



# FASS INQUEST

ISSN: 2789-116X



AN ACADEMIC JOURNAL  
OF  
FACULTY OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

# **FASS INQUEST**

*Journal of Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences*

*Volume - 1, Issue - 1, October - 2021*

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*Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences*

**Bangladesh University of Professionals**

Mirpur Cantonment, Mirpur, Dhaka-1216, Bangladesh

## **FASS INQUEST**

An academic Journal of Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences, Bangladesh University of Professionals (BUP)

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Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences (FASS)

Bangladesh University of Professionals

Mirpur Cantonment, Dhaka-1216

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### **Cover Design**

Sumaiya Mehreen Meem, Dept. of Economics, Batch: 2019, BUP

### **Printed at**

RAIYAN PRINTERS

277/2A, Elephant Road, New Market, Dhaka-1205

E-mail : [raiyanprinters2710@gmail.com](mailto:raiyanprinters2710@gmail.com)

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Bangladesh University of Professionals

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**Tel:** +88-02-8000368

**Fax:** +88-02-8000443

**E-mail:** fassinquest.journal@bup.edu.bd

**Published by:** Journal of Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences, Bangladesh University of Professionals, Dhaka, Bangladesh

**Frequency:** Half-yearly

**Current Volume:** 1/2021

**Design and Layout:** Sumaiya Mehreen Meem, Dept. of Economics, Batch: 2019, BUP

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## Message from the Chief Patron

It is an utmost pleasure for me to know that the maiden journal from the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS) of Bangladesh University of Professionals (BUP) titled 'FASS INQUEST' will be published. I profoundly appreciate the diligence and endeavors of all who have contributed to the process of sharing knowledge, ingenuity and scholarly insights through this journal. Articles incorporated in the 'FASS INQUEST' attest to the top-notch standard it has maintained. Valuable input by novice researchers and experts in the journal indicates the beaming future of research in different areas of arts and social sciences.

Within a short period, the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences has been able to make a mark in the realms of education and research. I am quite sanguine that the 'FASS INQUEST' will surely add a new dimension to the growth of the faculty and the university.

BUP has been persistent in upholding its motto "Excellence Through Knowledge" with unwavering efforts for augmentation of knowledge, development of resources, and enhancement of expertise. This university has emerged as a role model through its phenomenal execution of virtual teaching and learning strategies during the Covid-19 pandemic. Even in the midst of the pandemic, BUP continues to promote knowledge sharing through different initiatives including arranging webinars, virtual conferences, and publishing scholarly journals. This generates much hope and zeal to push BUP to a greater height.

I sincerely appreciate the editorial board of the 'FASS INQUEST' for their commendable effort in making the issue a success. I also hope that this publication would continue to be published in the future days to come. I appreciate and congratulate all contributors/ authors who have conducted quality research and published their work in this journal.



**Major General Md Moshfequr Rahman, SGP, SUP, ndc, psc**  
Chief Patron, FASS INQUEST &  
Vice-Chancellor, Bangladesh University of Professionals (BUP)

## Chief Editor's Note

By the grace of Almighty Allah, it is my pleasure to know that the “FASS INQUEST” first Faculty Journal published by the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS) of Bangladesh University of Professionals (BUP). This issue is a compilation of insightful contemporary research articles displaying diversified areas of research. The topics cover certain arenas from English Literature, English Language Teaching, Economics, Disaster and Human Security Management, Development Studies, Public Administration and Sociology. With the aim to foster the culture of research among the scholars of the faculty and to publish their quality papers on relevant disciplines, FASS of BUP starts this new journey with a dream to secure prestigious position in World University ranking through e-ISSN, Indexing and Impact Factor Analysis.

The responses by the authors to our request for contributions is highly appreciable. I sincerely acknowledge the conscientious contribution of the respected reviewers for reviewing the topics. I also convey my best regards to the members of my Editorial Board for their thoughtful guidance and relentless effort in the process of publishing the journal.

We are really grateful to the Chief Patron of the journal and the respected Vice Chancellor of BUP, Major General Md Moshfequr Rahman, SGP, SUP, ndc, psc for his valuable guidance, active encouragement and tremendous support all along the process of publishing the first ever faculty journal. I am also highly indebted to the former Dean of FASS, Brig Gen A K M Iqbal Azim, for his effort.

I would also like to state that the articles of this publication solely belong to the individual authors. We really hope to magnify better in the upcoming days and with that note, would like to invite quality research articles with international standard on thought provoking contemporary issues from the scholars, academicians and researchers for the next issues.

We would sincerely appreciate any constructive feedback or suggestion from our readers that could help us to improve the standard, achieve high impact factor and fulfil our long cherished dream in future. Wish you all a good read.



**Brig Gen A F M Atiqur Rahman, ndu, afwc, psc, G, MPhil**  
Dean, Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences  
Bangladesh University of Professionals

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## **Subject Matters of Development Administration: A Review**

M Abul Kashem Mozumder<sup>1</sup>

### **Abstract**

*Development administration, its nature and characteristics, its effectiveness, achievements, and potentials have become the focus of administrative thinkers in the recent era. Development administration focuses on policies, programs, administrative values, and situations which are important for the development of a nation. It also focuses on socio-economic and socio-political development and skilled bureaucrats for better administration. This paper uses secondary data as well as expert opinion to identify the principles and emergence of development administration.*

*Keywords:* Administration, Development, Development Administration

There are several limitations to traditional administrative theory in terms of effectiveness and efficiency. The most critical of them is that the theory is limited by its strict adherence to rules and regulations along with its heavy biasness towards hierarchical rigidities. Due to such deficiencies, researchers in comparative public administration have explored new concepts to explain and solve the problems of the administration of changing societies. Social practices, culture and values are constantly changing, and the structure, activities and the role of administration have changed drastically in this regard. As a result, the old administrative thought has become inadequate and inconsistent to cope with the needs and expectations of the changing societies. Fred W Riggs (1970) expressed in this regard,

They have been non-ecological in so far as they failed to relate administrative behavior to its environment. They have been static in so far as they took the basic institutional patterns of social structures for granted, failing to examine the conditions which brought these patterns into existence, which maintained them or, which caused them to change.

While discussing the concept of development administration, we should understand the concept 'Development' first. Development is a complex and

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<sup>1</sup>Former Pro-Vice- Chancellor, Bangladesh University of Professionals

multidimensional concept, and not so easy to understand. In general, the term 'Development' refers to the graduation or transformation or moving from one stage to relatively a better stage. Development administration is a cooperative effort and organized endeavor in anticipation to attaining purposive and productive goals (Mozumder, 2018). It is a planned and calculative change towards a marginal condition. Seers (1972) asserted that "development means the conditions for the realization of the human personality. Its evaluation must therefore consider three linked criteria: where there has been a reduction in (1) poverty, (2) unemployment, (3) inequality". According to Pearson (1992), development involves "a qualitative and quantitative improvement both politically and economically". He also states that development does not denote a particular perspective of social, political, and economic improvement. Instead, it is a myriad of strategies accepted for socioeconomic and environment transformation from current states to desired ones (Abuiyada, 2018). Amartya Sen (1999) expressed that "the result of development should have a positive impact on the living conditions of individuals in that situation". The concept 'Development' includes several aspects such as economic, social, political and administrative development (Jide, 2014).

### **Objectives**

The broad objective of this study is to describe the aspects and principles of development administration. The specific objective is to analyze different factors of development administration in the current time. Thus, the purpose of this paper is to explore academic insights of development administration for the better understanding of students studying public administration.

### **Literature Review**

Different scholars have tried to define development administration in different ways. Edward W. Weidner (1970) maintains that development is "the process of guiding an organization toward the achievement of progressive political, economic and social objectives that are authoritatively determined in one manner or the other". John D. Montgomery (1966) defines development administration as "carrying planned change in the economy or capital infrastructure and to a lesser extent in the social services especially, health and education" Another scholar John S.T. Quah (1979) explains development administration as: "... the administration of development programs designed to

promote nation-building and socio-economic development and the development of administrative practices and institutions necessary for the implementation of such programs. In a similar vein, Fred W. Riggs, a pioneer in the arena of comparative Public Administration, and a significant contributor to the field of development administration conceives “Development administration refers to the administration of development programs, to the methods used by large-scale organizations, notably governments, to implement policies and plans designed to meet their developmental objectives” (Riggs, 1970). Echoing with Riggs, Olawale (2020), about five decades later reveals that development administration is the art of mapping out planned strategies and procedures, which is sincerely and seriously implemented and will bring about much-desired growth and development for the well-being of the citizenry.

Smart development administration can circulate information with electronic means regarding the rural development process (Sharma et. al, 2012). Osborn and Gaebler (1992) emphasized better communication between government and people in this regard. Rodman (1968) explains that administrative processes should be reinvented to provide better rural development service digitally. Electronic signatures are necessary to enable the legal transfer of development services by digital means in both personalized and customized way (Weidner, 1962). It is also important to integrate information systems properly to get service from a single computer-generated center. This single cybernetic center can become the prime contact point for all rural development programs (Denhardt, 1992). Available literatures emphasized that civil servants should work together in a smooth and unified way to make the development effective in Bangladesh. In this era of smart development administration, the public agencies use information technology to support administrative actions, involve citizens and provide development services efficiently (Bhattacharya, 1979).

Interactions among different actors may be in the system of obtaining information, making payments, online services etc. (O’Toole and Meier, 2010). To promote greater participation of citizens in the development process, political institutions play the major role within the framework of smart development administration. Government, citizens, business organizations, interest groups etc. are the main actors in development (Osborn and Gaebler (1992). John D. Montgomery (1966) argues that using smart development administration can be described as a product of New Public Management (NPM) reform approaches. Development administration with pre-set and well-defined programs for vital sectors may ensure efficient implementation. Net

achievement in terms of interest gratification and sustainability depends inter alia on optimal utilization of available resources and social mobilization at the community level (O'Toole and Meier, 2010).

Thus, development administration is largely goal-oriented and program-based and this is what makes the administration development-oriented. Development administration can be interpreted from two different perspectives. The first one is the administration and implementation of development programs. That is why it needs to cooperate and collaborate with large organizations. The second one is increasing the efficiency of the administration directly or indirectly. In fact, the two concepts, administration of development programs and development of administration are closely linked. To increase the efficiency in administration, it is necessary to change the social and economic environment. Similarly, Efficiency and effectiveness of the administrative system is required to bring about change in the environment. Thus, development administration is completely unique from the traditional administrative system and this uniqueness is evident in its structure, function, and orientations (Sharma et. al, 2012).

Administration is co-operative enterprise in which usually a large number of people need to meet, interact, and act together. As a result, the personnel employed by an organization can be considered or taken to be a social group. Inside the large group of the entire personnel, there arise also smaller ones based on the common branch or unit of work, common status, personnel sympathies, antipathies etc. "These groups and subgroups have their own loyalties, and their own ethos and outlook which give so many twists and turns to the formal arrangements of the organization and thus deeply influence its work. Knowledge of the way in which groups arise, function, and influence their members can illuminate many of the phenomena of administration, which remain otherwise incomprehensible. Since such knowledge comes to us from sociology, the importance of this science to development administration is obvious" (O'Toole and Meier, 2010).

Some scholars argue that development administration has received special consideration of the policy communities now-a-days. Normative policy behavior at the institutional level favors the adoption of policies of development administration with core program components. This is to bring smart governance to a desired state in the shape of planning at the grassroots for promoting development administration. In recent years normative policy behavior seems to prioritize participatory and development administration. Scholars argue that to foster a favorable climate for socio-economic

development in rural areas participatory values have been given top priority. Hague (2010) discusses that introducing such changes may threaten the work of traditional bureaucratic institutions that enforce the democratic values. Smart governance allows citizens to exercise self-governance. Citizens as the customers are the ultimate recipients of public services (World Bank, 1978). Indeed, the citizens simply need to be assured that they are receiving the same services delivered to other citizens or recipients. It involves the growth of community support (Sharma et. al, 2012).

### **Origins of Development Administration**

Development administration was not perceived in theoretical standpoint until the 1960s. Immediately after the Second World War, it emerged as a process and subject matter (Anyebe, 2017). With the popularization of the 'welfare state' and the consolidation of the 'populist leadership' in the affairs of governance, the discipline of development administration gained its currency, especially in the newly independent post-colonial countries. Aiming at stimulating economic and social development of these countries, it is basically concerned with the transformation of the inherent colonial administrative structures into planned and purposive actions in conformity with changing situations of self-rule and development. Its emergences are traceable in the efforts of the USA to support socio-economic development in these countries through its economic and technical assistance. When nationalist uprisings in the least developed countries were increasing, the nationalist political self-determination was not only supported by the multi-lateral and bi-lateral international agencies like the US AID and the World Bank under the leadership of the US, but they also felt the reality that political independence seemed to be useless without economic self-determination (Jide, 2014).

The emergence of development administration has a mutual effect on traditional economy and public administration. Its proponents have sought to define development from an economic perspective. They proceeded to measure development with the per capita GNP growth rate. Development is perceived with equation of resources to population which is related to industrial production, agricultural production and the supply of raw materials. Plans regarding development administration adopted in the 1950s and 1960s determine the rate of growth based on per capita GNP (Sharma et. al, 2012).

Based on this idea, developing countries began to think in the 1970s about how to make their values and priorities efficiently in the distribution of resources and incomes. Not only those, but these countries are also trying to

make full use of manpower and natural resources and maintain the environment. Development administration emphasizes political commitment to meet these specific goals and objectives. It uses governmental power and influence to provide legitimacy to them. It is at the center of the politics of developing countries (Chandler and Plano, 1982).

### **Two Aspects of Development Administration**

The idea of development administration has two major aspects. First one is ‘development of administration which refers to develop administration and other aspect is ‘administration of development’ which has a key role in the implementation of the development programs.

#### ***Development of Administration***

Development administration emphasizes increasing and developing the capabilities of the administrative system in order to achieve developmental goals efficiently and effectively. For achieving objectives successfully, it is necessary to increase the capability of those who are involved in development activities. Development administration has to ensure these through education, training and other skill development activities. Besides many advisory functions of development administration such as policy making, planning and budgeting, it needs to perform a significant role to improve administrative capacity for development. There is a direct relation between the improvement and enhancement of administrative capabilities and achievement of developmental goals (Hague, 2010).

#### ***Administration of Development***

Administration of development refers to the administration of the development process such as organizational developments i.e., government departments, regulatory agencies, public enterprises, public corporations, cooperative institutions, etc. The government mechanism has the responsibility in achieving the economic and political goals of the broader society. Basically, there are two main functions of development administration first one is realizing development goals and second is improving and developing the capabilities of the personnel engaged in the achievement of development goals and objectives (Sharma et. al, 2012).

### **Significance of Development Administration**

The growth of a country's economy and culture, or, more accurately, the socio-economic changes in a society, is the focus of development administration (Sharma, 2020). Consequently, the significance of development administration can hardly be overemphasized. Here the administration seeks to make the rational bureaucratic structure a reality. The bureaucratic system conducts government activities in developing countries with impartiality and efficiency. However, in this case, it is not always possible to work properly. It is common to see that since political institutions are not integrated in developing countries, bureaucrats are more proactive in formulating and implementing government policies. Another reason for this is that being expert and highly educated; bureaucrats are easily capable to play a leading role (Hague, 2010). Moreover, in developing countries, as the pace of development needs to be accelerated, bureaucrats move forward with their knowledge and skills.

In this case, politicians lag behind. But they hope that bureaucrats will continue to follow their political leadership: the bureaucrats should not use the basis of their own elite power for their own interests. In developing countries, development administration, therefore, serves as a tool for determining, defining, integrating and implementing national goals and objectives. It plays a significant role in enhancing the lives of people. It emphasizes on developing its own administrative capacities, tools and techniques in order to meet the ever-changing demands of the society (O'Toole and Meier, 2010).

The key factor of development administration is the introduction of new ideas, techniques and changing the behavioral pattern of the officials. It creates a more democratic administrative process by permitting mass people to participate in the management process of developmental programs. It tries to minimize the gap between the development process and administrative response (Onichakwe, 2016).

### **Subject Matter of Development Administration**

Development administration deals with a wide range of subjects. It has a significant role in society, politics, economy and administration of a country as well as in sustainability and growth. Some important aspects of development administration are discussed below.



### ***Emphasizing on Natural Resources***

The concept, Development Administration, emphasizes on the use of natural resources efficiently. Through being efficiently used, natural resources can ensure sustainable development and economic growth. That is why ensuring the proper use of natural resources is one of the important areas of discussion for development administration.

### ***Developmental Planning***

All activities of development administration revolve around developmental plans. Development administration originated on development-oriented plans and programs. So developmental planning is important in the discourse of development administration.

### ***People-Oriented Administration***

One of the major significant features of the development administration is people-oriented administration. Development administration tends to make administrative systems more people-oriented through ensuring social welfare, security and reducing poverty.

### ***Administrative Reform***

Development administration emphasizes on reforming administration according to the needs and demands of the time for ensuring effective and efficient administration. A qualified bureaucracy with its expertise and knowledge can help to increase the pace of development.

### ***People's Engagement***

People's engagement has a significant role in developmental planning. People's views are important for making better and effective plans for developmental activities. This participation may be direct or indirect.

### ***Training***

Development administration gives attention to the enhancement of the quality of employees. So, it emphasizes on the training of employees because training is essential for acquiring skills in a changing environment.

### ***Ensuring Accountability***

Ensuring accountability is one of the key features for administrative development. The administration should focus on accountability to be successful and dynamic.

### **Elements of Development Administration:**

Development administration has some important elements. These are discussed below.

#### ***Goal-oriented Administration***

Development administration has significant differences from traditional public administration regarding its area of activities; it is a goal-oriented administrative system aiming at achieving socio-economic goals. Traditional administration is considered as a rule bound and change resistant administration, while development administration has the capacity to carry on development activities within a complex nature and can play the required role in bringing about change needed for the development of society and economy.

#### ***Planned Efforts with Coordination***

Development administration is considered as the organized efforts for undertaking development programs and projects aimed at state-building and socio-economic development. These organized efforts are well planned and coordinated. Due to the scarcity of human and material resources in a developing country, they have to adapt and adopt required development planning techniques necessary for ensuring socio-economic progress. Appropriate planning and coordination are the key aspects of development administration.

#### ***Quality Management***

Development administration includes enhancing management quality needed for accomplishing developmental objectives. It focuses on improving the knowledge and skills of the administrator for performing their task properly in a responsible way. It provides diverse special training to them in order to develop their management qualities.

### ***Motivation***

When the personnel of an organization are motivated, they work better and perform spontaneously to achieve organizational goals and objectives. Development administration requires highly motivated personnel at all levels of the organization. These motivated personnel should be committed to organizational goals and should have enthusiasm to achieve those goals.

### ***People's Participation***

Development administration focuses on people's participation in the development process. The participation of people has great importance in the successful formulation and implementation of development projects.

### ***Relations with Other Disciplines***

Development administration operates in the framework of the law of the land. Anything that is contrary to the law cannot be attempted by the administrator, no matter how desirable or reasonable it may be on the other grounds.

Indeed, the development administrator has to be on the right side of law not only negatively in the sense of not breaking it, but also positively, that is of not doing anything unless the law warrants it. This is as we see as one of the principal differences between development and private administration. The former can never function in excess of legal power. If it does, its acts are ultra-vires, i.e., void (Hague, 2010).

Development administrators can do only those things specially authorized by law whereas in the private sector the law tells the administrators only what they cannot do. As a result, discretion is more limited in development administration than in private sector (Sharma et. al, 2012).

Most laws contain in them expressions of development policy, i.e., they prescribe what shall be done and from this point of view, as Wilson put it, development administration becomes the 'systematic and detailed execution of public law'. It is on account of this intimate relationship between the two that in continental countries development administration has mainly been studied as a branch of law (O'Toole and Meier, 2010).

Administration is also closely related to the making of law. The proposals for a large part of legislation actually arise from the various administrative and institutional measures.

A country cannot run without proper financial management. The whole theory of financial management and taxation is economic in nature. Nowadays, the administrators need extensive expertise on the economic problems and the capacity to solve the same. All administrative problems need to be evaluated in terms of their economic consequences.

Most of the pressure groups and pulls which seek to influence administration have economic interest to safeguard or protect. It is considered as the foremost duty of administration to ensure the economic prosperity and strength of the nation. It must fight adverse business cycles and depressions, secure employment for the unemployed, maintain, as far as possible, a favorable balance of trade and do everything in its power to safeguard the financial credit and stability of the nation. Every project undertaken involves expenditure and the question of ways and means to meet that expenditure, and any administration which fails to solve its financial problems satisfactorily, would soon find itself discredited and at a stand-still (O'Toole and Meier, 2010).

Presently, except for a few capitalist countries, the tendency is increasingly growing towards state ownership and nationalization (Hague, 2010).

It is widely recognized that psychology plays a vital role in all human organizations. No social science concerned with the activities of human being can afford by avoiding the psychological factors involved in such study. In the earlier days, there was a tendency to view development administration solely as a matter of legal or formal relationships between the superior officers and the subordinator of the ruler and the ruled. However, experience shows that legal and structural relationships are only one aspect of administration.

Underlying these there are the psychological attitude and reactions of the personnel and public, deeply influencing the practical functioning of the organization. This truth forced itself into the notice of the observers first in the field of the industrial administration which was openly plagued by disputes and strikes as a consequence of ignoring the psychology of labor from there, it quickly spread to other spheres of administration too (Sharma et. al, 2012).

In this modern era, administration is being studied increasingly from the psychological point of view. The administration in modern technological advancement cannot avoid the most important result of the psychological approach. It has been widely recognized that, every formal organization as determined by the law and the rules; there exists also an informal organization which naturally springs up from the social and personal relationship and attitudes of the personnel engaged in running the organization.

The same organization will work in one way, if there is mutual sympathy and goodwill between its head and his principal lieutenants, but in a very different way, if those who are lower down, dislike and distrust the officers at the top, or vice versa. The social groups among the personnel and their mutual reactions to the ideas and attitudes of one another modify the formal relationships of the organizational structure in countless ways (O'Toole and Meier, 2010).

Therefore, it is clear that, psychology has thus involved a large number of new items to the problems which the students of administration have to study. A few examples are the problems of incentive, morale and prestige which are psychological in nature. On the other hand, psychological test is being increasingly employed in the selection of the personnel. Personnel administration is being influenced more and more by psychological consideration. In short, as a result of the understanding of psychological implications of the administrative activity, it has come to be viewed essentially as a system of human rather than mechanical relationships (Onichakwe, 2016).

Development administration cannot proceed without the assistance of sociology. "Sociology is the study of human behavior in a group. It studies various types of groups and how they influence human incidents and activity. Administration is co-operative endeavor in which large number of people get together to achieve certain objectives. The larger the organization is, the greater the growth of smaller social group". Sociology extensively is concerned with the behavior of an individual as the member of a group. It studies various kinds of people and groups that reside in the society and the way in which they influence human traits, instincts and activity (Jide, 2014).

### **Influence of Science and Technology on Development Administration**

The influence of scientific and technological inventions on our daily life can hardly be ignored. The railway, the airplane, the motor car, the

telegraph and the telephone have reduced distances for purposes of travel and transmission of news and information. The application of mechanical power in industrial sector has led to the increase of factories and urbanization with the myriad of their social consequences. During the last two hundred years, the forces of technology and science have transformed the world out of recognition. The vast environmental changes took place that could not but affect development administration in important ways. In this connection, scholars identified some consequences resulted from technological advancement and environment changes (Onichakwe, 2016).

The technological changes have greatly increased the functions, duties and responsibilities of development administration. Individuals have lost their capacity of self-help at many vital points of their lives because of the complexities created by the modern industrial civilization. An individual feels himself powerless and thus becomes forlorn before the large scale influences confront him in matters of supply of the necessities of life, employment, housing, business prospects, wartime protection and hundreds of other things, and therefore needs the help of development administration to safeguard his interest in these matters. Secondly, large scale organization and greater centralization of administration has been rendered possible by the swift means of communication now available (Jide, 2014).

A large addition has been made to the tools and implementation of development administration, many of the routine process of which are being mechanized. In this situation the administrator no longer lives in the era of simple pencil and pen, hand copying and slow-going couriers and messengers (Hague, 2010). No assistance has the typewriter, accounting, the calculating, sorting, and various other kinds of machine, the telegraph and telephone, and the railway and the airplane to accelerate and facilitate his work. To take the telephone only how much correspondence and delay it has reduced, and to what a great extent quick personal and informal consultation and discussion it has facilitated. These mechanical devices have also accentuated the problem of the training of the staff in their proper handling (Sharma et. al, 2012). With the advancement of computer almost reaching its zenith old patterns of thinking in the application of science and technology in development administration have evaporated. At this critical juncture in the age of information, governance must be ensured through digitalization of administration for prompt action and quick service (O'Toole and Meier, 2010).

## Differences between Development Administration and Public Administration

Although the concepts of public administration and development administration seem to be the same, there are considerable differences between them. Below are the differences between public administration and development administration in different contexts.

**Table 1:** *Development Administration vs. Public Administration*

Contexts	Public Administration	Development Administration
Definition	The process or institution through which the collective and co-operative efforts of the government are conducted is called public administration.	Development Administration uses all the elements of development to plan for socio-economic development and nation building.
Objective	Maintaining law and order, justice, collection of revenue, health, education and other services on behalf of the government.	Improving the system in a planned way for improving the socioeconomic and political condition of the country.
Scope	Scope of public administration is limited.	Scope of development administration is very wide.
Nature	Public administration is confined to nature and lacks positive thinking.	Development administration is innovative in nature.
Type	Public administration is executive type.	Development administration is the managerial type.
Characteristic	Public administration is upper-class oriented.	Development administration deals with all classes of the society.
Structure	Its structure is centralized from top to bottom.	Development administration is the result of a concerted effort in which everyone is a partner and enjoy the outcomes.
Leadership	In public administration, leadership is authoritative.	In development administration, democratic leadership is exercised for having legitimacy and cooperation from the people.
Decision Making	Decision making is centralized in public administration.	Development administration prefers participative decision making.

*Note:* Compiled by author from different sources

## **Development Administration and Good Governance**

Good governance is an ideal governing system that refers to the effectiveness and efficiency in actions, socio-economic development with sustainability, social justice, welfare etc. It also essentially emphasized on the significance of ethically sound political leadership, rules of laws and universal human rights, and above all, transparency and accountability in the affairs of governance ranging from central management to the delivery end at grass-roots level (Ijje & Michael, 2019). Development administration also shares the same theme. Both are simultaneously important for building a people-oriented welfare state. In the recent world, most countries have emphasized on development administration in order to ensure good governance (Onichakwe, 2016). Development administration can be helpful in ensuring good governance in many ways, such as-

- Rule of law is one of the most important ingredients of good governance. Without the rule of law, good governance is unimaginable. Development administration has an effective role in ensuring the rule of law.
- Development administration emphasized transparency and accountability in its activities which is also important for ensuring good governance.
- It is not possible to ensure good governance with the old thumb rule of traditional public administration. Development administration plays an important role in reforming administration to make it up to date which helps in ensuring good governance.
- Ensuring the basic rights of citizens is one of the important tasks of a modern state. Development administration is committed to protecting civil rights. Good governance is easier to establish when civil rights are upheld.
- Development administration aims to strengthen democracy which is also a key ingredient for establishing good governance.

## **Conclusion**

From the previous discourse, it is clear that there is a symbiotic relationship between public administration and development administration. The discourse highlighted the similarities and dissimilarities between the two and concluded that public administration is the basis on which development



administration actualizes its objectives of accelerating development agendas and programs. These agendas function in an environment where there are social, political, economic, and cultural forces, and each of these forces needs to be perceived from their proper perspectives. The functioning of development administration is therefore inter-factional and, in this process, stimulates and facilitates defined development programs of social and economic priorities. The idea of development administration thus appeared to be a complicated phenomenon and has various ramifications with multi-dimensional effects and outcomes. For development administration to be truly successful, these underlying factors are needed to be studied and properly utilized.

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## **Challenges of Disaster and Human Security Management in Bangladesh: A Study on Super Cyclone Sidr**

A K M Iqbal Azim<sup>1</sup>

### **Abstract**

*This research attempts to unearth the challenges of disaster and human security management with special focus on super cyclonic storm 'Sidr' which affected the south-western part of Bangladesh through land fall with 240 km/h on 15-16 November 2007 causing death toll approximately to 3406 and damaging property of about USD 1.7 billion. This research is exploratory and descriptive in nature following mixed approach mainly based on primary data along with some secondary data added to them. The primary data have been collected through participant observation, survey and key informant interviews of affected people, reports of activities of deployed unit etc. On the other hand, the secondary data have been collected through document analyses. The study concentrated on unearthing and analyzing the devastating consequences of 'SIDR' in purposively selected Jhalokathi district. It further analysed how Bangladesh Armed Forces encountered post-SIDR challenges of human security and derived important takeaways for future strategies. The research findings included the overall disaster management operational strategies and nature of coordination between different stakeholders. Finally, the research findings indicated the way out of redirecting the disaster affected people to normal life.*

**Keywords:** Disaster, Human Security, Relief, Rehabilitation, Transportation, Catastrophe, Strategy

Bangladesh is a deltaic land with huge vulnerability to natural disaster. Super cyclone Sidr is the one that brought dreadful consequence for the country. The name 'SIDR' was contributed by Oman. There is another saying that it is derived from the Sinhalese language where 'SIDR' means 'hole' or

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'eye'. Super cyclonic storm 'Sidr' formed in the central Bay of Bengal and quickly strengthened to reach the peak having sustained wind flow of 240 km/h (155 mph), which made it category-4 equivalent tropical cyclone on the 'Saffir-simpson' scale. The storm eventually caused landfall in the south-western part of Bangladesh on 15-16 November 2007. Super cyclone Sidr is considered as the strongest cyclone created in the Bay of Bengal which was even worse than the cyclone of 1991. Cyclone warnings were issued timely for which over 1.5 million people were evacuated and supported with safe shelters (OCHA, 2008).

Kilometers after kilometers all standing objects lied down to the ground within few hours due to the devastating cyclone Sidr. The Bangladesh Armed Forces responded immediately to address the cyclonic impacts. They conducted initial search and rescue as well as early relief operations within hours of the cyclone hit the country. A forward coordination centre was established in Barisal on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2007 to oversee the entire relief efforts and activities. Bangladesh Armed Forces, being deployed at district level under operation 'Alor Shondhane' since earlier, came forward to address all the challenges of 'SIDR' in the name of 'Operation Ashar Alo'. The 38 Air Defence Regiment Artillery, having been deployed from earlier, was immediately tasked to rescue the affected people with critical operation in Jhalokathi district.

## **Literature Review**

Analysis of the contemporary literatures on the severe effects and aftermath of cyclone Sidr revealed that Bangladesh would seek to derive the takeaways for the future. Kabir (2009) described how UNDP mandated their strategy for early recovery of the affected people by assisting in shelter repairing. It was very difficult for them to collect the building materials. They had to shoulder the accountability and had to monitor for effective implementation of plan. But lack of clear instruction from concerned organizations of government created big challenge for different agencies. However, his research did not critically discuss the nature of challenges of disaster management strategy. Haque and Jahan (2016) tried to investigate the impact of cyclone Sidr on six regional economic system of Bangladesh. The study used secondary data on direct damages and corresponding changes in consumer spending and public/private investment expenditure.

GOB (2008) report was produced to facilitate discussion leading to the finalization of a government endorsed strategies for early recovery and beyond. The report appreciated the contributions of every agency and individual who had participated in the relief operation to date since without their efforts it would

have been an even more daunting task for the government. It had extended special appreciation and recognition to Armed Forces Division for the way in which they so quickly responded to the crises of Sidr and so professionally engaged themselves with the force of United States. It also appreciated the role of international partners who responded magnificently to our national needs.

Halder (2011) analysed as to how cyclone Sidr had impacted the ecosystem of Sundarbans area including national economy. Siddik (2013) aimed to investigate the impacts of cyclone Sidr on *char* dwellers of the Majherchar Island in Pirojpur District. It explored the role of family assets and the means of livelihood of the *char* people in the study area in the pre-disaster period; and further assessed the nature of damage of family assets and means of livelihood of *char* dwellers of an isolated island due to cyclone Sidr and associated coastal flooding. Islam (2016) highlighted the partial output of a workshop where participants had conducted some case studies about Sidr victims to learn gender sensitive disaster management vulnerabilities and coping strategies. It recorded the nature of unlimited sufferings, miseries, pain and vulnerabilities of Sidr victims: men, women, children and animals. After analyzing all relevant existing literatures, the study was able to identify some significant research gaps in regard to the challenges of disaster and human security management dimensions, especially considering the study area of the present study. Thus, the study area being an unexplored ground, there remains research gaps and the present research has identified new findings which added knowledge in the relevant field and would help to formulate future disaster strategy for the country.

### **Rationale of the Study**

Several studies have been conducted for assessing various impacts of super cyclonic storm Sidr. But a scanty number of studies have been carried out on the intense challenges of ground scenario that were taken to counter the unimaginable devastating effects of Sidr. As per Global Climate Risk Index-2020, Bangladesh remains at 7<sup>th</sup> position among countries with most vulnerable to extreme climatic conditions. However, its ability to deal with climate related disaster has increased. At the same time, Bangladesh stands 3<sup>rd</sup> among the most hit countries in the world by natural disasters. Cyclone SIDR was the most powerful cyclone that severely impacted Bangladesh since 1991. But the death toll was significantly less (approximately 3,406 and about 1000 missing) due to the emergency steps taken by administration based on early warning system. However, the damage to crop and infrastructure was quite significant. Research

on the challenges of all these matters need to be done for formulating future comprehensive disaster management strategies.

Furthermore, the findings of the study are likely to contribute for better understanding of the importance and levels of early preparedness to evacuate vulnerable people followed by early warning system. The response strategies also followed the modus operandi of carrying out fast and accurate emergency response strategy, way of quick assessment of any catastrophe, quick reaction plan to ensure no further casualty after the immediate cyclone onslaught. Research outcome will also deduce initiatives of deliberate midterm rehabilitation plan as per priority of the affected people and help to formulate long term strategy to minimize the impacts. These recommendations may be taken care of by the policy formulators and policy implementers, especially by the concerned Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief; Ministry of Food; NGOs, INGOs and other stakeholders both at home and abroad. Research findings are expected to contribute to the proper implementation of SDG goals of climate and disaster sector and might help to achieve some of the objectives of vision-2030.

## **Research Objectives**

### ***General Objective***

To unearth the challenges of disaster and human security management in the Sidr affected South-western part of the country.

### ***Specific Objectives***

- To examine the devastating consequence of ‘SIDR’ in Jhalokathi District of Bangladesh;
- To investigate how the post-SIDR immediate challenges were addressed;
- To highlight midterm and long-term rehabilitation challenges accomplished under critical scenario;
- To derive some important learning to formulate future disaster management policies and strategies.

### **Research Methodology**

This research is basically exploratory and descriptive in nature. The study is explorative because it had been exploring the field of occurrence from beforehand the crisis took place. The researcher adhered to observe the situations during the cyclonic turmoil doing massacre over the study area. The researcher, being governmentally responsible, participated and administered the rescue and relief operation immediately the after the Sidr attack and thus utilized the opportunity of conducting a comprehensive observation and exploration over the field of study. The study is descriptive as well due to its striking characteristics of revealing the real-life situations. A descriptive research reveals and describes the 'what', 'who' and 'how' of the reality. This study revealed how the crisis occurred, what happened, who were victims, by whom and how the rescue and overall operations were conducted. Thus, it becomes a descriptive research.

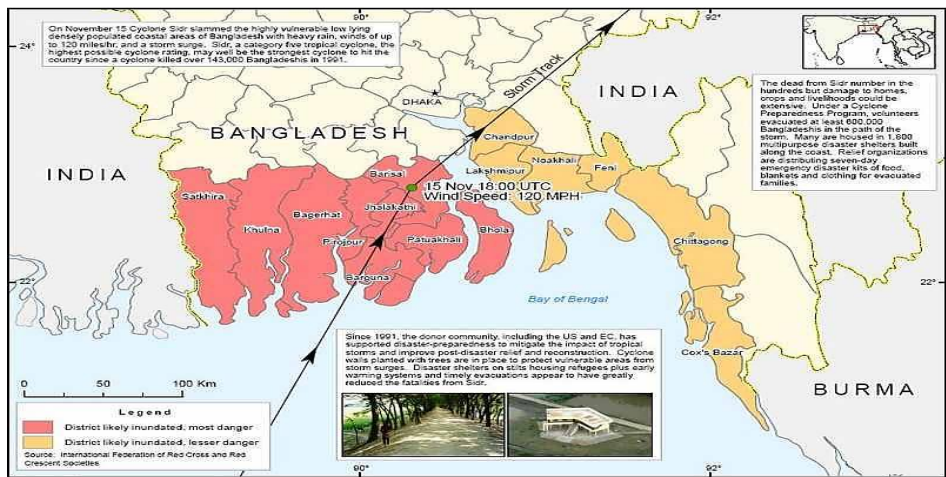
The research is mainly based on mainly primary data and partially on secondary data. Predominantly, observation method has been used for collecting field data and information. Out of the five severely Sidr affected districts of the region, Jhalokathi district has been selected purposively as the author personally participated in the whole disaster management operation there and served the affected people for over 1.5 years as the commanding officer of Bangladesh Army. Primary data have been collected by employing participatory observation method, informal survey on ground, face to face interviews, key informant interview, FGD, and informal in-depth interview of the affected people etc. On the other hand, the secondary data have been collected from printed document analysis, and analyzing contents from books, journals, papers, websites, reports and returns of units etc. relevant to Sidr. The relevant data have been collected from all the upazillas of Jhalokathi to make the analysis representative.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Stakeholders' approaches toward natural disaster management can be classified into proactive and reactive approaches. Moe and Pathranarakul (2006) described that pro-active approach refers to activities like mitigation and preparedness that are planned and conducted before the natural disasters by the stakeholders to tranquilize the adverse impacts of the natural disasters effectively. In contrast, response and recovery activities conducted by the stakeholders during and after the natural disasters are called reactive approach. Although there are two approaches to tackle the natural disasters; reactive and proactive approaches, most studies have claimed that the stakeholders often resolve the predicaments arisen in natural disasters by reactive approaches



(Bosher et al. 2009, Brilly and Polic 2005, Loosemore and Hughes 1998). Moe et al. (2007) proposed a balanced score card technique considering both proactive and reactive approaches to provide a continuous assessment of performance in each life-cycle phase in natural disaster management operation. Evaluation of super cyclonic storm Sidr from the perspective of balanced approach is highly required, deductions of which will be of immense importance for future successful disaster and human security management operation.



