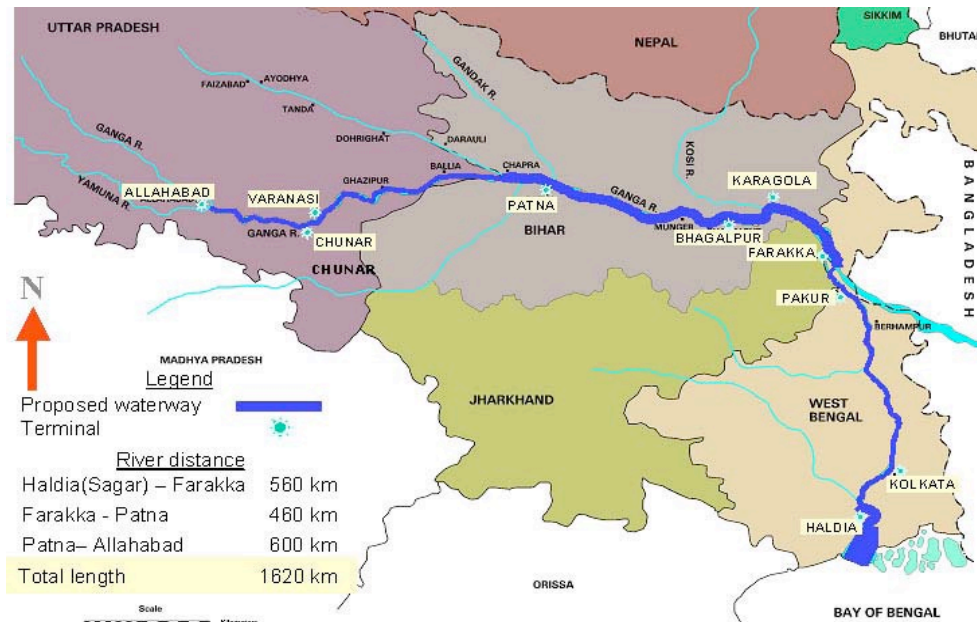
Source: http://www.defence.pk/forums/bangladesh-defense/59471-india-going-ahead-tipai-dam-2.html 8

In the relationship between Bangladesh and India the dispute over Ganga water was an important component for over two decades. In 1977, the two countries reached a five year agreement on water sharing which was signed in November, 5 1977. However, the basic issues remained unsolved and hence the agreement was not renewed and lapsed in 1982. Later, a proposal was mooted by India to enhance the flow of Ganga at Farakka by construction of a barrage across the Bramhaputra Jogighopa in India and transfer of water to Farakka through a canal. A proposal from Bangladesh was to construct a series of reservoirs on the tributaries of Ganga in Nepal. But this would have brought Nepal in the picture. None of these proposals could be implemented. According to the views of Bangladesh about this dispute, there was a "unilateral diversion" of waters of the Ganga by India at Farakka to the detriment of Bangladesh as reduction in flows had severe adverse affects on Bangladesh. It was also projected that large and more powerful country is disregarding the interests of small and weaker neighbors. This view is more common in Bangladesh. Sentiments grew to such as extent that India was projected as being responsible for all water related disasters whether drought or floods. The Farakka project was supposed to be the cause behind all water related problems.

The perceptions on the Indian side were entirely different. Ganga River is closely intertwined with religious and social life of the people. There are also legitimate needs of the Kolkata port on the question of siltation and growth of future traffic. It was felt that Bangladesh had greatly over stated its water needs and its claim was disproportionate to its fair share by any logic. Regarding diversion of water for the Kolkata port through the Farakka Barrage and the adverse effects due to reduced flows in Bangladesh were not addressed seriously. It was considered to be to blame India for flood problems. A further complication was the feeling of the concerned State Government in India that their

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interests had not been properly addressed by the Central Government during bilateral talks with Bangladesh. After 1990, there was a virtual stalemate between the two governments on this issue.

Finally an agreement was reached and a treaty on the Sharing of Ganga Water between India and Bangladesh was signed on 12 December 1996. The Ganga water treaty is cited as one of the important examples of peaceful negotiations between upstream and downstreams neighbor in South Asia. According to this agreement India should release water at the Farakka barrage in the dry season between of January to May every year. The 1996 treaty describes three different possibilities of water availability at Farrakka according to which shares of water of the two states would vary .Accordingly if water availability at Farrakka is more than 75000 cusecs (expected in January, February and last 10 days of May), India receives her fall requirement of 40,000 cusecs, and Bangladesh the rest . If the flow is between 70,000-75,000 cusecs (expected during first 10 day of March Second 10 days of May), Bangladesh receives 35,000 cusecs and India the rest. In the periods of 10 March-10th May, if the available water at Farakka is less than 70,000 causes but more than 50,000 causes the two states share that water on a 50:50 basis. The 50:50 sharing is subject to a provision that Bangladesh and India each receives guaranteed 35,000 cusecs of water in alternative ten-day periods during 10 March to 10 May.

The applicability of the treaty has been delimited by the providing that in case of availability of below 50,000 cusecs (cubic feet per second) of water the sharing formula of the treaty would have no relevance, In such cases, as article II (iii) of the treaty provides, Bangladesh and India will enter into immediate consultation to make adjustment on an emergency basis, in accordance with the principle of equity, fair play and no harm to either party,' Although sharing under the 1996 treaty depends on stable flows at Farakka, the 1996 treaty contains no effective provision to ensure such flows. It only contains an assurance of India for forfeiting the water flows at Farakka. That assurance falls far short of amounting to an obligation of controlling or regulating uses of the Ganges water in the upper basin. The fragility of that assurance can be discerned from the provision in Article II (iii) in which both the states recognized the possibility of water availability of below 50,000 cusecs. Sharing of Teesta water is another cause for irritation in Bangladesh India relations. In 2011, Manmohan Singh, Prime Minister of India visited Bangladesh to resolve Teesta water dispute. It has not been resolved due to objections which were raised by West Bengal Chief Minister, Mamata Banerjee. She has expressed her unhappiness about regular sharing of Tessta water. Present BJP Government has taken initiatives to resolve the Teesta water dispute and has expressed highly concerns on this issue. (Gibson : 2006)

VI1) Climate Refugee

According to German Watch, The Global Climate Index - 2009 report expresses that among 170 countries of the world Bangladesh is most vulnerable to climate change. The nation is particularly at risk because it is a vast delta plain with 230 rivers, many of which swell during the monsoon rains. The land in Bangladesh is either below or barely above sea level. This geology, combined with river water from the melting Himalayan glaciers

in the North and encroaching Bay of Bengal in the South, makes the region prone to severe flooding. The situation is made worse by the prevalence of intense storms, a marker of climate stresses. It is suspected that if sea levels rise in the next 40-50 years, then half of the population in Bangladesh will move across borders to neighboring countries. i,e. India and Myanmar. The situation is complicated by the fact that the population of the country is the highest in the world. According to US Davis, approximately 75 million (half) of Bangladesh's population would emigrate due to sea level rise . It will have impact not only on Bangladesh but also on South Asia and South-East Asia for many generations. As Bangladesh has very limited high land to which people can move migration to India becomes the next option. With India facing its own population pressures in low lying coastal areas. This new environmental facts throw challenges for both the governments. The two neighbors need to conduct a joint study on the impact of forced mobility from sea level rise, the number of people who will be displaced and possible solutions. For example, India could identify the areas where climate refugees can be accommodated. India - Bangladesh would have to study the possibility of shifting climate refugees (caused by climate change) from India to other parts of the world.(The Daily Star : August, 2010)

VII1) Environmental Degradation

Another climate change induced concern is environmental degradation especially of Sundarban mangrove forest one of the largest such forests in the world. The size is about of the 9,600 sq.km of Sundarbans, 40 percent of which lie in India and the rest in Bangladesh. The Sundarbans are critical for the protection of low-lying areas because they provide ground stability in the face of high tides, holding the tress and also absorbing salt. As India and Bangladesh are already sharing data on flood forecasting new stations can be set up to expedite the transfer of data on environmental degradation. As climate change will intensify the process of river erosion, this has become an urgent issue for India and Bangladesh. Reports in the Bangladeshi media predict that around 2400 hectares of cultivable land and 400 hectares of settlement on the banks of Jamuna, Ganga and Padma rivers will disappear due to erosion in 2017. Sometimes new land emerges along the rivers which leads to controversy over their ownership. In terms of the prospect involved in bilateral relations, India merits greater significance for Bangladesh than any other country. It is enough to mention that the issues at stake in Bangladesh-India relations are of crucial importance more for Bangladesh, but for both the countries for the sake of peace and prosperity. As indicated, earlier interstate relations embrace virtually all aspects of relations. These, while impinge on the prospects for the political and economic emancipation of Bangladesh, not much academic efforts have been employed to gauge the nature, magnitude and intensity of challenges faced by Bangladesh in managing its relations with India. Even, less has been done to explore the policy options for the country in overcoming these challenges. Meanwhile, with the formation of the Government headed by the Honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on 6 January, 2009, a new era of fresh prospects and opportunities of refurbishing the Bangladesh - India relations have been opened before the two countries. Recently, Bangladesh Prime Minister visited New Delhi on August 15, 2015 and met Narenda Modi, the Prime Minister of India on 24 September, 2015. (Patkar: 2006)

Recent Development in Bangladesh - India Relations

At present, as per sources of Ministry of External Affairs, Bangladesh relations, high level contacts are developing the relations between these two countries. This is reflected in multi-dimensional relations with Bangladesh at several levels of interaction. High level exchange visits and meetings take place regularly alongside the wide ranging people to people interaction. Indian High commission in Bangladesh issues about half a million visas every year and thousands of Bangladeshi students study in India on self financing basis and are recipients of over one hundred annual GOI Scholarships.

Diplomacy on Top: Head to Head Negotiations

Former Indian prime Minister Dr. Monmohan Singh accompanied by Chief Ministers of four states (Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram) and an official as well as media delegation visited Dhaka on September 6-7, 2011 at the invitation of PM Sheikh Hasina. Ten agreements including a Framework Agreement of Cooperation for Development and Protocol to the Agreement concerning demarcation of the land Boundary between India and Bangladesh were signed. PM of India announced the commencement of 24-hour access to the Tin Bigha corridor to Dahagram and Angorpota Enclaves as well as duty free import of 46 textile items (subsequently expanded to all items, except 25) from Bangladesh. Prime Minister of Bangladesh Sheikh Hasina accompanied by a 123 member delegation had paid a state visit to India from January 10-13, 2010. The prime Ministers of the two countries agreed to put in place a comprehensive framework of cooperation for development of the two countries based on their mutually shared vision for the flier. The bilateral relations between the two countries are on a high trajectory with regular high-level visits and exchanges. Smt. Sushma Swaraj and General (Retd.) V.K. Singh paid their first stand-alone visits abroad to Bangladesh after assuming charge as Honorable Minster and Minster of State of External Affairs in June and August 2014, respectively.

Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi paid a State visit to Bangladesh on June 6-7, 2015. During the visit, 22 bilateral documents were concluded, including the exchange of instrument of ratification for India-Bangladesh Land Boundary Agreement (LBA). Sheikh Hasina Hon'ble Prime Minister of Bangladesh visited New Delhi on 19 August 2015 to attend funeral of late Smt. Suvra Mukherjee, spouse of Hon'ble President Shri Pranab Mukherjee. Both Prime Minister's met in New York on 24 September 2015 on the sidelines of UNGA. Hon'ble President Pranab Mukherjee visited Bangladesh in March, which was his first trip abroad since assuming the office. Hon'ble President of Bangladesh Mr. Md. Abdul Hamid visited India in December 2014, which was the first visit by Bangladesh's ceremonial Head of the State after a gap of 42 years. Actually it is a milestone of the history of Bangladesh.

Recent Economic Assistance to Bangladesh

On the economic assistance side, India has extended credit of US$ 1 billion to Bangladesh for a range of projects including railway infrastructure supply of Bangladesh locomotives and passenger coaches, procurement of buses and dredging projects. The line of credit Agreement was signed in Dhaka on August 7,2070 between EXIM Bank of

India and Government of Bangladesh. During the visit of Sheikh Hasina, Hon'ble Prime Minister of Bangladesh to India in January 2010, India announced a US$ 1 billion line of credit (LOC) for Bangladesh. Most of these projects have been completed and the remaining are under various stages of completion. Hon'ble prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi announced a new LOC of US$ 2 billion during his visit to Bangladesh in June 2015. The new line of credit (LOC) will cover projects in areas of Roads.

Security Issues

India's main concern had always been its perception that Bangladesh had, consciously or otherwise been providing safe heaven for or even abetting, elements of various militant groups from the North-east Indian states who were actively pursuing anti India activities using Bangladesh as a launching pad. However the Mohajote (Grand Alliance) government led by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina considered these elements as inimical to Bangladesh's own security concerns and detrimental to its overall societal development. The Government of Bangladesh issued India in clear categorical and unambiguous terms that Bangladesh would not allow its territory to carry out activities inimical to India's security concerns and enunciated policy of zero tolerance towards any terrorist activity conduced on launched from Bangladesh. The commitment made in the very early days of government, has been more palpably demonstrated. It has been deeply appreciated by India. Security concerns alone cast cloud over the growing relations between these two countries. Within the overall security rubric, the Home ministers of the two countries signed a Treaty in Dhaka in January 2013. (The Daily Star: February,2013) Earlier during visits of the Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to India in January 2010 the two countries had signed the agreement of Moral Legal Assistance on Criminal matters, transfer of sentenced persons and an Agreement on Combating International Terrorism, Organized Crime and Illicit Drug Trafficking**.** (Bindra: 1982)

Cultural Exchanges

The *Indira Gandhi Cultural Centre (IGCC*) in Dhaka regularly organizes programme covering the entire scope of cultural activities since 2010. Scholarships are being granted by ICCR every year to students from Bangladesh for pursuing general courses in Arts, Science Engineering and also specialized courses for culture ,drama, arts and sports etc. Youth delegation of one hundred members is visiting India annually since 2012. The High Commission of India has been publishing a print and electronic edition of Bengali literary monthly magazine,"Bharat Bichitra" for the last 42 years. The magazine is considered as one of the best of its kind in Bangladesh and has a wide leadership among all sections of society. (The Bangladesh Obserber: September, 2012)

Connectivity

The movement of goods by road is conducted through more than 20 Land Customs Stations (LCSs) along the border and more than 20 are notified for operationalisation. The Protocol on Inland Water Trade and Transit (PIWTT) has been operational since 1972. It permits movement of goods over barges/vessels through the river systems of

Bangladesh on eight specific routes. Connectivity through the Coastal Waterways enabled by the signing of the Coastal Shipping Agreement is also of priority to both India and Bangladesh. There are bus services between Dhaka-Kolkata, Dhaka-Agartala, Dhaka-Shillong-Guwahati and Kolkata-Agartala via Dhaka. Commencement of Khulna-Kolkata bus service is also at an advanced stage of preparation. Three Broad Gauge inter country rail links between the two countries are in operation out of the 6 rail links that exist while work on the Shahbazpur-Kulaura rail link is in progress. There is regular Passenger train service 'Moitree Express' between Kolkata and Dhaka, which now operates 4 days a week. National airlines of both countries and few private airlines operate between Dhaka, Chittagong and New Delhi, Kolkata and Mumbai.

Conclusion

Bangladesh - India relations have more than an academic strategic context. Over the years, Bangladesh- India relations have been caught warp and woof, sometime in the 1970s if not futherback. This relationship needs to finally come to maturity by moving its discourse into the 21st century. Bangladesh observed many ups and downs in its relations with India in the last four decades. Although, the relations between these two countries have been built through the victory of liberation war in 1971, it was cracked in the post 1975 events. The 21st century is the challenging century to build relationship between these two countries. They have a strong economy and strategic position in South Asia. In the long run, India's national interests primarily lie towards and beyond its eastern flanks to South - East Asia and the new geographical and strategic construct namely Indo-Pacific Asia. Now a days, Bangladesh has been facing some challenges with India to resolve some issues and challenges for further development and cooperation. It is argued in this paper that the relationship between Bangladesh and India is historically examined by experiences. Some steps should be taken to improve relations between Bangladesh and India for further betterment and for resolving crucial issues:

Agreement on water sharing should be given priority. Early resolution of the Teesta issue is necessary; Connectivity should be given top most priority. Both the countries should work together to operationalise it; There is need for addressing the issue of illegal migration. In this regard innovative measures should be taken to resolve the problem, being extra careful to ensure that the illegal migrants do not acquire voting rights and Indian nationality. Liberal visa system should be put in place if necessary, as well as people to people contact needs to be encouraged. Trade relationship has improved significantly between the two countries. India has provided zero duty access to Bangladeshi products, thereby addressing the tariff related issue to a great extent. The two countries should now consider an agreement on non- tariff barriers. Progress can be made by cooperation on common challenges like disaster management, food security, environmental degradation, border security and energy security etc. Indian investment should be encouraged in Bangladesh through visits of trade delegation, trade fairs and bilateral assurances on protection of the interests of potential investors. We have to understand that there are many issues that need to be addressed successfully. If the two countries want to reduce border crisis, achieve well management on border issue, overcome the challenges of natural disaster and remove environmental degradation, it is

imperative for the top most political leadership of the two countries to work together towards being able to reach these goals. To march forward in the 21st century along with other developed and developing countries of south Asia, People of both the countries need a modern, vibrant, inclusive, pro - people, pro- development policies to be carried forward by the enlightened leadership. Both of the nations have common goals and for this reason a Dickensian phase may be quoted - "we are in the best of times, we are in the worst of time, we are in the edge of hope, and we are in the edge of despairs."

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The 2015 Constitution in Nepal and Changing Indo-Nepal and Sino-Nepal Relations[*]

Sharmila Kabir Sheema[†]

Abstract: Nepal promulgated her new Constitution on the 20th September, 2015. The new Constitution could not please the Madheshi people in Terai region, which is situated in the southern part of Nepal adjacent to the Indian border. Madheshi people blockaded the India-Nepal border in Terai region, which is the only commercial route of Nepal with India. Nepal had claimed that India supported the Madheshi ethnic groups, who are known as of Indian origin and make up 30% of Nepal's population. During the blockade, India stopped exporting petroleum, fuel, oil, medicine, and other essential goods to Nepal. That blockade caused immense miseries for Nepalese people. Anti-Indian sentiment rose high among Nepalese people. The anti-Indian sentiment had resulted in people's preference for China as an alternative to India. During the blockade China exported petroleum, fuel to Nepal. This paper discusses the causes of blockade and how the blockade affected India-Nepal relations and how Nepal moved strategically closer to China. It also discusses how Nepal is trying to maintain balance in its relationship with both India and China.

Introduction

A Constitution was enacted by the Constituent Assembly of Nepal on the 20th September 2015 which turned Nepal, among many things, into a federal democratic country. The then ruling political parties, namely, the Nepali Congress and Communist Party of Nepal-United Marxist-Leninist (CPN-UML) celebrated "Diwali", while the Madheshi Political Parties and Tharuhat Action Committee in the Terai region of southern Nepal bordering India observed the day of the enactment of this 2015 Constitution as a "black day". China, Pakistan and few other countries welcomed the new Constitution. But, India expressed its displeasure over Nepal's political development.[1] With "coded" encouragement from Indian administration, Terai politicians kept the transit routes between Nepal and India shut for almost five months from September 2015 to February 2016 stopping supply of petroleum products and other essential goods for which Nepal was completely dependent on India. This caused immense sufferings to the Nepalese people who blamed India for this and turned anti-Indian. In that circumstance, China came forward and announced its steadfast support for Nepal's national independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity. China supplied oil to Nepal which added to the anger of Indian-backed Madheshi protesters and India. The Chinese move made India further concerned about Chinese influence over Nepal whom India for long has considered nothing more than its satellite and Nepal's northern border with China as its own border with regard to India's security threat from China.

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This paper aims specifically at dealing with the nature of Nepal's domestic politics and the reasons for the Madhesi and Tharu communities' concern and opposition over some provisions of the 2015 Constitution. It also aims at focusing on the Indian role in encouraging and supporting the Madhesis' protest movement and blockade and Nepal's search for alternative source and force to India and did find China a ready source and force willing to reach out to Nepal to avert crisis caused by India-backed economic blockade by the Madhesis and Tharus. The blockade created an environment and opportunity for both China and Nepal to develop close relationship. To the chagrin of India, the crisis-time government of K.P. Sharma Oli had made a "soft strategic tilt" toward China. The paper deals with India's late realization of the real possibility of "losing Nepal" to China and thus its decision to "unofficial" lifting of "unofficially" declared blockade. It also discusses the down fall of the crisis-time government of K.P. Sharma Oli in July 2016 and the formation of new pro-Indian government with the backing of India after the fall of the Oli government. The paper finally discusses the new Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal (Prachanda)'s Madhesi, Indian, and Chinese dilemmas.

Qualitative approach has been used in preparing this paper. It is a descriptive as well as an analytical paper. Books, articles, Newspapers, Magazines, commentaries of experts on the issue at hand have been used as source and research materials for this paper. Formal and informal discussion with Bangladeshi, Chinese, Indian, and Nepali researchers and experts have also helped articulate arguments in this paper. The nature of the paper did not necessitate field survey or use of statistical tool.

Madheshis and Their India Connections

Nepal is a South Asian land-locked Himalayan country. It is bounded and butted by India in three sides (east, west and south). China is its northern bordering country. Nepal shares an open border of 1868 KM with five Indian states (Uttarkhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal and Sikkim) and 1,415 km with Tibet in China.[2]

The word "Madheshi is derived from "Maddhadesh" and, in Nepali language, Maddhadesh means middle/central territory between northern hill and southern plain land. The inhabitants of Madheshi and Tharu community of Madhesh are located in Terai region of the Sothern part of Nepal adjacent to the border with India who live in 22 out of 75 districts of Nepal. A sizeable portion of the Madheshis has originated in India and their Socio-cultural-anthropological relationships with India are much older.

Source: Google Map https://www.google.com/search?q=map+of +terai+district+of+nepal&client=firefox-b&tbm= isch&imgil=5gD0d Urez8eWbM %253A%253BH6ZomzxURLwO1M%253 Bhttp%25253A%25252F%25252Fmantray a.org%25252Fenduring-dilemmas-nepali-insurgencyredux%25252F&source=iu&pf= m&fir=5gD0dUrez8eWbM%253A%252 CH6ZomzxURLwO1M%252C &usg= E zpqDLDflb4fB80BaXerIGakD_Y%3D&ve d=0ahUKEwiYq5imqNHTAhWLuo8KHZ uuDF4QyjcIOg&ei=i4kIWdi5I4v1vgSb3bL wBQ&biw=1280&bih=647#imgrc=5gD0d Urez8eWbM: Accessed on 20 April, 2017.

