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Innovation of Land Administration in Public Service Delivery: An Exploratory Study on Manikganj District

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Abstract

The paper mainly focuses on the innovation of land administration in public service delivery. Here innovation indicates the application of e-governance in land administration. The study operates primarily based on public opinion which collected both from the service recipients and service provider and secondly from the case study titled "Land Record Archiving and Automation of Record Room at Manikganj DC`s office under the Ministry of Land" which was operated through the program titled "Modernization of land management and Registration". Conceptual clarification given in the very beginning part containing governance, e-governance, innovation and public service delivery then a picture has drawn on the current system of land administration service and service set up then mentioned the justification of the application of the e-governance in land administration. The online-based service system's main objective is to develop a computerized system for imaging, archiving, retrieving and printing the necessary papers according to the citizen need for application, and developing an online-based service station for the better service providence in public service delivery.

***Key Words:** Innovation, E-governance, Land Administration, Public Service, Manikganj*

1. Introduction

Public service becomes easier due to use of computerized system with internet. The use of computer with internet has brought a new dimension in global communication which involved almost all kinds of people both from public and private organization. In competitive market citizen can choose better option in order to variation of service delivery but there are some core sectors where only government sector organization provide the service land administration is one of them. Bureaucracies must overcome another impediment to effective renewal. This barrier is the mentality of public officials in their capacity as policymakers and citizens in their capacity as end consumers (Vigoda-gadot et, al. 2005). Under the National information and Communication Technology Policy 2002 government has taken important step to make every sector modified through different innovations and then under the ICT act 2009 government wants to ensure the e-governance in public sector organization. The application of ICT has already been established as an efficient instrument for attaining transparent, accountable, inclusive, and committed governance

in a number of countries (Sharmin and Islam 2013). Land administration is a sector which is the part and parcel of the citizen`s life and many things are related with this directly or indirectly that`s why this is a major sector to give the importance to make sure the digital Bangladesh within the vision 2021. The government is now looking for some innovations to enrich the public service delivery system in Land administration sector which has already started through pilot project in Manikganj district by computerized database of land record papers. Successful application of e-governance in land administration would be a great footstep in modern public service delivery which will make our governance system more easy and powerful and at the same time citizen oriented development approach will be ensured.

Citizens are the nucleus of a country. All kinds of policies and government initiatives are taken for the sake of betterment of state`s citizen. It`s clearly known to everyone about the Permanent settlement act in 1793 and then after the period of liberation act the nationalization policy of Bangladesh in 1972 and so on many policies stand a benchmark in land administration but this time for the individual level service providence by the public sector organization and the latest modification about the service system to do better than the previous system. Manual system of land registration and land record even the land management operated under the supervision of Deputy office in district level and Ministry of Land is the supreme authority to supervise it, so now time has come to make this service system by digital process and this is now a public demand. There is a dynamic scenario in many official sector e-governance makes the task very easy and reduce the lengthy process and reduce the consumption of time money and labor. Application of e-governance as an innovation in land administration sectorial service is now a public demand and this is the primary concern of this particular study. This study will try to find out the innovations and new reforms in land administration to meet the expectation of citizen to provide a better service in this solo public service sector. This study focuses the recent innovation in public service delivery and problems whatever citizens are facing in current management system. Gradual improvement is going on through digital database up gradation which is also a part of this study.

2. Literature Review

E-governance is the best footmark in the journey of digital Bangladesh. Application of this electronic governance already made some public organizations more dynamic, on the contrary to the previous scenario to provide public service delivery. Land Administration adopted this mechanism a few moments later after 2009 because there are lots of things to manage to make a run through a new dimension. Due to adaptation lately, there is an unavailability of the written book on the innovation of land administration in public service delivery. Still, some remarkable researches have conducted in very recent time in the region basis and specific service basis perspective. There are a lots of work can found on Innovations in Public Service Delivery even there are several research work in the field of Public Administration. In the arena of international

perspective this is a common scenario, as well as the emerging and evolving in the country like Bangladesh also created a foot step in this sectorial area research.

Literatures are the core fields to discuss and analyze a new field for research. Research gap can be easily found by this process and necessary documents, data which are related to any report paper or studies it could be a crucial point to sum some paper works from different articles and journals. (Hasnat & Siddik, 2018) developed a chronological history of land administration in Bangladesh, where it started from the Aryans and ended till now of Bangladesh government. Recent innovation will create extra value in this historical evolution of land administration in Bangladesh. This study can fill the gap to enrich history.

Mutation is one of the most seeking services in regard to land administration in every context of Bangladesh. (Talukder, 2015) reported an in a general file of overall scenario which was covered a pilot project, he mentioned the fine line between the service seeker and provider, and here demand side is very weak because of their poor knowledge and less educational quality which can't be a push factor and at the same time this service cannot cover the marginalized poor people a well. Officials can lay a complementary role. (Saif & Hawlader, 2018) shows the current status of e-mutation after survey in Pabna & Shirajganj which is an ongoing project under a2i but there is a gap of information also towards servicer seeker; eventually, they properly don't know the application amount proper procedure that's why it tends to costly and time consuming within the malfunctioning practice of service providers. To mitigate this gap right now current study and development should overlook and prescribe the proper solution to accelerate the service towards a people-centric service in a digitalized way.

(Hossain, 2015) conducted a study to oversee the recent improvement in service providence and management in Bangladesh. His study shows that land record management is developed in an integrated way through the Department of Land Records and Surveys (DLRS), which makes the thing easy to update the database by the interconnection of AC land office, zonal settlement office, and Sub-register office. Land Information System (LIS) & Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) are another major development in recent innovations. Some policy initiatives have taken in khas land management and acquisition of land management. All of these initiatives would be more relevant in the light of the digitalized system, which is the contextual demand right now.

(Uddin & Yasmin, 2015) explained their opinion regarding e-governance issues in land administration in Sylhet districtandthey observed some key issues and findings show that both the system and people are in a transitional period. Traditional service and digitalized systems are running at the same time; people are not comfortable with the digitalized system. This study is prompt to see the scene after five years what's going on in other areas outside of this selected area only.

After introducing e-governance in land administration, the government took an experimental project in five moujas in savar upazilla. (Asad, 2013) carried a research in this five moujas to see the status quo though he found so many problems in starting level but interestingly he forecasted some major prospects in this field like automation in land record and updating the database, avoidance of duplication or the multiplication of land ownership through illegal

registration process can be controlled in an innovative land administration system where e-governance will be worked as a filter mechanism. This whole mechanism will bring benefits for the user, officials and broadly for the government itself. To get all the facilities human resource, technical assistance and at the same time both hardware and software development should be needed.

Paper-based documentation is an ancient system in our land administration where a digital database can be a more dynamic one to provide service and querying anything in a very short time. Land Information System (LIS) is a computerized database where retrieval of information, capturing, and querying info can help analyze different service providence issues. However, there are some unavoidable challenges like technical, institutional and financial issues and most importantly skilled IT-based human resource. Still, you developed after conquering the problems then service will be easier in a very short time (Nahrin & Rahman, 2009).

3. Theoretical & Conceptual Framework

According to Osborne and Gaebler (1992) to improve performance of government services should be result oriented. Services of land administration should be output or result oriented to make sure the citizen centric service.

Max Weber`s (1947) bureaucratic model has several key points: division of work, fixed written rules, records, hierarchy maintenance, merit-based selection, and impersonality to increase any organization's efficiency. In reality, these characteristics cannot be succeed due to lack of incentive to improve and innovate and there is drawback due to fixed rules regulations which create a complexity in delivering service. For strict following the written rules and procedures it creates red-tapism, waste of resource and slowness in service delivery therefore it loses the locus and focus in achieving the organizational goal. On the other hand services in private sector delivery happened in competitive market within efficiency and effectiveness, at the short term period which makes the differentiation between public and private organizations leads a gradual shift from public administration to public management.

Meta theory of e-government by Heeks and Bailur (2007) has three dimensions as like as first dimension refers understanding versus explaining. It's a clear distinction among social constructionist studies and positivists. Whereas second dimension refers the distinction between holism and individualism. Finally the third dimension creates the fine line between management maintenance and change.

In its historical easy "The Study of Public Administration" Woodrow Wilson (1887) highlights what is relevant to the public administration, how the government can accomplish these things effectively and successfully, how it can perform them efficiently, costing money or energy as least to the maximum. The notion of public administration by Woodrow Wilson provides the basis for public administration values and public service delivery objectives.

Innovation comes up to create new dimensions in any organization like both in public and private sector organization. Land administration adopted the dimension of new innovation through the application of e-governance system to digitalize and operate the service to provide a better

service delivery towards the citizen. Here an innovation means the system of e-governance in land administration and its application.

Governance is defined as the set of traditions and institutions by which authority in a country is exercised. It is defined as the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country`s economic and social resources for development (World Bank, Governance and Development 1992, Weltbank, 1996) In other words Governance is a broader concept that encompasses the state`s institutional arrangements, decision making process, implementation capacity and the relationship between government officials and the public. In our context, it can be defined as the process by which governments are selected, held accountable, monitored, and replaced. It can also view as the capacity of governments to manage resources efficiently, and to formulate, implement, and enforce sound policies and regulations.

E-governance was established by linking all transaction areas, compliance / implementation points and data depositors through the use of information and communication technology, to enhance the effectiveness, openness, transparency, and efficiency of government communication between concerned citizens and groups and governments through multiple channels. In order to facilitate their increased engagement in these institutions' governance processes, e-government is the use of ICT by the government, civil society and political institution to engage people through the dialog and feedback. E-governance would improve good governance through technology. E-governance is an important tool for our courageous national journey to better governance. E-governance is typically supplied by electronic means to the public with government services and information. In other words, the use of ICT to facilitate effective governance through improved access to information and greater public transparency to government.

Changing nature creates new dimension in public service system. In traditional service model investment was the main task but nowadays turnover is the main objective of the investment and development perspective. Public service delivery denotes that the proper implementation of New Public Service (NPS) model to provide the service in an easy way with a very cheap coast towards the citizen as well as the customer.

4. Research Method

The study conducted on the basis of both qualitative and Quantitative research method. Data are collected through survey method both structured and non-structured and face to face interviewing with the respondents & also by the group discussion, a single case study has considered as the measurement of status quo of land services. Policy expert's opinion added with this as a recommendation or policy guideline sector. Both primary and secondary data are collected to analyze the innovative initiatives and find a new pathway to make sure the better service delivery in land administration in Bangladesh. Primary data collected from 3 Upazillas of Manikganj district which are Manikganj Sadar, Ghior & Dowlatpur.

5. Current Services Provided By the Land Administration

The most important task of any DC`s office room perform is closely related to land. Most people come to DC`s office to take information regarding land. Specifically, if the land related information is available on the web, especially the record of rights (ROR) then the work load of the DC office will be reduced significantly.

There is an Additional Deputy Commissioner (Revenue) under Deputy Commissioner for running the land administration in every District. Through different sections in his office, different land related services are provided. He supervises the land offices at the Upazila and unions along with the following sections with Land Administration.
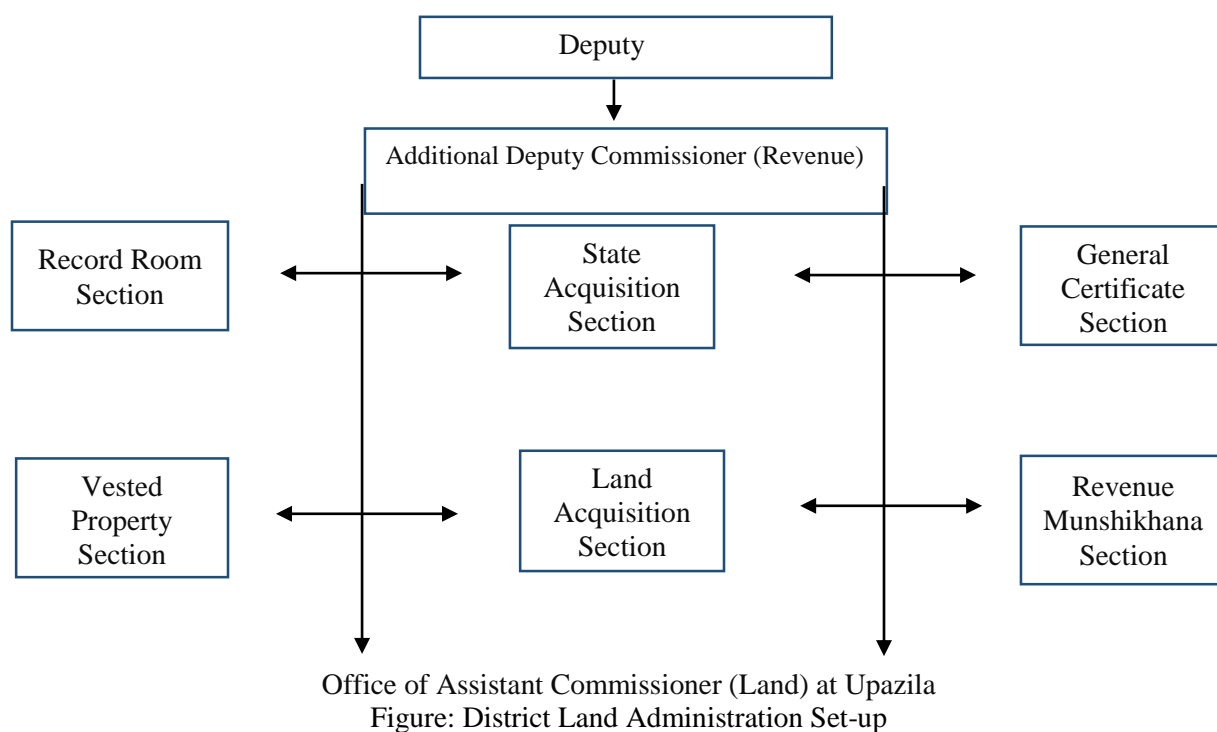

Office of Assistant Commissioner (Land) at Upazila
Figure: District Land Administration Set-up

5.1 Jobs Performed by the Record Room:

This section maintains all land related records. This includes the maintenance and security of maps and all volumes of CS (Cadastral Survey), SA (State Acquisition), and RS (Revisional Survey) records. Besides, it performs the following functions: Issue hand-written duplicate after verification of records, sell land maps and supply for official work, preserving supplying of certificate copies of CS, RS, PS, and BS khatiyan, preserving and supplying of RS, PS, and BS *mauja* maps , supply certified copies of any public document.

5.2 Tasks performed by State Acquisition Section:

Management of abandoned properties, Settlement of non-agricultural government-owned land, eviction of illegal public land possessors, management of Upazilla-wise agricultural government-owned land.Management of Waqf, Debottor and trustee properties, collect of land revenue from different sources. Settlement of government-owned land, supervision of Mutation cases done by the Upazila ofices. Settlement of Sairat Mahal, hat-Bazar-Chandina-Viti&different cases for the change of class of hand

Revenue munshikhana deals with the civil suits in favor of the government& affidavit of civil suits. General certificate section collect the revenue as per the provisions of Public Recovery Act 1913.

5.3 Tasks performed by Land Acquisition (LA) section:

Conducting inquiry before acquisition, determining compensation to the land-owners for acquired land. Acquiring buildings and installations for different purposes, Allocating land for government officers and industry. Relinquishing excess land to the owners.

5.4 Application of E-Governance in Land Administration
Real Cost of Government Services

The justification for e-governance systems from an analysis of the real cost of obtaining government services. In the traditional administration Delay and uncertainty, lack of transparency, corruption, mistrust/ill-treatment at the offices, loss of wages / productivity of the citizen / business, cost of travel and stay at the place at service.

It is observed that the quality of service provided by the land administration (office of the deputy commissioner and AC Land office) is not good and citizen friendly. The first and foremost reason is land records preserved in district land office are not digital and electronic, after introducing the digitalization process there are lots of mistakes happened in data input system which creates lots of problems both for the service provider and the service recipient in their tasks. People do not feel happy to go to the offices for the purpose of submitting an application, for complaining or for certified copies. For the lack of easy access to land related information land related disputes are so frequently observed in Bangladesh. Almost 90% of the civil suits and about 80% of the criminal cases emerge from land related disputes.

In this context, to make the land administration more citizen-oriented, application of e-governance is a must thing to do. Besides, regional land administrative sectors frequently alleged

for administrative corruption, bribery and extortion which not only undermine the efficiency and effectiveness of government but also make the citizens suffer a lot. For the following grounds, application of e-governance in land administration is justified: a) Land is still the prime source of prestige and financial strength of the general people as well as the elite people. B) Our administration has no alternative in future but to adapt with the future electronic service delivery system. C) Land administration is the major part of the entire administration. So, e-governance in administration reasonably indicates greatly to the land administration.

Besides, land administration of Bangladesh could not be modernized after many initiatives and to give people their service we have no option but to adopt internet and web assistance in delivering some of the substantive land services.

DATA ANALYSIS

Collected data are divided into two major parts, one is service provider perspective and another is service recipient perspective. Data collected from 3 Upazila of Manikganj district.

5.5 Service Recipient's Perception

Table 1: Knowledge status about the online service of land administration

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	38	95
No	02	05
Total	40	100

[Source: Field Survey at Manikganj, October-November, 2019]

Table 1 demonstrates that most of the people are familiar with the online service in land administration, it's about 95% are known to this but the problem occurs in procedural sector because only knowledge status can't give you a pathway to accomplish the task in a new dimension.

Table 2: Experience of online based service

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	36	90
No	04	10

Total	40	100

[Source: Field Survey at Manikganj, October-November, 2019]

Table 2 illustrates the experience rate from the citizens about the e-services in land related issues where almost 90% are experienced with this service, it helped to draw a proper evaluation in order to evaluate the newly introduces service management.

Table 3 shows the rating point on the basis of service provided by the officials. Among the experienced people who have already received the service they marked it by a rating system from 1 to 10 where 25% people marked it by giving 7 point, most of the citizens give 6 rating point and 15% citizen think that service is as standard of 5 point. So there are lots of to be improved to get a better rating point which ensures the public service.

Table 4: Extra money payment issue to the duty officer

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Always	17	42.5
Sometimes	19	47.5
Never	04	10
Total	40	100

TABLE **3**: ASSESSMENT OF THE SERVICE BY RATING SYSTEM

[Source: Field Survey at Manikganj, October-November, 20191

[Source: Field Survey at Manikganj, October-November, 2019]

Table 4 depicts that citizens often face some awkward situations by the officials, in most cases they found that officials demand excessive money in regard to provide legal service. Respondent reported that in 42.5% cases officers demands extra money as always and 47.5% cases duty officers often demand extra money that means in 90% cases citizen have to pay extra money which is also familiar as speed money and only 10% cases citizen can get the service in a rate which is fixed by the government authority.

Rating Point on Service
- 7 : 25%
- 6 : 50%
- 5 : 15%
- 4 : 2.50%

Rating Point out of 10
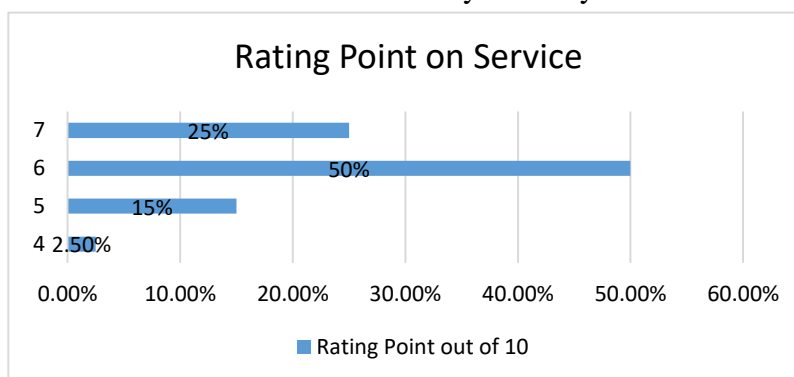
Table 5: Positive facilities

Responses (%)	Frequency	Percentage
Less time consuming	14	35
Less money expenditure	6	15
Can do the thing myself	20	50
Total	40	100

[Source: Field Survey at Manikganj, October-November, 2019]

Table 5 illustrates that people who are aware about the procedural system they can easily access the service which is provided by the land administration. About 50% think that they can easily do it by their own if they can understand the technical issues, 35% of the respondents think that it`s less time consuming rather than the manual service system and 15% think that the rules will reduce the expenditure to get the service easily, but all are still have to properly implemented.

Table 6: Safety measurement

Responses (%)	Frequency	Percentage
Digital	18	37.5
Manual	22	55
Total	40	100

[Source: Field Survey at Manikganj, October-November, 2019]

Although there are both manual and digital database are working, 55% people trust on manual database where 45% trust on digital database. It will be shifted within the changes of knowledge of online system &these credentials have to be earning by developing the quality of services.

Table 7: Satisfaction Level of the Citizen

Responses (%)	Frequency	Percentage
Satisfied	9	22.5
Dissatisfied	12	30
Satisfied for a little bit	19	47.5
Total	40	100

[Source: Field Survey at Manikganj, October-November, 2019]

Table 7 shows that satisfaction level is about 22.5% citizen are happy with the service and sharply 30% citizen are dissatisfied with the service and rest of the citizen are in a middle row who are partially satisfied and dissatisfied also.

Application of e-governance would reduce the corruption in this major sector, it was a very common notion of policy makers but in reality only 12.5% people think that it will work to combat corruption, 42.5% think it will work for little bit that means it will work sometimes and sometimes does not work properly and 37.5% people think it would not never be effective for any time being, this is very alarming. Citizen faces some major problems in a bigger picture which have to mitigate in order to develop the services. In 37% cases they found there is a technical shortage in offices and mostly 55% cases hold the problem of demanding extra money in a whole process comparing with other issues, in 8% cases duty officers don't have enough technical knowledge which is very problematic.

Service Provider's Perception

Graph 1 show that offices in district and Upazila level have quite enough number of computers to provide the services and also to record and update the digital database. Most of the respondent (75%) reported that they have enough number of computers and rest of 25% officials think there should be more computers needed to provide quality services.
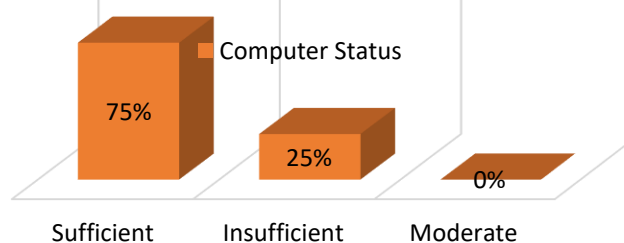
GRAPH 2: STATUS OF HAVING COMPUTER
[Source: Field Survey at Manikganj, October-November, 2019]

Graph 2 denotes that in regard the internet connection almost 85% cases there have the internet connection and in other cases don't have continuous internet connection but a very good sign is all of these respondents ensured that every office has electricity alongside in some cases there is an alternative power energy system.
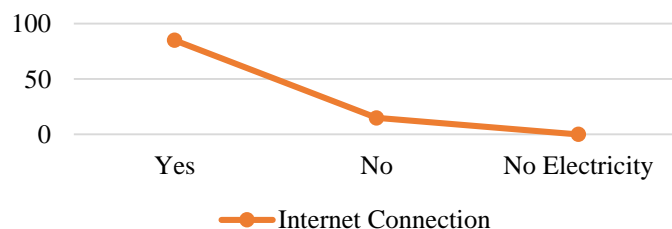
GRAPH 1: INTERNET CONNECTION STATUS

Graph 3: Training status of the officials

Training is an another important thing in this consideration because officers also unknown in this new dimension they have to accustomed with it through training sessions and successfully its going on smoothly. After all of this 65% officers think that their training sessions is enough to provide quality service and 35% other respondents think they need more training and among them 10% also think provided training merely is not enough so, there are lots of improvement needed in training sessions.
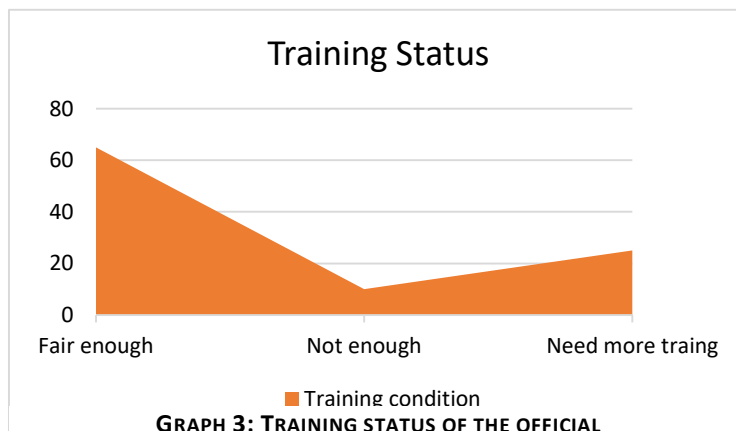
GRAPH 3: TRAINING STATUS OF THE OFFICIAL

[Source: Field Survey at Manikganj, October-November, 2019]

Graph 4: Contribution to combat Corruption

This online based system would reduce the scope of corruption, 90% of the respondent from the service provider supported this notion but this is slightly different illustration on the contrary to the citizen`s perception. There is an another perception which differs from the citizen`s perception and that is service providers think 70% people feel safe and comfortable with the digital database and online-based service whereas citizen often feel less comfortable in comparison of officer opinion
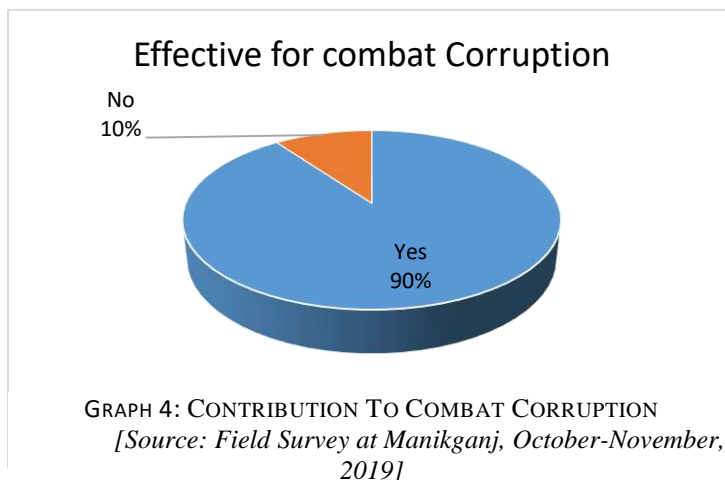
GRAPH 4: CONTRIBUTION TO COMBAT CORRUPTION
[Source: Field Survey at Manikganj, October-November, 2019]

CASE STUDY

"Land Record Archiving and Automation of record Room at Manikganj DC`s office under the ministry of Land."

- **Summary of the Project**

To automate all the RS and CS records of 3 Upazila of Manikgaj. Subsequently, issue porcha and maps electronically printed (Moniruzzaman, 2009). Under SICT Program, the following tasks had been undertaken;

To develop customized application software for imaging, Archiving, Retrieving and printing of Khatiyan and Mouza Maps. Digital image storage of all CS, SA and RS khatiyan records and CS and RS mouza maps for the 3 upazillas Manikganj, Singair and Saturia. Total Khatiyans of those Upazilla are about 2,720 volumes containing about 2.72 lakh 'Khatiyan' records and 550 Mouza maps.Installation of necessary equipments, e.g, Computer Hardware, Software, Accessories etc. will be installed in the record room in Manikganj DC office. Establishment of LAN in the record room at manikganj and also at the Ministry of Land.

- **Description of the Project**

This project was taken under SICT program. The Support to ICT Task Force (SICT) Program is a project initiated by the government of Bangladesh to implement e-governance throughout the nation. SIC`s objectives included development of a new Land Record Management System for the Manikganj Land Record Office in central Bangladesh, enabling the digital storage of maps and associated documents.

- **Government Policy Support**

The national ICT policy of 2002 gives due importance to the issue of e-government, declaring that "the government shall use ICT systems within the public administration to improve efficiency, reduce wastage of resources, enhance planning and raise the quality of service".The policy further states "the government shall implement ICT systems to provide nation-wide coverage and access by any citizen to the government database and administrative systems which can be used to external public services to the remotest corner.

- **Implementation Challenges of the Project**

Manage digital images of maps to determine land ownership. Deliver seamless integration between the image-capture software and the database. Incorporate different security levels to accommodate user privileges. Include an efficient search function with criteria. Employ a non-proprietary data format and enable access by multiple applications for different tasks. Ensure scalability to accommodate growth and migration to higher-capacity server. Provide backup to minimize loss in the event disaster

- **Suggested Solutions**

Engaged Oracle Certified Advantage Partner IBCS-PRIMAX Software to implement Oracle Database 10g Oracle Application Clusters 10g to deliver high availability and scalability using low-cost hardware. Minimized the impact of disasters and ensured rapid recovery with stable database platform and clustered server framework. Reduced forgery with a secure system that tracks user changes. Cut disputes over land, reducing costly litigation. Increased visibility of pending, jobs and enabled easier administration. Improved accountability and governance across the organization. Enhanced employee job satisfaction and citizen confidence in the speed, integrity, and functionality of the system

- **Counting the cost**

The inefficiencies and corrupt practices that have been described I incur heavy costs. Table 1 suggests that land administration by itself accounts for almost 40% of the total cost of corruption at the local level, and this record only he direct payments. If the indirect costs of having to travel to the office of income earning opportunities foregone are also taken into account, a further 60% would need to be added to the expense incurred. But even this does not measure the full cost, since a significant part of the expenditure recorded here as relating to courts, and a smaller proportion of police expenditure, also rise in relation to issues having their origins in land related matters.

- **Assessment of the Project**

The benefits that citizens were supposed to get after successful completion of this project are listed below: Citizen will receive much quicker services in obtaining porchas, they will get a good quality printed and certified copy of Khatiyan / Mouza map, instead of a hand-written copy, the way in which governance can improve after successful completion of this project are, the process of retrieving and printing a khatiyan or map will take much less time, digital storage will prevent tampering of old records

6. Findings and Discussion

6.1 Service Recipients` Perception towards Innovation of Land Administration

Fear of Unknown happened due to the introduction of new technology, changes in procedures and different work assignment which leads to a major or minor resistance. Uncertainly in benefits that may accrue from the new system or a perception that disadvantages outweigh advantages for individuals can also lead to resistance. People still now fell safe in manual process and the rate of interest still more towards the manual way through papers document. The greatest obstacle to apply e-governance in land administration is the negative attitude towards new technology. Besides, the perception that someone else will get the credit for the success of the system can also create resistance in the higher echelons of civil service.

Legally there is a normal range of the service charge and have to maintain it in order to service providence but unfortunately the system is not working, most of the officers demand excessive money to provide the legal service. Where people are not well informed about the new introduced system as a result they are giving the money to get the service. In this digitalization process data are inputted by novice technician in a very short time due to this mismanagement

there are lots of mistake and wrong information in online database. It creates a dilemma in service providence and there is a mismatch happening between the record book of previous 1996 and digital database.

Theoretically this system has to help to reduce the time delay but in reality citizens think that there is no time bound to provide service in certain time where in previous time there is a 7 working days fixed time to get the service in manual land administration system, even this online based system is not able to reach everywhere due to many realistic difficulties. Almost all kind of online services across the country has multiple options even mobile service system, but in this case only official station is authoritative to apply for the service purpose and another thing is that money transaction process can be done only through the Bank Asia which is made up purposively. Public choice theory does not permit this types of procedure.All kinds of data are inputted from the hard copy (manual data). In many cases papers may get tears or become wet even it can be damaged and papers be like RS,BS, CS, Mouza maps and so on, consequently this kind of incomplete information still remains incomplete in digital database. Initiatives to recover the data from the storage of the national storage center is not quite enough, it has to be more precise & purposive to accomplish the task for national development.

6.2 Service Providers` Perception towards Innovation of Land Administration

However, making the scope of a project very ambitious from the beginning increased the risk of failure in implementing. Often a large scope project involves a very large number of stakeholders who are affected by the application. Managing such scale change proves to be difficult. Pilot projects can allow the government to experiment and tailor their product to fit the needs. The safest approach to adopting a new technology with a steep learning curve is to take small steps with activities that are manageable that are within a relatively short frame. There is a number of tasks to perform for citizen`s interest with government initiative. Significant efforts and resources need to spend to make citizens aware of the added advantages that internet channels can offer as opposed to traditional one. The number of access points has sufficient to be within easy reach citizens also need to be trained to negative through service delivery portals. Additional technical assistance may also be needed. The design of the website is critical, it should be simple to reach for information and information should be complete. Many successful portals are seem to be citizen centric because they follow a navigation structure that mimics the life cycle of a citizen.

It is necessary that all documents are automated but only documents which are necessary to complete the whole process of citizen-centric service are necessary. It is also not necessary that the steps in the delivery of a service should be handled electronically. Ensuring shared values with advocates of change creates a sense of ownership that can be generated amongst employees` feedback. Involvement helps shape the new initiative/process/system can contribute to greater acceptance.The expected pay-off and stakeholders' role in terms of new tasks and development of skills is very much necessary. Counseling is often a useful mechanism. It is also necessary to gather stakeholders` feedback on their understanding of these changes. Champions are to be identified

and motivated some useful mechanisms are to be taken to identify champions and legitimize their role.

Identifying obstacle to change in advance of implementation is important as it helps in defining strategies to overcome obstacle. These obstacles may be financial, technical, organizational; social is the presence of anti-champions. The land software incorporates the bio-logon metrics system from Compaq, which authenticates all users of the software using their finger-print. A long is maintained of all transactions in a session. This one makes an officer accountable for his/her decisions and actions. Within all of these, there are some other perspectives which noticed by the service provider officials and these are be like; potential future benefit, provision of lodging a complaint through web, necessary laws has been approved, performance of the office enhanced, cost reduction in service delivery and all over the enhancement in technological performance.

7. Recommendation & Concluding Remarks

The succession of any new system depends on how much this system is accepted by the system's related stakeholders. For making the new invention more acceptable to service recipients, service providers and experts suggested some major recommendations;

First and foremost thing is infrastructural development, nowadays this is not all about making buildings rather it denotes the development with well-organized by the maximum service providence by using the new technologies. Online based service depends on electricity system so, it is highly required to manage the continuous electricity supply in the offices and also make sure the alternative sources like power generator or solar grid or anything like this. Internet connection was used through mobile sim operator. Broadband internet connection already has been available in urban areas and government initiated to introduce internet in union parishad area. Still, actually it does not work as much as the authority expected so, broadband internet connection have to ensure in public offices. It is highly challenging for the official staff to keep the information confidential. In this digitalized system replication of info is very easy; authority should handle it very consciously. Such kind of smart services providing system is still out of knowledge from many citizens in rural areas; it has needed to more publicity and public awareness.

Training and facilitation program should need more and more as much as it become enough to make the system efficient. Continuous foundation training program should be held in different cluster of land administration. Transformational leadership and strategic planning is as always expected from the head of every office affiliated with land administration. On more significant step can be taken which is collaboration with private sectors in order to provide a better service to the citizens because government already have successfully done so many programs in a way of joint operation with private sector organization.

There are many successful stories of innovations in public service delivery all over the world. But IT based innovation depends on the organizational capability and well expert and trained manpower, Country like Bangladesh has to go a faraway to accomplish such kind of

innovation particularly in land administration sector. Bangladesh already successfully implemented it in different official sector and education institutions, one by one and case by case it will going on. Land administration is providing an exclusive service, there is no any private organization in backup with the public sector beyond this recorded file and papers are so vague and long term basis so, successful run of this application of e-services still a challenge to the land administration. Strong organizational commitment and well management can ensure the proper implementation of this special digitalized program in land administration.

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Implementation of Sustainable Development Goals amid Pandemic: Challenges and Prospects

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Abstract

Sustainable development refers to the process of development to meets the needs of the present without conceding the capacity of future generations to meet their own needs. The main aim of this study is to investigate challenges interlinked with the implementation of sustainable development goals (SDGs) due to the crisis of Pandemic and recommend ways of smooth implementation of SDGs amid pandemic. The study has been conducted based on qualitative methods where secondary sources have been used to gather information. The findings of the study revealed the unprecedented challenges and prospects of sustainable development goals during the COVID-19 pandemic in Bangladesh.

Key Words: Sustainable development, Pandemic, COVID-19, Prospects, Challenges.

1. Introduction

The Sustainable Development Goals are visionary agenda to achieve effective and sustainable development in the world. Currently, people around the world are facing multi-faceted challenges including poverty, hunger, climate change, environmental degradation, unrest and conflict etc. It is a matter of great worry to see that a small part of the world is experiencing the most technologically advanced and economically prosperous life while the rest of the world is still lagging far behind the minimum life standard. Considering the situation, a new set of goals emerge as priorities for whole world which are known as SDGs. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are the goals set by the United Nations which is also widely known as global goals. Burgeoning

concern about global environmental degradation, disappointment with development efforts to reduce hunger, poverty and inequality together with economic and socio-political instability has driven the focus from the model of economic growth to the new model of sustainable development. After expiring the MDGs in 2015, world leaders agreed to set new goals for the world and it eventually produced 17 goals set to be achieved by 2030. UN describes these goals as an urgent call for action by all countries - developed and developing - in a global partnership. The SDGs emphasizes on three main issues of economic, social and environmental where development is sustainable and inclusive. Among 17 goals, one of the most important issues is governance which is equally vital to achieving every goals. Good governance is the central focus of sustainability which, as an instrument, helps in overcoming poverty and underdevelopment. On the other hand, sustainable development ideates development strategies that need to solve previous destructive effects on development. The concept of "governance" is not new and is as old as human civilization. According to the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific- 'governance' means the process of decision are implemented (or not implemented). Good governance includes new aspects in this field with several elements of democracy, pluralism, accountability, transparency and the like. It promotes equity, social justice and dignity for the human kind in the society. Bangladesh has gained the reputation of being one of the leading countries of MDGs implementation. It achieved many targets ahead of time and others within the 2015 deadline. Areas of extraordinary progress include poverty alleviation, ensuring food security, primary school enrolment, and gender parity in primary and secondary level education, lowering infant and under-five mortality rate and maternal mortality ratio, improving immunization coverage, and reducing the incidence of communicable diseases. With its success experience, Bangladesh actively participated in the global process of developing the post-MDG agenda with its domestic and global actions. The pre-requisite to achieving the relevant SDG targets is to overcome the key challenges in ensuring access to an effective and participatory governance system. Shortage in human and technical resources at all level in the administration has been constraining quick service delivery to the citizen. In order to achieve SDGs by 2030 all the participating countries are required to mobilize and effectively utilize necessary means of implementation, financial and non-financial, public and private, domestic and international resources. Notably, the non-financial resources can be categorized into domestic policy frameworks, effective institutions and support for good governance, democracy, rule of law,

human rights, transparency and accountability and so on. Although Bangladesh has performed impressively well, it has also embraced many challenges in the areas of resource mobilization in order to implement the required interventions towards achieving the SDG targets. Various data indicate that domestic resources are yet to be mobilized for proper and time-befitting utilization. Incorporating and mainstreaming the SDGs and their targets into the country's national plan is already effectively underway. The government is involving stakeholders to embark on in SDGs implementation with effective drives. It acknowledges that the current status of domestic and external resource mobilization need substantial improvement for ensuring the global goals by 2030. Capacity building of the government agencies and a properly functioning accountability mechanism can significantly improve assurance of ensuring the implementation of SDGs. To build effective, accountable and corruption-free public institutions, the Government has added some governance related innovations. Some of them are Annual Performance Agreement (APA), Citizen Charter, National Integrity Strategy (NIS), and Grievance Redress System (GRS). By applying these tools, the government will ensure creation of more responsive and corruption free public institutions in the future. The government is also prioritizing some areas namely investment in agricultural research and technology to increase food yields, women empowerment, reducing early marriage, strengthening local government institutions, decentralize public institutions to reduce pressure on cities, improvement in management of natural resources, preventing overfishing to protect fish stocks etc. Acknowledging the challenge of coordination of various Ministries and agencies responsible for implementing projects/programmes contributing toward attainment of SDGs and providing data and information for monitoring and evaluation of progress at the national level the government under the leadership of Honorable Prime Minister established an Inter-Ministerial Committee on SDGs Implementation and Review. It clearly demonstrates the commitment of Prime Minister to the greater achievement in SDGs implementation. The Committee comprising Secretaries from 20 Ministries/ Divisions coordinates SDGs monitoring and implementation.