**Figure 1:** Map showing Sidr affected Districts and Disaster Response

### Consequence of Sidr

Under ‘Operation Alor Shondhane’ 38 Air Defence Regiment Artillery was entrusted with the responsibility of controlling law and order situation in Jhalokathi district which is about 7 hours away from Jashore cantonment. As a part of their training curriculum, the unit was involved in carrying out ‘Annual Air Defence Course Shooting -2007’ with 50% manpower. With rest 50% manpower besides ‘Operation Alor Shondhane’, from 11 Nov 2007 the unit started ‘Operation Nbojatra’ to support the preparation of ‘National Identity card and voter list with picture’ in Jhalokathi District and Bakerganj & Banaripara Upazilla of Barisal district. When ‘SIDR’ struck Jhalokathi district, the unit was already committed to three above mentioned tasks of immense

magnitudes at the same time. With clear order from higher headquarters, the unit quickly rearranged to support this national catastrophe.

### ***Overall Damage and Loss Assessment of Sidr***

Five (including Jhalokathi) of Bangladesh's thirty affected districts were classified as "severely affected" and a further eight were classified as "moderately affected". Of the 2.3 million households got affected to some degree by Cyclone Sidr, about one million were seriously affected. The number of deaths caused by Sidr is estimated at 3,406 with 1,001 still missing, and over 55,000 people sustaining physical injuries. In the wake of Cyclone Sidr, the Government of Bangladesh, together with Bangladesh Armed Forces undertook a comprehensive damage, loss and needs assessment to ascertain the extent of the damage caused by the storm, and to define a comprehensive and feasible recovery plan. They estimated the total damage and losses caused by Sidr into Bangladesh Taka (BDT) 115.6 billion (GOB, 2008).

### ***Catastrophe in Jhalokathi District***

Based on weather forecast, emergency meeting was called at around 1600 hrs on 15 Nov 07 where all key personnel of the district including Deputy Commissioner, representative from Army, all Chairmen, local elites etc. were present. It was a mammoth challenge to ensure early safe return of locals to shelters as many were not interested to leave their own land. Immediately after the sunset on 15 Nov 2007, wind flow started increasing its strength and speed. The sky turned out red, blustery weather grew very strong, water level raised, area of destruction increased, and roaring sound reached to heart-breaking juncture. Tidal surge was 20 feet above the sea level which was plenty enough with required strength to destroy its surroundings. It was good luck for all as at that time low tide was prevailing which helped less destructive effect. Millions of gigantic trees and strong structures knocked down as sleep within short span of time. 'Jhalokathi turned into a town of ghosts' (Dainik, 2007). It was written that destructions happened all around, electric division was massacred with no electricity supply; phone, fax, computer services stopped; fallen trees blocked all road communication; no drinking water, shelter and food for affected people was available. Suddenly, there was an acute shortage of drinking water, food, and shelter for the severely affected people.

***Damage Assessment of Jhalokathi District***

All upazillas were exceedingly affected, but the greatest havoc happened in Kathalia upazilla. Amua and Paticalghata unions of Kathalia upazilla were totally cracked and shattered. These two unions were the commercial and educational hub of the district and located in the focal point of four streams of 'Bishkhali' river. After few days of relentless efforts by different organizations, the unit could quantify part of its destruction as follows:

**Table 1: Damage Assessment of Jhalokathi District**

SL	Category	Upazilla				Total
		Sadar	Nalcity	Rajapur	Kathalia	
1.	Death personnel	04	07	19	17	47
2.	Wounded personnel	3,573	324	3,229	4,080	11,206
3.	Affected family	33,215	31,251	18,207	32,086	1,14,759
4.	Fully damaged House	6,619	6,512	25,814	28,240	67,185
5.	Fully damaged primary school, high school, madrasa and college	21	21	42	35	119
6.	Partially damaged educational institutions	128	216	107	85	536
7.	Fully damaged crops/land (hector)	1,335	1,069	1,692	2,010	6,106
8.	Partially affected crops/land (hector)	11,787	10,972	10,973	8,531	41,387
9.	Death cattle	297	40	171	212	726
10.	Death poultry	22,854	8,033	21,177	22,442	74,506
11.	Damaged poultry farm	32	17	30	17	96

*Note: Survey Data 2007*

### **Post-Sidr Immediate Challenges of Disaster and Human Security Management**

In the framework of ‘Operation Ashar Alo’ civil-military joint forces took most important challenge of ensuring ‘no more death’ out of starvation. Besides, the unit took challenge of reaching life saving items, medical treatment etc. to all corners of the district. Terrain itself was quite difficult to reach door to door.

#### ***Involvement of Disaster Management (DM) Committee***

Under direct supervision of Barisal Central control cell, all the agencies of district administration were made active. Immediately all were deployed to all upazilla headquarters in support of ‘Operation Ashar Alo’. Disaster management committee were formed at district and upazilla level and made effective with the inclusion of army. Operation flow chart of DM committee is given at Annex-A.

#### ***Reception of Life Saving Items***

Barisal central coordination cell was very active in coordinating all relief materials received from different corners of the country. There were two basic channels of relief supply i.e., central coordination cell of Barisal, district administration or army camp. Subsidiary channels were different NGOs, private organizations, political organizations etc. In Jhalokathi district total relief materials received are quoted below:

##### **a. From Central Coordination Cell**

Relief was coming through road, river, and air under the close supervision of administration as mentioned below:

**Table 2:** *Items Received from Barisal Central Coordination Cell*

<b>Serial</b>	<b>Mode of Transportation</b>	<b>Items Received</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
1.	<b>Road</b>	rice, pulse, food pack, chira, muri, sugar, salt, mixed food, water can, warm clothes, cooking set etc.	244 Tons	From different districts, organizations, BDR etc.
2.	<b>Water ways</b>	rice, pulse, food pack, chira, muri, sugar, salt, mixed food, water can, warm clothes, cooking set etc.	26 Tons	Materials for the people of Chittagong were carried by ships from Haliashahar Artillery Centre.
3.	<b>Helicopter sortie</b>	rice, dry food, pulse, biscuit, various items etc.	80 Tons	About 40 helicopter sorties in Union or Upazilla level.
	<b>Total</b>		350 Tons	

*Note:* Survey Data, 2008

**b. From District Administration**

District administration received substantial amount of relief in terms of rice, money, clothing etc. as follows:

**Table 3: Item Received from District Administration**

Serial	Items	Amount	Mode of Distribution
1.	General Relief (GR) Cash	85,39,000.00	District administration distributed all the relief items at various upazillas as per priority of damage assessment in presence of army.
2.	House Building grant	81,60,000.00	
3.	Rice	1252.7 Tones	
4.	CI Sheet	1400 Ban	
5.	Blanket	5545 Nos	
6.	Saudi Food	17707 Pkt	
7.	Saudi Tent	250 Nos	
8.	Shelter Box	20 Nos	

Note: Survey Data, 2008

**c. By NGOS and other Private Agencies**

Relief given by NGOs and other private organizations are also more monitored that are appended below:

**Table 4: Items Received from NGOs and Other Private Agencies**

Serial	NGO/Institution	Items	Amount	Remarks
1.	Islamic Relief Bangladesh (Under United Nations food programme)	Food pack, water can, warm cloth etc	780 Ton	It is a project for 6 months, about 2500 persons per ward and each got 30 kg rice, 10 kg pulse, 1 kg oil etc. in each month.
2.	Old Rajshahi Cadets' Association (ORCA)	Cash Money	5,00,000.00	1. Relief goods purchased and distributed. 2. 2xPond Sand Filters (PSF) and 6xDeep tube well installed for fresh water.
3.	MARICO Limited	Blanket	1364 Nos	
4.	Red Crescent society	Food pack, water pack	3 Ton	
5.	Grameen Phone	Food families	300 Pkt	

Note: Survey Data, 2008

### ***Distribution of Received Relief Materials***

On 16 November morning, after collecting information from local sources, emergency food items like *chira*, *muri*, water, rice, pulse etc. were distributed to the people of acute need. It was difficult to identify the really affected people and the distribution was not synchronized. To streamline these initial challenges, the unit called for emergency meeting with civil administration and jointly formed committees at different levels to coordinate and ascertain the list of really affected people in three categories. Ward level committee included ward members, their nearest contenders, local elites, head masters from different schools, s (clergy man) and representative from Bangladesh Army. Upazilla level committee included Upazilla Nirbahi Officer (UNO), union parishad chairman, his/her nearest contender, local elites, principal/college teacher, imam/purohit (clergy man) and camp commander/officer/junior commissioned officer from army. To categorize the affected people, three lists were made. List 'A' included the fully affective people, list 'B' included the partially affected people and list 'C' included the less affected people from mid/high level of society who feel shy take relief publicly. Then the unit introduced 'SIDR' card (like ration card to unify the distribution effort) of three categories having three different colours (to recognize) which were issued to the affected people. All concerned including NGOs and private agencies were instructed to process their relief materials through district DM committee and all distributions were entered in SIDR card to avoid duplication of relief distribution. Affected people of list 'C' were served in their houses at night. Joint minutes of meeting which was signed by both District Commissioner and Commanding Officer were circulated to all levels to ensure their strict compliance without any failure. This step ensured neutral and corruption free distribution to the really affected people. The sample of SIDR card is attached at Annex B.

### ***Combined Operation Conducted by Civil-Military Medical Team***

Super cyclone Sidr left many people injured who needed emergency medical support. People were subjected to different types of water and air borne diseases. District Civil Surgeon deployed 37 medical teams to union levels and Army deployed one medical team to all upazillas. The unit established medical operation centre and coordinated with all the medical teams for effective management. Meanwhile, Pakistan medical team was deployed in Bhandaria, near the worst affected Kathalia upazilla. Serious patients were referred to this hospital and sometimes to Barisal Medical College Hospital for major surgery

support as well as critical treatment. All these teams worked relentlessly to deal with medical challenges efficiently.

### ***Helicopter Supported Operation***

Accrual of food staff and other relief materials in central control cell was enormous. But the main challenge occurred in supply of all these relief stock down to the union or upazilla level due to narrow roads and vehicle problem. To meet this challenge, Bangladesh Air Force (BAF) played very imperative role. To support hel-lifting operation, deployed troops including local leaders adopted corresponding effort to make smooth helicopter landing at union level. Upazilla and union level civil administration worked and dedicated help with the same frequency. Preparation of helicopter landing pad was accomplished within stipulated time fulfilling all requirements. Bangladesh Air Force pilots were found very ardent and steadfast to meet the ground challenges. Later, US helicopters also productively carried out good number of support missions for which the deployed unit prepared helicopter landing pads fulfilling their necessities.

### ***Media Management***

For effective disaster management operation, it was very challenging to take media on board for neutral and objective reporting. In the initial days, they lacked coordination while reporting which created negative impacts on this tough relief operation. However, after long discussion session, electronic and print media were brought under same umbrella. The unit decided to assemble in circuit house thrice in a week where officers from both army and civil administration remained present. CO and DC would attend such media conference once in a week. Due importance was given to their observation and they were supported with internet, mobility or any other facilities, if urgently needed. At the end, it became a successful joint effort to support the distressed people.

### ***Monitoring of NGOs' Activities***

Many NGOs were working for the distressed people which needed effective coordination. To streamline their activities, the unit arranged discussion sessions in circuit house where CO and DC were physically present. Within very short time, about 50 NGOs started functioning in the district arena. At times, the information quoted in their project proposal were not reflecting



correct ground scenario. They were instructed to appraise their project proposal to the administration, distribute relief materials in presence of DM committee with proper entry to SIDR card and not to pressurize poor people for paying loan installments. This is how many extraordinary challenges were addressed very effectively.

### ***Maintenance of Law-and-Order Situation***

There were all the possibilities of deterioration in law and order situation at any time. Intensity of stealing, grabbing, robbery etc. were about to rise. The deployed police troops & the workers were very vigilant and closely monitored the situation. Distribution points were highly secured. At times, some private agencies without proper notification distributed relief half-heartedly. As such, people in line not getting relief became very violent and at the end the unit had to control the deteriorated situation. Any case of mishandling of relief material was dealt very effectively.

### ***Efficient Management of Water***

‘Water, water everywhere, not a drop to drink’- a fallacy in life. The water around was highly contaminated with salinity and polluted due to rotten dead body, leaves, dead cattle, dead poultry etc. Stagnant pond water was equally unsuitable for any use or drinking due to decayed things as well as for dead fish, wastes etc above water. Most of the shallow and deep tube wells were out of order. People of health & hygiene department worked actively to reach purified water to remote area. The unit took initiative to seek expert opinion from different water specialists from home and abroad for proper water management. Finally, the unit established two pond sand fillers (PSF) and six shallow tube wells in remote areas of all the upazillas. PSF is a unique and huge arrangement like home water purifier for the first time in Bangladesh was commissioned on the ground to remove the salinity of the coastal water to drink. It was also very challenging to dig the shallow tube wells to far depth to get normal water. The unit used enormous lime in all affected stagnant ponds and kept it untouched for 3 days and made the water clean for different home use as well as cultivation.

### ***Role Played by Agricultural and Fisheries Department***

The unit supplied good seeds to farmers for immediate cultivation. In this regard, Bangladesh Agricultural Development Centre (BADC) helped a lot. The unit also supplied huge number of water pump, power tiller etc. for ‘Boro’ cultivation under operation ‘Ashar Alo’ and actively supported to restart fish cultivation. Besides, the unit gave adequate number of boats, nets etc. to the fishermen to restart their life. As a result of the effort, Jhalokathi district received record amount of boro rice in the subsequent season. More so, power tiller enabled them to cultivate 3 types of rice namely Boro, Amon and Auoush in the same year for the first time in the history of Jhalokathi.

### ***Various Challenges Encountered***

Catastrophic effect of Sidr partially or fully destroyed/disrupted all socio-economic support structures of the area. Joint forces in close coordination and with close support of all responsible departments countered all these challenges to bring back normalcy. These challenges stretched over like ensuring re-supply of electricity; re-establishing telephone line, mobile network, Fax, internet etc.; establishing road communication, ferry site; repair of living shelters, schools, college, mosque, madrasa etc.

### **Post Sidr Mid Term and Long-Term Human Security Challenges**

Civil administration and Bangladesh Army jointly tried to overcome mid-term rehabilitation challenges and took required steps in bigger spectrum for the long term.

### ***Mid Term Rehabilitation Projects- Steps to Regain Strength***

People had a propensity to become idle by getting huge free relief. After 4/5 months, it was noticed that people were standing in the line of relief leaving behind his rickshaw, van, or boat. It was difficult to get worker for any job. Even people from some other districts started gathering in Sidr affected districts for free relief. To rehabilitate them, Division HQ formulated sustainable policy in consultation with the unit to rehabilitate distressed people in three fields i.e., namely, agriculture, fisheries, and small business. The unit ensured proper verification of affected people’s list by the committee. In some

cases, like power tiller, water pump, *Guti Urea* etc., the unit made small group of 3/5 persons for future maintenance and as well for enjoying dividend by many. In every case, two party agreements were signed keeping ownership with Army. The unit aimed to make these projects sustainable for long duration to set examples for future. As such, the unit included civil administration in the monitoring committee and included them as the first party in two party agreements on the stamp while distributing rehabilitation equipments. All the contractual papers were handed over to the district administration before ending the support mission. Details of rehabilitation projects are listed below:

**Table 5: Rehabilitation Projects Undertaken in Jhalokathi District**

Allotment of Money per Upazilla	Power Tiller	Water Pump	Spray Machine	Milking Cows	Battle nut Garden	Boats & Nets	Rickshaw	Vans	Sewing Machine	Shop	Books	Guti Uria Project	Shitol Pati Industry	Families Rehabilitated
Sadar- Tk. 47,55,238	33	82	21	-	-	09	24	04	35	-	100	01	-	743
Nalcity- Tk. 44,97,022	36	48	23	19	-	06	-	15	40	01	147	01	-	616
Rajapur- Tk. 84,00,403	52	21	20	40	224	12	27	28	173	-	94	01	02	1048
Kathalia- Tk. 1,25,62,867	78	174	73	49	222	20	12	12	200	-	160	01	-	1937
<b>Total Tk 3,02,20,000.00</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>325</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>446</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>448</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>501</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>4344</b>

*Note:* Survey Data, 2008

### ***Long Term Effective Steps- Sustainable Projects for Future***

Within available resources, few long-term steps were undertaken and completed by joint forcers that are described in succeeding paragraphs. Besides, Govt. planned good number of long-term projects for the affected people with assured monitory support from foreign countries.

***Construction of Mosque cum Cyclone Shelter.*** In Jhalokathi District, for construction of two storied mosque cum cyclone shelter under operation ‘*Ashar Alo*’ the unit received required financial support. A two storied Mosque cum cyclone shelter was planned to serve two purposes. Firstly, in normal time people can use it as a mosque or common place of gathering to solve different social problems and secondly, during crisis it can be used as a shelter center. The unit intentionally planned to construct it in the worst affected remote union of Patalghata of Kathalia upazilla. It was very difficult to ferry the construction materials to the island of Patalghata where only available transport was either rickshaws or vans. With utmost dedication, the job could be accomplished maintaining highest possible quality within stipulated time and with lesser amount than allotted. Surplus amount was utilized to purchase sound system for the mosque and dig shallow tube well for the locals. It became an attractive tourist site in the island where enormous people gathered every day.

***Construction of Biogas Plant.*** Biogas plant or four cows’ project was a new concept to support power supply and natural fertilizer in the remote areas. After detailed ground study, with the approval of higher headquarters, the unit decided to establish this project in Nalcity upazilla. In coordination with civil administration the unit finalized the site near ‘*Asrayan Project*’ area where about eighty families reside. Grameen Shakti, a private owned company was contacted to construct gas chambers and provide required technical support. Besides, beneficiary groups were selected very meticulously from the Sidr affected poor people through the consultation with civil administration. Twenty eight cows were purchased for distribution to support the project. After completing the project, all the houses were connected to bio-electricity and the project was inaugurated on 06 November 2008. It was a red-letter day for the local people who for the first time in their life time got electricity in their area.

### **Takeaways for Future Strategy**

This study proposes following combinations of proactive and reactive measures as the steps for the future disaster and human security management strategy:

- As part of early response plan, district DM committee should seat for meeting once signal no-4 is declared and should give necessary directions to all concerned to bring people to the nearest safe shelters.

- Immediate action after the thrust of any cyclone should be taken to ensure ‘no more death due to starvation’. Then damage assessment should be made and priority of jobs should be determined.
- Initial disaster management strategy should focus on listing the affected people in different categories by forming reliable committee at union level taking representatives from different parties, elite groups etc. so that people cannot complain any biasness. To avoid duplication of relief distribution, necessary cards should be made in different colors (to recognize) like ‘Sidr Card’ and should follow neutrally prepared list.
- Effective water management strategy should be quickly activated through the use of huge amount of limes in the stagnant pond water, establishing PSF, shallow tube wells, purified water distribution plant etc. to ensure sound healthy environment in the affected area.
- Midterm disaster management strategy should emphasize on effective supervision of NGOs’ activities, effective media management through detailed plan, sound heli support plan, good coordination between civil-military medical team, repair & maintenance of road, electricity etc.
- Relief distribution strategy should be elaborate, and relief must not be held for long time in the store. As earlier the distribution is, lesser is the possibilities of pilferage. Distribution point should be safeguarded well in coordination with local police. Distribution team should remember that a hungry man is an angry man.
- Midterm rehabilitation strategy should support the affected people to return to job through making sustainable policy in the field of agriculture, fisheries, small business, poultry etc. Rehabilitation projects should be well planned based on local people’s requirements with bottom-up approach. ‘Cut-off date’ for free relief distribution should be fixed to direct the affected people to their previous works/rehabilitation projects.
- Finally, long term strategies should accommodate green forestation, permanent early warning system, mosque-cum-cyclone shelter, PSF plants, biogas & electricity plants etc.

## Conclusions

Super cyclone Sidr has carried away many valuable lives and belongings leaving behind a dreadful memory. But it is comforting to note that nobody in Jhalokathi district died out of starvation or diseases after Sidr. There lies the focal point of success of ‘Operation Ashar Alo’ conducted by the Armed Forces. Multi-dimensional efforts were taken to reduce the sufferings of the affected people. Post Sidr efforts continued until the affected people were rehabilitated and regained their vigor for works. Rehabilitation projects were meticulously chosen based on the actual requirement of the affected people. With highest dedication of all concerned, affected community people regained their combating spirit and normalcy in life within short period. As the recognition of outstanding performance, the unit received Chief of Army Staff’s Commendation letter which is shown in Annex C. Based on these findings, comprehensive disaster and human security management strategy may be formulated with mixture of proactive and reactive approach. This would enable to serve the nation in the best suited manner and help to fulfill some of the crucial objectives of SDG goals related to climate change and disaster and Vision-2030.

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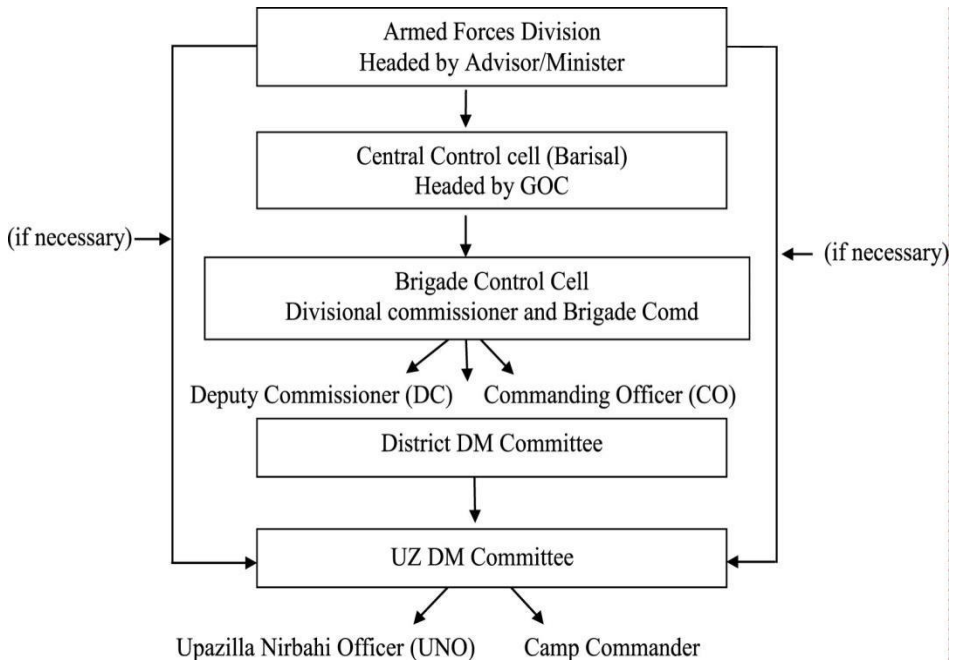
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District

## Appendix A

### Operation Flow Chart of Disaster Management Committee





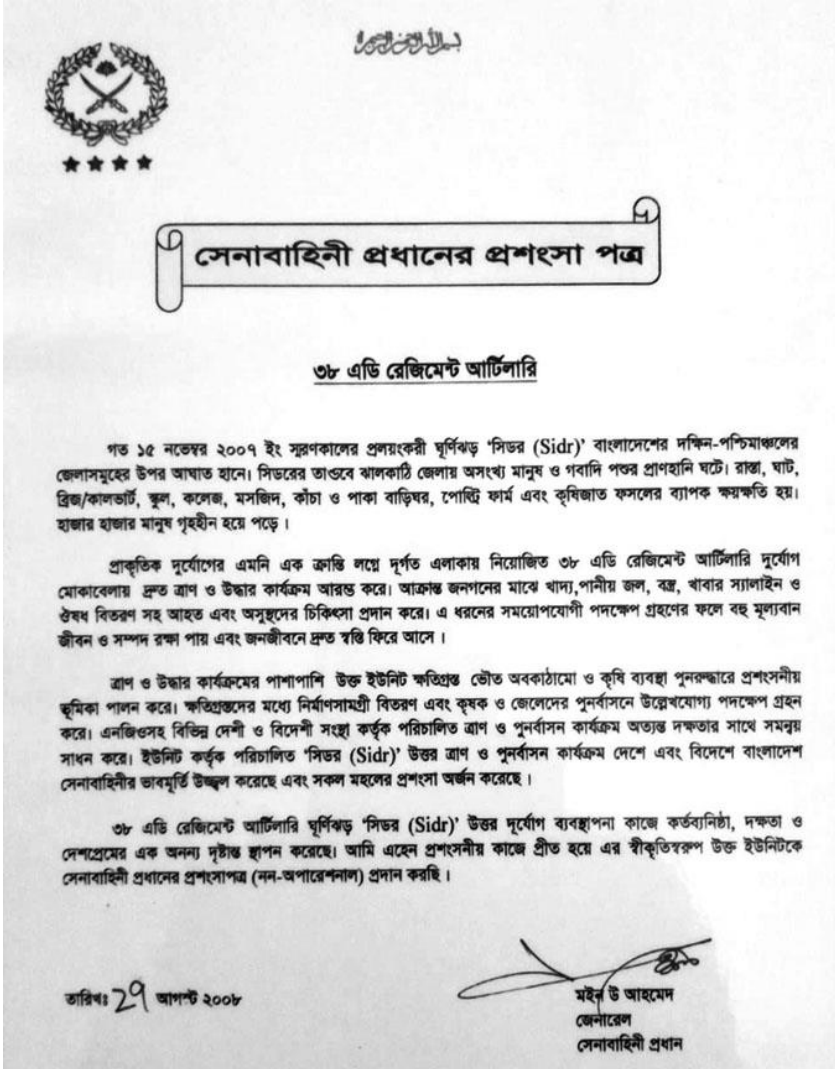
**Appendix B**

Sidr Card Showing Details of Distribution Procedure

<b><u>SIDR CARD</u></b>							
						Card No. _____	
						Category _____	
						Color _____	
Ser	Name and Address	Type of Damage/loss	Dt of Issuing Relief/Rehab Item	Issuing Items	Issued by Org/NGO/Any	Sign of Civil Rep	Sign of Military Rep
<u>Issuing Authority (Army)</u> (Sign by Camp Comd)				<u>Counter Signed</u> (Sign by UNO)			
Name _____							
Designation _____							
Address _____							
Date of Issuing Card _____							

## Appendix C

### Chief of Army Staff's Commendation Letter





## **Incorporating E-governance to Civil Service Training of Bangladesh: Obstacles and Recommendations**

Nazmul Ahsan Kalimullah<sup>1</sup>

M. M. Ashaduzzaman Nour<sup>2</sup>

### **Abstract**

*E-governance, now, a buzzword in the domain of public administration stands for electronic governance which means buying government multifarious services online. Among others, it includes paying taxes, purchasing licenses, sharing information among various organizations as well as governments beyond national borders. Public sector training institutions primarily impart training to civil officials in Bangladesh. Among the training institutions, Bangladesh Public Administration Training Center (BPATC) caters to the training needs of the officials of Bangladesh Civil Service Administration Cadre at entry, mid and senior level. This paper uses primary data as well as expert opinion to identify the current obstacles faced while conducting training on e-governance at Bangladesh Public Administration Training Center; the apex training center in the public sector of the country. Training on ICT is an important instrument in launching e-governance. The strengths found in this research are availability of computer lab with internet facility and the friendly training environment that plays a positive role in awareness building. The weaknesses are inadequate curriculum and lack of demonstration on application of case studies in public administration. The study also manifests a few logistical problems that include lack of adequate number of trainers in demonstration classes and the poor speed of connectivity that reduces the effectiveness of the demonstration classes. Based on empirical findings, this paper suggests recommendations to meet these deficiencies through designing of a stepwise training module for a breakthrough in this time driven gesture.*

**Keywords:** E-Governance, G2C, G2G, G2B, LAN, WAN.

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E-governance refers to the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) to steer government activities in a more accessible ways to various clientele groups. The interface thus includes various stakeholders such as government, citizens, corporate world and above all a mode of communication that is transparent, efficient, time saving and cost effective. The interface among these various units is important for a coordinated effort to reach a common goal and “government is the subset in the process that acts with authority and creates formal obligations” (Keohane and Nye, 2000). E-governance can circulate information with electronic means regarding rural development process (Bertot, Jaeger and Grimes, 2010). Dawes, Vidiasova and Parkhimovich (2016) emphasized on better communication between government and people in this regard. Elkadi (2013) explains that administrative processes must be reinvented to provide better rural development service digitally. Electronic signatures are necessary to enable legal transfer of rural development services by digital means both in personalized and customized manner (Mirchandani, Johnson and Joshi, 2008). It is also important to integrate information systems properly to get services from a single computer-generated center. This single cybernetic center can become the prime contact point for all rural development programmes (Ovais Ahmad, Markkula and Oivo, 2013). According to United Nations (2016), e-governance is a general term for internet and electronic device-based services from local, state and federal civil servants. In this era of e-governance, the public agencies use information technology to support administrative actions, involve citizens and provide services efficiently (Sivarajah, Irani and Weerakkody, 2015). Interactions among different actors may be in the system of obtaining information, making payments, online services etc. (Ranerup, Henriksen and Hedman, 2016). To promote greater participation of citizens, political institutions play the major role within the framework of e-governance. Government, citizens, business organizations, interest groups etc. are the main actors in using e-governance. Using e-governance in civil service training can be described as a product of New Public Management (NPM) reform approaches. Administrative machineries in many developing countries including Bangladesh now have their own websites. These websites provide information but are not updated regularly. Moreover, none of them attains interactive phases in the truest sense. Though e-information criterion meets some requirements in Bangladesh, but the e-consultation and e-decision-making are lacking in many respects though currently there are steps for e-consultancy and e-decision making through inter-connectivity among the various government offices. Now the scholars and practitioners feel the urgency

to identify the obstacles and way forward for enhancing e-governance in civil service training of Bangladesh.

### **Literature Review and Research Gap**

Ali (2004) describes in his book 'Bangladesh Civil Service' that training is considered as an integral component in the enhancement of professional attributes of civil servants in various stages of their work. A good number of literatures on BPATC and training system of civil service in Bangladesh are available. Khan (2013) mentioned that BPATC has four regional training centers at four divisional headquarters to meet the training needs of Class II officials and supporting staffs. Currently, the course curriculum of the various courses in BPATC and the regional centers has undergone a drastic change. They have developed their contents to facilitate the use of ICT and are putting emphasis on computer literacy and language skill rather than on rules-based training, a practice of the past.

BPATC and other training institutes started computer-training program in 1997 through an official order of the Ministry of Establishment [MOE (FT) C-6/97-84]. This training was confined only to theoretical discourse and was not effective because the officials did not get hand on experience on ICT in the absence of well-equipped lab with computer and internet connectivity (Khurshid, 2006). However, computer-training programs for all levels of government officials have undergone a change after 2001 with the installation of well-equipped computer laboratories and incorporation of module on information and communication technology. Now, the center has internet facility with broadband connection where officials can browse web page and interact with outside world for information sharing. A one-hour session is earmarked each day for ICT classes through which officials get first hand exposure to ICT (Alam, 2006). BPATC also conducts a four week specialized course on information technology and e-governance. This course addresses specific requirement of e-governance such as hardware and trouble shooting, data base management, net working and web development. The center already conducted two such courses during the last two years and trained fifty two participants from various government offices and autonomous bodies on the way to launch e-governance (Karim, 2007).

In 2015, Khan mentioned that a pragmatic assessment of the entire training program on ICT manifests naivety. This training, although lacks rigors in application of e-governance and understanding of the fundamentals; nevertheless, can be considered as the first step towards any initiative of the

government in the introduction of e-governance. Indeed, at the entry level most of the officials work at district or Upazila (smaller administrative unit) level. In 2016, Khan mentioned that All the administrative districts and two thirds of the Upazilas in Bangladesh are connected through digital network. Internet connectivity is available in many districts and officials at the entry level are benefited through exposure to training on ICT. They can use the knowledge gained through this training program in their office work.

Senior level officials mainly work at the secretariat and indeed constitute the first tier in the policy making process. An understanding of the application of ICT is imperative for designing work plan and thus training at BPATC helps in awareness building that may work as an incentive for understanding the technologies associated to such a drive. Mid-level officials work both in the secretariat and field administration (Rahman, 2009). Training on ICT is useful for those who work in the secretariat where internet connectivity is available and those who work in field administration as deputy commissioners. Entry-level officials (those who work in district headquarters) have access to the internet facility available in most of their offices (Khan, 2016).

Skimming through the voluminous number of studies in this field, it can be claimed that the benefits of e-governance are substantial both for the government and the citizens (Janssen and van den Hoven, 2015). The payoffs for government include reducing costs, reaching to a larger portion, faster response, improving organizational image through branding and many more (Gajendra, Xi and Wang, 2012). Yildiz and Saylam (2013) illuminate that digitalized training has necessarily changed the whole process from a paper-based mode to an internet-based more efficient and continuous mode. This process has reduced costs by about 87% compared to the traditional methods (Navarra and Cornford, 2012). Rorissa and Demissie (2010) argue that cost-effectiveness and economy can be achieved as it costs less to publish available services on the public agencies' website than on any other media. Thus, the mounting evidence of e-governance in civil service training benefits have lured many governments across the globe (Guha and Chakrabarti, 2014). The transformation of paper-based to web-based process has been observed in North America, Europe, Asia-Pacific regions with a revolution. Despite its substantial benefits, relevant literatures also highlight some challenges that include discrimination towards groups, threat to privacy, huge number of demands, inequality of access, absence of personal touch and so on (Kim, Kim and Lee, 2009).

Several researches have been conducted on the impact of e-governance and civil service training in Bangladesh. But, the state of introducing e-governance in civil service training is an under-researched field. This realization motivated the researcher of this study to identify the gaps in previous research in this connection. The literature review on e-governance and civil service training in Bangladesh states that many scholars have shown their interest in measuring the importance of e-governance and civil service training separately in Bangladesh. However, strategies for enhancing e-governance in civil service training of Bangladesh are not analyzed systematically by empirical research yet.

### **Objectives**

The general objective of this study is to measure the factors of obstacles to incorporate e-governance to civil service training in Bangladesh. The specific objectives are to identify obstacles and find out recommendation. Thus, the purpose of this study is to explore the training strategies of the civil officials; an important ingredient to upgrade the human capital index in e-governance drive.

### **Research Questions**

The qualitative part of this study is conducted based on the following two research questions:

- a) What are the obstacles to incorporate e-governance to civil service training in Bangladesh?
- b) What will be the training strategies of the civil officials to upgrade the human capital index in e-governance?

### **Hypotheses**

The quantitative part of this study is conducted based on the following hypotheses:

***H1: Obstacles of incorporating e-governance to civil service training in Bangladesh are interrelated.***

***H0: Obstacles of incorporating e-governance to civil service training in Bangladesh are not interrelated.***



These hypotheses helped to find out the factors regarding obstacles of incorporating e-governance to civil service training in Bangladesh.

## Methodology

This study is based on a survey administered through a questionnaire that includes a set of training related questions in the field of ICT training. Questionnaire included questions on the idea of e-governance, computer literacy, access to computer and internet facilities. Based on the literature review, the following 16 variables were identified to determine the obstacles.

**Table 1:** *Variables of the Study*

Variables	Sources
lack of knowledge of civil servants	Kim, Kim and Lee, 2009
ignorance of civil servants	Guha and Chakrabarti, 2014
less priority of civil servants	Yildiz and Saylam, 2013
financial barrier	Rorissa and Demissie, 2010
technical barrier	Navarra and Cornford, 2012
losing responsibilities	Rorissa and Demissie, 2010
lack of citizen support	Kim, Kim and Lee, 2009
lack of legal regulation	Guha and Chakrabarti, 2014
inability of competition	Rorissa and Demissie, 2010
diversity	Navarra and Cornford, 2012
management costs	Kim, Kim and Lee, 2009
lack of readiness	Guha and Chakrabarti, 2014
economic crisis	Janssen and van den Hoven, 2015
rigid bureaucracy	Rorissa and Demissie, 2010
changes in taxation	Navarra and Cornford, 2012
absence of IT experts	Gajendra, Xi and Wang, 2012

The purpose of this survey was to determine the strengths, weaknesses and inadequacies in the existing training programs. The questionnaire also included queries to garner feedback from the respondents through open ended questions so that challenges can be sorted out and doable within the available resources could be delineated in the transition phase from manual to electronic devices in public sector service delivery.

Primary data were collected on purposive basis from three categories of government officials related to e-governance implementation programs at Bangladesh Public Administration Training Center. Questionnaire was

distributed to 22 senior level officials, 83 mid-level officials and 174 entry level officials. Though sample size constitutes less than 10 percent of the population, nevertheless the feedback may serve as a preliminary guide. The limitation of this study is the absence of any statistical treatment of data; both on descriptive and probabilistic context. The survey design initially did not keep provision for this statistical treatment and the findings are based on just opinion survey.

The justification for using questionnaire in this research is to collect massive data in a short time. Additionally, it is rationally helpful to address many issues in a standardized way. It is particularly useful in any study when participants wish to remain anonymous or when the researcher wants to provide a more comfortable way for the participants to divulge information that would make them uncomfortable in a face-to-face setting.