As the map shows, the Terai region, where the Madheshi people live, has open borders with India. Madheshi families marry off their daughters to Indian men and bring brides for their sons from there.[3] In addition, majority of Madhesi population have come from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh of India and thus treated as the "blessed fellow" of India by the mainstream political forces and the non-Madeshi Nepalese. Consequently, the mainstream people of Nepal don't have much trust in them and look upon them with some degree of suspicion as "agents" of India.[4] The Madheshis are allegedly deprived of some of the citizens' rights; rights such as rights of the title and possession of land and even some government privileges. They are also deprived of proper representation in Nepal's parliament.[5]

The 2015 Constitution, Madhesi and Indian Concerns, and the Blockade

Although over 85% of the legislators in the 686-strong Constituent Assembly supported the 2015 Constitution, the pro-Indian parties representing the Madheshis strongly opposed the Constitution on a number of grounds. Apprehended to be marginalized in mainstream politics of Nepal, the Madheshis and Tharu communities vehemently protested against the Constitution enacted in 2015. Among others, this Constitution, in order to form a Federal system in Nepal, divided Nepal into seven administrative units against which the Madheshis and Tharu community launched vehement and violent protest movement. They argued that the way these seven provinces were divided was likely to make the Madheshi community minority and marginalized in the society and politics in those provinces leading them to resort to blockade the India-Nepal border which is Nepal's only commercial route with India and the outside world. Resultantly, all kinds of external trade of goods like petroleum, fuel, medicine was shut down.[6]

The Madheshis originally raised four point demands that included demarcation of provinces which were related to five districts (Sansari, Jhapa and Morang in the east, Kanchanpur and Kailal in the west);   resorting to population as the primary criterion for delimitation of electoral constituency; proportional representation in government jobs; and issues relating to citizenship.[7]

But, the three major political parties, namely, the Nepali Congress, the Communist Party of Nepal-United Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML) and the Communist Party of Nepal (the Maoist Center) – who were instrumental behind the articulation of the 2015 Constitution -- were steadfastly opposed to these demands. They thought that such demands of the Madheshis were impossible to accept and implement.[8]

Indian Support for the Blockade and Nepal's Failed Efforts to Change Indian Stand

Nepal's mainstream people and political forces strongly believe that there was India's "undeclared" support and role behind the blockade despite India's routine denial of such allegation. Both India and the Madheshis had raised almost the same objections about Nepal's 2015 Constitution. The fact of India's support was substantiated by Federal Socialist Forum's senior leader Ashok Rai's statement when he said, "We have blocked the border check-post by changing the form of agitation and India has been supporting and welcoming the agitation".[9] India had stopped supplying petroleum, fuel, medicine

and other essential goods. India used the Madheshis by supporting their protest movement from behind the scene. Obviously, the Madheshi parties provided India with the opportunity to meddle in the internal affairs of Nepal by resorting to violent protest against the 2015 Constitution. It has been a matter of fact that Madhesh-centric political parties always support India and India also patronize them.[10] Pushpa Raj Pradhan, a prominent Nepalese Columnist, wrote in the People's Review of Nepal that-'The dangerous agenda of India is not only to permanently capture the disputed land Kalapani, but also to separate the Terai districts and finally annex the 20 Terai districts (along Indian border) through the modality it adopted in annexing Sikkim'.[11]

Many Nepalese feared that India might repeal the agreement on transit right to land-locked Nepal. Many analysts opined that the aggression and involvement of India in Nepal could hamper Indo-Nepal relationship. The question was raised whether or not Nepal could solve its problems without India's help. Under such circumstance, Nepal's Deputy Prime Minister and foreign minister, Kamal Thapa, of the then government of Prime Minister K.P Sharma Oli, visited New Delhi during October 18-20, 2015. He met with Indian foreign minister Sushma Swaraj and Home minister Rajnath Singh and requested them to help lift the blockade. Both advised Thapa to solve Nepal's internal political crisis and to take initiative to address the discontent of the Madheshis through discussion and amending the 2015 Constitution. Kamal Thapa did not get any assurance from the Indian side about the lifting of blockade and returned home being disappointed.

The mainstream politics of Nepal is mostly influenced and dominated by the Monarchists, Nepali Congress, Communists, Maoists and the hill communities. On the other hand, India always dominated Nepal as it's "big brother" and that's why mainstream politics of Nepal is always against India. Nepalese leaders were determined not to give India any chance to fulfill its design. Even under heavy pressure from India, Nepal's political leaders had shown complete unity for the first time and did not compromise on self respect, dignity and sovereignty for petroleum as it was nobody's "little brother".

There is a persistent perception among a large section of Nepalese that India was primarily responsible for the five month blockade of the Indo-Nepal border. This perception is the strongest among high level Nepali bureaucrats, who are mostly drawn from the traditionally privileged hill communities.[12] Nepal's Prime Minister during the blockade, K.P. Sharma Oli, urged India to lift the blockade. He also said that his government was prepared to amend the Constitution by re-demarcating Federal State borders, for which the Madheshi political parties were protesting with Indian instigation and blockaded India-Nepal border. But, he did not get any positive indication of that from India causing a rift in Indo-Nepal bilateral relations.[13]

Nepal's Search for Alternatives: "Soft Strategic Tilt" Toward China, and Concerns of India

Although historically Nepal had maintained very close relationship with India on the basis of historical-religio-cultural-anthropological ties, China-Nepal relations dwell into the border conflict that resulted in Nepal-Tibet-China War in 1789-1792. Nepal even

severed all ties with China in the late 19th Century. At present, Nepal-China relations have developed due to two disasters and many more factors. On the other hand, over the years, many factors gradually caused distance in India-Nepal relations.

Nepal faced two large crises in a very short succession; the 2015 earthquake and blockade over the 2015 constitution. During these two events, China came forward to help Nepal, took the advantage to consolidate its relationship with Nepal, and pushed India to strategically inconvenient condition.

The climate of widespread anti-Indian sentiment among Nepali people, discussed above, led the Nepalese leaders to "tilt" toward China. Oli turned toward China and met with Wu Chuntai (Chinese ambassador) on 23 October, 2015 and requested Wu Chuntai for supply of fuel from China. An eight-member delegation headed by Commerce and Supplies Minister, Ganesh Pun, visited China to secure supply of fuel oil and cooking gas. China responded positively and immediately. China was also ready to supply raw materials to make solar power generators in Nepal. Naturally, the Madheshi protestors did not like Chinese oil supply. Madheshi political forces accused China of supporting Nepal's mainstream parties and elites against Madheshi interests.

With the arrival of Chinese fuel oil in Nepal, India had lost its outstanding status as Nepal's sole fuel provider and consequent leverage over Nepal. Nepal also requested China to open up six more routes linking Nepal with Tibet for increasing volume of trade between the two countries. Nepal also sought for duty-free access of its good to China.[14] By these initiatives, Sino-Nepal direct trade has begun. Kamal Thapa, the then Deputy Prime Minister and foreign minister of Nepal, also visited China during December 23-28, 2015 and was received warmly. He met with Chinese Vice President Li Yuancho who assured that China will assist Nepal to secure its interest, will expand connectivity, and help increase energy production capacity, post-disaster reconstruction, tourism, and other sectors. Thapa also met with Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi and discussed matters related to trade and other issues of common interest. Wang Yi and Thapa reached at an agreement on a wide range of issues of common interests of the two countries.[15] China promised to supply 1.4 million liters of fuel for urgent necessity US$500/- million in post-disaster rebuilding of Nepal. Nepal also started accelerating the advancement of its northern trade routes with China. An example of this is the enhancement of the Dhulekhel Tatopani Section of the Araniko Highway, which was built in 1970 with the Chinese aid, but had to be closed due to earthquake.

Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli also visited China in March 2016, met with Chinese President Xi Jinping, and discussed the possibility of establishing China-Nepal Free Trade Area and increasing cooperation on connectivity and energy sectors between two countries. Nepal had chosen China as her alternative trading partner which can be termed as "soft strategic tilt" toward China. Nepal sought to import gasoline from China for the first time.

China and Nepal also signed agreements allowing Nepal to conduct foreign trade via Chinese ports. Currently, over 90 percent of Nepal's trade with third countries is done through India. The new agreement has paved the way for some of that to be diverted to Chinese transit hubs. Oli also encouraged Chinese businessmen to invest in Nepal in

manufacturing, hydropower, tourism, service sectors, IT, mining, and agro-based industries.[16] China also sanctioned loans for building an international airport at Pokhra. They were also looking into the possibility of a rail link between the two countries.

Sensing that the control over the "Nepali Ball" was about to be lost to China, India found out the futility of the "unofficial blockade", and it, without any pre-condition, lifted blockade against land-locked Nepal in January 2016. Protestors called off the blockade and allowed supply trucks standard for about five months to roll into the landlocked country as Nepal also pledged to amend the Constitution to provide greater political voice to the Madhesi and vowed to resolve other grievances through talks.[17] K.P. Sharma Oli, then visited India on February 19, 2016. He expressed his intention to forget the "undesirable" things that occurred between Nepal and India and wanted to expand reciprocal friendship between India and Nepal. As expected, his visit to India was going to normalize the Indo-Nepal bilateral relations. After lifting the blockade, India-Nepal trade resumed once again.[18]

End of Blockade and Fall of the Oli Government: The Dilemmas of the Pro-Indian Prachanda Government

K P Sharma Oli resigned from his post in July 2016 in the face of concerted opposition from the Pro-Indian Madheshi parties, Nepali Congress, and the Maoists. Pushpa Kamal Dahal (Prachanda) of the Maoist Party was elected as new Prime Minister of Nepal on August 4, 2016 who headed a coalition government consisting of Nepali Congress and the Communist Party of Nepal (CPN)-Maoist Center. His government signed a 3-point agreement with the Madheshi Front composed of several parties. India was displeased with ex-Nepali Prime Minister, K. P. Sharma Oli, as it considered him bitter to India. On the other hand, Prachanda proved himself to be a pro-Indian Nepali leader who came to power by compromising with India. Thus, he could not do anything independently without support and advice from India.

Prachanda visited India in September 2016 and Nepal and India signed a three-point Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and issued a 25-point joint communiqué. As per the MoU, the government of India is to provide project management consultancy service for the road up gradation and improvement of projects in the Terai region of Nepal. India also agreed to provide a mandatory dollar credit line of US$ 750 million for the post-quake reconstruction in Nepal.[19] Prachnda was also prepared to amend the Constitution not only to satisfy the Madhesi people but also Indian counselors upon advice from Delhi. Oli's CPN-UML party sharply opposed this decision. Nepali ruling elites knew that the Indian elites have used them to fulfill their own agenda to disconnect the entire Terai districts from the hill districts. Indian ambassador to Nepal also asked the Madheshi leaders to support the Constitutional amendments proposed by Prachanda's government.

On the contrary, China was not happy about the fall of Oli's government and was reluctant to award Nepal's new Prime Ministe, Prachanda, because of the widely held perception that Prachanda, with Indian help, was involved in plotting Oli's downfall. China was concerned about the bilateral agreements which it signed with the Oli government. But, Prachanda assured China that Nepal would fulfill all the bilateral

commitments including agreements and obligations made by the previous governments. Parachanda has been trying hard to play a balancing act between India and China. In the 1950s and 1960s, we saw that Nepali King Mahendra also tried to keep balanced relationship with both India and China. He involved China as a potential counter-balance against India in the political game in the Hiamalayan region. He established the strategy through appointing Chinese-minded and India-minded Prime Ministers alternately. He also began to pursue the principle of "Non Alliance and Equal Friendship" to keep Nepal at "same distance" from both India and China.[20]

Nepal conducted its first ever Joint Military Exercise, named 'Pratikar', with China on February 10, 2017. This drill was designed to train Nepali forces in handling international terror groups and disaster management. Both sides hoped that it would set up a trend of adjustable military exercise between the two countries. Previously, Nepalese army had been involved in such drills only with the United States and Indian armies. By the beginning of new and higher level of bilateral military engagement, they also signed bilateral collaboration contracts of worth 01 billion RMB (the Chinese Currency). Most of the money was supposed to be spent for reforming and upgrading Nepal-China road links. In 2017, China sanctioned aid of US$ 32.3 million to the Nepal Army to increase its capacity and can provide its accessories for United Nations Peacekeeping Missions in high conflict areas. China has increased the number of seats for Nepalese Army Officers in its War Colleges. Some senior officers of the Nepalese Army argue in favor of deeper military cooperation with China to reap more benefits. Most Nepalese think that China is a neighboring state which does not interfere in Nepal's domestic political affairs. They also believe that since China is a permanent member of UN Security Council good relationship with it may be useful for the interests of smaller countries like Nepal.[21]

Nepal, at the same time also, assured India that military drill with China does not violate the India-Nepal Peace and Friendship Treaty of 1950. It is also clear that China wants to make an inroad to enter into South Asian countries. China wanted to expand her trade and commerce in South Asia by creating a link. That's why it is looking at Nepal as a centre to achieve its goal. China's position in Nepal is becoming stronger; it is gradually establishing its hold in Nepal. Geographical proximity between Nepal and China also gives China an easy access to Nepal.

Nepal and China have also started to promote their economic and political relations. China also wants to become an alternative trading partner for Nepal by providing new trade routes and improving its strategic relations. It has created a kind of unease in the Indian policy circles. Recent Nepal-China Joint Military Exercise is perceived as increasingly troublesome by the Indian elites. Though Nepal has assured India that there is nothing to be worried about it, as the Military engagement with China was of small scale, India's suspicion in this regard still remains. Prachada also assured India that Nepal's relationship with other countries is not designed to harm India-Nepal relationship. The relationship with one is not going to affect the other. The ambition of India is to increase trade ties with Nepal. For this, India has been building two rail lines in Nepal and three more are being planned. Yet, India's worries have increased lately. Improved Nepal-China relationship is troubling for India as unlike the past, India no

longer remained the only principal trading partner of Nepal as China has become its alternative trading partner.

In recent times, India's Zero Sum mindset has become obsolete and unsustainable. India has understood this fact but is yet to come up with any realistically viable and attractive alternative idea to replace the Zero Sum mindset. Since the position of Chinese diplomacy is a Win-Win one, Nepal's former Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli moved to consolidate Nepal's relationship with China. The standoff with India on the Madheshi and blockade issues led him to hug China's amity. His successor, Prachanda, found it hard to undo that.

India's Strategic and foreign policy planners need to be careful and ready to be able to adapt to the new reality that as China has been steadily expanding it's influence in Nepal and other parts of South Asia,[22] Beijing's focus is also on Lumbini, the Lord Buddha's birthplace, which lies inside Nepal and barely 25 KM across the border from India.[23]

Conclusion

After promulgation of the Constitution in mid-September 2015, Tharu and Madheshi inhabitants in the Terai region protested against the new Constitution alleging that Constitution would further marginalize their position in the Nepalese society and Polity. They blockaded India-Nepal border. India joined the blockade program by stopping supply of fuel, oil and other essentials to Nepal. Nepali people strongly believed that India put pressure on Nepal to force it to change its Constitution by supporting the blockade which Nepal refers to as an "unofficial" trade blockade by India which India denied.

During the blockade, Nepal had developed political and economical relations with China out of desperation and necessity. China also responded positively and supplied fuel oil in Nepal to minimize fuel crisis. Analysts said that India has always caused instability in Nepal. But this time around, India was not very successful to achieve much from blockade. China wants to take India's place as the largest trading partner of Nepal. India is the largest economy and a rising power in South Asia. China labels India as a country with overwhelming economic and social challenges where as China could play a role by investing in infrastructure and other sectors. However, an international environment that has apparently been favorable to India at the moment had led China to term India as a rising power in the international system.[24]

On the other hand, China wants to be a superpower on the global stage. China's concern is that, if India rises as leader of South Asia, it might hinder China's desire to become the super power. That's why China has developed relationship with Nepal to make an inroad into South Asian sub-region through Nepal as well as other Soth Asia countries. The Chinese are behaving with much savior-faire to win over countries in neighborhood by displaying respect combined with easy familiarity through soft power.[25]

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Myanmar: Problems and new Vicissitudes in Politics

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Abstract: In the twenty-first century military rule has become rare in world politics. Now, most of the military regimes have either been turned into some form of democracy or changed into another form of authoritarianism. Myanmar is not exceptional in this case. The present article discusses the structure and roles of major state institutions in the political process of Myanmar. This article also evaluates the terms and restrictions of participation of different political actors, regime ideology, legitimacy, and key facts of political contention and conflict. Based on these, the article explores how the military rulers are detaching from politics and which political vicissitudes are occurring in Myanmar. Finally, the paper proposes that the new situation can be attributed to changing internal and external factors such as ideological cohesion, organizational structure, personal interest, internal and external security impacts, military's moods and motives as well as its nature to interfere in Myanmar.

Keywords: Military, Vicissitude, Political System, Political actor, Conflict, Ideology, legitimacy, Myanmar.

Introduction

Southeast Asia is one of the significant regions in the world for its history, culture, politics, and economy. This multi-linguistic, ethnic, and multicultural region is well-recognized for its drastically economic growth. Southeast Asia has become a model for its economic development to developing countries. In this region, except Thailand, all other countries have colonial experience. Myanmar's political system was influenced by the colonial power both in positive and negative senses. Consequently, Myanmar is one of the unparallel and controversial countries in South Asia for its military politics and political system. The name of the country had controversy. Most of the European and other countries knew Myanmar was 'Burma' (Than, 2001: 203-247). A serious political struggle is in progress in Myanmar today which turns on the idea of freedom (Silverstein, 1996:211-228). Till the beginning of 1988 politics and opposition had been controlled unlawfully by the military ruler. Since then, Myanmar has been trying to obtain democratic values. In July 1997, Myanmar has been able to be recognized by the ASEAN and began a new journey for its economic development. Nonetheless, Myanmar has seen an unprecedented political opening in the recent years, which has clearly transformed the long term oppressive military administration. Since President U Thein Sein took power in 2011, he has started political liberalization that has reduced the repressive type of political practice and created opportunities for participation in institutions selected by the military (Macdonald, 2013:20-36). These reforms have opened the space for the opposition forces and civil society. As consequences, the international community has started to approve the political reforms of Myanmar. Particularly in 2013 government has taken numerous new political initiatives that positively marked Myanmar to the international community (Bunte & Dosch, 2015:3-19). In the present situation, Myanmar

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can no longer be classified as a case of direct military rule and this process shows a steady decline of military regimes worldwide in the last two decades. This phenomenon has been especially strong in Asia, where till 1987, half of the continent countries lived under military or military backed rule. Since then democracy has replaced many military or quasi-military regimes in South and Southeast Asia (Bunte, 2011). This article explores why did military leave the driver's seat, and what accounts for the transition from military rule to democracy in Myanmar?

By using secondary sources (e.g. related books, journals, research papers, newspapers) and expert comments, present article deals with the above-mentioned research question. As research methods, the study follows content analysis and exploratory method as approaches to the study.

Structure of the Political System of Myanmar

The political system is the set of formal legal institutions that constitute a "government" or a "state". On the other hand, political structure refers to institutions or groups and their relations to each other, their patterns of relations within political systems and to political regulations, laws and the norms present in political systems in such a way that they constitute the political landscape of the political entity. In the social domain, its complement is social structure. The political structure also refers to the way in which a government is run (Avery, 1991:29-34). The basic political structure of modern nation-state has formed by three major organs that are executive, legislature, and judiciary. The additional institutional structure has been shaped by this basic structure. In democracy strong executive, representative legislature and independent judiciary with the balance of power are very important. Due to ensuring of democratic values cheek and balance among three organs are also significant. Checks and balances refer to the different mechanisms that prevent one branch of government from gaining too much power and dominating the other branches.

The Southeast Asian countries political institutions and political culture have been influenced by the colonial legacy. The nation-building process of Myanmar was in progressed began by the eleven century with the name of Burma. In 1885 Myanmar captured by the British colonial power. But at that time, Myanmar was not directly governed by the British government; they ruled through the local elites like ethnic chiefs with under the British control. Colonial Burma never had a governor-general. It was the British Government of Burma Act of 1935 which separated Burma from India in 1937. Thus, nation-building process of Myanmar had been influenced by the indigenous nationality. In indigenous nationality everyone was loyal to their ethnic chief, nonetheless, this spirit of nationality was demolished when the modern nation-state building in Myanmar was started (Win, 2013:9).

After the independence, Myanmar has introduced west minister type of government with a bicameral legislature and it's divided into central and state government. The Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League (AFPFL) established the first government in Myanmar. In 1958 intended for civil war, the political conflict began and the AFPFL was divided into two factions. That was the most significant event for the Myanmar because military

derived to its own power. In 1962 General Ne Win founded a Revolutionary Council (RC). The RC also formed the corps known as Burma Socialist Program Party (BWS). Consequently, Burma started a new political order with a new political philosophy. Finally in 1974 Myanmar constitutionally became a socialist country.

Myanmar is administratively divided into fourteen regions, seven states with seven divisions. Excluding national capital, each state and division have a regional capital. The other administrative structures have designed with 64 Districts, 324 townships, 2471 wards, and 13747 villages. In September 1993, Myanmar has fixed 104 basic state principles by the National Convention Convening Commission (NCCC). The basic point has recognized secular republic with seven regions and seven states having equal status (Than, 2001:203-247). Myanmar has also fixed hierarchy under the direct presidential administration, designed self-administrative areas with the national races as a basic state structure.

Both central and provincial legislatures have reserved seats for the military person. As a chief executive, President of Myanmar is elected by the Electoral College. Cabinet and other higher administrative posts were controlled by the president. As a result, military chief in commander and the president became the most powerful persons in Myanmar politics.

After independence, during first fourteen years, Myanmar continued with parliamentary democracy. Judiciary is composed of Supreme Court and High Court. Nevertheless, under the military rule, the judiciary is controlled by the junta government.

Roles of Major State Institutions in the Political Process

Since first coming to direct political power in 1958, Myanmar military (tatmadow) has dominated the country's politics and controlled the state machinery. The major political institutions of Myanmar like parliament and judiciary had no democratic role in its political process. The executive had personalized by the army; the legislature of Myanmar contained feeble, non-representative, and rubber stamp characteristics. It is a well-known fact that the independence of the judiciary is the basic requisite for ensuring a free and fair society under the rule of law. Rule of law, responsible for the good governance of the country, can be secured through the unbiased judiciary. But the Judiciary of Myanmar was controlled by the military and not able to protect the public interest. On the other hand, Judiciary stayed inferior to the military ruler and always was undermined by the Parliament.

In Myanmar, political opposition is depressed and until 2011 mass media was controlled by the military ruler. Bureaucracy and civil society were unlawfully controlled by the army. In this process, military and police force always played an obedient role to the military ruler. The military junta has increased its force to the counter of communist insurgency and control ethnic minority rebels. Consequently, since the Ne Win regime, the military became an important force and support base of the authoritarian regime in Myanmar that still remained as well. The total military force with navy and air reached about 400,000 (Yoshihiro, 2013:291-316).

From 1988, little changes were visible in politics, society, and economy of Myanmar. Military junta of Myanmar has started some restoration of democratic liberalism due to the public protest movement. In November 1988, Myanmar government has started its market for a foreign investor. Change in the military leadership is another notable thing in Myanmar politics (Bunte, 2014:3-19). From 1996 to 2000, because of the student movement, the junta government closed universities and relocated the University of Yangon and Mandalay which was the main centers of the student movement. That time Aung San Suu Kyi became a popular leader due to her link in the movement. On the other hand, the military government continued with stop fire negotiation by proposing a political deal with the Burma communist party and ethnic rebels. Junta government reached conciliation with 17 insurgents groups; by the time in 2009 border guard force (BGF) has started functioning Myanmar.

In recent times, Myanmar government has declined its military and another nonproductive budget. It is also a positive change to politics of Myanmar. In the 1990s the military budget of Myanmar was 30 percent of total budget, that was declined 20 percent in 2000 (Yoshihiro, 2013:291-316).

Terms and Restrictions of Participation of Different Political Actors

Elections have been the common mechanism by which modern representative democracy has operated since the 17th century. But in Myanmar electoral process has been destroyed by the military ruler. Political parties who participated in the elections they must follow the laws fixed by the military. Intended for the election campaign, political parties were given a fixed time to speak in the national media. Voters and candidates were also selected by the military junta. In 1990 election, the National League for Democracy (NLD) won the election but junta government did not transfer power.