2. Objectives of the Study

   a) To investigate possible challenges interlinked with the implementation of SDGs due to crisis of Pandemic.

   b) To recommend ways of smooth implementation of SDGs amid pandemic.

3. Methodology of the Study

The study has been conducted on the basis of content analysis .Secondary sources of information have been collected and analyzed for investigating the challenges of SDGs implementation amid global pandemic. Different sources of information have also been examined to find out the proper ways of smooth implementation of SDGs within the desired timeframe.

4. Literature Review

"Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (IISD, 2020). It has become a widespread catchphrase in present development dialogue. In the context of development science, the concept of sustainability seems graceful to continue to influence future dissertation. Porter and van der Linde (1995) denote that three consistent domains of sustainability that define the relationships among the environmental, economic, and social aspects of sustainable development which meet the needs of society and are ecologically and economically viable (Justice, 2019).

However, due to the sudden outbreak of Coronavirus (COVID-19), the present world is going through an awful time since the last year. Coronavirus is a disease-causing virus called SARS-CoV-2 that has never been seen in the human body before and it can infect humans very quickly through infection (WHO, 2020).

The existing pandemic has caused the severe emergency in different counties around the world like poverty, hunger, weak health systems and lack of clean water and sanitation, education, and global cooperation (Richard, 2020). In this regard, the implementation of sustainable development goals can be played a significant role to address such issues (Bedford Juliet, Giesecke Johan, & Ihekweazu Chikwe, 2020).

One group of researcher articulate that as Bangladesh is one of the high-risk countries of the COVID-19 crisis, it struggling against this pandemic since March 2020. Due to the sudden outbreak of COVID-19, the socio-economic vulnerability has been increased in Bangladesh. The authors mainly concerned with four areas of vulnerabilities in Bangladesh during pandemic COVID-19 which are related to sustainable development goals (SDGs) i.e the urban slums, garment industry, social exclusion, and pre-existing health conditions. They also concerned about

the implementation of sustainable development goals (SDGs) where they contended that if at least some Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) had been partially achieved in earlier, the crisis would be easily cope up (Sakamoto Maiko & Tofayel, 2020).

Besides, another group of researchers demonstrate that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, trade and business somewhat have been limited and shut down, economies have been on lockdown, education system have been hampered, health sectors have been in danger, and social inequality have been increased, poverty as well as socio-economic vulnerability has increased. In reality, due to the pandemic poor are becoming poorer, and the disparity in the health system is more noticeable. Moreover, the researchers tried to investigate the challenges facing the accomplishment of sustainable development goals like poverty, zero hunger, good health and well-being, quality education, decent work and economic growth, and reduced inequality during the COVID-19 pandemic. Besides, they emphasized on some major aspects of COVID-19 vulnerabilities, such as millions of people lost their jobs, discrimination has been increased in all aspects, and health vulnerabilities have increased. In this regard, they suggest that adoption of innovative ways of living, reassessment of our relationship with nature, tax holidays, and increased budgetary expenditure on concerning issues can address the COVID-19's impact regarding the attainment of SDGs (Jude Chukwunyere Iwuoha, 2020).

Accordingly some expert argue that the sudden outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has modelled a substantial threat to the healthy lives and well-being of billions of people across the world. They also articulate that as the world begins to open up from lockdowns, people are trying to cope up with the new normal life and are starting to the way forward to building a sustainable world. Moreover, the expert believe that in spite of COVID-19's significant damage to human lives and livelihoods, it presents an outstanding prospect for the human being to act in solidarity and turn this catastrophe into a stimulus to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Additionally, the scholars highlighted on more research devotion to deal with attempting SDGs through developing the concept and practice of digital sustainability (Pan L. Shan, 2020).

5. Findings and Discussion

The MDGs initiatives were taken to tackle the indignity of poverty, hunger, averting deadly diseases, and escalating primary education to all children, among other development primacies. After completing the phase of MDGs (2000-2015), the initiatives of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has taken for the period of 2016-2030 for ensuring a set of universal goals that meet

the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations regarding environmental, political and economic aspects.

However, the existing pandemic COVID-19 has imposed several unprecedented challenges regarding the implementation of sustainable development goals. Particularly, the under developing and developing countries are struggling to implement the SDGs' goals during the COVID-19 pandemic. Bangladesh, one of the fastest-growing economies in South Asia, is facing serious challenges regarding implementing the SDGs' amid global crisis like the other countries. Exclusively, SDGs goals no 1 (No Poverty.), 2 (Zero Hunger), 3 (Good Health and Well-being), 4 (Quality Education), 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), etc. are facing greater challenges in the implementation process.

5.1 COVID-19 pandemic has increased proletariats' vulnerability and poverty

The sudden outbreak of COVID-19 has been increasing the crisis of low-income, backward, marginalized people as well as proletariat people of the society. In the latest survey, it has found that more than 49.43 million (Ibrahim, 2020) people are now living in poverty in the country. Besides, it has also found that due to the COVID-19 crisis, as of June, Bangladesh's national poverty rate rose to 29.5% (Ibrahim, 2020). Millions of people lost their jobs and employment opportunity due to this global crisis. Accordingly, at the beginning of the COVID-19 outbreak, the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) in a research finding forecasted that the country's overall poverty would increase by 25.13%, where poverty in rural areas will be 24.23% and poverty in urban areas will be 27.52% (Ibrahim, 2020). The above statistics show that due to the COVID-19 crisis poverty rate is increasing in Bangladesh that also indicates the implementation challenges of SDGs 1 (no poverty).

5.2 Increasing hunger

Hunger refers to the condition in which a person cannot eat sufficient food to meet basic nutritional needs for a sustained period. Zero hunger is the second goal of sustainable development which main aim is to remove the food crises around the world. Currently, the world is not on track to achieve Zero Hunger by 2030 due to the pandemic COVID-19 crisis which has made some unexpected challenges regarding the implementation of sustainable development goals. If the destruction of pandemic COVID-19 continues, the number of people affected by hunger would surpass 840 million by 2030 (UN, 2020). Moreover, The World Food Programme (WFP) illustrates that due to man-made conflicts, climate change, and economic downturns, 135 million (UN, 2020) suffer from acute hunger largely. In this regard, now the existing COVID-19 pandemic

could double that number where putting an additional 130 million people at risk of suffering acute hunger around the world by the end of 2020.

However, though the existing scenario is somewhat relaxed, the COVID-19 scenario has had a serious impact on the poverty dynamics in Bangladesh which has brought the country's economy to a standstill. Small businesses, inexperienced, and experienced labor are being the hardest suffering regarding the COVID-19 crisis. That's why the marginal, poor, and backward' sections are falling into economic crisis as well as a food crisis. In statistics, it has found that due to decreasing purchasing power, per capita food expenditure has dropped during the pandemic. Besides, 30% (Express, 2020) of households reduced food consumption to cope with the decline in income. Moreover, the statistics showed that 11% of urban slum-dwellers and 6% of rural residents (Express, 2020) did not have three meals during the pandemic. Especially, in the very beginning of the COVID-19 outbreak, it had found that for 73% (Express, 2020) of vulnerable non-poor people income had come much below the poverty line that is unexpected for a developing country like Bangladesh. However, it is clear that the pandemic is changing the extent and nature of poverty in Bangladesh which is also severely hampering the implementation of the 'Zero Hunger' goal of sustainable development.

5.3 Healthy lives and well-being threat

Ensuring health and well-being are essential at all levels throughout the world for sustainable development. It is one of the significant sustainable development goals established by the United Nations. The main aim of this goal is to focus on various aspects of healthy living and promote wellbeing at all ages. This goal is also faced crises like other SD goals that increasing human suffering and upending the lives of billions of people around the world. Before the pandemic, many progressive steps were made for improving the health service. But COVID - 19 has imposed a serious global health risk. That's why the world especially the developing country like Bangladesh unable to meet the greater demand for health services at all levels. Therefore, the COVID-19 pandemic is a critical threat to the progress of health and wellbeing goals of SD aimed to ensure healthy lives and well-being for all.

To tackle this global pandemic, at the very beginning of the COVID-19 outbreak, many countries had taken lockdown initiatives that hampered the various health services such as child vaccination, family planning, cancer screening, etc. This pandemic is also liable for overloading and overcrowding of health facilities and creates visiting fear with doctors. This pandemic has imposed a serious threat to Bangladesh's health sectors too. Here, there are a lack of essential health equipment, doctors, nurses, medicine, and other health-related issues to tackle the COVID-19 crisis. Regular health activities have also faced challenges. Mental illness and frustration are

increased among people especially children and youth due to the confined lifestyle. Besides, such challenges pose a critical threat to ensure SDG's goal of "good health and wellbeing at all ".

Though the Government of Bangladesh has taken precautionary measures like wearing masks in public and maintaining 'social distancing' by closing all educational institutions, these are not enough for facing health-related challenges. In this regard, mass people cooperation, the collective effort of all related ministries are needed to tackle this crisis.

5.4 Adverse impact on Education system

Education enables upward socioeconomic mobility and acts as a key to escaping poverty. Quality education is the fourth goal of sustainable development whose main purpose is to remove illiteracy from the world and ensure quality education for all, including marginalized, backward, and proletariat class. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic spread across the globe, a majority of countries announced the temporary closure of all educational institutions i.e schools, colleges, universities, and other institutions. But the existing situation has forced to close all educational institutions indefinitely. In statistics, it has found that more than 91% (UN, Education, 2020) of students around the world are directly or indirectly affected by COVID-19. Never before have so many children been out of school at the same time, especially the most vulnerable and marginalized students has fallen in frustration about their education. In addition, the global pandemic is made unexpected challenges to education that may need a long time to restructure the education system.

In Bangladesh, the Covid-19 pandemic has been disrupting all educational activities. Due to the long-term closure of all educational institutes, more than four crore students are being deprived of quality education. Pandemic COVID-19 has induced adverse effects on education sectors where access to education resources (online learning and equipment facilities) has become a big challenge for low and middle-income family students. In addition, worsening poverty incidence increasing their sufferings to a greater extent too. Various estimates articulate that the poverty rate in Bangladesh is anticipated to increase by 35-40% instead of the existing 20% due to the adverse effect of COVID-19 (Eusuf Abu M, 2020). Poverty disproportionately affects lower-income households where education facilities are hampering drastically. In this regard, BANBIES data illustrated that in the secondary education level, the dropout rate is 37.6% where the corresponding figures for primary and upper secondary levels are 34.8 percent and 19.6 percent, respectively (Eusuf Abu M, 2020). However, collective effort is needed to overcome this crisis.

5.5 Challenges of Decent work and economic growth

Decent work and economic growth is a significant sustainable development goal. The main purpose of this goal is to foster sustained, inclusive, and equitable economic growth; full and productive employment; and decent work for all by achieving higher levels of economic

productivity through diversification, technological upgrading, and innovation. Before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the global economy was growing. But the pandemic has quickly and greatly disrupted economic growth by pushing the world into a recession. In statistics, it is anticipated that the world's labor market will lose 10.5 percent (UN, World Economic Situation and Prospects, 2020) in aggregate working hours in the second quarter of 2020 due to the unexpected outbreak of COVID-19 that is equivalent to 305 million full-time workers.

In Bangladesh, economic growth has been also negatively impacted by the outbreak of COVID 19. Many companies, Small and medium enterprises are pushed to shut down. The existing pandemic is adversely affecting the proletariat class like i.e day labor, self-employed, daily wage-earning workers, and marginalized workers, etc. Along with this, the employment opportunity is continuously decreasing.

The World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) predicted that Bangladesh's economy would decline over 2 percent during the current fiscal year due to pandemic. It is estimated that only 6 million people are employed in the formal sector while 80 percent of workers unemployed in the informal sector due to the pandemic. Besides, as RMG is the prime export sector of Bangladesh, 61.57 percent export (Muhammad, 2020) drop in May in this year compared to the same month of last year (2019) due to export order cancellation and lockdown policy. Bangladesh has already taken fiscal responses to mitigate the emerging crisis but the measures do not look robust enough to meet the present needs. However, the national budget of 2020-21 has allocated a TK386.88 billion (Muhammad, 2020) stimulus package (FE, June, 12). In this context, the government, business sectors, and other stakeholders should take the necessary steps to recover economic growth.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

In the long run, it can be said that the United Nations Conference declared the Sustainable Development Goals in Rio de Janeiro in 2012 whose main purpose is to combat the environmental, political, and economic crisis of the world. To achieve the 2030 Agenda, there are 17 goals, 169 targets, and 231 indicators of SDGs. In this regard, the concept of SDGs is extremely important because they are a powerful advocacy platform that is working for implementing the 17 goals of it. Besides, SDGs are trying to meet the socio-economic, and environmental needs of all countries as well as people in the world. But the unprecedented attack of COVID-19 has been broken all the records of the 21st century. It has given an adverse impact on the world's economy, health sectors, education sectors, trade-commerce, tourism, international relations, etc. Besides, the lower, lower-middle, and middle economy based countries of the world are struggling to tackle the COVID-19s' destruction as well as the implementation of SD goals. However, the SDGs have set targets for the

next 15 years, that's why it is necessary to promote sustainability of actions and reinforces the commitment of all the states in the national political context to meet the 193 countries long term agenda by 2030. Therefore, like the other countries' cooperative efforts, Bangladesh should ensure people awareness, government subsidies, foreign aid, and donation, and establishment of a sound medical system, etc. that can work together to fight against the global pandemic COVOD-19.

However, it is high time to work together to fight against the COVID-19 pandemic and achieve sustainable development goals in all countries. The government, NGOs, media, business partners, civil society, and overall mass people should go together. The cooperation and collaboration among all stakeholders can recover the socio-economic, health, and other SDGs challenges. In Bangladesh, the government is trying to tackle the pandemic and attain SD goals. Bangladesh government has already made different stimulus packages to protect the RMG sector, medium and small enterprises, and mass people. But these are inadequate to tackle this global crisis.

In this context, to promote the health sector, there are many steps are taken like mandatory use of mask, preparing roles for maintaining social distance, import PPE, test kits, ventilator, and other health-related equipment, the establishment of specialized COVID-19 hospitals, ICU centers, Isolation centers, and recruit doctors, etc. Along with these, the execution of such initiatives should be updated and monitored timely and regularly to cope with this crisis. On the other hand, in order to remove poverty and hunger, the government has provided TCB products, subsidies, stimulates package, alternative employment opportunities, etc. among mass people. But due to the lacking integrity and monitor, such initiatives have been questionable frequently. In this context, the government should address such issues including regular update and monitor. In addition, for the purpose of education, the government has introduced e-learning opportunities but these opportunities are not reaching all students of the country due to their socio-economic status (high cost for internet, and equipment). Therefore, the government should reconsider and takes innovative initiatives regarding the existing education system to reach the education facilities to all students of the country during this pandemic. Conversely, before the pandemic, Bangladesh attained millennium development goals by implementation several development-related projects like reducing the rate of maternity and children death rate. From the above context, it can be said that the government, respective ministries, and development partners can address such issues by regular updates, monitor, and supervision. Therefore, it is hoped that we would able to overcome the prevailing pandemic situation as early as possible through overall cooperative measures.

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Classroom Efficiency in New Normal: Learning Satisfaction of Bangladeshi Public University Students

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Abstract

This specific research is aimed to explore the efficiency of online classes in Bangladesh during outbreak of COVID-19. The research takes subjective and qualitative measure to assess the same based on an open ended questionnaire which has been supplied to the potential respondents. The respondents have been selected by a convenience sampling method from three universities of three different types of areas such as urban, rural and sub-urban areas, which is thus, considered to be representative of the country. Online classes have been considered as a new experience in the new normal in Bangladesh. Upon analysis, it has been revealed that public university students in Bangladesh consider online classes as a very effective measure to cope up with the new normal. However, the efficiency is greatly hampered by many factors such as lack of prior experience, no face to face communication and no eye contact, poor and costly internet, especially more poor in sub-urban and rural areas, costly and poor devices, guardians' non-acceptance, serious health risks, not visualizing the class and fear of many examinations together etc. The public universities should endeavor to make the class more enjoyable whereas Government is suggested for policy formulation regarding low cost and more effective internet services, which altogether can remove the inefficiency potential in this regard.

Key Words: New Normal, Learning Satisfaction, Classroom Efficiency, Public University

1. Introduction

Since the very beginning of 2020, the whole world is facing a horrible and historic unseen unfortunate time. This happened due to a massive attack of a new version of corona virus which was first detected at Wuhan, a Chinese city by the end of December 2019 (Ma et al., 2020) causing pneumonia and severe lung infection. People started getting sick and were dying. The rate of infection was hiking every day as it is identified from human to human (Ma et al., 2020). Considering the fatal spread in China, Chinese Government declared an emergency and locked down Wuhan on 23 January, 2020 to protect the rest of the world form the outbreak. However, the virus got already speeded before Wuhan lockdown and spread all over the world. The World

Health Organization took this it as a serious issue for the world and declared emergency on January 30, 2020 (Qin et al., 2020). The world faced worse scenario afterwards. WHO declared the outbreak as a global pandemic on 11 March 2020 (Kapasia et al., 2020; Ma et al., 2020). Even after effective lockdown and business suspension programs, billions of people got infected and more than a million died. In such a situation, most of the countries initiated distance learning and work at home programs. The situation severely impacted the whole education community, i.e. the students and teachers, of all level of educations i.e. primary, secondary and higher education (Maddumapatabandi & Gamage, 2020).

In terms of total tests undertaken to confirmed positive cases ratio, Bangladesh is found one to the worst-hit countries of the world (Kumar & Pinky, 2020). The first confirmed case in Bangladesh was detected on March 08, 2020 (WHO, 2020). Since the beginning to April, 2020, the all offices (except emergency services and hospitals), included all types of educational institutions were suspended. The situation went worsen as days passed and more than 0.45 million were infected with a death toll of more than 6.5 thousand as per governmental statistics (Corona.gov.bd, 2020). Since July, 2020, businesses and other offices were into effect partially with proper health protection measures. However, although, Government of Bangladesh (GOB) has initiated several financial and non-financial programs to relief the country from COVID shock (Kumar & Pinky, 2020), education institutions still remain closed, at least up to the first half of December, to control the spread while in most of educational institutes started online classes. To Bangladeshi students this is a complete new experience in history as Bangladesh usually does not offers any distance learning programs based on online classes.

The learning satisfaction of students may significantly differ between traditional in person classes to online classes from home. Online learning may be effective in countries with good acceptance to digital culture (Adnan & Anwar, 2020) which is not the fact in Bangladesh. Though, during the Awami League led regime, Bangladesh got much advanced in digital services in comparison to any earlier time, there are people who are not coping with digital advancements. Moreover, though in urban areas, Bangladesh has good internet services available in most sub-urban and rural areas the situation is still a pity.

The situation motivated me to assess the satisfaction of common students in ongoing compulsory online education. The study reveals that there is a mixed feeling about online classes among Bangladeshi students. Though they feel that it is not as enjoyable and as effective as a real life in-person class, during pandemic there is no other way to continue their academic life. Although, Bangladeshi public university students started online classes in the immediate aftermath of the outbreak, their semester final examinations and course evaluation process were stagnant. They were allowed to continue classes for courses scheduled on next semester without having the current semester courses assessed. As a result, they have to appear many pending examinations within a very brief time limit, once the examinations and evaluation process resumes.

They feel that online classes are effective next to real life classes and less time consuming, however, many factors such as low teacher-student contact due to obstructed visualization, poor network and devices, high internet and device costs, guardians' bad feelings about students' connecting to online devices for long time, long waiting examination fear, high health risks etc. are revealed as to loosen the efficiency of those. Although, it is fairly reasonable that, each and every inefficiency measures cannot be removed by the Government or university authority, they should concentrate to as much as can be done. For example, the Government can guide the internet service providers to reduce cost while enrich service quality. The universities can find ways to evaluations for the courses and make the classes as realistic as possible.

The rest of the paper is organized such that, section 2 reviews the relevant and recent literature about the issue, section 3 describes the methodology and materials utilized for the research, section 4 presents the results of the research, section 5 presents a general discussion on the issue and the findings and finally, section 6 concludes the paper.

2. **Review of Literature**

It is internationally evident that, education systems often face breakdown in the aftermath of any natural calamities including flood, cyclone, earthquakes etc. (Dhawan, 2020). The outbreak of COVID-19 is one of the monster calamity in history, against which the world if fighting for survival. World scientists found self-distancing and social / physical distancing as only way to be safe from the monster (Maddumapatabandi & Gamage, 2020) until an effective vaccine is invented. In such a situation, along with other sectors, the world education faced rapid suspension

of traditional in-person classes to ensure social distancing (Adnan & Anwar, 2020; Singh, Srivastav, Bhardwaj, Dixit, & Misra, 2020). All most 600 million students across the world had been badly affected (Kapasia et al., 2020). The suspension of educational activities led the students all over the world to an unprecedented future. To cope up, teachers and students were in need for innovative techniques and technologies which could also help the teaching community to minimize mental stress and anxieties. The resulting innovations gradually equipped the world with enriched technologies to be used in education systems (Uddin et al., 2020) which includes cloud based class lecture systems, online meeting rooms, teleconference, digital books, online examination systems and many more. Many of the researchers (for example, Gonzalez et al., 2020) reported online classroom and learning process at COVID-19 era as effective and efficient than any traditional methods ever.

World scientists and intellectual community suggests for long term education planning to minimize the pandemic shock on education. UNESCO suggested for distance and online learning approaches all over the world to minimize the disruption (Maddumapatabandi & Gamage, 2020). Although, some of the European and African countries opened schools and other business and tourist establishments, the aftermath is seen to raise the infection again heading to a second wave of Corona infection. Thus, many of the researchers feels to continue the suspension of the educational institutions, as education programs can be continued online. However, many others expressed their anxiety about the quality of education while it is done online (Maddumapatabandi & Gamage, 2020).

The era of online learning or class giving is not a complete new invention, rather it evolved in last two decades and is much applied recently all over the world in COVID-19 situation. However, new platform has been popularized during this time. Therefore, ensuring the quality becomes a critical prerequisite for the satisfaction and success of those classes. Proper quality management, faculty development, proper curriculum development, pedagogy, proper support service, teacher-student interaction, evaluation and assessment etc. are considered as few success factor for online classes (Lee, 2010). However, access to technologies and technology acceptance attitude also highly direct online classes satisfaction, as information and communication technologies (ICT) are most important part of the whole procedure. Therefore, student's intention to accept technologies help them in having successful classes and gain satisfaction (Lin, 2005). The higher one student is technology prone, the higher satisfaction he/she is expected to have from

an online class (Liu et al., 2009). Moreover, the success praise also goes to good internet services. Before the mass use of internet, the distance learning, distance learning was mostly ineffective due to inability of student-teacher interaction. In current world, online class based distance learning is held as having almost classroom experience (Liu et al., 2009). However, it is noteworthy that, if the internet is poor, the satisfaction will not be perfect.

The education research literature identifies that online class attendees are generally most often less satisfied than tradition class attendees (McFarland & Hamilton, 2005). The reasons may be that, online class students are not able to actualize the visualization needs and experience gathering through learning by doing (Liu et al., 2009). The online class programs may also be limited by lack of class room decorum, formation and activation of study groups and some other health risks like potential hearing and eye problems. The objective outcome (e.g. examination grades) in many online and traditional class programs has been identified as indifferent, traditional class attendees are found to be more satisfied than their counterpart (McFarland & Hamilton, 2005).

Bangladesh is by in normal course a traditional and conservative country. Culturally online classes and distance learning are not encouraged to large scales at least before the outbreak of COVID-19. However, to cope up with the potential losses of the students, Governmental bodies encouraged initiation of classes online, for example, offering free internet connection for online classes by Government owned cellular service provider Teletalk (2020).

Most of the Bangladeshi students are based in sub-urban and rural areas. Though most of the University students live on campus or nearby their university areas which are mostly suburban or urban areas, due to lockdown and class suspension most of them are back to their parent homes in sub-urban and rural areas, mostly. Moreover, the online classes and continuing academic activities involves significant amount of costs which makes discrimination between financially marginalized and well-off students (Kapasia et al., 2020). In Bangladesh, most of the public university students are from financially marginalized families and are not well-off. A large percentage of them run themselves by providing tuitions to junior students outside the university from which they earn a very little. The financially underprivileged families who remain unable to support their children with digital devices (e.g. computers, smart phones) and internet connection fees. A statistics sourced from the University Grants Commission (UGC) of Bangladesh says that

mostly 14% of public[1] university students (which is only a small fraction of total students in the country) cannot participate in the online class due to unavailability of digital devices (Jasim, 2020). In such a situation University Grants Commission (UGC) executed a program to provide loans to those students with easy condition, which is still under process in the month of November.

3. Methods

3.1 The study design

The current study endeavors to assess the satisfaction of students on online based classes, while most of the students are bound to go online as in-person classed has been suspended due to the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic. The study is mostly a qualitative one which explores the satisfaction based on a qualitative opinion survey. The method is appreciated in prior literature as it is capable to help in generating hypothesis for future studies (Neergaard, Olesen, Andersen, & Sondergaard, 2009).

3.2 Sampling strategy

The current study applies a convenient sampling strategy to reveal the satisfaction scenario of the students engaging themselves in online classes. It engages students studying in Bachelor and Masters Classes in different public universities of Bangladesh. The sample students were chosen from three public universities of Bangladesh: the University of Dhaka, Dhaka; Jatiya Kabi Kazi Nazrul Islam University, Mymensingh and Bangladesh Agricultural University, Mymensingh. The students engaged in the survey current students who are attending classes online during in-person class suspension. The participants were contacted and confirmed research engagement via emails and social media groups. After confirmation the questionnaire URL based on google forms were supplied. A total of 60 students from different majors were finally recruited for the study.

3.3 The questionnaire and data collection

The questionnaire used by the research for data collection was a semi-structured one in nature. The technology use behavior largely depends on the cultural practices among social groups. The cultural issues can best be captured by semi-structured questionnaires (Kuswara, Laws, Kremer, Hesketh, & Campbell, 2016). The demographic questions were structured while the main interview questions were open ended. The interview topics included, participation rate, lecture quality of teachers giving classes online, the concentration factors, class room discussion and study group

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[1] Universities financed by Government of Bangladesh which provide equal education opportunity with a very reduced tuition fees, mostly, $0.15 to $02.5 per month.

discussion, online support services, connection quality, cost of internet connection and other digital devices, experience of friends who are not directly part of this research, class timing, learning visualizations and other learning experiences. The questions and issues were made available both in Bangla (the state language of the country) and English. The primary language for the questions was English. A Bangla translation was made by a Professor of Bangla language which was verified by the researcher and appended in the questionnaire within parenthesis. After the questionnaire is responded a telephone interview was conducted to all of the participants to grab more detailed opinions. The interviews were recorded with the participants' due permission and utilized while analyzing the data.

3.4 **Data Analysis**

Before extracting data from the interviews the demographic details and main questions were separated to de-identify personal details. The key answers to the key questions (both of answers on online questionnaire forms and phone recordings) were revisited and a thematic analysis were deployed to identify the common themes and factors those constructed a pattern of opinions which could be used for future decision making. Among other Braun and Clarke (2006) are the key pioneers to formalize and popularize thematic analysis approach. The authors contend the approach as qualitative data analysis technique which is better accessible and flexible than any other qualitative method. To identify the themes data familiarization techniques were used utilizing (QSR_International, 2012). The interviews were read and heard by the researchers several time to identify the themes. The themes were coded in a random manner with no predetermined criteria. While repeated reading and listening, the codes were reviewed in a flexible manner as suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006) and the same was continued until due confidence is gained that all key themes has been covered. The identified themes were reviewed twice again and the final set of themes were analyzed for reporting purposes.

4. **The Results and discussions**

4.1 **Socio-economic Characteristics of the Respondents**

A total of 60 responses were considered to be valid in respect to completeness and retained for analysis whereas the gender ratio was found to be 53:47 percent. Out of those, 50 (83%) of the responding students were undergoing different bachelor programs while the rest 10 (17%) were in Master programs. All of the student were from age group of 20-26 years. 47 (78.33%) of the students completely relied upon parental support for educational expenses while the rest 13

(21.67%) students used to generate their own income through different part time engagements like providing tuitions etc. Most of the students are from a farmer family (31 (51.67%)), who generally are the lowest earning members of the society. Most of the house hold income of surveyed students (23 (38.33%)) are below BDT. 10,000 (USD 117[2]) per month. 22 (36.67%) of the participates lie in the second fraction in regard to average house hold income of the parents (BDT 10,000 to BDT 25,000) whereas the third largest fraction contains 11 (18.33%) who earns between BDT 25,000-40,000 per month. The rest of the participants has a better household income which is a very small fraction of the total sample (4 participants). The number of participants was ensured to be equal from each university whereas the universities were located at three different geographic natures. University of Dhaka is located at Dhaka, the capital and largest city of the country. Bangladesh Agriculture University, is located in sub-urban area close to Mymensingh, another city of the country. Jatiya Kabi Kazi Nazrul Islam University is located at the rural area of Trishal with which is also under Mymensingh district.

4.2 **Online classes in Bangladesh**

Online or internet or cloud based classes are a very new concept to the students. Most of the students experienced it for the first time in 2020 after the academies initiated to start classes online. While they reported that many of their teacher were also the beginners in this regard.

All of the respondents believe this the only way during the pandemic to save part to their academic life. Although, as reported by many of them, it is not as enjoyable and as effective in Bangladesh as a real life class, it is helping them to get progressed with their academic activities, a least to some extent. During the pandemic it is not possible to be in the class as health divisions of the country and world health organization (WHO) has instructed them to stay home to stay safe from infection.

4.3 **Student-teacher classroom communication**

A majority of the students believed that with online classes better student-teacher classroom communication is not properly possible as in in-person or traditional classroom environment which is not so executable in online classroom. They believe that student-teacher eye contact makes a major portion of effectiveness of the class which is present in in-person classes but absent in online classes. Thus in online classes students feels more difficulties to communicate teachers. Sometimes teachers keep their videos off while giving lectures as videos consumes more data

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[2] 1 USD is considered to equivalent to BDT 85.

which involves more costs. This make students feels that teachers are lecturing far away. Thus they feel that they cannot hear their teachers properly and make their attendance unimportant which result in ineffective learning.

4.4 **Some Feelings**

Many of the students feel that online classes feels like something artificial and not as natural as in-person classes. It feels to at least 73% of them that they get more tired and bored on attending online classes than participating a traditional class of similar length. Despite many of the students reported that they don't need to travel to the university campus now, they are not much comfortable over online as in traditional classes. Although students find that teachers are more punctual and can spend more time currently, they feel that it is a one-way communication, unlike traditional classes. However, at least 20% of the students feel that online classes are more effective than traditional ones. It's because it excludes travels and living in overcrowded student dormitories. Students can stay their homes with their parents and attend classes.

4.5 **Poor network and high cost**

Students frequently face network issues which is most frequent to those who are living in rural areas. Most of the rural and sub-urban areas yet to get connected to broadband networks. This represents that most of the area of the country are not under good internet network. While mobile companies have initiated providing internet services a couple of years back, the whole country could be under internet network, if there were good mobile telephone infrastructure everywhere of the country. However, this is not the case till now in Bangladesh. There are many areas where mobile network is still very week. In summary, neither by broadband connection nor by mobile phone infrastructures or combination of both, the whole country is under good internet services. Although Government continues working on this, but it will take couple of more years to make it stronger.

As most of the students of public university are living at their homes in rural and sub-urban areas, from where they are expected to join the classes online during in-person class suspension due to COVID-19, they often are obstructed in joining and effectively following the classes and lectures delivered due to poor internet network (Dutta & Smita, 2020). All of the students of our sample who live out of city areas reported similar experiences.

Moreover, the price for internet is really high in the country (Dutta & Smita, 2020) which is most often unaffordable to the public university students and their poor parents. The Government

has recently offered mostly free internet via a completely Government owned mobile services provider, Teletalk. However, the all of sample students mentioned that their direct and indirect experience about Teletalk internet is very unsatisfactory mainly due to two reasons. Firstly, Teletalk internet does cover a very small area of the country, especially, the urbanized areas while it has least focus and coverage to the rural areas. Secondly, in most of the areas where Teletalk offers internet, the signal is weaker than other commercial internet service providers. Thus, despite of Governmental initiative to provide free internet for online classes, students are not being benefited in real senses form this offer.

The prices of laptop, desktop and mobile devices, which can be used to join online classes over internet, is also high (Dutta & Smita, 2020) and most often unaffordable to the poor students. As a result, a good percentage of the students cannot join online classes, at least 14% (Jasim, 2020). These loosen the effectiveness of initiating online classes during the pandemic.

4.6 **High frequency of power cut**

In Bangladesh, power cut is a very common phenomenon (Roy, 2016). Though situation has emerged greatly in recent days, still the rural and sub-urban areas face frequent power cuts. The power cuts coerce students to shut down their devices which largely hamper class effectiveness. Many students reported power cuts as a major barrier for online classes in Bangladesh. Moreover, around 23% percentage of households are still out of electricity (Bedi, 2018), especially, in rural areas. At least 64% students expressed their anxiety about this power cuts in Bangladesh.

4.7 **Poor devices**

Due to high cost many of the students buy low quality devices. Around 48% of the sample reported about their incapacity to buy better quality devices due to high costs. These devices sometimes may make disturbances while following the classes. In many cases students used to share devices for their regular study tasks (at least, 55% of our sample) as each of them does not have enough financial capacity to buy good devices individually. However, during class suspension due to COVID-19 outbreak, students are staying distant places, sharing the devices are not possible. Therefore, some of them who are a bit financially capable, buy low quality cheaper devices, while many of them cannot buy even the cheaper ones due to financial incapacity and remain out of the classes.

4.8 **Guardians' lack of knowledge about online classes**

Bangladesh is traditionally a conservative country. The society of Bangladesh takes time to generalize and accepts big changes. Technology has made big changes to the world which is the same to Bangladesh. However, the older people of the country is still unaware about the benefits of technological development. They do not intend to accept and allow younger people to be much oriented to information technology (IT). The students often need to get connected to their devices over six to seven hours for classes and other academic task which their parents and other guardians, most often, discourage. They feel that students' connection to online devices not good for their culture. This is because, senior citizens of Bangladesh, especially those living in rural and sub-urban areas are not well used to internet and online platforms. Due to their inexperience and reverse mentality they often behave discouragingly to the students who are joining to online classes. Around 39% of your sample reported similar happening to them from their parents, grandparents and other senior neighbors.

4.9 **Health issues**

Many students reported that continuing long hours' classes online i.e. to be connected on communication devices for long hours is increasing their health risks. Around 65% of our sample mentioned that they have to get connected to devices for 3-5 hours every day on average only for online classes. They may have to continue using those devices out of the classes for many other purposes such as assignment writing, project writing, preparing presentations, personal and academic communications etc. Altogether, most of them (i.e. those who possess the devices) may have to get connected to those for 7-8 hours a day, which is surely a risk factor for health, especially eyes problems, headaches, low back pain, carpal tunnel syndrome which may raise result in serious risk factors such as risk of sleep deprivation, self-harm, e-thrombosis etc. (Lippi, Henry, Bovo, & Sanchis-Gomar, 2020). Recent researchers suggest that screen based activities may cause serious health risks if it exceeds two hours a day (Langøy, Smith, Wold, Samdal, & Haug, 2019) whereas due to online classes students have to be on screen for more than two hours a day, which is due to the prolonged lockdown and school suspensions (Lippi et al., 2020) in Bangladesh.

4.10 **Visualization obstructed**

Many students (around 74%) reported as they are not habituated with online classes, they feel that online classes are like indirect communication. Although they follow the lectures, they cannot visualize the class in real sense. Moreover, most of the students keep the videos off and only allow audios due to high data cost. While the students mention about high data costs, teachers are helpless to instruct them to be on video mode. However, whatever is the mode of connection to the classes, video or audio, most of the students feel that as they cannot visualize the class properly and they do not feel that they are inside a class. As a result, they most often concentrate to some other thing surrounding them, such as family affairs, social media browsing, gaming while continuing a class etc. They believe that these problems appear due to visualization obstructions on online classes, which reduces the effectiveness of the classes.

Table 1. Presentation of identified themes

Identified themes	Sample quotes
Classroom communication	"…face to face class looks like as natural, energetic, well communicated both parties, eye contacted, emphatic, practical example shown, well understand etc…."
Feelings about online classes	"…online class looks like as artificial, gap in eye contact & communicated…" "…first of all I would like to say Online classes are not tiring and neither inefficient…" "…due to pandemic situation we may suffer a lot in every sphere of our life. In this situation, online class is a great opportunity for us to continue our study. Though online class is totally different from face to face class & may face various obstacles in online class but we need to attend class in order to complete our academic course…".
Poor network and high cost	"…. online classes are more effective than face to face classes if it is properly maintained with proper network system. In Bangladesh it is not possible because network is not available in everywhere of the country…". "we cannot hear all speech of teacher for poor connection as a result the important thing of lecture missed by using internet…" "…. In Bangladesh many students cannot manage the Internet devices because of high cost. Most of the students of Bangladesh are dependent on family income where their family members' income is very low for depending on agriculture such as farmer etc. So the students cannot manage proper money to buy modern Internet technology…." "…. half numbers of total students attend in the online classes because network problems and many of the students have not device etc. Online classes are not more effective than face to face classes. But online classes are necessary in this time in the changed situation caused by COVID-19". "…. online classes are most expensive as huge amount of money is expensed to buy data". "…In my experience, most of the students stay in village & they Can't attend online class regularly due to poor net connection, some have not any device through which they can join the class…".

High frequency of power cut	"……. Actually online class is not effective than face to face class for me. Because there are many causes……. lack of available electricity….".
Poor and expensive device	"…I can't attend classes properly for the poor network and lack of device and I can't manage internet sometime because I continue my expense with my own efforts…".
Guardians' lack of knowledge about online classes	"…we have to stay online minimum 4 hours as a result guardians have bad psychology about us, even they angry with me because of lack knowledge…"
Low attendance	"…I see that maximum 40 students participate in online class out of 59 students. The percentage of present students in our online class is 68%...."
Health issues	"On the other hand, because of using mobile phone for longer hours can give some health problems…" "… I sometime feel badly headache while attending classes online…" "…Due to long hours sitting, I am developing backpains…" "…Again long time class duration gives mental pressure and physical problem also such back pain, eyes and so on…"
Visualization obstructed	"…sometimes it seems to a one-way communication." "…Online class is effective and efficient in case theoretical course but not in case of mathematical course if we participate in the discussion and ask those topics we don't understand but unfortunately and the problem is, most of the students do not ask any questions...".

5. Conclusion

Most of the respondents of our survey express likely that, "During pandemic caused by COVID19, it almost feels lucky that we are still alive" which is a crucial reality of the time. At this critical moment people are continuously struggling to keep themselves and their family members safe from infection. However, as the pandemic prolonged, the lock down period also prolonged. To cope up with the situation many countries started to reopen their business. With a similar situation, the educational institutions in Bangladesh continues classes online starting from June 2020.