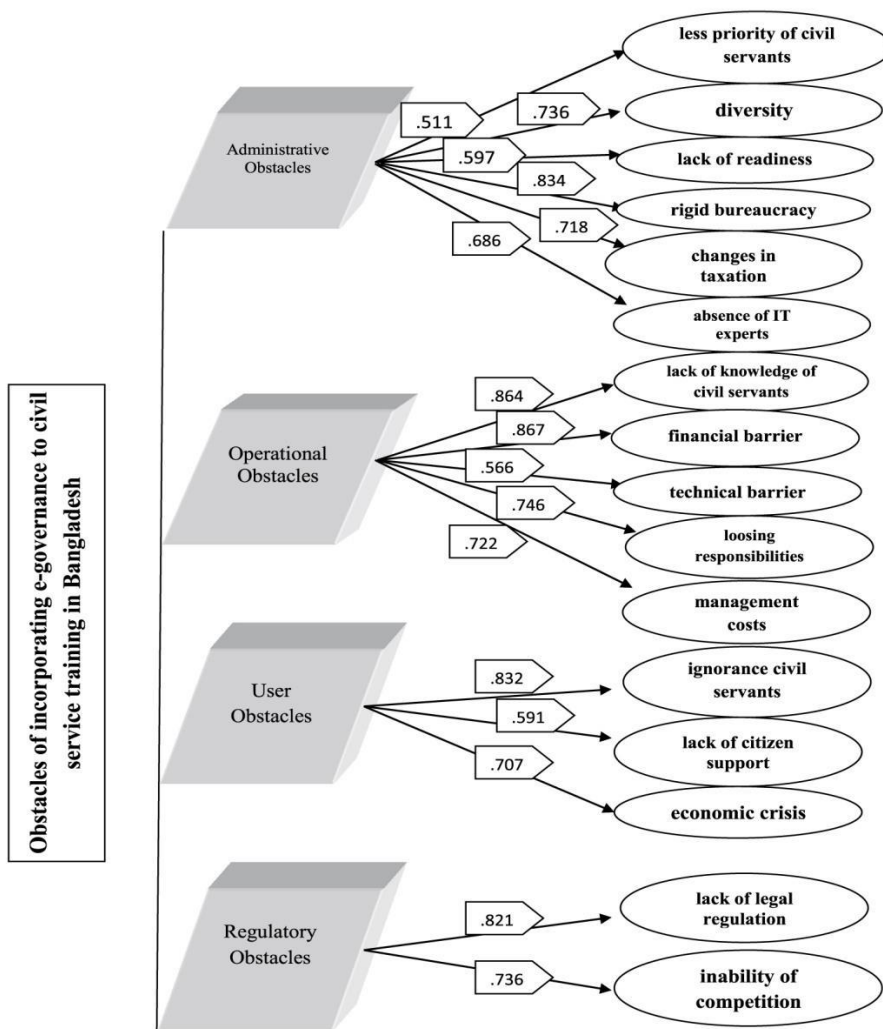
### **Quantitative Results and Findings**

To find out the relationship among the obstacles to implement e-governance, the researchers conducted a factor analysis on 16 variables. Those variables of obstacles are-lack of knowledge of civil servants, ignorance of civil servants, lesser priority given to civil servants, financial and technical barriers etc.

**Table 2:** *Rotated Component Matrix of Obstacles*

<b>Rotated Component Matrix<sup>a</sup></b>				
	<b>Component</b>			
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>lack of knowledge of civil servants</b>		<b>.864</b>		
<b>ignorance civil servants</b>			<b>.832</b>	
<b>less priority of civil servants</b>	<b>.511</b>			
<b>financial barrier</b>		<b>.867</b>		
<b>technical barrier</b>		<b>.566</b>		
<b>losing responsibilities</b>		<b>.746</b>		
<b>lack of citizen support</b>			<b>.591</b>	
<b>lack of legal regulation</b>				<b>.821</b>
<b>inability of competition</b>				<b>.736</b>
<b>diversity</b>	<b>.736</b>			
<b>management costs</b>		<b>.772</b>		
<b>lack of readiness</b>	<b>.597</b>			
<b>economic crisis</b>			<b>.707</b>	
<b>rigid bureaucracy</b>	<b>.834</b>			
<b>changes in taxation</b>	<b>.718</b>			
<b>absence of IT experts</b>	<b>.686</b>			
<b>Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis</b>				
<b>Rotation Method: Quartimax with Kaiser Normalization</b>				
<b>a. Rotation converged in 7 iterations</b>				

We found four factors, which have been shown at Rotated Component Matrix. Here component 1 incorporates less priority of civil servants, diversity, lack of readiness, rigid bureaucracy, changes in taxation, and absence of IT experts. Component 2 includes lack of knowledge of civil servants, financial barrier, technical barrier, losing responsibilities, and management costs. Component 3 integrates ignorance of civil servants, lack of citizen support, and economic crisis. Finally, lack of legal regulation and inability of competition are assigned under component 4. From this factor analysis, we developed a figure which can be named as ‘incorporating e-governance to civil service training in Bangladesh’. This figure is shown below.



**Figure 1:** *Obstacles of Incorporating E-governance*

Based on the nature of variables, the researchers have assigned a name to each component. Here, component 1, 2, 3 and 4 are named as administrative obstacles, operational obstacles, user obstacles and regulatory obstacles respectively. Thus, it can be said that there are four factors, named as

administrative obstacle, operational obstacles, user obstacles and regulatory obstacles involved in incorporating e-governance to civil service training in Bangladesh.

Among these factors, the first factor known as administrative obstacle incorporates less priority of civil servants, diversity, lack of readiness, rigid bureaucracy, changes in taxation, and presence of IT experts. Among these regulatory obstacles, rigid bureaucracy is the most important variable according to its points in Rotated Component Matrix. The next variables are diversity, changes in taxation, absence of IT experts, lack of readiness and less priority of civil servants which are comparatively more important. The second factor known as operation obstacle incorporates lack of knowledge of civil servants, financial barrier, technical barrier, losing responsibilities, and management costs. According to its points in Rotated Component Matrix, financial barrier and lack of knowledge of civil servants are the most important variables. The next highest rated variables of the second component are management costs and losing responsibilities. Additionally, technical barrier is also comparatively important. The second factor is user obstacle which includes ignorance of civil servants, lack of citizen support, and economic crisis. According to its points in Rotated Component Matrix, ignorance of civil servants is the most important variable. Economic crisis and citizen support are comparatively more important variables. The last factor which is known as regulatory obstacle includes legal regulation and inability of competition. According to its points in the Rotated Component Matrix, lack of legal regulation is the most important variable. Then, inability of competition takes its place.

### **Qualitative Findings and Analysis**

As a prelude to the training strategy on e-governance, participants were asked to elaborate their understanding on the concept of e-governance and the role of training on awareness building. The purpose was to get some feedback on the basic concept, their perception and doable in this area.

#### ***Idea on E-Governance and Role of Training on Awareness Building***

The participants have the basic understanding on e-governance as mechanism to provide government services to citizens (G2C). Most of the senior level officials understand the basic idea that it embodies buying or receiving government services online. The response from the mid-level and entry level officials are respectively 48 percent and 37 percent respectively. The

findings transpire that officials working in secretariat and important locations in administration such as divisional and district level administrative units possess idea on e-governance's various mode such as Government to Citizen (G2C), Government to Government (G2G) and Government to Business (G2B). Though the response from senior level officials on the other mode such as G2G and G2B are more than 50 percent, the response from mid and entry level officials indicates lack of understanding on the other mode of e-governance. This reflects poor exposure of the officials in field administration and brings the issue of digital divide between the field administration and the secretariat environment. Access to information is an important pillar in administrative ethics. E-governance through e-information and e-consultation may work as a tool in reducing corruption by ensuring transparency in all government transactions. The response from senior level officials is encouraging (68 percent), but the response from mid and entry level officials is again a reflection of the inaccessibility of the electronic devices in field administration and thus the utility of the devices in reducing corruption. On the role of training in awareness building on e-governance, participants' responses were rather scanty. Only one third of the participants from entry level, 49 percent from mid level and 41 percent from senior level responded positively. Only a few acknowledged that training plays a positive role in awareness building and thus have limited impacts. Though mere possession of a computer is not e-governance, but it is true that e-governance refers to the re-engineering of various government services through internet and web page, where knowledge on computer fundamentals is a prerequisite. Therefore, ownership and access to a computer is a prerequisite even in a modest endeavor. Another important element is the connectivity and presence of web page for information sharing.

### ***State of Inventory and ICT Access***

The finding reveals the preparedness at the ministry level for e-governance initiative in two important areas: internet connectivity and on web page availability for information dissemination. Over 100 percent senior level, 97 percent mid-level and 90 percent entry level officials have computer access in office, 100 percent senior level officials have internet connection in office and 100 percent have official web pages. Many entry-level officials work in remote Upazillas and obviously lack internet facility. Only 65 percent of entry level officials have access to computer in office and have internet connection. These micro findings may be compared to macro findings initiated by the support to ICT Task Force, a unit of government to implement government

policy on e-governance. To narrate a few macro statistics from the latest available survey, for every 100 employees there are 98 PCs available at the ministry/division level and more than 95 percent of the government offices at the level of ministry/ division/ department/ corporation have dial-up internet connection, about 10 percent have broadband, while less than 5 percent have radio-link connectivity and at the ministry/ division level, about 40 percent have LAN. Computer literacy is one of the important elements for a successful drive in e-governance. So, there was a question to test the computer literacy of the participants. Indeed, this question was set with a purpose because the use of computer in office work started only in late nineties by the withdrawal of typewriter. Though, the definition of computer literacy may vary in different environment, this survey considers a person computer literate when he is comfortable in typing and doing regular official tasks using a computer and can open, check e-mail and post a reply.

### ***State of Computer Literacy***

Most officials are computer literate and, on an average, at the senior level 92 percent, 98 percent at the mid level and 100 percent at the entry level are computer literate. This finding bears a close relationship to the previous part and asserts that officials are acquainted to the electronic data communication devices and are also being trained to meet this requirement. Redesigning an existing training curriculum for improvement must incorporate an assessment of the efficacy of the existing program. Therefore, this survey included questions on the strength and weaknesses of the existing ICT training program so that future program may be designed with contents suitable for e-governance drive. The questions were open ended and there were different responses. To present the findings in a coherent mass, both strengths and weaknesses are grouped into several categories.

### ***Strengthens and Weaknesses of Existing ICT Training***

There are some useful insights on the current training program at BPATC on e- governance. On various counts of strengths, 91 percent of senior level, 41 percent mid level and 32 percent entry level officials expressed that though the course contents are useful for office work but are elementary in nature for e-governance drive. Over 50 percent mid and senior level officials and 70 percent entry level officials acknowledged a friendly training environment. On LAN facility, the response was mixed. Over 70 percent of the

officials though appreciate the availability of LAN, but because of low connectivity the effectiveness of the demonstration sessions are compromised. On weaknesses, most respondents expressed the necessity of designing an appropriate curriculum and adequate demonstration sessions on e-governance. The demonstration sessions often suffer because of the lack of trainers. Moreover, poor connectivity and slow browsing speed hampers the smooth conduct of demonstration classes and time allotted to ICT training do not adequately meet the needs of the officials. Indeed, the weaknesses as revealed by the participants are genuine and deserve scrutiny. There are three labs each with 60 computers connected through LAN facilities. But four faculties cannot address individual needs when the class size is over 50. A one-hour session each day is not enough for practice and proper demonstration. The existing course curriculum contains computer basics such as MS Word, MS Excel, MS Power Point, MS Access, a firsthand knowledge on internet and e-mail connectivity. There are roughly thirty two one-hour sessions for the entry level officials whose course runs for four months, twenty one hour sessions for the senior and mid level officials, both courses run for a period for ten weeks. The survey depicts certain inadequacy of training on e-governance. Nevertheless, as a basic training on ICT in computer literacy and application of internet and e-mail facility, the success is modest. No doubt, in the absence of any formal training program this program may be regarded as the first step in breaking the inertia and inspire the officials to enhance the capacity and help awareness building in the application of e-governance in the service delivery mechanism of the government.

### **KMO and Bartlett's Test of Major Obstacles**

The variables are interrelated in KMO and Bartlett test result where null hypothesis of factor analysis is rejected because the level of significance is .00000 <.05 or .01 (Table - 3). Consequently, obstacles involved in implementation of e-governance are interrelated. Based on the interrelation of these obstacles involved in implementation of e-governance, the researchers were able to find out the factor.



**Table 3:** *KMO and Bartlett's Test of Major Obstacles*

<b>KMO and Bartlett's Test</b>		
<b>Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.</b>		<b>.710</b>
<b>Bartlett's Test of Sphericity</b>	<b>Approx. Chi-Square</b>	<b>488.043</b>
	<b>Df</b>	<b>120</b>
	<b>Sig.</b>	<b>.000</b>

### **Recommendations**

Based on the perceptions of the interviewees, the following recommendations have been explored for the effective implementation of e-governance in civil service training in Bangladesh.

#### ***Redesigning of Training Program***

The survey identifies certain weaknesses in the current training program. Most important of them are insufficient time allotted in ICT training, banal course curriculum and absence of demonstration on e-governance. These weaknesses can be overcome by the revision of ICT course contents, allocation of more time in computer practice and ensuring the availability of more competent trainers. Indeed, the training on ICT at BPATC equips participants only with basic skills. The course outline given in the following chart manifest the absence of rigor in the program though at least 250 entry level, 70 mid-level and 50 senior level officials receive training each year and get the firsthand exposure on computer training. Thus, the existing course outline may be enriched through the incorporation of topics such as concepts of networking and classification (LAN, WAN), idea of network devices (Router, Switch), topology, protocol and a basic idea on networking hardware and software. The center is poised to incorporate the above topics in its training on ICT by minor adjustment in its training program and adjustment of infrastructure facilities. National Training Council, the apex body in the formulation of training policy has approved a plan to extend the duration of entry-level training from a period of four months to five months. It is expected that additional sessions on training on ICT may be accommodated with a revision of the existing curriculum. However, the current state of manpower and available technology at the center

cannot meet the requirement of any higher-level course on ICT that a successful launching of e-governance warrants. More rigorous training program may be designed through specialized training institutes to address a few advanced level requirements for selected officials with a preliminary background on basic computer technology.

### ***Developing Infrastructure***

Primarily, the government should concentrate on developing and improving the infrastructures that are required for the implementation of e-governance in civil service training. Necessary investment should be made on building ICT infrastructure throughout the country, keeping in mind that the returns from such investment will be of long-term. To ensure equal access to technology for all citizens, government should improve internet infrastructure throughout the country. This will enable every citizen to find and receive information as well as public services from different government organizations consistently and easily. There should be a process to have 24 hour and immediate maintenance for the effective management of e-governance in civil service training.

### ***Improving Logistic Support***

It is very crucial for the government to supply and install necessary hardware, customized software and internet connectivity to the field administration offices. Government should consider nationwide networking infrastructure with faster internet speed at the lowest cost. Bangladesh is connected to only one submarine cable at present. It is time to take necessary actions in order to get connected with an alternative submarine cable with a view to ensuring frequent internet connectivity in Bangladesh. Power situation of such thrust area needs to be taken care of with highest priority.

### ***Ensuring Quality Training***

Government should start effective anti-corruption approach to bring transparency in civil service training through e-governance. A civil service officer is required to be available near the system center on a full-time basis. Rector of civil service training institutes should arrange a monthly monitoring meeting and the participation of the citizens must be confirmed.

### ***Encouraging Public Service Recruitment in a Digitalized Manner***

Around half of the respondents have told that the contents of the Bangladesh Public Service Commission (BPSC) website are informative, but they are extremely dissatisfied with the presentation of those in the website. The design features of the website are not attractive at all. Apparently, the design features seem to be insignificant factors in influencing the perceptions of the job candidates. The reason may be the BPSC is the sole central agency in recruiting and hiring first class cadre officials for Bangladesh civil service and the agency feel less impetus in modernizing their hiring process. Around 15% of the respondents think that the BPSC is a corrupt institution. and this finding is not a surprising one. Despite this severe image crisis, still people are willing to join civil service applying through the e-recruitment system of BPSC. According to them, the reasons include job security, gaining power, social status, honour and extra facilities. Very few of the respondents are attracted for the holy reason of serving the nation without realizing their personal interests. Therefore, the above analyses indicate that despite negative image (corruption, credibility crisis, etc.) of the institution, the candidates are largely motivated by their perceived personal gains to apply for jobs using the online recruitment system. Now it is required to encourage such motivation of general people towards the existing digitalized public service recruitment system.

### **Conclusion**

Civil officials stand in the forefront of e-governance drive. They work as a catalytic agent and thus need to be equipped with proper training-a fundamental component of this drive. However, research on training strategy in e-governance drive is scanty. A study on training strategy on e-governance reveals some facts that tally our findings. There are three levels of training in e-government with an emphasis on e-governance as a process in which ICT is the vehicle of achieving learning goals of that process. ICT is considered as an enabler and not a goal in itself and should be considered in different discrete steps with explicit reference on prerequisites, basic training needed for this course, course related training and advanced training for future or professional courses. The weaknesses of the existing training program on ICT that have been identified in this study and the revision of the contents within the available logistical support cannot meet the requirement beyond Level 1. The need of the hour is to address these deficiencies through making alternative arrangement of

training beyond Level 1. Fortunately, the government has initiated a project in the establishment of a specialized training unit with trained manpower to fill this gap. The establishment of Bangladesh- Korea Institute of Information & Communication Technology (BKIICT) with the technical assistance of the Government of the Republic of Korea may usher a new era in the training for government officials in more specific area of ICT. The objectives are to establish an international standard training institute for human resource development in ICT to meet the challenges of 21<sup>st</sup> century, conduct customized courses for government officials and offer advanced diploma and post graduate diploma training courses on ICT. The training program under the joint collaboration of Bangladesh Computer Council, an autonomous unit under the Ministry of Science and Information and Communication Technology (MOSICT) and BKIIT on five specific modules may meet the weaknesses in training that have been identified in the study. BKIICT is housed in the Bangladesh Computer Council (BCC) building and is fully equipped to meet training requirements of international standard. Moreover, there is adequate number of well-trained professionals who were trained on ICT from Korea. This arrangement thus can genuinely meet deficiencies that have been identified in the survey. It is expected that this specialized training program can meet the important requirements in the e-governance drive. This paper addresses a very narrow but focused aspect of training requirement in e-governance drive and thus may constitute an input in the future research undertaken on this subject.

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## Representation of Humanism in Tagore's *Gora* and Forster's *A Passage to India*: A Comparative Study

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### Abstract

*In this world with geographical variation where the countries are being divided by borders, the neutrality of the western version of humanism needs to be analyzed. There arises the question whether western humanism is uniformly applicable for the occidentals as well for the orient. Therefore, this paper attempts to draw a comparative study on the treatment of western humanism in Tagore's Gora and Forster's A Passage to India through the lens of orientalism focusing on the representation of the orient and the occidentals. The research detects the failure of equal application of western humanism in case of both the authors due to the presence of stereotypical images where the orient is denied from the traits of human beings and dehumanized. Both the texts provide a fair reflection of the general western perception about the Orient to represent the concept of otherness in the minds of Westerners as Edward Said (1978) said. While Forster only encompasses the western view, Tagore reflects the treatment of orientals as animals by the orientals along with the occidentals. Besides, the females of both texts are the victims of dehumanization. Hence, they are devoid of same treatment as male. Both Forster and Tagore reflect on physical and inner beauty. In Forster, it seems that emphasis on physical beauty surpasses inner beauty. However, Tagore seems more liberal compared to Forster in case of women's representation in a male-dominated society. Therefore, it is seen that a specific group of people are the victims of maltreatment because of their stereotypical representation. This indicates the failure of humanism in a world where a group of human beings are differentiated and underestimated. The reason behind this failure is the political application of western humanism. This is a qualitative study which is explorative in nature. Analytical and close-reading method along with critical discourse analysis have been used to conduct the research.*

**Keywords:** western humanism, orientalism, representation, orient, occident

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The conflict between the East and the West is set to increase as an increasingly globalised world is bound to bring increasing interactions between different civilizations and cultures. In this world with geographical variation where the countries are being divided by borders, the neutrality of the western version of humanism needs to be analysed. There arises the question whether western humanism is uniformly applicable for the occidentals as well for the orientals. The Hellenic thought presents a kind of classical humanism as it is claimed to be the oldest humanism of the west (Pradhan & Singh, 2019). In the modern era, especially during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, humanism came to refer to a broad and rising social movement to endorse humanistic values, significantly in reaction to and in order to counter the impersonal and destructive forces of humankind's inhumanity against itself (especially state induced violence) (Pietersen, 2005). In the fourteenth century, colonizers referred to farmers, cultivators, planters who moved from one region to another for a better living (cited in Nayar, 2008). However, during the eighteenth and nineteenth century, the colonizers started to judge things through binaries. They started to judge and create stereotypes keeping Europe at the centre which is known as Eurocentrism. They considered Europe as a model which is the embodiment of superior ideology, language, religion, behaviour, and culture. Thus, their version of humanism was inspired by Eurocentrism as they were measuring everything by comparing with the West. They started to construct oriental image which was in Said's words "almost a European invention" (1978) and not a natural event. Orientalism is a double glass through which the occidentals consider the orientals as inferior and at the same time consider themselves superior. Orientalism justified the colonizer's reason of exploiting the colonized in the name of civilizing them. It is "an integral part of European material civilization and culture" (Said 1978). The post-humanists studied the theoretical failure of humanism (Nayar, 2015). Besides, the post-colonial critics focused the failure of the practical implication of humanism. Orientalism is one of the main reasons behind the catastrophe of pragmatic insinuation of humanism. Orientalism, as per Edward Said (1978), is a process by which the 'Orient' was, and continues to be, constructed in European thinking. As a consequence of this 'Eurocentric' feeling, the occidentals categorize the orientals less than human as the definition of ideal human has been limited to the universal white upper-class man. Hence, there arises the question of neutrality in humanism irrespective of geography and gender. The term 'western humanism' signifies two things. First, its origin of Europe. Second, special emphasis on the West where the rest of the world is seen as 'the Other'. This version of humanism is

reflective in Rabindranath Tagore's *Gora* (1910) and E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India* (1924).

Though Forster gave voice to his Indian characters, but being an occident, he could not stop himself from creating oriental image of those characters. The novel starts with the dissatisfaction of the orientals. Then progresses towards the bridge party but shows the failure. Forster demonstrates the devastating outcome as a result of amalgamation of the occidents with the orientals. With a view to resolution, the last chapter tends towards a bridge between the occidents and the orientals. But ultimately it was not possible. However, Tagore's *Gora* cannot reach a conclusion until he discovers his real identity of being an occident. *Gora* faces an internal dilemma regarding the existing rules of the society. Both Tagore and Forster promoted western humanism in their texts. Therefore, the analysis of the western humanism drawn by Forster and Tagore through the lens of orientalism throws light on the question of objectivity of western humanism in case of the orientals and the occidents.

"I know all about him. I don't know him." — This statement, spoken by Fielding about Dr Aziz, in *A Passage to India*, is a fair reflection of the general western perception about the Orient. On the other hand, outside of India, Tagore is mainly observed through the prism of "the East" or "Asia," which to a great extent has reduced his versatility to a "spiritual," "mystic," and "anti-Western" monochrome, although exploration of Tagore's works indicates that such epithets cannot be applied uncritically (Lee, 2013). Despite Rabindranath Tagore being an oriental, he drew orientals in his novel. Analysing the life of Rabindranath Tagore, shifts can be found (Islam, 2011). During the earlier period of his life, Tagore was much influenced by the West (Islam, 2011). However, his mentality changed at his later age. *Gora*, which is a political novel, was written during the time when Tagore received inspiration from the West (Islam, 2011). Thus, both the texts (*A Passage to India* and *Gora*) provide a fair reflection of the general western perception about the Orient to represent the concept of otherness in the minds of Westerners as Edward Said (1978) said "The Orient is... its [Europe's] cultural contestant, and one of its deepest and most recurring images of the Other." Whereas Forster only encompasses the western view, Tagore reflects the treatment of orientals as animals by the orientals along with the occidentals. Against this backdrop, the present research attempts to draw a comparative study on the treatment of western humanism in Tagore's *Gora* and Forster's *A Passage to India* through the lens of orientalism focusing on the representation of the

orients and the occidentals. Therefore, Orientalism is a useful concept for examining the failure of equal application of western humanism in case of both the authors due to the presence of stereotypical images where the orient is denied of the traits of human beings and dehumanized. Orientalism, which signifies not only a discipline but a European practice of ideological connotations, is defined by Edward Said (2003) as follows in his *magnum opus*:

Orientalism is a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between “the Orient” and (most of the time) “the Occident.” (p.2)

Besides, the females of both the texts are the victims of dehumanization. Hence, they are devoid of same treatment as male. Both Forster and Tagore reflect on physical and inner beauty. In Forster, emphasis on physical beauty surpasses inner beauty. However, Tagore seems more liberal compared to Forster in case of women's representation in a male-dominated society. Therefore, it is seen that a specific group of people are the victims of maltreatment because of their stereotypical representation. This indicates the failure of humanism in a world where a group of human beings are differentiated and underestimated. The reason behind this failure is the political application of western humanism.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Human has emerged as a generic, universal category through renaissance humanism. However, this idea of universal category has been questioned by the postcolonial critics. Franz Fanon argued that “the idea of a universal human with human rights and self-evident dignity evolved, ironically, during the age when Europe was engaged in both the slave trade and imperial conquest” (Nayar, 2015). The reason behind this is the treatment of the non-Europeans as non-human or less than human by the Europeans. The western humanist Renan in his book *La Réforme intellectuelle et morale* (1850) stated, “We aspire not to equality but to domination. The country of a foreign race must become once again a country of serfs, of agricultural laborers, or industrial workers. It is not a question of eliminating the inequalities among men but of widening them and making them into a law” (Cesaire, 1955). Said (1978) highlighted the Oriental discourse which portrays the supremacy of the West over the East. The western humanism has failed to bridge the gap between the occidentals and the orientals. Contrarily, it has created a superior position of the occidentals where the orientals are regarded as less than human. The orientals are

treated as inferior compared to the occidentals. The culture and tradition of the non-whites are seen as barbaric, primitive and weird. It is a matter of sadness and concern that a humanist is calling for widening the gap instead of removing the inequality on a humanitarian ground. This raises question on the equal applicability of humanism.

Both E. M. Forster and Rabindranath Tagore were humanists. They wanted to bridge the gap between the occidentals and the orientals. However, in doing so they created stereotypical images of the orientals. In *A Passage to India*, it seems that Forster was not concerned with the question of whether India should be ruled or not, rather he focused how India should be ruled. Tagore, on the other hand, made the occident his hero who is the emblem of all good and ideal characteristics. He showed the internal complexities of the orientals. He portrayed the enlightenment of the orientals in touch with the occidentals. This reinforces the idea of Antonio Gramsci's (.....) idea of power stated in *Quaderni del Carcere* or *Prison Notebooks* where the dominated classes consent to the supremacy of the ruling classes because of the hegemony. Tagore in his *Gora* demonstrated the supremacy of Gora over the other Indians. Gora could finally get out of prejudice because of his occident origin.

There is a difference between the treatment of the occidentals and the orientals as the occidentals consider themselves standard. The celebration of variation is absent. Hence, it can be seen that western humanism often leads to orientalism rather than diminishing it.

Besides, in the patriarchal society, woman is seldom the subject of her own life and she mostly depends on the decision of the male counterpart. She is often denied the rights of a human being. Adella and the colonized women of *A Passage to India* or Sucharita, Lalita of *Gora* are mere dolls in the hand of the patriarchal society. They have to face the severe criticism of the society because of their decisions and actions. They are victims of suppression in the male-dominated society. This harsh and cruel reality creates the necessity of exploring the treatment of both western and colonized women under western humanism.

### **Rationale of the Study**

Said (1978) argued that one of the reasons behind orientalism is the representation of orientals in books written by the occidentals. As an instance, Caliban of *The Tempest* (1611) by William Shakespeare represents the primitive, barbaric, uncivilized portrayal of the orientals. Hence, it is necessary to

investigate *A Passage to India* by E. M. Forster to find out the presence of western humanism and oriental image. Though there are scholarly articles (Jajja 2013, Vafa and Zarrinjooee 2014, Mondal 2016, Nimesh 2014) focusing on the orientalism in *A Passage to India* by E. M. Forster; barely any research has been conducted showing the failure of traits of humanism in front of orientalism. Therefore, the presence of western humanism and the resulted oriental image in *A Passage to India* needs exploration.

Again, Said (1978) proclaimed the presence of hegemony in case of orientalism. Hence, it is seen that many a times the orient writers themselves produce oriental image giving the occidentals a superior position. This creates the urgency of analysing the features and representation of the characters in Tagore's *Gora* to figure out the oriental image and promotion of western humanism. The main protagonist of *Gora* is not an Indian by blood. He is an Irish. As long as he considers himself as an Indian, he performs acts like orientals. Whereas, after knowing the truth about his origin, he changes in a positive way. There are scholarly articles (Choudhury 2002, Suthar 2017, Jois 2011, Thompson 2015, Rajagopalan 2012) on *Gora* by Rabindranath Tagore throwing special light on the character of Gora and nationalism. However, there is hardly any research comparing *A Passage to India* and *Gora* which creates the need to explore the relation of orientalism with western humanism.

### **Theoretical Framework**

We know, humanism is an approach towards human life and values that involves the harmony of natural phenomena (Pradhan & Singh, 2019). It is also characterized by the interest in "Man", concern for man, and faith in man's reason, conscience for discriminating perception of truth and goodness keeping in view of self-realisation (Pradhan & Singh, 2019). The Hellenic thought presents a kind of classical humanism as it is claimed to be the oldest humanism of the west (Pradhan & Singh, 2019). In the modern era, especially during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, humanism came to refer to a broad and rising social movement to endorse humanistic values, significantly in reaction to and in order to counter the impersonal and destructive forces of humankind's inhumanity against itself (especially state induced violence) (Pietersen, 2005). According to Pietersen (2005),

Humanism is opposed to: war, tyranny, unjust and oppressive political systems, ecological overexploitation, hierarchy, autocracy, inhumane treatment of people, and, generally, against

any policy, rule, institution or form of conduct detrimental to human dignity, integrity and well-being. (p.54)

Western perception of “Man” is merely a biological entity having rationality (Lamont, 1997). Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807) is considered as the milestone of the western humanism. He emphasized on the subjectivity and autonomous activity of human beings. He stated, the “activity of individuality, all that it does, is in itself an End; the employment of its powers, the play of these powers in action, is what gives them life” (Lin, 1997). So, Hegel focuses on the progress of the individual self. The purpose of ‘others’ is only how they help the advancement of the individual self. Hegel ignored the role of the individual in the subsequent progress of the ‘others’. So, Lin rightly stated, “the ‘other’ for Hegel is no more than a means by which the individual becomes substantiated, rationalized and universalized” (1997).

Human has emerged as a generic, universal category through the renaissance humanism. However, this idea of universal category has been questioned by the postcolonial critics. Franz Fanon argued that “the idea of a universal human with human rights and self-evident dignity evolved, ironically, during the age when Europe was engaged in both the slave trade and imperial conquest” (Nayar, 2015). The reason behind this is the treatment of the non-Europeans as non-human or less than human by the Europeans. In other words, the occidents treated the orient inferior as the comparison was ‘Eurocentric’. The Europeans or occidents considered their position at the centre, and other races and ethnic groups were considered to be situated at the periphery (Nayar, 2015).

Orientalism, as per Edward Said (1978), is a process by which the ‘Orient’ was, and continues to be, constructed in European thinking. The Orient represents the east and the occident the west. Orientalism is a style of thought based on “the ontological and epistemological distinction between the “Orient” and the “Occident”” (Said 1978). Orientalism is like an institution for dealing with the Orient “dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient” (Said, 1978). So, it is a relationship which portrays power, domination, materialization and complex hegemony. Said highlighted the Oriental discourse which portrays the supremacy of the West over the East. The western humanism has failed to bridge the gap between the occidents and the orient. Contrarily, it has created a superior position of the occidents where the orient is regarded as less than human. The orient is treated as inferior

compared to the occidentals. The culture and tradition of the non-whites are seen barbaric, primitive and weird.

The western humanist Renan in his book *La Réforme intellectuelle et morale* (1850) stated, "We aspire not to equality but to domination. The country of a foreign race must become once again a country of serfs, of agricultural laborers, or industrial workers. It is not a question of eliminating the inequalities among men but of widening them and making them into a law" (Cesaire, 1955). It is a matter of sadness and concern that a humanist is calling for widening the gap instead of removing the inequality on a humanitarian ground. This raises question on the equal applicability of humanism.

Does humanism include the females? The main motto of French revolution was "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity" (Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité). Though women played a pioneering role in the French revolution, their condition did not change. They were denied of their rights and treatment as a human being in a patriarchal society. So, in a male-dominated society, woman is hardly considered as a human being. She is the inferior. She is the other with a lack. As per Butler, "Gender is the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory framework that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being" (Nayar, 2014). The identity of a female is constructed by the society. It is not stable rather changes keeping the identity of man at the centre. The society reinforces the sexual difference through language, representation, and subjectivity. It is very ironical that the definition of human has been limited to universal white upper-class male. As a consequence, females are seen as someone less than human. This leads to the urgency of analysing the neutrality of humanism.

### **Literature Review**

Jajja (2013) emphasized the saying of Edward Said that no literature is politically innocent. He attempted to show that in the novel *A Passage to India* by E. M. Forster the supremacy of the Europeans was portrayed. He conducted his study based on the postcolonial aspects like mimicry and hybridity. He also tried to establish a link between imperialism and culture. In this research, he critically analysed the portrayal of India, compared British and Indian characters, portrayal of the *Neo-Assimilative* mode of *Imperialism* and the growth of the Indian identity.

Vafa and Zarrinjooee (2014) attempted to focus how Forster orientalisised the Indian characters. The study was conducted based on the

theories of Edward Said and Frantz Fanon. The study tried to highlight the complex situation of the Indians. Along with the oriental representation by the West, the authors focused on how the colonized orientalise themselves. They tried to find the way out with the colonizers because of their psychological feeling of inferiority. Mixing with the colonizers, they felt more inferior and so the bridge never got built.

Mondal (2016) also focused on the gap between the Indians and the English in *A Passage to India*. He highlighted the attempts of Mrs. Moore, Adella, Fielding along with the bridge party of Turton. Whatever the attempt might be, the gap seemed to be unbridgeable. The reason behind this unbridgeable gap, as per Mondal, was the oriental image. Oriental image created an image and mind set-up of the Other. So, it produced a contrasting image with the West which prohibited both the orients and occidents to fill-up the gap.

Nimesh (2015) conducted a study on orientalism comparing *A Passage to India* by E. M. Forster to the movie *Slumdog Millionaire*. He tried to focus on the western superiority. Regarding the movie *Slumdog Millionaire*, he argued the movie mainly focused on the bad side of India which included poverty, prostitution, slums. Regarding the novel, *A Passage to India*, he criticized the English notion of visiting the real India which was portrayed as mysterious and havoc creating. The paper projected the oriental view individually, it lacked comparative analysis.

The study of Jajja (2013), Vafa and Zarrinjooee (2014), Mondal (2016) and Nimesh (2015) mainly highlighted the discrimination, stereotypical images, and unbridgeable gap between the orients and the occidents. Therefore, their studies lacked the concept of humanism and the failure of humanism on the ground of geographical variation. They did not highlight the relation between humanism and orientalism.

However, Lin (1997) attempted to question the humanism of the colonizers. He conducted his study by critically examining the foundation of humanism laid in *The Phenomenology of Spirit* by Hegel. He criticized the limitation of western humanism and urged the urgency of posthumanism. He analysed the stereotypical images in *A Passage to India* to portray the irony of western humanism. Though this research included the criticism of humanism, there was absence of the comparison of Forster's *A Passage to India* with Tagore's *Gora*.

Choudhury (2002) critically analyzed the novel *Gora*. He defended the opinion of Protap Narayan Bishwas regarding the similarity of George Eliot's



*Felix Holt, the Radical* and Tagore's *Gora*. He regarded *Gora* as an epic novel. He highlighted the result of English administration, religious conflicts, friendship, love. Along with *Gora*, he focused on the character Sucharita.

Suthar (2017) tried to analyse the character of *Gora*. He studied *Gora* as a cardinal character. He portrayed his personality, secret of *Gora*'s birth and parentage, respect for parents, education, spokesman of Hinduism, view on love, women and caste system.

Thompson (2015) briefly stated the story of *Gora* where he termed Tagore as "an Indian Sage" (2015) for his outstanding quality of blending orthodoxy with progressiveness. Laljibhai (2014) conducted a comparative study between the character *Gora* of *Gora* by Rabindranath Tagore and Mattadeen of *Godan* by Munsii Premchand. He mainly portrayed how both characters revolted against the existing caste system and prejudice despite having some contrasts. Jois (2011) highlighted the character of *Gora* and Binoy. Besides, he commented on the heroines of Tagore and the portrayal of secularism.

Rajagolapan (2013) termed *Gora* as 'a novel of ideas' (2013). He analyzed the plot of the novel throwing special light on the characters *Gora*, Binoy, Anandamoyi and Paresh Babu. He commented on the excellent characterization of *Gora* with some of its limitations. He considered the main theme of *Gora* was not the turmoil between Hindu and Brahma Samaj rather it was the search for truth. But he failed to show that truth cannot be achieved and established until humanism is equally applicable irrespective of gender, power, and geography.

It can be seen that Choudhury (2002), Suthar (2017), Thompson (2015), Jois (2011) and Rajagolapan (2013) mainly analysed the plot and main characters of *Gora*. They did not portray the stereotypical images. That means, they did not highlight the shortcomings of western humanism along with its good sides. Their studies missed the link between orientalism and western humanism.

Choudhury (2002) analysed the heroines of different novels by Tagore including Anandamoyi and Sucharitra of *Gora*. He threw light on the condition of women under patriarchy in a colonial society. He mainly focused on the individuality of the heroines of Tagore. He highlighted the submission of *Gora* to Anandamoyi and Sucharita for their individuality along with Binoy's appreciation for Anandamoyi. The reason behind this demonstration was to show that the heroines of Tagore were powerful. The heroes who were the

representatives of the patriarchal society finally submitted themselves to the heroines and by doing so they went through an evolution. However, he did not highlight the demonstration of women as inferior by the patriarchal society portrayed in *Gora*. Besides, the article did not show how women were considered less than human because of their stereotypical representation. It also lacked a comparison with Forster's *A Passage to India* regarding the neutrality of humanism.

Although Islam (2011) discussed the contribution of Tagore for making Bengali Renaissance and the influence of western culture on Tagore, the book did not contain detailed description regarding western humanism portrayed in *Gora*. He analysed Tagore's admiration of great Bengali personalities like Bidyasagar, Ram Mohan Roy, Michel Modhusudan Dattya. Tagore was inspired by Gautam Buddha. He was influenced by renaissance particularly by its western humanism. Tagore was an Indian by blood, but an English in thought. He wanted to create a bridge between the Indians and the British. However, this article mainly analysed the essays of Tagore along with a few novels.