During the last 20 years, political parties had no right in doing politics and getting an executive position in Myanmar. As the chief executive of Myanmar, the president controlled national and central level administrative power. In national or regional elections, winning political party faced an undemocratic decision by the military government. If the majority party's leader took the executive position then he or she must have to sacrifice his or her party affiliation.

On the other hand, in 1991, the military government had prohibited politics for the public servant. Conversely, in the Parliament, people's representation was not reflected, in the bicameral Parliament since both chambers were occupied by the military officers. That time about one-quarter of the total seats in both chambers of parliament was entitled to the military officers who were nominated by the Chief in Commander of the defense of Myanmar (Than, 2001:203-247).

Nonetheless, 2011 was a year of change in Myanmar. Much of this change was symbolic, impressive, but enough of it was real to suggest that reform in a number of areas was at last happening. The new government that had emerged from the faulty election of the previous year engaged in discussion with the country's opposition movement. Officials lifted certain restrictions on press freedom and parliamentary debates, initiated limited economic reforms and released some political prisoners (Turnell, 2011:148-154).

Sources of Regime Ideology and Legitimacy in Myanmar

During the British colonial period, few British people, soldiers, and businessmen were staying in the peak of the society of Myanmar. The bulk of the people of Myanmar were not satisfied with the British rule. Nevertheless, the elites were contained the western political system until the 20 century when the anti-colonial movement had increased by the socialists. In 1942, during the Japanese attack, the British Indian army became weaken and Japan occupied Myanmar. After the capture of Myanmar, Japan established an indigenous administration. In 1943, Japan government gave the nominal independence to Myanmar. During Japanese era, Myanmar was influenced by the Japanese military ideology and fascist practice (Owen, 2005:322-334). The nationalist elite influenced by such fascist ideology is still remaining in Myanmar.

In the period of parliamentary government, Myanmar adopted democratic socialism ideology with an economic nationalism against foreign economic interests. In the period of 1980s, the junta government failed to introduce a state ideology. However, they were trying to establish non-disintegration of the union, non-disintegration of the national solidarity, and consolidation of sovereignty as the state ideology. The politics of Myanmar was guided and served for the military junta. Southeast Asian countries mostly Thailand and Indonesia have experienced military rule nonetheless Myanmar is an unrivaled for its intense and long term military control.

State legitimacy depends on its economic consideration, development, and mass people economic condition. Nevertheless, from 1988 to 2010, the government of Myanmar had failed to accelerate its economic growth like other Southeast Asian countries. Similarly, legitimacy also depends on governmental performance to upholding of human rights. But Myanmar had also failed to maintain human rights. Consequently, since then, Myanmar was known as an authoritarian state to the international community (Martin, 2012:351).

Key Facts of Political Contention and Conflict in Myanmar

The concentration of wealth and power by the military is one of the major causes of conflict in Myanmar. Myanmar is one of the multi-religious, multi-ethnic, and multi-cultural society, another root cause of the conflict. On January 4, 1948, Myanmar achieved its independence. In 1948, Myanmar introduced its first constitution under the British control. In the first constitution, the leaders of small ethnic-linguistic minority lost their power and were excluded from governing position. After independence, indigenous ruler and its one-time communist allies became locked in a civil war. The communists began an armed insurgency against the government. Similarly, Karen insurgent groups began to fight for independence. Thus, the government was trying to build up a strong military force to control this instability. At that time India, United Kingdom, and some other countries supported Myanmar for its anti-communist action. In the early 1960s, the government refused to adopt a federal system, to the shock of the insurgent groups such as the Communist Party of Burma (CPB), who proposed adopting the system during peace talks. By the early 1980s, politically motivated armed insurgencies largely disappeared, while ethnic-based insurgencies continued (Licklider, 1995:681). During

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political reforms, 1911-1915 periods, several rebellious groups have negotiated ceasefire and peace agreements with consecutive governments; but also mostly failed.

On March 2, 1962, the army of Myanmar captured the state power and imprisoned many politicians, suspended the constitution and started a new movement for building a new type of society and state structure led by the Revolutionary Council. It saw the end of Burma's multi-party democracy that started in the year of 1921 (Owen, 2005:322-334).

The ethnic policy of Myanmar is a relic of the colonial era. However, Myanmar officially declared 135 national racial groups constituting eight broad ethnic categories. They accord each of eight major national ethnic races a designated statelet. The rest of the 135 officially recognized groups are classified as sub categories of these (Than, 2001:203-247). Among the total population of Myanmar, only 3.9 percent is Muslim and among this Muslim, only 1.3 million are Rohingya Muslims. Rohingya Muslims are denied citizenship in Myanmar, which considers them illegal migrants from Bangladesh, and most live in poverty under a form of state-sanctioned apartheid. Many ethnic Rakhines worry that if Rohingyas are recognized as a group and granted citizenship, they will start agitating for their own state. As U Thein Maung, an NLD member of Rakhine's parliament puts it: "I have nothing against any religion or any kind of people. But I will not accept a single inch of my fatherland becoming Rohingya land." Thus, Myanmar government has emphasized for discussion about the rights of ethnic groups and conflict (Namtu & Sittwe, 2016). The Rohingya insurgency in Western Myanmar is continuing. The conflict between the government of Myanmar and insurgent of the Rohingya ethnic minority in Rakhine State (Arakan) still remain a big challenge for Myanmar politics. According to BBC News in 2012 about 200 and in 2014, 40 Rohingya men, women, and children were killed in Rakhine state in a communal riot.

On October 9, 2016, Rohingya militants attacked border posts near Maungdaw, a town in the north of Rakhine state in western Myanmar, killing nine Burmese border guards. For these consequences, emerged mass arrests, torture, the burning of villages, killings of civilians and the systematic rape of Rohingya women by Burmese soldiers. At least 86 people have been killed. Human Rights Watch said that soldiers have burned at least 1,500 buildings including homes, food shops, markets, and mosques. Amnesty International said the army's "callous and systematic campaign of violence" may be a crime against humanity. However, Myanmar's government denies all such claims, dismissing many of them as falsehood (Namtu & Sittwe, 2016).

The ethnic crisis is creating huge problems for the Myanmar. One is the possible growth of jihadism. Until now the Rohingyas have exposed little interest in Islamist extremism. But many of them see a miserable, hopeless future in Myanmar. The International Crisis Group thinks the attacks in October 2016 by Rohingya militants were planned by a well-funded insurgent group whose leaders had been trained in guerrilla-war strategy. This affected Rohingyas attract sympathy the world Muslim community.

On the other hand, the rise of fighting will obstruct Myanmar's economic development. Furthermore, due to communal riot, many Ruhingas have illegally migrated to Bangladesh and they are living in refugee camps in inhuman condition. Bangladesh-Myanmar bilateral relation is warning became of Rohingya matter.

Concluding Remarks

The new constitution of Myanmar took effect in May 2008 following endorsement in a referendum by the 92.45 percent of voters. Under extremely controlled election in 2010, the military backed Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) formed the government and the both chamber of the parliament again blocked by the army officers. The government was formed by President Thein Sein in 2011 and cabinet formed by the ex-military officers. This government provides some civil liberty, but the most important issue is government compromised with Aung San Suu Kyi to build a new capital city in Nay Pyi Daw in August 2011. About 500 political prisoners were released in Myanmar by January 2012. In this state of affairs, National League for Democracy (LDP) registered and participated the 2012 by-election and win 43 of 45 parliamentary seats. By this series of initiatives, the relation of the military backed government with the United States and European countries is improving. The reason for the military withdrawal from the politics of Myanmar is internal. The main motive was the succession of the leadership of the armed forces. Once power was transferred, external factors also came into play. This shows that external and internal developments are strongly interrelated and the outcome can be explained only by taking both factors into account.

Nonetheless, in Parliament, the opposition was not strong enough for ensuring government responsibility to apply parliamentary tools. Thein Sein's power was very secure until 2015 election because he holds the 80 percent seats in the Parliament. The regime is well- functioning because of the charismatic presence of Aung San Suu Kyi. The Recent political transformation may be defined as a strategic game between the soft liner reformers versus hardliners with a particular focus on the elite actors.

Currently, various positive changes softness of military rulers and some democratic practices make a positive aspiration. An author observes, "The heritages of military rule and the continued dominance of the military in the affairs of the state combined with a re-mobilized society suggest that Myanmar will likely transform as a diminished authoritarian regime in the coming years, perhaps in a similar fashion to that of contemporary 'democratic' Thailand" (Huang, 2013: 258). In this situation, Myanmar government should take quick initiatives to establish a democratic government and restructure its constitution with the flavor of democracy. Intended for democratic consolidation of Myanmar, I would suggest that consociational democracy is suitable because Myanmar has faced ethnic conflict and civil war. Consociational democracy can decrease religious and ethnic polarization that one of the major elements of ethnic conflict and civil war. Nevertheless, in 2015, the last national parliamentary election, NLD got a majority and 15 March 2016, Myanmar's parliament elected a close friend and confidant of Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi making Htin Kyaw the first head of the state who does not come from a military background since the 1960s. Thus it can be said that it is a good start for Myanmar toward the democratic process.

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Violence Against Rohingya Refugee Women in the Nayapara Camp in Bangladesh

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Abstract: Bangladesh has been a hub of Rohingya refugee for many years. The Rohingya is the most vulnerable group of the world's refugee communities. This study aims to shed light on violence against women in documented Rohingya refugees living in the Nayapara camp located in the Cox's Bazar district under Teknaf Upuzila of Bangladesh. However, the living status of Rohingya refugee is very poor and they are not legally allowed to find employment in Bangladesh. At the same time, state support is minimal and the mobility of refugee is highly restricted by violence and intimidation. Women are more vulnerable both inside and outside the camp. The study has applied case study method for collecting primary data. It has also applied interviews and informal discussion methods for collecting primary data. The study found that women of Rohingya refugee suffer multiple forms of violence, including domestic violence, rape, sexual harassment, forced marriage, trafficking, forced prostitution, coerced suicide, murder and other psychological and physical torture in the camp and also outside the camp. Most of the domestic violence happens for frustration and minimal support of living. On the other side, rape, other sexual and physical harassment, trafficking also occurred in the camp by local villagers and refugee community. Accommodation, sanitation, limited work opportunities, moving restriction, arrest etc. are the main causes of violence in the camp. The study recommends that the government of Bangladesh should enhance bilateral ties with Myanmar in order to push back Rohingya refugees to their home countries and also to ensure living conditions for protecting human rights.

Keywords: Violence against Women; Rohingya Refugee; Bangladesh

1.1 Introduction

Bangladesh is an impoverished country of over 160 million people. In its short history as an independent nation, Bangladesh has fought war for independence, faced massive internal displacement, famines and frequent natural disasters. In addition, Bangladesh is hosting over 200,000 Rohingya refugees from Burma in the eastern region (Ahsan, 2011, p.139). The Rohingya ethnic minority of Burma are trapped between severe repression in their homeland and abuse in neighboring countries. Bangladesh has hosted thousands of Rohingya fleeing persecution for more than three decades, but at least 200,000 Rohingya refugees have no legal rights there (Samima & Kayoko, 2014, p. 225). They live in squalor, receive very limited aid and are subject to arrest, extortion and detention. Refugee women and girls are particularly vulnerable to sexual and physical attacks. In the registered refugee camp their movement is highly restricted; they have no permission to go outside from the camp. In the camp they live in small shed which is allotted for 7

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members (Abrar, 2015). There is no electricity and have no recreational activities. They have no work in the camp. So they become very frustrated and it directly affects women through violence. For the purpose, the study aims to shed light on violence against women in Rohingya camp. It intends to analyze the root causes of violence against refugee women and investigate who is the perpetrator of violence.

The Rohingya ethnic minority of Burma is one of the most persecuted groups in the world. The area of eastern Rakhine (Arakan) was home to the Rohingya for about a thousand years (Ahmed, 2010, p. 13). In the Union Treaty of 1947 Rohingyas were granted no rights within the Union of Burma. After then they continued to be oppressed under Burmese Government especially under the military regime of General Ne Win (Ahmed, 2010, p. 14). The Dragon Operation, conducted in 1978, forced 3, 00,000 Rohingya in Bangladesh, causing tremendous political and economic problems there. After an agreement between Burma and Bangladesh in 1979, most of the Rohingya returned to their homeland and they fled to what is today northern Arakan. Thus the story of two Arakan races began. After then again Rohingyas were stripped of their citizenship by the Burmese government in 1982 by Citizenship Law of 1982 and forced to flee through violent military campaigns and sustained persecution (Zaiez, 2009, p. 48). Later on, between 1991 and 1992, almost 250,000 Rohingya fled to Bangladesh to escape persecution. The Government of Bangladesh (GOB) with the support of United Nations stood by their side despite its own socio-economic problems. The GOB had originally built twenty camps for the Rohingya refugees in 1992. At present there are two camps for the Rohingya refugees. Documented Rohingya refugees are living in those 'Kutupalong" and "Nayapara" camps in Ukhia and Teknaf Upazila respectively (Shamima and Kyoko, 2014, P. 226). The most recent incident took place in June 2012, when a large number of Rohingyas tried to enter Bangladesh after riots pitted Buddhists against Muslims in Myanmar's state of Rakhine. At present only approximately 28,000 are recognized as refugees by the Government of Bangladesh and live in Kutupalong (approximately 12,000 refugees) and Nayapara camps (approx. 16,000 refugees) both of which are administered by UNHCR. Registered refugees receive basic health services, primary education and food rations, but about 5,000 of the camp residents were not properly registered and are barred from receiving food rations (Abrar, 2015, p.8). In addition, a total of 15,000 refugees reside in Leda refugee camp in Teknaf and a total of 55,000 refugees live in an unregistered camp near Kutupalong. Presently a total of about 450,000 unregistered refugees lives in different places of Cox's Bazaar and Bandarban district (Ahmed, 2010, p. 13). However, the actual number of undocumented Rohingyas is unknown and it is estimated that it can be around 2,00,000 to 5,00,000. Everyday 5 to 10 families are trying to cross the border of Bangladesh. Though Myanmar is the closest neighbor country of Bangladesh, the unsolved Rohingya crisis is impeding the bilateral relationship between the countries. Actually, the huge number of Rohingya refugees is a matter of serious security concern for the host country because the refugees are also involved in serious crimes, including terrorism, drug and human trafficking, smuggling, robbery and other organized crimes.

The study analyzes different types of violence against women of Rohingya refugees living in Bangladesh. The study also recommends how the government of Bangladesh

can ensure the human rights of women of Rohingya refugees and can create international pressures on the Myanmar government to take back their people to their home countries.

1.2 Methodology

The study is primarily based on both the primary and secondary data. In order to collect primary data, the study was conducted at the Nayapara camp in Cox's Bazar District under Teknaf Upazila in Bangladesh among documented Rohingya refugees from Myanmar. The data was collected in June 2014. At first in-depth interviews were conducted with 25 households inside the camp. The respondents comprised of 37 women and girls. The households were selected through snowball sampling. In addition, an informal group discussion was conducted within the camp for those who willing to come and talk. Finally, 16 women took part in this research and shared their experiences regarding violence and, raised some pertinent issues regarding sexual harassment and violence. While the in-depth interviews included only adult women and girls, however, young girls and boys also participated in the informal group discussion.

In –depth interviews were also conducted with NGO officials who had been working with refugees as well as with the Government of Bangladesh Refugee and Relief Commissioner, the camp in-charge and the Local Chairman (an elected representative of the local government body). The interviews included the local villagers, a tea-stall owner selling goods just outside the registered camp. Moreover, secondary data were drawn from the existing literature like official documents, different books, articles, research paper, research seminar, document paper, newspaper and related website concerning the issues. The findings of the research are as follows:

1.3 Findings

1.3.1 Violence Against Women in Rohingya Camp

Violence against women and girls is one of the most systematic and widespread human rights violations. The United Nations defines violence against women as "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life" (UN General Assembly, 2006). However, violence against women might be included in the following:

1. Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family, including battering, sexual abuse of female children in the household, dowry-related violence, marital rape, female genital mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to women, non-spousal violence and violence related to exploitation;

2. Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring within the general community, including rape, sexual abuse, sexual harassment and intimidation at work, in educational institutions and elsewhere, trafficking in women and forced prostitution (UN General Assembly, 2006).

Violence against women is a very common occurrence in Rohingya camp. Rohingya refugee women suffer multiple forms of violence, including domestic violence, rape, sexual harassment, forced marriage, trafficking, forced prostitution, coerced suicide, murder and other psychological and physical torture inside the camp and also outside the camp. They face violence in the camp by their husband, community people, camp ansar and camp police. On other side, they also face violence in the outside of the camp, by villagers and local Police. There are many socio-economic factors contributing to the occurrence of sexual and gender based violence in the camp. Cultural traditions, insufficient humanitarian assistance, limited income generating possibilities as well as the frustrations arising from inactivity and lack of future prospects all contribute to a high level of violence and exploitation experienced by women refugees. Moreover, the absence of effective prevention and response mechanisms contributes to the general level of impunity that prevails, as does the fact that the perpetrators are often those who are responsible for ensuring the security of the camp residents, including the Mahjees, other camp personnel and the local police.

The worse living status of Rohingya refugee women in the camp is the root causes of violence. Virtually the place where Rohingya refugees live is densely packed and overcrowded; there have no privacy and no personal space. They allotted 7 people in one shed include father, mother, son, daughter, son-in-law, daughter-in-law and other. So sexual relationship is open here and as a result, rape, extra marital relationship, sexual harassment, sexual exploitation and sexual abuse is very common here. Their accommodation and living standard picture have been given below:

Table-1.3.1: The Accommodation and Living Standard of Rohingya Camp

With five family members live in a hut	Over five family members live in a hut	Less than five family members live in a hut	Total
17	25	11	53

Source: Field Survey of Nayapara Camp, 2014

On the other side the sanitation system is not also secure; it is visible and they take bath in an open place. This causes sexual violence. In Nayapara camp the ratio of latrines is 1 to 25 refugees. At present the bathing cubicles are not adequately equipped for women. Male and female cubicles are adjacent to one another, and the female ones have a poorly maintained because of these women tend to use them at night, these places them at risk of harassment and/or violence because cubicles are not in well-lit areas. This further endangers the refugee women as the location is not well lit, leading leaving them vulnerable to harassment and violence (Burnett, 2001, p. 544).

Insufficient level of humanitarian assistance to refugees, particularly of food coupled with the absence of legal income generating potential, has driven many refugee women to engage in survival sex. Coercion by Mahjees, camp personnel, and local police (who financially profit from sexual labour) are involved with these types of violence. Although the registered refugee receives regular WFPO supplied food rations, but it is not sufficient for them. The food rations given to them by the camp authorities are too meagre for survival. The refugees also need cash to buy other necessities such as fuel,

soap and clothes. Hence, they are forced to earn cash income, either by selling a part of their meagre food rations or by seeking work and when they go to outside from camp for seeking work, then they face various kinds of violence like rape, sexual harassment, exploitation, abuse etc.

In the other hand, the highly restriction of movement of the refugee is also another cause of violence. The movement of Rohingya refugee is highly restricted by the Bangladeshi government. Registered refugees who stay in camps are prohibited from leaving the camp without a valid permit. They are not allowed to hold jobs or integrate with Bangladeshi society (Ahmed, 2010, p. 14). But they need to go outside every day for survival activities. They go outside for income and shopping their necessary needs. So they use illegal way and go outside the camp and face violence by the local police and villagers. Many people take opportunity from the refugee for their illegal movement; especially women are more vulnerable in this case. In fact the restriction on movement has led to a series of persistent and grave protection problems both within and outside the camps. Inactivity contributes to illegal activity, corruption, abuse and domestic violence. Thus the inability to engage in legal economic activity leads to exploitation, including in regard to wages, conditions of work, and exposes refugees to the risks of arrest and detention. A further consequence of the limitation on the freedom of movement is that it renders women, particularly female heads of household, vulnerable as they are less able to engage clandestinely in income generating activities. In some instances, this has led to survival sex by refugee women (Shamima and Kyoko, 2014, P. 227).

The absence of effective prevention and response mechanisms also contributes the violence against women in the camp. In reality, the perpetrators are often those who are responsible for ensuring the security of camp residents including the Mahjee, other camp personnel and the local police. In the refugee camps, the Mahjee (the formal title of male Rohingya community leaders) are very influential. Nothing is done without their approval, and even the camp management is not able to access the people directly. The Mahjee support the traditional gender roles and values and, instead of assisting the impoverished women refugees, many of the Mahjee take advantage of a woman's need to be accepted by the community (El-Bushra, 2000, p. 70). Refugees must get the Mahjee's permission to engage in income- generating activities, which makes the leader extremely powerful in the community. Some women are asked to offer sexual services to these leaders in negotiations to get permission for their businesses.

The major trends of violence against refugee women have been given below:

1.3.1.1 Domestic Violence

Domestic violence incidences are fairly common and widespread across all over the camp. Domestic violence includes maltreatment, beaten and abuse by husbands, in-laws, and other family members. Most of the refugee women reported that men's frustrations and experiences of violence directly affect women through domestic violence.

Such men's frustration gets exacerbated because of the gendered norms that are embedded strongly in Rohingya culture in which men are expected to be breadwinners and women housekeepers. Therefore, when women start to work outside the home, it

becomes difficult for men to accept their wives' independence, and relations become strained. Men feel frustrated since their mobility is restricted due to fear of police arrest outside the camp. On the other hand, women's jobs, such as domestic work, keep them indoors, so it is safer for women to work, even though they earn less than the men (Jack, 2003, p. 17). Even as women face increased tensions at home, they also experience more violence outside the home and in the workplace. The negative experiences within the home and outside directly affect their family and create domestic violence. The data on domestic violence have given below:

Table-1.3.1.1: Domestic Violence in Rohingya Camp

Perpetrators	Number of cases of Domestic violence	Did not face domestic violence	Total
Husband	48	5	53

Source: Field Survey of Nayapara Camp, 2014

Table-1.3.1.1 demonstrates that 48 (90.57%) respondent faced domestic violence in their family and only 5 (9.43%) did not face domestic violence. That means a vast number of Rohingya refugees face domestic violence in the camp.

1.3.1.2 Rape/Attempted Rape

Rape is a very common incident both, within and outside the camp. Refugee men, including Majhee, local villagers are known as perpetrator. The women who collected firewood in the area surrounding camps, female heads of household or young girls whose father/husband are in detention are particularly risk of rape. Inside the camp refugee women are attacked by their neighbor when they stay alone at home. Besides the camp security guards also visit their shed at night and force to make sex with them otherwise they caught by them and send to jail. They are also raped by other refugee at night when they go to latrine because cubicles are not in well-lit areas (Moser, 2001, p.19). In the other side refugee women are also raped by their employers outside the camp. Furthermore, there is evidence that men do not only rape to women, but also physically torture and murder the victims as well. In the last year, gang rape has become the prevalent form of rape in the outside of the camp. It is found that several men kidnap a woman when she went to collect firewood, then they took her to an isolated place, and did rape.

According to Nur Fatema (817/2, C), CMC member Abdur Rahman tried to rape her when she was alone at her home. Nur fatema is a married woman and she has two children. Her husband went to Kutupalong for three days and her children were also not at the home. When she was alone at her home suddenly Abdur Rahman entered into her room and tried to rape her. Then she was shouting for help and hearing her shouting her brother Md. Zakir came to rescue her.

In another case, according to Somira Begum (1121/4, P) she was raped by Kefayetullah (another refugee) at night while she was going to latrine besides her shed.