This study endeavors to assess the effectiveness of the classes under continuation, especially in case of public universities of Bangladesh. Traditionally, public universities are considered to be the highest level education providers in Bangladesh. This assessment of effectiveness and barriers to online classes in case of public universities is representative of the whole education system throughout the country including primary and secondary education as majority of the students of the country are in public funded institutions. Furthermore, the study put forward investigating the

issue by selecting samples from three universities of different geographic characteristics. Among the sample universities, University of Dhaka is located at the most urbanized part of the country, the capital city, Dhaka. Bangladesh Agriculture University is located at a district head quarter which is characterized as sub-urban and Jatiya Kabi Kazi Nazrul Islam University is located at a rural area of the country. Although, during in-person class suspension, most of the students got back to their homes, mostly located in rural and sub-urban areas.

Most of the respondents, contended that online classes are the only available solution to carry forward their studies while the pandemic is continuing as well. From that perspective, it is the second efficient educating option while in Bangladeshi culture, in-person class is the first efficient educating option.

A subjective analysis is conducted based on the identified themes. There are many factors those are hampering the effectiveness of class arrangements. The top in the list is high cost of internet with a poor network and devices. A majority of the students contended that the cost to be borne by them for internet connection and usage devices are really high, although the network and device services are not so satisfactory. It's due to slow speed and frequent disconnection. Although students living in urban areas are enjoying a bit better internet speed, those living in rural and sub-urban areas are suffering with this. In respect of cost of internet and devices, the living areas are indifferent. Mostly, the ones living in rural areas are to use mobile internet as broad band connections are not available. The other major in efficiency-forces are low student-teacher communication, guardians' unfavorable mentality towards online classes, increasing health risks, lack of class visualization and continuing classes without course examinations.

The research is important for the teachers and policy makers of the county and also exemplary for other countries. The educators of the country are suggested to make the classes more enjoyable to the students as possible. However, nothing will be efficient enough if the classes cannot be made cost effective. Therefore, the policy makers of the country are suggested to make the cost and services of internet and devices reduced. For example, guideline can be issued to the internet service providers to make internet stronger and cover more parts of the country with strong network and import taxes on relevant high quality devices can be exempted to lower the cost of those.

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Labor Migration and Foreign Remittance of Bangladesh: A Trend Analysis

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Abstract

This is an endeavor to explore the trend of labor migration from and foreign remittance inflow into Bangladesh. The objective of this study is to show and critically assess the historical trends of migration from Bangladesh and resulting foreign remittance inflow into the country. The analysis is based on time-series secondary data for the period from 1976 to 2020. The findings reveal that both migration and remittance inflow trend are very much unidirectional for Bangladesh. Saudi Arabia (KSA) is the most preferred destination of Bangladeshi migrants. The highest chunk of remittance for Bangladesh also comes from Saudi Arabia. Migration from the country historically has been underscored by short-term less-skilled migrants. At the same time, country-wise migration from Bangladesh and inflow of remittance into Bangladesh for the period of 1999 to 2019 revealed that there is no definite relationship between these two among destination countries. Most of the middle-eastern countries except Kuwait and Saudi Arabia (KSA) produce much lower share of remittance for Bangladesh compared to their share of absorption of Bangladeshi migrants. But the scenario is the exact opposite in case of European and western countries like the UK, Italy, and the USA and also in case of some Asian countries like South Korea and Japan. Diversifying the international labor market for Bangladeshi migrants is the key to make international labor migration a sustainable income generating source for Bangladesh.

Key Words: Bangladesh, Migration, Remittance, Trend

1. Introduction

International labor migration is a logical consequence of globalization. Labor migration from one country to another has long been a popular trend. And it still is. The direct impact of migration on the development of the sending country is underscored by remittance. For Bangladesh, remittances sent by the Bangladeshi migrants are the second largest source of foreign currency after export-earnings from readymade garments (RMG).

Labor migration is the movement of person or a group of persons from one geographical location to another across an administrative or political border willing to settle temporarily or permanently in a place other than their places of origin. Remittance is popularly defined as the amount or money, goods, or both sent home by the migrants. The portion of migrants' earnings abroad that they send to home-countries are termed as remittances. Cummins (2008) mentioned that once a person crosses the borders of his/her native country and stays in a different country for a period of time, it is called international migration. United_Nations (2009) revealed that some 215 million people or 3 percent of the world's population are believed to live outside their countries of birth. Ratha, Mohapatra, and Scheja (2011) said that according to the official estimates, migrants from developing countries sent over USD 315 billion to their origin countries in 2009, three times the size of the official development assistance (ODA). On the other hand, (World Bank 2017) disclosed that in 2017, migrants from developing countries have sent USD 466 billion as remittance.

Overseas employment and remittance earnings of Bangladeshi migrants are making diversified contributions to the economic development of the country. Migration from Bangladesh is reducing the country's severe unemployment problem and poverty-level. It is also increasing the country's foreign currency reserve. M. Rahman and Rahman (2008) found that migrant's remittance has become a major source of income to many households in Bangladesh.

But the question remains whether the trend of migration from Bangladesh are heading towards the right direction? Are the right person migrating and if so, are they migrating to the right destination, especially as far as the amount of remittance earning is concerned? This study has been undertaken to have an understanding on such issues.

The specific objectives of the study are as follows:

    a) To assess the present state of labor migration and foreign remittance received by Bangladesh
    b) To represent the trend of migration flow and remittance inflow into Bangladesh
    c) To compare the trends of migration from Bangladesh and that of remittance inflow into the country

2. Literature Review

Tigno (2006) mentioned that human migration has occurred throughout the history and began with the movements of the first human groups out of their origins in East Africa. Globally speaking, Ratha et al. (2016) identified that the top migrant-destination country is the United States, followed by Saudi Arabia, Germany, and the Russian Federation. The number of migrant workers as a share of population is the highest in the smaller nations of Qatar (91 percent), the United Arab Emirates (88 percent) and Kuwait (72 percent). Karki (2020) argued that international migration is growing in emerging economies like Malaysia, United Arab Emirates and Qatar Ramanayake and Wijetunga (2018) found the importance of remittance as an external financing source for local development in Sri Lanka. Siddiqui (2016) stated that Bangladesh has participated in the international short-term labor market as one of the major labor-sending countries since the mid-1970s. Akhter and Islam (2019) identified Bangladesh as one of the dominant labor supplying countries in the international labor market. Murshid, Iqbal, and Ahmed (2002) found in previous studies that most international migration from Bangladesh originates from the districts of Sylhet, Chittagong, Noakhali, Comilla, and Dhaka. M. M. Rahman (2004) said that Bangladeshi labor migration is a location-specific phenomenon. Most Bangladeshi migrants in Singapore came from selected districts in Bangladesh. Liton, Alauddin, and Sadekin (2016) argued that the labor migration scenario of Bangladesh is highly country specific. Total labor migration from Bangladesh is increasing but it is also highly dependent on the Middle East countries. Masum Miah, Khan, and Rahman (2012) identify that about 70 percent of total exports of manpower from Bangladesh are in different countries of Middle East and most of the remittance also come from Middle East. Liton et al. (2016) identified that the flow of labor migration from Bangladesh has been following an increasing trend over the years until FY 2007-08. Later, it continued to decline over the next three successive fiscal years. Similarly, Masum Miah et al. (2012) found that from FY2001-2002 to FY 2007-08 both the migration and remittance flows showed an increasing trend but after this period it showed a decreasing trend. Ratha, Mohapatra, and Silwal (2009) argued that a minor reason behind the fall in remittances in 2009 is simply that in 2008 there was an "abnormal" surge in remittance flows to many countries including Bangladesh, Ethiopia, India,

Nepal and Tajikistan. Such high levels of remittances are difficult to sustain over the medium-term.

Goldin, Cameron, and Balarajan (2011) have shown that remittances stimulate local development. Ratha et al. (2015) found that substantial remittances have flown into South Asia for the last two decades. They were estimated to rise by 4.5% in 2014 and the growth was driven by significant flows into Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. Akter (2016) found that for the year 2014-2015, workers' remittance is 9 times higher than FDI and 25 times higher than Portfolio Investment and 4 times higher than ODA in Bangladesh. Lim and Basnet (2017) identified that remittance inflows into Bangladesh have well exceeded official development assistance (ODA) since the early 1990s and surpassed foreign direct investment (FDI) from the mid 1990s. Farid, Mozumdar, Kabir, and Hossain (2009) identified that major share of total remittances in Bangladesh come from the Middle East countries. But individually the position of the USA is just behind Saudi Arabia over the last few years. Lim and Basnet (2017) mentioned that in 2015, Bangladesh received roughly 55% of its total remittances from the Middle-East. Mawla and Khanam (2018) stated that in 2014, remittances contributed to 8.2% of GDP of Bangladesh while the contribution was 6.7 % in 2006. Lim and Morshed (2015) showed that the increased remittances do not come from existing migrants who squeeze their earnings to send more remittances during economic bad times at home, but they come from increased migration as a result of income shocks. However, Ratha and Mohapatra (2007) mentioned that remittances tend to be strongly countercyclical in Bangladesh and India. It implies that remittances have a tendency to rise during recessions in recipient country's economy.

3. Methodology

This is solely a secondary data-based study. Published data on migration from Bangladesh and inflow of remittance into the country for the period of 1976 to 2020 have been focused. Relevant data have been collected from the publications and websites of national organizations like Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training (BMET), Bangladesh Bank (BB), Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMRU), and publications and data sets of relevant international organizations like the World Bank (IBRD), the United Nations (UN), and International Organization for Migration (IOM). Relevant literature in the field have been reviewed as well. Finally the findings of the study have been presented in graphical form to get instant understanding. The findings have been segregated into three separate sections namely= trends of migration from Bangladesh, trends of remittance inflow in Bangladesh, and trends of migration and remittance together.

4. Trends of Migration from Bangladesh

This section will depict the historical trend of migration from Bangladesh ever since the country started sending migrants overseas.

4.1 Trends of Gender-wise Yearly Migration of Bangladeshi Migrants from 1991 to 2020

Though migration from Bangladesh started way back in 1976, it was all about male migration during that time. The formal female manpower export from Bangladesh started in the year 1991. Hence, to follow the trend of both sex in the international labor migration scenario of Bangladesh, data have been presented in the following figure 4.1 on gender-wise yearly manpower export from Bangladesh from 1991 to 2020.
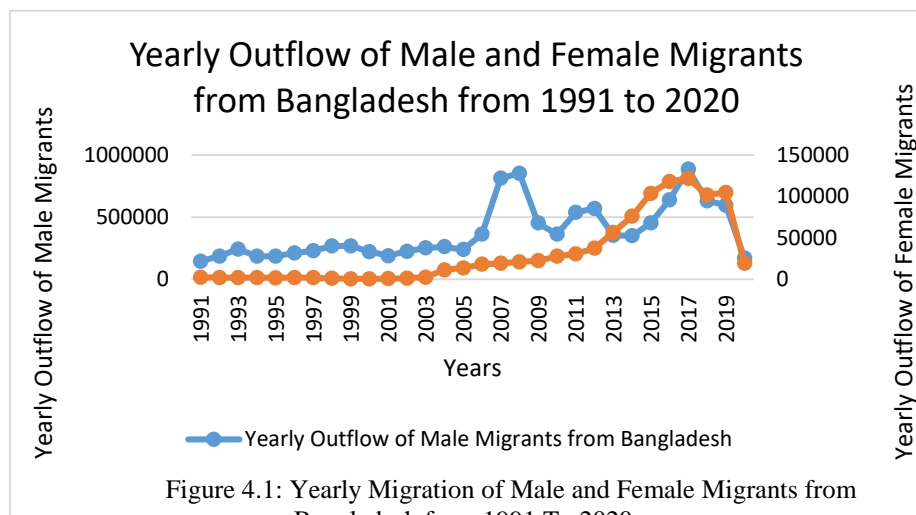
Figure 4.1: Yearly Migration of Male and Female Migrants from Bangladesh from 1991 To 2020

Source: Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET)

If the growth rate of male and female migration is focused, it can be observed that from 1991 until 2012, the growth rate of male migrants per year was higher than that of female migrants. In the year 2013, the growth rate of female migration outperformed that of male migration for the first time in the history of Bangladesh. This new trend persisted up to 2016. In the year 2017, the growth rate of male migration again exceeded that of female migration. But this momentum could not be maintained afterwards. Rather, a sharp decline in the rate for both male and female migration has been observed in the year 2020. It is due to the COVID-19 situation during which overseas migration remained suspended for Bangladeshi migrants in most of the destination countries.

4.2 Trends of Migration from Bangladesh by Skill-levels

Siddiqui (2016) mentioned that migration from Bangladesh varies according to skill composition. To unfold the true picture, figure 4.2 shows the trends of migration from Bangladesh based on skill levels for the period of 1976 to 2019. Not only the number but also the skill-structure of migrants play a vital role in earning remittance from abroad. In fact, skill plays more important role in this regard. Hence, focusing the trend of migration based on skill-levels can give better insight and can also give answers to many questions regarding the causes and consequences of below-average earnings of Bangladeshi migrants abroad.
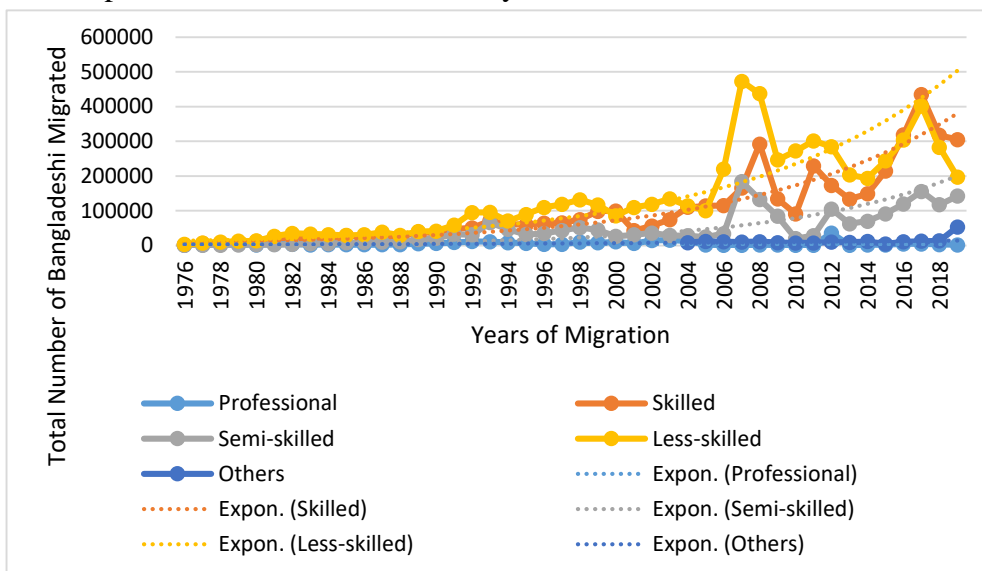
TRENDS OF MIGRATION FROM BANGLADESH BY SKILL-LEVEL (1976 - 2019)
Source: Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET)

Currently Bangladeshi migrants migrate under five different skill-categories articulated by the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET). Figure 4.2 shows that labor migration from Bangladesh is dominated by less-skilled migrants from the very inception. Even the growth rate of less-skilled migrants exceeded the growth rates of all other categories until 2000. "Skilled" category migrants stood second after "less-skilled" category for Bangladesh. The number of skilled migrants exceeded the number of less-skilled migrants in the year 2000 for the first time in the history of migration from Bangladesh. The third dominant category is the "semi-skilled". For only once in the year 2007, the number of semi-skilled migrants exceeded that of skilled migrants. Apart from that, the number of semi-skilled migrants always stood below the number of less-skilled and skilled migrants. However, both the skilled migration and less-skilled migration showed upward trend as is evident from their respective exponential lines.

The other two skill-categories, i.e., professional category and others category do not show any promising picture in terms of their trends. Both remained very flat from the very beginning and seldom did they show any noticeable ups and downs in their trend.

5. Trends of Remittance Inflow in Bangladesh

This section will depict the historical trend of remittance earnings of Bangladesh ever since the country started sending migrants overseas.

5.1 Trend of Remittance as Percentage of GNI of Bangladesh from 1976 to 2017

The influence of remittance on an economy is better reflected when it is computed as percentage of the GNI of the country. With this end in view, figure 5.1 has been presented to show the trend of remittance as percentage of GNI of Bangladesh from 1976 to 2017.
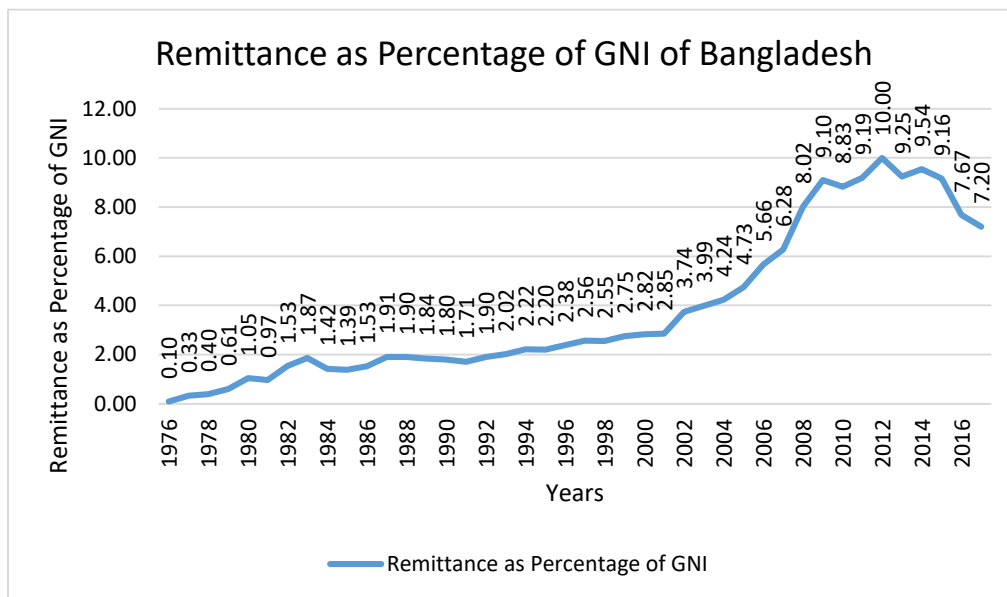
FIGURE 5.1: REMITTANCE AS PERCENTAGE OF GNI OF BANGLADESH
Sources: Compiled by the author (collected from World Bank, World Development Indicator; Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET); Bangladesh Bank

Remittance as percentage of GNI of Bangladesh was at its bare minimum during 1976. It touched 1 percent mark in 1980 but fell below that afterwards. From 1982 onward, it remained over 1 percent level. It touched 2 percent mark for the first time in 1993 since when it never fell below that. In 2002 it grew to 3.74 percent. Until 2001, a steady rate of increase is observed. From 2001 up to 2012, it showed a sharp growth. In 2001, the rate was 2.85 percent which jumped to 10 percent in 2012. It is the highest rate that the country observed in the history. But since 2012, the rate showed a declining trend. In 2016, the rate fell below 8 percentage for the first time since 2008. Though there were small ups and downs between 2001 and 2012, the rate, by and large, showed an increasing trend. But such pace could not be maintained after 2012.

5.2: Remittance as Percentage of Export and Import of Bangladesh, and the Growth Rate of Remittance of Bangladesh from 2005-'06 to 2019-2020
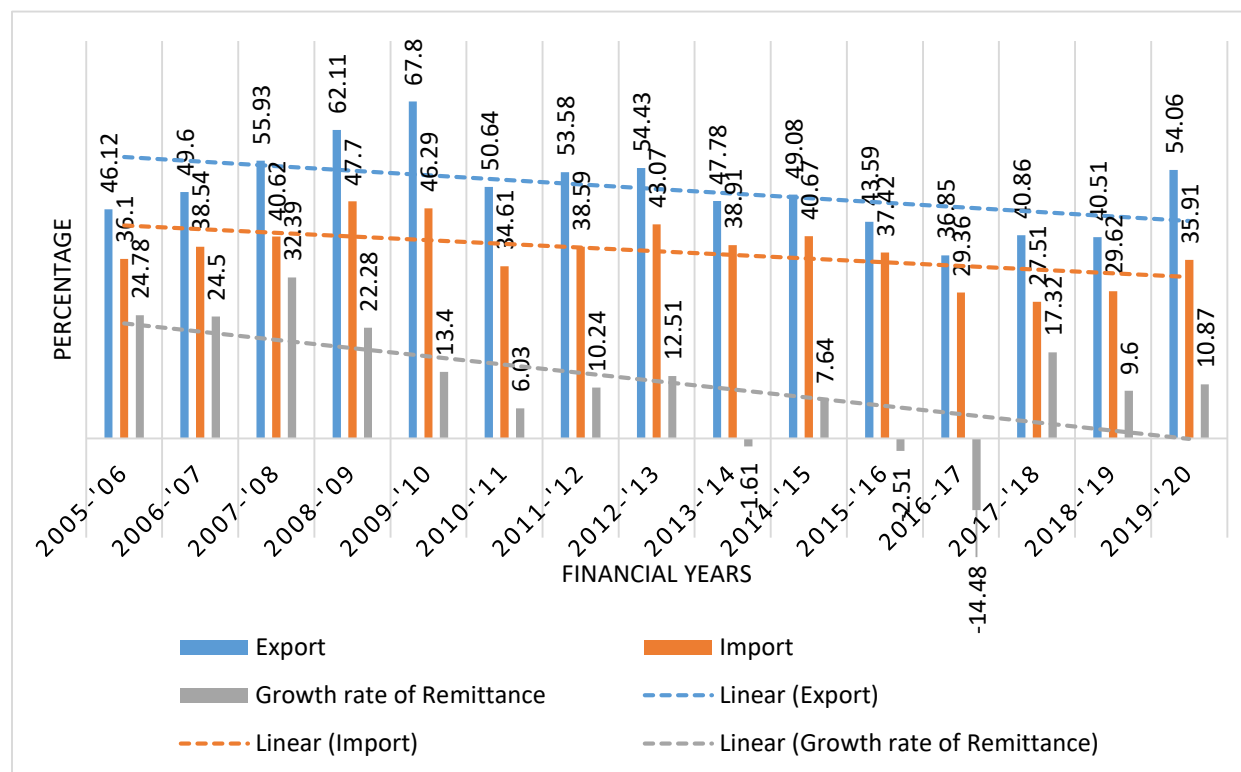
Figure: Remittance as Percentage of Export and Import of Bangladesh, and the Growth Rate of Remittance of Bangladesh from 2005-'06 to 2019-2020

[Sources: Bangladesh Bank, Quarterly Report on Remittances of Different Quarters from the Period of 2005-'06 to 2019-2020]

It can be seen from figure 5.2 that remittance as percentage of export earnings of Bangladesh was 46.12 percent during 2005-'06. Since then, it started increasing. In the financial year 2009-'10, it reached its peak (62.11 percent). But afterwards, it maintained a decreasing trend with occasional increase. It reached its lowest (36.85 percent) in the financial year 2016-'17. If remittance as percentage of import payments of Bangladesh is focused, it was at 36.1 percent level in the financial year 2005-'06. After that, it showed an increasing trend up to 2008-'09. In fact, it touched its peak by reaching 47.7 percent in 2008-'09. Afterwards, it maintained a declining trend with infrequent ups and downs and reached its lowest measuring 27.51 percent in 2017-'18.

Focusing on the growth rate of remittance, it is observed that it stood at 24.78 percent in 2005-'06. It reached its highest in 2007-'08 with 32.39 percent. But after that, it persistently maintained a declining trend. In the process, it became negative in the financial year 2013-'14 with -1.61 percent. In the next financial year, it turned back to positive. But since then, for the next two consecutive financial years, it remained negative. The figure was -2.51 percent in 2015-'16, and -14.48 percent in 2016-'17. Fortunately it has turned back again to positive figure in 2017-'18 and

persisted. One of the catalytic factors behind this growth was close supervision of and incentives offered by Bangladesh Bank to use formal banking channel to send remittance.

6. Trends of Migration and Remittance Together

Bangladesh started formal manpower export way back in 1976 with 6,087 workers sent to some Middle-eastern countries. Up to April 2019, the total overseas employment for Bangladeshi migrants has touched 12.42 million (Source: BMET) with USD 1, 97,540 million sent as remittance (Source: Bangladesh Bank). In 2018, 7, 34,181 Bangladeshi migrated for overseas jobs and sent USD 15,544 million to Bangladesh. Globally speaking, Bangladesh is one of the top five migrant-sending countries, and at the same time, one of the top ten remittance- earning countries in the world at present. Bangladesh was 9th in the global top ten list of remittance earning countries in 2017.

6.1 Trends of Yearly Migration from Bangladesh and Inflow of Remittances to Bangladesh from 1976 to 2020

Ever since Bangladesh became independent, its economy has been characterized by huge number of working-age people with intense unemployment, low per capita GDP and GNI, and consequently, low levels of living. These problems were more acute in rural than in urban areas of the country. Lack of education and skill only added to their jeopardy, making their productivity very low. On the other hand, contemporary global scenario was the emergence of oil-rich middle-eastern countries that needed supply of cheap labor. The
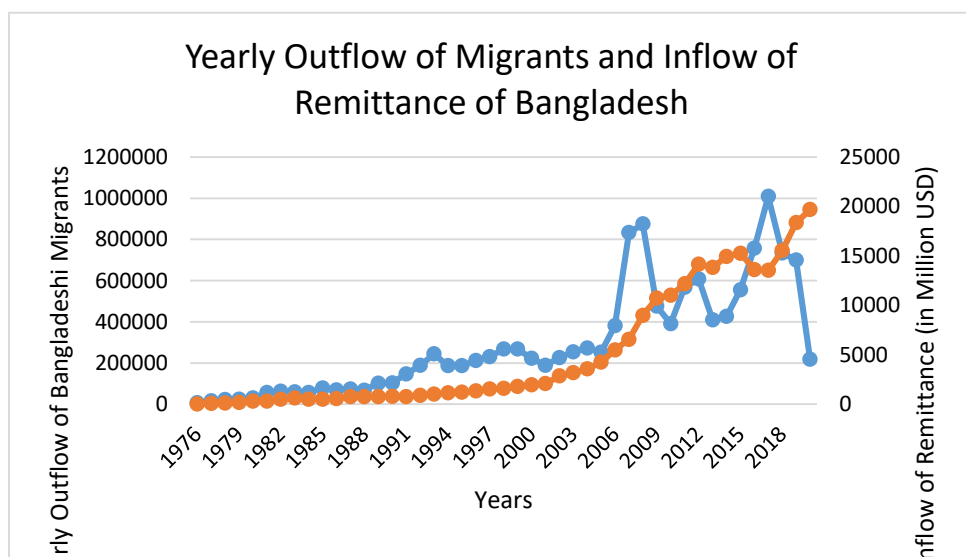
Figure 6.1: Yearly Migration from Bangladesh and Inflow of Remittance into Bangladesh from 1976 to 2020
Source: Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET)

unemployment problem within the country acted as push factor and the demand of cheap labor of middle-eastern countries acted as pull factor for international labor migration of Bangladeshi migrants.

But penetrating the global job market with highly-unskilled and undereducated or illiterate labor force was more than a challenge. This harsh truth has been reflected in figure 6.1 in which it is evident that both the outflow of migrants from Bangladesh and inflow of remittance to Bangladesh were very low during the early years of migration from the country. It was only during 1989 that the number labor force migrating from Bangladesh touched the 1 lac margin and it was

only during 1993 that the amount of remittance sent to Bangladesh touched 1 billion USD. Another important observation is that it was only during 2005 when the growth rate of remittance inflow exceeded the growth rate of migration from Bangladesh. It simply manifests the lack of skill, and hence lack of productivity and wages of Bangladeshi migrants overseas during the early stages of migration from Bangladesh. Another startling observation is that though there is a sharp decline in migration from Bangladesh during 2019 and 2020, there is a sharp upsurge of remittance inflow into the country during the same period. COVID-19 situation precisely is the cause. Economic theory suggests that people tend to remit more during periods of economic hardship of their families back home.

6.2 Country-wise Migration from Bangladesh and Inflow of Remittances into Bangladesh during 1999 to 2019

The scenario of country-wise migration from Bangladesh and inflow of remittance in Bangladesh during the last 21 years have been presented in figure 6.2.

The trends of migration from Bangladesh and remittance earnings during 1999 to 2019 reveal that most of the middle-eastern countries absorbed higher share of Bangladeshi migrants but produced comparatively lower share of remittance for the country whereas most of the non-middle-eastern countries accommodated very low share of Bangladeshi migrants of the period but produced comparatively higher share of remittance for Bangladesh during the period. It may be due to the higher rate of wage
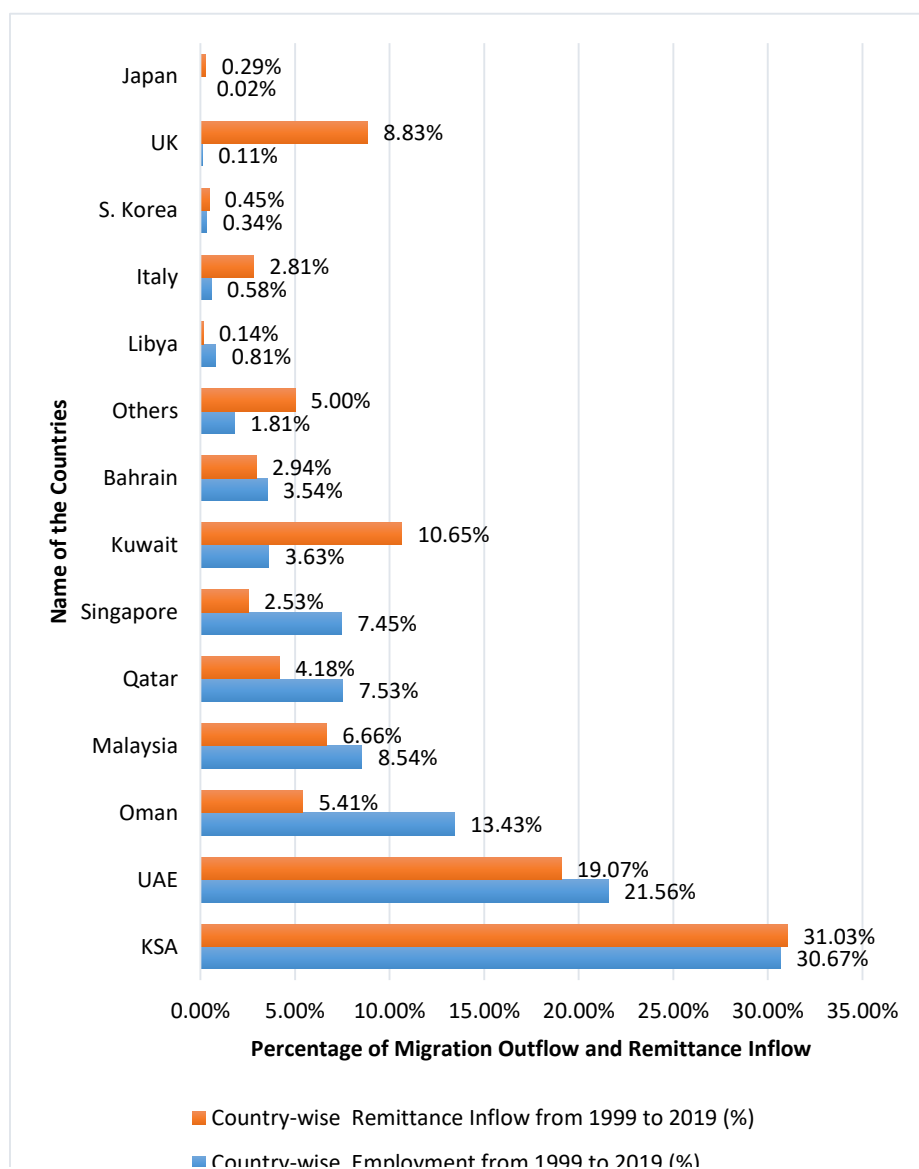

Figure 6.2: Country-wise Migration from Bangladesh and Inflow of Remittance to Bangladesh during 1999 to 2019

[Source: Compiled by the author (collected from Bangladesh Bank (BB); Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET)]

prevailing in non-middle-eastern countries compared to the middle-eastern countries. Another possible reason is that most of the Bangladeshi migrants in the middle-eastern countries are either less-skilled or semi-skilled category labor who lack basic skills needed to earn commensurate wages abroad. But most of the Bangladeshi migrants going to the non-middle-eastern countries are either skilled or professional category workers who possess the required skills to earn higher rate of salaries and wages abroad. As they can earn more, they are expected to send more as remittance to the country.

7. Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

This study reveals that both migration movement from Bangladesh and also the remittance inflow into Bangladesh is very much unidirectional. International labor market for Bangladesh is severely lacking diversification. Hence, our remittance earning has been tied to the economic conditions of a few countries which is a potential area of vulnerability for the economy of Bangladesh. The analysis regarding the skill-composition of Bangladeshi migrants also revealed significant dominance of less-skilled migrants with very low level of productivity and consequently low level of remittance earnings. The study also showed that most of the popular destination countries of Bangladeshi migrants are producing far less remittances than commensurate.

In the back-drop of the above findings, the following policy recommendations can be proposed:

a) The recruitment agencies and the government should search for newer and more promising niche labor market for Bangladeshi labors.
b) The government should focus on sending more migrants to European and Western countries than sending them to already saturated middle-eastern countries.
c) Since almost half the Bangladeshi migrants still go abroad unskilled, both the government and private sector should take necessary steps in order to increase their skill-level before their migration. Technical and vocational training centers, language training center, etc. should be made available at the village level. Relevant trainings should be made mandatory precondition for migration.
d) With many mishaps happening to our female migrants, female migration should be dealt with extra caution. Their physical and job security should be ensured beforehand before sending them abroad.
e) International migration cannot be feasible for everybody. The government should skillfully decide on who should migrate and who should not. Specific restrictions should be put in place regarding who should migrate and who should not and also where to migrate and where not to.
f) Conscious efforts should be made to diversify the destination countries for Bangladeshi migrants in order to decrease the dependency on a few middle-eastern countries for earning remittance and make the remittance earnings from this sector more sustainable.

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The Impact of Leadership Style on Employee Performance: A Study on Government Employees

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Abstract

Leadership styles play a crucial role in the improvement of employee performance. This study examines the influence of leadership styles for the enhancement of government employees' performance of Mymensingh district in Bangladesh. Exploratory approach along with mixed method has been followed here and, convenience sampling method used to select a total of 30 employees who are working at different government offices located at Mymensingh district. Responses have been collected through semi-structured questionnaire and interview, later on, analyzed through frequency distribution, descriptive statistics, and thematic analysis. The findings of the study show that, among authoritative, participative and delegative leadership styles, participative leaders are likely to communicate well instruction about goal setting. Authoritarian leaders are less preferable in the government institution since they entirely control the authority and very much dominant over employees. Finally, there is a desire for highly capable leaders with followers who can accept the directions from their leaders with adaption capabilities to change and, hence self-driven for their improvement. In future, research can be conducted in this area with a bigger sample data size in different districts of Bangladesh.

Key Words: Leadership, Authoritative, Participative, Delegative, Employee Performance

1. **Introduction**

Employees are the core asset of the organization as they are assorted as human capital in every organization. The success of an organization depends on the employee performance, but performance never happens alone without the spike of the assistance of leadership. Therefore, leaders show the direction how strategic planning can be attained in the organization with guided leadership practice. The organization gains its competitive advantages and dynamic environment by applying different management styles (Malcalm & Tamatery, 2017). The perception of employees about work attitude and organizational commitment greatly depends on how a leader or manager leads to achieving organizational productivity (Jaskyte, 2004). If employee performance correctly fits to the job demand, then organizational goals, mission, and vision can be achieved, and before this achievement leaders responsibility to direct employees towards the common goals (Robbins & Coulter, 2012). Effective leaders adopt good diagnostician and, adopt the style to meet the demand of the situation in which they operate (Iqbal, S, & Haider, 2015). Organization environment demands different situation in a different time, under this situation leadership acts as a metamorphosis process to place any change if required. Not only leadership style plays a vital role

but also to implement any changes under the variable situations for better performance. There are so many leadership styles that an organization can adapt according to its strategic plan, environment, knowledge, skill and, ability. This study will emphasize on Kurt Lewin's style of leadership (Goethals, Sorenson, & Burns, 2004) such as *authoritarian, participative and, delegative leadership*. This individual leadership style has an impact on employee performance and, organizational goal achievement issues. Each leadership style will demonstrate how performance may vary under different styles.

The prime objective of the study is to investigate the leadership style and the employee performance in the government employee in Mymensingh district. This study will also examine the existing leadership style in the government sector in the same district and, measure the employee performance that may influence by the leadership styles. Moreover, this study will make some suggestions about how better leadership practice would enhance the employee performances in this sector.

2. The Rationale of the Study

Government sector plays a vital role in the economic development of a country. Most people prefer to build up their career in the public sector for highest job security and social status. Therefore, it is now on demand to measure the actual employee performance in the organization, whereas leadership plays an essential role in which direction followers would allow the command for better performance. Moreover, if an employee performs with proper direction and attains the career goal and organizational objective, then organization productivity enriches and, establishes the benchmark in the competitive business or service environment. Therefore, this study examines the impact of leadership style on employee performance in the public sector in Mymensingh district. This study would show the various leadership styles that exist in different government offices in Mymensingh district and their impact of the performance. Findings of the study would contribute to the public sectors for both employees and employer; additionally, policymaker who would be assisted from the study.

3. Literature Review

Leadership style directly affects the performances and retention of the employees; hence, leadership is an essential part of management. Leadership is the process of influencing and supporting others to work enthusiastically toward achieving objectives (Davis & Newstrom, 2008). The total pattern of explicit and implicit leaders' actions as seen by employees is called leadership style. It represents a consistent combination of philosophy, skills, traits, and attitudes that are exhibited in a person's behavior (Davis & Newstrom, 2008). Leadership is a social influence process that seeks to elicit cooperation and support of individuals toward the actualization of some set goals (Habeeb & Ibrahim, 2017)

Psychologist Kurt Lewin developed his framework in the 1930s, and it provided the foundation of many of the approaches that followed afterward. Lewin's leadership style is the oldest situational model exercised in organizations.

Authoritarian leaders also are known as autocratic leaders, who would like to concentrate their power and decision among themselves. Employees are strictly and clearly instructed to follow the structure

and guidelines. There is an apparently clear distinction between leader and employee since authority and responsibility are not delegated to the subordinates. Autocratic leadership generally is negative, based on threat and punishment (BM & R., 2008), but sometimes reward is given in the term of a benevolent autocrat (Davis & Newstrom, 2008). Authoritarian leadership is preferred in a critical, complex situation where the leader makes the quick decision (Khoza, Chetty, & Karodia, 2016), it also allows less competent subordinates, provides security and a proper structure for employees. In the contrary, most employees dislike it, because this type of leadership hampers creativity and innovative ideas.

Participative leadership is also recommended as democratic leadership style that refers to the decentralization of authority. A leader has choice to ignore information as well as receive advice from followers (Davis & Newstrom, 2008). Filippo (1976) describes this leadership style as "consultative leadership", where employees feel and believe that their views are truly desired and have an impact upon the decision. Since this leader takes inputs from followers and appreciates their participation in the decision-making process, the leader also allows innovation and creativity from followers. Despite of the benefits associated with participative leadership style, it still has some pitfalls. Donna (2011) stressed that participative leadership is marked by several drawbacks that must be overcome to ensure its effectiveness in the organization. He mentioned the five pitfalls which are: competency, crises, consensus, pseudo-participation, and adherence ((NawoseIng'ollan & Roussel, 2017).

Another leadership style by Kurt Lewin's situational leadership is *delegative or laissez-fair leadership* that offers ample freedom to the followers about work and decision-making process in-group or individual performance. A leader provides resources, advice, guidelines if needed but involvement is rare. With this style, autonomy leads employee satisfaction, promotes creativity and innovations, but it can be damaging if followers are unable to meet the deadline if they are lacking proper knowledge, managing time, and competency. Lewin noted that laissez-faire leadership tended to result in groups that lacked direction where members blamed each other for mistakes, refused to accept personal responsibility, and produced a lack of progress and work. (Cherry, 2019).