Therefore, the existing body of research on *A Passage to India* by E. M. Forster mainly focus on orientalism, stereotypical images, irony of colonial humanism along with psychological inferiority. Whereas, the research on *Gora* by Tagore mainly encompass the role of the protagonist, nationalism, search for truth and representation of women. It can be seen that barely any research has been conducted on these two texts individually or comparatively focusing on the relation between western humanism and orientalism. There is hardly any comparative study which dissects western humanism in order to understand equal application of western humanism. Therefore, this field needs to be addressed in detail.

## **Objectives**

The objective of this paper is to analyse and interpret the neutrality of western humanism. This paper also aims to investigate the portrayal of the orientals and the occidentals in *A Passage to India* and *Gora* with special focus on human physique and the concept of rationality.

## **Methodology**

This is a qualitative research. The qualitative methods have been used for accomplishing this research. This is descriptive and explorative in nature.

The two texts *A Passage to India* by E. M. Forster and *Gora* by Rabindranath Tagore have been used as primary source and other books and articles are used as secondary sources. Secondary sources also encompass the theory of western humanism and orientalism. Close-reading and analytical methods have been adopted for conducting this research.

## Discussion & Findings

### *Human Physique*

The physique of human beings is an important factor as it differentiates *homo sapiens* from other animals. Again, diversity can be observed in the biological appearance of human beings across the world. Despite having different physique, human beings deserve equal treatment. Unfortunately, the occidents consider their physique as the ideal type and judge others with that parameter. That is the reason, Rudyard Kipling observed the orientals as “half devil and half child” (1899) who are inferior to the superior occidents. The orientals are seen as animals. Gabriel Garcia Marquez, in his Nobel lecture, mentioned about Antonio Pigafetta, a Florentine navigator, who described the natives as “a misbegotten creature with the head and ears of a mule, a camel’s body, the legs of a deer and the whinny of a horse” (1982). Again, according to Adichie (2009), the Africans are stated as “people without heads, having their mouth and eyes in their breasts” (cited in Adichie, 2009). Therefore, the biological representation of the orientals and the occidents is an important factor for investigating the equal applicability of western humanism.

Again, in a phallogocentric society, women are often observed as a person with a lack. They are ‘the Other’ of the ideal male. As a result, they are depicted as beautiful sex-object. Hence, despite of their lack of phallus because of their beauty they get accepted by the male society (Nayar, 2010). Neither an orient woman nor an occident woman is free from this type of classification. Since the women are portrayed as inferior to men, they are often not treated as human beings.

Therefore, in order to understand the equal application of humanism, biological representation of both orient and occident men and women in *Gora* and *A Passage to India* should be analyzed.

***Representation of orient and occident man.*** Gourmohan or Gora, the protagonist of *Gora*, is presented in a very attractive physique with a good

personality. He is almost six feet tall. His bones and fists are like the paws of tiger. His lips are thin. He is not very handsome, but very noticeable. He is called "the Silver Mountain" (8) by his college professor. Bhawani Bhattacharya says, "The main character in the book Gourmohan or Gora has been created with deep sympathy" (cited in Suthar, 2017). After seeing Gora, Sucharita could sense "the mysterious presence of something alive and whole" (163). She has forgotten the differentiation observed in the society which viewed human beings through the gaze of "black and white alone" (163). She became able to see a human being as a human being in the first place irrespective of his different opinions. This mentality of Sucharita reveals the mentality of the society which judge people based on their colour. Because of the fair colour of the occidents, they are regarded as angels. Contrarily, the black orientals are regarded as evil.

Though Tagore gives a very beautiful representation of Gora, regarding the description of the pure orient Binoy it is mentioned that he is "like the average educated Bengali bhadralok" (8). Tagore did not take the pain to draw how an average educated Bengali looks. This can be related with the portrayal of Aziz in *A Passage to India*. There is no separate description about his physique and personality except the momentary fascination of Adella where she observed him as "a handsome little Oriental" (163). The portrayal of Aziz as an orient is revealed through the actions of Aziz. In the first appearance of Aziz, he is shown as a person who is always late, extremely emotional and likes to fantasize remembering the Mughals.

Observing the orientals as 'animals' by the occidents can be observed in both the texts. In *A Passage to India* it is mentioned that no Indian animal has any sense of the interior which refers to the lack of sense of the orientals. After the cave incident, McBryde, the District Superintendent of Police, calls the Indians "Jackles" (184) who are cunning and trickster. In court, to prove Aziz criminal, McBride says, "the darker races are physically attracted by the fairer, but not vice versa" (235). Aziz, while in imprisonment, is compared with "a wounded animal" (252) through direct metaphor. The reason of him being in such a situation is that he knows that the word of the English woman will bear more weight even if it is false. The procession of the orientals after the victory of the case is metaphorized by a snake in a drain. Similarly, Tagore in *Gora* hinted at the observation of the orientals as animals by the occidents. He did not limit his observation only to the occidents but also observed the inhuman treatment inflicted upon the orientals by the orientals themselves. Gora states that earlier the only the occidents saw the orientals as "mere animals" (119) but with time the

higher-class orientals like the deputy magistrates are “increasingly treating his own countrymen as mere animals” (119).

Therefore, treating the orientals as animals results in the failure of the western humanism.

***Representation of orient and occident woman.*** In *A Passage to India*, there is a very little description about oriental women. They mostly spend their life living inside the house like the oriental ladies of *Gora*. When they attend the bridge party, they are not cordially received. The physical appearance of woman is a crucial factor in *A Passage to India*. Though the occidental women enjoy much freedom compared to the oriental women, they are not free of the male gaze.

Aziz's attitude towards women is ambivalent. In his youth, he went to a brothel. The physical structure of woman is an important factor for him. When he first met Mrs. Moore, it is mentioned that the voice of Mrs. Moore deceived him. Because when he saw the face of Mrs. Moore, he saw that she was even older than Hamidullah Begum.

After hearing the engagement announcement of Adella and Ronny, Aziz thinks Fielding is hurt and so he consoles him saying, “she was not beautiful. She has practically no breasts” (126). While in imprisonment, Aziz expresses his agitation regarding being accused by a girl who lacks physical beauty. He thinks it damages his impression in the society. A contradiction can be noticed regarding the mentality of Aziz and Fielding. Aziz, an oriental gives more emphasis on the physical beauty than the inner beauty. Contrarily, Fielding, an occidental is shown to give priority on the inner beauty. In the eyes of Fielding, Adella is “one of the pathetic products of the western education” (125).

In the gossiping scene in Fielding's house, Aziz could easily communicate with the English ladies as he considered them as men. It is stated, “Beauty would have troubled him, for it entails rules of its own, but Mrs. Moore was so old and Miss Adela Quested so plain” (69). He tells Fielding he will arrange for him a girl with good physical structure as if girls are commodities. Again, his friendship with Fielding initially breaks as he suspects Fielding has a soft corner for Adella.

In the patriarchal society, women are the sexual objects. In *Gora*, the idea of the phallocentrism is reflected through the mouth of Gora. He states, in the English scriptures, all that hyperbole about women conceals one inner motive, sexual desire. We should worship the female sex at the mother's

chamber and the virtuous housewife's holy shrine; when women are worshipped elsewhere, such adoration conceals an element of degradation (11).

These portrays the stereotypes of 'Madonna-whore'. A good woman should sacrifice her life serving the society and abiding by its partial and suppressing rules. Those who dare to deny or change the harsh rules are considered as 'slut'. The patriarchal society assigns places to man and woman. The place of woman is inside the house whereas, man is free to work anywhere. When Gora sees Binoy accompanying Borodasundari in a carriage, he thinks Binoy is entrapped in "serpent-coils" (83). So, the female is being dehumanized by comparing with serpent. Again, in *A Passage to India*, Mrs. Moore is compared with a little wasp whose plea of generosity is hardly being given attention by the mass people.

The complexion is an important factor in case of representation. When the first description is given about Anandamoyi, it is mentioned that her complexion is darker than Gora. The heroine Sucharita is portrayed as a very beautiful and angelic lady who has "extraordinary eyes" (3). Among the three daughters of Poreshababu, the complexion of Lalita was dark. She was bolder than others. However, "the beauty Poreshababu saw in Lalita's face was not that of complexion or of build, it was the profound beauty of the inner self" (224). This represents the progressive mentality of Tagore where he gives importance to the inner beauty or spirit.

Therefore, Tagore was more liberal compared to Forster in case of representation of women in a male-dominated society.

### ***Rationality and the Question of Binary***

Rationality is a prominent feature of humanism. In western humanism, human beings possess rational faculty (Abrams 2007). The occidents consider themselves rational, whereas, they regard the orientals irrational. This provides the occidents a solid base to rule and dominate the orientals. Furthermore, the women both oriental and occidental are often considered irrational, emotional which creates the emergency of treating them inferior. That being the case, it is necessary to investigate the rationality of orient and occident man and woman portrayed in *Gora* and *A Passage to India* for determining the equal applicability of western humanism irrespective of geography and gender.

***Rationality of orient and occident man.*** In *A Passage to India*, Fielding and Ronny are rational characters. Whereas, Aziz, Hamidullah and

Nawab Bahadur are depicted as irrational. In *Gora*, Gora represents both the rational and irrational features as he is an Anglo-Indian who at first did not know his real identity. Poreshbabu is a mouthpiece of rationality whereas, Binoy seems to be mainly irrational at many instances.

A country is represented by her people. When Adella wants to see India, Fielding suggests her to see the Indians. In Aziz's house, Hamidullah asks Fielding the justification of England holding India. In reply, Fielding says, "England holds India for her good" (117). After the trial, he discussed with Adella the failure of the British Empire in India. He says, "Indians know whether they are liked or not- they cannot be fooled here. Justice never satisfies them, and that is why the British Empire rests on sand" (279). These statements of Fielding legitimize the ruling of the orient by the occident.

At the beginning, Ronny is portrayed as harsh in conducting his administration. Mrs. Moore becomes astonished at such transformation of Ronny. The reason Ronny gives is that "People are so odd out here, and it's not like home" (48). Regarding his harsh administration, he says, "We're out here to do justice and keep the peace" (49). The irrationality of the orient leads to the production of stereotypical images which gives the occident a valid ground to dominate and rule them. This echoes the saying of the western humanist Renan,

We aspire not to equality but to domination. The country of a foreign race must become once again a country of serfs, of agricultural laborers, or industrial workers. It is not a question of eliminating the inequalities among men but of widening them and making them into a law (cited in Césaire 1955)

This remark by a western humanist demonstrates the hollowness of western humanism. The stereotypical images of irrational orient give the occident a strong base for conducting their authority and widen the gap by treating others inferior.

Aziz is a very impulsive man. He does not think much before saying or doing anything. As an instance, when he first meets Mrs. Moore, he expresses his negative opinion regarding Mrs. Callendar. He does think about the consequences before sharing his personal feelings. He is short-sighted and judges people quickly. When Mrs. Moor says, "I don't think I understand people very well. I only know whether I like or dislike them." (20) He replied,

“Then you are an Oriental.” (20) So, it can be seen that judging people very quickly and not to be calculative is regarded as an oriental trait.

Similarly, in case of *Gora* it is seen that Gora loves to talk too much. He talks both in presence and absence of people. He himself is sufficient for a speech. This represents the oriental trait of talking more and thinking less. Many times, his own speeches are ironical and contradictory. As an instance, he thinks that if the ruler becomes the companion of the general people, there is no need to rule. He considers the Brahmans as the true rulers. The irony is reflected when he says, “I do not occupy the same ground as everyone else. Friendship is not necessary for me. I do not belong to that ordinary category of people who delight in the company of women. And I must completely reject close intimacy with the base commoners of this land” (482). The orient who at one time wants to diminish the distance, the other time reinforces the difference claiming his superiority.

Aziz and Binoy represent the oriental trait of giving emotion more priority than reason. Aziz weeps like a child at the death of Mrs. Moore, though it is not mentioned whether Ronny cries like Aziz at the death of his own mother. In *Gora*, Gora becomes amazed seeing the wailing and the weeping of the orientals which demonstrate the stereotypical representation. The arguments of Binoy are not his own arguments. Those are the words of Gora. It is stated, “for all his arguments over opinions, people mattered more to him” (66). This domination of Gora over Binoy is regarded as “slavery, not love” (122) by Lalita.

It is seen that orientals are often portrayed as confused people who fail to do the right thing at the right moment. When Binoybabu first met Poreshbabu and Sucharita, he was not satisfied with his behavior. Though he is a very good orator, he could not communicate with them freely. As a result, “he tormented himself with futile thoughts of what he could have said or done at specific moments” (4). This echoes the similarity with Aziz. When police came to arrest him, he tried to escape being frightened though he did not commit any crime. Though formerly Nawab Bahadur was portrayed as “a man of benevolence and decision” (35), later he has been depicted as a stupid, indecisive and emotional person. After the car accident, irrespective of acting wisely, he weeps like a child. On the other hand, Ronny and Adella remain calm and try to investigate the reason behind the car accident. Through the reasonable actions of Ronny and Adella, Forster justifies the remark of Hamidullah, “At a crisis, the English are really unequalled” (187).



Both Aziz and Binoy lack critical reasoning. Aziz blames himself for the late arrival and miss of train by Fielding and Godbole. Though he had no hand at the late arrival he blames himself as he was the host. Regarding the fine of Adella, he wants to consult Mrs. Moore as he considers her oriental. He is rejecting the opinion of Fielding, the only English man who stood with him at the time of danger whereas, Mrs. Moore did not even come as a witness to help Aziz. He stated that he has become “anti-British” (270). Ironically, he was only rejecting Fielding thinking he likes Adella and still looking for advice from Mrs. Moore who is a British. Regarding the immature behaviour of Aziz, Fielding remarks “Your emotions never seem in proportion to their objects” (273). When both Adella and Fielding leave India for England, Aziz laments for his twenty-thousand rupees. This highlights the irrationality of Aziz. If Adella did not file a case against him, he would never get twenty thousand rupees. Life would go on as it was going. Besides, he is solvent. He behaves bad with Ralph Moore until he asks Aziz the reason of such bad behaviour despite doing anything wrong. He judges Ralph Moore as an Orient as he likes the strangers.

Similarly, when Sucharita asks Binoy whether caste system is good or bad, he replies,

“‘Caste discrimination is neither good, nor bad,’ Binoy declared. ‘In other words, it is good in some situations, bad in others. If you asked me whether the hand is a good thing, I would reply that it’s best judged in relation to the rest of the body. If you asked, is hand good for flying?-I would reply in the negative; likewise, wings are not good for grasping things, either’” (42).

The comparison between caste system and hand is not a good comparison. It is like the comparison of a cow with a goat which lacks rationality and equal base of judgement. Binoy tries to justify his answer but ends up being producing a ridiculous explanation. This shows his irrationality. On the contrary, Fielding gives utmost priority to reasoning. After the cave expedition, an informal meeting was held in the club discussing the rape issue of Adella. In that meeting though everyone was considering Aziz guilty without any solid proof, Fielding was critically analysing the situation. For this Anglo-Indian the lantern of reason was more important.

After the trial of Aziz, the orients became very excited as they won the case. Though Nawab Bahadullah does not consider the chaos and violence appropriate, Hamidullah explains the necessity of violence stating, “otherwise they will still think we are afraid” (252). This represents the irrational and barbaric nature of the orients. However, it is mentioned that the victory would

have made the English clam but it has been an opposite for the orient. When Adella and Fielding were critically analysing what actually happened in the caves, Hamidullah without understanding the whole thing cynically stated, "of course some Indian is the culprit, we must never doubt that" (262). He was mocking Ronny during his hard time. He intentionally inflicted pain on Ronny, despite of knowing the death of Mrs. Moore. This portrays revengefulness and the lack of sense.

Contrarily, Poreshbabu is an emblem of rationality in *Gora*. Regarding the caste discrimination, he says,

there is no harm in a cat approaching our plate and devouring rice from it, but if a certain human being enters the room, we must throw away the rice. If caste discrimination causes men to treat other men with such humiliation and contempt, how can I call it anything but anti-religion? (165)

This statement of Poreshbabu reveals the position of lower-class orient worse than the animals. He gives reason more emphasis than mere sentiments. In his conversation with Sucharita regarding the failure of the Egalitarian philosophy in case of the lower caste people, he holds emotion responsible. He says, "Equality concerns knowledge, not emotions of the heart" (165).

Therefore, whereas the orient of Forster are irrational, the orient of Tagore are both rational and irrational. The orient who are really being enlightened by the concept of humanism try to practice humanism.

***Rationality of orient and occident woman.*** Women are generally represented as taking decisions through heart without thinking about the future consequences. In *A Passage to India*, Mrs. Moore is depicted as an emotional person. She believes that God is present in every religious institution like mosque. She loves to share her opinions without thinking much. She does not judge people very critically. She only knows whether she likes or dislikes them. As her features echo the features of an orient, Aziz says to her, "you are an Oriental" (20). Contrarily, Anadamoyi, Lalita, Sucharita are rational. Regarding the caste differentiation, Anadamoyi says, "nobody is born into a caste" (16). This reflects her rational mind. Lalita is a very rational girl. She becomes angry seeing that Binoybabu is not using his rational faculty, rather telling the words of Gora like a parrot. She states, "Has the Almighty Ishwar

given us brains to elaborate on other people's views, and mouths to utter other people's words in a marvelous way?" (120).

Rationality can be seen in Sucharita when she asks the justification of caste system to Binoybabu again and again being unsatisfied with the irrational saying of Binoy. The rationality of Sucharita is expressed when she argues with Gora regarding the backwardness of Indian women. She says,

You people think women have fulfilled their duties if they are confined within the home and allowed to cook and clean. On the one hand you stunt their mental growth like this, but on the other, when they sent for the ojha, you don't spare them either. Those for whom a couple of families constitute the whole world can never become complete human beings. And if denied their full humanity, they are bound to destroy and retard all major male undertakings, dragging men down to avenge their own plight (132)

This thoughtful speech of Sucharita portrays the condition of orient women. The orient women are confined within the four walls. At that time, they did not enjoy the fruits of education like the male members of the society. As a result, they remained in the darkness of ignorance. As they had no contribution to economy and their house-works were hardly counted as economic or given respect, they were considered as the burdens. As a consequence, they were devoid of the same treatment as a male in the society. Supporting Sucharita Lalita says, "our work will make no progress if our women's development remains stunted like Chinese women's feet" (133). Begum Rokeya Shakhawat Hossain mentioned that the society is like a cart which will not progress but just circle on the same place if one wheel is smaller than the other. Again, Nazrul in his "Nari" celebrated the equal participation of man and woman. Lalita's rationality is once again reflected through her analysis regarding the backwardness of the society.

On the contrary, Forster highlights the tragedy, when women go out the home. Women are represented as creating chaos. When Adella goes out to explore India, she creates nothing but problems. She is a very confused person. First of all, she is confused regarding her decision of marrying Ronny, "to be or not to be married" (98) was the question. The reason behind this confusion is her lack of critical reasoning along with her conflict between head and heart. Secondly, she is confused regarding the case issued on Aziz. She is doubtful regarding the guiltiness of Aziz. Finally, she put off the case, as she is not sure.

Therefore, a contrast can be observed in Tagore and Forster. Forster portrayed his female characters as emotional which does not fulfil the criteria of rationalism of western humanism. This refers to the inferior position of the women. Contrarily, Tagore indicates the irrational behaviour of women, but represents his main female characters as rational who deserve equal treatment of humanity.

## Conclusion

The oriental study of *Gora* by Rabindranath Tagore and *A Passage to India* by E. M. Forster reveals the existence of western humanism along with its failure due to the presence of stereotypical images. The tone of *A Passage to India* is euphemistic. It contains the irony of western humanism as it presents cliché images of the orient. The major portion of the political novel *Gora* is also ironical. Throughout the novel aversion is expressed by several characters towards the Christian ways which includes mingling with all sorts of people ignoring caste and religion, education of girls, women getting outside the zenana. Though *Gora* again and again states the glory of Bharatvarsha restating its caste discrimination, social malpractices, and superstitions, it expresses nothing but the backwardness of Bharatvarsha. The dissection of western humanism in these two texts based on the traits of human beings (human physique and rationality) demonstrate the creation of inferior beings in the hierarchical order.

The analysis of biological representation of orient and occident man reveals the failure of western humanism. The orientals are being brought down to the status of animals. Whereas Forster only encompasses the western view, Tagore reflects the treatment of orientals as animals by both the occidentals and the orientals. Again, in case of representation of women physical beauty plays an important part. Both Forster and Tagore reflected on physical and inner beauty. However, it seems that in Forster emphasis on physical beauty surpasses inner beauty. Besides, the females of both the texts are the victims of dehumanization. Hence, they are devoid of same treatment as male.

The investigation of rationality portrayed by the orientals and the occidentals open up the question of binary and the subsequent failure of humanism. Rationality is an important feature of human beings. The occidentals of *A Passage to India* are rational whereas, the orientals are portrayed as irrational and emotional. This highlights the binary opposition. Again, *Gora* of *Gora* possess both rational traits of occidentals and irrational characteristics of orientals. Besides, Binoy is presented irrational. Contrarily, Pooreshbabu is

portrayed rational. Hence, it can be seen that unlike Forster, Tagore was not confined to the binary stereotypes. Anandamoyi, Lalita, Sucharita of *Gora* are more rational compared to Mrs. Moore and Adella of *A Passage to India*. It is found that the oriental women of Tagore are mentally progressive compared to the occidental women of Forster. Therefore, portrayal of rationality by women of Tagore demonstrates the praiseworthy side of western humanism.

The exploration of western humanism through the lens of orientalism in *A Passage to India* and *Gora* demonstrates the decline of western humanism due to orientalism. The application of western humanism can be seen to be limited to the occidentals in both Forster and Tagore. The orientals are denied from the benevolent grace of western humanism as it became political. The orientals are projected with a lack of traits of being a human traced in humanism. However, unlike Forster, Tagore portrayed the amenable side of western humanism in case of women. The good side in Tagore's writing is that he tried to give man position higher than religion and society, he wanted to break the chains of religion and society. But in breaking the chains, he consciously or unconsciously gave importance to the occidentals with whose contact the shackles of religion and society can be broken. The protagonist Gora could break the chain boldly, as he is an occident. Both Tagore and Forster wanted to create a bridge between East and West. However, the stereotypical representations highlight the failure of the bridge. The western humanism becomes confined to the West because of orientalist thoughts. As long as there exists the notion of 'me' versus the 'Other', equality cannot be established. Thus, humanism cannot flourish in its full form.

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## Representation of Gender in a Primary Level EFL Textbook: A Critical Discourse Analysis Based on Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model

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### Abstract

*Nowadays, the issue of gender bias in EFL/ESL teaching materials, especially in textbooks, is gaining much attention of the researchers and educationists. Though gender discrimination is a recurring social problem in Bangladesh, enough research has not been done focusing on the representation of gender in EFL textbooks. To fill that gap, this study is an attempt to explore the representation of gender in a primary level EFL textbook (English for Today, for Class 5) used in Bangladesh. The objective is to stress importance of maintaining gender balance in the contents of such textbooks for growing a better perception in the children regarding gender equality in social roles. It follows Fairclough's (2001) three-dimensional model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), as adapted by Amerian and Esmaeeli (2015) and Lia Litosseliti's (2014) insights on feminist linguistics which intends to identify, demystify, and resist the ways in which language is used to create and sustain gender inequalities. Frequency of appearance, order of appearance, participation in social and daily activities, pictorial presence, use of generic terms and honorific titles- these seven factors of CDA (adapted from Amerian and Esmaeeli, 2015) have been examined in the selected textbook to have an insight into the representation of gender in it. Findings of the research have revealed the presence of gender imbalance in the textbook. Females have been projected in stereotypical roles and discrimination towards them have been done either consciously or subconsciously. This study accordingly recommends some ways of making the contents of the selected textbook more gender balanced which can be suitable to be applied in other EFL textbooks too.*

*Keywords:* EFL, textbook, CDA, gender, imbalance, perception

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Textbooks are mandatory materials to be studied in the formal education system all over the world. Students get exposed to textbooks on a regular basis which make their reach and influence immense (Selander, 1991). Apart from providing general knowledge on the subjects suggested by the official curriculum, textbooks convey multiple cultural and ideological meanings, playing a significant role in the process of socialization and cultural reproduction (Skliar, 2007). Teachers in different countries, especially in the developed ones, tend to follow textbooks without questioning the contents and students also develop this practice. This system keeps imposing ideologies and beliefs on the students that have been expressed in the books. (Islam & Asadullah, 2018). Thus, it is immensely important to provide correct messages and be very conscious about the socio-culturally sensitive issues while selecting the contents of the textbooks.

One of the issues, which has provoked much interest and debate among the researchers and educationist all over the world at present time is the issue of gender bias in EFL/ESL (English as a Foreign Language/English as a Second Language) teaching materials, especially textbooks (Amerian and Esmaeeli, 2015). Students from different parts of the world study English textbooks as it is the most widely used lingua franca of the present world. Students of varied age and class from different parts of the world are exposed to not only the language but also the social messages conveyed through the English textbooks. If gender discrimination is portrayed in English language textbooks, it can become a huge obstacle in the path of achieving gender balance in any society (Blumberg, 2004). Researchers from different parts of the world have studied this issue in the context of different countries and found that EFL/ESL textbooks render gender biased information to the students in different ways (Amerian & Esmaeeli, 2015; Nofal and Kavar, 2015; Yonata and Mujiyanto, 2017; Asadullah, Islam & Wahhaj, 2018; Skliar, 2007; Biemmi, 2015). As there has not been enough study in this regard, in context of Bangladesh, this study is an attempt to explore the representation of gender roles in a primary level EFL textbook (*English for Today*, for Class 5). The motive is to emphasize on maintaining gender balance in the contents of such textbooks for helping the children to create a better perception of gender equality. It follows Fairclough's (2001) three-dimensional model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), as adapted by Amerian and Esmaeeli (2015).

### **Statement of Problem**

Even a few decades ago, gender discrimination or sexism (Wodak, 1997) was so severe in Bangladesh that it was one of the major reasons behind the birth of thousands of malnourished children as females were marginalized and not even provided with enough nutritious food (Mehrotra, 2006). Women were deprived of their basic human rights, and discrimination was done in every sector, especially education and job sectors. Females were seen as liabilities and violence towards them was a common issue (Akhter, 2005). Governments led by different political parties took several attempts to change that oppressive scenario, but no massive change has occurred till now apart from the disappearance of gender differences in enrollment at primary level of education. Although the present government has initiated several programs to encourage girls' education at all levels, the school textbooks still continue to suffer from a pro-male biased ideology regardless of whether they are based on a secular or religious curriculum which may discourage the girl children to join school and study (Asadullah, Islam & Wahhaj, 2018).

### **Significance of the Study**

As the children enter their primary level of education, they get exposed to the broader world outside their family and begin to create perceptions about the world. To create a gender balanced society, gender neutral education at this stage should be ensured (Dandapat & Sengupta, 2012). Textbooks used at this level of education should provide correct messages about the socio-culturally sensitive issues. In Bangladesh, at the primary level of education, millions of learners of Bengali medium, Bengali version and Ibtidaie education mandatorily use the same EFL textbooks named *English for Today* issued by the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) of Bangladesh. Apart from teaching English language skills, different socio-cultural meanings implied through the contents of these books reach the learners and put influences in shaping their perspectives. As gender bias in English Language Teaching (ELT) materials is one of the most concerning issues of present world, so, analyzing how gender is represented in the *English for Today* textbooks carries a huge significance. The primary education of Bangladesh officially ends through 5<sup>th</sup> grade and, afterwards, students get promoted to lower secondary level of education. It is an important transition period in their lives. That is why, it is important to explore with what perceptions of gender roles in the society children complete their primary education. The students

studying at primary schools are very sensitive and generally more prone to get influenced by the contents of textbooks.

## **Theoretical Framework and Literature Review**

### ***Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model***

As mentioned in Amerian and Esmaeeli (2015), CDA explores the social and political contexts in order to liberate ideologies, hegemony, dominance and social powers (Fairclough, 2001). It is an interdisciplinary and multifunctional approach having several applications in different domains; and education is one of those. A very interesting application of CDA that has appealed to many researchers in the arena of education is textbooks, especially the ELT textbooks and their contents (Amerian & Esmaeeli, 2015). Textbooks can be effectively examined from various points of view, such as- representation of gender, ethnicity, cultural dynamics etc. using CDA.

The discipline CDA investigates power relations, manipulation of ideology and hegemony (Rahimi & Sahragard, 2007). One of the most influential theorists of CDA is Norman Fairclough who puts emphasis on "social conflict and tries to detect its linguistic manifestations in discourse in particular elements of dominance, difference and resistance" (Meyer, 2001). Fairclough (2001) has named this method critical language study (CLS) and described it as "a contribution to the general rise of consciousness of exploitive social relations by putting focus upon language".

One of key approaches used in the exploration of gender representations in books is Fairclough's (2001) three-dimensional model. For analyzing any event of communication, this model puts simultaneous focus on three things: text, discourse practice and socio-cultural practice (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999). To Fairclough (1989), power, ideology and language together make a unitary system and the nucleus of his position is that "language connects with the social through being the primary domain of ideology, and through being a sit of, and a stake in, struggles of power" (as cited in Amerian and Esmaeeli, 2015).

### ***Language and Gender***

Language and Gender, as a discipline of study, emerged between 1960s and 1970s (Key, 1975; Lakoff, 1975; Throne & Henley, 1975). Through the

influence of critical linguistics and discourse analysis, there has been a ‘turn to language’ in humanities and social sciences which has reframed the question of relationship between gender and language (Litosseliti, 2014). Language both reflects and creates how we see the world and how the world includes assumptions about gender inequalities. Gender is not a biological, but some socially created “traits assigned to a sex- what maleness and femaleness stand for-within different societies and cultures” (Litosseliti, 2014). Every society has distinct points of views towards gender roles and expectations from males and females playing those roles based on various economic, cultural, political, social and religious factors (Bell, McCarthy, & McNamara, 2006). Biological explanations of ‘natural’ differences between men and women are often manipulated to justify male privileges and female deprivation as the suppressed group (Litosseliti, 2014). Gender bias in language is an abstract system (Litosseliti, 2014) in which women are put in the right side of the binary and presented as passive, weak, dependent, and emotional, whereas men are presented as active, strong, independent and rational. Feminist linguists try to raise consciousness regarding these discriminations and third-wave feminism with its more critical, constructivist, and post-structuralist theoretical paradigms shares a lot with current thinking within feminist linguistics (Litosseliti, 2014). According to Mills (2002), third-wave feminism is concerned with the diversity, multiplicity, performativity, and co-construction of gender identities within specific contexts and communities of practice, and on the politics of power construction and subject positions (as cited in Litosseliti, 2014). Feminist linguistics shares these assumptions and principles. It aims to theorize gender-related linguistic phenomena and language use, and to explicitly link these to gender inequality or discrimination, on the assumption that linguistic change is an important part of overall social change (Litosseliti, 2014). Language change should happen alongside wider changes in our discourse practices and textbooks are a big part of our discourse practice. The argument that language is sexist has created the demand for a more gender inclusive language in every aspect of language use, including education in general and textbooks in particular.

### ***Gender Representations in Textbook***

English language textbooks do not only contain language structures, but also use different social contexts to represent the use of language. Bahman and Rahimi (2010) state that often cultures, languages and textbooks include sexism in them and are oppressive towards women. Although the textbooks are

supposed to teach some disciplines, but in effect, they express secondary information on gender roles and social values (Gershuny, 1977). Biemmi (2015) studied the imagery of gender in Italian textbooks and found the evidence of Gershuny's (1977) opinion even after 38 years where the textbooks still project extremely sexist and anachronistic feminine and masculine images. Even the authors' gender biased attitudes get reflected in the contents of Indonesian textbooks as argued by Yonata and Mujiyanto (2017). In some textbooks used in the Middle East (Iran and Turkey), Skliar (2007) found the existence of gender related stereotypes and imbalance in representations of woman and man. The high school textbooks in Iran include more male nouns, pronouns, and adjectives and women are made invisible through the use of male generics (Bahman and Rahimi, 2010). Moreover, Amerian and Esmaeeli (2015), applying Fairclough's three-dimensional model, reveals that an international ELT series named *American Headway Student Textbooks* contain gender imbalance and prioritize men over women. On the other hand, although the scholars started analyzing gender roles in the EFL textbooks from the 1970s, gender bias is still present in the textbooks of Jordan (Nofal and Qawar, 2015). Males are less projected in domestic roles and more in social roles whereas females appear less frequently in the textbooks than males. Ahmad and Shah (2019) have also found instances of discrimination towards women in Pakistani textbooks.

More research needs to be done in Bangladesh focusing on gender representations in textbooks. Asadullah, Islam and Wahhaj (2018) critically examined the ongoing controversy over the Islamization of textbooks by a secular government of Bangladesh and argued that school textbooks of Bangladesh suffer from a pro-male bias regardless of whether they are based on a secular or religious curriculum. However, their paper focuses on whether gender portrayal in government issued textbooks are related with politics and religious beliefs or not. But they do not describe in detail how gender imbalance is present in the books which is the main focus of this present study.

### **Research Objectives**

The general objective of this study is to attempt a critical discourse analysis of an EFL textbook (*English for Today*, Class 5) used in Bangladesh to examine the gender representation in the book with a view to stressing importance on maintaining gender balance in textbooks (in general) for creating better and developed perceptions in the children about gender equality. To do so, it focuses on the following specific objectives:

- a. To find out if gender balance has been maintained in the contents of the selected textbook.
- b. To recommend ways of making the contents of the selected textbook more gender neutral for creating better perceptions in the children regarding gender equality.

## **Research Methodology**

### ***Corpus of the Study***

*English for Today* textbook provided by National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB), Bangladesh used for teaching the students of grade 5 at primary level of education is the corpus of this study. NCTB is assigned by the government for textbook production and distribution all over Bangladesh for free. The latest edition of the *English for Today* (Class 5) book which appeared in 2015 (reprinted in 2019) has been selected for the research. As children are more vulnerable to acquire beliefs from the society (Biemmi, 2015), one of the books taught at primary level has been selected purposively for this research.

### ***Data Analysis Procedure***

Data has been analyzed through CDA. CDA inquires if there is any attempt to maintain power structures where the privileged takes control over the underprivileged through ideas, assumptions, or ideologies (Widdowson, 2007). To interpret data, the adapted version of Fairclough's (2001) three-dimensional model (description, interpretation, and explanation) by America and Esmaeeli (2015) has been used. America and Esmaeeli (2015) pointed out eight factors to examine gender balance in a series of Iranian EFL textbooks. Those are: frequency of female and male appearances, social and domestic roles performed by the two genders, female and male's semantic roles, their order of appearance, pictorial representation, use of generic terms, use of honorifics and activities performed by the two sexes. The researchers have utilized seven factors (except the semantic roles performed by males and females) in the present study to examine gender representation in NCTB recommended *English for Today* textbook for Class 5.

1. Frequency of Appearance: To gather data about the frequency of appearance, characters represented through nouns, pronouns, connotations, or other forms have been considered. But illustrations that carry faces without any mention in written form have not been included in this section as there is another criterion on frequency through pictorial representation. Characters with the same name presented in different contexts have been counted as separate cases. Because, with the same name some characters can cover a single lesson of the book, and some can occupy a large proportion of the book. However, at the end of any content, in the activity session, same character has been counted as an individual representative.

2. Social Roles Performed by Males and Females: Different social roles performed by the characters in the book have been taken into consideration. Also, the social roles that characters aspire to perform have been included because they signify the vision and ideology regarding the roles to be performed by the two sexes in society.

3. Pictorial Representation: For analyzing pictorial representation, all the illustrations including the cover pic has been considered. However, every page in the book begins with a small picture on the top with page number which has not been counted. Pictures even in collages have been analyzed individually. If any participant's face in the picture does not confirm gender identity or is vague in any way, then that picture has been analyzed excluding that particular participant.

4. Order of Appearance: For exploring the order of appearance- who starts a conversation, whose pictures appear first, how nouns and pronouns are ordered have been analyzed.

5. Generics: It has been observed whether generics in the form of nouns or pronouns are used to refer to both sexes or not. Also, generic pronouns used for animals in fables have been counted under this segment.

6. Honorifics: The titles Mr. Mrs, Miss, MS. have been counted for the analysis of honorifics.

7. Activities Performed by Males and Females: Different activities done by the characters in the textbook have been counted and analyzed. Activities demonstrated through pictures have also been considered because often who the characters are can be understood from the written text but what they are doing is made clear by the pictures provided with the text.

## Discussion and Findings

### *Analysis of Gender Balance through Seven Factors Adapted from Amerian and Esmaeeli (2015)*

**Frequency of representation.** It is vital to have a balanced frequency in representing male and female characters in any textbook. In the selected textbook of this study, male characters appear comparatively more frequently than female characters. Among 109 characters, 60 (55%) are males and 49 (10%) are females. Though, the difference is of only 10%, it is significant. According to Esmaeeli and Amerian (2014), it is an omission-based biasness where one gender comes into the notice of the readers more whereas the other one remains unnoticed and suppressed. If female sex is omitted several times and males are presented frequently, it may psychologically impact the learners into thinking that males have superiority over females (Amerian & Esmaeeli, 2015). Such imbalanced representation of gender might subconsciously sow the seeds of marginalizing women in the tender minds of the learners in Bangladesh and they will naturally tend to build a male dominated world view. On top of the discrimination through frequency, contexts in which females and males have been represented also reinforce sexism. In unit 10 (pg.38-39), while presenting a text on the description of Kishoreganj district in order to teach students how to describe their home districts, the names of 4 iconic males (Upendrakishore Roy Chowdhury, Zainul Abendin, Syed Nazrul Islam, Sukumar Roy) born in the district have been mentioned along with the pictures of 3 of them. On the other hand, only 1 female character has been mentioned shortly (Poet Chandraboti) without any pictorial representation. Though in different sectors in Bangladesh, women have significant contributions and there are many female role models, they have been overpowered by male characters in this text. If Kishoreganj district has less female iconic characters to project, description of another district having more significant females could have been selected for this text. For primary level students, one of the biggest sources of information is their textbook. So, if the textbook projects that most of the iconic figures in Bangladesh are males, the young learners might grow up with a preconceived notion that females are not worth contributing much to the society and nation.