Table-1.3.1.2: Rape/Attempt Rape in Rohingya Camp

Perpetrators	Number of cases of Rape/ Attempt rape
Other refugee of the camp	6
Villager	4
Relatives	3
Total	13

Source: Field Survey of Nayapara Camp, 2014

Table-1.3.1.2 demonstrates that a total of 13 (24.53%) respondent of refugee women had faced rape in the camp. The study found that 46.15% were raped by other refugees of the camp, 30.77% were raped by villagers and 23.07% by relatives.

1.3.1.3 Sexual Abuse and Harassment

Sexual abuse and harassment is widespread both inside and outside the camp for refugee women. Rohingya men, villager, local people, camp security, local police all try to get an advantage from Rohingya women. When Rohingya women or girl go to collect firewood and to get any job, then they face sexual abuse and harassment. Sometime camp security forces (for example, police and ansar) try to use them and harass them sexually. The community power structure at camp is also liable of sexual harassment in the camp. The women are also harassed by Majhee in the camp.

Hamida Begum (1012/4, B) shared that her husband was caught by police on robber case and it was a false allegation. Then she went to local police to seek help the police officer punched her sex organ with a stick. They did not offer any help. Samira (1135/5, P) opined that perpetrator Tuka (a pseudonym name of a local villager) has made a fake pornography of her and spread it in the whole community. He collected Samira's photo and added her face with a nude body. Noor Kaida (refugee), Nosima (refugee) and Belal (refugee) helped Tuka to make the pornography and spread it out.

Table-1.3.1.3: Sexual Abuse and Harassment in Rohingya Camp

Perpetrators	Number of cases of sexual harassment
Camp Police	1
Employer	4
Other refugee of the camp	5
Villager	7
Total	17

Source: Field Survey of Nayapara Camp, 2014

Table-1.3.1.3 demonstrates that a total of 17 (32.08%) respondent of refugee women had faced sexual abuse and harassment. It is found that 5.88% were abused and harassed by

police, 23.53% were abused by local employer, 29.41% were harassed by other refugees, 41.18% by villagers.

1.3.1.4 Forced Prostitution

Forced prostitution is another sexual abuse issue in the camp. Many women are forced in prostitution inside the camp and also outside the camp. Many women are even forced by their husband for prostitution and many are forced by their father and other family member for money, because the life of the camp is very difficult and the source of income is also limited. So the women are also forced in prostitution for bearing their lives. On the other hand the women are also forced in prostitution by the other Rohingya men and outsider. Many times they are tempted by other men, they are often sold as sex worker and are forced in prostitution in order to receive money.

Table-1.3.1.4: Forced prostitution in Rohingya camp

Perpetrators	Number of cases of forced prostitution
Family members	2
Other refugee of the camp	3
Total	5

Source: Field Survey of Nayapara Camp, 2014

Table-1.3.1.4 demonstrates that a total of 5 (9.43%) respondent of refugee women had faced forced in prostitution. The study found that 40% were forced by the family members and 60% were forced by other refugees.

1.3.1.5 Exploitation

Sexual exploitation is another common issue in the Rohingya camp. The teenagers and adolescents are more prone to victim of sexual exploitation. At first teenager girls are tempted to make a relationship like affair, then miscreants promise adolescents girls to marry and finally make sexual relationship. One day miscreants left girls alone or in pregnant. When victims want justice from BMC (Block Management Committee) and CMC (Camp Management Committee) members they are eventually exploited by BMC and CMC members, giving false promise. Many Rohingya women are also exploited by Rohingya men, CMC and BMC members. Besides the villagers and local police also exploit them to give some gift, advantage of ration, money and promise to marry. Minara Begum (Shed-724/8, Block-D) expressed that she had an affair with BMC secretary Mohammad Khalil. One-day perpetrator (Mohammad Khalil) came to her shed at night and invited her at his shed. He promised Minara again and again that he will marry her tomorrow morning. Then he made a physical relation with her forcibly. Finally Khalil took her back at her shed and then he did not communicate with her later. When Minara tried to communicate with him, she failed.

Table-1.3.1.5: Exploitation in Rohingya Camp

Perpetrator	Number of cases of exploitation
Villager	3
CMC-BMC members	7
Other refugee of the camp	11
Total	21

Source: Field Survey of Nayapara Camp, 2014

Table-1.3.1.5 demonstrates that a total of 21 (39.62%) respondent of refugee women had faced exploitation in the camp. The study found that 14.29% were exploited by villagers, 33.33% were exploited by CMC-BMC members and 52.38% were exploited by other refugees.

1.3.1.6 Trafficking

Trafficking of women and children is a significant problem in the camp. Teenage girls are the main target of traffickers in the camp. In the absence of social protection, economic security and legal support, an alarming number of women and children from the camp become easy victims of trafficking (Syeda, 2005, p. 154). Refugee women and children are trafficked both within the country and internationally. The organized gangs of traffickers often lure young women with false promises of better jobs or false proposals of love and marriage. Victims of trafficking are generally trafficked for forced prostitution, but sometimes also for other purposes such as organ transplants and slave labor (Syeda, 2005, p. 154). A refugee women, Sawkat Ara, said that her neighbor Noor Jahan (1212/02, H) took her daughter for giving a job. Noor Jahan did not keep her words. She took her daughter to Chittagong as a maid servant. She could not communicate with her daughter for a long time and her daughter did not get any salary from them. Her daughter passed miserable life while she was working as a maid servant.

Table-1.3.1.6: Trafficking in Rohingya Camp

Perpetrators	Number of cases of Trafficking
Villager	2
Other Refugee of the camp	5
Total	7

Source: Field Survey of Nayapara Camp, 2014

Table-1.3.1.6 demonstrates that a total of 7 (13.21%) respondent of refugee women had trafficked in Nayapara camp. It is found that 28.57% were trafficked by villagers and 71.43% were by other refugees.

1.3.1.7 Abuse/Humiliation

The Rohingya women face abuse and humiliation often every day. They are abused by their own family members, neighbors, community members, co-workers, and security member etc. When they go outside from the camp everybody treats them as a refugee abuses and humiliates them. Joynob Bibi (shed-1204/5, Block-H) opined that she went to her cousin's house in "B" block wearing 'borkha'. When she was returning home alone, then police members and ansar stopped her and saw her face forcibly. She tried to forbid them, but they became angry and abused her. They caught her hand and they dragged her in the ground and toured her mask and scarf. They also snatched her mobile phone and money.

Table-1.3.1.7: Abuse/Humiliation in Rohingya Camp

Perpetrator	Number of cases of Abuse/Humiliation
Other refugee of the camp	7
Villager	8
Camp security members	3
Total	18

Source: Field Survey of Nayapara Camp, 2014

Table-1.3.1.7 demonstrates that a total of 18 (33.96%) respondent are abused and humiliated. The study found that 38.89% were abused and humiliated by other refugees, 44.44% were by villagers, 16.67% by camp security members. Furthermore, early marriage, forced marriage, polygamy, extra marital relationship, physical assault are also available in the camp. These types of violence also effect on Bangladeshi culture. In addition, the Rohingya community, both male and female is also involved with drug smuggling, robbing and terrorism, which is a big threat to security of Bangladesh.

1.4 Conclusion

The study focuses on the violence against women of Rohingya refugee in Bangladesh and it is found that both women and men, refugees suffer violence in the camp from the local Bangladeshi communities, the police, their employers and the camp authorities. The refugee's illegal status makes them more vulnerable and nullifies their rights when dealing with the injustices meted out to them. It is evident that the solution to the problem is complex as well. Only a larger change in the status of the Rohingya, especially living status, an end to the Mahjee's power in refugee camps and an end to violence against the community, can change the women's position of acute vulnerability. The study found that the Rohingya refugees are involved with a number of illegal activities such as drug smuggling, robbing, terrorism, illegal arms trade and other organized crimes which are the biggest threat for security dilemma for the host Country-Bangladesh. If the Rohingya crisis is not addressed quickly emphasizing on justice and rights, it will tarnish security and stability of the country. Actually the primary problem and the solution lies with Myanmar, the representation of various developed countries, including the USA and EU should continue to exert pressure on Myanmar's government to consider the community

as their nationals. The Rohingya deserve to be accepted in the integration, social reconciliation and economic development process of Myanmar. Therefore, it is important to resolve Rohingya refugee problem and to develop a peaceful bilateral relation between Bangladesh and Myanmar. To reduce the violence in the camp and resolve the Rohingya refugee problem Bangladesh should take the following steps soon:

- To involve Rohingya refugee with income generating activities in the camp and take more significant steps to improve the protection of Rohingya refugee women both inside and outside the camp.

- UNHCR has to take steps to resettle them to their home country; and

- Bangladesh government has to take steps to get support from UNO and other developed countries like USA, UK, Russia, China and Japan to convince Myanmar government to take back Rohingya refugee from Bangladesh.

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Socio-economic Reality and Health Status of Tobacco Workers in Bangladesh: An Ethnographic Study

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Abstract: The aim of this ethnographic research is to identify the prevalence of different disease patterns of the tobacco workers and explore how socio-economic realities have pushed workers into a working situation in tobacco factories located in the Rangpur region of Bangladesh. In addition to studies of literature, a total of 120 respondents are interviewed along with their description collected through informal discussions. Data are also collected by using case study method. We have employed a participant observation technique to find the real picture regarding the environment in tobacco factories. The study finds that a significant percentage of workers have been affected by a number of diseases such as the respiratory disease, chest pain, cardiac palpitation, eye irritation and redness, low blood pressure, underweight, skin irritation, loss of appetite, diarrhea, constipation, insomnia and pain in limbs. The study explores that the quality of working time of female, children and adolescents have been perceived to be lower than that of their male counterparts. It has also revealed that female, children and adolescent workers are severely affected compared to their male workers and they remain untreated as they are submissive and do not generally complain regarding their ill health. Although they are affected by a number of communicable and non-communicable diseases, they do not want to get treated by themselves as it costs more than their income. It reveals that socio-economic realities have forced female, children and adolescents working hazardous working condition in the tobacco factories in order to get out from extreme poverty. The government has not taken proper policy measures to provide required healthcare services to the sufferers employed in bidi/cigarette processing.

Introduction

Bangladesh is one of the most densely populated countries in the world with 160 million people, of whom more than half live below the World Bank poverty level defined as living on less than $1.25 per day (Islam & Biswas, 2014, p. 367; United Nations Development Program, 2013; Rahman, 2008; p. 1) in an unhygienic health condition and health status. The reason is that the production and usages of tobacco products are increasing especially in the Northern parts of Bangladesh. National and regional health oriented NGOs report that those people who work in the tobacco industry suffer from a negative impact on their health. Workers in the tobacco industry are negatively affected by several chronic diseases such as cancers, strokes, tuberculosis, respiratory diseases, cardiovascular diseases, gastrointestinal disorders, cancer in organ cavity, abridged physical fitness, cataracts, broken bones and they need long time to recover from other physical illnesses (Gaur, Kasliwal & Gupta, 2012; see also Trivedi and Raj, 1992). A

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recent study shows that people who work in tobacco industry have a higher rate of diseases as of 37% and it imposes a huge burden on healthcare services with its associated mortality and mobility especially coronary heart diseases and cancer. It has been known for many decades that tobacco is the leading preventable causes of the ill-health and premature death in the world. Rahman (2008) argues that tobacco causes serious health hazards and it loses quality of life of the workers. Valic, Beritic & Butkovic (1976) opine that a significantly increased prevalence of asthma symptoms are found for tobacco workers. Rahman (2008) in a reputed *Internet Journal of Epidemiology* (vol. 6, no. 2), indicates that health hazards have increased among tobacco workers in Bangladesh over the past three decades. In addition, it indicates that the sanitation, ventilation and other facilities are not enough in tobacco factories. The situation is more acute for female workers and adolescents. A number of studies have found that female workers, children and adolescents constitute the majority in tobacco industry because their financial demands are comparatively lower than that of their male counterparts. The grim reality is that the owners of tobacco industry do not provide required healthcare services for their workers. The health condition of female workers, children and adolescents have been worsen as their daily income is very low; many of them do not generally go to hospital to visit doctors, and remain untreated being afraid of paying extra consultation fees as well as medicine costs.

Bangladesh is administratively divided into eight major divisions like Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi, Sylhet, Khulna, Barisal, Rangpur and Mymensingh. Comilla and Faridpur are two proposed administrative divisions. Rangpur is the seventh administrative division in Bangladesh and it was formed in 2010. Rangpur is located in the northern part f Bangladesh and bordered by West Bengal to the north. The division of Rangpur consists of eight districts and fifty eight sub-districts under these eight districts. According to 2011 census, Rangpur division has a population of 15, 665,000 which is about 10 percent of total population of Bangladesh. The per capita income and literacy rate of the people are considerably lower than the national average. People in this region are mainly dependent on agriculture for their livelihood. In comparison to other regional divisions, Rangpur is socially and economically backward. Majority people still live under poverty line which is the main problem in this region. The gap between rich and poor is extreme and the rich becomes richer and the poor becomes poorer in this economy. Consequently, labor is very cheap and most of the workers find employment as day laborers in tobacco factories as there is no alternative employment opportunity. A handful of studies have found that unemployment, seasonal income and low income are the common phenomena. As a result, many poor families involve their female, even under-aged children and adolescents as day laborers to supplement income in their families. As Rangpur is known as the tobacco growing and processing zone in Bangladesh, owners of the tobacco factories generally prefer to recruit female, children and adolescents for the availability of cheap labor. A recent study shows that almost 95 percent of tobacco workers are female, children and adolescents (Sultana & Bashar, 2015, p. 82), and rest of the workers are male. The newspaper report shows that almost half of the tobacco workers in Rangpur are from the age group between 4 to 12 (bdnews24, 30 January, 2016). Although child labor is strictly prohibited in Bangladesh, as the labor law prohibits employing anyone under 14 years for employment, a large number of children and adolescents still continue to be

employed in such a hazardous and life threatening work place. It is observed that the poor economic condition and social realities forcefully push these vulnerable people to work in tobacco factory as day laborers although their health is negatively affected by the hazardous environment. However, these workers are not aware that they are at high risk as tobacco related diseases may ruin their lives. This research aims to explore how socio-economic realities push them forcefully into such working condition and what kind of diseases do affect their health? The findings may help tobacco workers to create awareness regarding their health status and the policy makers to take appropriate policy measures to abstain children and adolescents from working in tobacco factories.

Research Methods

We have first selected three tobacco factories located at Aditmari and Kaligang sub-districts under Lalmonirhat district and Haragacha sub-district under Rangpur district purposively. A total of 120 respondents are interviewed of whom 40 seasonal and permanent tobacco workers have been selected from each factory. We have collected the list of workers from each factory first and interviewed them chronologically. Tobacco factories usually hide the names of the children and adolescents as their workers. We have convincingly collected those lists and interviewed them. Information is collected about the socio-economic characteristics of the workers, such as age, education level, gender status, household income, occupation, religious status, marital status, employment status. Information is gathered on health issues like cardiac diseases, eye ailment diseases, chest pain, shortness of breath, diarrheal disease, vomiting, skin diseases, loss of appetite diseases and other health related symptoms. Along with this, we have also used participant observation over a period of two months to observe how decisions are made regarding medical decisions when they become ill. We have closely observed within the environment of the tobacco factories where workers process cigarettes and bidi, from morning to late evening. We have collected case studies to understand how tobacco workers cope up with the vulnerable situation when they become physically ill. Anonymous names are used to describe the views and narratives of the respondents.

Source: https://www.mapsofworld.com/bangladesh/maps/rangpur-map.jpg

Socio-economic Characteristics of the Respondents in Tobacco Factories

The word *'socio'* is derived from the word *'social'* that refers to the demographic and social characteristics such as the age group, sex ratio, level of education, religious composition, marriage and divorce rates, and so on. The term *'economic'* is related to the economic conditions, such as, income, occupation, and so on. Scholars generally use socio-economic term as an umbrella term to encompass a wide array of interrelated social and economic characteristics (see Rahman et al, 2014, p. 65). In this study, socio-economic status has consisted of respondent's religion, education, marital status and income.

It is found that 30 percent of the respondents (age group 10 to 18) who work in the tobacco industry at the northern region are children and adolescents. Twenty five percent of the respondents belong to the age group 19 to 29. Thirty percent respondents are lying between the age group of 30 to 40 and rest 15 percent belong to the age category of 41-50. A relevant question we have addressed: does age affect work and how does it affect? Does age affect workers health and how does it affect? It is found and observed that a vast majority of these children and adolescents work in tobacco factories not as full time workers and they work as helping hands just like filling up empty shells of bidi and cigarettes. Children and adolescents also close the shells and shell tops and prepare bidi/cigarette packets. The workers from the age groups of 19 to 29, 30-40, 41 to 50 prepare those empty bidi and cigarette shells and insert chopped tobacco and tobacco flake in the shells. Tobacco workers from these age groups usually wrap bidi and cigarettes in a *Diospyros melonoxylon* or *Piliostigma racemosum* leaf tied with a string or adhesive at one end. It is found that children and adolescents, and elderly workers whose age group is 10 to 18 and 41 to 50 respectively are mostly affected by the tobacco toxicity. These age groups are more vulnerable to health problems as they often have a lower protective immune response. It is found and observed that the young tobacco workers whose ages range from 19-29 and 30-40 are not severely affected by the tobacco toxicity. This means that age groups create differences among tobacco workers regarding working conditions and their health.

Among 120 respondents, 25 percent are adolescents whose age is under 18, about 32 percent are male workers and more than 43 are female. It is found that there is a gender discrimination in tobacco factories with regard to their work, because owners of the tobacco factories favor female workers as women are more dexterous, docile, and willing to work longer time for a less payment. Thus female workers are mostly recruited for the processing of bidi and cigarettes whereas male workers are mostly recruited for supervising and administrative functions. Out of 52 female workers, it is found that more than 90 percent of them work in processing of bidi/cigarettes, only nearly10 percent work as the helpers of their supervisors. On the other hand, out of 38 male workers, 56 percent work as supervisors. Rest of them work in processing of bidi/cigarettes. Alternatively, the owners of the tobacco factories usually prefer to recruit female workers as bidi and cigarette processing fee for women is lower than that of the male workers. Although female workers deserve equal payment for equal work, unfortunately they receive lower payment. It is found that male workers are paid 32 taka per 1,000 bidi processing where as it is fixed 29 taka for women workers.

Out of 120 tobacco workers, more than 54 percent respondents are Muslims, 33.33 percent Hindus, 8.33 percent Christians and 4.17 percent Buddhist. It is found that religion does not create discrimination for working in tobacco factories. It is found and observed that people from different religions who wish to work in tobacco factories are hired equally and are paid by the same standard. This means that tobacco factories have tolerance for religious differentiation and ensure a non-communal character of the working environment.

More than 27 percent of the workers, children and adolescents have no formal education, majority of the respondents (nearly 52 percent) have primary level of education and nearly twenty one percent have passed secondary level of education. It is found that a vast majority of the tobacco workers including children and adolescents do not have their formal education. It is found that illiterate and people who passed primary level of education work in processing of bidi and cigarettes and almost 90 percent of them are female, children and adolescents. It is also found that people who have passed secondary level of education work as supervisors and maintain generally administrative duties in tobacco factories and a vast majority of them (98 percent) are male workers. The salary for supervisors is slightly higher than that of day laborers who process bidi/cigarettes for a fixed payment.

In Bangladesh, the legal age of marriage is 18 for a woman and 21 for a man but a newly passed bill by the Cabinet on 24 November, 2016 adds new stipulations that allow early marriage for girls before age 18 in special cases or for the greater benefit of the adolescents. Bangladesh has one of the highest rates of child and adolescent marriage in the globe, and the highest rate is in Asia. The Human Rights Watch figures that 52 percent of girls in Bangladesh get married before age 18, and 18 percent are married before they turn 15. In order to get out of the poverty trap, the new stipulations may encourage Bangladesh's economically vulnerable families to get their children and adolescents married at early ages. Out of 120 respondents, 38.33 percent are married, 32.50 percent are unmarried, 08.33 percent are divorced/separated and 20.83 percent are widowed. Among the unmarried groups, a total of 14 percent are from children and adolescent groups and their average age is 12-14 years. It is found that owners of the tobacco factories prefer to employ unmarried, divorced/separated and widowed workers as they represent a total of 74 out of 120 respondents. It is found that marriage is directly related to work in tobacco factories as owners of the factories prefer to employ unmarried, divorced and widowed workers as they come to the factories regularly and give much time as much as they can. Administrators of the factories narrate that they do not usually prefer to recruit newly married and young workers as they are apathetic to their work in processing of bidi/cigarettes, even if they do, they always try to get higher payments for processing of bidi/cigarettes. On the other hand, Sheuli - a female worker of age 40, opines that female, children and adolescents are discriminated in two ways: first, female workers receive low payment than that of their male equivalents; secondly: female, children and adolescents are deprived in receiving their payment as it is withdrawn by their husbands and parents respectively. Factory owners also allow husbands and parents to withdraw the payment of their wife, children and adolescents.

The villagers generally depend on multiple sources of income and as a result their income varies from person to person (Rahman et al, 2014, p. 68). For example, as it is mentioned before, the processing fee per 1,000 bidi for female, children and adolescent workers is 29 taka whereas for male workers it is 32 taka. The monthly income for 44 percent of the respondents is between 2001-3000 taka, for 20 percent income is from 3001-4000 taka and only 4 percent workers have monthly income of 6000 taka.

The household occupation of 42.50 percent tobacco workers is non-agricultural day laborer, while 29.17 percent are rickshaw-pullers and 20.83 percent are agricultural farmers. The rest of the respondents such as 7.5 percent are involved in other professions such as CNG auto driving and small business. It is found that workers in tobacco factories work on part-time basis, men usually drive CNG auto and work on hourly basis in tea stalls. Very few female workers work in people's home on part-time basis. But a large number of them do not usually have such alternative income opportunities as they have to regularly manage household chores, cook food and wash clothes for their family members, and have to take care and nurture their children and elderly parents. It means that women have to bear dual responsibilities or double burden who after finishing their paid work must work for their family members at home. Although a working women's burden is more than that of a man, female workers remain untreated when they get ill. They are even deprived of receiving their payments as it is mostly withdrawn by their husbands and often parents. Only in very few cases when female workers receive payments by themselves. Even if they are allowed to receive salaries, these salaries are immediately handed over to their guardians, saying that they may spend it for unnecessary purposes. It is more problematic when female workers don't have money in their own hands particularly when they wish to visit physicians and pay for the cost of medications. Although female workers suffer from different diseases and malnutrition as they work in unhealthy environment, they are truly unable to treat themselves. Rahima, a married young woman, narrated that - *I work in tobacco factories day long and after returning to my home, I have to nurture my children, mange household chores and cook food for my family members. My husband receives my payment and spends money for family purposes. I have been seriously ill several times but I have not been treated. I still have to start working in tobacco factories. I am getting so sick day by day*. It is also observed that the working condition in factories is not hygienic. Workers are affected by tobacco dust as it floats on air inside the factories where they work. Such hazardous working conditions directly affect the health condition of those who work there. They are affected by a number of chronic diseases such as asthma and bronchitis, kidney infection, abdominal problems, vomiting, diarrhea, eye and skin diseases.

As per the employment status of the tobacco workers, selected respondents are divided into two groups such as permanent and seasonal. Distribution as per employment status of the workers is shown in table – 8. This table shows that about 27 percent respondents have been working as permanent basis throughout the year whereas 66 percent respondents work temporarily. This shows that a vast majority of the respondents work in selected tobacco factories on seasonal basis. Usually men prefer to drive CNG auto and work in tea stalls whereas women find part-time jobs at home of others. Those who get such opportunities, they work on a contractual basis at the home of factory owners for

cleaning, chopping vegetables, cooking food and washing clothes. The salary for such household work is low and these salaries are also required to be handed over to their husbands as women are afraid of being assaulting by their husbands. Still they have to continue their work as they don't have alternative working opportunity elsewhere.