As mentioned earlier, leadership has a great impact on individual and group performance; therefore, performance may deviate under different circumstances and leadership styles. Without proper performance, no organization can survive in a competitive business environment. Performance is multidimensional, this means that there are many different kinds of behavior that have the capacity to advance or hinder organizational goals (Aguinis, 2017). Goals also provide a good basis for making decisions by keeping the desired outcomes in mind. Leaders initiate followers to achieve the goal by providing proper resources, guidelines, defining the meaning of goals so that the self-actualization of goal achievement becomes vivid and career-oriented (Bacal &Max, 2011). According to different leadership style, the direction may vary leader to leader. Performance-oriented direction always helps an employee to walk on the correct trail whatever the situation is. Proper direction such as mentoring, coaching, social support motivates employee to perform better and make them more resilient when they fail (Shumi & Begum, 2017). Another way of

measuring employee performance and organizational performance is productivity (Robbins & Coutler, 2012). If deliberate performance occurs from positive supervision, greater output generates at work. Productivity also measures the efficiency and consistency of a task. Proper leadership style enhances employee performance and overall productivity if demonstrate constructively.

4. Research Methodology

This study has followed the exploratory approach where mixed method (qualitative and quantitative) design has been utilized. Convenience sampling method has been followed to collect data from respondents and, the sample size for this study is 30 government employees who are working at different government offices (Office of the Deputy Commissionaire, Agricultural Extension Department Office, Office of Environment and Forestry, Secondary and Higher Secondary Education Board Office, National Board of Revenue Office,) located at Mymensingh district. Hence the government employees working at the mentioned offices of Mymensingh district are the population for this study. For the collection of primary data, survey and interviewed methods have been followed. A self-administered, semi-structured questionnaire along with an interview schedule has been developed. In the questionnaire, respondents have given their perception about different leadership styles and their effects on employee performance on a five-point Likert scale. Secondary sources like books, journals, articles, internet sources have been used here. For the quantitative analysis of data frequency distribution, descriptive statistics, mean, standard deviations have been calculated, presented through tables and then analyzed by using SPSS (version 16). Thematic analysis has been followed for the analysis of qualitative data.

5. Data Analysis and Discussion

As the prime objective of this study is to investigate the leadership style and the employee performance in the government employees in Mymensingh district, both primary and secondary data have been used here to satisfy the objective of this study. Survey and face to face interview method have been followed to collect primary data. The constructed questionnaire contains both open and close-ended questions where the Likert scale follows the format (perception of leadership style) of 1) Strongly Disagree; 2) Disagree; 3) Neutral; 4) Agree; 5) Strongly Agree and 1) Very Low; 2) Low; 3) Average; 4) High; 5) Very High (perception about employee performance). The development of the questionnaire is based on the following variables; authoritative leadership, participative leadership, delegative leadership, and employee performance. The researcher ensures no revelation of identity or other personal information when preparing questionnaires. There are also issues of trust from the respondents; however, confidentiality has been guaranteed to avoid unnecessary issues.

5.1 Demographic Analysis

In this study, the age, sex, job position and job experience of the respondents who are government servants, working at Mymensingh District have been collected through self-administered, semi-structured questionnaires. The demographic characteristics of this research were measured by gender, age, job position and job experience (table 1).

Gender distribution showed that there are more male respondents (n=25, 83%), as there is female

Table 1: Demographic analysis

Variables			Frequency	Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent (%)
Gender		Female	5	17	17
		Male	25	83	100
Age	25	Below	0	0	0
		26-35	15	50	50
		36-45	10	33	83
		46-45	5	17	100
	Above	56-	0		100
Job position	level	Entry	20	67	67
	Mid-level		7	23	90
	level	Top	3	10	100
Job experience (years)		0-5	14	47	47
		6-10	6	20	67
		11-15	6	20	87
		16-20	2	6.5	93.5
	above	21-	2	6.5	100

Source: Field survey January 2019

(n=5, 17%). The majority of the respondents are aged between 26 to 35 years who contributed 50% of the respondents. Most of the respondents are in entry-level (67 %) and 23% are at mid-level. Regarding job experience, 47% of employees have 0-5 years of working experience. Only 6.5 percent have experienced above 21 years.

5.2 Descriptive Results on Leadership Style

This study adopted Kurt Lewin's (Goethals, Sorenson, Burns, 2004) *"Situational Leadership Styles"* which covers basically authoritative, participative and delegative leadership styles. Leadership tries

to influence employees to voluntarily seek defined objectives, preferably with enthusiasm. The perception of respondents' regarding different leadership styles and their impact on performance has been discussed below.

5.2.1 Authoritative Leadership

Table 2: Authoritative leadership

Authoritative leadership	Frequency						Mean	Std. deviation	Variance
	N	D	D	N	A	S.A			
Decision-making authority	30	2	4	7	15	2	3.37	1.033	1.068
Accept suggestion	30	5	17	3	4	1	2.30	1.022	1.045
Supervision	30	1	6	11	10	2	3.20	0.961	0.924
Aligned to goal achievement	30	0	1	12	12	5	3.70	0.794	0.631

Source: Field survey January 2019

In an authoritative leadership style, leaders often centralized power and decision making into them. Here the leaders take full authority and full responsibility (Davis & Newstrom, 2008). Respondents' were asked to give their perception about different characteristics of the authoritative leadership style. The following table (table 2) depicts that respondents express different perceptions in different categories in authoritative leadership practice, such as while making the decision, accepting suggestions from followers, supervising employees, and making followers aligned with goal achievement activities. However, most respondents agreed (n=15) that in their workplace their supervisor retains the final decision-making authority. The majority of respondents (n=17) disagreed about non-acceptance of suggestions by their supervisor. Employees' preference to work under the centralized authority and strict supervision, maximum respondents (n=10) express neutral response. Finally, in response to their strict alignment to achieve projected goals, total of 12 employees have agreed and the same numbers of employees have stayed at a neutral response.

5.2.2 Participative Leadership

Table 3 : Participative leadership

	Frequency	Mean	Std. deviation	Variance

Participative leadership	S.D	D	N	A	S.A			
Collaboration and free flow of idea	40	3	6	13	4	3.33	1.241	1.540
Equally distributed responsibilities	00	3	1	7	19	3.40	0.968	0.938
Being creative	20	1	3	19	5	3.80	0.997	0.993
Opinion in decision making	00	3	12	11	4	3.43	1.073	1.151

Source: Field survey January 2019

In participative leadership, leaders clearly decentralize authority. Employees are informed about conditions affecting their job and encouraged to express their ideas, make suggestions and take action. Majority of respondents (n=13) agreed that their supervisor/leader emphasizes collaboration and the free-flow of ideas where only 4 respondents (table 3) strongly disagreed. About the question of equally distributed responsibilities among all employees majority of them (n=17) strongly agreed whereas only a few (n=3) disagreed. Among the respondents, 19 of them agreed that they are encouraged by their supervisors to use their creativity at workplace. Only 3 respondents disagreed that they have little chance to give their opinion in major decision making but 11 of them agreed that they can convey their opinion in any major decision making.

5.2.3 Delegative Leadership

Delegative leadership also known as laissez-faire leadership, leaders prefer a hands-off management style and allow team members to make decisions. Here employees make all decisions and choices, for which they are responsible then. According to the survey, among 30 government employees, 11 (table 4) employees disagreed that they are given little guidance at the workplace whereas only 4 of them strongly agreed. In response to the allocation of resources for achieving goals most of the respondents agreed (n=10) that their supervisor allocates resources for achieving goals whereas only 2 of them strongly disagreed. In the case of independent decision making most of them (n=13) disagreed. For the question of delegated power, the majority (n=10) have given their response as 'neutral'. Moreover, in the case of the supervisor's taking all responsibility and action in-group, 11 among 30 respondents agreed and only 5 of them strongly disagreed.

Table 4: Delegative leadership

Delegative leadership	Frequency						Mean	Std. deviation	Variance
	N	S.D	D	N	A	S.A			
Little Guidance	30	6	11	8	1	4	2.35	1.252	1.568
Distribution of resources	30	2	8	5	10	5	3.27	1.230	1.513
Independent decision making	30	8	13	3	3	3	2.33	1.269	1.609
Problem-solving capability	30	6	12	6	5	1	2.43	1.104	1.220
Delegated power	0			0			2.93	1.048	1.099
Supervisor's responsibility to the group	0				1		3.07	1.363	1.857

Source: Field survey January 2019

5.3 Employee Performance

The survival of any organization (governmental or private) in today's highly competitive environment relies on the continuous enhancement of their employees' performance. This study focuses on the performance of government employees who work in Mymensingh district. Employees were asked to rate the influence of leadership style on their performance improvement at Likert scales ranging from "Very Low (1) to Very High (5)". Leaders' direction towards goal setting and career objectives has an influence on employee's performance. Most of the respondents (n=12) opined that leader's influence helps them to attain average performance and 11 respondents (table 5) opined that their performance becomes high when they get guidance from the leader. In the question of a leader's role for the availability of resources for goal attainment, 10 employees opined that they could perform highly when resources are allocated properly by their leader. According to the majority of respondents (n=13), they can perform highly when supervisor made their goals clear, measurable and achievable. 14 respondents opined that their performance became high when they get direction for improvement whereas only 1 opined that the influence is very low. Feedback from supervisor or manager plays a crucial role in performance improvement, here majority (n=16) opined that their performance became high when they get feedback from their supervisor. In overall 16 employees opined that their leader's impact on the enhancement of their performance is high whereas only 2 opined as low.

Table 5: Effects on employee performance

Employee performance		Frequency					Mean	Std. deviation	Variance
	N	V. Low	Low	Avg.	High	V. High			
Goal setting and career objectives	30	4	2	12	11	1	3.10	1.062	1.128
Resource allocation	30	1	4	11	10	4	3.40	1.003	1.007
Clear, measurable. Achievable goals	30	0	5	5	13	7	3.73	1.015	1.030
Direction for performance improvement	30	1	1	4	14	10	4.03	0.964	0.930
Feedback	30	0	5	7	16	2	3.50	0.861	0.741
Performance enhanced	30	0	2	7	16	5	3.73	0.980	0.961

Source: Field survey January 2019

The table also interprets the existence of leadership style in government institutions in Mymensingh district, these styles influence on employee performance with different intensity. If the supervisor directs employees with goal setting, to implement these goals proper resource has to be allocated, more precisely if goals are achievable with proper direction with given feedback than performance must be enhanced.

5.4 Favorable Leadership Style to Enhance Employee Performance

Any leader has an influence on his subordinate whether positive or negative. Leadership styles differ on the basis of motivation, power, orientation towards task and people (Davis and Newstrom, 2008). As this study has been conducted among government officials they have opined about their favorable leadership style. The following table (table 6) shows that employees perception about their favorable leadership style under which their performance improves. Most of the respondents (n=18) opined that their favorable leadership style is participative leadership whereas only 4 of them opined that they prefer to work under delegative leaders. In addition, according to the rest of the respondents (n=8), they prefer authoritative leadership.

Table 6: Perception of employees about favorable leadership style

Leadership styles	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative Percent
Authoritative	8	27	27	27
Participative	18	60	60	87
Delegative	4	13	13	100
Total	30	100		

Source: Field survey January 2019

Among the different government officials, who have supervised under different leadership styles have expressed their preferences on participative leadership style, since this leadership style enhanced overall employee performance than any other leadership styles. On the other hand, delegative leadership scored low where an employee performs lower under this style.

5.5 Descriptive Analysis of Leadership Style on Employee Performance

Based on the table mentioned below (table 7), participative leadership style has the highest mean value corresponding to 3.49 and indicating that the mean score is above midpoint. This statistics shows that the leaders are the participative leader who has an influence on employee performance at Mymensingh district's government offices. Whereas authoritative leadership style scores the second highest mean value corresponding to 3.14 that indicates that the authoritative leadership style is present at their workplace having an average impact on enhancing employee performance. Finally, delegative leadership style has the lowest mean value corresponding to 2.76 indicating that the mean is below the midpoint and indicates that respondents disagreed that when their supervisors are delegative leaders having little influence on their performance improvement.

Table 7: Descriptive Analysis of Leadership Style on Employee Performance

	Frequency N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Participative	30	3.49	0.808
Authoritative	30	3.14	0.567
Delegative	30	2.76	0.891
Employee performance	30	3.58	0.636
Valid N (List wise)	30		

Source: Field survey January 2019

5.6 Qualitative Analysis

Within the organization, leaders are actors and change agents who impact the execution of new practices, processes, and structure (Sang and Sang, 2016). Government institutions, therefore, must analyze the attributes of leaders for better performance of the employees. In this study government employees have been interviewed where some are leaders and some are followers (table 1). The leadership style related question focused on the key thematic areas of authoritative leadership, participative leadership and delegated leadership styles. The employee performance questions were based on how leaders influence the performance of employees through their direction and supervision regarding goal setting, resource allocation, direction for career objectives, the direction towards performance improvement, giving feedback, etc.

Thematic analysis expresses that the data collected from the survey and interview states that participative leadership style is preferable to government employees of the studied area. In the work of Basit, Sebastan, and Hassan (2017) the similar result has been found. Employees had better working experience under the supervision of a participative leader (Basit, Sebastian, & Hassan, 2017). As policies and decisions are reached by general consensus employees more readily accept these. Employees feel personally liable for the accomplishment of any task which improves their morale. Participative leaders encourage creative solution which made more efficient. The most important fact is that a follower of participative leader works in collaboration which has an impact on the overall performance of a team or group.

From the discussion with top, mid and entry-level employees it has been discovered that employees like to work under an authoritative leader where quick decision making is needed. As leaders using the authoritarian leadership style often make a decision by themselves and it facilitates at an emergency situation where quick decision making is required (Malcalm & Tamatey, 2017). The respondents support this leadership style when there is a lot of pressure surrounding them. This leadership style enhances performance because of the predetermined instructions to follow which often diminished the risk. In contrary, this leadership style sometimes suppresses the creativity of employees because they do not consult with their team. Moreover, employees have found this style appropriate to enhance their performance as they followed strict instructions, can concentrate on their task, decisions are made promptly, and pressures are taken by their leaders; not bothering them.

The delegative leadership style often called the laissez-faire leadership style is based on the delegation as this type of leadership tends to take a handoff management approach to decisions. They allow their team members to make the decisions instead (Anyango, 2015). From the responses of the employees (leaders and followers) interviewed, they confessed that hardly they found their leaders to be as delegative leader. In case of an emergency or complex situation, supervisors do not allow them to handle the situation in their own way. As this study has been conducted among government employees of Mymensingh district, it has been found that the presence of delegated leadership style weakens the accountability of the

supervisors or leaders. In public offices, accountability is a major factor for the proper implementation of tasks and policies. Though employees enjoy much freedom under this leadership when it comes about the cohesiveness of group or teams, that occurs less frequently and, it affects adversely to employee performance.

Employee performance is job-related activities expected of an employee and how well those activities are executed in the workplace. The performance of an employee depends on some factors such as how well employee's role and responsibilities are clarified, how their performance will be measured, direction and guidelines for goal attainment, constructive feedback and rewards after successful completion of their task (Zaman & Newaz, 2013). As this study aims at identifying how the leadership styles influences on the performance of employees at government offices the qualitative data regarding the improvement of employee performance are discussed here. It has been found that the interaction between supervisors and subordinates play a crucial role in the accomplishment of any goals. In government, offices directions come from the top level in which hierarchy and chain of command are strictly followed. Employees who like strict rules and regulations, continuous monitoring can perform better under the authoritative leader. On the other hand, employees who prefer to participate in the decision-making process, determination of policy (Daft, 2008, p. 40), enthusiastic to share leadership along with leader had shown improvement while working under the participative leader. Moreover, the findings of this study pointing out that in compared to delegative and authoritarian leadership styles, the participative leadership style has an influence on the improvement of employees' performance. The findings also showed that supervisors or managers cannot fulfill the aspects of leadership styles for the hindrances in government offices due to lack of experience, difficulties to convince employees, lack of responsibilities of followers, faulty decision making, inadequate resources (manpower and materials), lack of accountabilities and transparencies, etc.

6. Conclusion, Implications, and Recommendations

The main object of the study was to delve the effect of leadership style (Kurt Lewin's Model) on employee performance in government administration in Mymensingh district. Both qualitative and quantitative types of method have been adopted for the study with 30 respondents in the different public sector in the same area. Interview, structures and open-ended questionnaire have been used for primary data collection. Likert 5 point scale has been used for measurements.

From the study, the findings show that the participative/democratic leadership has a positive impact on employee performance in the government sector in Mymensingh district. Employees get enough direction, the suggestion to implement the goals and objectives, as they found it meaningful for their performance; moreover, they are active participants in the decision-making process. In addition to that, authoritarian /autocratic leaders are less preferable in the government institution, since they entirely control the authority and very much dominant over employees (Malcalm & Tamatey, 2017). These types of leaders though are acceptable in case of the urgent decision-making situation in the presence of incompetent

subordinates. Finally, delegative or laissez-fair leadership are least practiced in the government sector in Mymensingh district. As this style offers a free-rein management system, sometimes chaotic environment prevails in a problem-solving situation, but this style allows followers having authority at a moderate level in the public sector in the same district.

However, if the government officials in the Mymensingh district wants to enhance employee performance, it should become from both parties; employer and employee. Effective employee performance is two-way communication that comes from leaders and executed by employees. Employees have to be agreed upon the performance and goal achievement task. An employee would like to idealize their supervisor as a mentor, coach and expect preferable leadership behavior. As a result, the supervisor must be aware of the projected behavior. Leaders have to be sensitive about the opportunities and threats around the creativity and goal achievement task; they also should allow the creativity that comes from employees. The supervisor should be very precise about the strategic planning of their department, organization and, be communicative about the individual or group task about career goals.

From the study, participative leaders are likely to communicate well instruction about goal setting; still, they have to be open about collaborative ideas, and there should be room for creative discussion. Leaders may get training for enhancing their behavior toward the effectiveness of leadership practice. In summary, according to the result, management should pay attention to develop the work relation between employee and employer for better employee performance.

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Pandemic and Governance in Bangladesh: Case of Field Administration

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Abstract

    Currently, countries around the globe are simultaneously fighting against the COVID-19 pandemic. The government of Bangladesh has already taken and implemented several policies to control the spread of the COVID-19. Moreover, in building public awareness, the central and field administration has implemented several policies such as-lockdown strategy, isolation, home quarantine, obligatory use of masks, ensuring social distance, etc. Conversely, due to being a densely populated country, most of the rural people in Bangladesh are not aware of the threat of COVID-19. In this regard, field administration (Upazila Administration) i.e UNO (Upazila Nirbahi Officer) has been playing a significant role to make rural people aware from the very beginning of the COVID-19 outbreak in Bangladesh. But in some cases, the Upazila administration faced some limitations. Thereafter, the study has identified the different roles of UNO in building public awareness at rural levels in Bangladesh. The study was conducted based on a quantitative approach of exploratory nature. The findings of the study demonstrated that a large group of rural people i.e 71% had the knowledge about the threat of the COVID-19, but 53.6% of rural people did not use masks, and 9.10% did not have faith in the physical distance that can eliminate the risk of COVID-19. As well, 50% of respondents argued that UNO played a significant role to enhance rural people's awareness amid the pandemic. Especially, 38% and 32.70 % of respondents argued that implementation of the 'No Mask, No Service' policy and 'monitoring initiative' was an effective mechanism to increase public awareness respectively. Thereafter, the authors illustrated several suggestions to enhance the rural people's awareness amid the pandemic in Bangladesh.

Key Words: *Pandemic, Governance, Field Administration, Public Awareness, Role of UNO, Monitoring.*

1. Introduction

    The present world is passing through a terrible time due to the outbreak of COVID-19. COVID-19 is a disease-causing virus called SARS-CoV-2 that has never been seen in the human body and it can infect humans very quickly through infection. World Health Organization (WHO) named it COVID-19 on 11th February 2020 and declared a pandemic on the 11th of March (WHO, 2020). Currently, all the countries of the world are concurrently fighting against the pandemic COVID-19. The first coronavirus cases confirmed in Bangladesh on March 8, 2020 (Banik et al., 2020). In this regard, to control the COVID-19 outbreak, and ensure the health service to the victims, the government of Bangladesh has already taken and implemented-several initiatives such as heavy lockdown strategies; preparing the hospitals and emergency care with available testing kits, PPE, oxygen, N-95 mask, ICU bed, isolation center, emergency care, ambulance services; stimulates package; distribution relief goods to the backward sections; telemedicine opportunities; e-learning opportunities; signing for the vaccine, etc. (Chowdhury et al., 2020).

In this context, the local government particularly, Upazila administration is playing a significant role in terms of building rural people awareness amid the pandemic in Bangladesh. Local government is an administrative body as well as the sub-system of central government whose main purpose is to provide services within a certain territory (Akhter & Ahmed, 2022) . There are three tiers of rural local government in Bangladesh i.e Union Parishad, Upazila Parishad, and Zila Parishad (Khan & Obaidullah, 2003). Since Bangladesh is an overpopulated country with the highest population-density, around 63.4% of the total population live in rural areas (Azad, 2020) where most of them are unaware of the World Health Organization's (WHO) guidelines regarding health safety on the COVID-19 issues. Therefore, public awareness is a big issue in the COVID-19 case. Public awareness is defined as the public level of understanding about the significance and consequences of a certain program or an activity, or issues. Moreover, it is the process of spreading knowledge to people so that people can make their own decisions about an issue (Teo et al., 2021). Public awareness levels are imperative for the long-term recovery tactics after the COVID-19 crisis (Rousseau & Deschacht, 2020). However, UNO (Upazila Nirbahi Officer) as the administrative head of Upazila Parishad, plays a principal role to implement, monitoring, and supervising several government policies at the rural level in Bangladesh. Especially, amid the pandemic COVID-19, UNO has played a praiseworthy role in terms of building public awareness in the rural areas in Bangladesh. Correspondingly, Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) has already implemented several innovative ideas to make rural people aware of the threat of the COVID-19. However, this study explored the existing scenario of public awareness in the rural areas as well as assessed the multiple roles of UNO in terms of managing the COVID-19 issues in field administration in Bangladesh.

2. Literature Review

Field administration is a branch of central administration (IGI Global, 2021) that works on the ground to carry out government agendas and policies with a view to serving citizen at local level along with solidity (ALI, 1982). Upazila Parishad is an administrative tier of field administration that is consisted of an elected Chairman, two Vice Chairmen (one will be women), all Union Parishad Chairman, Mayors of concerned Municipality (if any), and female members in reserved seat. Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) is the Principal Executive Officer in Upazila Parishad whose main responsibilities are ensuring compliance with rules and regulations and upkeep of financial discipline. The general functions of the UNO are ensuring compliance with rules and regulations; maintenance of financial discipline; planning and implementation of development projects under UZP; planning and implementation of block grant supported projects; providing secretarial assistance to the UZP; increasing influence of political factors, etc. (Zamil, 2012). During the COVID-19 pandemic, UNOs in Bangladesh are playing a significant role to make rural people aware of the COVID-19 pandemic, ensure the proper application of laws, as well as carry out the central government announcements through active cooperation and collaboration (Matin et al., 2020) From this point of view related literature has been illustrated below to assess the government response as well as field administrators' contributions to address the drastic effect of COVID-19 in Bangladesh.

Zakir Hossain (2021) conducts a study on the strategy of the local government regarding addressing the pandemic COVID-19 in Bangladesh. Particularly, the author explores the contribution of local government and its conversion to response the COVID-19. However, the study was conducted based on the primary data analysis where the findings of the study reveal that local government- as a field administrative unit played a noteworthy role to eliminate the drastic effect of COVID-19, such as ensuring the

accountability and transparency of the local representatives; providing efficient services to the grassroots people through obtaining their consent, etc. As well, the findings of the study demonstrate the significance of the ICT intervention at local government to address the impact of COVID-19. However, the author of the study significantly illustrates the role of local government but specifically did not clarify the role of filed administrator/Upazila Nirbahi officer (UNO) regarding addressing the COVID-19 in Bangladesh (Zakir Hossain, 2021). Besides, Noman et al. (2020) articulate that UNO has played a significant role to ensure the list of the marginalized and backward sections of the rural areas and proper distribution of government reliefs to those who are hit hard by the coronavirus pandemic. In this regard, the authors articulate that Union Parishad cooperates with the Upazila Parishad to prepare the proper list of the marginalized where the tag officer verified it. They added that after ensuring the check and balance, UNO distributed the government cash relief to the poor (Noman et al., 2020). However, the authors did not illustrate the challenges of UNO regarding addressing the extreme effect of COVID-19 in Bangladesh. Moreover, Md Kariul et al. (2020) depict a study on assessing the level of response to eliminate the impact of pandemic COVID-19 Bangladesh. The authors expressively illustrate the economic status of Bangladesh amid the pandemic and purposively illustrate the impact of COVID-19 on the economy as well as all aspects of human life. The study was conducted based on the descriptive secondary literature review where the findings of the study demonstrate the drastic impact of COVID-19 on human life. Moreover, the findings reveal that males are more vulnerable than females in terms of the COVID-19 infection. Therefore, the authors articulate that government and non-government level initiatives could significantly control the community transmission of the COVID-19 in Bangladesh. However, the authors did not articulate the role of field administration to address the threat of COVID-19 in Bangladesh (Md Kariul et al., 2020).

Similarly, Panday (2021) demonstrates the significance of local government to address the COVID-19 pandemic in Bangladesh. The author articulates that as an important unit of the central government, local government plays a noteworthy role to attain the overall development of the country. Particularly, in the case of COVID-19 management, local government institutions have been playing a significant role since the very beginning i.e enhancing the awareness among the local people in Bangladesh. As well, the author argues that in terms of implementing vaccination programs, civic awareness-raising, forming local committees, volunteer supports, and etc. local government is playing a gigantic role. However, the author significantly illustrates the significance of local government to address the COVID-19 issues but specifically, he did not mention the contribution of the field administration in terms of pandemic management (Panday, 2021).

Correspondingly, Islam et al. (2020) explore a study on tacking the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic in Bangladesh. Principally, the authors elucidate the overview of the COVID-19 in Bangladesh and explain the government strategies to address this global crisis. However, the study was conducted based on the literature review where the findings of the study demonstrate the adopted strategies of the government to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic. Particularly, the findings reveal that the government of Bangladesh has implemented several effective strategies to eliminate the threat of COVID-19 including COVID test initiatives, quarantine initiatives, regional lockdown strategies, the shutdown of all offices, educational institutions, etc. The government has already declared several financial stimulus packages to tackle the drastic effect of the COVID-19. Conversely, the authors highlight several limitations and challenges of the government to effectively tackle the COVID-19 in Bangladesh including poor contact tracing, inadequate testing, poor emergency health facilities, etc. (Islam et al., 2020).

In addition, Anwar et al. (2020) depict a study on the challenges of the COVID-19 in Bangladesh and how to address such challenges! In this regard, the authors initially illustrate the drastic global scenario of the COVID-19 and globally adopted strategies. However, the study was conducted based on the secondary data analysis where the findings of the study demonstrate that as an overpopulated and developing country, it will be harsh for Bangladesh to implement strict country lockdown, social isolation, isolated office deeds, etc. Conversely, the authors argue that to eliminate the severe effect of the pandemic, the country can strengthen mobile sanitization services, transitory quarantine facilities, healthcare conveniences, etc. Moreover, the findings of the study recommended that effective collaboration among the administration, inhabitants, health professionals and foreign aid can abate the drastic effect of COVID-19 in Bangladesh. However, the author did not demonstrate the significance of field administration to tackle the impact of COVID-19 in Bangladesh (Anwar et al., 2020).

Conversely, Dutta and Fischer (2021) explore a study on the importance of local governance to COVID-19 management in terms of disease prevention and enhancing social security. The authors predominantly illustrate the unexpected challenges of COVID-19 on social security and virus control in third-world countries. The study was conducted based on the secondary data analysis where the findings of the study divulge the involvement of community administrations in synchronizing national response against COVID-19. Additionally, the findings of the study demonstrate that local government expands civic trust and value of response. Similarly, the authors argue that government can effectively recover the fragile economy, demography, and biology through active community engagement. However, the authors did not illustrate the significance of the field administration to address the COVID-19 threat (Dutta & Fischer, 2021).

However, in the past few days, different scholars have extensively written about COVID-19 response strategy but preliminary literature review shows that no studies have been conducted yet about the comprehensive and sustainable contribution of field administration i.e roles of UNO in building public awareness in rural areas. Conversely, the previous studies are quite different from this study in the case of sample size, methods of research, research variables, and data collection process. Therefore, this study is very much significant to illustrate the contribution of field administration through the role of UNO in building public awareness at rural levels amid the COVID-19 pandemic in Bangladesh.

3. Aim and Objectives of the Study

The main aim of the study is to illustrate the role of field administration i.e Upazila Administration in building public awareness amid the COVID-19 Pandemic.

The specific objectives are-
  a) To identify the role of UNO (Upazila Nirbahi Officer) in building public awareness during the COVID-19 pandemic.
  b) To illustrate the significance of public awareness regarding eliminating the drastic effect of COVID-19 in rural areas in Bangladesh.

4. Methodology of the Study

As the main aim of this study was to identify the role of field administration i.e UNO in building public awareness amid the COVID-19 pandemic, this research was exploratory in nature and ensured the

application of a quantitative approach. The main reason behind the application of the quantitative method was to illustrate the roles of field administrator i.e UNO (Upazila Nirbahi Officer) in building public awareness amid the COVID-19 pandemic in the rural areas in Bangladesh.

4.1 Data Collection Method: Quantitative Tool (Survey)

As a part of the quantitative mode of data collection, a sample survey was accompanied to serve the study purpose. As well, a structured questionnaire was applied to collect data. Particularly, 5 points Likert scale and closed-ended questions were applied for gathering quantitative data.

4.2 Study area

Since the study focused on the roles of field administrators i.e UNO in building public awareness amid the pandemic in the rural areas in Bangladesh, the selected study areas were the 5 distinct Union Parishads (i.e Amirabari Union Parishad, Bailar Union Parishad, Dhanikhola Union Parishad, Bali Para Union Parishad, Trishal Union Parishad) under Trishal Upazila, Mymensingh.

4.3 Sample and Sampling Procedure

In this study, probability sampling (random cluster sampling) was applied to design sampling, and data were collected within the selected areas. However, the target populations were the general people in rural areas (Upazila level) under Trishal Upazila, Mymensingh. Especially, as a sample unit, 110 rural people in different groups (businessmen, day laborers, learners, teachers, job holders, etc.) participated to gather survey data.

4.4 Data Analysis

As the study was conducted based on a quantitative approach, collected data has been organized characteristically and the coding activities is done manually. Prepared data is analyzed statistically with data analysis software 'MS Excel' and 'Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS)' and is presented in the report accordingly.

5. Findings of the Study

This section has significantly illustrated the overall findings of the study. Initially, it has described the demographic and socio-economic profile of the respondents. Thereafter, survey data (quantitative data) has been presented accordingly.

5.1 Demographic and Socio-economic Profile of the Respondents

The study depicts an overview of demographic and socioeconomic characteristics that includes age, gender, education qualification, and profession of the respondents.

5.1.1 Age of the Respondents

The respondents were from various age groups. The following bar chart represents that 21.8% of the total respondents were 15-25 age group; 25.5% were 26-35 age group; 35.5% were 36-50 age group, and 17.3% were the 51-80 years age group. It is perceived that most of the respondents were middle-aged people.
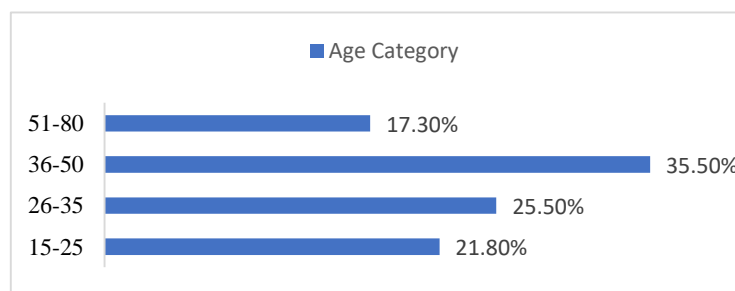

FIGURE 1: RESPONDENTS BY AGE GROUPS (FIELD SURVEY, DECEMBER 2020)

5.1.2   Gender of the Respondents

According to the survey result, among the total respondents, 63.6% were male whereas the rest of them were female (36.4%).
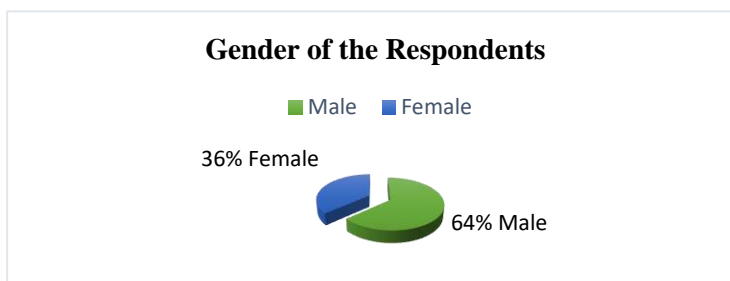

Gender of the Respondents

■ Male ■ Female

36% Female

64% Male

FIGURE 2: GENDER OF THE RESPONDENTS (FIELD SURVEY, DECEMBER 2020)

5.1.3   Education Qualifications of the Respondents

The survey found that 75.5% of the respondents were knowledgeable who received education from different levels (Master's, graduation, HSC, SSC, and JSC) whereas 24.5% had no educational qualification.

Education Qualifications of the Respondents					
		Frequency	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
Knowledgeable People	Higher Educated/Master's Degree	10	9.1	9.1	9.1
	Graduation	14	12.7	12.7	21.8
	Higher Secondary	24	21.8	21.8	43.6
	Secondary	21	19.1	19.1	62.7
	Junior School Certificate	14	12.7	12.7	75.5
	Total Knowledgeable	**83**	**75.5**	**75.5**	-
Less Knowledgeable People	**Less Knowledgeable**	**27**	**24.5**	**24.5**	**100.0**
	Total	**110**	**100.0**	**100.0**	-

TABLE 2: **RESPONDENTS' LEVEL OF KNOWLEDGE (FIELD SURVEY, DECEMBER 2020)**

According to the survey, the above table illustrates the respondents' level of knowledge where 9.1% of respondents had the Master's Degree; 12.7% had the Graduation Degree; 21.8% had a higher secondary degree; 19.1% had a secondary degree; 12.7% had Junior School Certificate, and the remaining 24.5% had no educational knowledge.

5.1.4   Nature of Employment

According to the given figure, it has been observed that 23% of respondents were housewives (women); 22% were day laborers; 14% were learners; 24% were involved with small business; 11% were involved in the teaching profession, and the rest of them (6%) were involved with government services. However, those people were the key respondents of this study.
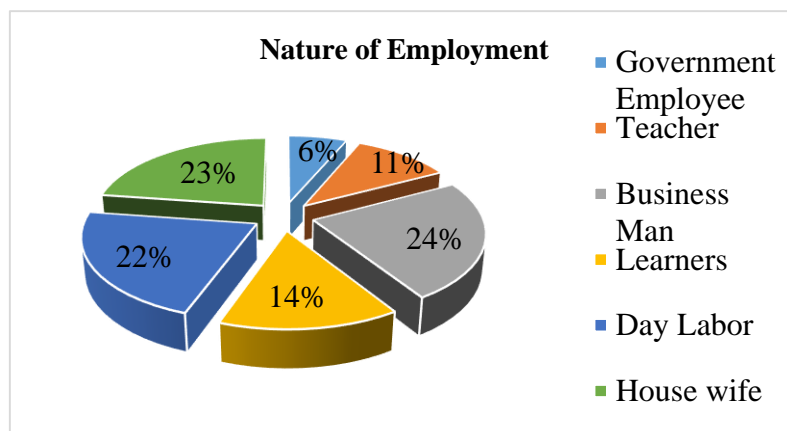

FIGURE 3: NATURE OF EMPLOYMENT (FIELD SURVEY, DECEMBER 2020)

5.2 Knowledge of Citizen on the Declaration of World Health Organization (WHO) about Pandemic

According to the survey, it was found that 71% of respondents knew about the WHO's declaration in terms of COVID-19 threats, but 29% of respondents had no knowledge about WHO's declaration. Although the majority of rural people were concerned about the COVID-19 issues, a particular group had faith in superstition and ignored the COVID-19 related health measures. As a result, the Upazila administration is still struggling to make people aware at grassroots levels in Bangladesh.
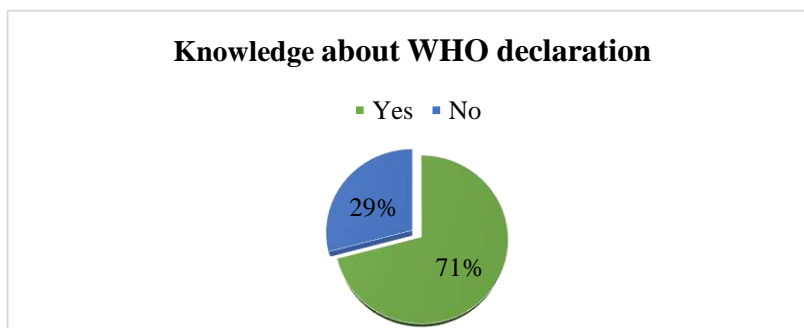
FIGURE 4: KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE WHO'S DECLARATION (FIELD SURVEY, DECEMBER 2020)

5.2 Frequency of Using Mask

The following table represents that 53.6% of respondents did not use masks when going out from home. Conversely, the table also represents that about 46.4% of respondents used masks when going out from home. Although about a large group of rural people used masks, however, the given statistic demonstrates the drastic conditions of the rural areas where a majority of people ignore the using mask and avoid the WHO's health-related declaration when they go out.

Frequency of Using Mask outside the Home				
		Frequency	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
Valid	**Yes**	51	46.4	46.4	46.4
	No	59	53.6	53.6	100.0
	Total	110	100.0	100.0	

TABLE 3: FREQUENCY OF USING MASK OUTSIDE THE HOME (FIELD SURVEY, DECEMBER 2020)

5.4 People's Perception of the Necessity of Using Mask

The survey report represents that 61% of respondents believed that using a mask can control the spread of COVID-19 whereas 20% of respondents supported this notion. On the other hand, 7% of respondents disagreed that masks can control the spread of COVID-19 because they believe in superstition. Therefore, the given statistic validated that a large group of rural people

FIGURE 5: PEOPLE'S PERCEPTION OF THE NECESSITY OF USING MASK (FIELD SURVEY, DECEMBER 2020)

had no faith in using masks regarding controlling the spread of COVID-19.

3.5 People's Perception in terms of Maintaining Social Distance

According to the survey data, 39.10% of respondents thought that maintaining physical distance can control the rapid spread of COVID-19 in rural areas in Bangladesh whereas 26.60% of respondents supported this statement. Conversely, about 9.10% of respondents articulated that
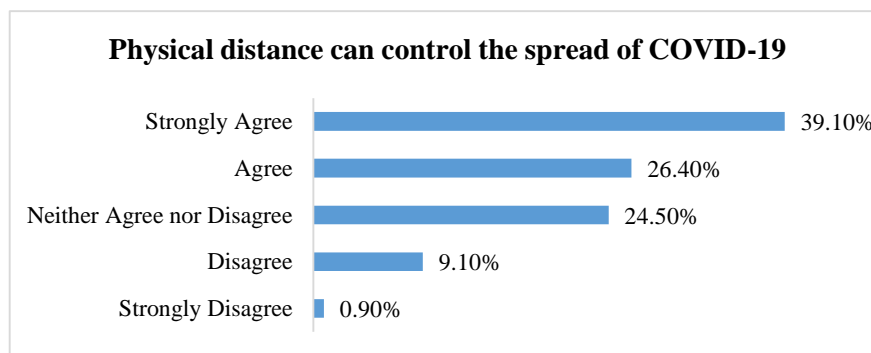
FIGURE 6: IMPORTANCE OF PHYSICAL DISTANCE (FIELD SURVEY, DECEMBER 2020)

maintaining physical distance alone could not control the spread of COVID-19 in the rural areas in Bangladesh. Therefore, the above statistic demonstrates that there was a dilemma among the rural people about maintaining physical distance amid the pandemic in rural areas.