In Unit 19 (pg. 74-75), to present contents related to Liberation War of 1971, a male representative has been selected as the magazine reporter. Also, the guide of the tour is a male. Liberation War is an immensely significant issue



in the lives of Bengali people. But there is no female representative to talk about this important event in the text. In a country like Bangladesh where there is still a lot of struggles going on to make the mass people take females' opinions seriously, such representation can influence the future generations to perceive females' opinions and participation as insignificant. Also, there are many other major and minor instances of demeaning females and making males superordinate. For example, in unit 3 (pg. 13), a female child named Sue has been addressed as "silly" for losing her shoes which reflects the discriminatory social binary that women are silly (irrational), but men are rational. This may trigger the tendency of taking females lightly and overlooking at them. Another aspect to be noticed is that while projecting siblings, males have been presented as the elder ones in almost all the cases which once again reflects society's expectation of having a male child first, then a female and a sister's mandatory need of an elder brother to guide and protect her. In several lessons and activities, the textbook has maintained the typical binaries that females are subordinate and naive, while males are superordinate and powerful. Such binaries can negatively influence the perceptions of the learners about gender roles as they are at a crucial stage of constructing their concepts regarding the world around them.

***Social roles and sex stereotype.*** There are many social roles that are traditionally assigned to only females (female monopolized roles) or mainly to females (female dominated roles). There are also some social roles that are performed only by males (male monopolized roles) or performed mainly by males (male dominated roles). And some roles are performed by both sexes in a balanced way (gender shared roles). However, the stereotypes regarding social roles have been changing with time (Sekścińska, Trzcińska, & Maison, 2016). Unfortunately, the selected textbook is more inclined to the traditional stereotypical representation of social roles. Male monopolized social roles are 7 (fire fighters, bankers, NGO workers, shopkeepers, laborers, political leaders and sports personalities) and female monopolized roles are 5 (housewives, teachers, models, singers and fish farmers). 1 male dominated role is present and female dominated role is absent. Gender shared roles are 3 (teachers, doctors, and reporters).

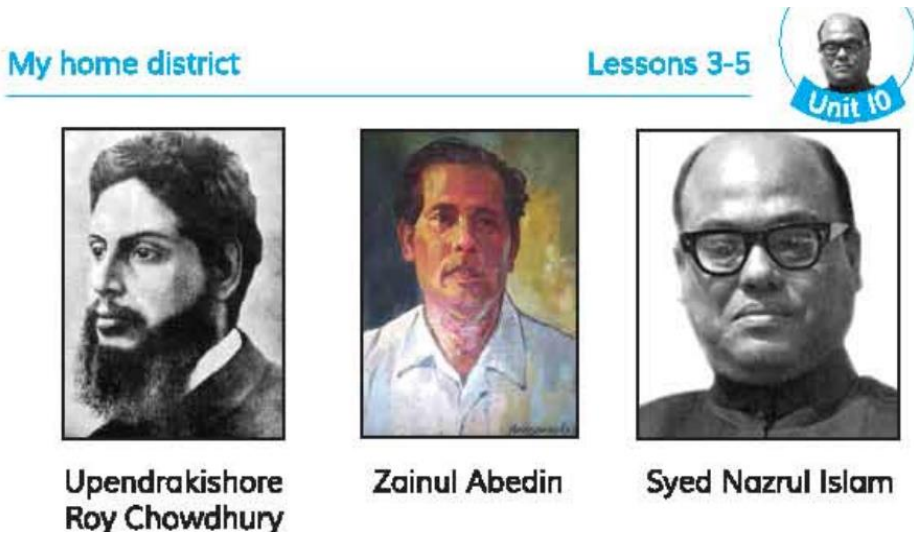
**Table 1:** *Social Roles of Males and Females in English for Today Textbook (Class 5)*

<b>Types of Social Roles</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
<b>Male-monopolized social roles</b>	44%
<b>Male-dominated social roles</b>	6%
<b>Female-monopolized social roles</b>	31%
<b>Female-dominated social roles</b>	0%
<b>Gender shared social roles</b>	19%

Table 1 shows the presence of 44% male monopolized and 31% female monopolized social roles in the book. 6% of the social roles are male dominated and no social role is female dominated. Gender shared roles are only 19%. So, male monopolized roles are more than female monopolized role and no female dominated role is present. On the other hand, significant male monopolized roles like fire fighters, bankers, NGO workers, political leaders and sports personalities have been mentioned whereas the female monopolized roles are comparatively less significant (housewives, teachers, models, singers, and fish farmers) although almost all the male monopolized roles mentioned in the book are spontaneously performed by women too in real life. This imbalance may create an impression that there are more significant roles of males in the society to perform than females. In unit 9 (pg. 34-35), while talking about occupations, a firefighter has been presented as a male representative, whereas a singer has been presented as a female. Such discriminatory projection of females (housewife, singer, model etc.) and males (firefighter, banker, sports personalities et.) might influence the learners into believing that finance, leadership, sports etc. are males' domains while entertainment and home chores are female domains. Such sexist representation of social roles can trigger sex stereotype and gender inequality.

**Pictorial representation.** Picture is a powerful medium of rendering meanings. Even the complex ideas can be delivered in an easier way through pictures (Sadiq, 2013). So, it is important to have a balanced gender representation through pictorial illustrations. In the textbook selected for the

present study, among 80 pictures, 35 (44%) include only males and 21 (26%) include only females. More male characters are included in 7 (9%) pictures and more female characters are included in 5 (6%) pictures. Both genders have been equally represented in 12 (15%) pictures. In total, 53% pictures are fully or more focused on men whereas in case of females it is 32% and the other 15% are gender shared. Overall, males are projected more frequently through pictures in the textbook. This inclusion of more males in pictures comes with the possibility of building a gender biased mentality in the young learners. When frequently females are omitted in the pictures or they are out of focus in the illustrations, these create an impression of them being insignificant.



**Figure 1:** Pictures of prominent male figures in the book (Source: English for Today for Class 5, 2015. Pg. 39)

In unit 10 (pg. 38-39) while representing real life iconic characters, pictures of 3 Bangladeshi male personalities have been projected. but, no real-life female icon's picture has been included.



**Figure 2:** Picture of Liberation War Museum (Source: English for Today for Class 5, 2015. Pg. 74)

In Unit 19 (pg. 74), the picture related to Liberation War which appears at the top right corner of the page includes only males. Females' contribution in war has not been represented through any picture.

**E. Look, listen and say.**



**Figure 3:** Pictures representing female figures (Source: English for Today for Class 5, 2015. Pg. 16)

In unit 4 (pg. 16), while discussing about magazines, a female is projected as a well-dressed model posing for picture and males are portrayed as sportsmen. Females have been focused through the illustrations as entertainers and care givers (doctor), while males have been projected in the dynamic social roles like sportsmanship. When the learners are confronted with such illustrations, they are likely to endure in their system of belief that females are not worthy of performing the dynamic roles like males. The images projected in the books can influence the mental image created among the learners regarding gender roles. So, the imbalanced projection of genders through illustrations can input patriarchal concepts into the young learners both consciously and subconsciously.

***Use of honorifics.*** Gender politics can be manifested through the use of honorifics. Mr. is a title attributed to males. Miss, Mrs. and MS. are honorifics used for females. Though Mr. does not reveal the marital status of a man, Mrs. and Miss do reveal the marital status of females. Thus, MS. is the equivalent to Mr. which has nothing to do with marital status. Mr. has been used 3 (43%) times in the book. Mrs. has been used 3 (43%) times too and MS. has been used only once (14%). Instead of using an honorific (MS.) that puts more focus on a female as an individual more frequently, the book uses an honorific (Mrs.) which is a projection of the marital status of a woman at first place. This can encourage the learners to acknowledge woman based on their marital status and give a message that marriage is the most inevitable thing to make a woman's life meaningful. What is noticeable is that in unit 2 (pg. 8), there is a content on titles which explains which honorific is for married, unmarried and which one (MS.) doesn't reveal the marital status of a woman. But it does not mention that MS. is a more appropriate term to be used for focusing more on a woman as an individual, rather than her marital status. This reflects the fact that issues related to gender balance have been overlooked to some extent in the book. As the learners are not made clear about the appropriateness of using the above-mentioned honorifics and frequently exposed to these, they are likely to use these honorifics outside the classroom. So, the impact of the textbook can have a long-term effect on how both genders are addressed and are looked upon by the society.

***Order of appearance.*** Appearing first in a discourse relates to getting more priority (Ahmad & Shah, 2019). If a character initiates a dialogue, then

the focus remains on that character (Jones, Kitetu and Sunderland, 1997). In the textbook, males appear first in 20 (62.5%) cases and females in 12 (37.5%). This clearly shows discrimination towards women in terms of order of appearance. In Unit 4 (pg. 14), two characters named Tamal (male) and Nasreen (female) have been presented as the reporters of English Club Magazine. In an interview with Sima (female) and Biju (male) regarding their leisure time activities, all the questions are asked by Tamal, while Nasreen's presence has been found only once in the whole conversation (while adding something to Sima's answer). Though it might seem a trivial issue on the surface level, this order of appearance can have a long-term effect on the psyche of the learners. The students of Grade 5 are at a stage in their life where their ideologies are still in the process of getting shaped and even the minor aspects projected before them can have a major impact. If the male characters constantly keep appearing first (as the initiators of conversations) and are shown as dominating the conversations and actions, then the young learners can get the message that males are more active and authoritative, whereas females are passive and secondary.

***Use of generic gender terms.*** A generic statement takes one participant as the general representative of all, though there is the presence of other participants (Passanisi & Hampton, 2015). The use of generics puts influence on people's perception of the world. Language without masculine generics help to think without gender bias (Silveira, 1980). However, in the selected textbook, use of masculine generics have been found. There are two stories in the book where animals have been addressed as "he", "his". The two stories in unit 14 (pg. 54-55) and 25 (pg. 98-101) provide moral lessons. The absence of female voice in moral lessons can have significant impact on learners. If these stories are considered as microcosms from which life lessons are to be learnt, then it can be said that they promote worldviews discarding females. It can spread a misconception that male voice is enough to put across moral lessons and the learners might assume human life as androcentric where only male voices are enough to convey significant messages.

***Participation in daily activities.*** In the textbook, visiting different places is done more by males than females. While males are projected working in fields, women are shown sewing and doing other household chores. Although playing as an activity has showed the involvement of more females than males

in the selected textbook, sports as an occupation has been shown as the domain of only males.

**Table 2:** *Activities in English for Today Textbook (Class 5)*

Activity	Male	Female
Conversations, socialization	20	19
Visiting places	6	2
Eating	4	4
Buying Stuff	1	0
Working in the field	3	0
Sewing	0	1
Attending class	3	4
Practicing English	2	1
Filling up forms	0	3
Dressing up	0	1
Arranging books	0	1
Reading	5	3
Playing	7	8
Listening to music	2	0
Cycling, swimming, walking exercising	8	7
Household work	3	2
Writing	3	1
Watching TV	1	1
Singing	0	1
Planting trees	1	3
Repairing	4	0
Painting	1	1
Sleeping	2	1
Total activities	76	64
Total activities in percentage	54%	46%

Though as per the numeric data in table 2, males participate more (3) in household chores than females (2), in actual context of the textbook women are shown as the main participants doing household chores and their husbands or sons are shown only as helping them. Males' role in household chores is passive in the textbook. Males and females both participate in writing but while females write to friends, males are shown to write in magazines. Though females and males both do interactions and socializations, in most cases the topics of more gravity are discussed by males. While talking about tourist spots, disaster management and Liberation War, male participants are more active than females. While representing the natural disasters in unit 24 (pg. 95-96), females and old people are presented as the victims of the disasters and the rescue service is mainly done by males. After Aila, only the males have been found in rebuilding the damaged houses, whereas females have been found only in tree plantation. In unit 4 (pg. 14), while talking about magazines, a male character Biju is shown to read about sports. At the same time, a female character Sima is shown reading funny stories. So, gender imbalance can also be found in different activities presented in the book. Such projection can influence the learners into believing that males perform the major duties in the society, their conversations are more meaningful whereas females have trivial roles and their conversations are usually on light topics lacking depth and significance. Bangladesh still needs to go a long way to eradicate discrimination towards women. If textbooks too present males as more significant than females, then the learners are likely to cling to the long legacy of discrimination towards women.

### **Addressing the Research Objectives**

*Maintenance of gender balance in the contents of the selected textbook.* In most of the contents of *English for Today* textbook for Class 5, gender balance has not been maintained. The frequency of male characters outnumbers female characters, males occupy first appearances in most of the cases, the social roles assigned to males overpower those of females, the honorifics used for males are not related to their marital status, but honorifics used for females are related to marital status. Also, most of the illustrations include and focus male characters rather than females. The iconic figures shown in the book are mostly men and different serious issues described in the book exclude women. In many other aspects of the textbook, imbalance in presenting gender can be traced.



***Projection (or non-projection) of discrimination towards any particular sex in the book.*** Discrimination towards females, either done consciously or subconsciously, can be traced in the book. Females have been projected in stereotypical roles. Financial, political, and other influential roles have rarely been assigned to females. Females have been introduced with honorifics which do not show them as individuals but relate their identity with their marital status. Demeaning attributes (like silly) have been attached to female characters. The overall content of the book has a subconscious tendency of marginalizing and discriminating females.

***Ways of making the contents of the book more gender neutral.*** The activities, social roles, frequency, and order of appearances of both genders should be consciously projected in a balanced way to attain gender neutrality in the contents of the selected book. Appropriate use of honorifics for the female characters should be ensured. Gender neutral pictorial illustrations can be included for this purpose. Among the four authors and one illustrator of the book, only one author is female. Including more female authors and illustrators can reduce the chances of subconscious discrimination towards women in the book.

## **Conclusion**

The use of language is not apolitical. Language can be used to convey different sociopolitical messages. Gender politics is an extremely crucial issue in the present world. Marginalization of any particular gender in the textbook can result in sowing the seeds of gender discrimination in the tender minds of the young learners. The *English for Today* textbook taught in class five contains gender imbalance in many of its contents. This is an alarming scenario because gender discrimination and undermining of women are crucial problems prevailing in Bangladesh. If textbooks continue to marginalize females, then this scenario will persist and can even get worsened. Hence, addressing the issues of gender roles in *English for Today* textbook for Class 5 is necessary. In fact, all *English for Today* textbooks at primary level should be analyzed not only from the perspective of language development but also the social messages delivered through them. Otherwise, the young children will be shaped up with deformed sense of morality. Without the awareness and efforts of writers and illustrators, it is not possible to have gender balanced contents in the textbook. They should acknowledge the impact of the social messages delivered through textbook and address gender issues in a very sensible

manner. Apart from making the textbook contents gender balanced, there should be the practice of discussing different social issues including gender discrimination in the EFL or ESL classrooms. From a broader perspective, language pedagogy should be related with sociolinguistic aspects to lessen the risks of deviating learners from nurturing proper values.

It is high time NCTB considered the matter of gender imbalance in textbooks with more importance. The authors and the illustrators of the EFL textbooks in Bangladesh should be instructed to consider the seven factors explained in this paper consciously for avoiding marginalization of females and creating stereotypes in the textbooks. Appropriate honorifics for females should be used in both in textbooks and real life. NCTB might consider the matter of incorporating more female authors and illustrators for devising gender balanced textbooks. EFL teachers in Bangladesh should focus on creating gender balanced classroom environment. They should be trained by the proper authority for ensuring the appropriate selection of classroom tasks by them to maintain gender balance.

The present study is focused on analyzing gender roles in the *English for Today* textbook of Class 5 only. A broader endeavor can be attempted to analyze gender roles in all the *English for Today* textbooks taught at primary level. Even the EFL textbooks taught at secondary, higher secondary and tertiary level of education in Bangladesh can also be scrutinized. So, the present research can be considered as an initiator of further research in the relevant field.

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## **Individual Disaster Preparedness and Safety among University Students of Dhaka City, Bangladesh**

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### **Abstract**

*This cross-sectional study intends to evaluate individual disaster preparedness and safety among university students of Dhaka city. Dhaka has been considered one of the most vulnerable cities with frequent fire occurrences, high risk of earthquake, recent coronavirus and dengue outbreak. It possesses the highest number of private and government-funded public universities in Bangladesh. However, these students have been overlooked with a few disaster preparedness efforts. University students (n=311) of Dhaka city participated in a self-reported internet-based survey. Chi-square, Kruskal-Wallis and Mann Whitney U tests were performed, where appropriate. Students reported essential disaster awareness with all disaster experiences, and they know the national emergency number. The majority of the observed respondents had the lack of first aid kit at home, inadequate basic mitigation measures, poor integration of volunteer group and other relevant organizations, limited participation and identification of any earthquake and fire drills around their living places etc. Students living with their family and living more than five years in Dhaka city have reported a better understanding of disaster as well as using existing available resources to prepare for any sudden or slow-onset disaster. The study's findings could help the government, private and social organizations to identify the gap in their disaster preparedness efforts.*

**Keywords:** university students, disaster preparedness, developing settlement, urban disaster

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Disasters cause massive destruction of multiple aspects resulting in widespread human, economic, material and environmental losses and impacts (Reduction, 2009). Relatively few studies have evaluated disaster preparedness in developing nations (Hoffmann & Muttarak, 2017; Xu, Peng, Liu & Wang, 2018). At the same time, Bangladesh has not received enough attention despite being one of the most disaster-affected countries (Chanda Shimi et al., 2010; Dilley, 2005; Kulatunga et al., 2012; Ozaki, 2016; van, 2015) due to the hotspot of many climate-related and geophysical hazards. All the cities of the country have been identified as highly exposed and vulnerable areas with the potential for immense human and economic losses (Gu, 2019). Floods, fire incidents, building collapse and diseases frequently visit Bangladeshi cities (Chowdhury, 2017; Islam and Islam, 2016; Shirin, Muraduzzaman, Alam, Sultana, Siddiqua, Khan, Akram, Sharif, Hossain & Flora, 2019). The capital city Dhaka is the fifth largest megacity in the world. It has experienced the utmost physical expansion and the highest population density of any other Bangladesh city (Islam, 2015). Climate change-induced rapid migration has triggered these issues to an unbearable level (Rigaud, de Sherbinin, Jones, Bergmann, Clement, Ober, Schewe, Adamo, McCusker, Heuser, & Midgley, 2018). This mega city has become accustomed to frequent fire incidents. According to the Bangladesh Fire Service and Civil Defense (B.F.S.C.D., 2020), about 113,997 fire incidents occurred in Bangladesh from 2014 to 2019, which caused 550 deaths with 2,318 people injured. Estimated economic losses were about US\$258.03 million (B.F.S.C.D., 2020). In this period, the Dhaka division experienced the highest number of fire incidents (24,941) compared to other Bangladeshi cities, which caused immense human and economic losses of around US\$160.21 million (B.F.S.C.D., 2020). In 2019, Bangladesh experienced 24,074 fire incidents with estimated economic damages of US\$38.89 million and 185 losses of lives, where the Dhaka division alone experienced 3,136 fire incidents which cost 126 lives and US\$14.68 million (B.F.S.C.D., 2020). Recent reported frequent fire incidents have made the city dwellers distressed. Along with the fire incidents, this city is also at a high risk of an earthquake (Chowdhury, 2017; Islam and Islam, 2016; Paul & Bhuiyan, 2010; Steckler, Mondal, Akhter, Seeber, Feng, Gale, Hill, & Howe, 2016). With the high risk of earthquakes and frequent fire incidents, this densely populated capital city is now at high risk of epidemic/pandemic outbreak. Community people from Dhaka have been recently struggling with vector-borne diseases. In 2019, more than 100,000 Dengue cases were identified in Bangladesh, and the highest number of cases were from Dhaka city (Akram, 2019; Hsan, Hossain, Sarwar, Wilder-Smith & Gozal, 2019; Shirin, Muraduzzaman, Alam, Sultana,

Siddiqua, Khan, Akram, Sharif, Hossain & Flora, 2019). Climate change and the rapid unplanned urbanization has been predicted for severe dengue outbreak if no effective actions are taken ( Mutsuddy, Tahmina, Shamsuzzaman, Kaisar & Khan, 2019). Dhaka is the worst affected city of Bangladesh in recent pandemic COVID-19, till June 2020 and is predicted to be a severe condition if proper actions are not strictly followed (*IEDCR*, n.d.). Climate change, rapid migration, population with high density, rapid unplanned development, improper management, unawareness, and insufficient disaster management activities have made Dhaka one of the most exposed and vulnerable megacities in the world (Chowdhury, 2017; H. & Islam, 2015; Rigaud, de Sherbinin, Jones, Bergmann, Clement, Ober, Schewe, Adamo, McCusker, Heuser, & Midgley, , 2018).

Even with the high risk and unsafe conditions, Dhaka possesses the most on-demand living hotspots in Bangladesh. Climate change-induced migration, basic living facilities, employment opportunities, and better educational institutions compared to other cities have made the city country's top destination. It has the highest number of universities in the country, estimated at one university in every 5.38 square kilometres (*A University in Every 5.38 Square Kilometres*, 2019). Many university students have no other option except to stay in Dhaka due to the inconvenient and time-consuming transportation facilities from outside the city. Many of these students are obliged to stay without their families and in unsafe places. However, this large number of students has been overlooked in few disaster preparedness efforts. Frequent fire incidents, high risk of earthquake and uncontrollable dengue outbreaks have put the life of the country's vast number of university students at risk. Some of the *Churihatta* fire tragedy victims were identified as university students (*Families of Missing Childhood Friends Tackle Loss, Cheats after Chawkbazar Fire - Bdnews24.Com*, n.d.). The recent fire that broke out in a private institute (*Fire at Daffodil Polytechnic Institute Doused | Dhaka Tribune*, n.d.) portrays the university students' alarming situation in Dhaka city. Students living in dormitories are at risk of building collapse as most of the buildings are too old and ill-maintained (*Vulnerable Halls Pose Threat to DU Resident Students | The Daily Star*, n.d.). Following the report from the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research of Bangladesh, 41% out of 420 sample dengue patients were students (*Students, Officegoers Most Vulnerable | Daily Star*, n.d.).

Studies (Kapucu & Khosa, 2013; Li, Hao & Wu,, 2015; Tan, Liao, Su, Li, Xiang & Dong, 2017; Tanner & Doberstein, 2015) have suggested that

university students are at more risk of the hazards than the general people, and in most cases, they are overlooked in disaster preparedness efforts. Numerous studies (Claborn, 2010; Collins et al., 2009; Watson et al., 2011) also indicated that disaster preparedness awareness is lacking. Some studies (Chen, Fang & Liu, 2015; Mai & Zhang, 2013) identified that more than 50%, and in some cases more than 90%, university students without enough disaster coping knowledge and skills. Another research (Edwards, 2013) emphasized the university preparedness for students in similar ways that the cities conduct for the community, and it should align with the business continuity planning. It has been stressed that an integrated preparedness plan is needed with the coordination between the local community and the university, where the university can contribute to developing the plan.

Some studies understand the disaster preparedness in Dhaka city (Chowdhury, 2017; Islam, 2015; Paul & Bhuiyan, 2010). Unfortunately, it is rare to ascertain studies focusing specifically on understanding the disaster preparedness and safety among university students of Dhaka city. In this dearth of relevant research, this study evaluates the individual disaster preparedness and the safety among university students of Dhaka city despite the importance. For this study, university students were the respondents, and they had to respond about their disaster preparedness and safety for three potential hazards in Dhaka city: fire, earthquake and dengue. This study's findings can contribute to the discussion of the impact of increasing exposure and vulnerability of university students to hazards. This study could similarly pave the way to understand university students' disaster preparedness and safety levels in one of the world's fastest-growing urban settlements.

## **Materials and Methods**

### ***Study Design***

A self-reported survey-based cross-sectional study was conducted among students from 11 universities across Dhaka city. The selection of universities was made based on the notion to cover most of this city's areas. Out of 11, three (03) were government-funded public universities covering the city's southern and northern part. The remaining eight (08) were private universities covering the town's central, eastern, and western aspects.

### ***Study Participants and Sampling***

The study was centred on the university students living in dormitories (both in and out of university campus) or with the family. Total,  $n=311$  respondents were identified as valid considering the boundary conditions of undergraduate students living for their study in Dhaka city, Bangladesh. The convenience and snowball sampling method were used, concentrating only on the undergraduate level students. This perception based study followed Morgan's Table for sample size calculation. 306 respondents were required (considering 1500 respondents of the total population, 5% error and 95% Confidence Interval). This study was part of research work approved by the corresponding author's department. It has also been approved by the institutional review board (Research Ethics Committee) of the author's university. It has maintained all the ethical issues.

### ***Questionnaire***

A self-reported internet-based questionnaire was developed. The self-reported survey has been successfully used in many relevant types of research (Basolo et al., 2009; Bourque et al., 2012; Gillani et al., 2020; Nguyen et al., 2006; Tan et al., 2017); the internet-based survey was selected because it was easily reachable to the students (Tanner & Doberstein, 2015). The developed questionnaire had three main parts: demographic and academic profile, knowledge and communication section with close-ended answer (yes/no/maybe), the selection-based question to understand their hazard experience and their action during an emergency, open-ended option for their suggestion "to do". The questionnaire structure was later adapted and simplified following Jensen's model, 2014 (Jensen, 2014; Nojang & Jensen, 2020) to evaluate the individual university student's response to disaster preparedness. It also had 1-5 Lickert scale questions to score the safety of their living place against fire and earthquake (1-very unsafe, 2-unsafe, 3-moderately safe, 4-safe and 5-very safe). The questionnaire was verified and finalized after the open discussion with several students.

### ***Data Collection***

Data were collected from October to November 2019. For each university, a group of students was assigned to lead and conduct the survey. The participated students were assured that all the collected data would only be used for research, and all of their responses would remain confidential. After

receiving verbal consents from the respondents, the assigned group shared the internet-based questionnaire link with one group, and they also shared with others in respective universities. Each assigned group had an open discussion after data collection. Based on the open discussion and online survey; the result was analyzed.

### ***Data Analysis***

All statistical analyses were performed using 'R' software, version 3.6.3 (R Development Core Team, 2019). Chi-square tests were conducted to analyze the association of demographic and academic profile (university type, university year, major, gender, the living period in Dhaka, a residing condition in Dhaka and origin) with *disaster awareness, recognizing home member's awareness, basic mitigation measures (fire extinguisher, emergency exits, signs and lights, fire hose, helmet, axe, whistle, portable radio, drinking water, dry food etc.) against fire and earthquake at living place, first aid kit at home, knowing national emergency contact number, the experience of fire and earthquake drilling, knowing any volunteer group working for disaster preparedness, any support from relevant government and non-governmental organizations*. Shapiro-Wilk test was conducted to check the normality of *safety of their living place against fire and earthquake* data. The data were not normally distributed. Non-parametric tests such as Kruskal-Wallis or Mann Whitney U tests were conducted to analyze the association of demographic and academic profile with their living place's safety *against fire and earthquake*. Post hoc analyses were also performed using Dunn's test, and Bonferroni correction was employed to adjust the *p-value*. The analyses also considered student's *hazard experience, the priority of hazard, action during an emergency, activities to reduce dengue risk* consisting of selection-based questions. 0.05  $\alpha$  level was set for all analyses.

## **Results**

### ***Demographics***

Table 1 shows the demographic and academic profiles with frequencies and percentages. The majority of respondents were from selected eight private universities ( $n=202$ , 64.95%), where 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>-year students ( $n=125$ , 40.19%) were placed the highest proportion in the sample ( $n=311$ ). Many respondents were also in their final year (4<sup>th</sup> year) ( $n=109$ , 35.05%). Students majoring in

Science and Engineering made up the highest proportion ( $n=136$ , 43.73%) in the sample. Students with other two majors, Arts and Social science and Business Administration and Economics, acquired almost equal proportions in the sample,  $n=89$ , 28.62% and  $n=86$ , 27.65% respectively. The sample mainly consisted of male respondents ( $n=200$ , 64.31%). Many participants lived in Dhaka for more than five years ( $n=199$ , 63.99%). In living conditions, most respondents lived with their families ( $n=182$ , 58.52%), whereas the remaining respondents ( $n=129$ , 41.48%) were living in a dormitory. This sample mainly consisted of respondents who originated from Dhaka ( $n=253$ , 81.35%).

**Table 1:** Demographic and Academic Profile of Participated Students.

Features	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
1. University Type		
<i>a. Public</i>	109	35.05
<i>b. Private</i>	202	64.95
2. University Year		
<i>a. 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year (1+2)</i>	125	40.19
<i>b. 3<sup>rd</sup> year</i>	77	24.76
<i>c. 4<sup>th</sup> year</i>	109	35.05
3. Major		
<i>a. Arts and Social Science (AS)</i>	89	28.62
<i>b. Business Administration and Economics (BAE)</i>	86	27.65
<i>c. Science and Engineering (SE)</i>	136	43.73
3. Gender		
<i>a. Male (M)</i>	200	64.31
<i>b. Female (F)</i>	111	35.69
4. Living in Dhaka		
<i>a. 1-5 years</i>	112	36.01
<i>b. More than 5 years (&gt;5)</i>	199	63.99
5. Living Condition		0.00
<i>a. Dormitory (DM)</i>	129	41.48
<i>b. With Family (WF)</i>	182	58.52
6. Origin		
<i>a. In-Dhaka (DH)</i>	58	18.65
<i>b. Out-Dhaka (O-DH)</i>	253	81.35

### ***Hazard Experiences and Priority***

This study took into account fire, earthquake, and dengue as potential hazards for Dhaka city students. Most respondents had experienced earthquakes ( $n=135$ , 43.41%), where dengue placed 2<sup>nd</sup> most experienced hazards in the study. Some respondents reported multi-hazard experiences (fire and earthquake, fire and dengue or earthquake and dengue), even all these three hazards together ( $n=23$ , 7.39%). In case of hazard priority based on impact, respondents ranked fire as 1<sup>st</sup> ( $n=118$ , 37.94%), followed by earthquake ( $n=109$ , 35.05%) and lastly, dengue ( $n=84$ , 27.00%). Respondents with the experience of only fire incidents ( $n=42$  total,  $n=30$ , 71.42%) treated fire as the most devastating hazard, where less than 50% of the only earthquake and only dengue experienced respondents treated earthquake and dengue as the most destructive hazard respectively.

### ***Individual Disaster Preparedness and Safety***

This section has considered the association between the respondents' demographic and academic profile with their responses to different questions. Associations between hazard experiences and *disaster awareness, basic mitigation measures against fire and earthquake at their living place, first aid kit at home and knowing the national emergency number* were also analyzed. However, no statistically significant differences were found for the associations by hazard experiences. Before the association results, total responses ( $n=311$ ) from the respondents were also compared. The majority of the respondents were observed with fire, earthquake and dengue awareness ( $n=228$ , 73.31%), recognized home member's awareness ( $n=179$ , 57.56%), first aid kit at home ( $n=173$ , 55.62%) and knew national emergency number ( $n=292$ , 93.89%). However, there were also respondents identified with inadequate basic mitigation measures ( $n=86$ , 27.65%) at their living place against fire and earthquake, knowing volunteer group working for disaster preparedness ( $n=81$ , 26.04%), earthquake and fire drills around their living area ( $n=45$ , 14.47%) and support from government and non-government organizations from dengue outbreak ( $n=32$ , 10.29%). In the case of the *safety of their living place against fire and earthquake*, the majority of respondents reported their living places moderately safe ( $n=137$ , 44.05%) and followed by unsafe ( $n=64$ , 20.58%) and very unsafe ( $n=53$ , 17.04%). Only ( $n=43$ ) 13.83% of respondents reported their living places are safe.

***Individual disaster preparedness by demographic and academic profile.*** Table 2 presents the association of demographic and academic profile with the responses received from the sample. Significant differences were observed between university types for *basic mitigation measures at living places* ( $\chi^2/df=11.28/1$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), with the majority of respondents from private university (Private=34.16% vs. Public=15.60%); similar results for *first aid kit at home* ( $\chi^2/df=12.80/2$ ,  $p<0.05$ ; Private= 61.88% vs. Public= 44.04%); where majority of respondents from public university (Public= 33.03% vs. Private= 22.28%) were observed in case of *knowing volunteer group working in emergency situations* ( $\chi^2/df=6.77/2$ ,  $p<0.05$ ).

In the case of the university year, significant differences were identified for the *first aid kit at home* ( $\chi^2/df=15.98/4$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), with more 3<sup>rd</sup>-year students (3<sup>rd</sup>=63.64% vs 1<sup>st</sup>+2<sup>nd</sup>=56.80% and 4<sup>th</sup>=48.62%). Significant results were observed across major for *basic mitigation measures at living places* ( $\chi^2/df=8.55/2$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), with the high proportion of respondents from Science and Engineering (SE=36.03% vs BAE=22.09% and AS=20.22%). For *first aid kit at home* ( $\chi^2/df=17.50/4$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), Business Administration and Economics students (BAE=63.95% vs SE=59.56% and AS=41.57%) were observed highest proportion; where Arts and Social Science students (AS=39.33% vs BAE=22.09% and SE=19.85%) was for *knowing volunteer groups working in emergencies* ( $\chi^2/df=12.10/4$ ,  $p<0.05$ ).

Female respondents reported more *basic mitigation measures at living places* ( $\chi^2/df=4.26/1$ ,  $p<0.05$ ; F=35.14% vs. M=23.50%), *first aid kit at home* ( $\chi^2/df=17.42/2$ ,  $p<0.05$ ; F=70.27% vs. M=47.50%) than their counterpart male respondents, identified with the integration of the *volunteer groups working in emergency situations* ( $\chi^2/df=10.92/2$ ,  $p<0.05$ ; M=32.00% vs. F=15.32%).

Respondents with the more living period in Dhaka were observed high proportion in *disaster awareness* ( $\chi^2/df=9.40/2$ ,  $p<0.05$ ; >5year=77.89% vs. 1-5year=65.18%); *first aid kit at home* ( $\chi^2/df=31.39/2$ ,  $p<0.05$ ; >5year=67.34% vs. 1-5year=62.90%). Respondents living with their family had more confidence ( $\chi^2/df=10.55/2$ ,  $p<0.05$ ; Family=63.74% vs. Dormitory=48.84%) on the awareness of their home partner; they were also observed with more *basic mitigation measures at living places* ( $\chi^2/df=8.26/1$ ,  $p<0.05$ ; Family=65.93% vs.



Dormitory=18.60%) and with more *first aid kit at home* ( $\chi^2/df=37.55/2$ ,  $p<0.05$ ; Family=69.23% vs. Dormitory=36.43%).

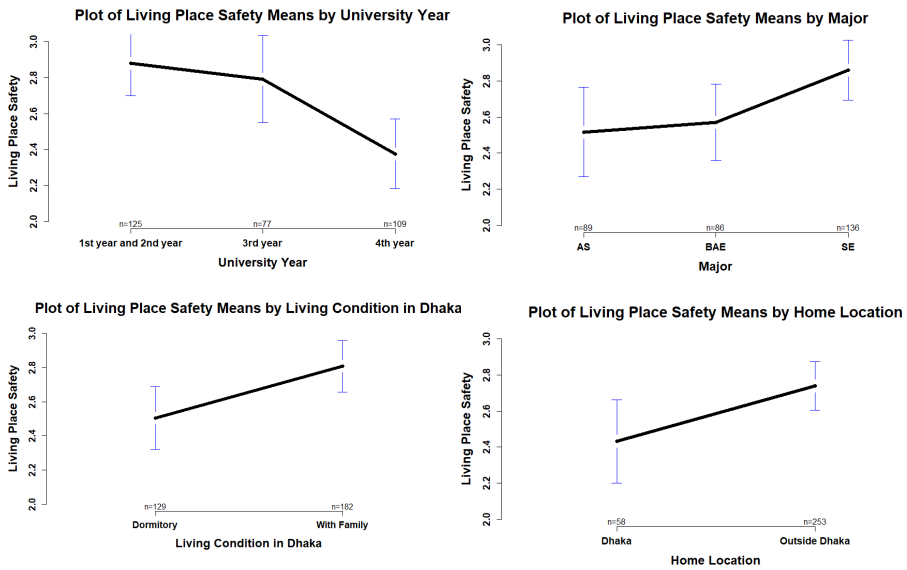
No statistically significant differences were found for *knowing national emergency number, earthquake and fire drills around living place and support from GO, NGO for dengue outbreak* by demographic and academic profile. In the respondent's origin, there were no statistically significant differences identified in this analysis.

***Living place safety by demographic and academic profile.*** Table 2's last column presents the Kruskal-Wallis or Mann Whitney U test results for the safety of respondents' living place scored by the respondents. At the same time, Figure 1 represents the mean comparison after the post hoc analyses. Overall significant differences [ $p<0.05$ ] were observed across university year, across major, between living conditions and between the students' origin. After post hoc analysis, it was identified that on average, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year students and also 3<sup>rd</sup> year students (mean=2.79) significantly rated higher (mean=2.88) than the 4<sup>th</sup> year students (mean=2.38); whereas Science and Engineering students significantly rated higher (mean=2.86) than the Arts and Social Science students (mean=2.52); students living with their family significantly rated higher (mean=2.81) than the dormitory students (mean=2.50) and the students originated from outside Dhaka significantly rated higher (mean=2.74) than the students with the origin in Dhaka (mean=2.43).

**Table 2:** Individual Disaster Preparedness and Safety by the Demographic and Academic Profile of Participated University Students.