Health Related Diseases of the Sample Respondents

The workers in the factories are not aware about their health, hygiene situation and sanitation. Most of them do not wear musk, glass and hand gloves while working in tobacco factories. An estimated 4 million deaths are caused by tobacco each year and if the current trends continue the figure will reach 10 million per year by 2030 (Beyer et al, 2001, p. 210). Tobacco workers in North Bengal have been suffering from different diseases. They are affected by a number of communicable and non-communicable diseases such as the cardiac diseases, eye ailment, skin diseases, sleeping fluctuation and loss of appetite diseases. The tobacco workers who are affected by cardiac diseases endure heart palpitation, low blood pressure, irritation and burning symptoms. The common triggers of palpitations include stress, anxiety or panic, caffeine, diet pills, nicotine, low level of blood sugar, low levels of oxygen in human blood and many others. The heart palpitations are thus caused by nicotine that can irritate heart and cause extra beats. Nicotine causes a decrease in appetite, which leads to weight loss. Thus, in turn, it lowers the blood pressure. Cardiac irritation can be caused by a number of factors. Tobacco substances may also play a role for the development of cardiac irritation that leads to workers heart attack. Heartburn, is a burning sensation in the central chest or upper central abdomen which is also caused by tobacco use. Nicotine causes inflammation in esophagus which leads to heartburn.

Tobacco workers who are affected by eye ailments have been suffering from eye disorder diseases such as the blur and poor visions and eye irritation disease symptoms. Tobacco use has been linked to two of the leading causes of vision loss. Tobacco reacts with substances in the human body to produce radicals, substances that can damage bodily cells- including the lenses of eye, contributing to the risk of cataracts. A cataract occurs when the lens of eyes thickens and becomes less transparent and less flexible. When the lens becomes cloudy, it causes vision problems. Loss of vision affects workers ability to work or care for themselves or family members. Among workers who are affected by skin problems mostly have eczema, dryness and insomnia disease symptoms. Eczema, is a type of skin disorder, which becomes apparent on the skin surface in the form of dry and red itchy patches. It is aggravated with chewing tobacco and chopping tobacco dusts. Tobacco leaf contains carbon monoxide, which displaces the oxygen of the workers skin, and nicotine, which reduces workers blood flow, leaving their skin dry and discolored. Nicotine is also a potent stimulant that causes workers insomnia symptoms.

Sample tobacco workers have suffered from a number of sleeping fluctuation diseases such as over sleeping, nausea and vomiting. Disturbance of sleeping, nausea and vomiting are among the most featured side effects of tobacco usage. People who work in tobacco industries struggle to fall asleep because the nicotine disrupts their natural sleep-wake cycle. Nausea and vomiting are consistent with acute nicotine poisoning which is an occupational illness specific to tobacco leaf harvesting and for processing of

bidi/cigarettes. This occurs when workers absorb nicotine through their skins. Nicotine disturbs tobacco workers sleep condition because it is stimulating. Sleeping disturbance thus creates nausea and vomiting related diseases. Tobacco workers who suffer from loss of appetite diseases, which is medically referred to as anorexia, endure diarrhea, constipation, biting & limb pains diseases. Workers who work in tobacco factories are contaminated by nicotine which comes from tobacco dusts, leaves and tobacco substances that causes a slump in appetite of tobacco workers. Anorexia is common among tobacco workers and smokers and is part of the reason for the typical lower weight. It can cause constipation and indigestion. Peristalsis, which is the wormlike movement by which the alimentary canal or other tubular organs with both longitudinal and circular muscle fibers propel their contents, is stimulated from nicotine and increased peristalsis causes diarrhea. Reduced peristalsis means a longer alimentary sojourn, greater inspissation of ingesta and a tendency to constipation. Tobacco workers also suffer from pains in limb which is used to describe discomfort affecting any part of a limb (elbow or knee) or the entire limb (arm or leg). As workers work on a contract basis to prepare bidi/cigarettes they work as long as they can endure and it causes pains in their limbs. Tobacco workers are also likely to be at increased risk of suffering from chest pain due to dusty air quality in the tobacco factories. Children and adolescents who work in the tobacco factories are mostly vulnerable to the adverse effects of toxic and nicotine exposures as their brains and bodies are still developing.

Among them who are affected by cardiac diseases 33.33 percent suffer from heart palpitation while 29.16 percent have low blood pressure. Only 16 percent workers have not had cardiac diseases. Among the respondents who are affected by eye ailment, 50 percent suffer from blurred eye vision while 12.50 percent from poor eye vision diseases. About seventeen percent are suffering from eye irritation while 20.83 percent have had no eye diseases. Respondents who suffer from skin diseases, 54.17 percent suffer from eczema. More than 19 percent are suffering from skin dryness and 13 percent from insomnia diseases. Only 13 percent have not had any skin diseases. Respondents who suffer from sleeping fluctuation, 16 percent have normal sleep whereas 30.83 percent and 38.33 percent are suffering from over sleep and nausea diseases respectively. Workers who suffer from loss of appetite diseases, among them nearly 26 percent and 16 percent workers have limbs and chest pain diseases respectively. Among them thirty percent have had diarrheal diseases. About 22 percent have not had diseases like loss of appetite. It is found that permanent workers are severely affected by a number of diseases while seasonal workers suffer less.

Respondents express that they are somehow aware of health hazardous condition in tobacco factories. Actually they do not usually have available work facility to live their normal lives. They raise a common question: who will provide them food and daily necessities if they do not work in tobacco factories. Many respondents view that poor workers are compelled to work in tobacco factories as they do not have any other means to buy their daily commodities and groceries. Mostly they work in tobacco factories to get out of poverty and to live normal and happy life. A male worker, who has been working on permanent basis in Haragacha bidi factory, has narrated his story as follows:

I am born in a poor family. From my childhood I have grown up in unhygienic living environment and my parents have not had ability to offer me required food and clothes. I have been married few years back and have also two children. My wife also works in bidi factory. I know from watching TV that smoking bidi and using tobacco leaf for the purpose of processing bidi is harmful for health. It may cause severe diseases. But we don't have any option. We have to work here to live our lives.

Workers who have been working in tobacco factories throughout the year as permanent workers especially female, children and adolescents suffer mostly from health hazards in the factories. It is observed that the male workers of all ages lead better quality of life than the female, children and adolescents. Female workers do not usually go to consult physicians for physical examinations as it costs more than their income. Due to extreme poverty workers especially female, children and adolescent are malnourished which makes them more prone to be repeated attacks by a number of communicable and non-communicable diseases. Other studies also support these findings (Khatun et al, 2013, pp. 1-8; Harry et al. 2010, p. 2).

A local medical officer narrate that tobacco workers are not aware of their health and they do not usually wear mask and hand gloves in order to protect themselves from tobacco dusts. As a result, they mostly suffer from heart problems, low blood pressure, cough, vomiting, malnutrition, skin diseases and eye diseases. They do not come to hospitals so often. When workers are seriously affected they come to see us. As all required medications are not available is the hospitals, prescriptions are given to them to buy necessary medications for their recovery. But they do not usually buy such medicines. Consequently, their health conditions become worsen.

Workers who work in tobacco factories take a heavy toll on their physical and mental health that causes early deaths. The situation is worse for children and adolescent workers. As their health and brain is still developing, they become exposed to the detrimental health effects of tobacco – either they smoke it or not. Studies show that most of the children and adolescents who work in tobacco factories are between ages 10 to 16 years and are seasonally engaged in bidi/cigarette production. The National Child Policy 2010 stipulates that children and adolescents whose age is under 14 years are not legally allowed to work in any workplace and age below 18 are only allowed to do a light work but they cannot be employed in hazardous working condition. Bangladesh government has declared 38 jobs as hazardous and banned children and adolescents from engagement in those tasks. Working at bidi/cigarette factories is in the fourth position of the list. Bangladesh has also ratified ILO Convention number 182 in 2001 that deals with the hazardous child labor. Scholars think that appointment of children and adolescents who work in bidi/cigarette factories cannot be stopped due to lack of proper implementation of the relevant policies and ILO convention.

Figure – 1: Opinion of the Respondents Regarding Health Related Disease Symptoms

Disease Patterns		No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Cardiac symptoms	Heart palpitation	40	33.33
	Low Blood pressure	35	29.16
	Irritation	11	09.16
	Burning	16	13.13
	No symptoms regarding cardiac diseases	19	15.83
	Total	**120**	**100%**
Eye Ailment	Blurred vision	60	50.00
	Poor vision	15	12.50
	Irritation	20	16.67
	No eye disease symptoms	25	20.83
	Total	**120**	**100**
Skin problem	Eczema	65	54.00
	Dryness	23	19.17
	Insomnia	16	13.33
	No disease symptoms regarding skins	16	13.33
	Total	**120**	**100**
Sleeping Fluctuation	Disturbance of sleeping	37	30.83
	Nausea	46	38.33
	Vomiting	21	17.50
	No sleep fluctuation disease symptoms	16	13.33
	Total	**120**	**100**
Loss of appetite	Diarrhea	36	30.00
	Constipation	08	06.67
	Chest pain	19	15.83
	Limps pain	31	25.83
	No disease symptoms regarding loss of appetite	26	21.67
	Total	**120**	**100**

(Source: The field survey, 2016)

Case Study:

What pushes poor people into tobacco factories? Khatun, a middle age married woman working at Gafur bidi factory of Haragacha in Rangpur district, is a member of nuclear family having four children. She was admitted in primary school but was not able to continue her studies as her parents were poor. She left school and started working with her parents in tobacco factory to supplement income in their family. She got married with a day laborer who was also working in tobacco factories. They have given birth to four children of whom two are working with them because they could not bear the educational expenses for their children due to extreme poverty. They are adolescents under the age of 15. Her two younger daughters are irregular at school and they do not pursue their children to go to school. She views that all of their family members have been working in tobacco factories because there is almost no secured employment opportunity throughout the year. She shared that they work in tobacco factories because poor people who work in farm as well as drive CNG auto do not have regular work or daily income. That is why they work in tobacco factories as it has regular employment opportunity. They do not want to be economically vulnerable as they have to feed themselves and their children. She narrated that she works from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. every day and earns about 4,000 taka. She earns daily TK.145 for preparing 5000 bidi in a day from the factory. The Household Income and Expenditure Survey (2016) report shows that the monthly average (per capita) income of a person was $1601 in 2016, $1315 in 2010, $610 in 2005 and $350 in 1995-96. She said that their two children have also been working with them in tobacco factories to prepare empty bidi shells. We have observed that many other under aged children and adolescents work in tobacco factories usually prepare shells in order to help and supplement income for their family members. Most of them are unmarried and aged between ten to fifteen years. Khatun expressed her views keeping her hand on head which is an expression of extreme frustration because she frequently suffers from fever, eye irritation, muscle pain, skin diseases and diarrhea. Coughs and vomiting are also her regular companions. She does not go to visit physicians but takes medications and drugs prescribed by local medicine stores. She said that her husband is not worried at all about her sickness. She does not also care about her own heath and many more. She

keeps on continuing her work silently in hazardous health conditions. Sickness has become a permanent companion. Khatun considers it to be her destiny. Khatun at home and in the factory, earn money, takes responsibilities of the family members but still she does not consider herself to be empowered. She is exploited in the household as a woman and in the factory as a female worker.

Conclusion

The environment of the factories is not hygienic; sanitation, and ventilation facilities provided by the tobacco factories are not so well. Moreover, a large number of tobacco workers live in overcrowded areas in unhealthy environment where basic services and utilities are either absent or grossly inadequate. Tobacco workers do not necessarily use hand gloves, musk and glasses to protect themselves from tobacco dust. It is found that workers who have been working in tobacco factories mostly suffer from various kinds of lung, skin and eye ailment diseases and loss of appetite. Tobacco factories do not provide any kind of treatment facility to their workers. The study also provides evidence that female, children, adolescents and older persons are more vulnerable to such diseases. This study has also unveiled that the duration of working hour in processing bidi increases the risk of diseases as workers work in tobacco factories from morning to evening on a contractual basis. Most of the tobacco workers live in kancha houses in slum areas where living condition is unhealthy. The daily income gained from this employment is barely enough to sustain their lives and is insufficient to meet the basic needs.

Recommendations

The government of Bangladesh and non-government organizations may take appropriate measures to improve the working situation. As the majority of the workers do not have formal education investment in education would help poor workers to rise from their deplorable conditions in tobacco related employment. As tobacco control law is already introduced in Bangladesh in 2005, stipulations should be modified to increase bidi/cigarette prices. The study finds that most of the workers are forced to join such

hazardous job environment only due to extreme poverty (see also Majra1 & Gur, 2009, pp. 316-318). However, tobacco workers earn very little. Their everyday income is around only 110-150 taka only if they work full-time. As we have mentioned above that the processing fee for 1,000 bidi for women is 29 taka whereas it is 32 taka for male counterparts. Why does it differ? Do women, children and adolescents produce low quality of bidi or are they unlawfully deprived? We have observed that a worker can process as much as 4 to 5 thousand bidi per day which is not sufficient to bear the cost of their daily commodities. As a result they are being pushed towards a fatal nutritional problem. Thus various malnourishment related diseases develop. Although they are ill, they remain untreated as payment for treatment is considered to be a dream where almost half of the population live their lives with less than US$1.25 per day. In this deplorable situation either poor workers have to choose between receiving healthcare or food for their family. Public hospitals always remain overcrowded and poor are often denied access to healthcare services from public hospitals. Workers also do not want to visit public hospitals as required medicines and drugs are unavailable there (Beyer et al, 2001, p. 211; see also Siraj, Hassan & Islam, 2012). Awareness programs among the tobacco workers are needed for knowledge about the causes of diseases and find remedies to overcome those health related problems. The public hospitals should be better managed to offer medical services to the poor workers. The factories should be responsible for providing workers with health facilities, better working conditions, and good salary. Most of all workers need to be organized to demand their rights for their survival.

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Community Participation in Family Planning Program in Bangladesh: The Role of the Eligible Couple and Community Leaders

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Abstract: Although family planning program in Bangladesh has achieved a commendable progress, the rapid growth of the population is still a daunting problem. The major aim of this paper is to analyze the views and narratives of eligible couples and community leaders to use modern contraceptive methods as a best means of controlling population growth. An exploratory survey was conducted among the 658 eligible couple and 120 community leaders in the sub-district levels of Bangladesh. The findings reveal that the lack of mass awareness at large and unwillingness of eligible couples to participate in the family planning program are major problems for a successful family planning program. The main reasons for not using family planning and modern contraception are the negative perceptions regarding contraception, socio-cultural barriers, side effects and inadequate of access to these services. The study concludes that the need for the family planning care provider as well as the mass accessibility to family planning services may strengthen the existing family planning program. Addressing issues around accessibility, increase the use of contraception, recruit required health workers and increase involvement of eligible couples and community leaders in family planning program are the best means to solve the problem.

KEY WORDS: Family planning; community participation; eligible couple; community leaders; awareness.

Introduction

Bangladesh, a land of 55.598 square miles, has since ancient times been known to the outside world for its glorious history and tradition and its strategic geographical setting on the Bay of Bengal. With a unique communal harmony, Bangladesh has a population of 16, 10, 83, 804 and annual growth rate 1.579% (BBS, 2016) making it one of the densely populated countries of the world. In 1901, as the Bangladesh Population Census (2001)

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shows, the country that is now Bangladesh is supported by a population of roughly 28 million and the rate of population growth was negligible. Due to a decline of mortality after WW II, the population was exploded and nearly 100 million population had been added by the beginning of the present century (Kamal, 2008).

Table 1: Enumerated population during 1901-2001

Census year	Population (in '000)	Variation		Growth Rates (Exponential)
		Number	Percent	
1901	28,928	-	-	-
1911	31,555	2,627	9.08	0.87
1921	33,254	1,699	5.38	0.52
1931	35,604	2,350	7.07	0.68
1941	41,997	6,393	17.96	1.65
1951	42,063	66	0.16	0.02
1961	50,840	8,777	20.87	1.90
1974	71,479	20,639	40.60	2.62
1981	87,120	15,641	21.88	2.83
1991	1,06,314	19,194	22.03	1.99
2001	1,23,851	17,537	16.50	1.53

(Bangladesh Population Census, 2001)

The family planning (FP) program in Bangladesh has been considered as a success story in a setting without much socio-economic development. With the concerted effort of the Government of Bangladesh (GOB) and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), the contraceptive prevalence rate has increased from eight percent in 1975 to 54 percent in 1999-2000 (Mitra et al., 2000). Bangladeshi policy makers and population professionals were convinced that the community participation is one of the key components of achieving success in FP program. During this time, Bangladesh decided to foster and promote community participation with the lessons learnt from Indonesian FP program through overseas study tours which helped the program planners and implementers exposing themselves to the success story of the Indonesian program by practically observing the program design and implementation strategies. With this aim in mind, the Government sent a large number of officials, community leaders, program administrators and even service providers and their supervisors to gain firsthand knowledge on Indonesian program implementation strategies. Following this study tours, the participants, back at home, developed an action plan for their own areas for implementation in line with the Indonesian program. The major characteristics of the Indonesia family planning program were-

- Involvement of community leaders in all spheres of program planning and implementation including service delivery;
- Involvement of multi-sectoral development agencies in FP activities; and
- Institutionalization of the program at the local levels.

In Bangladesh, the program was known as Local Initiatives Program (LIP) and Bangladesh succeeded in introducing and extending the LIP in 104 out of the country's total 464 Upazila since 1987. With positive responses, remarkable changes occurred in

the accomplishments to the extent that at local levels. Unit FP committees, Union FP committees were constituted and headed by the respective elected chairmen and other members of the local institutions to plan and monitor the program. LIP female volunteers were recruited, service delivery plans and monitoring tools were developed for the community leaders to coordinate and ensure program development and implementation of FP program at the local level. The program has achieved a laudable success in implementing the program through community leaders and other local influential.

Family planning empowers women and improves maternal health. Unplanned pregnancies interrupt work; career plans and affects a woman's health. By preventing unintended pregnancy, wider family planning access reduces the risk of abortion or childbearing. It should be noted that improving maternal health is an important MDG. In 1990, maternal mortality rate (MMR) in Bangladesh was 570 per 100,000 live births. The MDG objective for Bangladesh is to reduce it by 75 percent, i.e., to 143 by 2015. However, the progress made in reducing MMR, even though significant, is not sufficient to bring it down to the target level in 2015. MMR came down from 570 in 1990 to 450 in 1995 and then to 320 in 2005 (Chowdhury, 2006). However, family planning prevents HIV. Contraception is the best kept secret in HIV prevention.

1.1 Rationale of the Study

Over population of Bangladesh is a big problem. Though the growth rate, relatively speaking, is on the decline but continuously increasing total population has produced enormous pressure on this small landscape. The annual growth of population is around 1.5 percent, and two million of new faces are added to the population annually. Even if the government adopts two child policy in a family, the total number of population would be 238 million by 2030.

Table-2: Total population- According to the census of 1961, 1974, 1981, 1991, 2001 and 2011 are shown below:

Census	Male	Female	Total
1961	2,81,98,000	2,70,05,000	5,52,03,000
1974	3,96,22,657	3,67,75,591	7,63,98,247
1981	4,62,94,784	4,36,16,999	8,99,11,783
1991	5,73,13,929	5,41,41,256	11,14,55,185
2001	6,77,31,320	6,27,91,278	13,05,22,598
2011	7,49,80,386	7,47,91,978	14,97,72,364 as on 15 March, 2011

(Source: BBS, 2011)

As one of the countries, Bangladesh contributing immensely to the up surging growth of world population had been the focal point of international concern for quite some time. The country has the heritage of past population growth. It had only 10 million populations in 1650. It grew to 22.80 million in 1872, 42.20 million in 1951, 51.6 million in 1961, 71.3 million in 1973, 87.09 million in 1981, 10.8 million in 1991 and an estimated 12.38 million in 1997. Due to the past high fertility and falling mortality, the population has more than doubled itself in less than 30 years since 1961. Whereas

previous doubling took eighty years and doubling before that about two centuries. What is horrifying for Bangladesh is the tremendous growth potential build in the age structure of its population, below 15 years is 46% while 48% of the country's population constitutes nonproductive members including the young and old age groups of 25 million women of reproductive age, 60% are between the ages of 15-29, the most fertile ages. During the next 20 years approximately additional 29 million young female will enter into reproductive ages while only 7 million will age out. This population wave will continue to propel growth even with drastic dramatic reductions in fertility.

To reduce this rapid growth of population, family planning was introduced in Bangladesh (Then East Pakistan) in the early 1950s through the voluntary efforts of social and medical workers. The Government, recognizing the urgency of moderating population growth, adopted family planning as a Govt. sector program in 1965.

In 1976, the Government declared the rapid growth of the population as the country's number one problem and adopted a broad based multi-sector family planning program along with an official population policy (GOB, 1994), population planning was seen as a integral part of the total development process and was incorporated into successive five year plans. Policy guidelines and strategies for the population program are formulated by the National Population council (NPC), which is chaired by the Prime Minister.

Community participation is widely believed to be a solution for many of these problems. In recent years, community participation has been recognized as an important element for sustainability, effectiveness and optimal use of health and family planning programs, particularly among poor and under-served populations in developing countries. Both governments and donor agencies in developing countries have become increasingly aware of the importance and need for active local participation in the light of unsatisfactory performance of health, family planning and development programs and their limited impact on the welfare of the intended beneficiaries (Bhatt, 1985). Specific to Bangladesh, there is a growing realization that the innumerable problems the nation will face in the future may be so big and unique that no existing government and non-government mechanisms will be able to address them adequately without effective participation from community members.

In Bangladesh, a growing realization forced on the policy makers and program planners by an analysis of the causes of failure of the program to achieve its goals even after two decades of its operation, that is family planning program will not be able to achieve the desired demographic, goal without community involvement, is manifest in the policy and programmatic measures emphasized in the Bangladesh Government's Third Five Year Plan (1985-90) on family planning. This document categorically states that community participation is an indispensable precondition for developing a social awareness of and a consensus for small family norm and a social sanction against large family.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

A major aim and objective of the study is to find out the present scenario of the family planning program in Bangladesh. This study explores the opinion and views of the eligible couple whether they accept and use modern contraceptive family planning techniques and critically reviews and analyzes the existing policies and programs

strategies through community involvement and to suggest alternative program in the country. However, the specific objectives of the study are delineated as follows:

- To find out the obstacles to implementing a successful family planning program throughout the country;

- To know the rates of community participation in the family planning programs; and

- To identify alternative strategies or approaches in the light of the diversified needs or suggest new interventions for ensuring effective community participation in family planning program.

2. Literature Review

In 1970, MS Calderone edited a book entitled "*Manual of Family Planning and Contraceptive Practice"*, 2nd edition, India in which authors have presented a comprehensive survey of contraception in its many relationships-medical, social, legal and psychological. It is more than a manual of techniques, although each method received for contraception, although these are discussed. It is rather a presentation of family planning as a broad canon of knowledge which, if applied, would do much to foster the happiness of families everywhere. This volume has emphasized that if motivation is strong, almost any contraceptive method will prove reasonably successful because the earnest desire to prevent pregnancy will dictate regular usage. This important problem is discussed with emphasis on the fact that mossy failures of a method stem from its irregular use rather than from deficiency of the method. The editor of this volume hopes that this volume will, among other functions, give new impetus to the integration of family planning services into all maternal health programs throughout the country to the end that benefit will occur not only to our own mothers but to all women in the world at large.