5.6 People's Perception of the Importance of Public Awareness

The above pie chart illustrates that 52% of respondents strongly agreed that public awareness can significantly control the outbreak of the COVID-19 in rural areas whereas 27% of respondents supported their opinion. As well, 18% of respondents have neither agreed nor disagreed about this issue whereas 2% of respondents disagreed about this issue. Therefore, the given statistic validates that the majority of rural people believed that public awareness could be an effective mechanism to control the spread of COVID-19.
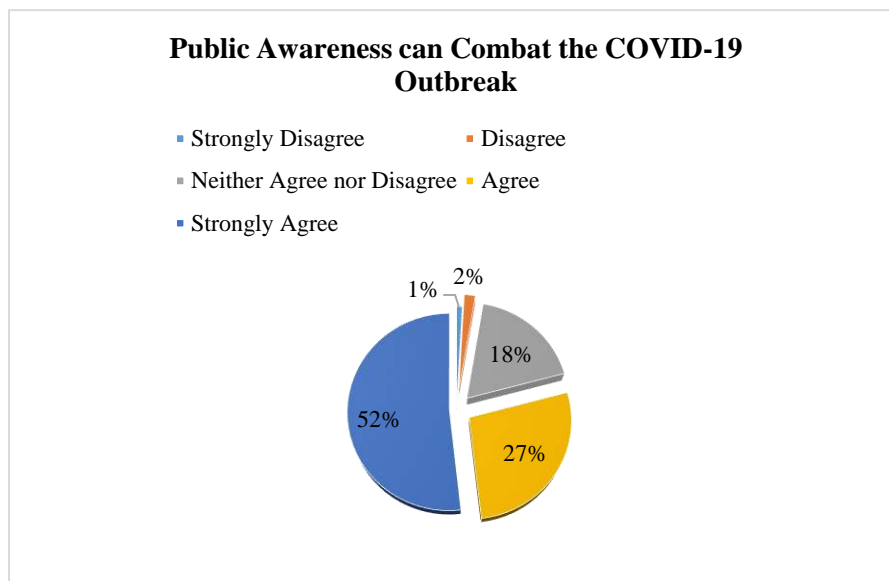
**FIGURE 7: IMPORTANCE OF PUBLIC AWARENESS (FIELD SURVEY, DECEMBER 2020)**

5.7 Role of UNO: Monitoring Activities

According to the following bar chart, 19.10% of respondents argued that in terms of enhancing public awareness amid COVID-19, the highest monitoring area of Trishal Upazila was the open market whereas 13.60% of respondents articulated that the second-highest monitoring area was the different shopping mall under Trishal Upazila. Consequently, 41.80% of respondents claimed that UNO of Trishal Upazila
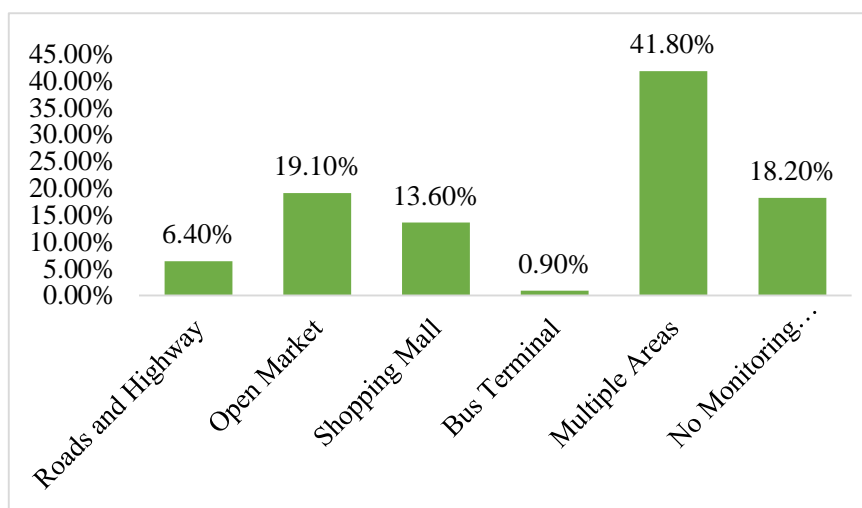
FIGURE 8: MONITORING ACTIVITIES OF UNO (FIELD SURVEY, DECEMBER 2020)

supervised the mixed area (roads and highway, open market, shopping mall, and bus terminal) at a time in terms of building public awareness amid the COVID-pandemic. However, remarkably 18.20% of

respondents debated that they did never see any monitoring activities of UNO under the different Union Parishad of Trishal Upazila.

5.8 Role of UNO: Raising Public Awareness activities amid Pandemic

In a question about regular awareness-building activities by the UNO of Trishal Upazila, different data have been found. The above pie chart denotes that only 29% of respondents strongly agreed about the regular awareness-building activities by the UNO whereas 50% of respondents supported this statement.

Raising Public Awareness by UNO amid Pandemic

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

4% · 16% · 1% · 29% · 50%
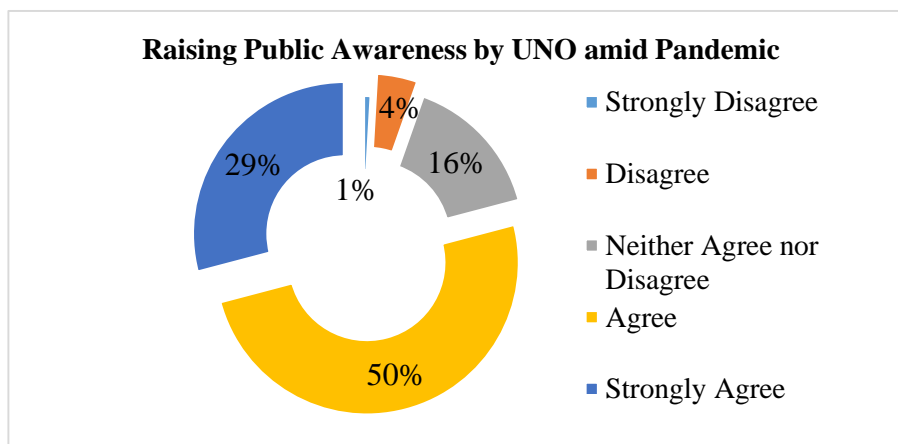
FIGURE 9: RAISING PUBLIC AWARENESS AMID PANDEMIC (FIELD SURVEY, DECEMBER 2020)

Conversely, 18.2% of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed about the role of UNO amid the pandemic COVID-19. However, 4% of respondents totally disagreed about the public awareness-raising activities of UNO under Trishal Upazila. They debated that UNO's awareness-building activities were uneven.

5.9 Role of UNO: Imposing Punishment

The given bar chart demonstrates that 33.60% of respondents agreed that UNO imposed financial penalties in terms of enhancing public awareness amid the pandemic in rural areas in Bangladesh whereas 25.50% of respondents strongly supported the UNO's initiatives. However, 17.30% of respondents articulated that financial penalties

Role of UNO: Imposing Punishment

- Strongly Agree — 25.50%
- Agree — 33.60%
- Neither Agree nor… — 21.80%
- Disagree — 17.30%
- Strongly Disagree — 1.80%
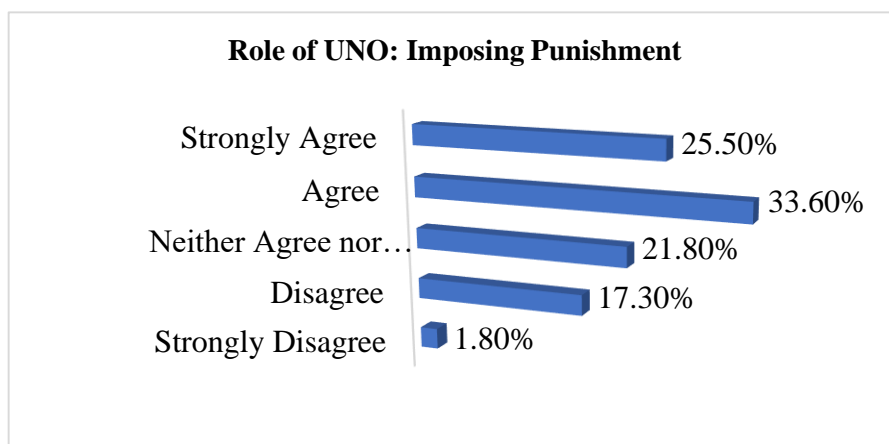
FIGURE 10: IMPOSING PUNISHMENT (FIELD SURVEY, DECEMBER 2020)

were not effective to enhance public awareness amid the pandemic. Therefore, the given statistics clarify that there were mixed reactions among the rural people in terms of imposing financial penalties amid the pandemic to enhance public awareness.

5.10 Role of UNO: Consistent Monitoring Activities

According to the given line chart, 19.10% of respondents strongly argued that UNO at field administration ensured consistent monitoring activities amid the pandemic to enhance public awareness about the threat of the COVID-19 whereas 25.50% of respondents validated this statement. Conversely, a group of respondent i.e 20.90% debated

FIGURE 11: CONSISTENT MONITORING ACTIVITIES (FIELD SURVEY, DECEMBER 2020)

that UNO did not ensure the persistent monitoring activities amid the pandemic. Since the majority of respondents supported the UNO's role amid the pandemic, however, the given statistic validates that there was an active engagement of the UNO to eliminate the risk of COVID-19 in field administration in Bangladesh.

5.11 Role of UNO: Consistent Announcing (Miking) Activities

According to the survey data, it was found that 38% of respondents strongly agreed that with a view to enhancing public awareness in rural areas, UNO ensured consistent announcing (Miking) activities amid the pandemic whereas 12% of respondents disagreed. In this regard, 29% of respondents were neutral about this issue.
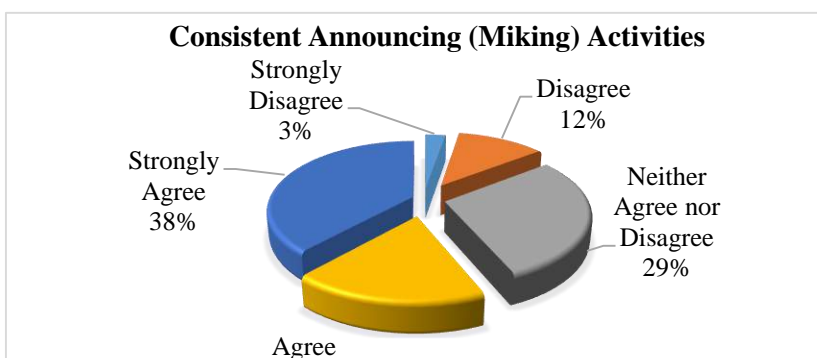
FIGURE 12: ANNOUNCEMENT ACTIVITIES (FIELD SURVEY, DECEMBER 2020)

5.12 Role of UNO: Distributing Leaflet

According to the survey, only 16.40% of respondents strongly articulated that distributing leaflets by UNO was an effective method to enhance public awareness amid the pandemic whereas the majority of respondents i.e 28.20% of respondents debated that people do not read the leaflet and it could not be the best method to enhance public awareness at the rural areas in Bangladesh. As well, the above line chart
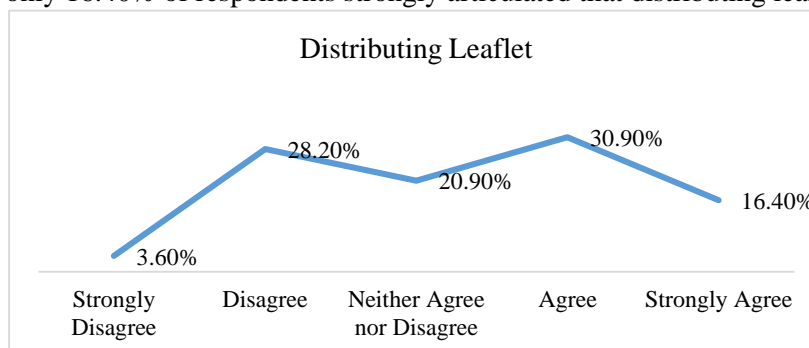
FIGURE 13: DISTRIBUTING LEAFLET (FIELD SURVEY, DECEMBER 2020)

validated that 20.90% of respondents were neutral about this matter. However, the above statistic demonstrates that since most of the rural people were less knowledgeable, the leaflet could not be an effective mechanism to enhance public awareness amid the pandemic in rural areas in Bangladesh.

5.13 Role of UNO: Implementation of 'No Mask, No Service' Policy

The given pie chart exhibit that 'No Mask, No Service Policy' was one of the best methods of building public awareness at the field administration levels in Bangladesh. According to the survey, 38% of respondents argued that UNO implemented 'No Mask, No Service Policy' at the field administration i.e all offices under Upazila Parishad while people taking services

FIGURE 14: NO MASK, NO SERVICE POLICY (FIELD SURVEY, DECEMBER 2020)

from these offices whereas 29% of respondents supported this statement. Conversely, only 16% of respondents disagreed that UNO did implement the 'No Mask, No Service' policy at the field or rural level.

5.14 Best Method of Ensuring Public Awareness

According to the survey data, the above figure represents the best method of increasing public awareness of the COVID-19 in rural areas in Bangladesh. Based on the survey, 32.70% of
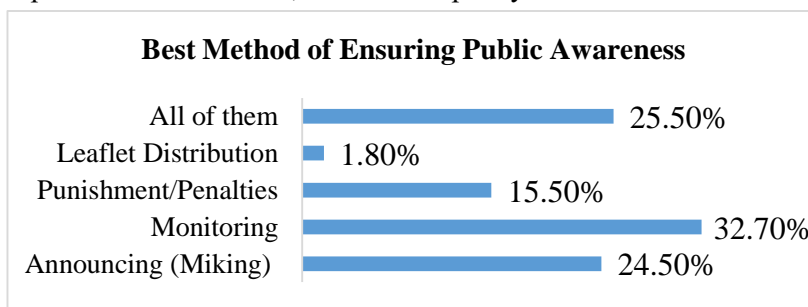
FIGURE 15: BEST METHOD OF ENSURING PUBLIC AWARENESS (FIELD SURVEY, DECEMBER 2020)

respondents argued that the UNO's monitoring role was the best method of building and enhancing public awareness amid the pandemic whereas 24.50% believed that announcing (Miking) could increase public awareness. Besides, 15.50% of respondents thought that public awareness can be increased by imposing penalties against uneven activities of the general mass.

6. Discussion of the Study

Since the COVID-19 is a disease-causing virus and infects people very quickly, public awareness is the best way to control the outbreak of the pandemic. However, the findings of the study demonstrate that rural people are less concerned about the threat of COVID-19 than the city people due to the practice of superstition, unawareness, poor practical knowledge, and cultural differences. In this context, this study explored the role of field administration/administrator i.e UNO (Upazila Nirbahi Officer) in terms of enhancing the public awareness amid the pandemic. One of the most important findings of the study reveals that more than half of the total study respondent i.e rural people knew about the danger of the COVID-19 but they ignored the regular use of masks and did not maintain physical distance to keep them safe from contamination. These findings validated that rural people were unconscious of the threat of the pandemic. Hassan et al. (2021) clarify a similar argument in their study which determine the public awareness level between the rural and urban areas in Bangladesh. Particularly, Hasan et al. (2021) articulate that recent COVID-19 statistics enhanced the consciousness among the rural people in Bangladesh (Hasan et al., 2021). As well, Bakebillah et al. (2021) also highlighted that there was a great misconception among the community people about the COVID-19 which also supported the findings of the given study whereas it was found that the most rural people believe in superstition (Bakebillah et al., 2021). Correspondingly, the principal findings of the study demonstrate that local government administration, as well as field administrator i.e UNO (Upazila Nirbahi Officer), played a substantial role to control the outbreak of COVID-19 in rural areas through the enhancement of public awareness. In this regard, Panday (2021) clearly demonstrated the significance of local government i.e field administration in terms of enhancing civic awareness, volunteer supports and implementing vaccination programs amid pandemic which clearly supported the given findings (Panday, 2021). Similarly, Zakir Hossain (2021) elucidated that in terms of ensuring the accountability and transparency of the local representatives as well as providing efficient services to the grassroots people amid the pandemic, field administration played a gigantic role (Zakir Hossain, 2021). However, it has already been perceived that without public awareness, controlling the drastic outbreak of the COVID-19 in rural areas was a very tough job. As a result, based on the findings, in terms of enhancing public awareness amid the pandemic in rural areas, UNO applied several strategies including announcing activities, distributing leaflets, imposing penalties, and consistent monitoring activities. Banik at el. (2020) supported such findings and clearly demonstrated that to reduce the harshness of the COVID-19 pandemic, an immediate public health response, as well as rapid public awareness at all levels, is very essential (Banik at el., 2020). From the overall discussion, it can be said that in terms of building public awareness among the rural people amid the pandemic, UNO's role was considerably appreciable.

7.   Conclusion and Recommendations

Field administration is the extension of central administration at the field level to implement government programs and policies. UNO is the chief administrative person in the Upazila administration who hold the monitoring and supervision authority as well as scrutinizes all functions under Upazila Parihad. From the 1st wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, UNO has been playing a praiseworthy role at rural areas in terms of building public awareness. However, the findings of the study represented the existing role of UNO in terms of enhancing rural people awareness through various means including announcing (miking) activities, imposing penalties, distributing awareness-related leaflet, and active monitoring, etc. Conversely, practice of superstition, illiteracy, cultural diversity, unawareness, and rigidity of the rural people posed several barrier in terms of carrying out UNO's role in field administration. Therefore, the UNO's roles in field administration should be regular, enhanced, and strengthen to increase public awareness amid pandemic. However, the following recommendations will be helpful to enhance public awareness amid the COVID-19 pandemic in rural areas in Bangladesh.

- Monitoring and observation activities of the Upazila administration on the open market, shops, bus terminal, and other crowded places should be increased on regular basis in order to ensure physical distance.
- Announcing (Miking) activities should be prolonged at regular intervals so that rural people can increase their awareness amid pandemic COVID-19.
- UNO should take innovative initiatives to ensure obligatory mask use for all rural people.
- The roles of the Upazila COVID-19 Prevention Committee should be strengthened and visualized so that people can be inspired to cope with the new normal by following all health measures.
- Service delivery system (in possible cases) of Upazila Parishad should be transformed into an online system to avoid public gatherings.
- 'No Mask, No policy' strategy should be implemented strictly at all service receive points so that people can use masks purposefully.
- The performance of the volunteer groups should be enhanced so that they can make people aware of COVID-19.
- Finally, the cooperative and friendly relationships of the Upazila administration should be improved so that people's interest and esteem increase towards maintaining the health measures amid this pandemic.

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Water Borne Diseases Associated with Climate Change: A Study among the People of Coastal Area in Bangladesh

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Abstract

This study attempts to identify the way to cope with multi-faceted phenomenon and set of challenges specifically linked with climate change in Bangladesh. Climate change is contributing to the global burden of waterborne diseases and premature deaths. In Bangladesh, various climate changes related events like heat waves, cold waves, flood, drought, salinity intrusion, cyclone and tidal surge etc. have direct and indirect adverse effect on human health especially on water borne diseases. A number of vector and water borne diseases including diarrhea, dysentery, skin diseases etc. are common in Bangladesh. There are some studies on climate changes and its impact at different times in Bangladesh but research on human health impact due to climate change has not gain much focus. So, it is important to explore local people's perception of water born health risks due to the impact of climate change. This is mixed method study where survey and case study are conducted collecting data properly. A total 340 sample respondents are selected randomly according aerial accessibility and respondent availability by ensuring the representation of both male and female. Climate change hampers coastal people creating waterborne diseases though they have little knowledge on it. People are affected by waterborne diseases in several times in the last five years and they face difficulties with the sufferings in their daily life especially after the cyclones held in every year. This study is significant to the policy makers mitigating the health hazards associating with climate change in the coastal areas of Bangladesh.

Keywords: Water borne disease, climate change, coastal area, Bangladesh

1. Introduction

Bangladesh is a predominantly coastal country. About 700 rivers, small and big, include tributaries flow through the country constituting a waterway of a total length of around 24,140 kilometers. In terms of geo-formation and geo-morphology, Bangladesh is formed with very young alluvial sedimentation of the major five rivers; and the majority parts of it are covered by the GBM deltaic rivers and channels. The country is prone to the natural hazards of all possible sorts such as floods, riverbank erosion, cyclones, droughts, waterlogging, arsenic contamination, salinity intrusion, tornadoes, winter water scarcity, earthquakes, etc. The regular occurrences of these natural events are often coupled and multiplied by high risks of poverty, health, and vulnerabilities among the individuals, households, and communities. The serious aftermaths of such events further push the country towards greater environmental degradation, hunger, health, poverty, social deprivation, and political conflicts and thereby hinder the planned socioeconomic development of

the country. Between 1991 and 2009, it is a fact that almost 93 major natural disasters devastated the country resulting in 200 thousand deaths and causing damages of approximately USD 5.9 billion.

A decline in water levels of these local water bodies happens due to interaction of pumping groundwater from the adjacent shallow aquifers and high evaporation losses due to climate change. Moreover, as projected in the IPCC's fifth assessment report (AR5), 70 million people could be affected annually by floods; eight million by drought; and up to 8% of the low-lying lands may possibly become permanently inundated due to sea level rises all by 2050. Both in Copenhagen and in Cancun, the world community unanimously agreed that Bangladesh is the country most vulnerable to climate change impacts. Therefore, the dire situation calls for immediate attention and action from both national and international communities to be engaged in counteracting the pessimistic development impacts of disaster in Bangladesh. Nowadays, global climate negotiation is very intense; and it has resulted in some legitimate discussions in the COP25 at a conference of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Madrid held on 2-13 November 2019. Though there may not have concrete commitments for mitigating climate change through the effects reducing greenhouse (GHG) emission by the major polluters on the earth but there are concrete commitments of large investments in various adaptation plans and programs to address climate change induced hazards especially health. The global development agencies including even the private sectors are up for climate-proof development, particularly in the developing and least-developed countries.

In recent days, the impact of climate change on human health is a subject for major concern for most countries in the world. The evidence is growing that the earth is warming and for that reason future global climatic and environmental circumstances may be significantly changed (WHO, 2018). This trend in climatic change will impact human populations through their effects on the physical and biological components of the environment. Climate change associated impacts including flood, heat waves, drought, sea level rises, salinity, and temperature and rainfall variations have become evident globally (Ohwo, Odafivwotu., 2015). People are exposed changing weather patterns through changes in the quality of water, air, and food changes in ecosystems, agriculture, industry, human settlements and the economy. These forms of direct and indirect exposure can lead to death, disability and suffering (Haque, MD. A. et al. 2012; Rahman A., 2008). Nonetheless, a WHO assessment assumed continued economic growth and health progress, concluded that climate change is projected to cause approximately 250000 additional deaths per year between 2030 and 2050; 38000 due to heat exposure in elderly people, 48000 due to diarrhea, 60000 due to malaria, and 95000 due to childhood under nutrition (WHO, 2018).

The affecting climate is linked to upsurges in a wide range of non-communicable and infectious diseases (Portier CJ et al., 2010). There are intricate ways in which climatic factors can directly or indirectly affect the prevalence of disease (Manangan, Arie. P et al., 2014). Future scenarios of carbon-driven anthropogenic changes in the global climate system project an increase in climate extremes, meaning an increased risk of disease and injury to the population, particularly to the most vulnerable groups (IPCC 2001, 2007). Susceptibility to the impacts of weather and

other disasters has been defined as 'the characteristics of a group or a person related to their capacity to anticipate, to cope with, resist and recover from the impacts of natural hazards' (Blaikie et al. 1994; Younus, A. F., 2013). It tracks that the most vulnerable social groups are those that experience the most exposure to a hazard that are the most sensitive to it, and have the weakest capacity to respond and ability to recover. Vulnerability to global environmental changes is also distinguished as both a biophysical condition (geographic space) and is defined by political, social and economic conditions (U. E. C. Confalonieri, D. P. Marinho & R. E. Rodriguez, 2019; Liverman 1990).

Climate change impact negatively on human health in developing countries (Kovats et al. 2005; Costello et al.2009). According to Safe Drinking Water Foundation/SDWF, 2018), it is emphasized that 80% of all illnesses in developing countries are attributed to unsafe drinking water and the spread of waterborne diseases (Abedin, Anwarul, Collins, Andrew E., Habiba, Umme & Shaw, Rajib, 2018). About 3 million people die from water-related diseases every year, the majority of whom are children under the age of five (Abedin, Anwarul, Collins, Andrew E., Habiba, Umme & Shaw, Rajib, 2018; DFID, EC, UNDP, and WB, 2002). It is significant to mention that approximately 1.1 billion people in the world do not have access to safe water (Shaw and Thaitakoo, 2010). To survive everyone, need a safe, reliable, affordable, and easily accessible water supply (Hunter et al. 2010).

Nonetheless, Bangladesh is suffering climate change impacts through the consequences of the gradual rises of the sea level and temperatures, combined with increased regional climate variability and extreme events that is more intense floods, droughts, and storms (Khan, Aneire. E., W.W. Xun, H. Ahsan, & P. Vineis, 2011). These issues are more dominant in coastal areas because of sea-level rise, poor rainfall in winter, high rates of evaporation, and various disastrous events like cyclones and storm surges (Abedin, Anwarul, Collins, Andrew E., Habiba, Umme & Shaw, Rajib (2018). When a disaster occurs, it affects water infrastructures and supply systems the most. Every year floods or tidal surges overwhelm tube wells, ponds, and water bodies and contaminate the natural sources of freshwater (WaterAid, 2012). This situation is particularly distressing for the coastal population because they rely heavily on surface water (ponds and rivers) and groundwater (tube wells) for drinking (Khan, A., P.F. Scheelback, A.B. Shilpi, Q. Chan, S.K. Mojumder, A. Rahman, A. Haines, S. Kovats, and P. Vineis., 2014). As a result, the coastal residents are victims of an enduring crisis of water resources for drinking and domestic uses (Abedin et al.2014). The emergency has enlarged with the incidence of waterborne diseases that are linked to sea-level rise, floods, and salinity intrusion (Sikder and Jian, 2014). In this backdrop, this study attempts to identify the way to cope with multi-faceted phenomenon and set of challenges specifically linked with climate change in Bangladesh.

Bangladesh is highly vulnerable to climate change. Various climate changes related extreme events such as; floods, droughts, cyclone and tidal surge etc. affect to the people of this country almost every year. Bangladesh is susceptible to cyclone. This country has already experienced several severer cyclones with enormous disruptions and damage of lives and livelihoods. Coastal regions of Bangladesh are in the most vulnerable position of these problems.

It affects surface water resources used for collection of drinking water. The water sources become contaminated through all kinds of solid waste and debris as well as salt water inundation from the tidal surges. It also creates food insecurity by damaging agricultural products through tidal surge and salinity intrusion. In Bangladesh; various climate changes related events have direct and indirect adverse effect on human health (Rahman A: 2008). A sum of vector and water borne diseases including diarrhea, dysentery, skin diseases etc. are common in Bangladesh (CCC, DoE: 2009). Furthermore, mental disorders, malaria, dengue and malnutrition problems affect many people of the country. Various extreme events such as; floods, droughts and cyclone etc. directly and indirectly affect health of the people of this country almost every year.

Bangladesh is also extremely susceptible to climate change among the many developing countries. According to the Global Climate Risk Index 2009 of German Watch, Bangladesh is the most vulnerable country in the world. It has also experienced numerous climate change-related events such as heat waves, cold waves, floods, drought, salinity intrusion and cyclones in recent years that have caused direct and indirect adverse impacts on human health (Hoque et. al., 2012). The changes of water availability resulting from climate sensitive hazards have an extreme impact on water sources in some places in Bangladesh which has resulted water scarcity to the people. The lack of clean drinking water has resulted in a number of acute diarrhea cases and increased the risk of water-related disease outbreaks. Perception of risk is influenced by many factors such as educational background, gender, age, historical and personal experience etc. Perceptions of particular risk guide people's coping responses. This action research has intended to explore local people's perception of health risks due to the impact of climate change. Accordingly, it will explore the season specific emerging and concerning diseases in their region due to climate change. In addition, it is important to identify the participatory way to cope with multi-faceted phenomenon and set of challenges specifically linked with the scarcity of water resources in a coastal village of Bangladesh and will be able to set a novel model of water resource management.

2. Literature Review

Bangladesh is highly vulnerable to climate change as well as a low-lying deltaic country. A number of significant researches have been conducted to investigate the causes of the vulnerability of Bangladesh especially waterborne diseases due to climate change. This is significant to focus on adverse impacts of climate change for Bangladesh which are due to sea level rise, cyclones, storm surge, flood, land erosion, water logging, drought, salinity intrusion, bank erosion and tidal bore leading to large scale damages to crop, employment, livelihoods and national economy (Miner, Hossain & Shamsuddin, 2013). There are lots of study on climate change but limited study in associated with waterborne diseases to cope with the challenges of health hazards. Climate change has a significant adverse impact on human health in Bangladesh. In this article, the data show that the magnitude of malaria, dengue, childhood diarrhea, and pneumonia was high among the vulnerable communities. High salinity levels in drinking water of coastal region of Bangladesh is significantly focused which may have numerous direct and indirect impacts on health (Kabir Iqbal et al., 2016). Higher rates of (pre)eclampsia and gestational hypertension in pregnant women living in the south-western coast of Bangladesh, compared with non-coastal pregnant women, were

assumed in a survey in 2008 to be caused by saline adulteration of drinking water (Khan et al. 2011).

Kabir. R. et al. (2016) on the other hand, showed how climate change has an impact on health. They explored that during and after the cyclone, people in the affected villages suffered from various diseases including diarrhea, dysentery, viral fever with cough, cold, skin diseases, eye infections, pain, paralysis, jaundice, lack of nutrition, waterborne diseases, typhoid, anemia, high blood pressure, and severe headaches. He also found that Diarrhea, typhoid, and skin diseases spread rapidly due to the infected water that resulted from cyclone Aila. Diarrhea and skin diseases were the most common problems identified in this article. In each household in the village there were cases of diarrheal disease. There were also some cases of amoebic dysentery and bloody dysentery found in this article.

The impact of global climate change on human infectious diseases can be examined through its impacts on the three disease components: pathogen, host, and transmission environment. Humans are an important and active factor during this process; they may mitigate the impact of climate change through adaptation practices such as those recommended by Kovats et al. (2000). Figure- 1 illustrates the relationships between climate change, human infectious diseases, and human society, forming the framework that guided the literature search for this review. Three sets of terms were used to define the searching keywords for the literature survey of this study; the returned records must include at least one entry from each of the three sets. The first set describes the components of diseases: pathogen, host or vector, and disease transmission.
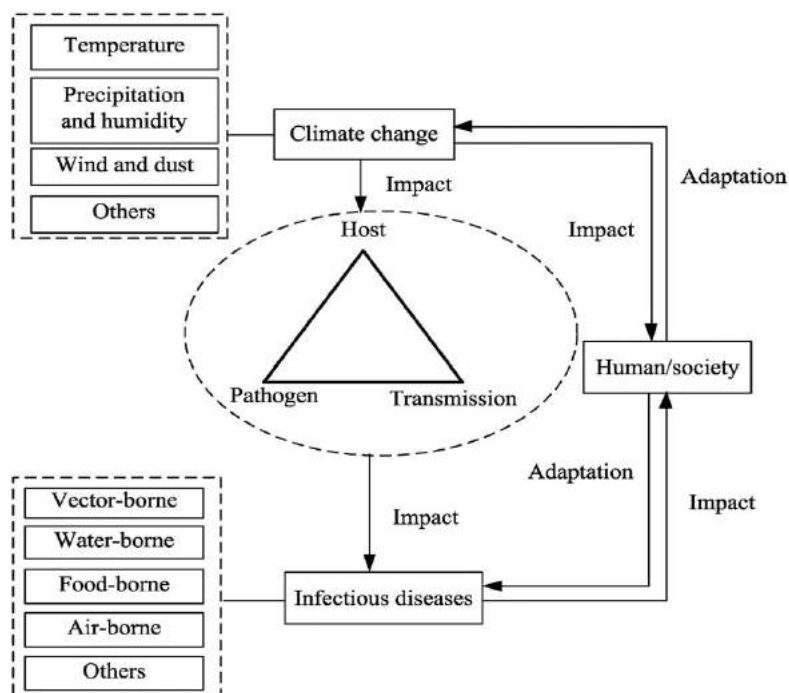
Figure1. Climate change, human infectious diseases, and human society (Kovats et al., 2000).

The second set describes the climate and weather, including climate variables (such as temperature, precipitation, and humidity), or large-scale extreme weather events (such as El Nino), or meteorological hazards (such as drought, flood, and heat waves). The third set describes the selected infectious diseases, including vector-borne diseases (e.g. malaria), water-borne diseases (e.g. cholera), air-borne diseases (e.g. influenza), or food-borne diseases (e.g. Campylobacter). Inputs from subject experts were further obtained to revise the search strategy and to locate additional citations. Abedin (2018) also illustrates the health problems through waterborne diseases in a multi-disciplinary way. Figure-2 shows the factors of climate change like salinity, cold wave, increasing temperature, rising pollen grain and so on that has impact on health especially waterborne diseases. Drought, flood, high salinity, sea level rise, high temperature, tidal surge and other climatic causes also impact on water related diseases in the coastal area of Bangladesh.
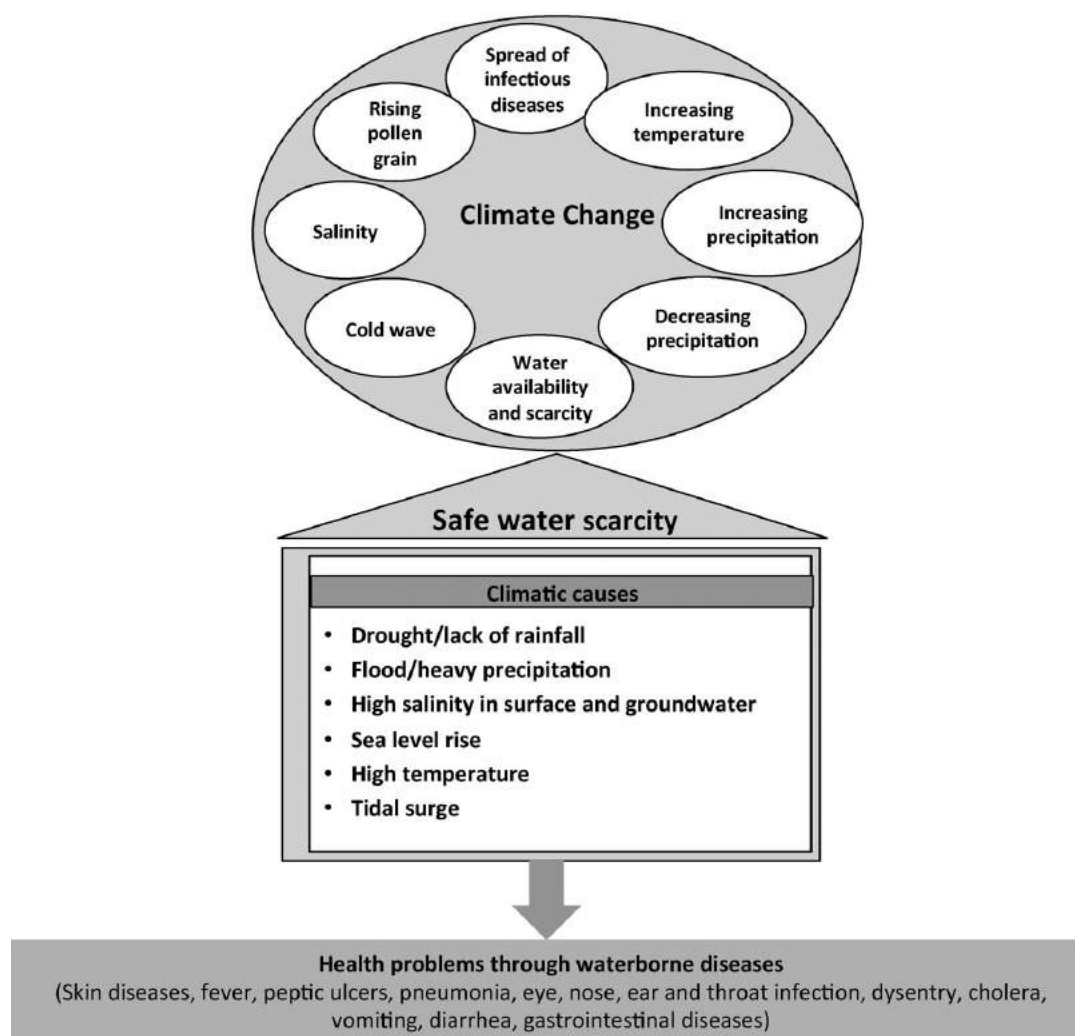
Figure 2. Nexus of climate change, safe water scarcity, and health problems (Abedin, 2018)

Hunter, P. R. (2003) explained the global scenario related to climate change occurring a number of waterborne diseases. His paper considers the potential impact on human health from waterborne and vector-borne infections which concentrates on the impact of two possible changes to climate- flooding and rising temperature. He showed that Flooding is associated with increased risk of infection in developing nations but not in the West unless water sources are compromised. It is also concluded that there may be an increase in the number of cyanobacterial blooms because of a combination of increased nutrient concentrations and water temperature. As temperatures rise there has been an increase in the frequency of heat-related conditions such as hypoxia and heat stroke and there has been an increase in the incidence of disease carrying vectors which has seen a wide range of diseases. Instances of flooding have increased and this had led to crop destruction and water contamination, which in turn spreads diseases such as cholera and typhoid along with other water-borne diseases (Sikder, R. and Xiaoying, J., 2013).

However, waterborne diseases are the major health hazard in the coastal area of Bangladesh. People of this area suffer from several health problems related to water and climate change. There are various studies on climate change but few studies on waterborne diseases in the coastal areas. By finding out the research gap, this study covers the socio-economic and health related issues that focused on several factors caused by climate change.

3. Theoretical Approaches

Climate change and water-related infectious diseases are connected to each other. This study illustrates the entire interconnections through some theoretical approaches. Several disciplines have noteworthy interests in water management and disease control including natural and physical processes, human dimensions (sociocultural and economic/political), and health outcomes. Such disciplines provide corresponding frames that together can provide a comprehensive approach to understanding water-borne diseases. The following approaches highlights key themes from critical disciplines. First of all, the ecologic approach is used by researchers to recognize how best to control transmission (Eisenberg et al. 2007). This approach has drawn from biology, epidemiology, and genetics, among other fields, to focus on environmental determinants of disease via natural and increasingly anthropogenic changes to the physical environment, which frequently result from shifts in population, consumption, and technologic growth (UNEP, 2007). Disease and microbial ecology research have identified multiple modes of transmission for both vector-borne and waterborne pathogens that depend on environmental, climatic, infrastructural, and sociocultural conditions. Many pathogens move about the environment via human feces and both humans and animals can act as hosts. Exposure to fecal pathogens occurs in domestic living spaces as well as workplaces and is most often linked to poverty, poor education, and underdevelopment.