Features →	Disaster Awareness (Earthquake, Fire and Dengue)		Recognizing home members' awareness at living place		Basic mitigation measures at living place		First aid kit at home		Knowing the national emergency number		Earthquake and fire drills around the living place		Knowing volunteer groups working in emergencies		Support from GO, NGO for Dengue		Scoring Living Place's Safety							
	Questions ↑	Response (%)	Y	N	M	Y	N	Y	N	M	Y	N	M	Y	N	M								
University Type	Public	75.23	8.26	16.51	54.13	14.68	31.19	15.60	84.40	44.04	44.95	11.01	93.58	6.42	12.84	60.55	26.61	33.03	54.13	12.84	12.61	74.77	12.61	2.54±1.15
	Private	72.28	7.92	19.80	59.41	11.88	28.71	34.16	65.84	61.88	25.25	12.87	94.06	5.94	15.35	51.98	32.67	22.28	54.95	22.77	9.09	81.82	9.09	2.76±0.99
University Year	$\chi^2/df$	0.50/2		0.92/2		11.28/1		12.80/2		0.00/1		2.10/2		6.77/2		1.21/2		1.21/2		1.21/2		1.21/2		3.30/1
	<i>p</i>	0.77		0.63		<0.05		<0.05		1.00		0.35		<0.05		0.54		0.54		0.54		0.54		0.070
Major	1 <sup>st</sup>	72.80	7.20	20.00	59.20	8.80	32.00	28.00	72.00	56.80	24.80	18.40	93.60	6.40	14.40	51.20	34.40	22.40	56.80	20.80	9.60	80.00	10.40	2.88±1.02
	2 <sup>nd</sup>																							
	3 <sup>rd</sup>	70.13	12.99	16.88	59.74	16.88	23.38	31.17	68.83	63.64	27.27	9.09	90.91	9.09	16.88	57.14	25.97	27.27	48.05	24.68	14.29	70.13	15.58	2.79±1.07
	4 <sup>th</sup>	76.15	5.50	18.35	54.13	14.68	31.19	24.77	75.23	48.62	44.04	7.34	96.33	3.67	12.84	57.80	29.36	29.36	56.88	13.76	8.26	83.49	8.26	2.38±1.02
Major	$\chi^2/df$	3.81/4		4.54/4		0.93/2		15.98/4		0.30		0.69		2.24/4		4.99/4		4.99/4		5.02/4		5.02/4		14.23/2
	<i>p</i>	0.43		0.34		0.63		<0.05		0.30		0.69		0.69		0.28		0.28		0.28		0.28		<0.05
Major	AS	71.91	7.87	20.22	59.55	12.36	28.09	20.22	79.78	41.57	47.19	11.24	97.75	2.25	14.61	58.43	26.97	39.33	47.19	13.48	15.73	75.28	8.99	2.52±0.18
	BAE	75.58	10.47	13.95	56.98	15.12	27.91	22.09	77.91	65.95	29.07	6.98	89.53	10.48	11.63	59.30	29.07	22.09	55.81	22.09	4.65	83.72	11.63	2.57±0.99
	SE	72.79	6.62	20.59	56.62	11.76	31.62	36.03	63.97	59.56	24.26	16.18	94.12	5.88	16.18	50.00	33.82	19.85	58.82	21.32	10.29	77.94	11.76	2.86±0.98
	$\chi^2/df$	2.47/4		0.91/4		8.55/2		17.50/4		5.17/2		2.76/4		12.10/4		6.06/4		6.06/4		6.06/4		6.06/4		7.75/2
Major	<i>p</i>	0.65		0.92		<0.05		<0.05		0.07		0.59		<0.05		<0.05		<0.05		<0.05		0.19		<0.05

Features	Questions		Disaster Awareness (Earthquake, Fire, and Dengue)		Recognizing home members' awareness at living place		Basic mitigation measures at living place		First aid kit at home		Knowing the national emergency number		Earthquake and fire drills around the living place		Knowing volunteer groups working in emergencies		Support from GO, NGO for Dengue		Scoring Living Place's Safety						
	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Mean±SD						
Response (%)	M	73.50	8.00	18.50	59.50	12.00	28.50	23.50	76.50	47.50	40.00	12.50	4.00	96.0	24.35	51.30	24.35	32.00	51.50	16.50	9.50	79.00	11.50	2.69±1.03	
	F	72.97	8.11	18.92	54.05	14.41	31.53	35.14	64.86	70.27	18.02	11.71	90.09	9.91	17.12	47.75	35.14	15.32	60.36	24.32	11.71	78.38	9.91	2.66±1.09	
Gender	$\chi^2/df$				0.91/2			4.26/1		17.42/2			3.38/1		3.67/2			10.92/2			0.51/2				
	p	0.99			0.63			<0.05		<0.05			0.06		0.16			<0.05			0.77				0.84
Period in Dhaka	1-5year	65.18	7.14	27.68	56.25	9.82	33.93	21.43	78.57	62.90	8.06	29.03	95.54	4.46	11.61	55.36	33.04	33.04	48.21	18.75	13.39	78.57	11.61	2.62±1.07	
	>5year	77.89	8.54	13.57	58.29	14.57	27.14	31.16	68.84	67.34	22.61	10.05	92.96	7.04	25.78	48.44	25.78	22.11	58.29	19.60	12.08	75.85	25.78	2.71±1.04	
Period in Dhaka	$\chi^2/df$				2.43/2			2.92/1		31.39/2			0.44/1		1.35/2			4.64/2			2.98/2				
	p	<0.05			0.30			0.08		<0.05			0.51		0.51			0.09			0.22				0.49
Living Condition	Dorm.	68.99	9.30	21.71	48.84	11.63	39.53	18.60	81.40	36.43	50.39	13.18	96.12	3.88	10.85	51.94	37.21	31.01	53.49	15.50	10.85	81.40	7.75	2.50±1.06	
	Famil	76.37	7.14	16.48	63.74	13.74	22.53	65.93	34.07	69.23	19.23	11.54	92.31	7.69	17.03	57.14	25.82	22.53	55.49	21.98	9.89	76.92	13.17	2.81±1.03	
Living Condition	$\chi^2/df$				10.55/2			8.26/1		37.55/2			1.31/1		5.57/2			3.78/2			2.98/2				6.13/1
	p	0.35			<0.05			<0.05		<0.05			0.25		0.06			0.15			0.22				<0.05
Origin	In-DH	75.86	10.34	13.79	60.34	15.52	24.14	25.86	74.14	60.34	24.14	15.52	93.10	6.90	13.79	55.17	31.03	24.14	50.00	25.86	6.90	84.48	8.62	2.43±0.88	
	O-DH	42.02	15.97	42.02	56.92	12.25	30.83	71.94	28.06	20.14	59.72	20.14	5.93	94.07	14.62	54.94	30.43	26.48	55.73	17.79	11.07	77.47	11.46	2.74±1.08	
Origin	$\chi^2/df$				1.20/2			0.03/1		2.34/2					0.03/2			1.98/2			1.44/2				4.26/1
	p	0.49			0.55			0.86		0.31			0.76		0.98			0.37			0.49				<0.05



**Figure 1:** Interval Plot of Living Place Safety (95% Confidence Interval).

**Crisis management.** Respondent's crisis management concept was also evaluated through simple questions, as "What will they do in crisis moment?" For this study, crisis moment has been defined as fire incidents, earthquake strike and dengue outbreak. Crisis management consisted of two situations: first response when hazard just strike near the respondent, and then the responses after the strike. In dengue, they were required to select activities to reduce the outbreak with open-ended questions.

People usually rush and forget about others and do not keep calm during any sudden hazard like fire and earthquake. For the 1<sup>st</sup> response to fire incidents, students had four options: (a) Keep calm, look for the source and act according to it, (b) Look for a safe place and take everyone with you, (c) Take your important documents and go to a safe place, (d) Mask yourself, cover with a blanket and do the task above. In case of fire incidents, victims usually experience breathing problems. 28.94% respondents selected option (d), where majority selections (35.05%) were observed for option (b). Then in the follow up particular question (if the fire incident strikes the respondent's building) had four options to select one: (a) If it is at the upper floor, then go down and leave, (b) If it is at the floor below then go up to the rooftop if you have access, (c) Find a place where there is a window or balcony and mask your face and remove all the combustible materials away from you and turn off everything,

(d) If it is at the floor below then go up to the rooftop, but you have no access. 48.23% were selection for (c), and then (a) (33.44%). Many respondents suggested contacting the national emergency number during the incident. For the sudden earthquake strike, they had five options to select: (a) Run out of the building, (b) Turn off everything and take shelter near the pillars and no glass, (c) If in a vehicle, then stop and turn off the vehicle and get out take shelter in an open space, (d) a+b, (e) b+c. Majority (44.37%) selected option (e) and then (d) (27.33%). Then, the two options were for the movement when an earthquake strikes the respondent's building: (a) Rush out of the building, (b) Slowly come out of the building. Majority selected option (b). The crowd is a common significant problem after any crisis moment in Bangladesh. Many people gather just to observe the crisis creating an obstacle for smooth search and rescue activities. Respondents also had some options to select for crowd management during crisis moment: (a) Take some people with you and try to clear, (b) Take help of police and clear the crowd, (c) Go to a place like a mosque and announce to move from the place. Majority respondents (55.63%) were for option (b) and then (a) (31.19%). Students had options to select to reduce dengue outbreaks: (a) Clean the surrounding, (b) Not to store water, (c) Use any mosquito killer. Majority selected option a (61.10%). However, many respondents pointed out that they have no clear notion and appropriate support to reduce dengue outbreaks.

## Discussions

Whether climate-related, geophysical, or biological, disaster can trigger severe disruption in people's regular lives. Between 1998 to 2017, disasters caused 1.3 million to lose their lives and 4.4 billion people were left with disabilities in different aspects (Wallemacq, 2018). US\$ 2.9 trillion direct economic losses were reported due to the disasters in this same period (McGlade et al., 2019; Wallemacq, 2018); however, the actual losses from disasters could be more. The recent COVID-19 pandemic has been predicted to cause even more human and economic losses (*COVID-19*, 2020). Rapid unplanned and risk-blinded urbanization has already placed people in a state of vulnerability than ever before (Wallemacq, 2018). The majority of the world's cities have been struggling with the new and existing intensified urban disasters.

The damages, losses, and impacts of disasters can be reduced through proper disaster management with the continuous four phases cycle: mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery (Altay & Green III, 2006; Patrisina et al.,

2018). United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) has stressed the urgency of disaster preparedness in priority 4 of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR): 2015-2030 (U.N.I.S.D.R., 2015). As previously defined, disaster preparedness is the knowledge and capacity of organizations, communities and individuals, effectively respond to hazard events and conditions (Reduction, 2009). Effective disaster preparedness can save lives and reduce disaster sufferings (Han et al., 2017; Lindell & Perry, 2000; Rokkas et al., 2014; Tan et al., 2017). However, it can be succeeded by improving disaster coping skills by considering the general public and university students (Tan et al., 2017; Yeager et al., 2010).

Intensive researches have been conducted to understand individual, and household preparedness (Basolo et al., 2009; Kim & Kang, 2010; Nguyen et al., 2006; Nojang & Jensen, 2020; Ronan et al., 2012; Spittal et al., 2008) and there are some models to evaluate disaster preparedness. Individual preparedness can be described "as a state of readiness for effective response and holistic recovery to hazard events" (Jensen, 2014; Nojang & Jensen, 2020). Jensen, 2014 proposed a model to determine individual preparedness through understanding individual's knowledge of hazard risk, available resources, steps taken to minimize property loss, social integration, communication and ability to move away from danger (Jensen, 2014; Nojang & Jensen, 2020).

This study evaluates the individual disaster preparedness and safety among university students of Dhaka city, Bangladesh. Many of these university students live in disaster risk environment (Akram, 2019; Chowdhury, 2017; Islam et al., 2016; Shirin et al., 2019; Steckler et al., 2016), where few disaster preparedness efforts are available. The evaluation was based on the dimensions adapted and simplified from the model proposed by Jensen, 2014 (Jensen, 2014) for assessing individual university students' disaster preparedness level by analyzing their disaster experiences, disaster awareness and understanding on the awareness of home partner; essential resources available to minimize the human and property losses; communication for the emergency (telecommunication), integration with the volunteer group, disaster preparedness exercises and relevant organizations; and the concept of crisis management to move away from the disaster. It also reveals the individual university students' perception of safety levels.

This study reveals that most respondents had earthquake experiences; however, they ranked fire incidents as the most menacing ones. Dhaka city is at high risk of an earthquake (Chowdhury, 2017; Islam et al., 2016; Paul & Bhuiyan, 2010; Steckler et al., 2016). However, this urban community is yet to experience

major earthquakes; even a few minor earthquakes can cover a large community compared to the fire incidents. On the contrary, in recent years, fire has caused massive casualties in this city (B.F.S.C.D., 2020). According to Bangladesh Fire Service and Civil Defence (B.F.S.C.D., 2020), in 2019 alone, the majority of the fire incidents happened in housing facilities of the Dhaka division (2,089 out of 3,136). After the earthquake, dengue placed the second most experienced hazard in the study. In 2019, Dhaka city had a severe dengue outbreak with the rapid epidemic characteristic (Akram, 2019; Hsan et al., 2019; Shirin et al., 2019), outspread over the city dwellers.

This study explains the variability of individual university students' disaster preparedness and safety, and then it unfolds the variability based on the demographic and academic profile. Relevant research (Gillani et al., 2020; Tan et al., 2017; Tanner & Doberstein, 2015) has also focused on the variability of the results by demographic and academic profile. The majority of the respondents reported that they had essential disaster awareness, and they knew the national emergency number 999. The national emergency number was officially initiated on December 12, 2017, by the Bangladesh Government's ICT Division (*Emergency Service 999 Jammed with Fake Calls*, 2019). This "toll-free" service assists in any disaster and emergency; though there were some difficulties, it is regarded as a successful project (*Emergency Service 999 Jammed with Fake Calls*, 2019). Bangladesh Government has launched more hotline numbers for COVID-19 assistance (*Coronavirus Outbreak in Bangladesh: IEDCR Adds More Hotline Numbers*, n.d.). The high proportion of disaster awareness was not only for the hazard experiences; university students are also intellectual and creative; they might have some disaster management relevant courses (Tan et al., 2017). However, the current study did not cover the courses in their university curricula. A large part of the study respondents was observed a lack of first aid at home, inadequate basic mitigation measures at their housing facilities, poor integration of volunteer group and other relevant organizations, very little participation, or identification of any earthquake and fire drills around their living places. These indicate the dismal level of individual disaster preparedness among university students of Dhaka city. The majority of respondents perceived their living area moderately safe, where a large part identified their place as being below a minimum safe level. These results align with the existing literature (Chowdhury, 2017; *Dhaka at Risk of Mega Quake | The Daily Star*, n.d.; *Dhaka Remains the World's Most Densely Populated City*, 2018; *Fire at Daffodil Polytechnic Institute Doused | Dhaka Tribune*, n.d.; H. & Islam, 2015; Shirin et al., 2019) identifying Dhaka city as one of the high disaster risk areas. These results can help the government,

private, social, and many other relevant organizations identify the gap in their existing disaster preparedness efforts. All of the respondents had experiences of fire, earthquake or dengue or multi-hazards. For this, the associations of individual disaster preparedness by hazard experiences are beyond this study's scope, and it can be the opportunity for further research. However, hazard experiences could make the people incline to follow disaster management activities.

Individual disaster preparedness results by demographic and academic profile have identified the respondents from private universities possessed more basic resources available at their home than public university students. It has been linked with the financial state of the students. In disaster management, the financial state is one of the vital factors to determine the preparedness level. In Bangladesh, students from only financially stable family can afford the unrestrainedly high tuition fees of private universities (Al Helal, 2012). Most private university students live with their family or housing facilities than the low tuition fee payee government-funded public university students. However, public university students have more exposure to attending different organizational programs for employment opportunity; it could be one reason why public university students are more connected with volunteer groups than their counterpart. 3<sup>rd</sup> year, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>-year students have reported first aid kit available in their home than the fourth and finally 4<sup>th</sup>-year students at their home, supporting previous research (Tan et al., 2017; Tanner & Doberstein, 2015). Fresher university students typically tend to be more serious about health and safety than mature final year students. Last year, students tended to be more confident in their knowledge and existing facilities than the essential first aid resources (Tanner & Doberstein, 2015). They also marked their living place safety better than the final year students.

Science and Engineering students generally have courses understanding essential mitigation equipment (*fire extinguisher, signs and lights, fire hose, helmet, axe, whistle, portable radio, etc.*) where the Arts and Social Science students require more social integration for their study. Science and Engineering students also reported their acquired place to be safer than the Arts and Social Science students.

In Bangladeshi society and culture, female is more self and home-oriented group than their male counterpart. Female students are generally concerned about the house's safety, which requires more mitigation measures and first aid at home. Male students are usually out goer and tend to connect with more groups of the organization.



Respondents with more stay in Dhaka city have reported better disaster awareness and first aid kit at home. This result supports the common sense of having more adaption in the area based on the experience, time and environment. Respondents lived with their family were also found to be more prepared than the dormitory residents due to the better understanding and confidence on their family member, more available basic mitigation measures and first aid at their housing facilities. This result supports the previous research concentrating on dormitory students only regarding their less preparedness level (Tanner & Doberstein, 2015). Large parts of students living in dormitories reported unclear (Maybe) about their roommate's disaster awareness. Students living in Dhaka with their family also addressed their living places as safer than the dormitory students. Dhaka city has an enormous number of poor quality residence for students that fail to comply with a minimal standard of living and thus creating a risky living environment; even some university dormitories have not been maintained basic disaster mitigation measures (*Vulnerable Halls Pose Threat to DU Resident Students / The Daily Star*, 2020). Many students with their family migrated to Dhaka from coastal and rural areas, where they might not have had safer housing facilities with better provisions in the first place. This could be one reason behind the high scoring of safe living among the respondents who originated from outside Dhaka.

The concept of movement from danger was also a part of evaluating individual disaster preparedness (Jensen, 2014; Nojang & Jensen, 2020). This study had identified and selected some arguments for the university students based on practical crisis moment scenario in Dhaka city, such as crowd management problem during FR tower fire tragedy (*FR Tower Fire*, 2019), getting trapped in the building and breathing problem during fire incidents (*ADPC*, 2020; Hasan et al., 2017). The study has identified students' moderately good understanding of crisis management and the concept of movement from danger. However, many of the students were identified with the lack of basic idea of crisis management. In case of any fire incidents, many tragedies were recalled because of suffocation. People need to mask first to be in sense and active. They also need to locate a place with proper oxygen transmission. In case of fire and earthquake, people should not be rush out of the building. People can be trampled and died during rush out (Tazreen & Sabet, 2013). People require being calm and avoid the rush out from the building. Crowd management becomes a serious issue after any crisis in Bangladesh (*FR Tower Fire*, 2019); people should have the basic concept of crowd management. Dengue is a vector-borne disease spread out by the *Aedes*

mosquito (Mutsuddy et al., 2019). Mosquito breeding sources must be demolished to prevent this breakout. The majority of students confirmed their inadequate understanding of preparedness for the dengue outbreak.

This study addresses the university undergraduate students of Dhaka city living in unsafe conditions with minimal or non-existent disaster preparedness efforts. Most individual students are aware of disaster in dearth of essential tangible and intangible resources for disaster preparedness; minimization of loss is impossible without these crucial resources. Social integration is identified rarely in this study where student can get support from the volunteer group. For increasing the community's disaster preparedness, there is a need to revise whether conducting preparation exercises without appropriate coverage of all group, even with the supervision of trained personnel or expert, is effective or not. Knowing only the national emergency number for this large group of students is not enough to be prepared. The concept of crisis management requires insightful study based on the practical scenario.

This study had some limitations which should be considered. It considered a self-reported internet-based survey which might have biases. It was conducted considering the Bangladeshi society, culture and environment, which may not be similar in other countries. It followed the simple evaluation method with convenience and snowball sampling technique because of limited time and lack of funding. All the university students were difficult to cover. The sample size was not large enough to reflect the whole population. However, this study has considered an overlooked group of university students particularly, in Dhaka city. It analyzed all possible understanding to evaluate the individual university student's disaster preparedness and safety in Dhaka city, helping develop a disaster preparedness plan. It also addresses the dire requirement of collaboration between the university and the local government, private and social organizations to be prepared well.

## **Conclusion**

Disaster can affect any group of people and can cause severe casualties. The university-level students should be active in disaster preparedness efforts to reduce the impact, damage and loss from disasters. However, they have often been overlooked, which has placed them in Disaster that can affect any group of people and cause severe casualties. The university-level students should be active in disaster preparedness efforts to reduce the impact, damage and loss from disasters. However, they have often been overlooked, which has placed

them in a more high-risk environment with insufficient capacity to support and make them prepared. However, university students living with their families and more than five years in Bangladesh's capital have responded positively to an understanding of disaster and its impacts and the use of available resources to combat any sudden or slow-onset disaster.

On the contrary, enormous numbers of university students are living in poor condition without minimum housing facilities. Relevant organizations, both government and non-government, need to concentrate on these large vulnerable groups with untapped potential to align and comply with a comprehensive disaster management plan. Disaster preparedness efforts cannot be successful if all people's participation is not ensured.

Bangladesh Government has already mainstreamed disaster management at the tertiary education level, and university students are encouraged to have training and education in disaster management. University authorities can also play a pivotal role by ensuring that their employees and faculties are trained and participating in annual disaster preparedness exercises. A university disaster training program needs to be well planned, regularly implemented and updated, and evaluated to ensure that the university community has developed their preparedness and resiliency to deal with the disaster.

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**Colonial Encounter, Diaspora, and the Third Space: A Comparative Study  
on *The Glass Palace* and *Brick Lane***

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**Abstract**

*Amitav Ghosh's The Glass Palace and Monica Ali's Brick Lane focus mostly on colonial oppression and hypocrisy, the history of the colonised, displacement, and the diaspora. A good number of works have highlighted on the aforementioned areas. However, there is hardly any work which compares and explores these two novels using the 'Third Space' as conceptual framework in order to understand a decolonial motive implied by the novelists. The 21<sup>st</sup> century postmodern era, marked by its mass migration and globalisation, still echoes the unequal correlation between First World and Third World that is, of hegemony and subalterns establishing cultural supremacy of colonial regime in a new pattern. Pondering these situations, postcolonial critics and authors must redefine their stance to promote decolonisation that would erode this essential binarism of cultures. Hence, this study discusses the way 'Third Space' can be a tool for the characters to find their cultural identities. The concept of 'Third Space' by Homi K. Bhabha, used as a form of resistance against colonial binary by the Indian subcontinent's writers and which would energise the epistemological decolonisation, has been examined in order to subvert the paradigm of Eurocentric world. This paper illustrates Amitav Ghosh's apt process of decolonisation that is centred around his championing of cosmopolitan attitude towards the world while showcasing how Ali falters to appropriate the 'third space' for transnationalism unregulated by the Eurocentric cultural supremacy.*

**Keywords:** Third Space, decolonisation, binarism, resistance, hybridity, mimicry

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In human history, three things such as money, empire and religion have worked remarkably for a unitary vision of the planet albeit from different perspectives, and therefore merchants, conquerors and prophets tend to foresee a singularity of humankind under one market, one empire and a single God (Harrari, 2011). The practice and processes of building an empire are often intertwined, and work as a unit navigating all corners of place and space under different imperial or colonial banners. Nayar (2005) states that colonialism is an exercise of imperialism, which functions as “an encounter between cultures, languages, people and systems of thought” (p. 186). Historically colonialism caused dislocation and displacement of cultures, peoples, or a community to another cultural or geographical locations. Thus, a diaspora culture emerged because of dislocation, migration (forced/ voluntary), immigration and exile. In the case of Indian sub-continent, colonialism and globalization have raised the question of cultural identity and politics in social and literary discourse. Thus, after 1947, a bulk of South Asian writers namely Anita Desai, Meena Alexander, Rohinton Mistry, Hanif Kureishi, Amitav Ghosh, Arundhati Roy, Monica Ali, Kiran Desai emerged from the former colonies who carry a strong political awareness of the postcolonial situation of a decolonised country at the backdrop of colonial infiltration, migration, and globalization. Thus, in their works, they have portrayed the question of identity, and the dynamics of cultural identity to promote an anti-essentialist and anti-colonial perspective in order to “advance human freedom and knowledge” (Said, 1994, p. 17). Among the literary works, Amitav Ghosh’s *The Glass Palace* (2000) and Monica Ali’s *Brick Lane* (2003) have been chosen for this study for some reasons. First both these contemporary novels are representative texts that offer strong ideas about the politics of identity in a formerly colonial now decolonized and globalized world. Second, the key aspect that intersects both novels is their exploration of the hybrid nature of the postcolonial world. It appears that both Ghosh and Ali acknowledge the notion of the untenability of culture’s purity –the idea that it is physically impossible to recover a “pure” pre-colonial culture and erode the stains of colonialism (Tiffin, 1987) because cultural identity itself is always inherently hybrid and has been created in space that negotiates between different antagonistic cultures. Finally, both texts have focused on the greater Indian subcontinent with similar historical colonial legacy and its engagement time; past and present. Amitav Ghosh has investigated the time in colonial past while Monica Ali has focused on contemporary time in a globalized world. Hence the analysis of both novels together can provide the reader with a complete view of engagement with time, culture and history for the peoples who live in or belong to greater Indian subcontinent. Therefore, this paper aims

at exploring the cultural hybridity reflected in two selected novels, one set in a formerly colonized and the other in globalized society, in light of Homi K. Bhabha's Third Space, which, does not attempt to "trace two original moments from which the third emerges, rather hybridity to me is the third space which enables other positions to emerge (Rutherford, 1990, p. 211)". The study also relates third space with decolonial discourse in the context of postcolonial perspective.

## **Background**

British colonialism brought a huge alteration into the history of south-Asian people. It is a violent contact between two different types of civilizations, and an encounter between communities, cultures, languages, and histories. This colonial regime has continued to superimpose a set of new standards of life and new ways of thought on the colonized people for almost 200 years. So, the relations with the colonial world have been a part of both cultural and historical realities of south Asian people. *The Glass Palace* (2000) by Amitav Ghosh and *Brick Lane* (2003) by Monica Ali seem to have been written on the articulation, engagement, and negotiation of the reality of this encounter between cultures and communities.

*The Glass Palace* (2000) by Amitav Ghosh is an attempt to trace the lost pre-colonial and colonial history of Burma and India under British colonial regime. The setting is primarily in Burma, India and Malaya. The novel retells history through a family fiction that goes over three generations including diverse characters like the Burmese Royal Family, Rajkumar, Saya John, Dolly, Uma, Dinu, Arjun, Alison, Ilongo and many more to comprise the pre-colonial, colonial and postcolonial history of those regions. On the other hand, Monica Ali's *Brick Lane* (2003) is an exploration of life of a Bangladeshi immigrant, Nazneen living among Bangladeshi Community. The novel sets in Tower Hamlets, East London (in)famously known as Banglatown, that is poor, dilapidated and crammed with impoverished immigrants. The novel recounts Nazneen's and the other immigrants' journey of gaining self-definition and adaptation in the migrant community.

Both novels intersect in their themes related to ambivalence, identity crisis, mimicry, and hybridity at the backdrop of a postcolonial, multicultural, and globalized society. However, this paper will mainly focus on the identity formation in the Third Space along with its decolonial motive in relation to postcolonial and diasporic realities.

### **An Overview of the Third Space**

Third Space as a concept in the postcolonial studies was first introduced by Homi K Bhabha, a postcolonial and literary theorist, who challenged the social and political authority of cultural representation. Homi K Bhabha defined Third Space as a “cultural space... where the negotiation of incommensurable differences creates... the new transnational world” (Bhabha 1994, p. 218). This is the unknown territory where different cultures can mingle together to create an identity that opposes the binary essentialism of cultural identity propagated by the colonial discourse for endorsing “cultural mummification” and a “mummification of individual thinking” (Fanon, 1970, p. 44). It is the in-between region where the First Space of native identity can come to terms with the Second Space of imposed colonial identity to give way for a new cultural identity. Bhabha argues that culture is inevitably hybrid and cultural purity is a social construction. In an interview with Rutherford, Bhabha explains that, “all forms of culture are continually in a process of hybridity. And for me the importance of hybridity is not to be able to trace two original moments from the third emerges, rather hybridity to me is the ‘third space’ which enables other positions to emerge” (Rutherford, 1990, p.211). Thus ‘third space’ is defined as a notion against identity fixity and fetishisms of the confined, binary and essentialist perspective of cultural identity. Third Space is an active and metaphorical space without a fixed location and is produced in and through discursive conditions. To Bhabha (1994), Third Space is “interruptive, interrogative, and enunciative in creating new signs of identity, and innovative sites of collaboration and contestations” (p.2). The Third Space has its close affinity with the ambivalent state of colonial identity that allowed the birth of mimicry. Mimicry is defined as “the desire for a reformed, recognisable Other, as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite... the discourse of mimicry is constructed around ambivalence” (Bhabha, 1994, p. 86). The colonial subjects, programmed to view the colonisers and their culture as superior, tend to replicate the colonisers. This situation is termed as mimicry which in turn clearly illustrates the authority of colonial dominance. However, this process is never wholly assimilating and Bhabha suggests mimicry to be a reproduction which is almost but not the same due to the ambivalent nature of perception. The mimic men of Naipaul’s *The Mimic Men* (1967) desire to be accepted by the colonisers’ culture and get ablution from the shame of their own inferior, primitive, barbaric culture. However, as Fanon (1952) suggested and was depicted in *The Mimic Men* (Naipaul, 1967),

the native can never truly be like their white masters, and this leads to a mockery of the colonised people. Yet mimicry also turns out to be challenging, disruptive and menacing to the dominant and fixed notion of colonial cultural authority. Thus, it can produce a ‘double vision’ of cultural identity which is old and new at the same time.

Therefore, the contact happening for colonization or globalization between the colonisers’ culture and the natives’ culture where two oppositional forces collide gives way to a transcultural form resulting in hybridity – crossbreeding of the two cultures. Bhabha theorised hybridity as a positive force where “the split-space of enunciation may open the way to conceptualising an international culture, based not on the exoticism or multiculturalism of the diversity of cultures, but on the inscription and articulation of culture’s hybridity” (Bhabha 1988, p. 209). It has come to be recognised as a “productive, exciting and positive force” promoting diversity (Tyson, 2006, p.422) to put an end of cultural binarism. Hybridity gives rise to transcultural and transnational identities to reject the fixed stereotypical notion of identity and culture. This hybridity creates Third Space and for Bhabha hybridity is the Third Space where an international culture can originate.

### **Literature Review**

Ghosh’s *The Glass Palace* and Ali’s *Brick Lane* being critically acclaimed postcolonial literature provide a range of postcolonial studies encompassing different issues. The focus of the existing works on these two novels confines their discussions on the specific topics of hybridity, displacement, migration, and the diaspora.

Among different postcolonial topics, the disintegrating state of the postcolonial world due to colonial contact have occupied the discussions regarding *The Glass Palace*. To reinforce this hybrid nature of nations, race and culture in the present era, Bhatt (2015) argues in “Hybridity of Race and Culture in Amitav Ghosh’s *The Glass Palace*” that colonial regime, through dislocation, destroys people’s identity and forces them into forming an “amalgamated identity” where both language and culture are fragmented and lost, making a return to the pure precolonial past that much impossible. The concept of diasporic nationalism and cultural displacement have been elucidated by Khurajam and Acharjee in their “Nation in Question in Amitav Ghosh’s *The Glass Palace*” (2013) through studying different characters of *The Glass Palace* who have experienced dislocation, hybridity, and mimicry.

Moreover, Ghosh's deconstructed "concept of 'nation'... as a static one in this postmodern world" (2013, p. 2) has been called to question in the article.

"Imaginary Pasts: Colonisation, Migration and Loss in J.G. Farrell's *The Singapore Grip* and in Amitav Ghosh's *The Glass Palace*" (2009) by Prusse outlined the ambivalence of the natives as a result of mass migration – standing on the edge of more than one culture and belonging to none, being "conquered and exploited" (2009, p. 14) by the colonisers. This "ambivalent" nature of the colonial subjects has been further studied by Rahaman in "Shifting Places, Shifting Identities: A Postcolonial Study of *The Glass Palace*" (2016). He indicated at Ghosh's deliberate deconstruction of the binary between the colonised and coloniser and the fragile state of that dichotomy as various characters in the novel assume different roles with a simultaneous shift in the power structure. The metanarrative of the coloniser and the colonised was broken by Ghosh in the character of Rajkumar Raha as Raha mimics the whites and emerges as "a collaborator with the colonizers" (2016, p. 543).

Migration and globalisation encompass the central debates of *Brick Lane*. For instance, the volatile instability of identity due to migration have been addressed in Alam's "Globalization, Women, Migration, and Nation: Analysing Linguistic and Cultural Identity in Monica Ali's *Brick Lane*" (2018). Identity conflicts because of "ideological differences and issues of cultural adaptation, assimilation and acculturation in the global metropolis space" (Alam, 2018, p. 145) in reference to the novel has been discussed with attention to Nazneen comparing her journey of discovery and reorganising of new identity in the Third Space with other characters i.e. Chanu and Shahana. "Chanu's Thwarted Dreams and Dislocation in *Brick Lane* by Monica Ali" (2013) by Töngür traces the painstaking journey of Chanu as a first-generation immigrant through displacement, isolation, unsuccessful attempts, and disillusionment of assimilating in the hybridised culture of London. On the other hand, Ling and Shun-sheng in their "On Cultural Identity in *Brick Lane* from the Perspective of Postcolonialism" (2018) argued that Bhabha's theory of Third Space can help to construct a cultural identity creating the migrants' spiritual home under the tensions of cultural hegemony in the age of globalisation.

"Notions of Hybrid Identities: A Postcolonial Insight into Diasporic Features in *Brick Lane* and *An American Brat*" (2017) by Rehman and Awan investigates the complexities of assimilating into a new society through mimicry and the ambivalent attitude of the protagonists Nazneen in *Brick Lane* and Feroza in *An American Brat*. "Transitional Identities and the Unhomed

Space in Monica Ali's *Brick Lane* and Tishani Doshi's *The Pleasure Seekers*" (2012) by Chattopadhyay and Shrivastava explicates the formation of identity and relocation within the Third Space using the processes of 'unhoming'. They claimed that the fixed notion of identity is problematic to shape a transnational identity in a new culture and thus impedes assimilation. The Third Space is significant in "subjecting identities to the conditions of hybridisations, fixations or states of constant transit" allowing the characters to join the multicultural era of globalisation (Chattopadhyay and Shrivastava, 2012, p. 113).

Even though these works bring out important postcolonial arguments, the literature review reveals that the existing research on *The Glass Palace* and *Brick Lane* hardly focus on the authors' celebration of Bhabha's Third Space with its connection to the process of decolonisation. Also, they do not address a comparative analysis of both novels. Besides, the existing works on the Third Space are not concerned with its contribution to subvert the binary notions of identity and its lean towards diversification of identity to form a transnational culture. Hence, there is a need for redefining the frame of the Third Space to match the process of decolonisation in the Indian subcontinent.

### **Third Space and *The Glass Palace***

Imperialism and colonialism are the most damaging and totalitarian enterprises that seek to take over the lives of the colonised in terms of economy, politics, culture, and psychology. The colonial regime had dislocated people who "were shipped to remote territories" as rickshaw pullers, coolies, plantation workers to bind them in inhumane servitude similar to slavery (Sharpe, 1989, p. 119). For the colonisers it mattered little whom the people were – from emperors to untouchables – none was able to escape from the clutches of the Empire. So far removed from their original native land, the concepts of home, language, and culture become obscure for these diasporic people. Encountering another culture, the diasporic community must change their norms, customs, culture into an amalgamated culture and the Third Space is that cultural home which allows these displaced, diasporic people to create their own place in the distant foreign land. However, there is always a chance of succumbing to the binary of either/or rejecting other cultures for native one. King Thebaw and Queen Supayalat are the representatives of the indomitable native culture who refused the growing invasion of Indianisation and Westernisation. Queen Supayalat is especially notable in this case who resists against the cross-cultural exchange that is set into motion due to colonial occupation to preserve the spirit of Mandalay.



Despite the Queen's incessant resistance, she is unsuccessful in stopping the inevitable cultural exchange that occurs in the Third Space. In the novel, the four Burmese Princesses, Dolly, Rajkumar, and Saya John represent both/and cultural identity where they simply embrace all and every culture they come into contact with. Ghosh has used the trope of clothes to draw the transition of hybridity in the growing Indianisation of Burmese Princesses as they were seen wearing the sari instead of their native clothes of htamein and aingyi, or the sari borrowing European petticoat and blouse to adopt modernisation (Ghosh, 2000, p. 77 & 105). A liminal state between Burmese and Indian culture, the clothes reveal the decay of Burmese hegemonic power. While the diasporic Burmese royal family want to retain their cultural purity, to adapt to their new home they must weigh the marginal Burmese culture against the dominant Indian culture. This new hybrid culture is produced in the experience of "traumatic and disruptive breach in their history" (Gandhi, 1998, p. 130) caused by the forced migration. Even though the Queen wanted to follow all the traditions and customs of Burma from performing shikho to wearing aingyi, she is powerless against the mutations. Colonialism's power to move corners of the earth goes to such an extent where home ceases to be home, native language becomes foreign, foreign land becomes "home" (Ghosh, 2000, p. 119, 310).

Rajkumar and Saya John are the core examples of adopting transnational hybrid identities that is ever-evolving and dynamic – taking bits from here and there much in the same fashion as the clothes of Burmese royal exiles. Ghosh brilliantly focused his attention on these characters development to showcase the positivistic force of hybridity. In the Third Space, orphans like Dolly, Rajkumar and Saya John can come out of the restricting shell of their lost and displaced native culture to forge a new identity that helps in their struggle to find a proper place in the world. One such indication given in the novel regarding the heterogenous identity that incorporates all is the introduction of Saya John – "His clothes were those of [a] European and he seemed to know Hindustani, and yet the cast of his face was that of neither a white man nor an Indian" (Ghosh, 2000, p. 8).

Similarly, Ghosh has depicted the rapid Westernisation of the Indian people through Arjun and Hardayal "Hardy" Singh who claimed themselves to be the "first modern Indian" (Ghosh, 2000, p. 279). They are thoroughly proud of their connections with the Europeans and their pseudo-European cultures through mimicry. The presumed new-world Indians exhibit Macaulay's "class of interpreters between [colonisers] and the millions whom [they] govern"

(Macaulay, 1835, p. 449). This “imported educational systems” (Buchanan, 1988, p 65) in its totality had separated the compatriots from the laymen of India. But their daydreams come to an end with a rude awakening during World War II. The modern education of which they boasted turned them against their masters’ – the hegemony – ideals and values.