Studies relating to community leader's influences on reproductive behavior of the eligible couples are very scanty. A few studies have done in the past also do not adequately address this issue. A study conducted by NIPORT on "Role Community Participation in Family Planning Program" published in 1983 shows that more than seventy percent of formal leaders (73.4%) and 86.9 percent of informal leaders never supervised the activities of the family planning workers. Only 26.6 percent of formal and 13.0 percent of informal leaders occasionally supervised the activities of family planning workers. Further, 39.0 percent of formal and 49.3 percent of informal leaders did not even have any idea about the activities of family planning workers. This study revealed that of the total formal leaders, 35.2 percent discussed motivational aspects and problems in family planning; 20.3 percent official matters and 37.5 percent addressed public meetings for family planning workers. It appeared that more than 40 percent of formal leaders and only 3.7 percent of informal leaders claimed to have put forward their effort to improve the family planning program through public meetings. It is also observed that the community leaders were reported to be irregular in attending the meeting arranged by the program managers. One-half of the program personnel reported that the members of the Union Parishad attended the meetings occasionally, while 26.6 percent reported that they never attended the meetings. However, a great majority of the formal leaders 76.6%

suggested that special power and duty to Union Parishad members would accelerate the family planning program. Ahmed (1987) outlined the 'Essential features of community participation approach of a successful primary health care program'. In the light of his experience, he emphasized that the basic obstacles. Such as, factionalism, local power politics, lack of experience in decision-making and other problems faced from the community need to be identified and overcome.

In practice, the present Bangladesh Family Planning Program, however, provides a gloomy picture of community participation. The empirical result of a survey has conducted by Waliullah et al. (1983) on "Evaluation of the Impact of Community Leader's Participation in Family Planning in Two Villages" shows that the community leaders show least interest in family planning. Lack of outlined responsibilities and incentives may be accounted for their inactiveness.

Another study conducted by Kabir and Moslehuddin on '*Role of Community Leaders in the Family Planning of Bangladesh*' which has almost the same focus was conducted in 1984. It was found that 56 percent leaders of the Government Sponsored Program area and 50 percent in the non-government program area were current users. Only about 10 percent leaders in the Government area reported that they were involved in promoting family planning program. The comparable figure in the non-government area was little over 14 percent of the leaders who reported that they were visited by the family planning workers (i.e. FPAs, FWAs); more than 65 percent informed that they discussed family planning along with other related issues.

3. Methodology

By nature, this study is exploratory. The study uses both the primary and secondary data. For primary data, a multi-stage sampling technique was used for this study. First, we selected following sub-districts such as Palasbari, Modhukhali, Kamalganj, Chowgacha, Betagi and Mirsarai were selected purposively. We selected these sub-districts purposively as these truly represents both the urban and rural areas of Bangladesh. As each of the Upazila was on an average 10 unions, we then selected several unions as the sample unit of my study. Consequently, we selected six villages, following the unions, one from each Upazila, for this study. Finally, we surveyed 658 eligible couple who had already been married and 120 community leaders including the chairman and member of the union parishad, teachers at primary and high schools, Imam of the local mosques. These respondents were also selected purposively. For this selection, we used stratified random sampling techniques as it really helped us to collect data from the people of different socio-economic groups.

A close ended questionnaire were used for this study. Both questionnaires were pre-tested before the data collection. The first set of questionnaire was used for the eligible couple and the second was used for community leaders. We surveyed each of the respondents separately and in a congenial environment. Each respondent was well-informed before data collection and we surveyed those who were willing to take part in our survey. After survey, the raw data has been processed, summarized and interpreted for analysis and presentation. The secondary sources such as the books, refereed journals and newspapers

were also collected using Google and Google Scholar search engine. The relevant literatures were then used for framing the theory for this research.

4. Findings

4.1 Eligible Couple

A. Personal, Demographic and Family Information of the Respondents

This section provides demographic and family information collected through the field survey in the six sub-district levels in Bangladesh. The table-3 shows age distribution of Eligible Couple. About half of ELCO (48.02%) was in the age range between 20-29 years. This period is important for ELCO to born child. If ELCO can patient to born child and plan small family this age ranged between 20-29 years, it will be help to reduce the population growth of Bangladesh. So we had taken significant and important maximum number of respondents of ELCO to evolve future strategies of family planning program.

Table-3: Percentage distribution of the respondents according to the age group of Eligible Couple

Age	Upazila						Total (N= 658)
	Palasbari	Modhukhali	Kamalganj	Chowgacha	Betagi	Mirsarai	
15-19	1.82	0.76	0.46	1.37	1.22	0.30	5.93
20-24	5.32	2.74	4.71	5.32	2.28	3.65	24.01
25-29	3.95	2.89	2.58	5.17	4.41	5.02	24.01
30-34	2.28	2.58	1.98	3.19	4.56	3.04	17.63
35-39	3.95	4.26	1.37	3.04	2.13	3.04	17.78
40-45	1.52	1.98	2.28	2.28	0.76	1.22	10.03
46-49	0.00	0.15	0.30	0.15	0.00	0.00	0.61
Total	18.84	15.35	13.68	20.52	15.35	16.26	100.00

Age at marriage influences fertility when the boys and girls marry at considerably advance age then immediately they can expect a child. The low age at marriage may be seen in the rural areas. The population of reproductive age, particularly the females is necessary for forecasting the future growth and taking appropriate measures for birth control and planned population growth.

The monthly incomes of most respondents (96.05%) were nil. Most of the respondents were women. They lived as a normal housewife and they work as home worker and don't earn money. So it is clear that most unemployment women keep important role to born child than that of employment women. The differential participation in productive activities by men and women has led to the development of son preference in society, boys are considered a greater economic asset but none had such expectation for the girls. So man expects boys than girls which effects increasing fertility.

Respondents were found belonging to two types of families-single and joint. Majority of them, 69.30% of all respondents, belonged to single family whereas 30.70% to joint family. Family type is an important factor about population growth. Joint family expects more children than that of single family.

Early marriage and economic benefits of having children translate primarily into high fertility for women. Maximum number of respondents (31.16%) was found belonging to a family having more than five members. During the study, it was observed that most respondents were expecting to born child.

Maximum number of respondents (86.32%) informed that no death of children had occurred. Changing medical level positively reduces death and increases number of family members. High fertility and large family size must be considered an important contributory cause of infant mortality. Early marriage and economic benefits of having children translate primarily into high fertility for women. Changing medical level positively reduces death and increases number of family members.

B. Concept, Side Effect and Birth Control Method

This section presents the views and opinions of the eligible couple and community leaders regarding the sources of knowledge about family planning from what they received. The following table shows that most of respondents (76.9%) informed that the source of knowledge about family planning was Family Planning Worker. In Bangladesh, Family Planning Worker keeps an important role to build up awareness about family planning.

Table-4: Percentage distribution of respondents according to the source of knowledge about family planning

Sources of Knowledge	Upazila						Total (n= 658)
	Palashbari	Modhukhali	Kamalganj	Chowgacha	Betagi	Mirsarai	
Neighbor	0.61	6.38	0.30	3.50	2.89	1.67	15.35
Relatives	0.76	1.98	4.10	3.19	0.15	3.65	13.83
Radio/ Television	1.52	4.41	4.10	12.77	0.91	8.51	32.22
FP worker	11.40	13.98	9.27	19.00	12.46	10.79	76.9
Local leaders/ Influential Religious Leaders	0.15	0.61	0.00	0.15	0.15	0.00	1.06
LIP volunteer	10.94	4.26	6.53	17.93	7.75	0.61	48.02
Others	0.15	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.30	0.00	0.45

*More than one answer

The above table shows that most of respondents (82.07%) used birth control methods as a means of their family planning procedure. Respondents, who had used such methods, (88.05%) opined that had not experienced any side effects or contraindications in using it. Only a few (11.95%) reported that they had experienced negative side effects. However, among respondents, who had experienced negative side effects of using such birth control methods, majority of them (65.71%) opined that they had sought assistance from family planning workers and had received such assistance appropriately.

C. Involvement, Effectiveness and Role

This section presents the views and opinion of the respondents regarding the role of family planning workers in delivering FP services to their stakeholders. Table-5 shows that the Most of the respondents (86.93%) answered about the involvement in the locality that FP workers' role was very effective in the locality for family planning program. Most of respondents (74.62%) informed about the family planning implementers from respondents' own locality that they could be shared openly with problems. About the opinions of respondents that the awareness program undertaken in family planning was sufficient, most of the respondents (73.10%) answered that the awareness program undertaken in family planning was sufficient.

Table-5: Percentage distribution of the respondents according to the opinions of the involvement and their effective role in the locality

Stakeholders	Upazila						Total (n= 658)
	Palashbari	Modhukhali	Kamalganj	Chowgacha	Betagi	Mirsarai	
FP worker(s)	7.45	14.89	13.68	19.91	15.05	15.96	86.93
NGO worker	0.00	0.30	0.00	0.00	1.67	0.46	2.43
LIP volunteer	15.81	5.32	12.61	19.91	9.88	2.74	66.26
Local influential Persons/ Negotiators/ Teachers etc.)	0.61	1.52	0.61	2.58	0.30	0.61	6.23
UP elected officials	0.00	0.61	0.61	1.22	0.61	0.91	3.95
Others	0.46	0.76	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.15	1.37

*More than one answer

About more effective and progressive measures and strategies in implementing family planning programs, maximum respondents (49.09%) opinioned about more effective and progressive measures and strategies in implementing family planning by distributing family planning methods free of cost or selling at subsidized price.

2. Community Leaders

A. Demography and Family

Community participation is an important pre-requisite for the successful implementation of the family planning program. As the community leaders are the key persons at the grass-root level to undertake any policy decisions on matters of community interest, their involvement in a social program like family planning is likely to have much influence on the contraceptive and reproductive behavior of the people living in the community. Maximum number of community leaders (32.50%) was in the age range between 40-44 years, Most of the respondents (46.67%) were UP Member.

B. Involvement, Implementation and Suggestions

In the six sub-district levels, most cases (92.50%) respondents' village and union based family planning workers involved in implementing the program in field level. In the study, the village and Union based family planning workers kept an important role in implementation of the FP program. Maximum number of respondents (47.50%) mentioned they were involving in implementing the program as member of union committee. A great deal of success in family planning program can be achieved through the active participation of the community. The involvement in such activities undoubtedly helps accelerate the overall development of the society. If the community leaders are involved in the family planning program, they could contribute towards achieving its desired goal.

Maximum number of respondents (60.78%) opinioned was involving both the community people and family planning workers in implementing the program about the ensuring of people's participation. People's participation is essential to sustain any program. In the study, people's participation would be increased to ensure and sustain in the implementation of the FP program. It is reality that any program can't success without people's participation. When respondents were asked to give information about the opinions of the strategy which could be taken to ensure the local leader's participation in implementing the program, most of them (63.33%) opinioned to ensure the frequent communication among the field workers and local leaders. Most of respondents (66.67%) answered that they could discuss about their problem without hesitation to the local leaders. Generally villagers hear and obey local leader's advice without hesitation. They seem that local leaders can't take any program which will be happened negative.

A community leader is perceived as a mentor possessing intelligence and ability to guide the community. Most of the respondents, 88.33% among all, informed role player as family planning workers and 63.33% as LIP volunteers in implementing the program. In the study, it was sorrow that NGO workers could not play effective role in implementing the program. Maximum number of respondents (60.78%) opinioned to be involved both the community people and family planning workers in implementing the program about the ensuring of people's participation.

5.1 Conclusion

Government's eagerness and sincerity achieve further success in family planning reflected in the allied programs taken simultaneously which will expedite the attainments of family planning efforts. Some of such programs like increasing quota for women encouraging self-employment of women. The success achieved so far in the national family planning program is encouraging and has increased the confidence that it is possible to achieve further progress. But there remain several issues of concern. Such as the tremendous growth potential build into the age structure as a consequence of past high fertility. Because of the increasing population entering childbearing age, the program will have to expand efforts substantially just to maintain the current level of contraceptive use. If demand for family planning also increases, that will put even more strain on the program. Other concerns are lack of a steady supply of contraceptives from

external sources, which effects program performance, the need for further improvement in access to and quality of facilities and services and the need for men to participate more actively in family planning acceptance.

5.2 Recommendations

Though the family planning program has achieved a great deal but still it has remained below the required levels because of the socio-economic condition of the country. That is, total fertility rate of 2.10 is still too high. (BBS, 2011) If the fertility rate remains content at 2.10, the population size will increase indefinitely, reaching an unmanageable size in the near future. Thus a strengthened reproductive health program and policy with emphasis on family planning is needed to reduce the present level of fertility. However, the recommendations are as follows:

5.2.1   The Total Fertility Rate (TFR) should be reduced and increased the use of family planning methods among eligible couples through raising awareness of family planning;

5.2.2   The Ministry of Information has a lot to do. Radio, Television and other mass media can chalk out and implement special programs for eligible couples, community leaders and field workers;

5.2.3   A mechanism may be developed to ensure that all newspapers, radio and television give due attention to family planning in respect of allocating reasonable time and space;

5.2.4   Integrated social consciousness raising efforts and programs should be taken by the government and the non-government organizations;

5.2.5   The government should be taken and implemented the Bangladesh Population Policy with the objectives to improve the status of family planning and maternal and child health, including reproductive health services and to improve the living standard of the people of Bangladesh through striking a desired balance between population and development in the context of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP);

5.2.6   The government, the NGO, the civil society and community leaders should take proper measure to spread knowledge of family planning;

5.2.7   Concretization and awareness building activities should be intensified which will remove misconception of the people about contraceptive method. This will help in changing the social outlook towards using contraceptive method;

5.2.8   Maternal and child malnutrition should be reduced and maternal health should be improved with emphasis on reduction of maternal mortality;

5.2.9   Develop the human resource capacity of planners, managers, community leaders and service providers, including improved data collection, research and dissemination;

5.2.10   Contraceptive use rate should be raised among the eligible couples;

5.2.11   Ensure and support gender equity and empower women especially rural areas;

5.2.12   Ensure coordination among relevant Ministries in strengthening population and development linkages and making their respective mandates and implementation strategies more population focused.

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Solid Waste Management of Rajshahi City Corporation in Bangladesh: Policies and Practices

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Abstract: As an urban governance institution, City Corporation is mainly responsible to enforce existing policies in managing its solid waste through recycling and non-polluting disposal methods. This article is an endeavor to evaluate the effectiveness of these policies at the urban centers of Bangladesh, using Rajshahi City Corporation (RCC) as a case study. It is an empirical research mainly based on primary data. Questionnaire survey, key informant interview, and observation were used to reveal the state of implementation of solid waste management policies into practice. Data were collected from local government officials and field staff involved in implementing solid waste management laws and policies, as well as non-governmental stakeholders from the communities, such as residents and civil society members. The major finding of this research is that RCC lacks effective practices of solid waste management policies.

Keywords: Solid Waste, Policies, Collection and Disposal of Waste, Rajshahi City Corporation

1.0 Introduction

Solid waste management is one of the mandatory functions of urban local governance institutions in Bangladesh. About 28.4% of the total population of the country lives in urban area and the annual growth in urban population is over 2.96% (Population Census, 2011). Solid waste generation has also increased proportionately with the growth of urban population. As such, urban governing institutions are facing difficulties to keep pace with the demand for adequate solid waste management and conservancy services. They lack developed facilities, strong institutional and legal framework, adequate human resources and consistent practice of relevant policies. Consequently, urban solid waste management has become a major concern for the cities and towns of Bangladesh. Research reveals that most of the urban centers of Bangladesh are little more than waste dumps. Industrial enterprises discharge their toxic and other harmful solid and fluid waste in untreated form into neighboring areas and water bodies. Domestic waste water is also discharged into water bodies. This not only pollutes the water but also adversely affects the biodiversity and ecological balance. Similarly, hospitals and clinics dispose their harmful clinical waste without concern for its environmental impact. Wastes from household activities, hotels and restaurants, markets and shopping places, slaughterhouses, etc. are thrown into open tips.

This system of open dumping of waste causes irreparable loss to the environment by polluting land, water and air, adversely affecting human health and lowering people's quality of life. In addition, it causes cardiovascular diseases, cancer and damage to crops and plants, by acid rain. The final disposal of urban solid waste is not yet sanitized. The

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harmful consequence is the emission of greenhouse gases. It is estimated that, in Bangladesh, 2.19 million tons of carbon dioxide is emitted per year from human-generated urban waste (Iftikhar, 2005: 13).

With the multiplicity of environmental problems created by urban waste, now the question of governance in waste management is more important than ever. Obviously, as an urban governance institution, Rajshahi City Corporation (RCC), along with other non-governmental organizations (NGOs), is working for ensuring good governance in the management of solid waste in their jurisdictions. However, the overall situation is not improving: rather it is deteriorating day-by-day. It is perceived that there are some gaps between policies and practices in the governance of its solid waste management. This article is an endeavor to identify the gap between policies and practices in solid waste management in RCC.

2.0 Methodology

The study is mainly based on the primary data collected by questionnaire survey, observation and key informant interview. Both qualitative and quantitative data have been used in this research. Data have been gathered from both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources include field studies, questionnaire, interviews, general review of the activities of solid waste management, government rules and policies, etc. Secondary sources include various research reports and articles, official statistics, relevant books, unpublished study documents, reports, theses/dissertations, daily newspapers, websites, etc.

Four sets of questionnaire, including both open-ended structured and close-ended unstructured questions, were arranged for four categories of respondents i. e. stakeholders (180 respondents), conservancy field staff (124 respondents), executives (6 respondents), and key informant (8 respondents). Stakeholders and field staff have been selected from 6 Wards out of 30 Wards in RCC following cluster sampling techniques. At first, 30 Wards have been classified into 6 clusters based on their urbanization character, like i) Residential, ii) Commercial, iii) Industrial, iv) Hospitals and Clinics, v) Semi-urban, and vi) Outskirt of urbanization. From 6 clusters, 6 Wards, 1 from each cluster, have been selected, following simple random sampling technique. Following this process, Ward no. 5, 6, 12, 16, 25, and 30 of RCC have been selected. Field survey has been conducted in the period of 2012-2014. Collected quantitative data have been analyzed using appropriate statistical techniques. Qualitative data have been analyzed through logical reasoning processes.

3.0 Rajshahi City Corporation (RCC)

Rajshahi City Corporation has an area of 96.72 sq. km. It is located between 24˚05' and 25˚14' north latitudes and between 88°28' and 88°38' east longitudes. The city has a sub-tropical wet and dry climate which is generally marked with monsoons, high temperature, considerable humidity and low rainfall. The annual rainfall is 1159.9mm. The average temperature is 25.1°C. Temperature is low in January varies from 2.7°C to 14.1°C and high in the month of April to July varies from 22.6° to 41°C. The mean relative humidity is found to be low in March (65%) and high in July-September (88-89%).

Figure 1: Location of Rajshahi City Corporation
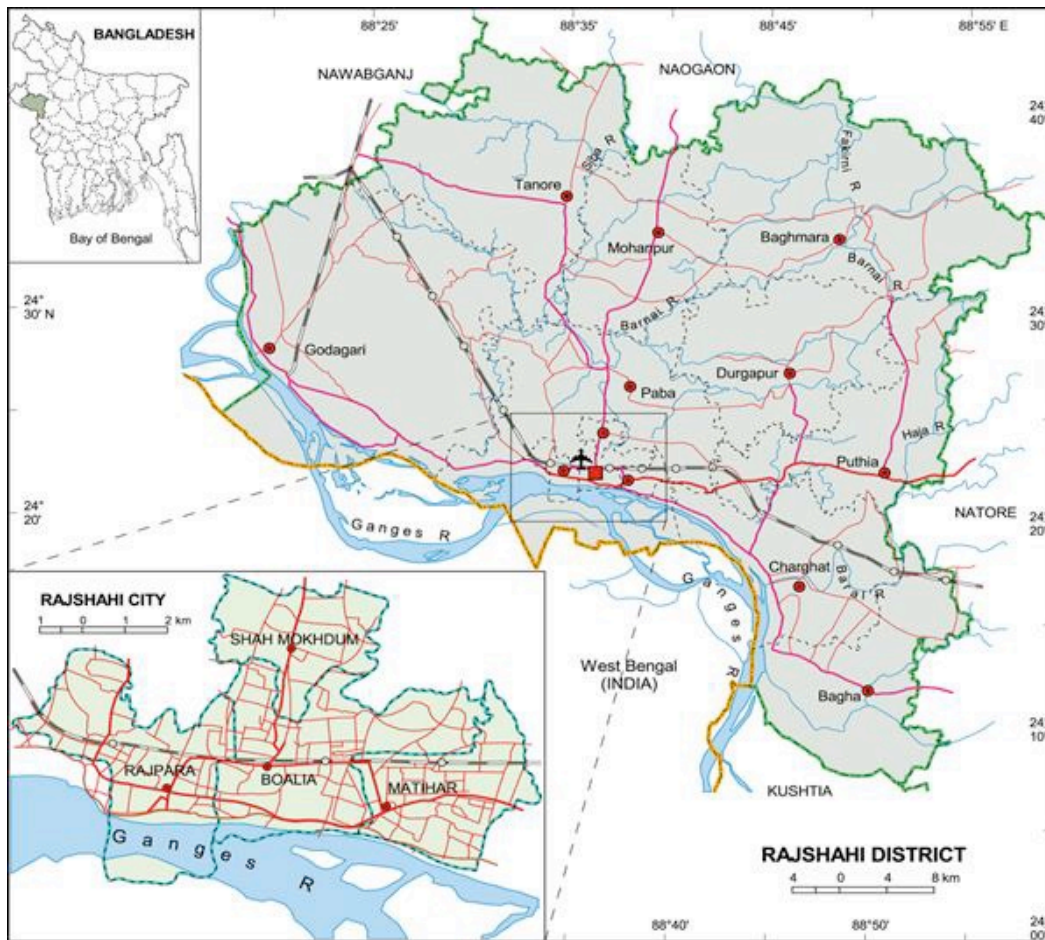
4.0 Organizational Aspects of Solid Waste Management in RCC

Solid waste management is organized by the Conservancy Section of the RCC whose prime responsibility is to collect and dispose of solid waste. The entire area of RCC is served by 384 km *pucca* and 96 km *katcha* road networks. There are about 118 km *pucca* and 162 km *katcha* drains in the City Corporation area. It has 13 *katcha* bazars, 80 hospitals and clinics. RCC sweepers dispose the human *excreta* from pit latrines or septic tanks through manual methods. Most of the sweepers and cleaners are hired on a temporary basis. Recently, RCC has introduced a mechanical road sweeping machine that can sweep 10-15 km of main road per hour (Bangladesh Municipal Development Fund, 2012: 33).