Secondly, anthropological approach has focused on several themes including local understandings of water-associated diseases such as dengue fever and diarrheal diseases; conceptualizations of water as pure, unclean, scarce, or having healing properties; water use in treatments for diarrheal diseases; the political economy of health care and access to proper sanitation; community participation and health education; and gender, occupational, and cultural inequalities in disease burden. Many of these themes are interconnected and overlapping. In the

nonappearance of adequate and usually state-provided knowledge and resources, social science approaches gradually recognize adaptive capacity that is, the ability to cope with change of individuals, institutions, and even entire social systems. This method has been offered as a means to progress integrative water management programs in UNESCO's (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) Ecohydrology Program (Lemos et al., 2007; Batterman et al., 2009). The anthropological approach also includes a shift within medical anthropology from interpretive analyses of the cultural understandings of illness and local classification of diseases to ethno-ecologic studies that examine environmental, biological, and social aspects of disease (Whiteford and Whiteford 2005).

Thirdly, an essential determinant of water availability and quality is the extent to which political will and economic resources exist among water management agencies. Moreover, this political approach must reconnect with socio-cultural research to address matters of trust and empowerment (Batterman et al., 2009). Poor people often have greater exposure to pathogens, higher prevalence of underlying diseases, and less access to adequate health services. Such social determinants of health, which include both proximal factors and distal factors, are integrally linked to poverty and act to increase susceptibility to disease (WHO, 2010).

Finally, public health research has shown the need to address all possible points of water contamination, including sources and storage, sanitation systems, and hygiene processes. Public health research areas most connected to water-related infectious disease include surveillance/forecasting, environmental health, epidemiology, interventions, and health education, and the methods to strengthen the relevance and impact of findings in each of these areas. These areas themselves are multidisciplinary and overlapping. Health systems, which are responsible for both curative and preventive care, offer many public health opportunities for provision of clean water and improved sanitation through surveillance, education, and interventions (Batterman et al., 2009). In developing countries, health posts, clinics, and even referral hospitals themselves suffer from a range of water-related problems.

However, there have been many earlier efforts to synthesize and integrate disciplinary contributions to water and health-related research. However, all of these theoretical approaches are linked to waterborne diseases associated with climate change. This study is connected with these approaches to make a fruitful combination with theories and practices especially in coastal areas of Bangladesh.

4. Methodology

This is mixed method study that collected data from multi-dimensional people in the coastal area of Bangladesh. In qualitative method, case study is used to collect descriptive data about water borne diseases. On the contrary, face-to-face survey method is used to collect numeric data in quantitative method. Both methods are used representing the study properly by amalgamating the data. This study is conducted in different coastal areas in Patuakhali district of Bangladesh. This district is selected because it is located near to the Kuakata sea beach where most of the natural disasters are recorded every year. It includes four Upazila of this district such as Kalapara, Galachipa, Dumki and Patuakhali Sadar. The study populations are the climate change victims'

household head (200), community leaders (4), local physicians (2), NGO workers (3), school teachers (4), religious leaders (3), local politicians (4) and other relevant population. Total 220 coastal people are interviewed collecting multiple responses about waterborne diseases associated with climate change. In qualitative method, 20 cases studies are conducted with the victims of waterborne diseases and in quantitative method, total 200 survey interviews are conducted with the local people in these selected coastal areas. The sample size is comparatively small and this can be a limitation of this study. Purposive and random sampling technic was used to select these sample respondents according aerial accessibility and respondent's availability by ensuring the representation of both male and female. For questionnaire survey, a semi-structured instrument is developed after rigorous review of the available research documents for face to face interview. On the other hand, checklist is used to conduct case study. All of these instruments are pre-tested and translated into Bengali for the local people of the coastal areas.

4.1 Statistical analysis

The analysis of this study is significantly representing the scenario of whole Bangladesh though the sample is small in size. This study covers both quantitative and qualitative data which consist of face-to-face survey and case studies. In qualitative study, the data is analyzed descriptively which added the extra value making the statements strong. On the contrary, in quantitative study, the raw data is analyzed by using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. The numeric data processed through coding, data entry and then the analysis with that software. Then the data presented graphically in this study. Both of the analyses made this study generalized and representable about entire Bangladesh.

5. Findings and discussions

5.1 Climatic Conditions in the Coastal Area

Bangladesh is a disaster-prone area and it has the coastal area of 19 districts facing or near the Bay of Bengal. The 19 coastal districts are Jessore, Narail, Gopalganj, Shariatpur, Chandpur, Satkhira, Khulna, Bagerhat, Pirozpur, Jhalakati, Barguna, Barisal, Patuakhali, Bhola, Lakshmipur, Noakhali, Feni, Chittagong, and Cox's Bazar. It has been estimated that the coastal area sustains the livelihoods of more than 37 million people. Twelve of the coastal districts already face a combination of cyclone risk, salinity, and tidal water movement above critical levels. Nonetheless, Patuakhali district, the study site, is also a disaster-prone area as it is near to the Bay of Bangal. People of this area suffer most likewise the people of another district.

However, in Bangladesh, there are several cyclones those hits in several times in last 30 years. In 1991, Bangladesh Cyclone affected with 260 km/h wind speed that damages 1500 million US$ including 138,000 death. In 2007, cyclone Sidr (eye) hit in Bangladesh that had also 260 km/h wind speed with 1700 million US$ and 4036 deaths. Cyclone Nargis hit in Bangladesh, India, Myanmar and Sri Lanka in 2008 that had 215 km/h wind speed. It has total 138,366 (126 in Bangladesh) number of deaths including 10,000 million US$ damages. In the next year in 2009, cyclone Aila attack in Bangladesh and India that had 120 km/h wind speed, 552.6 million US$

damages and 325 death (26 in Bangladesh). In 2013, cyclone Mahasen hit in the coastal area of Bangladesh, India and Myanmar that damages 5.14 million US$ and killed 107 people (17 in Bangladesh). In 2015, cyclone Komen hit in Bangladesh with 75 km/h wind speed that killed 132 people including damages of 510,000 houses. In 2017, cyclone Mora (110 km/h wind speed) attack in Bangladesh and India that killed 18 people with damages of 20,000 houses. Lastly, in 2019, cyclone Fani (17 killed) and cyclone Bulbul hit in the Bangladesh and India that has damages of 63.6 million US$ and 31 million US$ simultaneously. Likewise, every year Bangladesh face different kind of disasters those affect with high degrees of wind speed. And that's why Bangladesh face lots of damages and death every year. People of coastal areas also face difficulties in their daily livelihoods during and after these disasters. Water related diseases has also significant impact on their daily life even on the kids and the old ages people.

5.2 Safe Drinking Water Situation

This study reveals the situation of safe drinking water in the coastal area especially in Patuakhali district. People have to suffer more to collect the safe drinking water as the arsenic and salinity of water exists in these areas. Drinking water sources are contaminated during frequent disasters such as floods, landslides and cyclones. Some people are conscious and some are not to drink safe water. The contaminated water cause to waterborne diseases in the coastal area.

Figure-3 displays the major sources of water in the coastal area especially in some selective areas of Patuakhali districts. This study reveals the sources of safe drinking water from where the people collect water in the Patuakhali district. Here in figure-3, near about half of the people (45%) collect their drinking water from Tube well, almost one-third of the people (30%) collect water from pond sand filters (PSF), one-tenth of the people (10%) drink water

FIGURE 3. SOURCE OF SAFE DRINKING WATER

from purified filter and a small number of people collect water from tap water (5%) and other sources (5%).

People of the coastal area have difficulties of collecting drinking water especially in Patuakhali district as it is near to the sea. People basically drink water from the tube well though some tube well were unable to function in some selective areas. There are some deep tube wells for the community people from where they collect their drinking water. Pond sand filters are available in some areas though some filters were destroyed in the study site. Some people also drink water

from purified filters that was very small in number. Nonetheless, people of the coastal area suffer collecting drinking water due to salinity as well as natural disasters.

5.3 Climate Change and Emerging Diseases

This is significant to illustrate the people's knowledge about climate change in their coastal area. In this sense, this study found that (see table 1) near two-third of the people (65%) have accurate knowledge about climate change and disasters and more than one-third of the people (35%) have not that knowledge. On the contrary, most of the people (96%) confessed that their house is located in the risky

FIGURE 4. TYPES OF WATERBORNE DISEASES

zone of the coastal area and only few people (4%) are confessed that they are located in safe zone from disasters. With regards to climate change, every people face the heat of natural disasters in numerous times in their entire life.

Table 1. Knowledge and Risk of Climate Change in Coastal Area

Knowledge and Risk of Climate Change	People's perception	Response (%)
Do you know about climate change?	Yes	65
	No	35
Is your house in risky zone?	Yes	96
	No	4

In the coastal area, especially the Patuakhali district that is near to the sea, several disasters hit with high degrees of wind speed very frequently. This study reveals the basic disasters that the people have to face in their own living area. Here, more than half of the people (55%) shared that Cyclone hit in the coastal area frequently, one-fifth of the people (20) shared that they face flood/waterlogging, one-tenth of the people (10%) shared that they face erosion in their area and more than one-seventh of the people (15%) shared that they face windstorm in the coastal areas. Beside these, there is salinity problem in almost all the coastal districts in Bangladesh.

Moreover, every year people of the coastal area face several disasters in their life. This study reveals that more than three-fourth of the people (76%) confessed cyclone as the most severe disaster in last five years and only one-fourth of the people (24%) confessed flood as the most severe disaster in last five years. Among all the disasters, Sidr (eye) was the most severe cyclone in Bangladesh especially in coastal area since 2007. Due to these natural disasters, people face several difficulties with sea side break down, loss of Jhau garden, loss of cultivated crops and so on. Kolapara upazila is most severe damaging area in Patuakhali district. Nevertheless, people of the coastal area suffer from waterborne diseases due to these cyclone and other disasters. This study reveals that near four-fifth of the people (78%) suffer from several waterborne diseases due to climate change and only few people (22%) confessed that they do not suffer from the water related diseases. Basically, people suffer during and after the disasters in coastal area due to their vulnerability on that time.

As the people of the coastal area face natural disasters every year and they suffer from several waterborne diseases, this study reveals how many family members are affected and how many times including their age limit. Table 2 displays that 1-2 members are affected in half of the families (50%), 3-4 members are affected in one-third of the families (30%) and 5-6 members are affected in one-fifth of the families (20%) in last five years in Patuakhali district. The data means that every people are affected by the water related diseases due to climate change in the coastal area.

Table 2. People's Perception on Water Borne Diseases in Last Five Years

Number of family members who affected (%)		How many times family members are affected? (%)		Age limit of the sufferer (%)	
1-2 members	50	1-2 times	55	1-19 age	40
3-4 members	30	3-4 times	30	20-39 age	40
5-6 members	20	5-6 times	15	40-59 age & more	20

Moreover, more than half of the family members (55%) are affected in 1-2 times in last five years where one-third of the family members (30%) are affected in 3-4 times and only one-seventh of the family members (15%) are affected in 5-6 times in last five years. This data also state that people are affected by water related diseases in several times in last five years. In addition, more than one-third of the sufferer (40%) are belong to 1-19 age limit who are child where more than one-third sufferer are youth who belong to 20-39 age limit and one-fifth of the

sufferer (20%) are adult and old who belong to age limit of 40-59 and more. This data also state that people are affected by water related diseases in their every ages.

As per as this study reveals that people in every family suffer from various kinds of diseases, figure 4 shows most common diseases that the people of coastal area in Patuakhali experienced in last five years. Here, large number of people (30%) confessed their family members experienced skin diseases like eye, nose, ear, throat and other infections in last five years. Additionally, one-fourth of the people (25%) experienced Diarrhea, one-fifth of the people (20%) experienced Typhoid, one-seventh of the people (15%) experienced Jaundice and a small number of people (10%) experienced other diseases in last five years.

5.4 Impact of Water Borne Disease

Climate change has its own impact on the people's daily life. Waterborne diseases (due to climate change) are also having its impact on the people's livelihood during and after the disasters. This study found that (figure 5) three-fourth of the people (75%) confessed that waterborne diseases impact negatively on their earning where only one-fourth of the people confessed that they have no negative impact on earning (basically they are well-off in the area).

On the contrary, almost all of the people (88%) confessed that waterborne diseases harm their child's education. The data generalized that most of the people face difficulties in daily earning who are the businessmen and fish farmers and those who are well-off, they do not face much difficulties due to diseases.
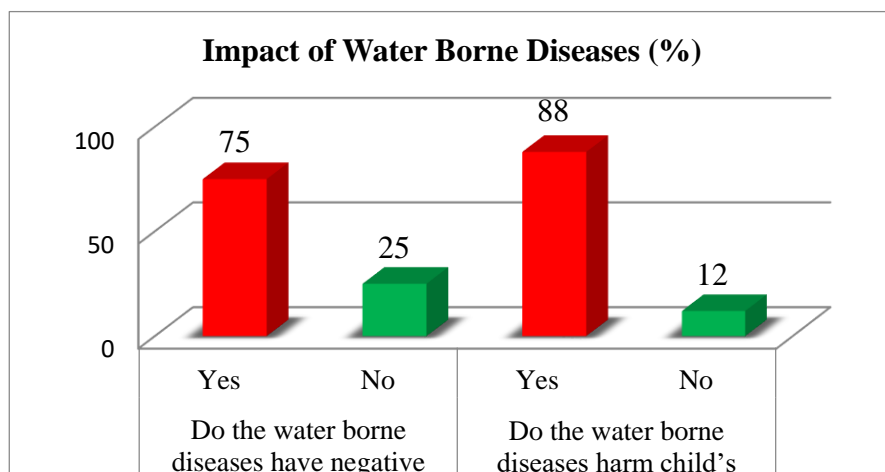
FIGURE 5. IMPACT OF WATERBORNE DISEASES

With regards to water related diseases, Government of Bangladesh (GoB) has taken necessary steps to eradicate as well as overcome the waterborne diseases in coastal area of Bangladesh. Govt. alliances for every single family are increasing day by day with regards to climate change. There are multidisciplinary steps during and after the disasters taken by GoB and different NGOs are also supporting the people of the coastal areas. However, this study reveals the perception of the people on govt. initiative in this regard. Here, more than half of the people (55%) confessed that the govt. initiative is sufficient with regards to water borne diseases. On the contrary, less than half of the people (44%) opined that the govt. initiative is not sufficient with regards to waterborne diseases. They expect more from govt. to support them during and after the disaster.

5.5 Discussion

This study gives an insight to the health issues related to climate change in Bangladesh. A large number of people mostly from backward and disaster-prone communities of coastal region were interviewed to enrich this study. The findings of the study visualize the risk factors of the coastal people related to waterborne diseases due to natural disasters. It reveals a way relating how the government may take actions to mitigate those risk factors despite the natural catastrophe being uncontrollable and unpredictable. Climate disorders or natural disasters have a vital effect on health hazards of the coastal people. The outbreak of Diarrhea, skin diseases, typhoid, jaundice is much common in the coastal region on which natural calamities have a strong and mentionable

linkage. Since the people of the study area are mostly from low-income families, they suffer a lot from those diseases. Reversely, those health problems also hamper their daily activities along with hampering income and education. Therefore, those diseases deserve special prevention measures from the authority. Government and non-government assistance to fight with waterborne diseases is inadequate according to the community people. Health sector requires systematic and strategic planning to cope with the climate change-induced health problems. For reaching the health-related goal of sustainable development, strategic action could be helpful like pre and post disaster actions in the coastal areas of Bangladesh. Child health also has to be a priority to ensure the proper educational attainment of the coastal region.

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

Effects of climate change on public health may seem ambiguous. But still it affects public health seriously. This study focusses on the health risks of the coastal people induced from natural disasters accelerated by climate change. To mitigate those risks, the frequency and degree of the diseases have to be discovered. This is significant to find out a way relating how the government may take actions to mitigate those risk factors despite the natural catastrophe being uncontrollable and unpredictable. Climate disorders or natural disasters have a vital effect on health hazards of the coastal people. Though it's obvious that waterborne diseases due to natural disasters induced by climate change is somehow neglected compared to the overall public health issues of Bangladesh, it contributes a lot in the overall public health. And since climate change accelerates the natural disasters at a great extent, this issue should be given extra priority to reduce public health risks. Otherwise the increasing rate of waterborne diseases will be a threat to the overall health sector and the unfavorable impact of this problem will harm the education and economy of the country. Being climate change problem a global issue, Bangladesh is not out of the embracement of this curse. Moreover, coastal Bangladesh, especially the southern districts at the line of the great delta Bay of Bengal suffer more than any other part of the country from this problem. The cyclone season always keeps the people of coastal region worried with their lives and wealth about devastating cyclones along with tidal surges and flood. Though it's clearly impossible to combat natural disasters, ultimate resilience, coping capabilities, and government and non-government assistance should be speed up. Research, proper management, governance and providing knowledge to cope with the disasters are important to minimize the sufferings and losses of the coastal people. Particularly, this study recommends some initiatives to mitigate the waterborne diseases associated with climate change.

- People of the coastal area should be aware and taken pre-actions before the disasters. They also should have to be proactive to sustain after the disasters specially to overcome the waterborne diseases.
- Govt. should increase their fund with regards to manage the natural disasters and should take health measures overcoming water related diseases. NGOs activities should also be increased in this regard.

- Further research should be conducted on this issue to find out the people's need before, during and after the disaster mitigating their suffering from several difficulties in coastal areas.

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Declarations

Role of Right to Information Act 2009 in the Delivery of Social Safety Net Services during COVID-19 in Bangladesh

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Abstract

The study aims at uncovering the role of the Right to Information Act, 2009 (RTI Act, 2009) on the delivery of social safety net services from the Union Parishad (UP), the lowest administrative tier of Bangladesh during the Covid-19 pandemic. This study is followed by a case-oriented qualitative research strategy, while questionnaire surveys, key informant interviews (KII), and focus group discussion (FGD) were tools of data collection. The study shows that there is no role of the RTI Act, 2009 on the delivery of social safety net services during the Covid-19 pandemic. The study also reveals that many eligible people did not get their legitimized services because the UP functionaries did not follow the appropriate criteria to select eligible beneficiary. The existing patron client relationship prevails in the service delivery process of the UP. Thus, it can be claimed that general people have no information about the RTI Act, 2009. Lack of a campaign about the RTI Act, 2009 and indifference from UP functionaries have been the main reasons behind people's ignorance of the RTI Act, 2009.

Key words: Right to Information, Social Safety Net, Transparency, Accountability, Covid-19, Service delivery

1. Introduction

A novel coronavirus known as being part of a severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) was identified in 2019, and was named COVID-19 (Mayo Clinic, 2020). Thus far, it has spread to 216 countries, since the first case was identified and reported in Wuhan, China, on 31st December 2019 (WHO, 2020; Huang et al., 2020). As of 30th June 2020, the virus had infected 10,185,374 people with 503,862 deaths worldwide (WHO, 2020). Due to its exponential fatality and high transmissibility, COVID-19 was declared a global pandemic by the World Health Organization on 11th March 2020 (WHO, 2020). A pandemic is generally communal, and it spreads through community transmission. Many steps and policies have been taken by concerned authorities around the world to control the spread of the deadly virus. Some of these include social isolation, social distancing, along with both home and institutional quarantine, etc (Jama, 2020). Besides these, governments of many countries have imposed restrictions on travel, social gathering in offices, classrooms, reception centers, clubs, and transport services, inducing thereby nationwide lockdowns (Cohen & Kupferschmidt, 2020). In Bangladesh, the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR) reported about the first three known coronavirus cases on 8th March 2020 (IEDCR, 2020). As of 30th June 2020, there have been about 141,801 active cases, with 1783 deaths (WHO, 2020). The Government of Bangladesh (GoB) took essential steps to curtail the outbreak, including declaration of public holidays, lockdowns of all public offices, apart from emergency services, limited banking services, restrictions on public transports, suspension of all domestic and international flights, closure of factories, and business enterprises for maintaining social distance (Mamun, 2020). It was argued that as a lower-middle-income economy with one of the world's densest populations, it would be extremely

challenging to implement these measures for a long time in Bangladesh (Anwar, Nasrullah & Hossen, 2020). Already, the income of the large population had decreased, and social security has been under threat (Mostafiz, 2020). A survey, conducted by Power & Participation Research Centre and BRAC Institute of Governance & Development, during the pandemic of the novel coronavirus, revealed that the average earnings in the slums of Bangladeshi cities, and among the rural poor, have declined by more than 80 percent. Notably, 63 percent of this population, including day laborers, bhangari [plastic] workers, restaurant workers, maids, transport workers, agriculture laborers, construction and factory workers, petty businessmen, shop assistants, and rickshaw pullers became economically inactive. Moreover, 75 percent urban people and 55 percent rural people faced livelihood insecurities (Rahman et al., 2020). To overcome this humongous crisis, the government introduced some social safety net programs (hereinafter SSNP) as an initiative to save the livelihoods of the underprivileged section of the society (Mostafiz, 2020). For example, in the fiscal year 2020-21, the government has allocated Taka. 955740 million for the SSNP programs. Interestingly, this forms about 16.83 percent of the total budget of Bangladesh, and about 3.01 percent of GDP (Molla, 2020). At present, there are two types of local government institutions, one is for rural areas and the other is for urban areas. Further, three tiers of local government institutions exist in rural areas (i.e. Union Parishad, Upazilla Parishad, and Zilla Parishad), while for urban areas, there are two tiers (i.e. pourashava and municipal corporation) (Panday, 2011). Each UP has nine wards with 13 members. Among them, a chair is elected by all UP voters, wherein three female members are elected from 'reserved seats', while the rest of the nine members are each elected from general seats from one of the nine wards. Notably, only the UP secretary is a permanent government official, and the other staffs work on contractual agreements (Ahsan, Chowdhury, & Panday, 2018). Thus far, in several cases, the local government has failed to deliver these SSNP services with both the quality and quantity as expected, due to the lack of effiency of the government. There are many challenges, including the selection process of the beneficiary, lack of monitoring, and a proper follow-up system that are responsible for the inefficiency of the Local Government Institution (hereinafter LGIs) (World Bank, 2006 cited in Haider & Mahmud, 2017). Moreover, the poor people cannot get access to information related to SSNP services. Moroever, the lack of transparency, accountability, responsiveness, and corruption are rampant in delivery of SSNP services (World Bank, 2006 cited in Haider & Mahmud, 2017). The Government of Bangladesh introduced the Right to Information Act in 2009[3] (hereinafter RTI) for enhancing transparency, accountability, and responsiveness in a local government institution, government, and non-government agencies (Baroi, 2013). But unfortunately, during this time of COVID-19, there have been reports of large-scale misappropriation of funds and hoarding relief materials (Molla, 2020). For instance, during the lockdowns induced by Covid-19, dozens of local-level leaders of the ruling party, along with local government officials were arrested for corruption and theft of food items by the law enforcers in different parts of the country (UCA News, 2020). These types of information go on to prove that there has been rampant corruption within the government, and SSNP has been no exception, even though the crisis of Covid-19 looms large. It was believed that the activities undertaken under the SSNP program would have saved the lives of the unemployed and helpless

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[3]The RTI Act 2009 was passed on 29 March, 2009 in the parliament (Iftekharuzzaman, 2009).

people, and a transparent process of service delivery would ensue to ensure the rights of the helpless and the needy; unfortunately, that has not been quite the case in reality. Thus, taking the present situation into consideration, this study focuses on Union Parishad, as the lowest tier of local government in Bangladesh. Further, this study has been conducted to explore the role of the RTI, 2009 on the delivery of SSN services that are distributed at the local government levels through local government institutes. The findings of this study explored the socio-economic conditions of SSNP beneficiaries. The intention was to know who actually did get these services! Were the real/needy beneficiaries getting the services! Once this was known, we looked to analyze the SSNP delivery process vis a vis the role of the RTI Act, 2009 on that process.

2.   Methodology of the Study

The study is based on qualitative data. However, quantitative data have also been used on a limited scale. So, a case-oriented qualitative research strategy is followed, as the 'case' strategy underlines a detailed contextual analysis. In fact, it analyzes a limited number of conditions or events vis a vis their relationships (Yin, 1994). Data have been collected from both primary and secondary sources. For collecting primary data, a questionnaire survey was prepared with a semi-structured questionnaire containing both closed and open-ended questions. Additionally, key informant interviews (KII) and focus group discussions (FGD) were also used. Due to both time and budget constraints, Sadullahpur Union at Pabna Sadar Upazila, under Pabna district was purposively selected as a study area. The total area of the union is 8286 acres with 31796 people in 7592 households (BBS, 2011). Among nine wards of the union, three were picked randomly (i.e. Ward no. 1, 4, and 7) for collecting primary data through a simple random sampling procedure. A total of 10 respondents, including UP Chairman, 3 ward members (WMs), 3 female ward members (FWMs), 1 UP secretary, 1 entrepreneur of Union Digital Centre, Project implementation officer, and 1 local elite were purposively selected as 'key informants'. Further, 48 SSNP beneficiaries (i.e. 16 from each ward) were selected purposively for interviews. This apart, 60 non-beneficiaries (30 male and 30 female participants who are eligible for SSNP services based on their economic condition) were selected for FGD. A total of 6 FGDs (10 participants participate in each FGD) was conducted. Two FGDs (one for male and one for female) were conducted in each ward. Taking into consideration the situation of COVID-19, the duration of collecting primary data was from 1st to 30th August (i.e. A total of 30 days). Various research works, including different published books, published government orders, newspapers, reports, journals, different websites, and online news portals were used as secondary sources. SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) software has been used for data processing and analysis.

3.   Role of RTI Act, 2009 on Social Safety Net Service Delivery Process: A Conceptual Understanding

Traditionally, the European welfare state used social protection (UNRISD, 2010) and modern social protection has been developed to cover an extensive range of issues and purposes. In developing nations, social protection is used as a policy approach to concentrate on persistent poverty issues (UNRISD, 2010). In Bangladesh, the constitution assures social protection as a basic right (Ahmed & Islam, 2011). Article 15 (d) of the Bangladesh Constitution declares to inaugurate the 'social security program (Miyan, 2005). In this perspective, a well-functioning safety net is regarded as an important element of the social protection

strategy (World Bank, 2006). Besley et al. (2003:04) defined : "Social safety nets as those public interventions which are designed to serve two key functions: (i) to play a redistributive role transferring resources toward the poorer members of society to bring them out of poverty, and (ii) to provide greater opportunities for individuals to mitigate risks from unforeseen contingencies." In general, the term 'social safety' is connected to a group of community or public programs. The purpose of the same is focusing attention on the less advantaged and more vulnerable people (Paitoonpong, Abe, & Puopongsakorn, 2008). Based on this discussion, it may be summarized that the social safety net is such type of service provided by the state for helping the underprivileged to save themselves from hazards and unexpected circumstances. There are many irregularities including mismanagement occurred in social safety net services for lacking of information (Baroi & Panday , 2015). According to the provisions of the RTI Act, 2009 of Bangladesh, "information is about an authority's constitution, structure, and official activities and includes any: memo, book, design, map, contract, data, logbook, order, notification, documents, sample, letter, report, account statement, project proposal, photograph, audio, video, drawing, film, any instrument prepared through an electronic process, machine-readable documents, and any other documentary material regardless of its physical form or characteristics (RTI Act, 2009: 7140). So, information refers to materials, documents, memos log book, circular, report and any kind of opinion. According to Amparan and Toledo (2009), underprivileged people can connect their daily requirements and problems with the use of the right to information law as a tool to get information. According to Plamenatz (1938:82), "A right is a *power* which a creature ought to possess". Louden (1983:95) defined : "Rights are permissive rather than requirements. Rights tell us what the bearer is at liberty to do". So, right is a force that allows a person to ask for something, and/or do something. According to the RTI Act 2009, "every citizen shall have the right to information from the authority, and the authority shall, on demand from a citizen, be bound to provide him with the information" (the RTI Act, 2009: 7141). Analyzing the elements of the RTI Act 2009, it can be claimed that ensuring accountability and transparency in governance is the prime objective of the enactment of the act. Thus, every service delivery system of government institutions falls under the purview of the act for bringing a qualitative change in its service delivery system (Sobhan, 2011). At the grassroots level, the Union Parishad is the key implementing authority and the gateway of SSNP programs, while UP representatives are responsible for performing different tasks related to these programs that include targeting, delivery of benefit, process approval, supervision, monitoring, and coordinating (Hossain, Chatterjee & Hossain, 2017). Generally, ward members play their co-ordinating function between the upazilla level officers and beneficiaries. Moreover, ward members provide data about the beneficiaries for issuing new cards for various programs (Chowdhury, 2015). According to Lovelock & Wright (2002), "Service delivery refers to the actual delivery of service and products to the customer or clients". According to Martins & Ledimo (2015), "Service delivery involves all the aspects relating to when, how, and where a service is delivered to a customer, and whether it is fair in nature. Service components are usually not always physical products, but instead are a combination of resources (skills and materials) that must be appropriately planned and designed". In this study, both transparency and accountability have been considered as independent variables.

According to UN ESCAP (2006), "Transparency means that the taken decisions and their enforcement are done in a manner that follows rules and regulations. It also means that information is freely available and directly accessible to those who will be affected by such decisions and their enforcement". According to Kailasam (2004), "transparency means sharing information and acting in an open manner". He is of the view that free access to information is a key element in promoting transparency. Such information must be timely, relevant, accurate, and complete for its effective utilization.

From the perspective of the analysis of the elements of the RTI Act 2009, in the process of delivery of SSNP programs from the UP, transparency means disclosure of information of the following:

-Dissemination of information regarding services: different types of services were allocated during the lockdown situations like grocery items, cash, and other relief materials. Dissemination of information regarding services means information about these services.

- Dissemination of information about the beneficiary list: dissemination of information about the beneficiary list means publishing the beneficiary list made by UP for distributing relief materials.

- Dissemination of information about the criteria: dissemination of information about the criteria means publishing the criteria that need to be followed in selecting a beneficiary.

- Dissemination of information about the selection procedure: dissemination of information about the selection procedure means disclosing information about the procedures that were followed for selecting a beneficiary.

- Dissemination of information about the duration: dissemination of information about the duration means elaborating the timeframe for providing services.

In this study, transparency operationalized as information (including services, beneficiary list, selection criteria, procedure, and duration) is freely available and directly accessible to the common people. The informed citizens can ask about the beneficiary's list and their selection procedure. As a result, there is no scope of abusing the system, arbitrary decision, and corruption.

Accountability is defined as a relationship between two parties. It has been stated "Accountability refers to the nature of a relationship between two parties. A relationship may be characterized as lacking in accountability or highly accountable. In a relationship between two parties, A is accountable to B, if A is obliged to explain and justify his/her actions to B, and B can sanction A if his/her conduct or explanation for it is found to be unsatisfactory" (cited in Chowdhury, 2017:25). "Accountability defined as an explanation of the activities, defined objectives, tasks, results, and even failures conducted by a public institution, within the framework of social responsibility"(Costa, 2010:30). Accountability, here in this study, is operationalized as the responsiveness of UP functionaries to their voters and answerability of UP officials to the inhabitants of UP in SSNP service related activities. Responsiveness means selection of SSNP beneficiaries through meetings, delivering information on demand, inclusion of beneficiaries on demand, etc. Answerability means UP official's response to the citizen's questions and giving justification of their action.

Analytical Framework of this Study

Based on this discussion, the analytical framework of this study is depicted below:

| Dissemination of information regarding services |
| Dissemination of information about the Criteria |
| Dissemination of information about the beneficiary list |
| Dissemination of information about the selection procedure |
| Dissemination of information about the duration |

Responsiveness of UP functionaries
      -Selection of SSNP beneficiaries through meeting
      - Delivering information on demand
      - Inclusion of beneficiaries on demand

Answerability of UP officials to the inhabitants of UP

      - UP officials response to the citizen's question
      - Giving an opinion to their action.

Social safety net service delivery

Source: Developed by the author

4. An Analysis of the Socio-economic Condition of the Service Receivers

In this study, the socio-economic condition has been analyzed through the profile of the beneficiary respondents.

- **Gender**

Table -1: Respondent's Gender

Male /Female	Frequency	Percentage
Male	34	70.8%
Female	14	29.2%
Total	48	100.05%

Table-1 exposes that among the beneficiary respondents, available data suggest that 70.8% (34) respondents are male and 29.2% (14) are female beneficiaries out of a total of 48. It is apparent that the numbers of male-headed households are larger; thus, males are considered to be helped during this covid pandemic situation in the study area.

- **Age**

Table-2: Respondent's Age

Age	Frequency	Percentage
30-40	16	33.3
41-50	15	31.3
51-60	7	14.6
61-70	5	10.4
71-85	5	10.4
Total	48	100.0

Table-2 shows that almost 33.3% (16) beneficiaries belong to the age group 30-40 out of a total of 48 respondents. About 31.3% (15) respondents come from age group 41-50, 14.6% (7) come from age group 51-60, 10.4% (5) come from age group 61-70%, and 10.4% (5) come from age group 71-85. This data reveal that most of the beneficiaries belong to the 31-33 age group.

- **Educational Status**

Table-3: Respondent's Educational Status

Educational status	Frequency	Percentage
Illiterate	26	54.2
Primary	16	33.3
Secondary	5	10.4
Higher-secondary	1	2.1
Total	48	100.0

The table-3 here shows that in terms of the educational background, almost 54.2% (26) respondents are illiterate, 33.3% (16) have completed primary education, 10.4% (5) completed secondary education, while only 2.1% (1) have completed higher-secondary education.

- **Occupation**

Table -4: Respondent's Occupation

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Farmer	14	29.2
House-wife	12	25.0
Small-business	6	12.5
Tea-seller	3	6.3
Driver	3	6.3
others	10	20.8
Total	48	100.0

Table-4 illustrates the distribution of the respondents by major occupations. Among the beneficiary respondents, data depict that about 29.2% (14) of beneficiaries out of a total 48 respondents are farmers, while about 25.0% (12) respondents are housewives, 12.5% (6) are businessmen, 6.3% (3) are tea-sellers, 6.3% (3) are drivers, and 20.8% are others.

- **Family Income**

Table-5: Respondent's Income

Income	Frequency	Percentage
0	33	68.8
2000-5000	13	27.1
5000-10000	2	4.2
Total	48	100.0

According to table-5, in the case of the beneficiary's monthly income group, it was found that 68.8% (33) respondents have no income, 27.1% (13) earn between 2000-5000, and 4.2% (2) earns between 5000-10000 Taka. Importantly, during the ongoing pandemic, most of the respondents have had no income.

- **Savings**

Table-6: Respondent's Savings

Savings	Frequency	Percentage
0	48	100.0

The data in table-6 displays that in case of monthly savings, all (100%) respondents have had no monthly savings during the ongoing pandemic.

- **Family Type**

Table-7: Respondent's Family Type

Type	Frequency	Percentage
Single	45	93.8
Joint	3	6.3
Total	48	100.0

It is clear from table-8, notably, the highest number of beneficiaries belonged to a single-family, which was 93% (45) beneficiaries out of a total of 48 respondents, while only 6.3% (3) of the respondents belong to a joint family.

- **Food Items**

Table-8: Respondent's Food Items

Food items	Frequency	Percentage
Rice, Vegetables	40	83.3
Rice, Fish	8	16.7
Total	48	100.0

From table-9, it was found in the food items that 83.3% (40) respondents eat rice and vegetables, while 16.7% (8) eat rice and fish as their daily meal.

- **Health Status**

Table-9:   Respondent's Health Status

Suffer from sickness	Frequency	Percentage
Regular	7	14.6
Irregular	5	10.4
On Occasion	18	37.5
Do not	18	37.5
Total	48	100.0

Table-10 represents 37.5% (18), 37.5% (18), 14.6% (7), and 10.4% (5) respectively replied that they suffer from sickness occasionally, don't suffer from sickness, regularly suffer from sickness, and irregularly suffer from sickness. Thus, it may be summarized that by and large the health conditions of these people were comparatively ok during the pandemic thus far.

Additionally, it is clear that most of the respondents enlisted in the beneficiary list include farmers, and they get the service for their personal communication. From data revealed through FGDs, many people deserve relief for their income losing like the beneficiaries during the lockdown situation. But they did not get the help because of their inability to establish communication with the UP functionaries. As a result, many deserving people have been left out of this assistance.

5. Does the RTI Act, 2009 Matter during COVID-19 Pandemic in Bangladesh?

Dissemination of important information including services, beneficiary list, selection criteria, procedure, and duration for getting any services are key elements of transparency. The following discussion has thus been stressed attention to these elements separately following the analytical framework of the study.

5.1 Dissemination of Information regarding Services

Important service-related information is supposed to be displayed at the UDC and through citizen charter by the UP elected and government officials. From the analysis of the data on both the demand and supply sides, it is evident that the beneficiaries got the tokens of service from the elected officials of the UP during the COVID pandemic. According to the opinion of the UP chair, "*the information has been disseminated by his known political personalities including ward members, the political person of the current ruling party among the service receivers" (Personal communication, August 10 2020).* The UP secretary stated, *"Generally, we published about relief related information in our notice board, but during the time of the covid pandemic, we did not do it. He also expresses that he gives information when people ask him" (Personal communication, August 11, 2020).* On the other hand, in response to the question "Do you know about the distributed social safety net services from the UP?" The data reveal that 89.6% (43) of respondents stated that they do not have service information, while 10.4% (5) replied positively that they know about the service. Again, participants of the FGD session replied, "*We don't know about the reliefs. We are scared of questions about those. If we ask, for those services, the men of the chairman and the members get angry and beat us. We did not have any work and seriously required help, yet we did not receive any facilities. Even we were afraid of going to the UP"(Personal communaication, August 11, 2020). Thus, it is clear that service-related information was not disseminated properly. As well as the provision of the RTI Act was not maintained properly.* These interpretations are shown by the following table

<div align="center">Table-10:   Knowledge about Distributed Social Safety Net Services</div>

Answer	Frequency	Percent
Yes	5	10.4
No	43	89.6
Total	48	100.0

<div align="center">Question: Do you know about distributed social safety net services from the UP?</div>

5.2 Dissemination of Information about the Beneficiary List

Social safety net beneficiary list is supposed to be displayed on the UP website by UP official. From the analysis of the data on both the demand and supply sides, it is evident that beneficiary and non-beneficiary both have no idea about the beneficiary list. Beneficiaries were informed by their WMs, local political leaders that they are listed in the beneficiary list for the social safety net that is allotted in COVID-19. So, they came to UP for receiving the service. In this regard, the UP secretary expressed his opinions. He stated,

"*The secretary of the UP says, normally we disclose the list of the beneficiaries. But as Corona is a pandemic and we did not experience any such calamity earlier, we did not reveal the list publicly because many affluent persons and little income groups also underwent economic problems. But if anyone comes to us and queries, we can show the list* (Personal communication, August 12, 2020).* According to one FWMs, "*Generally, we have not informed the total beneficiary list. We distributed the tokens among the helpless, widow, day-laborer. When they got the token, then they went to UP and received their services*"(*Personal communication, August 13, 2020).* On the contrary, responds to the question "Does UP disseminate information about the beneficiary list? "Available data suggest that 87.5% (42) and 12.5% (6) announced 'No' and 'do not know' about the services respectively. Moreover, one of the participants of the FGD session said:

"*Since we already know that who is near and dear to the chair, they get relief. So, we do not go up to investigate the beneficiary list*"(*Personal communication, August 13, 2020).* So, it can be argued that people's access to information about the beneficiary list has not been ensured in the study area. It can also be argued that the practice of providing information by elected officials has not been ensured as per the provision of the RTI Act. These interpretations have depicted by the following table:

Table -11: Knowledge about of the Beneficiary List

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
No	42	87.5
Do not know	6	12.5
Total	48	100.0

Question: Does UP disseminate information of the beneficiary list?