While both the identity of the above-mentioned characters and the cultural space they occupy are in a transitional process to adopt a transnational, cosmopolitan identity and culture Uma Dey and Jaya are the characters who epitomised Ghosh’s resistance against colonial binary in a cosmopolitan space. Both of them travelled far and wide in home and abroad to trace their identity that is created following an international culture resisting the extremist nationalism that is characteristic of many postcolonial nations such as modern-day India, Myanmar, Pakistan, Afghanistan. Both Uma and Jaya are presented as citizens of the global village where people are successfully exploring the world, connecting with others, and tracing their lost history (Ghosh, 2000). Uma’s journey throughout Europe and United States of America finally helped her to come to an understanding between her native Indian culture and the forcefully imposed European culture imbuing her with an energy that would fuel her to have a nationalist mindset that is not chained only in Indian origin – the “struggle for independence” is ingrained with a “struggle for reform”. Decolonisation should be progressive that balances both pre-colonial and colonial identity to resist any form of binary that would lead to an extremist end.

The cultural home of Jaya that is interracial and hybrid is presented in her post-independence understanding of history and assimilating to that history. The inevitability of the Third Space is evident in Jaya but at the same time, she has a profound understanding of her rich history. That is exactly the reason for her tracing her own past through travelling first of which is indicated in her comment on the origin of the sari – “the ancient garment” which was made to wear “with a blouse and petticoat... in the days of the British Raj” (Ghosh, 2000, p. 489). This cosmopolitanism rejects “the either/or alternative between territorial-bounded national and ethnical identities without denying the historical narrative behind them” (Beck, 2008, p. 22) to oppose the homogenous, elitist cosmopolitanism and calls for attention towards the sufferings of the Other to eradicate the centre-periphery binary. She reverberates the spirit of Tridib, a cosmopolitan hero from another one of Ghosh’s novel *The Shadow Lines*, who was at home in the world and in the world while at home.

### **Third Space and *Brick Lane***

In the novel *Brick Lane*, Ali herself had ambivalence in appropriating a cosmopolitan Third Space where all cultures can come together to form a new identity that would assist in the decolonisation process in a globalised world. Ali has created a space where Nazneen and Razia are negotiating within the colonial discourse of *Brick Lane*, however, the second generation of immigrants like Karim and Shahana are rejecting one of the cultures, accordingly the West and the East, that establishes the binary of opposition. While Karim being brought up in England longs for his native country Bangladesh, Shahana expresses an unjustified antagonism towards her native land.

For many of the first-generation immigrants such as – Chanu, Nazneen, Razia, Mrs Azad, Mrs Islam – the Third Space allowed them that melting point where two opposite forces can meet for amalgamation and successful assimilation in a foreign society depended much on this cultural space. The protagonist, Nazneen, like others, is displaced from her small village in Bangladesh to her new life in London while adaptation to her surrounding is the key to survive in that society. Thus, she and her husband, Chanu, must exchange some of their cultural values for Western ones. These immigrants are neither British nor Bangladeshi – they are a new crossbreed that is beyond any physical borders – “being both here and there” (Nayar, 2010, p. 179) simultaneously. For instance, Chanu has reverence towards the British Culture but at the same time preaches about the colonial oppression of the British heaped upon Indian subcontinent (Ali, 2003, p. 151) expressing the ambivalence of the mimic man. He desires integration in the British society as a British but at the same time dreams of “going home” in the native land (Ali, 2003, p. 24) which he purposefully left. Furthermore, although he had internalised both Bangladeshi and British culture, he failed to recognise it himself which led him to heap his failure of integration on British racial prejudice.

Whereas Chanu wants to be British, Nazneen understands the shortcoming of her new identity. She is fully aware of her hybrid state and this imbues her with an energy that makes her more practical than her husband. For this very reason, Nazneen dares to set foot on the ice ring in the very last page of the novel draped in a sari. The patriarchal notion of the East is reconciling with the women-empowering West as Nazneen decided to be self-independent in her own business. She clearly understands that it is physically impossible to go back that stage of her which was pure and native, uninvaded by the Western

culture when she articulated to Chanu “I can’t go with you” (Ali, 2003, p. 400). Furthermore, when she asserted her voice and her choice as a self-dependent woman, the concept that states “the subaltern cannot speak... cannot be heard or read” is being reverted (Spivak, 1988, p. 24). Ali, in a similar manner as Ghosh, highlighted the integration of the East and the West in a hybridised society with garments. The Muslim community of *Brick Lane* adopted a Westernised version of Eastern clothing. For instance, Razia, a product of multicultural society, had merged the salwar kameez with woollen hat and a baggy jumper while in another instance the kameez is being replaced by pants.

Additionally, transnationalism is portrayed in the metaphor of clothes as experienced in Mrs Azad and her daughter both of whom have donned their brown skin with white outfits – the “short purple skirt” (Ali, 2003, p. 87). Dress, along with culture, had gone through a process of amalgamation – knives and forks replace hands, traditional clothes are overtaken by Western attire (Ghosh, 2000, Ali 2003). While none of the characters is splitting from both of the cultures to embrace a new sort of cosmopolitan identity that bows to no binary and is heterogeneous in a homogenising frame, Bibi portrays a transitional point where she has the scope to adapt cosmopolitan attitude that is trying to assimilate towards both cultures of the East and the West marginalising neither.

### **Decolonisation and Third Space: An Analysis**

Conforming to Tiffin, Griffiths, and Ashcroft, “Decolonisation is the process of revealing and dismantling colonialist power in all its forms. This includes dismantling the hidden aspects of those institutional and cultural forces that had maintained the colonialist power and that remain even after political independence is achieved” (1998, p. 76). Therefore, in the postmodern world, this process should be centred around the epistemological emancipation that involves subverting the knowledge handed down by the Empire. Furthermore, as stated by Simon During, “The post-colonial desire is the desire of decolonised communities for an identity” (During, 1987, p. 144). Decolonial process, then, involves a quest for identity that is unfettered by the Empire and its influence. In this regard, Bhabha’s Third Space created in hybridity is a form of resistance against the colonial propaganda of a superior culture in its civilising mission of an inferior, primitive, barbaric culture. The systematic intrusion of the British into “government, education, cultural values, and daily lives of the colonial subjects” created “a negative self-image” (Tyson, 2006, p. 419) alienating and destroying the native culture that outlives political

independence championing cultural binarism. Hence, decolonisation becomes a confrontation against “the subjugation of the mind” (Kapoor, 2001) that would subvert this either/or cultural identity inculcated by the colonial occupation.

In Ghosh’s *The Glass Palace*, Arjun and Hardy illustrated the earlier ambivalence embedded in mimicry of the modern nationalists who conceived the idea of a nation-state in opposition of colonialism that ultimately led to the independence of Indian subcontinent. The transformation of Arjun and Hardy discloses “the limitation in the authority of colonial discourse” and eventually leads to the annihilation of colonial hegemony when the mimic men turn on the masters (Tiffin, Griffiths, and Ashcroft, 1998, p. 153). This disillusionment of these Indian mimic men mirrors that of Michael Ondaatje’s Kirpal ‘Kip’ Singh in *The English Patient* (1992) who was made to fight the war for the British Raj in World War II. Ghosh has stripped the centre from its centuries-old power structure and subverted Empire’s subject position, transferring it to the periphery – the subaltern. This decentralisation erases the superiority of the colonisers from the mind of the colonised to promote psychological decolonisation.

Not only does Ghosh express the positive force of hybridity, but he has also contested the Empire’s civilising process in the novel on the basis of cultural superiority. *The Glass Palace* rightly questioned the assumed “humanity” of the British that subjugated and destroyed “liberty” of sovereign countries in the name of “freedom” (Ghosh, 2000, p. 150, 189). The Burmese Queen is especially notable for her powerful discernment of the colonial reality. She commented on the capitalistic venture of colonialism against its technological seduction. That Britain was in truth developing itself at the cost of other countries’ wealth had been well mentioned in one of her speeches. She asserted, “In few decades the wealth will be gone... then they too will leave” (Ghosh, 2000, p. 88). Colonialism is a system of underdevelopment that destroyed countries to create a market for its own economy. The resources “were being exploited with an energy and efficiency hitherto undreamt of” (Ghosh, 2000, p. 66).

On the contrary, Ali’s *Brick Lane* falls short in implementing a decolonial process in a cosmopolitan attitude. Providing a marginal woman like Nazneen a power over her restraints, suggests the author’s counter-discursive approach where “a more integrative view of human community and human liberation” is possible in a cosmopolitan society (Said, 1993, p. 216). Despite her efforts, Ali promoted re-colonisation of mind in her novel. Ali demonstrated a superior West as London is eulogised as a place of liberation,

freedom, and empowerment – “This is England... You can do whatever you like.” (Ali, 2003, p. 413). But the East is epitomised as a backward, primitive, barbaric place filled with perversion, religious fundamentalism, sexual promiscuity throughout the novel. The first of these comes through Nazneen’s fatalistic attitude and Nazneen’s affair with Karim that reinforces the sexual depravity of the East. Ali’s “othering and exoticisation of ethnicity” through the characters “stabilises the hegemonic notion of Englishness” (Gandhi, 1998, p. 126) and ultimately justifies Nazneen’s choice of aligning with the racially superior culture and staying in England while Chanu leaves for Bangladesh.

On top of that, Chanu who had both “deference and difference” (Nayar, 2010, p. 171) for the British culture, ultimately leaves Britain for his homeland. Chanu becomes the victim of Ali’s vengeance against postcolonial critics through his failure to assimilate in the cultural space of London and establish himself. This additionally destabilises Ali’s vision of cosmopolitan globalisation in the Third Space that welcomed Nazneen into enfranchisement. Ali is unable to embrace the globalisation that liberates itself from the First World to accommodate the Third world in a dominant position against marginalisation and oppression (Nandy, 1978) as both Chanu and Nazneen are representative of the periphery but only one of them was able to carve a space in the culture of the hegemony. Therefore, Ali’s Third Space stumbles to offer a counter-hegemonic method vibrating cosmopolitan attitude. She is unsuccessful in “moving the centre” that could have paved the way for true emancipation in terms of “nationalism, class, race and gender” (Wa Thiong’o, 1993, p. 17) through her loyalty towards Europe as the crux of modernisation.

## **Conclusion**

Decolonisation is not a goal to be achieved with the end of physical removal of the colonial powers from the colonies. It is an ongoing process involving the dialectical struggle between the centre and the periphery (Tiffin 1987, p. 95). As long as the writers uphold the binary position of colonial relationships, they are bound by the legacy of Imperialism. Writers of the East must recognise the exploitative “Euro-American-based stranglehold” as the antagonist of true emancipation (Wa Thiong’o, 1986, p. 4). The two novels studied in this paper proposes an analysis of the hybridised society as it strives to decolonise subsuming a global culture in the Third Space. Decolonisation in such circumstance greatly becomes a choice rather than a decision for those marginalised by the global centre (Mignolo, 2011, p. 52). Obviously, Ali has chosen to operate within globalisation that gives way for Neo-colonial

expansion, but Ghosh is remarkably against all oppression in the name of civilisation. In *The Glass Palace*, Ghosh champions a cosmopolitan identity that is summative and whole, imbued with a “national consciousness” reverberates the “social consciousness” (Fanon, 1961, p. 203) to take back the representation of colonisers and break free the chains of cultural imperialism. On the other hand, whereas it is expected from Monica Ali to embrace a cosmopolitan view beyond nationalism, she leaned towards the binary opposition refusing to connect with the larger part of the world that is suffering at the hands of its powerful oppressors. She stumbles at decolonisation with her “undeterred and unrelenting Eurocentrism” (Said, 1993, p. 221) indoctrinated through different characters. Therefore, while Ghosh is the Caliban of Shakespeare Ali cloaked herself to be the Ariel.

Thus, in the postmodern era, the liberation against a society that is swept by the consuming wave of globalisation, rests on, what Bhabha has pointed, “an international culture, based... on the inscription and articulation of culture’s hybridity” (Bhabha, 1988, p. 209). In the Third Space, cultural differences and diversity meet to render a mutual interaction for a “cosmopolitan community envisaged in a marginality” (Bhabha, 1996, p. 195) much in the same manner as Jaya from *The Glass Palace* and Tridib from *The Shadow Lines* both of whom are at home and in the world transcribing to a global community regardless of spatial attachment. And this vernacular cosmopolitanism can lead to an international culture subverting the binary essentialism that leads to an all-consuming nationalism in the Third World countries.

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## Subverting Gender Normativity in McCullers' *The Member of the Wedding*

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### Abstract

*Carson McCullers (1917–1967), the American novelist, in her novel The Member of the Wedding (1946), illustrates a twelve-year-old Frankie Addams' encounter against a society-approved heteronormative structure that strongly demands a strict hetero design in sexual orientation. The novelist presents Frankie as a non-conforming character who challenges the heterosexual characters in the novel to examine the discourses of gender and sexuality, instrumental towards establishing heterosexuality as the standard form of behavior in a society. McCullers' Frankie with atypical physiology exemplifies the performativity of gender and sexuality and challenges the cultural intelligibility of insisting that everyone 'does' gender in the same way. This paper examines the meaning of gender: how it is not a distinct intrinsic characteristic, rather a socially-developed conduct, that is, a performance, to show the coercive nature of the social practice that impedes the life of non-gender conformists in America. In doing so, the paper further examines gender acculturation that controls sexual conformity and shows how the novelist critiques the acculturation by subverting the coercive mandatory gender performance. For establishing the paper's arguments, American post-structuralist, gender theorist Judith Butler's conception of 'gender performativity' and Cuban American queer theorist José Esteban Muñoz's 'queerness' and 'utopia' will be used as theoretical lenses.*

**Keywords:** Gender normativity; heterosexuality; performativity; subversion; acculturation.

Carson McCullers' (1917–1967) novel, *The Member of the Wedding* (1946), recounts Frankie Addams' struggles against a heteronormative system

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that insists that gender and sex follow a strictly heterosexual pattern. She imagines remedy from her isolation in her brother's wedding at Winter Hill. While constantly trying to make an understanding of her sexual identity, Frankie gets lost as she could not figure out who she is and where she belongs and eventually detaches from the Southern American society. Her effort for an amicable association wherein she could live peacefully with her sibling to dispose of her horrible clairvoyant circumstance does not work. As a result, she detaches herself further from her sibling and society for the most part. Frankie's response to disengagement and estrangement originates from her failure to play out society-specified gender roles, the traditional and customary feminine character. The novel examines the discourses of gender and sexuality that enforce heterosexuality as the norm, whereas Frankie, the non-conforming character, is contrasted with other conforming heterosexual characters in the novel. She brings into light the performativity of gender and sexuality with atypical physiology, which signifies her inner freakishness. The novel interrogates what gender stands for and how it is not an inborn characteristic but a socially constructed behavior, that is, a performance. Through Frankie, McCullers shows how coercive social norms restraint non-gender conformists in America and challenges the cultural intelligibility of insisting that everyone 'does' gender in the same way. She shows how gender acculturation asks for and controls sexual conformity and critiques the acculturation by subverting the coercive mandatory gender performance through Frankie's characterization. By showing thus McCullers is clarifying the misinterpretation of gender performativity as Judith Butler notes, "The misapprehension about gender performativity is this: that gender is a choice, or that gender is a role, or that gender is a construction that one puts on, as one puts on clothes in the morning" (1993a, p. 21).

At the start of the novel, McCullers introduces Frankie Addams as an isolated person, "a member of nothing in the world" (McCullers, 2004, p. 3), and due to her isolation, "she was afraid" (McCullers, 2004, p. 3). Frankie's physical appearance adds to her liminal position in society: she is neither a girl nor a lady. With an unusual height and physique, she looks quite different from her peers and adults. Her non-normative expression could be the result of her unlikely physical identity. She is afraid of her nature and tries to find solace in John Henry, the boy she asks to be with her in her house while no one is at home. With time, Frankie realizes that her unusual height and physique are a constraint for her to become a member of the club in her society, given that belonging to clubs requires physical attributes, expectations, and social codes, which she finds herself not in possession of. Frankie finds these social

expectations bizarre. Eventually, in the novel, Frankie is out of every group; firstly, she is out of the club even though “until this summer she had been like a younger member of their crowd, but now they had this club, and she was not a member” (McCullers, 2004, p. 12). Secondly, she is out of the group of Berenice, T. T. Williams, and Honey, and finally, she is left out by her brother Jarvis and his wife Janice, who are her last recourse to find the answer to her quest to make sense of her social identity. She fears that her inability to fit into society will ultimately make her a freak. She comes to believe that freakishness could be the result of social exclusion and articulates her concerns to Berenice once, “Do you think I will grow into a Freak?” (McCullers, 2004, p. 21) In Southern American society, it is the male who defines and decides the gender roles. Simone de Beauvoir (1952) notes that “humanity is male and man defines woman not in herself but as relative to him; ... she is the inessential as opposed to the essential. He is the Subject, he is the Absolute—she is the Other.” (Beauvoir, 1952, p. xviii-xix). Because the “discursive condition of social recognition *precedes* and *conditions* the formation of the subject: recognition is not conferred on a subject, but forms that subject” (Butler, 1993a, p. 18, italics in original). In fact, the “socialization process of women and men is such that individuals rarely question the social and psychological origin of their gendered or sexual identities unless such identities become sufficiently conflictive or contradictory” (Schutte, 1997, p. 40). Frankie, a member of the society, runs into the middle of the male defined gender performativity and gets lost. Her lost position could be symbolic to the “queerness” that José Esteban Muñoz (2009a) argues for in his “Feeling utopia”:

Queerness is that thing that lets us feel that this world is not enough, that indeed something is missing.... Queerness is also a performative because it is not simply a being but a doing for and toward the future. Queerness is essentially about the rejection of a here and now and an insistence on potentiality or concrete possibility for another world. (p. 1)

In looking for the “utopia,” McCullers criticizes the normative behavior/structure in the novel. For example, she presents marriage and motherhood institutions as failed characterizations of Southern American society’s normativity. Through Frankie, she looks for Muñoz’s “queerness,” the “utopia,” where a character like Frankie and other females could make their choices by themselves out of social dictation.

According to Judith Butler, gender performativity is the “bodily gestures, movements, and enactments...a reiteration of a norm or set of norms”

(1990a, p. 270, 1993a, p. 12). Butler argues that “performativity must be understood not as a singular or deliberate ‘act,’ but, rather, as the reiterative and citational practice by which discourse produces the effect that it names” (1993a, p. 2). So, performativity is a repetitive social practice that produces normalcy in a social structure. Normalcy and gender/sexual normativity are significant concepts in understanding the discourses of gender and sexuality. According to Ofelia Schutte (1997), “a ‘normative’ model of sexuality...[is] a model of sexual behavior that is taken as exemplary for defining the propriety or impropriety of any particular instance of sexual activity” (p. 41). William Little (2016), in his “gender, sex and sexuality,” argues, “Just as masculinity is the symbolic norm, so too has heterosexuality come to signify normalcy” (p. 492). Little further claims, “The experiences of gender and sexual outsiders — homosexuals, bisexuals, transsexuals, women who do not look or act ‘feminine,’ men who do not look or act ‘masculine,’ etc. — reveal the subtle dramaturgical order of social processes and negotiations through which all gender identity is sustained and recognized by others” (2016, p. 492). So, to be recognized as an adult, the coercive society demands normalcy- gender normalcy - from Frankie. Frankie must become intelligible to be recognized as ‘normal’ in society. About this connection, Judith Butler (1990) argues that “‘persons’ only become intelligible through becoming gendered in conformity with recognizable standards of gender intelligibility” (p. 16). Here, it could be argued that the definition or construction of normalcy is one-dimensional, which only considers the masculinity or the male perspective, where the feminine voice is missing, and is thus a bizarre idea. McCullers exposes this bizarre gender identity construction by subverting various normative categories. This subversion challenges the normative process’s legitimacy, the existing gender identities that run and dictate society. The subversion might be the “alternative,” which Raymond Williams notes in *Marxism and Literature*. Williams writes: “alternative political and cultural emphases, and the many forms of opposition and struggle, [which] are important not only in themselves but as indicative features of what the hegemonic process has in practice had to work to control” (1977, p. 113). McCullers, questioning the coercive system, and by subverting them, discloses how unnatural and imposing the social construct the system is.

The period in which the novel is set at around the 1940s, it was not an easy task to counter gender normativity because there were laws that fortified heteronormativity. About this connection, Jonathan Ned Katz (1976) points out:

[A]ny person who 'presents or participates in, any obscene, indecent, immoral or impure production 'which would tend to the corruption of the morals of youth or others' was guilty of a misdemeanor. The same was true of anyone presenting any work 'depicting or dealing with, the subject of sex degeneracy, or sex perversion. (p. 90)

Even though it is difficult for a writer like McCullers to use terms like gay/lesbian in her novel, she deploys different recognized stylistic devices to undercut the language of heteronormativity. For instance, she uses terms such as "queer" to bring into discussion issues regarded as "obscene," "indecent," "immoral," and "impure" in order to subvert heteronormativity. Thus, the very first words Frankie says in the novel are: "It is very queer" (McCullers, 2004, p. 3), a statement that apparently indicates McCullers' intentions to deal with the issues as mentioned earlier that were difficult to discuss at that time. Rather than using homosexuality or similar socially sanctioned words, the narrator of the novel notes instead that "[Frankie] could not name" (McCullers, 2004, p. 4) what she finds queer. This inability to name things signifies the coercive nature of heteronormativity and its insistence that difference must not be named. However, by queer, Frankie might be looking for the future; as Muñoz (2009a) claims, "Queerness is a structuring and educated mode of desiring that allows us to see and feel beyond the quagmire of the present. The here and now is a prison house....Queerness is a longing that propels us onward, beyond romances of the negative and toiling in the present" (p. 1).

McCullers' choice of Frankie, a twelve-year-old girl, as the protagonist of her novel helps her name and subvert normative sexuality. Using Frankie, she questions the coercive gender roles and sexual normativity immanent in her society, even while aesthetically distancing her from social condemnation since she is a child. Her innocent questions on the surface bode on the kind of ignorance associated with children; yet, at the same time, her questions challenge her society's refusal to accommodate differences, especially in relation to sex and gender. For instance, Frankie is annoyed when Jarvis gives her a doll intended for children, especially girls. Looking at the doll, she says, "I don't know what went on in Jarvis's mind when he brought me that doll. Imagine bringing me a doll!" (McCullers, 2004, p. 18) She refuses to take the doll. Her rejection of the doll subverts society's expectations that girls should love dolls as toys. Dolls are a symbol of girlhood, and Frankie refuses to be co-opted into this normative gender expectation. She refuses to be stigmatized by



gender normativity as the doll as Jarvis's gift symbolizes society's forceful gender expectations.

The novel, however, reveals that John Henry seems to be happy with the doll as he is found "rocking it in his arms" (McCullers, 2004, p. 18). Although a boy, Henry's preference is overlooked just because he is a child, having not yet co-opted into his society's gender norms. But, if he were an adult, he would not be able to play with a doll or dress in a girl's clothing. Through juxtapositions such as the one observed in Frankie's rejection of the doll and Henry's interest in the doll, McCullers subverts gender normativity and upholds the view that gender is socially constructed and imposed. Readers see society's attitude to Lily Mae Jenkins, who is considered a strange man who "[has] changed his nature and his sex and turned into a girl" (McCullers, 2004, p. 81). Berenice right away dismisses Jenkins' situation as insignificant by telling Frankie thus: "Well, you don't need to know Lily Mae Jenkins. You can live without knowing him" (McCullers, 2004, p. 81). Here, Berenice summarizes and establishes the heteronormative attitude of South American society that all other gender and sexual identities that do not identify with heteronormativity must be overlooked and excluded from society. In this regard, Butler claims that "if one fails to reinstate the norm 'in the right way,' one becomes subject to further sanction, one feels the prevailing conditions of existence threatened" (1997a, p. 28-9). They do not deserve to a topic of social discussion. Thus, the novel questions the peculiar attitude of a gender normative society, an attitude that excuses children from gender performance but coerces adults into heteronormative order. Through children's blurring of gender roles and behavior, McCullers shows how gender is less of an innate attribute as it is more about a socially constructed system. About this connection, Judith Butler in *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* remarks:

Inasmuch as "identity" is assured through the stabilizing concepts of sex, gender, and sexuality, the very notion of "the person" is called into question by the cultural emergence of those "incoherent" or "discontinuous" gendered beings who appear to be persons but who fail to conform to the gendered norms of cultural intelligibility by which persons are defined. (1990, p. 17)

So, to be within a society lawfully, there is no other way but to be sexed as either male or female, to be sexed "cultural[ly] intelligib[ly]."

McCullers' *The Member of the Wedding* is an example of queering of the center, as everything in the novel is queer: the narrative form of the novel, the character Frankie, the space such as the kitchen, the club, the room, etc. By

queering everything as a way of revealing the complicated nature of things, as well as blurring the lines between what is considered the norm and what is often regarded as the ab-norm, McCullers tries to resist society's heteronormativity and asks for a future that anticipates the argument by José Muñoz in *Cruising Utopia*. Muñoz, in "Feeling Utopia," argues that "[q]ueerness is a structuring and educated mode of desiring that allows us to see and feel beyond the quagmire of the present" (2009a, p. 1). He sees queerness "as a temporal arrangement in which the past is a field of possibility in which subjects can act in the present in the service of a new futurity" (Muñoz, 2009a, p. 16). The coercive gender performance is exposed in the novel through Frankie's freakishness with her choice of dress. Berenice reacts with utter disappointment as Frankie looks like a tomboy with her hair cut. Berenice remarks thus: "You had all your hair shaved off like a convict, and now you tie a silver ribbon around this head without any hair. It just looks *peculiar*" (McCullers, 2004, p. 90, emphasis added). Frankie's "tomboyishness represents a resistance to adulthood itself rather than to adult femininity" (Halberstam, 1998, p. 6). This resistance from Frankie could be for a new kind of recognition for her as Halberstam argues that "[w]hen gender-ambiguous children are constantly challenged about their gender identity, the chain of misrecognition can actually produce a new recognition...can produce to the production of a masculine identity" (Halberstam, 1998, p. 19). In the novel, the queer Frankie "lets us feel that this world is not enough, that indeed something is missing" (Muñoz, 2009a, p. 1).

However, Frankie tries to satisfy Berenice by saying that she will try to be feminine by curling her hair. Still, Berenice's complaints go on: "And look at them elbows....Here you got on this grown woman's evening dress. Orange satin. And that brown crust on your elbows. The two things just don't mix" (McCullers, 2004, p. 90). Whatever efforts Frankie attempts, it would not be sufficient to unknot her difference. What McCullers shows with Frankie is that the girl needs all the unnatural ornaments to affirm her femininity. She needs these artificial ornaments regularly to remain within the peculiar identity constructions of her society. Gender correctness, therefore, is about being artificially ornamented. Berenice's criticism lies in the inconsistency of Frankie's dressing, as Frankie is not questioned for not dressing in proper female's dress, but once she tries, Berenice, the representative of the coercive social normativity, demands proper, complete maintenance of this femininity in dress, in look. Heterosexual gender normative society demands consistency in the way people talk, dress, and look.

In every correspondence, people (re)create a specific gender identity. With Frankie, the problem is in her inconsistency. This inconsistency results from her crusty elbows, from her tomboyish haircut that signifies masculinity, all of which are in direct contrast to the femininity she is trying to create with her dressing. The situation is further complicated by Frankie when she enquires about the demands of society thus: “Yet always I am I, and you are you. And I can’t ever be anything else but me, and you can’t ever be anything else but you. Have you ever thought of that? And does it seem to you strange?” (McCullers, 2004, p. 114-115). As a character who is queer, Frankie resists the “here and now and...[insists] on potentiality or concrete possibility for another world” (Muñoz, 2009a, p. 1). Frankie’s inconsistency and nonconformity could be Halberstam’s “failing” that helps her to remain queer as “[f]ailing is something queers do and have always done exceptionally well” (Halberstam, 2011, p. 3) to reveal the hidden inconsistency of a heteronormative society. Simultaneously, this inconsistency as a “failure” could be “a way of refusing to acquiesce to dominant logics of power and discipline” (Halberstam, 2011, p. 88). Equally, Frankie’s inconsistency could be the “forgetfulness” which is “a rupture with the eternally self-generating present, a break with a self-authorizing past, and an opportunity for a non-hetero-reproductive future” (Halberstam, 2011, p. 70). As “resistance lurks in the performance of forgetfulness itself, hiding out in oblivion and waiting for a new erasure to inspire a new beginning” (Halberstam, 2011, p. 69), Frankie charts a future by resisting the heteronormative present. Her inconsistency could be the “not-yet-conscious [which is] a utopian feeling” (Muñoz, 2009a, p. 3).

McCullers’ novel shows how freedom has become an illusion due to mandatory, coercive gender performance, how life has become an “irony of fate” (McCullers, 2004, p. 14), which is delicately symbolized with the example of the flying moths. Frankie says, “[t]hose moths could fly anywhere. Yet they keep hanging around the windows of this house” (McCullers, 2004, p. 14). Considering their flying capability, Frankie thinks they can fly anywhere even though they are fated biologically to live, seeking light against the window’s screen. Gender coercion works with the same paradox. It seems that Frankie has the freedom to dress, speak, and behave the way she wishes but again, it is gender normativity, the light inside the room that directs the moths, that bounds her to act the way society wants her to act. She is the slave of the fate that social coercion demands from her: to be an adult, to be an intelligible adult, which means to be a woman with proper gender performance as society rejects everything outside of the set categories of male and female. About this

connection, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, in her *Epistemology of the Closet*, quoted Gayle Robin, who argues that “‘sex/gender system,’ the system by which chromosomal sex is turned into, and processed as, cultural gender, has tended to minimize the attribution of people’s various behaviors and identities to chromosomal sex and to maximize their attribution of socialized gender constructs” (1990, p. 28). Frankie has no other option if she wants to be accepted by her society except to become a woman with proper gender performance set by the social construct, as she is biologically a female.

Frankie is always seen in the novel, especially while touring the town and informing people of her upcoming trip, searching for her own self, a spiritual desire “to be recognized for her true self” (McCullers, 2004, p. 61). This search could be the queerness Muñoz talks about in “Queerness as Horizon.” Muñoz notes, “Queerness as utopian formation is a formation based on an economy of desire and desiring. This desire is always directed at that thing that is not yet here, objects and moments that burn with anticipation and promise” (2009b, p. 26). However, Frankie’s desire remains unrealized in a society where she is seen only as a sex object in the Blue Moon club’s male soldier’s eyes. Her spiritual attempts to be recognized as who she really is becomes impossible because Frankie, as a female, is reduced to a sex object. The soldier sees her as a sex object, intentionally touches her by “grasp[ing] the skirt” (McCullers, 2004, p. 136), which symbolizes gender categorization. So, it is the gender categorization that causes her to fail to recognize her spiritual desire. Frankie’s meeting with the soldier is also a marker of the failure of gender conformity in society; it shows that even heterosexuality is not working in society.

McCullers subverts the normal by showing the failure of heterosexuality and gender conformity by showing the unsuccessful union of opposite-gendered characters in the novel. At the beginning of the novel, the success of heterosexual futurity is questioned when Frankie feels uncomfortable about Jarvis’s wedding to Janice. Her remark, “It is so very queer” (McCullers, 2004, p. 3), signifies her feeling of awkwardness towards a heterosexual union. She feels the union is unnatural, and the “thought about her brother and the bride... was a tightness in her that would not break” (McCullers, 2004, p. 21). The heterosexual normativity, the union of the opposite gender as a couple, is comforting to her only when she plans to join with them to make it a household of three, which incidentally deforms the normalcy attributed to the heterosexual union, as well as deconstructs the social construction of gender union. In the novel, McCullers subverts sexual normalcy and heterosexual

gender conformity through Frankie's experience with Barney MacKean, which is labeled as "a queer sin" and also regarded in the story as a "secret and unknown sin" (McCullers, 2004, p. 25). Although it could be argued that Frankie's reaction to the experience is quite normal, her use of the word "queer" does complicate the meaning here, as "queer" in the novel is used by McCullers to substitute the normal, that is, to substitute what should be normal. McCullers' tricky use of the term, which actually means unusual sexuality outside of so-called social construction, signifies sexual normalcy.

Through the dialogues between Frankie and Berenice, McCullers exposes the strangeness and constructed nature of a society based on gender performance. The twelve-year-old Frankie, who is on the edge of adulthood, represents the change from adolescence, at what stage society overlooks gender nonconformity, to adulthood, when gender conformity must be maintained. Berenice, as a representative of the heterosexual society, observing Frankie's change from adolescence to adulthood, takes up the burden of society in teaching Frankie to be culturally intelligible. The coercive nature of heterosexual normativity is evident in Berenice's exchanges with Frankie, particularly on whether Frankie will look pretty or not as she grows up. Berenice's response echoes society's insistence that only submission to the socially accepted norms can make an individual pretty: "Maybe. If you file down them horns an inch or two... I think when you fill out you will do very well. If you *behave*" (McCullers, 2004, p. 21, emphasis added). Here, "behave" means to remain within the social codes society has stipulated. When Frankie returns home after the town tour, Berenice suggests to Frankie thus: "What you ought to begin thinking about is a beau" (McCullers, 2004, p. 82). Berenice is trying to explain to Frankie that Frankie needs to become a woman and get married to be culturally intelligible. As a representative character of heterosexual society, Berenice contributes to McCullers' effort to subvert the normative discourse of gender construction. Berenice's constant, forceful nudge on Frankie to accept society's gender codes advances McCullers' point that gender is constructed. If it is natural, then there will not be any need to urge an individual to act in a certain way since they will not be able to act otherwise. Although a female body may not always resemble and signify a gender, Berenice always pushes Frankie into gender normativity, which exposes the whole identification process and, in turn, gender performance as an unnatural imposed social construction.

McCullers' most powerful subversion in the novel is the subversion of marriage and motherhood. Marriage and motherhood are the mandatory

institutions of womanhood. A strong point of argument favoring this subversion is the absence of any effective marriage in the novel. The novel has no mothers. Although it could be argued here that Berenice is married, in fact, she has had four marriages. But none of the marriages has worked well. Instead, these marriages are examples of the futility of heterosexual unions. Apart from her first marriage to Ludie Freeman, whose death leaves Berenice in grief, who Berenice believes has loved her immensely, her other three marriages are dreadful. In the words of Berenice:

The other three husbands were all bad, each one worse than the one before, and it made Frankie blue just to hear about them. The first was a sorry old liquor-drinker. The next went crazy on Berenice: he did crazy things, had eating dreams in the night and swallowed a corner of the sheet; and what with one thing and another he distracted Berenice so much that finally she had to quit him. The last husband was terrible. He gouged out Berenice's eye and stole her furniture away from her. She had to call the Law on him. (McCullers, 2004, p. 28)

Therefore, it is ironic that the novel is all about weddings; the title itself has the word. Even though the whole novel is centered to a great extent on marriage, *The Member of the Wedding* hardly depicts marriage as a success for the characters. Instead, around the end of the novel, McCullers presents marriage as a space for quitting. So, the author resists the idea of marriage as a successful recourse. In turn, she might have wanted to present the futility of heterosexuality with marriage as a space for resignation and passivity. At the end of the novel, Frankie's plan to marry the soldier as a solution to her loneliness and Berenice's resolution to marry T. T. reveal further the logic that these women are victims of a coercive social system that insists on the women's recourse to a sad union, rather than finding other ways to be happy. Moreover, the absence of productive marriages in the novel parallels the absence of motherhood. Frankie loses her mother at birth, and John Henry's mother does not appear once in the novel. The only mother who appears in the book is Big Mama, the mother of Berenice. Big Mama is a bizarre character, who "had the constant habit of...talking to herself... [and] telling herself just who she was and what she was doing and what she intended to do as she lay there in the bed" (McCullers, 2004, p. 126). She is without any importance as a mother figure in the novel. The absence of real wedding and mother figures in the novel could be indicative of McCullers' idea that the institutions of marriage and motherhood are not positive forces for a society.

Through Frankie's inconsistency and resistance in *The Member of the Wedding*, McCullers anticipates Halberstam's "queer time," which "is not only about compression and annihilation; it is also about the potentiality of a life unscripted by the conventions of family, inheritance, and child-rearing" (Halberstam, 2005, p. 2). Through young Frankie's struggles as she transitions into adulthood, McCullers reveals the masked practices of gender performance. All the coercive social practices chain Frankie to perform the only available gender role sets up by the society, that is, to be a woman, to be a culturally intelligible woman. However, McCullers' Frankie resists society's constructed gender conformity, and through her resistance, McCullers shows the unnaturalness of gender identification. Even though Frankie's story reads like a traditional coming-of-age narrative, McCullers' protagonist – Frankie – breaks out of this tradition in which the non-conforming youth conforms to social dictates by the end of the novel. In *The Member of the Wedding*, however, Frankie's growth results in her disenchantment with adulthood because of all the restrictions socially imposed upon adults, especially adult female bodies, unlike childhood experiences. Her desire for her childhood signifies her dismissal of social norms and her refusal to conform to society's sexual and gender codes.

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## **Sexual Violence in the Public Buses of Dhaka North City Corporation: Experiences of Female Undergraduate Students**

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### **Abstract**

*Dhaka is one of the most unsafe cities in the world especially for females. The unsafety translates into horrid sexual violence which further intensifies in public buses. The female undergraduate students of Dhaka North City Corporation are to commute in a specific route at a precise time via predetermined vehicles, mostly public buses, which adds to their vulnerability, as those are the hubs of gender violence. The objective of this study is to take an account of the perception and everyday experiences of sexual violence in public buses revolving around the exchanges of undergraduate female students. This research is strongly grounded on qualitative data but also features crucial quantitative data. Primary data has been accumulated from participant observation, two focus group discussion (FGD)s, in-depth interviews of twenty-five interlocutors. Secondary data is availed from articles, books, reports, newspapers, and websites. The drivers, helpers and passengers are seen to harass the females by staring, touching, poking, elbowing, making lewd comments and so on. The violence can escalate to rapes and gang rapes which mostly goes unpenalised. All of the interviewed students nominated public buses as the most unsafe means of travelling and are not satisfied with the behaviour of the driver and staff and feel unsafe commuting at night. Zero tolerance to sexual offences, boycott of sex offenders, victim support and punishment, upholding law and fast and effective judicial system, uprooting taboos centering sex, and sex education are some of the probable measures that may be taken to eliminate sexual violence.*

**Keywords:** Violence, Sex, Female, Bus, Transport, Harassment, Unsafe

According to Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU)'s Safe Cities Index (SCI), Dhaka is the fifth least safe city in the world (Dhaka Tribune, 2019).