The organizational structure of solid waste management of RCC, at least between the Engineering and Conservancy sections, with some illustrative responsibilities, is shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Organizational Structure of Solid Waste Management in RCC

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                          ┌─────────────────────────┐
                          │          Mayor          │
                          └─────────────────────────┘
                                      │
                          ┌─────────────────────────┐
                          │ Chief Executive Officer │
                          └─────────────────────────┘
                                      │
                          ┌─────────────────────────┐
                          │        Secretary        │
                          └─────────────────────────┘
                           ┌──────────┴──────────┐
          ┌────────────────────────┐   ┌────────────────────────┐
          │   Engineering Section  │   │   Conservancy Section  │
          └────────────────────────┘   └────────────────────────┘
          ┌────────────────────────┐   ┌────────────────────────┐
      →   │ Solid Waste            │   │ Collection & Dumping   │ ←
          │ Transportation         │   │ of Solid Waste         │
          └────────────────────────┘   └────────────────────────┘
          ┌────────────────────────┐   ┌────────────────────────┐
      →   │ Vehicle Maintenance    │   │ Sweeping of Streets    │ ←
          └────────────────────────┘   └────────────────────────┘
          ┌────────────────────────┐   ┌────────────────────────┐
      →   │ Cleaning of Large      │   │ Cleaning of Medium     │ ←
          │ Drains & Canals        │   │ & Small Drains         │
          └────────────────────────┘   └────────────────────────┘
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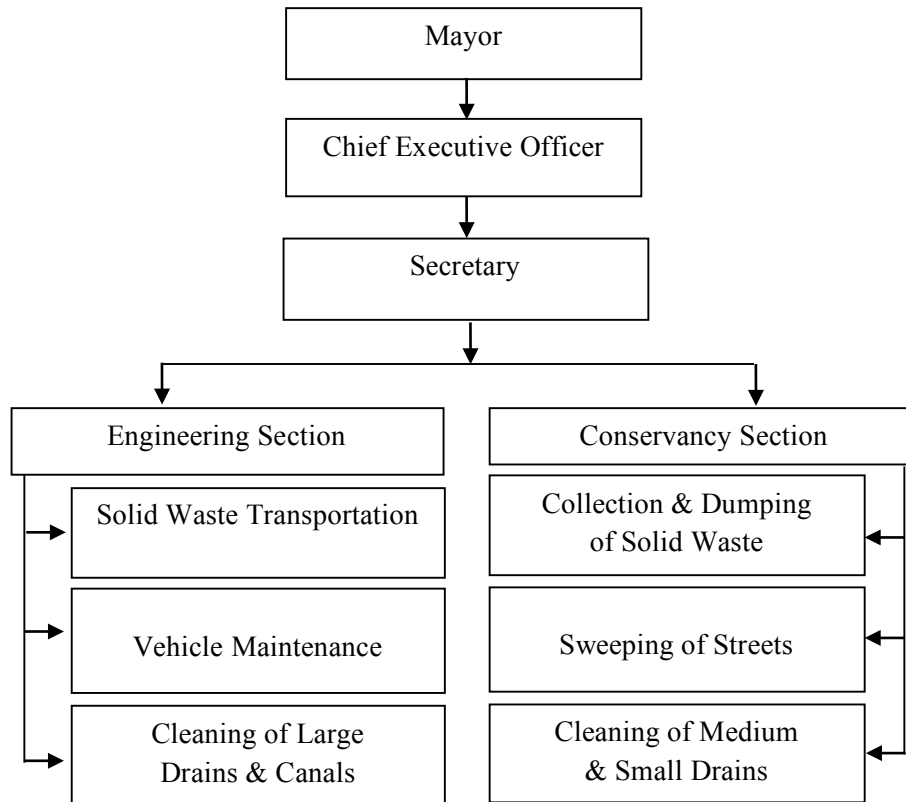
Source: Developed on the basis of field study

In RCC, almost all the 30 Wards have primary collection service. In the residential areas, RCC cleaners collect waste from households or residential buildings and small dustbins with rickshaw-vans (manually-pulled vehicles) in the afternoon and bring them to the secondary collection points before evening. There are 19 secondary collection points along with dustbins and open points. Secondary collections take place at night, through dump trucks as per instruction of the Conservancy Inspector. There are 8 dump trucks, 6 trailers, 16 lorries, 2 hydraulic trucks, 216 rickshaw-vans, etc. used for transfer and transport of waste from the secondary points of the whole city. There is one solid waste disposal site in RCC. It is located in Nawdapara which is about 8 km from the city centre. The total area of this disposal site is 16 acres. RCC has a compost plant with 2 tons/day capacity. Yet the compost plant is not processing any waste since it has not been able to get the license from the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) for marketing of compost.

Figure 3: Flow Sheet of Present Solid Waste Management System of RCC

[Source: Developed on the basis of field study]
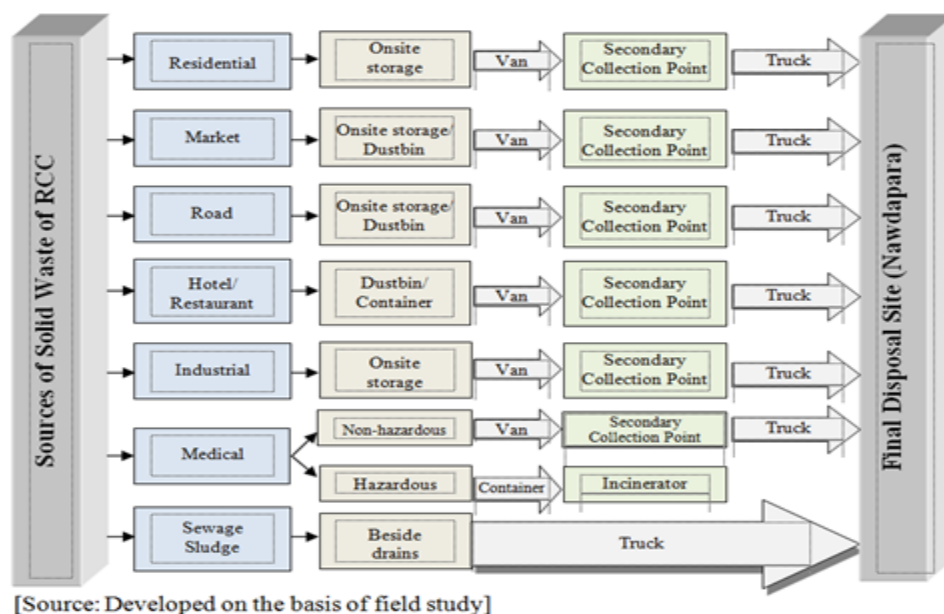
RCC has 1,073 waste management staff, including drain cleaners (242 for 30 Wards), sweepers (226 for Wards and 151 for major roads), rehabilitated women sweepers 29, market waste cleaners 46, clinical waste workers 2, Van workers 180 for Wards, 36 for central) truck/tractor workers 77, waste management supervisors 84 (central 57, and 27 for 30 Wards) (Accounts Division of RCC, 2012). A major portion of the total expenditure made in solid waste management (SWM) is basically consumed by the component of salary and other allowances for the engaged manpower. Apart from salary, wages and their overheads, there are certain other heads, on which RCC has to spend for SWM. Table 1 indicates the budget expenditure of RCC on SWM for the financial year of 2011-12.

Table 1: Budget Expenditure for Solid Waste Management of RCC

Particulars	Expenditure (in taka)	Percentage (%)
Salary and Allowances	66,482,724	93.60 %
Other Conservancy Expenditure	4,544,00	6.40%
Total Expenditure	**71,026,724**	**100.00%**

Source: RCC Budget 2011-12

From the table 1, it is found that total expenditure budgeted for SWM in the financial year 2011-12 is Taka 71,026,724, of which 93.60% is consumed under the head of salary and allowances, and 6.40% under other Conservancy expenditure. However, the Conservancy budget does not include the cost incurred for operation and maintenance of the Conservancy vehicles, as well as the salary and allowances for the drivers and helpers.

Physical Composition of Solid Waste in RCC

In RCC, the major portion (79% to 85%) of solid waste in residential areas and market areas of RCC is compostable. The average percentage of compostable waste in residential areas is 82.47%, non-compostable waste is 13.93% and ash content is 3.60%. On the other hand, similar composition for market areas is 84.77%, 7.02% and 8.21%, respectively. The large quantity of degradable organic contents indicates the necessity for frequent collection and removal. This also indicates the potential of recycling of organic waste for resource recovery. Table 2 shows the data.

Table 2: Physical Composition of Solid Waste in RCC

Components	Household (%)	Market (%)	Landfill Site (%)
Vegetable, Food	82.05	83.65	79.4
Bones, Fishbone	0.27	0.13	0.37
Paper	4.40	1.23	2.30
Plastic	6.63	1.98	3.53
Textile, Rags, Jute	1.50	2.55	2.20
Glass	0.51	0.40	0.00
Leather, Rubber	0.22	0.20	0.85
Metals	0.00	0.13	0.00
Ceramic	0.33	0.38	0.39
Soil, Ash	3.60	8.21	10.51
Grass, Creepers, Herbs, Wood	0.42	1.12	0.45
Medicine, Chemical	0.07	0.00	0.00
Total	**100.00**	**100.00**	**100.00**
Compostable	82.47	84.77	79.85
Non-compostable	13.93	7.02	9.64
Ash content	3.60	8.21	10.51

Source: Bangladesh Municipal Development Fund, 2012: 43

5.0 Policies Related to Urban Solid Waste Management in Bangladesh

Presently, there is no separate law and policy or handling rules for the solid waste management in the country including RCC. The following rules and regulations have direct or indirect relation with urban solid waste management in Bangladesh.

The National Environmental Policy 1992 prescribes that wastage of raw materials in industries will be rationally controlled and their sustainable use will be undertaken (The National Environment Policy, 1992: Article 3.1.5). The rivers, canals, ponds, lakes, haors, baors and all other water bodies and water resources will be kept free from pollution (The National Environment Policy, 1992: Article 3.5.5).

According to the National Environment Management Action Plan (NEMAP), encourages recycling to reduce waste. It prohibits waste discharge in rivers, canals and all other water bodies from industries. Open trucks will not be allowed to collect transport or dump

garbage during the day time in urban areas. Necessary steps will be taken to protect the environment and public health from the adverse impact of all sorts of waste materials.

The Bangladesh Environment Conservation Act (BECA), 1995 stipulates that Government, by rules, can control hazardous waste generation, processing, storing, loading, supplying, transporting, import, export, disposal, dumping, etc. with a view to preventing environmental damage (The Bangladesh Environment Conservation Act, 1995: Section 6.c). Violation of this section will be penalized either a fine of tk. 2 lac for first offence, or an imprisonment not exceeding 2 years, or both; in case of second offence not exceeding tk. 2 lac and in case of each subsequent offence, an imprisonment not exceeding 2 years or fine not exceeding tk.10 lac or both.

According to the Environment Conservation Rules (ECR), 1997, land filling by industrial, household and commercial wastes is classified as "Red Category," which includes most harmful or dangerous industrial units and projects (The Bangladesh Environment Conservation Rules, 1997: Rule 7.1).

The Local Government (City Corporation) Act, 2009 provides some Clauses/Sub-Clauses that are relevant to urban solid waste management.

- The Corporation shall be responsible for the sanitation of the city, and for this purpose, it may cause such measures to be taken as are required by or under this Act (The Local Government (City Corporation) Act, 2009: Article 1.1).
- The Corporation shall make adequate arrangements for the removal of refuse from all public streets, public latrines, urinals, drains, and all buildings and land vested in the Corporation, and for the collection and proper disposal of such refuse (Ibid: Article 1.4).
- The occupiers of all other buildings and lands within the Corporation shall be responsible for the removal of refuses from such buildings and lands subject to the general control and supervision of the Corporation (Ibid.: Article 1.5).
- The Corporation may cause public dustbins or other suitable receptacles to be provided at suitable places and where such dustbins or receptacles are provided, the Corporation may, by public notice, require that all refuse accumulating in any premises or land shall be deposited by the owner or occupier of such premises or land in such dustbins or receptacles (Ibid.: Article 1.6).
- All of the refuses removed and collected by the staff of the Corporation or under their control and supervision and all refuse deposited in the dustbins and other receptacles provided by the Corporation shall be the property of the Corporation (Ibid.: Article 1.7).
- The Corporation may, if so required by the government shall provide sufficient number and in proper situation of latrine and urinal separate for each sex in the city (Ibid.: Article 1.8). The Corporation will ensure the cleanliness of public privy and urinals, and ensure the private ones are cleaned and operated in order (Ibid.).
- Subject to any law for the time being in force, the Corporation will provide an adequate system of public drains in the city area and all such drains will be constructed, maintained, kept cleared and emptied with due regard to the health and convenience of the public (Ibid.: Article 8.7).

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- Subject to any law for the time being in force, the Corporation may establish and maintain public markets, and secure the proper management of such markets (Ibid.: Article 12.1).
- The Corporation shall provide and maintain at such site or sites within or without the limits of the city as the government may approve one or more slaughterhouses for the slaughter of animals or of specified description of animals (Ibid.: Article 14).
- The Corporation shall provide and maintain such streets and other means of public communication as may be necessary for the comfort and the convenience of the inhabitants of the city and of the visitors thereon (Ibid.: Article 18.1). The Corporation shall take such measures as may be necessary for the watering of public streets for the comfort and the convenience of the public, and may, for this purpose, maintain such vehicles, staff, and other apparatus as may be necessary (Ibid.: Article 18.14).
- The Corporation shall, at its first meeting, in each year, or as soon as may be at any meeting subsequent thereto, constitute different Standing Committees, such as Standing Committee of Waste Management, Standing Committee of Environmental Development, Standing Committee of Disaster Management, etc (Ibid.: Article 50.1).

6.0 Practices of Solid Waste Management Policies

Data have been collected from the respondents to assess the extent to which RCC complies with government policies in managing its solid waste. Findings have been presented below.

6.1 Sufficiency of Solid Waste Disposal Site

It is duty of the Corporation to make adequate arrangements for the removal of refuse from all public streets, public latrines, urinals, drains, and all buildings and land vested in the Corporation. However, the data reveals that 76.1 % of respondents believe that waste disposal places are not sufficient in RCC and only 23.9 % have replied that they have sufficient waste disposal place or tip near their house.

On this matter, RCC officials said that they are trying to make RCC a tip-free city. RCC has introduced a door-to-door collection system. RCC cleaners collect waste from households or residential buildings. Small bins are kept at various points for disposal of waste from shops and restaurants of RCC. Yet these bins are not sufficient for the high amount of waste generated from shops, hotels, restaurants, and other commercial activities.

6.2 Rate of Solid Waste Collection from Households by RCC

It is duty of the Corporation to collect and dispose of refuse from the area under its jurisdiction. So, respondents have been asked how many days in a week RCC cleaners collect waste from households. As shown in Table 3, most of the stakeholders have reported that RCC cleaners collect waste from households every day (67.8%), only 32.2% reporting that waste is collected irregularly (32.2%). On the other hand, 100% of field staff stated that RCC cleaners collect household wastes every day.

Table 3: Solid Waste Collection Rate by RCC Cleaners

Variables		Frequency (%)	
		Stakeholders	Field Staff
RCC cleaners collect household waste	Every day	122 (67.8%)	124 (100.00%)
	Irregular	58 (32.2%)	00 (0.0%)

Source: Field Survey

6.3 Household Solid Waste Disposal Place

Proper disposal of household waste is the key to develop public health and to control environmental pollution of the surrounding area. 320 respondents have been interviewed in this regard. They had the option of putting tick marks on more than one option if they thought it necessary.

The highest number, 77.19 % of respondents report that inhabitants give their household wastes to the RCC cleaners, household wastes are discharged in the adjacent drains (39.06 %), and wastes are thrown in the open place or roadsides (57.5 %). 18.75 %, 5.0 % and 5.94 % respondents state that inhabitants dispose of their household wastes in the tips, water bodies, and on their own land, respectively (Table 4). An important finding is that most of the RCC inhabitants have a lack of consciousness about the proper disposal of their household wastes.

Table 4: Household Waste Disposal Habit of RCC Inhabitants

Variables		Frequency (%)	
Where do RCC inhabitants discharge their household waste? (Please select more than one option if you think necessary).	RCC cleaners are given	247	77.19%
	Disposal in the adjacent drains	125	39.06%
	Disposal in the open place/roadsides	184	57.5%
	Disposal in the dustbin/RCC specified area	60	18.75%
	Disposal in the water bodies	16	5.0%
	Disposal in own land/ditch	19	5.94%

Source: Field Survey

6.4 Vehicles Used in Solid Waste Transportation

Domestic wastes, collected by the RCC cleaners, are accumulated at the 19 secondary points of RCC with the help of rickshaw vans. The cleaners collect household waste generally in the afternoon and accumulate them at the secondary points before evening. From the secondary points, wastes are carried to the final disposal site at night in vehicles. In interviews, 71.6 % of stakeholders have replied that wastes are carried to the final disposal site from the secondary points through open truck or trolley. 20.6 % reported that covered trucks or trolleys are used during disposal of wastes from the secondary points to final disposal sites. 7.8 % do not have any knowledge about this matter.

89.5 % of field staff state that wastes from the secondary points are carried in covered vehicles. 10.5 % do not agree. Actually, physical observation reveals that RCC does not use any covered vehicles to carry solid wastes from the secondary points to final disposal sites.

6.5 Rate of Cleaning of Solid Waste Disposal Sites

RCC still has more than 1,200 open tips, along with 18 secondary points, where primary wastes are accumulated. Respondents were asked whether these dustbins or secondary points whether produce stenches. 51.1 (31.7 + 19.4) % respondents replies that their nearby waste disposal places are not cleaned regularly. Thus, they spread offensive odors and pollute the environment. 38.3 % state the opposite. 10.6 % give no answer. However, observation showed that, although all the secondary points are cleaned regularly, tips are done on irregular basis: these may become air pollutants.

6.6 Sweeping of Roads

It is the responsibility of the City Corporation to clean public streets for the comfort and convenient of the inhabitants of the city. Analysis of data shows (Table 5) that most of the respondents (53.3%) from stakeholders agree that RCC sweepers clean their nearby roads regularly with 22.3 % dissenting. Yet 24.4 % opine that their adjacent roads are never swept by the RCC sweepers.

Again, the views of field staff are somewhat different from those of stakeholders. The vast majority (91.9 %) of field staff report that the rate of sweeping of RCC roads is regular and only 8.1 % have the opposite view.

Table 5: Rate of Sweeping of Adjacent Roads

Variables		Frequency (%)	
		Stakeholders	**Field Staff**
Rate of sweeping of adjacent roads	Regular	96 (53.3%)	114 (91.9%)
	Irregular	40 (22.3%)	10 (8.1%)
	Never swept	44 (24.4%)	0.0 (00%)
Removal of swept wastes from the road	Regular	71 (39.4%)	124(100%)
	Irregular	109 (60.6%)	0.0 (00%)

Source: Field Survey

Regarding removal of swept wastes from the roads, 39.4 % of stakeholders and 100 % of field staff have reported that swept wastes are removed regularly from the roads. But 60.6 % of stakeholders have not agreed with them. Physical observation reveals that RCC sweepers generally do the sweeping work at night. They usually sweep important and busy roads regularly. Less important roads are cleaned very irregularly. It is true that many roads are never swept by the RCC cleaners.

During sweeping, wastes are accumulated place to place. Although the swept wastes are removed quickly from the roads, these wastes are often thrown or disposed along the roadsides or used for filling up nearby water bodies or low lands.

6.7 Sufficiency of Solid Waste Management Materials in RCC

The City Corporation is responsible to provide sufficient materials for the proper management of solid waste of the city. RCC staff state that they provide many vehicles to manage solid waste, including: 8 tractors, 16 Lorries, 2 hydraulic trucks, 216 rickshaw-vans, etc. Respondents have been asked about the sufficiency of these materials. 71.38 % of them think that the materials used in waste management of RCC are sufficient. 28.62 % disagree.

6.8 Usage of Safety Materials by the Conservancy Workers

It is the responsibility of the City Corporation to supply health risk-reducing materials, like uniform, gumboots, masks, hand gloves, etc. for its conservancy workers. When they were interviewed, the largest number of respondents in both categories (67.2% of stakeholders and 71.0% of field staff) report that RCC workers do not use safety materials while performing their waste management activities. Only 12.2% and 18.5% of respondents from stakeholders and field staff, respectively, disagree. The remainders do not have any knowledge about this.

During physical observation, it was found that conservancy workers do not use these materials while cleaning or sweeping roads, drains, tips, etc. In an interview, the RCCs' CEO replied that the Corporation provides health risk-reducing materials, sufficient training and necessary treatment for their conservancy workers. Yet the workers may not use these safety materials because of their limited knowledge and awareness. Many workers do not participate in the training sessions, giving false excuses. RCC do not take any punitive measures for such workers.

6.9 Dumping of Solid Waste into Drains and Collection

Observation showed that most of the RCC drains contain lots of solid waste. In some cases, drains fill up and become clogged due to unlimited dumping of solid wastes over the years. When they (both stakeholders and field staff) are asked, 71.05% of respondents report that people dump solid wastes into drains, with 28.95% replying in the negative. RCC cleaners do not collect these solid wastes from drains on regular basis. 82.24% of respondents say that, when cleaners clean the drains, collected wastes from drains are dumped in the street, which is one of the causes for environment pollution and health hazard (Table 6). Especially, on rainy days, the dumped wastes in streets are spread over the roads and create a disgusting situation for the inhabitants and vehicles. Indeed, field observation confirms that wastes collected from drains are often kept in streets to dry, as RCC lacks proper waste management logistics.

Table 6: Dumping of Solid Waste into Drains and Storage on Streets

Variables		Frequency (%)
Do the people of RCC dump solid waste into drains?	Yes	216 (71.05%)
	No	88 (28.95%)
Are the collected wastes from drains kept on streets to dry?	Yes	250 (82.24%)
	No	54 (17.76%)

Source: Field Survey

6.10 Cleaning of Market Waste

The City Corporation is mainly responsible for the proper environmental management of public markets. RCC has 14 markets in its jurisdiction from which a lot of solid wastes are generated every day.

Most of the respondents (75.66%) from stakeholders and field staff confirmed that RCC workers collect market wastes regularly. Only 7.24% deny this. 17.11% did not answer (Table 7). Observation indicates that lots of solid wastes are dumped into the drains that are adjacent to the markets.

Table 7: Cleaning of Market Waste

Variables		Frequency (%)
Rate of cleaning market waste	Regular	230 (75.66%)
	Irregular	22 (7.24%)
	Not known	52 (17.11%)

Source: Field Survey

6.11 Cleaning of Abattoirs

It is the responsibility of every City Corporation to provide and maintain abattoir for the slaughter of animals for food. RCC cleaners have the duty to clean wastes from these butcheries regularly.

Analysis of data shows that 56.25% of respondents (both stakeholders and field staff) think that these are cleaned regularly. Only 8.55% think that these are not cleaned regularly, with a large proportion (35.20%) of the respondents abstaining from answering. Furthermore, in an additional question, 24.01% of respondents reply that wastes of abattoirs are dumped into open places and drains, while 30.59% say no. The plurality of the respondents (45.39%) did not answer this question (Table 8). Observation found that, in most cases, butchers slay animals in open places and dispose of the animals' blood in the drains.

Table 8: Cleaning of Abattoirs

Variables		Frequency (%)
Rate of cleaning slaughterhouse	Regular	171 (56.25%)
	Irregular	26 (8.55%)
	No Comment	107 (35.20%)
Do you think, waste of slaughterhouses are dumped here & there or thrown into drains?	Yes	73 (24.01%)
	No	93 (30.59%)
	No Comment	138 (45.39%)

Source: Field Survey

6.12 Disposal of Industrial Waste

Rajshahi is not an industrially-developed city. There are some silk industries in this city which generate chemical waste. When the respondents (both stakeholders and field staff) are interviewed about disposal of industrial waste, 39.80% report that these toxic chemical wastes of industry are dumped into the water bodies through RCC drains. Only 7.89 % deny this. Yet the majority (52.30%) did not know.