5.3 Dissemination of Information about the Criteria

Beneficiary's selection criteria are supposed to be displayed at the citizen charter of UP by UP official. From the analysis of the data on both the demand and supply sides, it is evident that beneficiary and non-beneficiary both have no idea about the criteria. However, the study found that the relationship with ruling political parties is the main criteria for getting the services. In response to the question "Do you know about the criteria for getting services? "Available data show that 83.3% (40) beneficiary respondents replied with the word 'No' and 16.7% (8) respondents replied 'yes' that they know the criteria for getting the services. Here, one may ask "What criteria are followed by UP for delivering services?" The data reveal that 52.1% (25) of respondents out of a total of 48 replied that they got the services for "personal communication". It has also been revealed that 39.6% (19) and 8.3 % (4) replied that they got the services for "economic condition" and "Others" respectively. In this connection, one participant in the FGD session stated: "*Closeness to chairman and member is the main criterion for getting relief*" *(Personal communication, August 14, 2020).* On the other hand, one of the key informants in this study is the project implementation officer who stated: "*We were instructed to help the persons who became workless, especially the tea sellers, drivers, barbers, and so on. We sent letters to the UP and asked them to form a relief distribution committee. The activities of this committee are to find out the eligible person for giving relief*" *(Personal*

communication, August 14, 2020). In this connection UP secretary commented that, "*We followed the government rule and published the criteria for getting the services? But at the time of COVID-19, who came to us for relief, we try to get them (Personal communication, August 14, 2020).* Thus, it is apparent that the information about the criteria was not disseminated as per the provision of the RTI Act. These interpretations have been shown by the following table-

Table-12: Knowledge about the Criteria for Getting Services

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	8	16.7
No	40	83.3
Total	48	100.0

Question: Do you know about the criteria for getting services?

5.4 Dissemination of Information about the Selection Procedure

It is supposed to be that the selection procedure of the social safety net during COVID-19 is available to common people. The beneficiary should be selected on legal documents as well as fixed indicators. However, it is seen that most of the beneficiary respondents do not know about the formal selection procedure. According to the UP chair's statement, he said: "*among the beneficiaries 30% are related to politics and the other 70% are common people. But all beneficiaries were poor and helpless irrespective of political backgrounds. Usually, these people were identified by the members of the UP. The persons, who did not receive other facilities, have also received the reliefs" (Personal communaication, August 15, 2020). Further,* in this regard, one of the FWM stated: "*Generally, we select the beneficiary by people's economic status. Besides this, whoever came to me for getting help, I distributed the token. I do not know about the formal selection procedure*" (*Personal communaication, August 16, 2020*). However, in response to the question "Does the UP disclose the procedure of selecting beneficiary?" It has been revealed that 85.4% (41) of respondents expressed that the UP does not disclose the beneficiary selection procedure, while 14.6% (7) of respondents stated that UP does disclose the beneficiary selection procedure. Responding to another question "Why did you get the services?"Available data suggest 83.3% (40), 8.3% (4), 6.3% (3), and 2.1% (1) opined that they communicated personally with UP members about income shortfall, poverty, and unemployment. So, it appears that the enactment of the RTI Act-2009 does not affect to beneficiary selection procedure during COVID-19. Following table illustrates these results-

Table-13: Knowledge about the Procedure of Selecting Beneficiary

Answer	Frequency	Percent
Yes	7	14.6
No	41	85.4
Total	48	100.0

Question: Does the UP disclose the procedure of selecting beneficiary?

5.5 Dissemination of Information regarding the Duration of the Service

It is supposed to be that the duration of getting SSNP services is displayed at the citizen's charter, so that common people are aware of it. From the analysis of the data, it is seen that beneficiary respondents do not have any idea about the duration of SSNP. Apparently, many of the beneficiaries did approach UP for receiving the services, after getting their tokens. However, in response to the question on "Do you know the duration of providing services?" Available data represent 97.9% (47) of respondents expressed that they have no idea about the duration. On the other hand, 2.1% (1) answered 'yes' to this question. Additionally, most of the participants of the FGD session stated: "*We did not get any services during COVID-19. So, we have no idea about the duration*"*(Personal communication, August 15, 2020). However,* the UP chair opined: "*After getting the relief, we took the necessary steps to deliver as soon as possible. Generally, when we heard that the governments would grant relief, we tried to arrange a meeting with the relief committee in a short time. So, it was possible for us to distribute the relief in a short time after getting the relief*"*(Personal communication, August 17, 2020).* According to the UP secretary, "*We provide the services in due time. If anyone asks me, then I disseminate the information about the duration*"*(Personal communication, August 18, 2020). Further, i*n this regard, one FWM said: "*Generally, I said the time, when I provide the token*"*(Personal communication, August 19, 2020).* Thus, it is apparent that information on the duration of getting services was not disseminated properly. There was no formal arrangement for disseminating information about the duration. These interpretations are shown by the following table-

Table-14: Knowledge about Duration

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	1	2.1
No	47	97.9
Total	48	100.0

Question: Do you know about the duration of providing services?

5.6 Accountability

Responsiveness and answerability are the key elements of accountability. The selection of SSNP beneficiaries through the meeting, delivering information on demand, and the inclusion of beneficiaries on demand are key elements of responsiveness. On the other hand, UP official's conduct against the citizen's question and giving justification against their action are the key elements of answerability. The following discussion has thus stressed upon these elements separately, following the analytical framework of the study.

5.7 Selection of SSN Beneficiaries through the Meeting

It is presumed that SSNP beneficiaries are selected through open meetings with the Union Humanitarian Aid Implementation Committee. We found that the meeting was indeed held, but most of the committee members were related to the ruling party. There was no scope for expressing public opinions. The beneficiaries got the services because their leader or relatives attended these meetings. However, the common people have no information about the committee's meeting. According to the UP secretary, "*UP arranged an open meeting with the relief committee. The member of this committee selected eligible people. Sometimes, general people were also present at this meeting*" *(Personal communaication, August 20, 2020).* Moreover, one of the key informants' Family planning inspectors said, "*Generally, the leader of the ruling party and their supporter selected the beneficiary of the Social safety net during COVID-19. The relief was mainly distributed based on the relation to the ruling party*" *(Personal communaication, August 21, 2020).* Here, in response to a question "Did you attend any meeting for getting the services?" Available data reveale that all (100%) respondents, a total of 48, stated that they did not attend any meeting. The respondents while being questioned on "Do you know about the formation of the meeting committee?" Available data suggest that 83.3% (40) replied they have no idea and on the otherhand 16.7% (8) said they have an idea about the meeting committee. In this regard, one of the FGD participants said: "*near and dear people of chairman and member are the member of the meeting committee. We are general people; we have no right to attend the meeting. We cannot also express our opinion to our representative. They do not hear our opinion*" *(Personal communaication, August 14, 2020).* It is thus evident that UP functionaries and officials are not responsive. The RTI Act has not seem to have been implemented properly, and fair beneficiary selection process for SSNP has not been ensured. The table shows that all respondents, a total of 48 announced 'No'.

Table-15: Information about Meeting for Getting the Services

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
No	48	100

Question: Do you attend any meeting for getting the services?

5.8 Delivering Information on Demand

It is presumed that the enactment of the RTI Act ensured delivering information on demand as well as UP functionaries' responsiveness to their voters. From the analysis of the data, it is revealed that people do not have any idea that demand for information is their right. In response to the question "Does the UP provide information if asked for?" Available data show that 85.4% (41) of respondents do not get information on their demand. Only 14.6% (7) replied that they get information on their demand. On responding to another question "Do the people know about the RTI act?" Available data provide that 85.4% (41) said "No," while 12.5% (6) said: "do not know". On the contrary, only 2.1% (1) said "yes". But an UDC entrepreneur opined: "*If anyone comes to UDC for asking information, then we try to provide the information within a short*

time" (Personal communication, August 25, 2020). Further, the UP secretary stated: "*we provide all information on demand except for our confidential information" (Personal communication, August 27, 2020).* Thus, the findings of the study suggest that people remain unaware due to the lack of publicity of the RTI Act. Following table illustrates these results:

Table-16: Information Delivered on Demand

Delivering information on Demand	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	7	14.6
No	41	85.4
Total	48	100.0

Question: Does the UP provide information if asked for?

5.9 Inclusion of Beneficiaries on Demand

Inclusion of the beneficiary is supposed to be included in the beneficiary list on demand. From the analysis of data, it is revealed that most of the time eligible people are not included in the beneficiary list on their demand. In response to the question "Does the UP include the eligible candidates in the beneficiary list if demanded?" 93.7% (45) non-beneficiary FGD participants replied with "No", while only 6.3% (3) respondents replied "yes". The UP chair stated: *"They included the name on their demand in the beneficiary list"(Personal communication, August 28, 2020). Further,* in this connection, one FWM said: *"When eligible candidates wanted to enlist their names in the beneficiary list, they included them in the beneficiary list"(Personal communication, August 30, 2020). Thus,* it may be argued that though UP functionaries claimed that they included eligible candidates in the beneficiary list, but in reality, in most cases, people claimed that though they were eligible for the service, their name was not included in the beneficiary list. The provision of the RTI Act has thereby not been ensured under UP functionaries' responsibility. These interpretations are shown by the following table-

Table-17: UP Includes the Eligible Candidates in the Beneficiary List if Demanded

Includes the eligible candidates	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	3	6.3
No	45	93.8
Total	48	100.0

Question: Does the UP include the eligible candidates in the beneficiary list if demanded?

5.10 UP Officials' Conduct against the Citizen's Question

It is assumed that UP officials answer citizen's queries. But from the data analysis, it is revealed that most of the citizens do not know that getting an answer is their right. As a result, UP officials' answerability is not ensured. In response to a question "When you sought information, how did they conduct?" From the available data suggest 37.5% (18), 29.2% (14), 14.6% (7), and 10.4% (5) replied that UP officials keep themselves away from answering, show that they are busy, display anger, announced the word 'stop me' respectively. Only 8.3% (4) stated that they did get a response. So, it is found that though the provision of the RTI act enacted in the UP Act, 2009, but its implication and implementation remain poor at the local level. These interpretations are shown by the following table-

Table-18: UP officials' conduct against the Citizen's Question

Conduct	Frequency	Percentage
Angry	7	14.6
Give answer	4	8.3
Keep themselves away from answering	18	37.5
Stop me	5	10.4
Show busyness	14	29.2
Total	48	100.0

Question: When you sought information, how did they conduct?

5.11 Giving Justification against Their Action

It is assumed that if the RTI Act is implemented, then UP officials will be accountable through giving justification about their activities related to SSNP. From the data analysis, it is revealed that people do not demand justification about UP's official action. In response to the question "Do they give justification against their action?" Available data reveal that all (100%) respondents replied 'No'. One of the participants of the FGD session stated: "*We do not know that we can demand justification against their action*"(*Personal communaication, August 29, 2020*). Thus, it can be said that UP officials do not give justification for their actions. People's ignorance is responsible for this. These interpretations are shown by the following table-

Table-19: Giving Justification against their Action

Justification against their action	Frequency	Percentage
No	48	100.0

Question: Do they give justification against their action?

6. Conclusion

The results of the study show that free flow of information had not been prevailing in the UPs through the UDC, website, notice board, and citizen charter. Both the beneficiary and non-beneficiary did not know that they had the right to ask about the services, beneficiary lists, criteria, and selection procedures. People had no idea about the RTI Act, and they were not aware of their rights. The UP secretary knew about the RTI Act, but the UP chairman and the rest of the functionaries were not aware of the RTI Act. The Act was not yet familiar with the common people. These findings prove the findings of Baroi & Alam (2020), wherein they stated that most of the people still remain unaware of the RTI Act in Bangladesh. A lack of campaign and people's ignorance are the main reason behind this. This finding confirms the findings of Baroi (2013), who stated: "there was the need for a stronger campaign on RTI policy well-known within the community and also with UP representatives". So, through this, we can safely assume that there was no transparency on SSNP, whereby common people were well-informed about the service, and that it was easily accessible to them, especially during the nationwide lockdown, owing to the pandemic. On the other hand, the UP functionaries' accountability has been measured from the two perspectives; responsiveness and answerability. The study found that the provision of the RTI Act did not make the UP functionaries responsive to the general people. Moreover, UP officials' accountability was not ensured through the provision of the RTI Act. Besides this, the study found that personal connection with the UP functionaries acted as a criterion for getting services, and the RTI Act did not play any role. The findings revealed that most of the beneficiaries were farmers, and most of them had no income and savings during the lockdown; but, they got relief because of their 'personal' contacts with the ruling party. Notably, the findings corroborate with the findings of Chowdhury (2015), who stated: "names of the beneficiary in the allocation are being chosen by the political activists of the ruling party". Besides this, many non-beneficiary people deserved relief, but did not get. Though their crying need was relief, they were not enlisted in the beneficiary list. Because they failed to communicate personally with the UP functionaries. So, the study concludes that the aims of the enactment of the RTI Act have failed to achieve its goal in the study area.

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Acknowledgement

Dynamics of Administrative Reforms in Bangladesh: A Qualitative Meta-Synthesis Analysis

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Abstract

Administrative Reforms are seen as those efforts which call for or lead to significant changes in the bureaucratic system of a country intended to transform the existing and established practices, behaviors, and structures within it (Khan, 2013). It is a political process influenced by predominant actors and factors that have a critical role in implementing reform strategies. Evidence implies that the international donor community, politicians, and bureaucrats are dominant reform agents highly controlled by the clientelist politics and bureaucratic ritualism in Bangladesh and extend their resistance in implementing administrative reforms. This article offers a new frame to facilitate the administrative reform process's notion in two ways: it used the Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) to explain the reform policy dynamics. Secondly, it analyzes the role of reform policy determinants (factors) and dominants (agents) from an interaction perspective. Finally, this meta-synthesis analysis's significant findings claim that policy actors and factors collective influence bears different reform policy implications than their individual influence.

Keywords: Administrative reforms, Implementation, Actors-factors, Meta-synthesis.

1. Introduction

Public administration reform is an ever-present element in the government's policy-making in advanced and growing nations (Azizuddin, 2008, P. 85). United Nations (1983) defines "administrative reform as the deliberate use of authority and influence to apply new measures to an administrative system to change its goals, structures, and procedures to improve it for developmental purposes." Like other developing nations, Bangladesh also strives to reform its administration in response to the changes in socio-economic environments. Her bureaucracy is frequently charged with incompetence, debasement, favoritism, the need for responsibility, and a collection of other sicknesses. It is now and then depicted as standing within the way of advancement instead of fortifying it (Jamil, 2002, p. 93). Therefore, since independence, several commissions/committees were constituted by different governments for administrative reform and reorganization to suit their respective policy declarations (CPD, 2001, p. 2). More than twenty reports on reforms have been prepared by these commissions (Jahan, 2013, p. 21), but few of their suggestions were implemented. Prior litterateurs explain the reasons for the aperture between reform policies initiated and

their implementation. The significant factors behind failure to implement administrative reform committees' recommendations were: firstly, the inherited bureaucratic structure and colonial service attitude that contradicts with socialistic values of independent Bangladesh. Most of the senior bureaucrats were emanate from the Civil Service of Pakistan highly unwilling to give up privileges and elite status and hindered the changing pattern of citizen-friendly administration (Zafarullah and Huque, 2001; Jamil, 2007; Khan, 2009). Secondly, the postwar socio-economic condition was very vulnerable. The demand of mass was paramount; that is why the government concentration was mainly to fulfill citizens' basic needs and expectations through socio-economic and infrastructure development instead of reforming administration. Besides political chaos, nepotism, politicization in various public jobs, leaders' misuse of power enhances this delay. However, other studies revealed that policy actors, especially donors, and the government of Bangladesh (GoB) in all political regimes, whether democratic or military, advocated improving the performance management system, rationalizing civil service structure, and eliminating superfluous government operations (Mollah, 2014). Bureaucrats have been resistant to reform in administration, and the other important stakeholder, the citizens, society actors are nearly absent in the reform policy process. As a result, these recipients of reform benefits seem to be out of administrative reform dynamics. Most of the pieces of literature discuss factors or actors' role in the administrative reform process. However, they lack an explanation of how factors and actors jointly create a policy environment that reinforces administrative reform failures and whether there are any differences between their collective and individual influence on reform implementation. The article, therefore, first focuses on describing the determinant and dominant factors and actors of reforms in Bangladesh civil service. Secondly, it aims to unearth the implications of their interplay over the implementation of administrative reforms. Accordingly, the question that is asked in this analysis is how the interaction between actors and factors does impact the performance of administrative reform in Bangladesh. The overall structure of the paper takes the form of five chapters, including this introductory section. Chapter two begins by laying out the concepts related to this study and understanding how factors and actors are involved in the administrative reform process. The third chapter is concerned with the methodology that introduces the qualitative meta-synthesis research procedure used for this study. The fourth section presents the findings: qualitative meta-synthesis of published literature that reveals dominant actors and factors and discusses how they cause the ineffective implementation of the reforms. Finally, the conclusion gives a summary of the research findings to future research into this area.

1.1 Research Questions

    a) Who are the dominant actors of the administrative reform process in Bangladesh?

    b) What are the dominant factors of the administrative reform process in Bangladesh?

    c) How does the interaction between these actors and factors impact the implementation of administrative reform in Bangladesh?

1.2 Research Objectives

This study aims to investigate administrative Reform in Bangladesh through the lens of an interaction perspective. Thus, it has purposes:

    a) To find out the interaction between influential factors and actors of the administrative reform process.

    b) To examine the impact of this interaction on the reform implementation in Bangladesh.

2. Conceptual Framework

2.1 Administrative   Reform: A Ubiquitous Idea

Administrative reform is the qualification and adaptation of public agencies to ensure their efficiency, effectiveness, and economy. It is to cope the government with changes in both the local and global social, economic and political environment (Fuller, 2010). Reform in administration usually takes to ameliorate and overcome state machineries' deficiencies and flaws by redesigning and re-engineering the set-up, personnel, methods, and technology through trailblazing but realistic policies (Mollah, 2014, p. 28). Discussions over reforming administration are hardly new in Bangladesh. Since the year of independence, it has been a constant background buzz in the public policy process. Many reform efforts have been initiated, which produced noticeable recommendations yet to bring remarkable changes in bureaucrats' performance. Researchers investigated and identified the reasons for unsuccessful reforms. For example, Khan (1990), in his *Politics of Administrative Reform,* followed political perspective in examining the reform process and found factors together with actors behind the miscarriage of reform struggles. He brought up some preconditions of facilitating reform, which are suggested by Gerald Caiden, such as commited government and support from technical experts; civil servant's involvement in the whole reform process; feasible reform goals must be set, and so on. Sarker (2004) in *Administrative reform in Bangladesh: Three decades of failure,* mentioned the political commitment is circumscribed by clientelist legislative issues, capable of diverting the political authority from setting out comprehensive transformation programs (p. 372), whereas recently Pandy and Asaduzzaman (2011) focused on one of the primary areas of administrative reforms is decentralization policy execution at the local level in their *Politics, Problems, and Trends of Decentralized Local Governance in Bangladesh*. They explored the hegemony culture of the political party, and centralized bureaucracy are the setbacks of this implementation. *Governance Experience in Bangladesh: Reforms, Debates and Issues* by Aminuzzaman, Khair, and Basu (2013) propelled to reinvestigate administrative reforms. They underscored reconceptualization of reforms from governance aspects and considering the domestic context. Last but not least, an interlink between different

political regimes and administrative reforms in Bangladesh was uncovered by Mollah (2014) in *Administrative Reforms and Governance in Bangladesh: How Far the Dream of Success?* He claimed that bureaucratic resistance, institutional incapacity, and inheritance of colonial governance patterns are the main causes of unsuccessful reform activities. Indeed, the precedent literatures are fundamental to comprehend administrative reform in Bangladesh to date but missing the explanation of how the interplay of factors and actors impact reform strategies implementation failures. Therefore, this meta-synthesis review identifies this research gap and evaluates administrative reform as a non-autonomous, political output of interplay between determinant actors and factors within the governance.

Thus, for a clear understanding of the concepts, this study requires a theoretical acquaintance which interrelates administrative reform and public policy implementation. The public policies are curved at all phases by variant actors and organizations; actors can form connections through either formal or informal networks according to their beliefs/interests in defense of an issue, their actions being affected by the circumstance in which they act and influenced by external events (Almeida & Gomes, 2018, p. 445). Weible and Carter (2017) argued that studying the policy process means investigating interactions that take place over the years between public policies and participants, events, milieu, and outcomes (p.25). Several public policy models but the advocacy coalition framework (discussed later in section 2.3) can vividly explain the interplays between actors and factors of administrative reform and help reach the study objectives.

2.2 Policy Implementation

Understanding the reality of administrative Reform in Bangladesh requires analysis through the lens of policy implementation. Policy implementation is complicated and is far too complex to be accounted for by a single theory (Winter, 2012). The term "policy implementation" has been defined by many scholars from various perspectives. It is an important stage of the policy-making process. It means the execution of the law in which various stakeholders, organizations, procedures, and techniques work together to put policies into effect, intending to attain policy goals (Stewart et al., 2007, pp. 1–3). Implementation is considered a system, having output, outcome and involves organizations and control techniques (Khan & Khandaker, 2016). It is a reciprocal process between setting objectives and the activities coordinated towards accomplishing them (Pressman, & Wildavsky, 1973). Implementing a particular policy is very much context-specific because it depends on political, social, economic, organizational, and attitudinal variables that influence how competently or dismally a policy or initiative is implemented (Van Meter & Van Horn, 1975, p. 467, & Stewart et al., 2007, pp. 1–3). The circumstance too shifts substantially throughout policies, over time, and from one state to the following.

2.3 Theoretical Framework: The Advocacy Coalition Approach

The goal of the Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) is "to provide a coherent understanding of the major elements and approaches influencing the overall policy process-including problem definition, policy

formulation, implementation, and revision in a specific policy domain-over periods of a decade or more (Sabatier, 1998, p. 1350, cited in Nohrstedt & Olofsson, 2016, p. 16). The policy process is popularly identified as an open system that has external interaction with the environment, exchanges feedback, and whose primary unit of analysis is a set of sub-systems, including public policies that consists of diversified actors actively interested and associated with a political issue (Sabatier & Smith, 1999). The public policy process's ACF model comprises three sub-systems: factors' sub-system, actors' sub-system, and policy sub-system. It is noteworthy that three major assumptions: advocacy coalitions, policy change, and policy-oriented learning, occur through the entire process of public policy formulation. Sub-system actors are also influenced by external system events, including changes in socio-economic conditions, public opinion, governing coalition, and other sub-systems. These are growths outside the dominance of sub-system actors and can change over time (a decade or more). A policy sub-system portrays conflict and competition among actors who ally, engage in critical debates, and derive benefit from political approaches, resources, and venues to stand for their preferred policy concerns and ways out. Coalition interactions require coordination and common beliefs between policy participants in one or more governmental programs to reach indistinguishable policy goals (Sabatier & Weible, 2007, p. 196). This actor-axis approach entails that effective policy formulation can only occur if all actors or players are involved and play different roles. It further entails that each actor has its role to play, and if these roles are forgone or ignored, policies established may be difficult to implement. It advocates for the dilution of interests between all stakeholders. The actors can be put into two categories which are formal and informal actors. Formal are those responsible for establishing policies, including the legislators, executive, judiciary, and civil servants. The informal include those affected by the policy and those who provide policy ideas towards addressing their problem and ensuring that policies are effective. These include civil society (interest groups, political parties, and pressure groups), individual citizens, media, think tanks, and research institutions. As the formal actors are tasked with the overall policy formulation process, the informal actors are important in expressing policy demands, proposing policy alternatives, providing research, mobilizing citizens through political activism to advance rational policy formulation. These policy demands should be reflected in the policy to allow its implementation to be more effective (Chikowore, 2018).

Another significant part of this model is that stable factors are responsible for and influence the actors' actions within the policy process at both formulation and implementation stages. These factors are the essential attributes of the problem: the distribution of natural resources, socio-cultural values, social structure, and the structure of the political system (Sabatier & Smith, 1999). The change can occur due to factors internal and external to the sub-system. The external factors are 1) relatively stable parameters, 2) coalition opportunity structures, and 3) major external shocks. As for the internal factors responsible for changes in the process of formulation and implementation of public policies, they are 1) internal shocks; 2)

negotiated agreements, and 3) the political learning built by the interaction of actors in the sub-system over time (Sabatier, & Weible 2007). The present study is guided by the ACF model but distinctive in two orders. Firstly, it focuses on the interactions between actors' sub-system and factors' sub-system; Secondly, it centers on the impact of this interaction exclusively on reform implementation due to circumventing multi-stage operation complexities.

3. Methodology

Qualitative syntheses are presently acknowledged as beneficial tools for looking into participants' connotations, circumstances, and beliefs, both deeply (Lachal et al., 2017, p. 2) and broadly. A 'qualitative meta-synthesis approach has been selected as the research method for this study, as it is known to be a descriptive qualitative research procedure to construct or extract a typical frame of endorsement from qualitative research end (Lee, 2010, p. 226). It is a process that helped the researcher to distinguish a particular research question and, after that, explore for, select, evaluate, summarize, and combine subjective data to address the research question (Erwin et al., 2011, p. 195).

3.1 Qualitative meta-synthesis approach

This study explores the dynamics of administrative reform by identifying and synthesizing the underlying metaphors and concepts in the administrative reform process already discussed in different qualitative literatures. Therefore, an extensive literature review was done following Sandelowski and Barroso's Qualitative Research Synthesis (QRS) methodology (*see figure 3.1*) as follows.

3.2 Framing the review question

The query that led this research was how is this interplay between and among actors and factors of the administrative reform process in Bangladesh civil service. The rationale of using Booth's (2006) Settings, Population or Perspective, Intervention, Comparison and Evaluation (SPICE) framework to structure this review research question is it improves the process of question formulation and builds more specific research questions.

3.3 Conducting a systematic search for literatures

A complete systematic search was conducted entailing the conventional subject searching first and then reference list checking search strategies around terms for administrative reform process (Intervention) and Bangladesh (settings). Searches were carried out on two databases provided by EBSCO Host are Public Administration and Political Science Complete. Searches were restricted to English language publications but noticeably flexible about the literatures' publication year. Besides these, potential pieces of literature were searched using accessible test terms in Google Scholar and Semantic Scholar, include politics of administrative reform or causes of administrative reform failures. It helped avoid the danger of using only indexed terms indicating that possibly pertinent studies may be missed during the investigation since unseemly index terms have been used or papers were published before any adequate indexing (Dixon-Woods et al., 2005, p. 48). This search was done prioritizing the topic area and types of study, over and above the academic research databases; the most effective channel to find high-quality academic literatures had been the networking among researchers. Initially, a systematic literature search produced 43 articles from these databases.
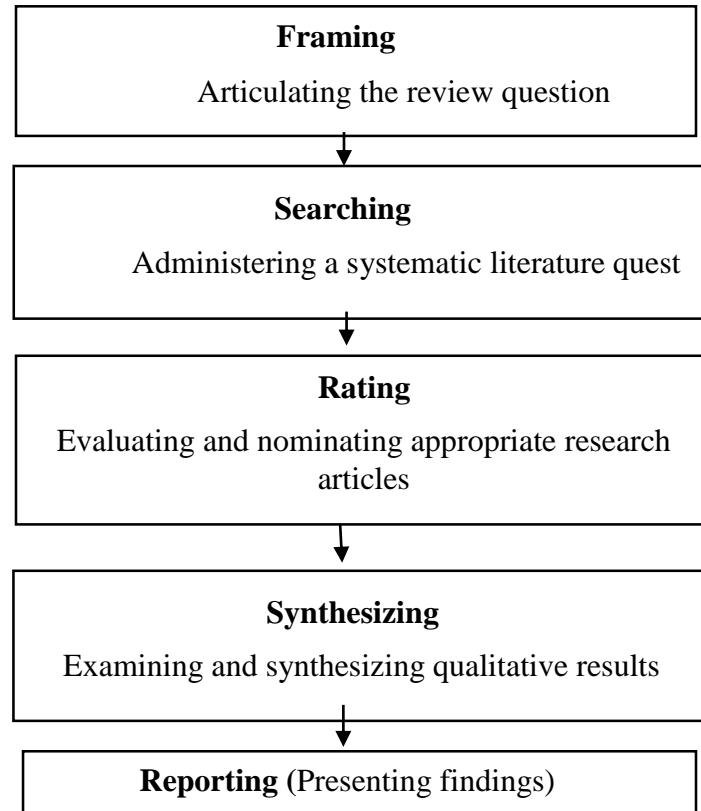
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│                    Framing                         │
│          Articulating the review question          │
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│                   Searching                        │
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│                     Rating                         │
│    Evaluating and nominating appropriate research  │
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│                  Synthesizing                      │
│     Examining and synthesizing qualitative results │
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│       Reporting (Presenting findings)              │
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FIGURE 3. 1 QUALITATIVE META-SYNTHESIS METHODOLOGY (ADOPTED AND MODIFIED FROM LUDVIGSEN ET AL., 2015, P. 321, & ARAFAH & WINARSO, 2017, P. 12065))

3.4 Evaluating and nominating appropriate research articles

At the screening phase, literature was reviewed based on inclusion and exclusion criteria identified before beginning the search. Consequently, a group of literatures was removed as these a) use languages other than English, b) were done for other settings than Bangladesh civil service, c) do focus on different research areas such as administrative reform and gender issues. Thus, in the second phase, a reference list checking search was conducted in the remaining thirty-five articles related to the present research question. As its result, fifteen qualitative published works of literature were found as the research sample. Also, to assess the quality of these literatures, at the stage of rating, the Critical Appraisal Skills Program (CASP, 2017) - a checklist tool was used and appraised against ten questions are: 1) Was there an explicit statement of the research purpose? 2) Is a qualitative methodology appropriate? 3) Was the research methodology appropriate to address the aims of the research? 4) Did the research sample fit into the research purpose? 5) Did the data collection procedure duly address the research issue? 6) Has the relationship between researcher and respondents been adequately contemplated? 7) Has the researcher well thought of ethical

issues? 8) Was the data analysis exhaustive? 9) Is there a precise reporting of findings? 10) What are the research implications?

3.6 Analyzing and synthesizing qualitative findings

The fourth stage, analyzing and synthesizing qualitative findings, denotes in-depth reading of each literature and identifying concepts, metaphors that answer the research question. Thematic synthesis method given by Thomas & Harden (2008) was used for analyzing data containing three levels: firstly, free coding of the prototype findings, then clustering the corresponding free codes into descriptive themes, and finally fostering analytical themes that appear from and step beyond the descriptive themes data analysis.

3.6 Presenting findings

The study findings have been presented in three separate sub-sections (*section 4.1; section 4.2 and section 4.3*) and demonstrated by the table (*see table 4.1*) and figures (*see figure 4.1 and figure 4.2*).

4. Results and Discussion

Analyzing interactions among policy motions, stakeholders, implementers, and socio-political environments is crucial (Brinkerhoff and Crosby, 2002) to ensure careful administrative reform plan and implementation. This study reviewed and synthesized the most relevant literature on administrative reform in Bangladesh and found an interplay between and among influential factors and actors of the bureaucratic reform policy process, which impacts reform initiatives' accomplishment.

4.1 Account of studies reviewed

As mentioned earlier, some studies were located as samples where the administrative reform idea is identified through the constant literature search and citation analysis. These studies are primarily qualitative and categorized into two groups include: first, literatures discuss either factors or actors that influence administrative reform; second, publications that describe the present state of administrative reforms in Bangladesh (see table 4.1).

Table 4.1: An overview of nominated literatures for the study

Authors	Year	Initial Codes	Underlying Metaphors	Descriptive Themes	Analytical Themes
Khan, M.M.	1980	➢ Administrative reforms ➢ Paternalistic attitude ➢ Elite bureaucracy	Resistance	Key factors & actors	Failures of administrative reforms

Authors	Year	Initial Codes	Underlying Metaphors	Descriptive Themes	Analytical Themes
Khan, M.M.	1990	➢ Administrative reforms in different periods ➢ Corruption & militarization of civil service ➢ Reform committees	Constraints of reforms	Key actors & factors	Failure of administrative reform implementation
Khan, M.M.	1998	➢ Reform initiatives ➢ Globalization ➢ International donor ➢ Challenges	Resistance	Key actors & Factors	Failures of administrative reforms
Zafarullah, H.M. & Huque,A.S.	2001	➢ Reforms, regimes ➢ internal and external factors ➢ Poor performance ➢ Domination of bureaucracy	Resistance	Key factors & actors	Poor implementation of reforms
Zafarullah, H.M. & Khan,M.M.	2001	➢ Partisan politics ➢ Bureaucracy in Bangladesh	Resistance	Key actors	Poor performance
Sarker, A. E	2004	➢ Lack of political commitment ➢ Incapacity of the state ➢ Clientelist politics	Resistance	Key factors	Failure of Reform implementation
Jahan, F. & Shahan, A.M.	2008	➢ Bangladesh Civil Service ➢ Politicization of bureaucracy ➢ Recruitment ➢ Corruption ➢ Malfunctioning of the institution	Politics-bureaucracy relationship	Key actors	
Authors	Year	Initial Codes	Underlying Metaphors	Descriptive Themes	Analytical Themes

Authors	Year	Initial Codes	Underlying Metaphors	Descriptive Themes	Analytical Themes
Azizuddin, M.	2011	➢ Politics and administrative reform ➢ Civil Service ➢ International donor intervention ➢ Regime of democratization	Resistance and non-cooperation	Key actors	Failure of Reform implementation
Lægreid, P.	2011	➢ Transformative perspective of reforms ➢ NPM related reforms ➢ Structural devolution ➢ informality	None	Critical factors	Success of NPM reforms
Panday, P.K., & Asaduzzaman, M.	2011	➢ Politics of decentralization ➢ Bureaucratic elitism	Resistance	Key factors	Failure of local governance reform
Thomas, T., & Rahman, M. H.	2013	➢ Policy Process ➢ Reframing reform idea ➢ Political will ➢ Formal-informal institution	Resistance but the core idea was to challenge the reform concept	Key formal-informal actors	Ineffective reform efforts
Mollah, AH.	2014	➢ New Public Management ➢ Chaotic political culture ➢ Civil-military elitism	None	Key factors & actors	Failure of Reform implementation
Panday, P. K.	2017	➢ Urban governance ➢ Lack of autonomy ➢ dependence on the central government	Resistance	Key actors & factors	Failed to balance centralization & decentralization in Bangladesh
Authors	*Year*	*Initial Codes*	*Underlying Metaphors*	*Descriptive Themes*	*Analytical Themes*

Islam, M. S	2018	➢ NPM-driven Reform ➢ Bureaucratic unwillingness ➢ awareness among government, non-government organizations.	Resistance	Key actors	Poor implementation of reforms
Sarker, A. E & Zafarullah, H.M.	2019	➢ Contemporary reforms of the public bureaucracy ➢ Political settlement ➢ Dominant power coalitions	Resistance	Key actors	Poor implementation of reforms

Table 4.1 provides a general review of literatures which have been selected for extensive analysis in this study. It summarizes the free codes that constitute descriptive and then analytical themes such as dominating actors and factors in administrative reforms and their role in the successful implementation of reform measures. It is noteworthy that only resistance as the underlying metaphor is commonly found in all these studies.

4.2 The determinants: Key factors and actors of administrative reform

The administrative system of Bangladesh is thriving to be improved since its emergence as a sovereign state. The analysis of the administrative reform process can be done from different aspects. Exploring the determinants of reform decisions indicates that administrative reform is not solely administrative but instead falls under bureaucratic politics. It stipulates the political contests of negotiations among principal players of the policy process to rush for administrative reforms in government, heightening one's relative control in government (Bowornwathana & Poocharoen, 2010, p. 316). Contextual factors highly influence the struggle over power. At the policy designing level, decolonization, globalization of development, interventionist state idea, and a post-bureaucratic model are dominant factors that push the idea of administrative reform in developing countries like Bangladesh. The essential rationale behind change programs was modernization, which fortified the need for a vast government (Esman, 1988, p. 129). Change endeavors within the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s were guided by this idea of massive government. Modern practices and organizations were made, whereas conventional enactments, structures, and behaviors were reserved for alter. Essential inputs for change came from multilateral and bilateral patrons

(Sarker, 2004, p.366). Public Administration Efficiency Study in 1989, and Public Administration Sector Study in 1993, for instance, sponsored by USAID[4] and UNDP[5], respectively recommended reducing secretariat's operational activities through delegation, problem-solving training, and performance management system in civil service in Bangladesh. Although it is evident that the international donor communities have an ascendant role in designing reform initiatives for civil service, domestic institutional variables, particularly little assistance from native political and bureaucratic guidance for the suggested reform projects (Khan, 1998), affect the effective execution of changes in administration. The infringement of New Public Management (NPM), a comprehensive reform strategy that the World Bank suggested in 1996, is notable. Politicians, the other important agent, are involved in the formulation of administrative reform decisions and carrying out by negotiating with the change target group, the bureaucrats, ensuring political commitment, and providing essential institutional capacity to enforce reform initiatives. Though the domineering role of elected officials should be to set reform agendas to rebuild the present bureaucratic set-up more citizens' responsive, governments' attempts are often criticized for failing to produce significant results because they compromised with bureaucracy for regaining the regime and maintaining the party power. Factors such as national incapacity, clientelist political culture, and oscillation between socialistic and capitalistic approaches of development policies impel politicians to act sluggardly or abort administrative reform policies. The third and most significant actor among the dominant coalition members (Sarker & Zafarullah, 2019) is the bureaucracy. It plays a profound role in prescribing administrative reform programs over and above their implementation. By its historically strong position, bureaucracy allegedly manipulated all reform measures in its favor (Khan, 1980). The Public Administration Sector Study (PASS), funded by the UNDP, was conducted between February 1993 and July 1993. The study made as many as fifty-two recommendations. Some of the subsequent recommendations were: establishing results-oriented management systems through setting up of objectives and measures of outputs and impacts throughout the government; establishing units in each ministry, responsible for developing and applying performance criteria and measures and develop internal performance audit capability; rationalizing government structure by reducing the number of ministries and divisions and appointment of a reform implementation commission (UNDP, 1993). Due to solid bureaucratic resistance,[6] none of the major recommendations of PASS were implemented.

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[4] United States Agency for International Development in short, USAID is a catalytic actor believes in development and puposes to help partner countries to end poverty, elevate democracy and ensure good governance.

[5] United Nations Development Program in short, UNDP is one of the United Nation's wings, works in 170 countries for advocating changes, reducing inequalities and help developing strong policies, partnerships and skills.

[6] Merton (1940) states bureaucracies are considered to be conservative structures oriented toward maintaining the external as well as internal status quo.

Some studies explain why they are resistant along with dominating character to administrative reform in Bangladesh. Firstly, bureaucrats follow ritualistic behavior. Ritualism is characterized by emphasizing the institutionalized means while ignoring or rejecting the overall goals (Merton, 1940). Secondly, they bear imperial heritage that is often referred to as 'historical legacies' describe civil servants as strongly ingrained in British values and traditions (Khan, 1980). Still, they have a paternalistic attitude toward mass people and are inclined to power exercise represent their elite character which discourages adopting administrative reforms. Thirdly, their technical incapacity and parochial administrative culture are the factors that appear to be stumbling blocks in the reform process. When bureaucratic resistance itself is an influential factor of reform failures, there is a weighty reason for bureaucrats as a strong contestant in the reform process include: political settlement [7] helps bureaucrats to maintain their powerful status within the dominating coalition circle. During the most recent competitive clientelist phase (1991–2012), the civil bureaucracy was part of the 'inner circle' of the dominant coalition and the politicians and the military. Therefore, the civil bureaucracy, notwithstanding its factional divisions, thwarted any reforms meant for undermining the privileges of civil bureaucracy (Hassan, 2014).

Another example that illustrates political settlement has strengthened bureaucracy to reject reforms is the radical reform plan of the Administrative Service Reorganization Committee (ASRC) 1972, which was quashed as its spirit was at odds with the interests of the higher civil service and the incorporation of political settlement (Zafarullah, 2007). As it is noted, determinants that influence the fate of administrative reforms do not work in isolation. Instead, they share a complementary relationship. Therefore, the socialization of reform agents needs to get further emphasis in research.