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This unsafety results in gender-based violence throughout the city. Nearly 2083 women and female children were subjected to sexual violence from the beginning of the year to June 30, 2019. Around 11 women and female children were imperiled by sexual violence on a daily basis during that timeframe (Dhaka Tribune, 2019). A study indicated 94% of women undergo various forms of sexual harassment in the roads or public transports of Dhaka city (Bdnews24.com, 2018).

The city of Dhaka features one of the most unsafe roads. The public transports of the city including the buses are not only life threatening as accidents and reckless driving is common, but also a hub for gendered violence of which female are the prime victims (New Age, 2020).

There has been a significant number of sexual harassments of female undergraduate students in public buses of the city. This paper attempts to unfold the sexual violence against the female undergraduate students in public buses of northern part of Dhaka city.

### **Problem Statement**

Dhaka city ranked first on the list of worst traffic as per a survey titled “World Traffic Index 2019 (Dutta, 2019). Most buses of the city are unregistered, unfit and does not maintain a schedule. Most drivers are unprofessional, do not have license or proper understanding of traffic rules. The inside of the buses of are filthy with negligible segregation. The ticketing is disorganised and the operators get unfair advantage via bribery (Rahman, 2019). The female undergraduate students are no stranger to the pangs of it.

Over the years, Dhaka city has seen an increase of monstrous crimes mainly shaped into sexual violence particularly subjected to females. According to a survey by the Thomson Reuters Foundation, it is the seventh most dangerous megacity for the females (Dhaka Tribune, 2017). As per the reports of human rights organization, Ain o Salish Kendra, 32 rape incidents took place between April and August of 2020 (Rabbi, 2020). Of course, the real numbers go far beyond that. The existing danger takes a new dimension in the roads and public transports (Reality Check Team, 2018). This is evident in the amount and intensity of sexual violence faced by the female undergraduate students of Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC). Inevitably, the students are to commute in a specific route at a precise time via predetermined vehicles, mostly public buses, which adds to their vulnerability. Yet, societal settings, material arrangements and even policies are not designed keeping these facts in mind. Existing efforts have very limited outcomes.

## **Literature Review**

For a proper understanding of the experiences of female undergraduate students, it is essential to know how sexual violence is defined. Any sexual act or attempts to attain it, unwanted sexual advances or comments, or acts to traffic, or otherwise directed, against a person's sexuality by coercion, by any person irrespective of their relationship to the victim, in any setting, including but not restricted to work and home; may be regarded as sexual violence (Jewkes, Sen and Garcia Moreno, 2002).

Individual, relationship, community and societal factors increase men's risk of committing sexual violence. Sexually violent males tend to consider victims blamable for the acts of sexual violence without bringing the impact upon them into cognition. They misinterpret cues of females and may lack reticence for subduing aggression and sex. They have coercive sexual fantasies. They are hostile and impulsive towards female and males who do not share their views. These are fueled even more through pornography. Alcohol and drug consumption clouds one's judgment and awakens their animosity. Men in highly patriarchal arrangements tend to be more inclined in being violent, coercing women abusing intimate partners. People brought up in violent, emotionally unsupportive and scarcity-prone environment tend to become violators. Males who experienced sexual violation themselves have a chance of turning into sexual predators in the future. Not only members of a society, but also a family is seen to blame a female victim for 'losing honour' of the family instead of punishing the male violators. Families associate 'shame' with sexual violence and create a climate of impunity and the well-being of the females and victims become trampled under a false sense of honour. Poverty is associated with the perpetration of sexual violence as well as the risk of being a victim of it. Connection between poverty and perpetration of sexual violence is unpaired through outlines of crisis of masculine identity. Earlier generations presented masculine 'success' chiseled by material consumption, misogyny, substance abuse, participation in crime, xenophobia and racism. Overall tolerance of sexual violence and absence of support from police and judicial systems took this negativity even further. Male superiority and male entitlement to sex astoundingly shake up the probability of sexual violence taking place. Society legitimises the wrongdoing of men and dilute the cries of female even in formal settings. So, members of the society are less likely to oppose against a violence in procession and more drawn to terrorise and belittle the victim by stripping their rights due to weak laws, practices and policies (Jewkes, Sen and Garcia-Moreno, 2002).

Social context and challenges that adds to the vulnerability of females are low status of females, silence and shame, and sexual double standard. Socially, females are given low if not any status, making them vulnerable to violence. Assigned low status of female's conditions them to inferiority while shredding them of choice, opinion and the voice to question male authority. So, females fail not only in restricting sexual advances but also in recognising those. Owing to their subordination, being vocal about abuses, particularly sexual violence against females brings about shame and other negative effects like threats, attacks, seclusion for both the victim and the protestors. Dressing, interaction, sexual history and other aspects of only the females are treated as a social concern and are used against them when violence take place to absolve the male criminals of any blame. Instead of serving justice, females are shamed for 'attracting unwanted attention' (United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), 2010).

Patriarchal masculinity is one of the many forms of existing masculinities. It may be used to expound the ideas and practices of masculinity that stress upon the superiority of masculinity over femininity and the authority of males over females. It appropriates that male are superior and must always hold the dominant state. Females are to be always accounted as sub-ordinate. So, men will always have an upper hand and everything concerning women is inferior. These ideas and practices maintain inequality (among males and females) and violence against females. Violence mostly comes from men. Violence is done by men to assert their power. Women are positioned to have less if no power in the realms of society, economy, politics and others. Patriarchal masculinity legitimise atrocity of men. Thus, patriarchal masculinity is harmful for males and females (Greig, 2016).

There exist different forms of masculinities that vary across time, culture and the individual. One of such masculinity is hegemonic masculinity that appropriates the dominant state of males in the society and validates the subordination of marginalised and less privileged populace, primarily the females. Everything concerning males is considered superior and affairs of females are labelled as inferior. Men retain dominant social roles over women, and other gender identities, which are supposed as "feminine" in a given society. The conceptual beginnings of hegemonic masculinity represented the culturally idealised form of manhood that was socially and hierarchically exclusive and concerned with bread earning; that was anxiety-provoking and differentiated. The men were expected to be violent, brutal, tough, psychologically contradictory, pseudo-natural, financially rich and socially sustained (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005).

Universally, there has been an asymmetry of power based on sex. Power and value is tilted towards the males, not only because of the biological “givens” of human nature, but also the changeable patterns of human, social, psychological, and cultural experience. This becomes the base for distinguishing men’s and women’s spheres and assigning genders (Ortner, 1972).

According to American feminist writer, educator, artist, and activist, Katherine Murray Millett, the man-woman relationship is profoundly implanted in power structures with political implications. Hence, she coined the term, “sexual politics” (Women's History Month: Kate Millett, 2012). She viewed patriarchy as a political institution that depended on subsidiary roles of women. Social institutions serve as tools for the manipulation of power. Women were afflicted with falsely constructed ideas of what was feminine (Mambrol, 2016). Every block of culture and society operated as per sexual politics that directed women in the adoption of their inferiority until it became psychologically ingrained. Literature was recognised as a means of political ideology as it recreated sexual inequalities and reinforced patriarchal values of society (Millett, 2016).

Edwin Ardener, a British social anthropologist and academic initiated the formulation of the muted group theory which unfolds that certain class of the society are muted (Callan, 2021). Male is the overriding class. Females are dependent on the male bread earners who overpower them, creating societal divisions. The women live with the attitude where her views are muted when vocalised and commonly choose to adapt with the situation (Matveev and Nelson, 2004).

Martha Nussbaum is one of the world's most influential living moral philosophers. She is the current Ernst Freund Distinguished Service Professor of Law and Ethics at the University of Chicago. According to her, violence against women is a worldwide dilemma of mammoth scale as it constantly threatens all their considerable capabilities. The capabilities approach is vital for narrating the damages resulting due the violence and formulating the most effective recommendations for tackling it. But, the capabilities approach will be effective in this expanse only if it raises compelling points against cultural relativism and in favour of a context-sensitive universalism, and only if it is eager to produce some claims, albeit humble and revisable, about which capabilities are most worthy of state protection, as fundamental entitlements of all citizens (Nussbaum, 2005).

A string of incidents that were inspected in connection to the above enunciation are presented. A bus helper was given a three-day remand in a case

filed against him for verbally abusing a Dhaka University student (The Daily Star, 2015). A student at Sylhet Agricultural University lost his life as he was thrown off a bus by the helper and crumpled under the rear wheels in Nabiganj upazila of Habiganj (The Daily Star, 2019). The conductor and the helper of Suprobhat Paribahan bus that killed Abrar Ahmed Chowdhury, a student of Bangladesh University of Professionals student gave confessional statements in the filed case (Dhaka Tribune, 2019). Four months of imprisonment was given to a helper for stalking a woman passenger in a bus in Chattogram city (Daily Sun, 2019). Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) members detained 11,500 Yaba tablets from an AC coach of Sohagh Paribahan in Mahipal of Feni and held the helper (Bhuiyan, 2019). A helper tried to strangle a female student of Chittagong University (CU) on his moving bus in the city when she was the only passenger onboard. She was denied getting off the vehicle and managed to escape with bruises all over the body (Prothom Alo English, 2019). A bus driver and helper of Shapno Paribahan attempted to rape a woman on a running bus in Gior upazila when everyone else got off. She was thrown off the bus when she started screaming (United News of Bangladesh (UNB), 2019). A driver and helper duo teamed up and raped a young female nurse on her way home in Kishoreganj's Katiadi upazila at night. The duo denied the accusations after being arrested. The victim's body was found in a short distance from her residence (Jagoroniya, 2019). A bus helper was hit to death allegedly by a passenger at Mithapukur upazila of Rangpur at an evening who got infuriated upon being asked to get down from the roof to sit inside the as it had room inside (NTV Online, 2015). Four transport workers gang raped a female readymade garments worker on a moving bus in Tangail's Dhanbari area in the early hours of April 2016. The convicts escaped after taking turns in agonising the victim and abandoning her in an isolated area of Tangail-Mymensingh highway at Modhupur. Afterwards, the woman was admitted to the General Hospital in Tangail by her husband upon finding her. In 2019, a court in Tangail sentenced the jailing of the convicts. Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunal Judge Begum Khaleda Yasmin also fined them Tk 1 lakh each (Al Numan, 2019). About 100 nurses under the banner of Bangladesh Nurses' Association (BNA) made a human chain in front of Jatiya Press Club demanding speedy trial and exemplary punishment of the culprits involved in the rape and murder of Tania, the nurse (The Daily Star, 2019).

Information is shaped in a way that it articulates how females fall victim to sexual violence in most cases. It articulates in limited cases, how men and other factors including socio-polito-economy and deep-rooted cultures and practices are responsible for stirring up vehemence. So, violence against the

females is a passive construction which leaves these elements out of the picture. This phenomenon is so engrained in civilisation that, a much-needed shift may seem unpalatable to the masses, adding to the complexity of the predicament.

### **Objectives of the study**

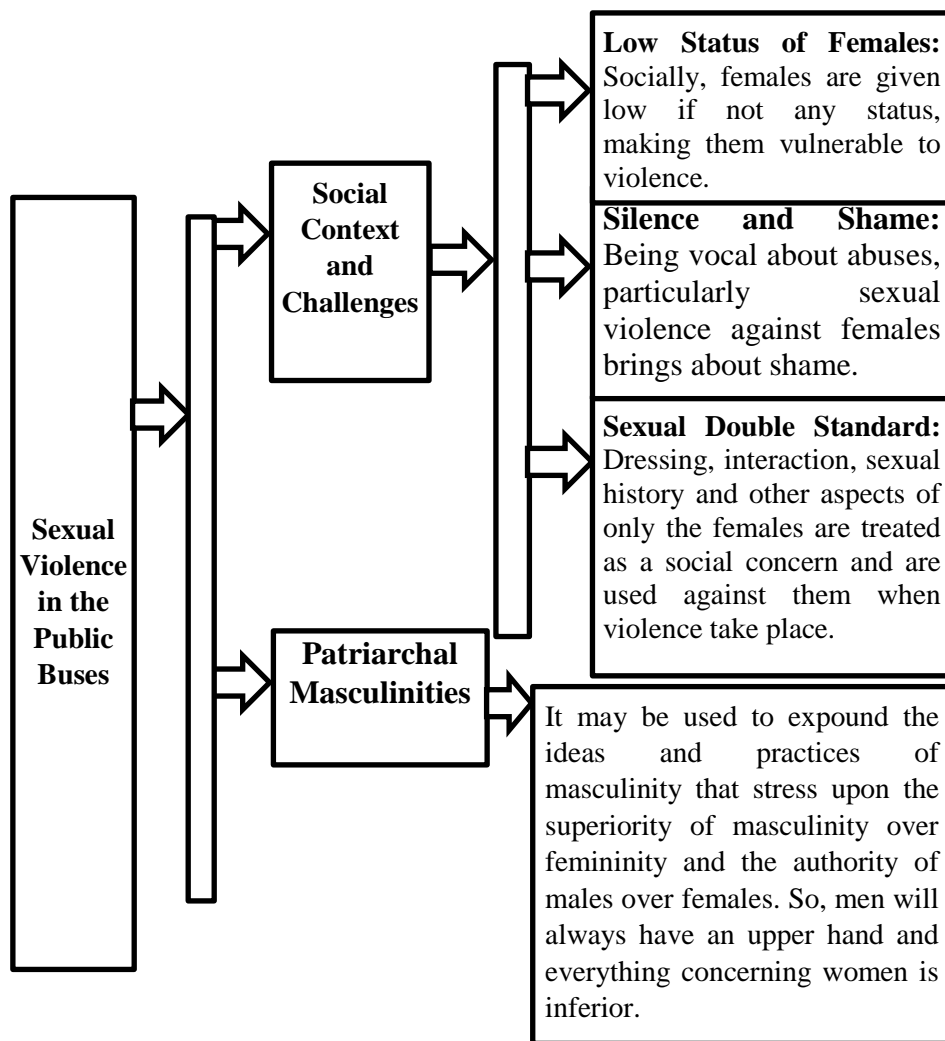
The broad objective of this study is to take an account of the perception and everyday experiences of sexual violence in public buses revolving around the exchanges of undergraduate female students. The specific objectives are:

1. To explore the reasons that make particular communities more susceptible to sexual violence in public buses
2. To unveil how inconsistencies in policies adds to sexual violence in public buses

### **Conceptual Framework**

A conceptual framework has been sketched as an analytical tool used for comprehensively assessing sexual violence in the public buses of Dhaka North City Corporation and understanding the experiences of female undergraduate students.





**Figure 1:** *Conceptual Framework (Source: Researchers' Construct)*

The constructed conceptual framework eases the accounting of the perception and everyday experiences of sexual violence in public buses revolving around the exchanges of undergraduate female students. Mindfulness about social context and challenges and patriarchal masculinities allow, the exploration of the reasons that make particular communities more susceptible to

sexual violence in public buses; and unveiling how inconsistencies in policies adds to sexual violence in public buses. Findings of United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), (2010) and Alan Greig (2016) are used in the formulation of the conceptual framework.

### **Methodology**

The paper is strongly grounded on qualitative but also features quantitative data. Qualitative approach is useful as the research is exploratory and descriptive in nature. It is designed to gain knowledge about underlying reasons, opinions, and impulses surrounding sexual violence in the public buses. The qualitative approach is helpful for acquiring insights and coming up with sensible solutions for lessening and eliminating sexual harassment in public buses. Again, qualitative approach is favoured as the paper deals with human experiences which are not quantifiable.

After literature review, the research gap was identified and conceptual lenses were incorporated, that steadied the research area. Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) is taken as the study area. This is because, all previous attempts of assessing sexual harassment occurring outdoors of Dhaka, that has been explored, targeted only a few places scattered around Dhaka City. This paper attempts to produce a greater picture with connectivity. Few researches demonstrated that, sexual violence took place in some selected areas of the concerned city corporation. Again, the researchers of present study live at certain places of the Dhaka North City Corporation. These factors motivated them to conduct the research in this area. It is an autonomous body that governs 54 northern wards with varying characteristics. Special emphasis has been given upon a bus route (stretching from Mirpur-12 to Asad Gate of Mohammadpur via Mirpur-10, Kazipara and Shewrapara) of DNCC to extract information about it. The public bus services of the concerned area have been used for all the trips and it is also studied.

At the second stage, the researchers adopted purposive sampling for selecting the interlocutors. To reflect their research objectives, they have selected the interlocutors based on some criteria, for instances, the respondents were females, and studied undergraduate programs, and who frequently traveled by bus for going to their educational institutions which are in the DNCC area. These selected students possess different socio-economic backgrounds, irrespective of their religion, parents' income and ethnicity etc. Verification is done throughout the entire research via consultation and cross-checking. The research is designed to be an empirical one as it is dedicated in generating knowledge that may be beneficial to disadvantaged populaces.

The research is formulated with the integration of both primary and secondary data. The researchers conducted 25 in-depth interviews from the purposively selected students and, two focus group discussion (FGD)s, that served as the sources of primary data. Participant observation is also conducted. Secondary data is availed from articles, books, reports, newspapers, and websites.

Throughout the research, the Principles of Professional Responsibility on Ethics, as prescribed by the American Anthropological Association (AAA) has been upheld. So, the participants of the in-depth interview have provided oral consent to be a part of it. They are ensured that their identities will not be disclosed, and their provided information will be used for academic purposes only.

To trace the salient themes and patterns from the discussions of the interviews and observations, we analyzed the data thematically. Employing thematic analysis, we were able to show the patterns of similarities and differences of data we collected. We adopted analogue system in sorting, structuring, organising, and coding qualitative data. Afterwards, we segmented the collected data and formulated subgroups to narrow them down. In doing so, we have been able to identify specific interview themes and made meaningful analytical units. The thematic presentation of collected data facilitated us to structure the data in the concise and limited space.

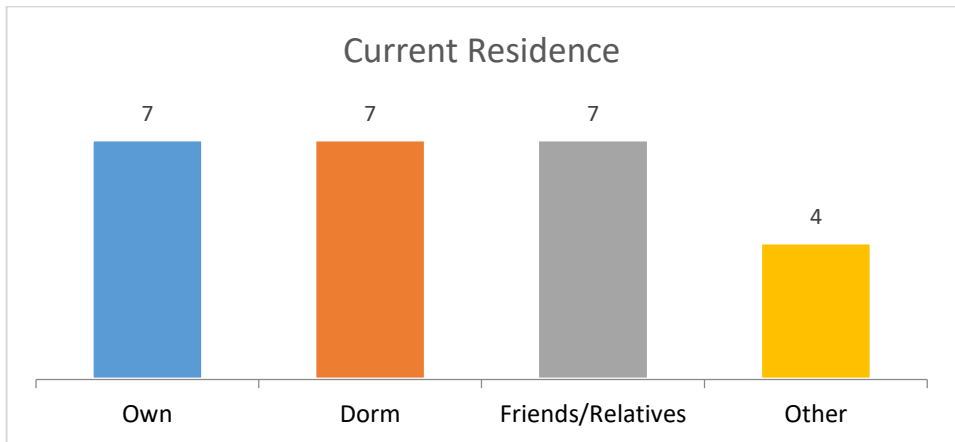
## **Findings, Discussion and Analysis**

### ***Bus Journey and Experiences of Female Undergraduate Students***

Most local buses of Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) are dirty, unfit, and raggedy with small and big dents, scratches and other signs of impact; and often stored with improper items like tyres, gallons; in addition to being littered by garbage such as peanut shells, cigarette ends etc. Getting on and off and maintaining a proper position in those recklessly driven buses may seem challenging even to a young and able male. The trickiest and most uncomfortable seats are allotted especially for females, children and differently able people. The drivers, helpers and passengers are seen to harass the females by staring, touching, poking, elbowing, making lewd comments and so on. Females are slyly touched in backs and waists and are weighted upon. Often, these are guised as casual behaviour and assistance. The violence can escalate to rapes and gang rapes which mostly goes unpenalised. Material arrangements work in favour of the violators.

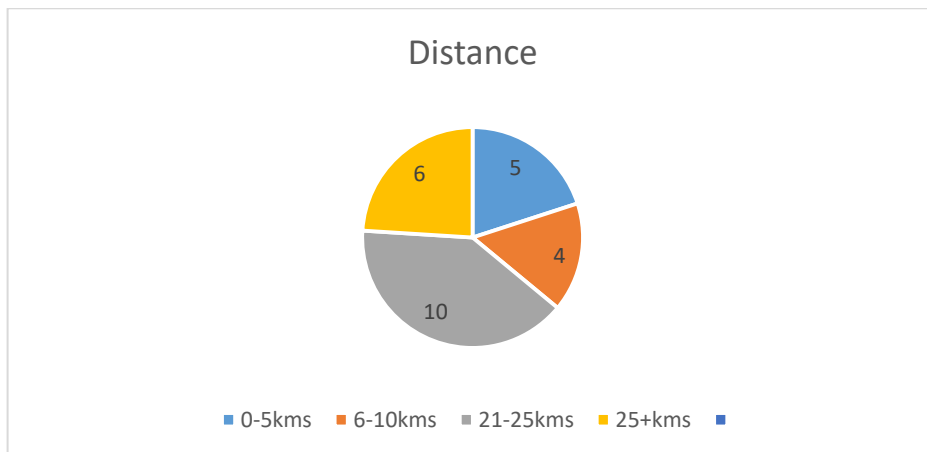
A student may be regarded as a person enrolled in an educational institution who attends classes in a course (Definitions.net, 2019). A student who is studying for their first degree at a college or university is regarded as an undergraduate (Undergraduate, n.d.). Female undergraduate students of different academic years from various educational institutions of Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) have been made part of in-depth structured interview and focus group discussion (FGD)s to uncover real-life experiences. The students are of different socio-economic conditions.

Students who have been interacted with are diversified residences. Seven of them live in their own houses while the same number of students are staying at the dorms of the educational institutions or at the houses of their relatives or friends or have chosen other lodging facilities. Students tend to move out of their own houses for smoother access to their educational institutions.



**Figure 2:** *Current Residence*

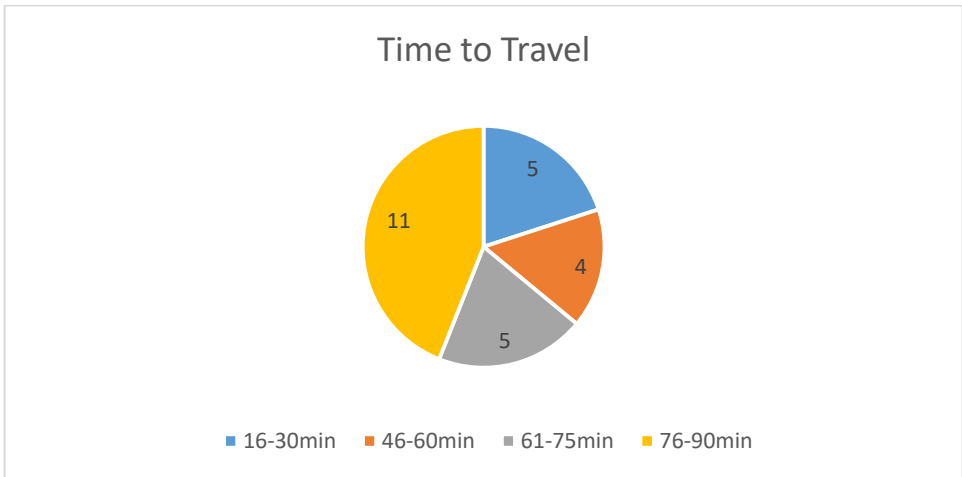
The distance between the current residences of the female undergraduates and their educational institutions vary. This variance in distance changes the experiences. Usually, ones who are to traverse larger distance are more susceptible to violence.



**Figure 3:** *Distance between Residence and Educational Institution*

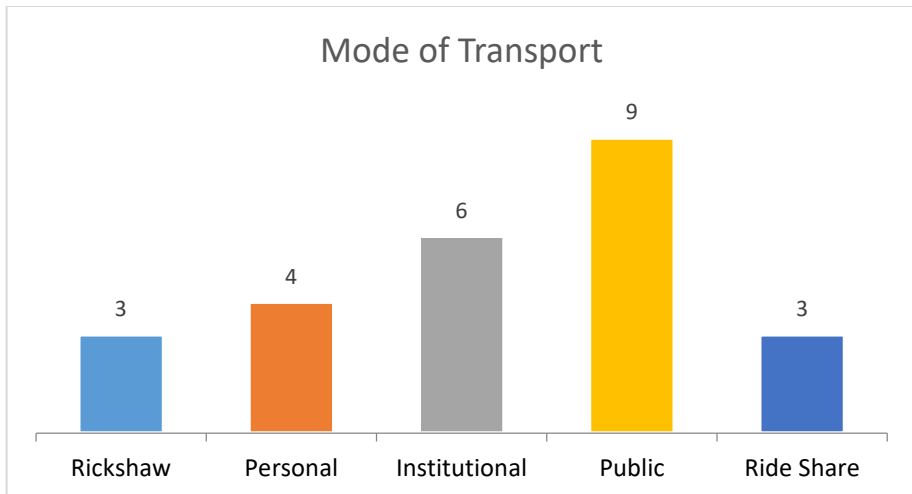
About half of the female undergraduates need to travel a distance of 21-25kms to get to their educational institution from their residence. An interlocutor said, “I have vowed never to close my eyes when I am on a public bus, no matter how long a journey is. A friend of mine who only rested her eyes for mere fifteen seconds found out someone scissored the back of her kamiz. May be for a split second, I let my guard down and the pervert sitting behind groped me. I returned home and discovered his fingerprints which still stained my waist. I never want to live that again.”

The distance needed to travel heavily influences the time required to travel. Longer travel time not only exhausts the students but also compels them to commute in dark and in isolated public buses for hours when they feel comparatively unsafe. Greatest share of the females spends 76 to 90 minutes in traveling.



**Figure 4:** *Time to Travel*

Diverse mode of transport is used by the students. Out of the twenty-five surveyed students, nine use public transport or public buses i.e., the most unsafe variable. Institutional transport which is deemed to be much safer is only availed by six of them. The largest share of them do not have any personal transport. Only four of the interlocutors confirmed the accessibility of personal vehicle.



**Figure 5:** *Mode of Transport*

Out of the twenty-five interviewed students, twenty-two need to rely on multiple transports to get to their institution. Generally, it is seen that they have to take a rickshaw or a tempo or leguna along with a bus. The bus may be a public one or from their institution.

All of the students confirmed their preference for gender segregated public buses. One of them said, "I hate sitting close to men. They do not have the slightest courtesy. They spread their legs so wide that it eats up my space and their body uncomfortably touch mine. When I request them to sit properly, they act as if theirs is the only way to sit and it is extremely arrogant and insensitive of me to even speak about it. Sometimes, they pretend to be asleep and slant on my body." Eight seats are allotted in total for female and differently able people. But this is not the solution. Rather, changes can be made in seating arrangements. Seven out of the twenty-five females confirmed spending more on transport than their male contemporaries. As, the females feel unsafe in public buses, they have to settle for alternate modes of transportation such as CNG auto-rickshaw, ride sharing apps and so on which increases the travel expenditure. It is due to this increased expenditure; most females refrain from alternate safer transports sacrificing their safety.

Unanimous agreement was witnessed when all of the interlocutors ranked public buses as the most unsafe means of transportation when given a choice consisting of walking, rickshaw, personal vehicles, and institutional buses; and they affirmed feeling unsafe traveling at night and their dissatisfaction at the behaviour of the driver and staff of public buses. One of the interlocutors said, "The helper kept staring at my chest while I proceeded to give him the fare. He clenched into my palm as he received it. He even acted as if the pressure from the standees was about to make his body collapse over mine."

Twenty-three out of the twenty-five students faced harassment while commuting. It is found that, thirteen and six students respectively face harassment frequently and always. Two students reported of occasional harassment while only four reported of not facing it. The largest proportion of the females: eighteen out of twenty-five undergo both verbal and physical harassment. Nine out of the twenty-five interlocutors do not protest or resort to silent departure while thirteen of them protest verbally and only three of them took part in physical protest.

### **The Transport Policies of Bangladesh**

A law, regulation, procedure, administrative action, incentive, or voluntary practice of governments and other institutions may be regarded as a policy (Definition of Policy, n.d.). Like other sectors, Bangladesh has formulated policies for transport.

***The Project on the Revision and Updating of the Strategic Transport Plan for Dhaka.*** The Project on the Revision and Updating of the Strategic Transport Plan for Dhaka discourses upon Dhaka Transport Coordination Authority (DTCA), Dhaka Mass Transit Company (DMTC), Bangladesh Railway (BR), Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA), city corporations of Dhaka, Narayanganj and Gazipur. It also confers operations of Rajdhani Unnayan Katripakkha (RAJUK) and other organisations. DTCA is to serve as a regulatory organisation that handles policy formulation for legal and institutional framework of MRT/BRT. It positions centrally for policy development and planning, research, training, and coordination for traffic and transport. DMTC is accountable for safety regulations, maintaining database, enforcement, information technology, and human resource management. The operations of BR is restricted to transporting passengers and goods within the country with limited shuttle services in Dhaka-Narayanganj and Dhaka-Gazipur route. So, it is not meant to serve the urban transport system yet. BRTA acts as the regulating body of the government for many activities and functions connected to motorised vehicles throughout the country. Its activities also stretches to the management of licenses for vehicles and driving. The objectives of RAJUK include strategic planning, planning of area, land use, zoning, major roads, link roads, bridges and culverts (Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and Dhaka Transport Coordination Authority (DTCA), 2015).

***Bangladesh Transport Policy Note.*** Bangladesh Transport Policy Note pontificates about the background, evaluation, challenges and national and international organisations involved with the transport sector in Bangladesh. It also outlines the priorities promoting economic growth and alleviating poverty. The transport sector in Bangladesh falls short in providing equitable services and opportunities due to dense population and inhospitable environment. This can be taken care of by sustaining economic growth via mutually beneficial trade and transit in South Asia and actions for alleviating poverty by strengthening governance. The roads are still unsafe despite improvement in networks. The objectives of the government's policy for the transport sector; spelt out in the National Land Transport Policy include facilitating dependable



and safe transport services and refining the regulatory and legal framework. Integrated Multimodal Transport Policy was designed to attain more rational and balanced investments across transport modes and gain better coordination (Transport Unit, Sustainable Development, Department South Asia Region, 2009).

The existing transport policies are comprehensive and the responsibilities of each sector, organisation and concerned people is well-distributed and distinct. The progress and the steps taken are documented. The human aspect of improvement of the sector is concerned about faster transport, improved roads, affordability, trade and commerce. Safety is pronounced in the papers but it fails to explain the dimensions of it. Crimes that take place on a regular basis are not listed. Even steps needed for the minimum comfort of the passengers and drivers are not addressed. Gender lenses has never been used. People are only classified on the basis of their economic status, involvement in business and trade and urban-rural nature. Trips that are of comparatively short distance and more frequent in nature are rarely addressed.

### **Causes of Sexual Violence**

The prime cause that may be taken as the only reason for the occurrence of sexual violence is the presence of a demonically twisted offender with perverted mentality, which is often tied to sex and power motives, operated by inflated male egos and setting, that equate their 'success' with having intercourse and delegate the male entitlement by justifying their ruthless streaks of grave sexual violations. Natural reactions of females are labelled as 'inviting' and their silence is taken advantage of.

Drivers, helpers and passengers are often intoxicated and deviated by pornography. There is no system of checking the soberness of potential violators. Taboos (ever intensifying with the absence of sex education) centering around sex restricts the victims and their supporters to protest against the violence of the offenders. Alternately, the violators are advantaged due to this and the general acceptability of male misconduct and female aponia. A female victim is blamed for 'losing honour' instead of enforcing punishment to the male violators. Families associate 'shame' with sexual violence and create a climate of impunity and the well-being of the females and victims become trampled under a false sense of honour. So, the predators engage in sexual violence knowing that the female victims can easily be overpowered. Even if their actions are disclosed, the victims are likely to keep mum, or they can easily get away with their crime. The males of the bus tend to be sexually frustrated and hunt opportunities to nullify it by attacking females. Criminal

networking, lawlessness and slow judicial system, devaluation of consent, absence of gender-sensitive lens and scope of female input adds to the plight.

The material arrangements such as the design and the norm of internal functioning of buses and everything concerned with it are not in favour of the females. There lies inconstancies in policies. The recruiters or the bus owners are reluctant to thoroughly inspect the aspects of the drivers and staffs needed to ensure the utmost safety of the passengers. There is no form of record keeping in the public buses aimed at the safety of the passengers, particularly, the females. For any query, assistance or complaint, the passengers have shout out to the helpers who is mostly unwilling to respond.

### **Recommendations**

Actions must be taken at the earliest time possible to eradicate sexual violence against the female undergraduates and every other community and individual in public buses and every other spheres. The narrative may sound overly ambitious, but it is not entirely unfeasible.

As mentioned earlier, the only reason for the occurrence of sexual violence are the offenders and their perversion, which may be prevented by creating a climate of cooperation and understanding while providing education, healthy entertainment and instilling morality by brushing off age old corrosive ideologies. Males are to be moulded humble, cooperative, considerate and empathetic beings by scrapping their egos and entitlements and setting healthy goals and notions of successes. This is because, violence against the females is a passive construction which dissociates the male involvement. Alcohol, drugs and other intoxicants are to be made inaccessible as those cloud judgment and awakens animosity. Counselling is needed for victims, offenders and relevant personnel like their family, friends, classmates and colleagues. It is also highly relevant in formal settings like educational and religious institutions, offices, ministries, courts, hospitals, police stations and so on. Pornography and other articles that is used to justify deviant and violent behaviour are to be effectively banned. Victims are to be provided with utmost care and support while safeguarding their privacy and preserving their preferences and requirements. Privacy protection has paramount prominence in all domains. Offenders should not only be punished in the highest degree (by upholding law and fast and effective judicial system) but also be socially boycotted. This can be done dismantling criminal networks.

Zero tolerance policies with immediate action and victim safety and support programmes should be implemented in every sector for all forms of sexual offences. The transport policies of Bangladesh need to keep tabs of the

crimes that take place on a regular basis on public buses because, steps required for the minutest ease of the passengers and drivers are not addressed. Gender lenses are to be incorporated since foundations that require the expertise, experience, and insights of females are often driven solely by the males. The material arrangements such as the design and the norm of internal functioning of buses and everything concerned with it are to be shaped in favour of the females, not just for males. Record keeping aimed at the safety of passengers such as who served as the drivers and helpers in which route, how many passengers were boarding etc. may boost the safety and security of passengers. Similarly, databases of sexual violators will keep a check on them. Tracking of public buses and the staffs while they are on duty will undeniably boost the sense of security. For any query, assistance or complaint, the passengers need to shout out to the helpers who is mostly unwilling to respond. These may be addressed by the implementation of an effective system of assistance. The service of public buses should be monitored and evaluated regularly to ensure quality. The recruiters or the bus owners must not to be reluctant to thoroughly inspect the aspects of the drivers and staffs needed to ensure the utmost safety of the passengers. Females prefer exclusive transport for them and gender segregation. Ladies only buses are very limited and available only on a few routes at selected times. More seats are to be allotted for the females in regular buses and those are not to be positioned in the trickiest and most uncomfortable spaces. Other forms of public transport are to be made affordable.

Sex education is to be imparted freely without stigma in family and formal settings. Coupled with healthy entertainment, it can provide opportunities of rationality and mindfulness, allowing growth and positivity. Enlightenment in one's religion may prove vital to restrict oneself from committing offences as well falling a victim as often religious scriptures and teachings are deliberately misinterpreted to justify violence and the superiority of males. Uprooting taboos centering around sex allows the victims and their supporters to protest against violence. Voicing of females is vital as they hold lower position compared to males in individual, family, community and society due to their unequal access to power, prestige and wealth. Consent is to be valued irrespective of gender, class, religion and other social parameters. Actions are to be taken to stop all justifications of sexual violence which is mostly done by questioning the victim's choices.

## **Conclusion**

This study is formulated on the basis of the experiences of the female undergraduate students of Dhaka North City Corporation. Perusing education

and residing in the capital is assumed to empower individuals in Bangladeshi context. Unfortunately, having these two boxes checked could not eradicate the sexual violence against them, especially, in public buses.

The startling unsafety existing in Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) takes an even more gruesome turn as it exudes as sexual violence against the females. Fragments of the study are enough to give one the idea of the spine-chilling horrors in the public buses of the area.

All of the students who has been interviewed, designated public buses as the most unsafe means of travelling and are not satisfied with the behaviour of the driver and staff and feel unsafe commuting at night. Traveling by public buses exposes the female students to both verbal and physical harassment and a conspicuous portion can do nothing but clench into their silence; owing to the dormancy of law keepers, system and society and state at large.

This study acknowledges that, sexual violence do not always come from males and the victims are not always females. However, the reverse is true for the cases dealt with in this work. The sexual violators are devoid of humanity and are reduced to only a sex drive and toxicities, opportunistic on satisfying their carnal needs, egos and false sense of entitlement. Nothing justifies their acts of violence. And any entity to advocate otherwise is corrupted itself.

Maladies plaguing the outlook and the way how any subject is dealt with is directly linked to the sexual violence against the female undergraduate students in the public buses. The study area and the entire Bangladesh is tangled in constructs that justify sexual violence, and the use of violence by males to assert their superiority while blaming and shaming the female victims by labeling their natural behaviour as 'inviting'. Dressing, interaction, sexual history and other aspects of only the females are treated as a social concern and are used against them when in violence take place to absolve the male criminals of any blame. The harrowing patriarchal masculinity locates the females to have less if no power in the realms of society, economy, politics and others, while justifying the atrocities of males. This is detrimental for both males, females and the entire society. Elimination of toxic forms of masculinities is the key to social growth and progress, which will come in handy for putting a stop to all forms of sexual violence. It has been unveiled how inconsistencies in policies adds to sexual violence in public buses and how particular communities are more susceptible to sexual violence in public buses.

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# FASS INQUEST

Volume - 1 | Issue - 1 | Oct - 2021

ISSN: 2789-116X



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