6.13 Disposal of Clinical Waste

In Rajshahi, there are 80 hospitals and clinics which produce a huge amount of clinical waste. These wastes are accumulated into RCC's specified places by the clinic's own employees and RCC cleaners collect these wastes. Respondents have been asked about the extent to which RCC dispose of these clinical wastes to the tip. 31.25% of the respondents say that RCC collects these wastes regularly. Only 4.61% say that clinical wastes are collected irregularly. Yet most of the respondents (79.28%) do not have any knowledge about this matter.

6.14 Disposal of Hotel-Restaurant Waste

Hotel-restaurants and different shops in RCC produce a lot of wastes every day. According to RCC rules, the owners of the hotels or shops are ordered to dispose their wastes into RCC-specified places.

In this survey question, there is an option to choose more than one answer. So, most of the respondents (80.26%) reply that these wastes are dumped into RCC-specified points, 39.14% say that these wastes are dumped beside the hotel-restaurants and shops with 36.18% reporting that wastes are dumped into open places. Only 1.32% refrains from answering (Table 9).

Table 9: Disposal of Hotel-Restaurant Waste

Variables		Frequency (%)
Hotel-restaurant waste disposal place (please put tick marks on more than one option if you think necessary)	Disposal into RCC specified points	244 (80.26%)
	Disposal besides the hotel-restaurant	119 (39.14%)
	Disposal into drains or water bodies	110 (36.18%)
	No Comment	4 (1.32%)

Source: Field Survey

6.15 Sufficiency of Manpower in Solid Waste Management

Sufficient manpower is a must for ensuring effectiveness and efficiency in solid waste management services. When they are interviewed, 55.6%/ of respondents from stakeholders and 38.7% from field staff agree with the statement that there is insufficient manpower to collect and dispose of refuse for the RCC. 44.4% of the stakeholders and 61.3% of the field staff opine that there is sufficient manpower.

From informal discussion with the stakeholders, it appears that, in many cases, Ward Commissioners use Conservancy manpower as personal servants, taking them away from

waste management. Furthermore, stakeholders state that a large number of sweepers, backed by a section of RCC officials, illegally draw salaries without any work (Ali, 2010).

This could explain the discrepancy between stakeholders and RCC staff answers to the sufficiency of waste management staff. There may be enough staff on the roll, which is what RCC officials see. However, in reality, many of these staff are not working on waste management, which is what the stakeholders see.

6.16 Usage of Technological Instruments in Solid Waste Management

Using technological instruments in collecting and disposing of refuse can facilitate quality service delivery, as well as a healthy environment. In this regard, 70.71% of the respondents (from stakeholders, field staff, executives and public representatives) go with statement that RCC does not use any technological instruments in collecting and disposing of refuse. 17.5% go against the statement. Only 12.19% of the respondents refrain from answering.

6.17 Monitoring of Solid Waste Management Services

An effective monitoring system helps to identify problems and, thereby, takes measures to ensure quality of the services. 44.06% of the respondents (stakeholders, field staff, executives and public representatives) report that there is no monitoring in the waste management activities of RCC. 15.31% are unwilling to answer. On the other hand, 40.63% think that there is a monitoring system in the waste management activities of RCC (Table 10).

Those who say 'no' to the previous question are asked a further question. Among them 85.11% report that a weak monitoring system impedes pollution control. 10.64% of the respondents do not report the same. Only 4.26% of respondents refrain from answering.

Table 10: Monitoring of Solid Waste Management Services

Variables		Frequency (%)
Does RCC regularly monitor the solid waste management activities?	Yes	130 (40.63%)
	No	141 (44.06%)
	No Comment	49 (15.31%)
Do you think that weak monitoring system impedes pollution control?	Yes	120 (85.11%)
	No	15 (10.64%)
	No Comment	6 (4.26%)

Source: Field Survey

6.18 Punitive Actions Against the Environment Polluters

RCC has a Magistracy Department, headed by a Magistrate, whose main responsibility is to conduct mobile courts and monitor the environmental situation in RCC's jurisdiction. In accordance with the legal framework, particularly Bangladesh Environmental Conservation

Act 1995, he is charged with imposing penalties, including fines and filing cases against the persons who are responsible for polluting the environment.

But when they (both stakeholders and field staff) are interviewed about this matter, only 1.32% report that RCC takes punitive actions against the polluters. The vast majority of the respondents (78.29%) say that RCC does not take any action against the environmental polluters. 20.39% of respondents do not answer in this regard. In some cases, RCC serves only a notice to the criminal, threatening him/her with future punishment. It is very rare to find any example of the RCC Magistracy giving punishment to the environmental polluters.

6.19 Financial Capability of the RCC

The most important part of the total management of a City Corporation is finance. Inadequate collection of tax, fees, rates and tolls, as well as insufficient government grants, results in weak management capacity and thereby in poor service delivery. Therefore, it is essential to know whether or not the RCC has a financial crisis.

To that end, data have been collected from 16 members of RCC, 10 of whom are officers and 6 are Councilors. All the respondents (100%) clearly opine that there is a financial crisis in RCC. In response to a relevant supplementary question, 66.88% of the respondents think that lack of finance hampers the quality of services of solid waste management. 18.75% do not think so. Only 14.37% do not comment in this regard (Table 11).

Table 11: Financial Capability of RCC

Variables		Frequency (%)
Do you think that there is financial crisis in the RCC?	Yes	16 (100%)
	No	00 (00%)
	No Comment	00 (00%)
Do you think that lack of finance hampers solid waste management services?	Yes	214 (66.88%)
	No	60 (18.75%)
	No Comment	46 (14.37%)

Source: Field Survey

7.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

Rajshahi City is one of the largest cities in Bangladesh. About 800,000 people live in this city and its area is 96.72 sq. kilometres. Its solid waste management problems and shortcomings are a microcosm for the urban sector of the nation. Solid waste management is organized and run by three Departments. The Conservancy Division is the most focused of the three on waste management yet it has no power to lead the other Departments: each goes its own way. Primary and secondary collection overlap and there is no overall strategy. Resources are inadequate. Management requires planning, control and evaluation: so there is no solid waste management in RCC, only collection and dumping. This city

everyday produces about 350 ton solid waste. RCC collects only 230 tons per day. The rest is informally dumped in open tips, drains and on roadsides. The people of Rajshahi are living in it. RCC has no policy to deal with the part it collects: no composting, no recycling, no incineration, no burial, no sanitary landfill. It is dumped next to a cattle market, leaching into ground water and spreading disease and stench to 4 communities. Impoverished women and children scavenge in it to sell recyclable materials, picking up disease as they go.

Among the solid waste, 82.36% is compostable and 17.64% is non-compostable waste. RCC does not have any composting facilities, so it is wasting its waste. Primary collection is done by the RCC cleaners through house-to-house collection system at 175Tk per day with no permanent appointments and from the small movable tips at different points in the city. Secondary collection is also done by the RCC staff at night from 19 secondary collection points of the city. Open vehicles like rickshaw vans, trucks, trailers, lorries, etc. are used for transportation of waste at all levels. The final disposal of solid waste is done by RCC through crude open dumping in the landfill site. Nawdapara is the only landfill site in the RCC. It is the opposite of sanitary. The study reveals that hazardous and non-hazardous, organic and non-organic wastes are not separated in RCC. All the clinical wastes are disposed in the landfill site along with hazardous waste from other sources like industries, slaughterhouses, households and agriculture. The study finds non-cooperative attitude of people in keeping their surroundings clean and in collecting and disposing of their refuse. The drains, roads, etc. are often seem as their rubbish bins, dumping grounds and sometimes public toilets. RCC does not take any punitive measures against the polluters. RCC does not have any effective awareness-building program. RCC has made an issue of waste management in the past but the actions taken were mostly for show, to disguise the problem: the policy was the infantile concept of "what you don't see can't hurt you".

However, to protect the environment of RCC from pollution by solid waste, strong governance is required. A few well-thought-out strategies could make Rajshahi as clean and green as it believes itself to be.

- A Solid Waste Management Department with consolidated powers, permanent employees with the conditions of all City staff, and its own Magistracy, as well as a budget for public awareness, is needed.

- At least one (and probably many) sanitary landfill is required. Central government should allocate resources for this department in Rajshahi and all urban centers.

- The Department needs a clear mission, vision and power to protect the environment in every act of the Corporation. It should have a strategy for separating and recycling most waste at collection points.

- An Environmental Magistracy and Environmental Police Force should be included under the Council to provide the constant, systematic, monitoring and enforcement of waste management laws which is missing now.

- Training should be mandatory so workers handling hazardous substances wear proper equipment: including dismissal of temporary employees who do not.

- The Corporation needs a capacity building scheme for its officials dealing with the environment including solid waste management and for Rajshahi people as a whole. Awareness-raising, training, and political leadership on the issue should all be included.

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Ethnic Community's Awareness on Political Rights in Bangladesh: A Study on the Rakhaine Community

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Abstract: It is observed from this study that most of the members of the Rakhaine community are not aware of their political rights. However, those who have a minimum level of awareness are aware only of voting rights, political parties, meetings and processions. The causes of poor awareness are their backwardness, lack of mobility and dearth of education as well as the effects of demographic variables.

Keywords: Political awareness, Political rights, Ethnic community, Rakhaine community

Introduction

The political right is an inalienable attribute in a democratic political system. The prime examples of political rights are voting, forming assembly, participating in the decision making process, expressing reactions to governmental activities and so on. Enjoyment of citizen's political rights is possibly correlated with proper state management. Conscious citizens tend to think that the state and the political authority are legitimate, and the political institutions are responsible for ensuring welfare of the citizens. Such feelings encourage them to associate with the existing political system. This paper discusses the extent of awareness of a small ethnic Rakhaine community in Bangladesh.

In Bangladesh, there are a number of small ethnic communities like Chakma, Marma, Orao, Tripuri, Tanchangya, Garo and Rakhaine. Among them, the Rakhaine community appears to be significant in number and contribution. The selected Rakhaine communities live in Patuakhali, Cox's Bazar, Barguna, Chittagong and the Chittagong Hill Tracts. But most of them live at Kolapara in Patuakhali. They stand unique with their distinctive language, culture, rituals and festivals, and unlike most Rakhines, they are Buddhists. Although they are underprivileged in terms of education, occupation, achieving different civilian opportunities, engaging in public and private activities, participating in the decision making process, but are entitled to enjoying all kind of rights according to the constitution. But, how far are they conscious about their rights, specifically political rights? An attempt has been made on the basis of primary data to find out their level of awareness about the political rights.

Methodology

This research work has been conducted by using questionnaire method. Mainly, the information from the primary sources has been used in this research. In addition, secondary sources have also been used to discuss many theories and theoretical bases. Data from published and unpublished research reports, many local and international

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books, essays, journals, newspapers and relevant websites have been used. First of all, the name, age, gender, marital status, education, religion, profession, monthly income of all the family members have been collected from preliminary survey. Data has also been collected by interviewing selected individuals. On the other hand, interviews have been conducted at a village namely Goraamkhola Para at Kalapara Upazila in Patuakhali. Specimens have been collected by Simple Random Sampling in this research. Population above eighteen years totaling 120 (26.91%) out of the 42 Rakhaine families from the 114 families in the village has been added as samples.

Awareness on Political Rights of Rakhaine Community

Right means something "which is morally correct, justified, or acceptable"[i] to the society and the state. To further explain, rights are the fundamental normative rules about what is allowed for people or owed to people, according to some legal system, social convention, or ethical theory.[ii] According to Laski, "Rights define those states in social lives without which man can't enjoy his own personality." [iii] So, rights are such basic needs that are must for everyone. There are different types right, and political right is one of them. The political life of an individual revolves around the bases of political rights because political rights let the people to participate in the political process. The question then arises on what political rights are. Political rights are a class of rights that protect an individual's freedom from infringement by governments, social organizations and private individuals, and which also ensures one's ability to participate in the civil and political life of the society and state without discrimination or repression.[iv] These political rights are recognized in the democratic system of governance. As is a democratic state, Bangladesh constitution has recognized political rights of its citizens. This is mentioned through the articles of 26 to 47 of the constitution of Bangladesh. Its article number 29, 33, 37, 38, 39 and 43 include the existence of political rights. It has been said in article 37 that every citizen shall have the right to assemble and to participate in public meetings and processions peacefully and without arms, subject to any reasonable restrictions imposed by law in the interests of public order or public health.[v] In this manner, the right to vote, right to procession, right to form political parties, right to be the member of any political party, right to get government jobs, right to apply, right to criticize the government, right to protest and right to unite have been recognized by the constitution. But, before enjoying those political rights, it is important to become aware of them. To find out the awareness on political rights of Rakhanine people recognized by the constitution, a simple question was asked to the research participants- Are you conscious about your political rights? And, if the answer is 'yes', what are those rights? In this discussion, the data generated through the questionnaire has been analyzed.

Chart 1.1 Awareness on political rights

		Awareness on political rights		Total
	Yes	No	No answer	Total
Total	46	67	7	120
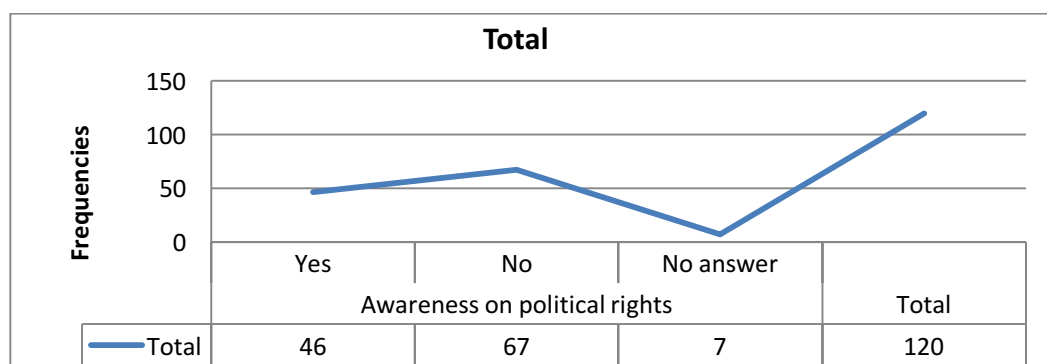
Source: Collected and prepared by researcher

First of all, it is interesting to note that in case of ethnic community's awareness on political rights 46 (33.3%) respondents told that they are aware of their political rights and 7 (5.8%) respondents are refrained from answaring whareas maximum 67 (55.8%) respondents are unconcious of their political rights. Here, it could be concluded that as a backward community, majority of Rakhaine people remain in dark of their political rights. Those who are conscious are mostly aware of only two to three political rights like voting right, right to procession and right to form party. Now, the discussion will be given on the awareness of different political rights of Rakhaine community.

Table 1.1: Awareness on different political rights in relation to age

Age (year)	Awareness on political rights					
	Right to vote		Right to procession		Right to form parties	
	Yes	no	Yes	no	Yes	no
18-25	14	10	5	19	0	24
26-35	9	16	1	24	0	25
36-45	7	17	4	20	1	23
46-55	9	17	4	22	2	24
56-65	4	5	2	7	0	9
66+	2	10	1	11	0	12
Total	45	75	17	103	3	117
	120		120		120	

Source: Collected and prepared by researcher

It appears from table 1.1, (among the various political rights, people of Rakhaine community are aware of only three political rights. Some of them are aware of one, some are of two or three. So, here is the total number of conscious people would be more or less than the previous chart) coherent with the age out of the age group 18-25, 14 (58.3%) identified the right to vote as political rights, 9 (36.0%) from the 26-35 age group, 7 (58.3%) from the 36-45 age group, 9 (36.0%) from the 46-55, 4 (44.4%) from the 56-65 and 2 (16.7%) from the group of over 65 years old. Here, it could be seen that 45 (37.5%) respondents are aware of the voting rights and 76 (62.5%) respondents are in dark. 'Political rights' has been defined as holding processions and meetings by 5

(20.8%) from the age group of 18-25, 1 (4.0%) from the age group of 26-25, 4 (16.7%) from the 36-45, 4 (18.2%) from 46-55, 2 (22. 2%) from 56-65 and 1 (8.3%) from 65. Here, it is noticed that 45 (37.5%) are aware of voting rights, 17 (14.2%) on the right to hold meetings and processions and 3 (2.5%) are conscious about the right to form parties. Interestingly, it is shown in the chart that the youth know more about the voting rights in comparison to the older ones. About the right to hold meeting and procession, it is observed that people from all ages bear quite the same amount of knowledge. On the other hand, only the middle-aged seem to know the right to form parties. After an overview, it is learnt that the awareness of political rights has not changed much in consistency with the age. So, age does not have any significance for the awareness of the political rights.

Table: 1.2: Awareness on different political rights in relation to gender

Gender	Awareness on political rights					
	Right to vote		Right to procession		Right to form parties	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Male	29	35	13	51	3	61
Female	16	40	4	52	0	56
Total	45	75	17	103	3	117
	120		120		120	

Source: Collected and prepared by researcher

Awareness on political rights in relation to gender demonstrates that on the question of right to vote maximum 29 (45.3%) of male respondents are aware whereas only 16 (28.6%) respondents of female people are aware on it. On the question of right to procession only 13 (20.3%) respondents are aware of it, whereas 4 (7.1%) of the female respondents are conscious about their rights. While only 3 (4.7%) of the male respondents affirmatively of their rights to form parties whereas all the female respondents remain in the dark. In the above table, it has been seen that male member of the Rakhaine peoples are much more aware than female. Here, gender is an important variable in a given ethnic social situation.

Table: 1.3: Awareness on diverse political rights in relation to education

Education	Awareness on political rights					
	Right to vote		Right to procession		Right to form parties	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Illiterate	0	21	0	21	0	21
Primary/Kyiang	9	38	2	45	0	47
Lower secondary	6	14	2	18	1	19
S.S.C/ H.S.C	23	1	10	14	2	22
Graduate and above	7	1	3	5	0	8
Total	45	75	17	103	3	117
	120		120		120	

Source: Collected and prepared by researcher

Education is a significant demography in analyzing the awareness on political rights of small ethnic Rakhaine community. It makes them conscious and responsive to their political rights and the table 1.4 also demonstrates that. It can be seen that not a single respondents of illiterate people are aware of their political rights. 9 (19.1%) out of the 47 from primary/kyiang are aware of the right to vote and 2 (4.3%) respondents are conscious to the right to hold meetings and processions. 6 (33.3%) from 20 of the lower secondary are sensible of the right to vote, 2(10.0%) respondents are aware of the right to hold meetings and processions and 1 (5.0%) is conscious to the right to form parties. In terms of the S.S.C and H.S.C level, it has been found that one respondent was aware of multiple rights, and therefore, the numbers of informants have increased. On this, 23 (95.8%) respondents are sensible to the right to vote out of the 24, 10 (7.1%) respondents are aware of the right to hold meetings and processions and 2 (8.3%) know about the right to form parties. Those with a degree in graduate and above, 7 (87.5%) from 8 aware of the right to vote and 3 (37.5%) respondents are aware of the right to hold meetings. Here, it is seen that none from the illiterate class know about the rights. On the other hand, with the increase of education the level of awareness on political rights increased as well. So, education has influenced the field of awareness on political rights.

Table 1.4: Awareness on political rights in relation to occupation

Occupation	Awareness on political rights					
	Right to vote		Right to procession		Right to form parties	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Employee	4	4	2	6	1	7
Businessman	6	1	2	5	0	8
Farmer	9	14	4	19	1	22
Housewife	9	12	0	21	0	21
Labor	4	41	3	43	1	44
Student	11	10	4	17	0	21
Unemployed	1	11	1	11	0	12
Others	1	2	1	2	0	3
Total	45	75	17	103	3	117
	120		120		120	

Source: Collected and prepared by researcher

Next are the issues of occupation and awareness. It appears that 4 (50.0%) employees, 6 (85.7%) businessmen, 9 (39.1%) farmer, 9 (42.9%) housewives, 4 (8.9%) labors, 11 (52.4%) students, 1 (8.3%) unemployed and 1 (50.0) unemployed individual are aware of the right to vote. 2 (25.0%), 2 (28.6%), 4(17.4%) farmers, 3 (6.5%) labors, 4 (1.9%) labors, 1 (8.3%) unemployed and 1 (50.0%) from the rest aware of the right to hold meetings and processions. 1 (12.5%) employee, 1 (4.3%) farmer and a labor 1 (2. 2%) are sensible of the right to form parties. Here, we can see that almost all the occupations are aware of the right to vote. Apart from the housewives people from all professions are conscious to the right to hold meetings and processions. Only the job holders and the farmers are aware of the right to form parties. However, an observation suggests that they are aware of these because of them being educated. If the overview is taken under consideration, the conclusion would be reached that the occupation has not mattered much for their awareness of political rights.

Causes of Poor Awareness

It is observed from the earlier analysis that majority of the Rakhaine people are not aware of their political rights. Again, those who are conscious are mostly aware of only two to three political rights. Further analysis shows that backwardness is the core reason behind their lack of political awareness. In most cases, they are reluctant to get acquainted with the central state politics. Another vital cause of poor awareness is dearth of mobility. Majority of them would not like to go outside of their community. Not only that but also they usually would not like to talk with Bengali people. Even if they engage in group conversions with the Bengali speakers, they would like to speak their own language to the people of their own community despite being in the group. That brings negative results. Again, low percentage of literacy is also seen to be the reason behind the lack of awareness. But hesitation towards involvement into politics has also been noticed among the educated. The main reason of which is political aversion. Though in mass media like- Newspapers, radio, television in modern days play important role in creating awareness of political rights, the Rakhaine community could not enter the grounds of mass media. It has been observed that only 15 out of 120 respondents watch television regularly. Those who watch television are mostly habituated with watching entertainment programs rather than political issues. Further observations show that only 5 of them are associated with the national newspapers. It is to be noted here that, only the *Morol*, village leader, listens to BBC Bangla news regularly. On one hand, as the Rakhaine are aloof from national politics, the activities of the national political parties here are also likewise limited.
In other cases, among those who are conscious of political rights include one fourth of them from families, to a large extend from religious institutions, little number of them from political parties, educational institutions, mass media, neighbors and village leaders. It is to be noticed that, the role of mass media, political parties and educational institutions are very minimal to become aware of their political rights.

So it can be said that backwardness, lack of mobility, aloof from mass media, lack of education, political apathy and insufficient activities of the political parties are as the main reasons for the lack of political awareness of the Rakhaine community.

Conclusion

After analyzing the awareness on political rights, it is seen that one-third of the Rakhaine people are aware of their political rights. Majority of them are conscious to their voting right, one third of them are aware of the right to form parties and little number of them are aware of their right to hold meetings and processions. By analyzing the causes of poor awareness on political rights, it is seen that aloof from modern technology, lack of education, political alienation and minimum activities of the political organizations can be seen as the main reasons for the lack of political awareness of the Rakhaine community. Again, the effects of demographic variable of awareness on political rights are noticeable. In this regard, the younger people are much aware and this increase in subordination with age. Again, in term of age, people who are younger in comparison, learnt from educational institutions and media but no significant distinction has been noticed in case of others. On the other hand, throwing education in contrast, highly

educated people keep complete awareness in this topic, where the margin of awareness decreases to zero along the degradation of education. So, education has far reaching effects on the awareness of political rights. Again considering the professions, it is observed that occupation is the catalyst in creating awareness of political rights.

Finally, based on the analysis found on this research, it is exciting to reach the conclusion that most of the Rakhaine population is not aware of their political rights. And the causes of poor awareness on political rights are mainly backwardness, lack of mobility, aloof from mass media, dearth of education, political apathy and insufficient activities of the political parties. Overall, the effect of demography is notable in this regard as well.

End Notes:

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