4.3 Interplay between determinants-dominants: Unsuccessful administrative Reform in Bangladesh

From the discussion in *section 4.2,* it can be assumed that the current state of administrative reform measures in Bangladesh is not unidimensional but the consequence of a complicated and challenging interaction process. This study set out to explore how this interface can take place through the administrative reform procedure. Based on support or resistance from influential factors or actors either combinedly or individually, it includes three more sub-sets of interaction and distinctive impact over the reform output. First, factors (determinants) and actors (dominants) can collectively influence the administrative reform process providing full-scale support or resistance yields ideal or real situations at the reform implementation stage (*see figure 4.1*). The following is the interface between factors and actors in a conflicting approach where factors favor administrative reform, but actors do not (*see figure 4.2*). Third, they have an

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[7] The term 'political settlement' signifies the contrived relationship among elites based on mutual understanding of the way power is organized and exercised (Hickey, 2013; Khan, 2010; Parks and Cole, 2010)

incompatible interface phase again, where reform initiatives might fail because of discouraging factors even though the actors encourage the reform strategies (*see figure 4.2*).
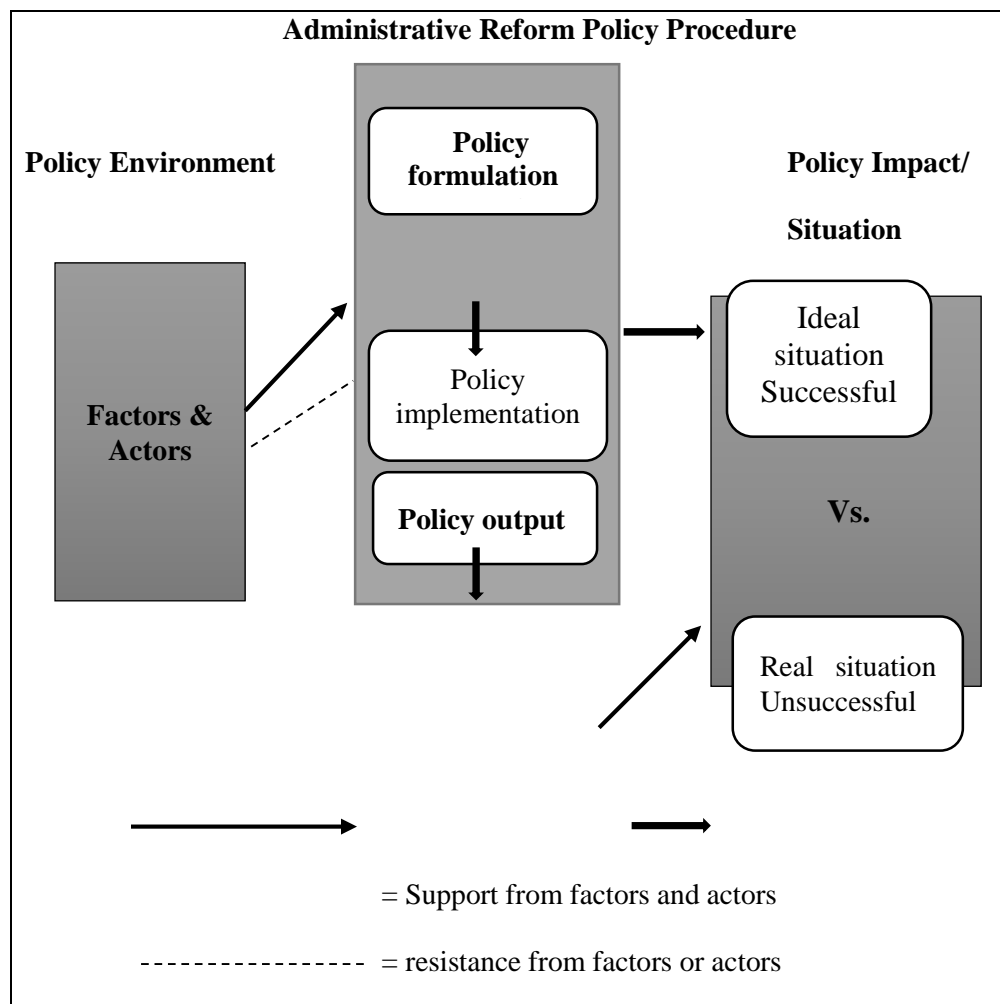

Figure 4. 1 Collective Influence over the Administrative Reform Process

Both factors and actors jointly render either support or resistance to administrative reform policy procedure (Figure 4.1). It may create two policy impacts: Ideal situation, where determinants and dominants encourage changes and reform initiatives; contrarily, the actual situation where they restrain changes within the bureaucracy. In particular, the Administrative and Services Reorganization Committee's (ASRC) remarkable recommendations in 1973 confront challenges from both actors and factors and remained debarred. Jamil (2007) and Khan (2013) state that the prevalence of the colonial culture in the administrative system, patron-client relationship, and dominance of generalist cadre officers over specialists have aggravated the negative administrative culture and politicking. Such domineering cultural traits have also let the executive dominate the legislature (Khan, 2014) and restrain reform measures.

On the other hand, during 1975–1990, three significant reforms, including an open civil service structure with twenty-eight functional cadres; reduction of the size of government and financial delegation were recommended by the Pay and Services Commission (PSC) Report, relatively successful from the perspective of government administration (Sarker & Zafarullah, 2019). It can be assumed that important factors authoritarian political regime, and its politics to convince bureaucracy for reform together with the military government, and influential generalist civil servents derived successful transplantation of modified reform proposals of Martial Law Committee (MLC), the Committee for Administrative Reorganization and Reform (CARR), and National Pay Commission (NPC). The same actors and factors are responsible for both reform policy failure and implementation, but the difference is the then military government (actor) twisted the politicking approach (factor) and had reforms implemented for regime legitimizing.
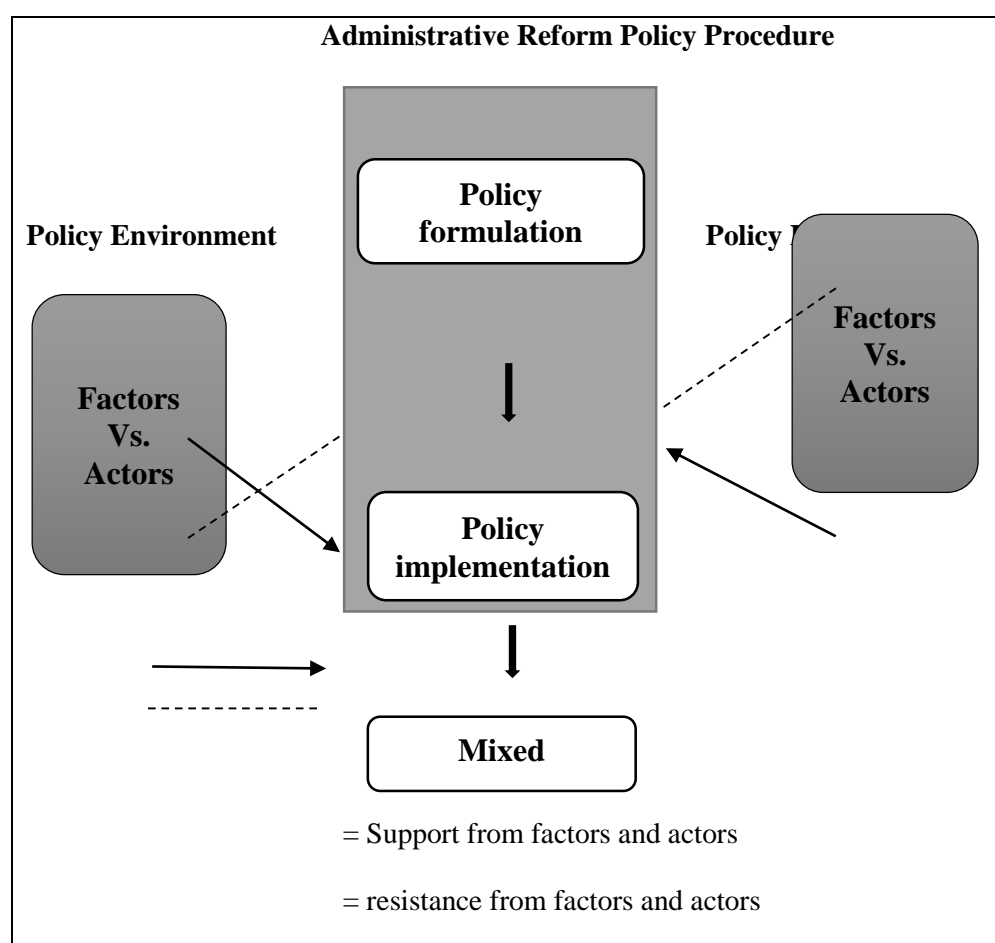

Figure 4. 2 Individual Influence over the Administrative Reform Process

Individual influence over the administrative reform process contradicts collective influence in two aspects. Firstly, it illustrates the incompatible correlation between prevailing determinants (factors) and dominants (actors) in the policy environment (Figure 4.2). Secondly, unlike the collective influence of the policy factors and actors, just one is independently responsible for the success or failure of reforms. For instance, New Public Management (NPM), a market-based reform, was well driven by the donor

community and won at the policy preparation stage; however, it was thwarted at the implementation level by the organizational culture of Bangladesh civil service because of corruption and factionalism the two on-ground realities. It confirms the explanation given by Hughes (2017) mentioned bureaucracy is undoubtedly effective but does not work well in all circumstances and has a few negative pay-offs (pp. 1-3). Decentralization has been a core area of reform efforts in independent Bangladesh. It is extremely sought by national and international policy actors and governance partners though stying back to be implemented in a true sense. In their policy guidelines, the ASRC and CARR demanded effective decentaralization at the local level by focusing on elected authority, decentralized planning and budgeting system, and non-intervention by the central government. However, greater central control is an in-built hindrance affecting local preference in planning and implementing development programs (Ahmed, 1988, p. 826). In this illustration, the Act, 2009 (amended in 2011) empowers every City Corporation (CC) to take up any development plan and its implementation but needs to be endorsed by the government's Local Government Division (LGD). So, in reality, control of the LGD makes CC dependent on the central government's extended part. Although the CC has been entrusted with the power to design plans and budget, there is also the provision that entails the Government's permission. Thus, they are disabled to plan everything to pursue their priorities and needs (Panday, 2017, p. 81).

Taken together, the meta-synthesis analysis suggests that the dynamics of administrative reform in Bangladesh have multiple layers of its structure. Reform implementation failure is just the mere surface while actors and factors interact with each other deep down. However, in between the surface and deep structures, there are two more layers, i. e., formality and informality layers (see figure 4.3).
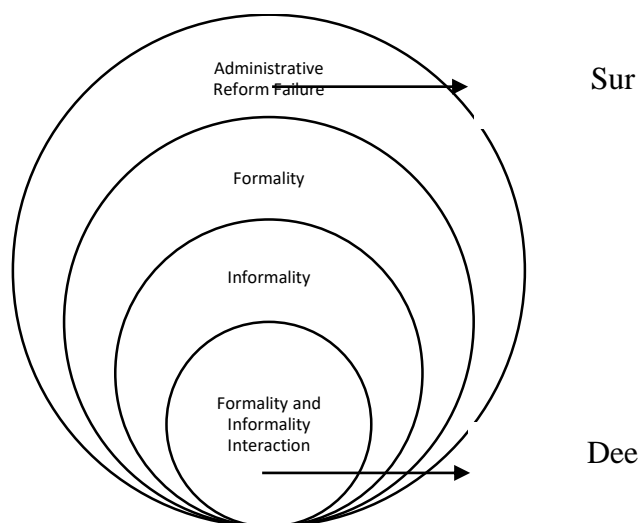

Figure 4. 3 Formality and Informality Interface within the administrative reform structure

The *formality layer* consists of enacted rules and formal actors (state actors) involved in the reform process, in opposition to the *informality* layer, which contains a set of casual, non-standard or non-ceremonial approaches, procedures, and informal (non-state actors). The notable part in the *deep structure* is that the informal interest (private or group interest) and rules violate the formal procedures and supersede the people's interest in Bangladesh. The most vicious aspect is that the formal actors are influenced by informal factors and informal interest in the reform process. It produces a couple of issues: undemocratic, non-participatory, but elite coalition opportunity within the reform process. Secondly, it creates and recreates a lack of political will, social will, and indigenous leadership for administrative change. Thus, the

advocates for administrative reform should change their intransigent mindset focused on the formal institution as the prime attention and aim at the systems, associations, interests, and stimuli that underpin the formal institution (Thomas & Rahman, 2013, p. 74).

5. Conclusion

The reform of bureaucracies has, in general, involved activities seeking to improve public administration structurally, functionally, and behaviorally. It also has to do with initiatives to systematically enhance efficiency and effectiveness, democratic norms, consensus building, and equity in core public service institutions (Denhardt & Denhardt, 2000). It is a political process influenced by predominant actors and factors who struggle for power. Indeed, they have a critical role in the successful implementation of reform strategies. The preceding discussion demonstrates the analysis of these forces and agents' actions in the administrative reform process, particularly from an interaction stance. This study argues that critical actors, including international donors, politicians, and bureaucrats, are dominant participants but controlled by contextual factors such as lack of institutional capacity, ritualism, clientelist politics, and corruption. Politicians are engaged in a coalition with bureaucrats to maintain regime stability at the expense of administrative reforms, whereas bureaucrats assist them in exchanging rents.

Consequently, reform measures are vulnerable and suffer from a lack of effective implementation. This study findings have added value in the realm of administrative reform in two respects; firstly, it found an interaction between reform actors and factor; secondly, this interaction has different implications over reform policy output and its implementation. Collective influence from agents and forces yields unidimensional impact, including either ideal or actual reform policy outcomes. However, their individual or incompatible influence on the reform policy process produces mixed policy output, which embraces successful and unsuccessful changes in bureaucracy. Even though this study is significant from a methodological perspective, solely based on prior studies and limited to explaining dynamics at reform policy implementation, it has implications for future research where reform dynamics can be explored at the policy formulation stage. A further empirical investigation on the socialization of reform agents can unlock how people's representatives and civil servants can be more interested in administrative change. Finally yet importantly, this study has thrown up a question 'can we do research on and develop the sustainable administrative reform model in the future?'

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E-Governance Initiatives: Approaches to Pursue 'Digital Bangladesh'

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Abstract

E-governance is a highly priority agenda item in Bangladesh, since it is seen as the best way to bring ICT to the "Digital Bangladesh." In present world, information and communication technology (ICT) has a huge influence on people's socioeconomic well-being. ICT can play a pivotal role in establishing and improving citizen-centric services in government responsibilities. In Bangladesh, where the digital divide affects a huge section of the population, adapting e-governance is critical for smart administration and making information technology (IT) accessible to regular citizens. This article aims to investigate Bangladesh's e-governance efforts, i.e. how many e-governance initiatives have been installed? what are the constraints in implementing e-government initiatives? what are the next steps in building a successful e-governance system? Secondary sources were used to get answers to these questions. Lack of technical knowledge, expensive mobile internet data plan, inadequate legal framework, inadequate infrastructural facilities, lack of uninterrupted and high-speed internet connection, lack of availability of computer accessories, lack of information technology training facilities, security issues, central database problem according to the results, are the primary barriers to implementing e-governance initiatives in Bangladesh. In the final part of this study, a pattern for implementing an effective and efficient e-governance system for securing digital governance has been proposed.

Keywords: E-governance, Electronic services, Digital Bangladesh.

1. Introduction

E-governance is widely acknowledged as improving the quality of government services. It is transforming the whole government service, which has long been chastised for inefficiency and low productivity, especially in developing nations (Giordano, Lanau, Tommasino, & Topalova, 2015; Rosen, 1993; Kant, Chandra, Sharma, & Agrawal, 2019).

Implementation of e-governance can make public administration faster and more effective, provide better services, and ensuring of transparency and accountability. It also can help the government to go green by effective management of natural resources aiding sustainability to the environment. E-governance brings to consciousness economic growth and promotes the social insertion of disabled and vulnerable sections of society. E-governance can lead to future opportunities, improved health, improved education, information

sharing, skill development, and capacity building for long-term growth. E-services that are quick and easy to use minimize intermediaries and save time and money. Without such online services, our cities and towns would have turned into more difficult places to live and the transport services would have been impossible to manage (Rahman, 2016).

Bangladesh Awami League (BAL) launched Bangladesh Vision 2021 as action plans for Digital Bangladesh before the 2008 general elections, with the primary goal of becoming a middle-income country by 2021.The central government also in turn developed the National ICT Policy 2009 which takes on goals and action items required for realizing Digital Bangladesh. Bangladesh's government should launch technology-oriented e-governance services for ensuring digital governance which covers E-mobile, E-education, E-service, E-commerce, E-learning, E-banking, E-passport, E-voting, etc.

2. **Objectives**

Digital Bangladesh and E-governance are very correlative issues in developing countries. The uses of e-governance make positive changes in the country and a way forward to digital Bangladesh.

The specific objectives of this study are:

a) To investigate different initiatives of e-governance for ensuring Digital Bangladesh.
b) To find out threats and recommendations of e-governance towards digital governance.

3.   **Research Methodology**

This study is descriptive. The study technique has relied on secondary data, collected through literature review, journals, research articles, thesis papers, newspapers, and online news. Internet websites are used to conduct the study.

4. **Definition of E-Governance**

The use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) by the government to offer and facilitate government services, information sharing, communication transactions, and integration of numerous standalone systems and services is known as electronic governance or e-governance. The government's use of technology, particularly internet applications, to improve citizen, business partner, employee, and other government entities' access to and delivery of government services It's a method for governments to employ new technology to give people easier access to government information and services, enhance service quality, and give people more opportunity to engage in our democratic institutions and processes (Osborne and Gaebler, 1992).

The government agencies of information technologies (such as Wide Area Networks, the Internet, and mobile computing) have the proficiency to transform relations with citizens, businesses, and other arms of government. Through access to information, these technologies can achieve a range of goals, including better delivery of government services to citizens, growing relationships with business and industry, and citizen empowerment. The outcome benefits can be to minimize corruption, increased transparency, greater convenience, revenue growth, and/or cost reductions (The World Bank, 2012).

In terms of reliable access to information within government, between government, national, state, municipal, and local level governments, citizens, and businesses, e-governance improves transparency, accountability, efficiency, effectiveness, and inclusiveness in the governing process, and empowers businesses through access and use of information (Dwivedi and Bharti: 2005).

Therefore, the term e-governance is defined as the efficient and effective use of modern ICT technology to establish good governance for any country. From the management and technological perception, e-governance can also be defined as Electronic State Management System based on information and communication technologies (ICT), including internet technology (Kabir, 2007).

4.1 What are the Goals of E-Governance?

E-governance improves transparency, accountability, efficiency, effectiveness, and inclusiveness in government by providing reliable access to information at all levels of government, including national, state, municipal, and local governments, citizens, and businesses. It also empowers businesses through information access and use (Dwivedi and Bharti: 2005).

The basic goal of E-Governance, also known as electronic governance, is to provide citizens with clear, equitable, and accountable service delivery. The goal of e-governance is to facilitate and improve the standard of government while also ensuring people's participation in the governing process (A. Biswas, 2020).

In the following ways, e-governance ensure Digital governance

	Goals
Goals of E-governance	To promote efficiency and effectiveness of government tasks through electronic devices.
	Smoother and faster online delivery of government services like distributing ID Cards, Citizenship Certificates, Issuing clearances to documents (Land, Tax).
	Pro-active part and interaction of government representatives, Bureaucrats and Citizens.
	To Bolster ties and act as bridge between government representatives and citizens.
	To Creates a faith and communication environment between government and citizens.
	No Geo-political restrictions and limitations.
	Provide better information and service delivery.
	Citizen's easy penetration to government public information.
	Enhance government transparency and accountability to reduce corruption.
	To encourage democratic practices through public participation and consultation.
	To practices experiences and innovation conception.

Source: Developed by the author based on data collected from different websites.

4.2 Experiences and Innovation of E-Governance for Ensuring Digital Bangladesh

Though e-governance in Bangladesh is in its initial stages there are also some successful e-governance initiatives from the government that we were able to collect information about.

4.3 E-Banking and M-Banking

Bangladesh Bank has been allowed to make online money transactions, payment of utility bills through the internet, transfer of funds (account to account), payments for trading goods and services, and facilitate online credit card payments in local currency. On the other hand, mobile banking refers to a system that enables bank customers to access accounts and general information on bank products and services through mobile devices. Since its launch in 2011, the mobile banking sector has been experiencing exponential growth. Some leading public and private banks introduced a mobile banking system so that customers can transaction through their mobile phones in an easy, convenient and reliable way.

4.4 E- Learning and E-Booking

Through the use of technology, e-learning is too capable for people to learn anytime and anywhere. E-Learning covers training, the provider of information just-in-time, and guidance from specialists. Computer-based learning, web-based learning, virtual classrooms, and digital collaboration are the result of e-learning. The e-Learning System is capable of monitoring courses and customizing instructions to match the needs of students. E-learning is a type of modern education system where the medium of instruction in computer technology. It involves designed educational experiences that make use of a variety of technologies, mostly the internet, to reach out to distant learners (Tiwari. M.S.K, Khamari.M. J, Singh. A, 2013).

A rich e-Book platform (www.ebook.gov.bd) has been created to make all textbooks and interactive books, that is, books containing videos, animation, and pictures, available online. Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurated the latest editions of the e-Books on April 24, 2011.

4.5 E-Ticketing

Bangladesh Railway has introduced an e-ticketing system since May 29, 2012. Passengers can now easily purchase e-tickets by following 3 things:

➢ Using transaction cards like Credit, Debit, Visa, Master, Dutch Bangla Bank Limited (DBBL), Nexus, or any mobile banking account such as Rocket, bKash, or through registration at Bangladesh Railway website.

➢ A photocopy of the mail was sent to the passenger by the railway.

➢ A photocopy of a passenger's national identity card.

4.6 **E-Commerce**

In Bangladesh, the e-commerce market has gained popularity. E-commerce refers to the purchasing and selling of products and services through the internet. Since 2015 the number of the e-commerce-based business is increasing. Bangladesh's e-Commerce has improved, particularly during the lockdown imposed to limit the spread of the coronavirus, when individuals remaining at home bought practically all sorts of things through online shopping platforms. Chaldal.com, Shohoz.com, food Panda, Ghorebazar.com, Bdticket.com, Sheba. com, bdshops.com, daraz.com, pathao, bikroy.com, ajkerdeal.com, and bagdoom.com are some of the most famous online shopping and e-Commerce platforms in Bangladesh (Financial Herald, 2020).

4.7 **E-Mobile**

Payment of utility bills and weather forecast getting through mobile phone. The Grameen phone and other mobile operators are giving this facility for paying water, gas, and electricity bill. Submission of utility bills is an altercation and time consuming for citizens that wastes important working hours. But bill pay is at the tip of your fingers now.

The specific service charge will be applicable for paying bills of selected utility bill payment billers by the bKash app, Nagad,

E-commerce market size
Figure in billion taka

2016: 5.6
2017: 86.32
2018: 105.04
2019: 131.84
2020: 166.16

FIGURE: E-COMMERCE MARKET SIZE
SOURCE: BANGLADESH COMPETITION COMMISSION

Rocket and Nexus Pay, iPay, GPAY, RobiCash, Upay and Online Banking. So those are the medium of paying utility bills in Bangladesh. Utility bill payment method like the use of mobile phone, mobile app/wallet, or online banking organization makes living easier.
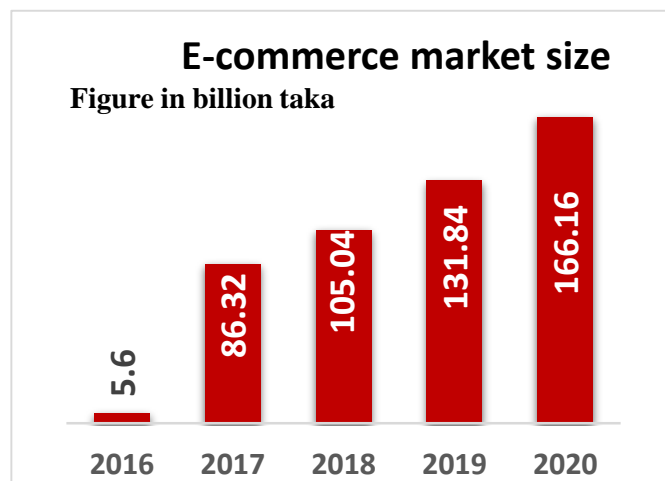
4.8 **E-Education**

Secondary School Certificate (SSC), Higher Secondary School Certificate (HSC), Higher Education Certificate, and Job result in Bangladesh are a remarkable initiative in this section. Now anyone can get his/her SSC/HSC/JOB result through Short Message Service (SMS). Bangladesh government take successful e-education initiative for ensuring digital Bangladesh.

4.9 E- Passport

With the introduction of electronic passports, often known as e-passports, Bangladesh has taken another crucial step forward in its digital transformation. At a ceremony at the capital's Bangabandhu International Conference Centre on January 22, 2020, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina officially inaugurated the distribution of e-passports. Bangladesh is the first country in South Asia to use the e-passport, and the 119th in the world. By the end of 2020, regional offices will begin issuing e-passports. The services will be phased in. Passports that can be read by a machine will continue to be valid.

4.10 E-Voting

Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) is a new path of technology home and abroad. It is a device by which voters can cast their votes easily. The modern system of vote casting, counting, and result publishing is very easy. It's also ensuring Digital governance. For the first time, Bangladesh uses EVMs for the 11th national election. In this election six seats selected through a lottery. These are Dhaka-13, Dhaka-06, Chattogram-9, Rangpur-3, Khulna-2, and Satkhira-2. The six seats constructed over 2.1 million voters. The results were announced from these six seats within hours after the voting ends. There are some benefits of the product Electronic Voting Machine (EVM)-

- ➢ Vote counting & result publishing is almost instantaneous & 100% accurate
- ➢ Save time and cost-effective
- ➢ Reusable

4.11 Submarine Cable

On 1st December 2020, the government of Bangladesh approves a project to install a third submarine cable connection, SEA-ME-WE-6, at a cost of taka 693.16 crores. It was approved by the meeting Executive Committee of the National Economic Council. The SEA-ME-WE-6 submarine cable will be monitoring from Singapore to France. 3rd submarine cable will be spreading to the Indian Ocean, the Arabian Sea, and the Red Sea. The core landing stations will have in Singapore, India, Djibouti, Egypt, and France. The Bangladesh branch of the cable landing station will in Cox's Bazar through the Bay of Bengal. Because of the 3rd submarine cable connection, Bangladesh would receive a high bandwidth of almost six terabits per second to enlarge internet and telecommunication services.

4.12 E-Service

Bangladesh's e-Government services can be categorized into Government-to-Government (G2G) for inter-government operations and Government-to-Citizen (G2C) and Government-to-Business (G2B) for citizens and companies to examine services offered by a government organization. Bangladesh's national portal offers 587 e-services and 71 mobile services. There are 23 categories for e-services and 5 for the categories of mobile services. The project team assessed 587 e-services as an ordinary citizen user and identified whether the services are accessible or not. Among 587 e-Services, 467 e-Services are on service.

Pruning identical services, there are 365 e-Services available. Multiple organization uses identical services which we call shared services such as e-GP, e-File Management (e-filing system, Nothi), Personnel Data Sheet, Bangladesh Education Boards, PMIS, e-Form, and iVAS. 42 services are simply providing information or links to PDF and radio channels. 307 e-Services are for citizen/business services and 50 e-Services are for government administration. 8 e-services are shared by multiple organizations.

5. Threats of E-Governance for Implementing Digital Bangladesh

- **Lack of knowledge in ICT**

    The less infiltration of ICT in Bangladesh serves as a challenge to the implementation of e-governance in the country. Most of the people in Bangladesh comprehend the use of computers and the internet as very complex and strive to avoid them. It is noticeable that educated people also face the same issue. Among them, the willingness of ICT is not high. The majority of Bangladeshi citizens take computers and the internet as tools that should be dreaded like a plague.

- **Expensive Mobile Internet Data Plan**

    Costly internet connection and monthly line rate is the heavier matter in Bangladesh. At present, the cost of the internet is too high for customers. For getting a broadband internet connection and so do monthly line rate users have to pay a huge amount of money.

    At the same time, there are different kinds of internet package and it is very difficult to pick out an internet package within so many internet packages such as Social package, smart package, daily facebook package, day package, night package, mega plan, mid plan, and heavy package and so on. As a result, users face a profound dilemma of which package is suitable for him/her (Rahman, 2016).

- **Inadequate Legal Framework**

    The existence of various government's enactment and policies but those are not enough to promote e-governance in Bangladesh. As a result, implementation has remained a far cry. Some of the ICT services from the government are not properly regulated. Therefore, the misuse exercise of ICT in the day-to-day running of affairs in the public and private sector.

- **Inadequate Infrastructural Facilities**

    Without adequate infrastructure, ICT cannot work perfectly. For wider coverage, the government should be the installation of broadband and electricity supply. Infrastructure is essential to activate the ICT facilities for purpose of ensuring e-governance. But, the services of the internet and telecommunication are very expensive. As a result, inadequate infrastructure facilities are the stumbling block of ensuring e-governance.

- **Interrupted and Low-Speed Internet Connection**

    The uninterrupted connection is a major problem in Bangladesh. Fiber optical cable SEA-ME-WE-4 and SEA-ME-WE-5 is connected to information with superhighway. Inside the country, our

connection of fiber optic cable is hanging in electric pillar and foot over bridge. Sometimes city corporation workers cut down those hanging cable above the roads and highway. As a result, the user of the internet loses their internet connection for a long time. Its infraction of our daily works.

- **Unavailability of Computer Accessories**

It is a very common scenario is that all government high-level offices provide computers. It's a matter of great sorrow that, large numbers of offices display it as a status symbol. A large number of government officers don't know how to use a computer. Because of their less interest to adopt new technology. That's why most of the computers shown government officers for their status symbol.

- **Lack of Sustainability of IT System**

Almost all projects of e-governance are funded through external sources, primarily foreign funds. It brings about a very vulnerable situation concerning to the sustainability of these projects. So, the external fund dries up. As a result, there is a lot of hardware sitting in government offices unused as memories of a bygone project (Hoque.S.M, Mahiuddin.M and Alam.S. S, 2011).

- **Absence of Political Will on the Part of the Leadership**

In the concept of e-governance in Bangladesh particularly in the 1990s, the previous government has not shown strong political will and determination to ensure that the government succeeds in her ICT goal. For poor development of ICT systems in the country, the policy action has endured from negligence on the part of the government.

- **Insufficient of Information Technology Training Facilities**

Lack of information technology training facilities is one of the major problems in Bangladesh. Only 30% of officers are trained up while the number of staff is a little higher at the ministry level. At the department/corporation level 25% of officers are trained while trained staffs are very poor (Chowdhury and Sattar, 2012).

- **Shortage of Electricity**

Electricity is the key factor for ensuring e-governance and also digital Bangladesh. At present, our national grid's electricity installed capacity is 21419 MW and also coverage 95%. Though the production of electricity is increasing dramatically still, now citizens are facing load shedding in important working time in a day.

- **Corruption**

The activities of e-governance in the country are not covered by the menace of corruption. In the public sector, most e-governance projects and programs have been stopped in the course of implementation due to pervasive corruption. As a result, the government should confirm that e-governance has the magic wand to curtail corruption to the barest minimum.

Security Issues:

All kinds of the modern organization of ICT assets require security where the government is no exception. Threats and attacks come in different forms from different sources to the ICT assets. As a result, e-governance can be attacks different sources of internal or external to the government. With the sharp division of the government employees, the possibility of internal or external attacks in Bangladesh (Alam.J.M, 2012).

Central Database Problem:

For citizen's access to the central database through the internet, the Bangladesh government does not take any initiatives. As a result, Bangladeshi citizens do not get available information in government offices to use any emergency. Therefore, government officers face many problems to identify any person for an emergency case (Alam.J.M, 2012).

6. Recommendation for Implementing an Effective E-Governance System

The way forwards implementing an effective -governance system: To make effective e-governance we need to consider the following critical factors.

- **Provide Website, E-mail and Phone-Based Government Services**

Around the world, different countries provide services through websites, e-mail, and telephones. The government of Bangladesh should have provided officials website. So, citizens can get their necessary information through the website. For instance, in a pandemic situation, Jahangirnagar University provides an institutional email ID for students. Through this email ID, the student will get different opportunities including research, scholarship, publishing research papers, and funding, etc.

- **Technical Infrastructures should be Flexible**

To survive in this new era, the government must be able to respond quickly to challenges at all levels. Regular technological innovation is needed to provide public services based on meet priorities. To do this, government agencies need to have enough technological infrastructure and the rapid adoption of new technology.

- **Political Commitment**

All the political parties of Bangladesh must be committed to implementing their action plans. The government of Bangladesh must take proactive initiatives to reach technology to rural citizens. So that the penetration of information might become very easier to the local level's citizens.

- **E-Democracy**

E-democracy is known as digital democracy or Internet democracy. It is used for information and communication technology for political and governance processes. The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) should take initiative for video conferencing at the local administration level. So that the prime minister

can talk to officials at local levels through it. As a result, the mass people must have the opportunity to share problems and views with the government officials electronically.

- **Paperless Office**

Most of the offices in the public and private sectors in Bangladesh following the traditional administration system. All the offices in the public and private sectors should be paperless. The offices should be providing services through the network and the officers should use a digital signature.

- **Private Sector**

To make Digital Bangladesh the private sector also a momentous factor. In areas like train ticketing, passports, and tracking Hajis (pilgrims), the government should strengthen the private sector to reduce corruption and citizen harassment. The ICT sector has to be proper utilized for efficiency in domestic organizations, particularly the government, which will ultimately provide better services for citizens. Private companies and NGOs can take effective initiatives to enhance awareness and utilization of ICT at the grass-roots level. They can make arrangements for the program so that IT specialists and educators visit rural schools and help students get familiar with computers and technology.

- **Health Sector**

E-governance in the health sector can help bring medical expertise to Upazila and District headquarters. For example, telemedicine may link healthcare centers in remote locations, through the internet and mobile phone with super-specialty hospitals in major towns/cities. For medical consultations and treatment, it can bring connectivity between remote end patients with specialist doctors. In a pandemic situation, the Govt. should implement Video conference systems for emergency patients with doctors in major clinics. The Govt. also should take initiative for the remotest corner of the country to recruit doctors with TNT line. So that, they can take services through massage or call.

- **Education Sector**

Digital Bangladesh discerns that by 2021 all kinds of educational institutions (universities, colleges, high schools, primary schools, and madrasah) will have computerized connectivity. The intention of ICT is to be used as teaching-learning aids. For example, in the case of the corona situation, all the educational institutions have arranged online classes for the students to keep pace in the field of education. This is the biggest achievement of e-governance. After five years, all students should have regular access to computers with internet facilities. The objective point of government is to promote the quality of the education system. By 2021 the entire education sector should be digitized with the fourth revolution (internet and computer) wireless technology.

7. Conclusion

E-governance and Digital Bangladesh are a dynamic and contemporary issue in the process of development administration of Bangladesh. It is working as a helping hand in delivering services

to different sectors and ultimate focus on ensuring Digital Bangladesh. As a developing country like Bangladesh, it is very essential to apply e-governance for better delivery of services. It was viewed that empowerment of people, transparency and accountability, human resource development, poverty alleviation, and economic growth would be ensured as people would receive doorsteps public services and have access to all kinds of public information if e-governance is established. Concerning the public services related to education services, health service, utility bill payment of necessary service, tax payment, land records, agricultural issues, trade license, law, and order service are now spontaneously enjoyed from the house through the internet.

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Local Governance in Bangladesh: Contemporary Issues and Major Challenges

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Abstract

Local Government plays an important role in the delivery of government services at the grassroots level. The central government cannot reach the grassroots level directly and that's why set up local bodies or institutions for providing the maximum number of basic public services to the beneficiaries of the grassroots level. Using a broad descriptive and qualitative approach this paper evaluates the local government system, contemporary issues and major challenges of the local government in Bangladesh based on the content analysis and the review of secondary sources of information. The findings of the study reveal to explore various contemporary issues of governance at the local level such as structural issues of local bodies, the functional and financial pattern, local election, the role of committees, the participation and the representation, the issue of SDGs, digital services at local level etc. Besides, frequent changes of the local government structure, lack of effective participation and proper coordination, weak committee system, absence of a comprehensive local government policy and an independent local government commission etc have been identified as major challenges to the effective functioning of local bodies. Finally, the study aims to recommends the ways to overcome challenges for an effective functioning of the local government which will enhance governance and sustainable development at local level.

Keywords: Local Government, Contemporary Issues, Challenges, Bangladesh

1.   Introduction

Local governance is the rule of elected representatives in a particular area such as rural or urban area, which is an extended part of the central government. Bangladesh is a democratic republic with national and local territories. The constitution mandates the provision for local government in several articles and the main legislature texts includes the Acts covering Zila Parishads (2000), Upazila Parishads (1999, revised 2009), Union Parishads (2009), Municipalities (2009), City Corporations (2009) and Hill District Councils (1989). The local government division within the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives is responsible for local government, with the exceptions the hill district councils, which are under the Ministry of Hill Tract Affairs. There are two tiered urban local government system comprises city corporations and municipalities in Bangladesh. And a three tiered rural local government system consisting of Zila (District) Parishads, Upazila (Sub-District) Parishads and Union

Parishads. There are also three Hill District Parishads for Chittagong hill tract areas. All local governments have the power to levy taxes and rates, and the range of responsibilities for each type of authority varies widely from public health and hospitals, education and social welfare for city corporations and municipalities to development projects, libraries and roads for public upazilas and union parishad (clgf SG blog, 2017-18). Multidimensional changes and innovations in the arena of governance are gaining stern attention throughout the world. Nowadays local governance, in particular, has become a vital issue of governing process of the periphery in many developing countries like Bangladesh. The concept local government has been identified as a key strategic sector for improving governance and development in Bangladesh. Various changes have occurred in structure, composition, functions, election, financial pattern, participation and representation of local government institutions due to changes in rules in different regimes. In recent years there has been increasing awareness both nationally and internationally about the importance of local government in delivering public services for its comparative advantage with respect to transparency, accountability increased participation of the community people (Hussain, Ahsan, & Rahman, 2015). Effective local government system is essential for establishing good governance, accelerating social, political and economic development, strengthening democracy, solving local social problems and ensuring grassroots participation. Although local government is playing an important role in the ongoing governance system of the country, over time various contemporary issues and challenges have been emerged in local governance which are hindering its governance process. However, it is necessary to identify and combat these issues and challenges of local government in the context of Bangladesh in order to advancing local development as well as national prosperity. Strong local government system helps to establish democracy at the grassroots and pave the way for good governance through the practice of transparency, accountability and effective participation in all activities of local government at local level. The study mainly focuses on contemporary issues and major challenges of governance at local level in the context of Bangladesh. This research work will be useful in solving various issues and challenges arising in the local government system.

2. Objectives

The main objective is to overview of the local government system in order to identify various contemporary issues and major challenges which create impediments in the way of effective functioning of local government institutions in Bangladesh.

The specific objectives are given below-

(a) To identify contemporary issues of Local Government in Bangladesh.
(b) To investigate major challenges.
(c) To recommend the ways to overcome issues and challenges for enhancing governance at local level.

3. **Methodology of the Study**

   This study has been conducted based on qualitative and a broad descriptive approach. It is based on content analysis of data. Sources of information derived from the review of secondary sources. The secondary data have been collected from the various books, articles and recent discussions on governance at local level, local government institutions etc. Different websites, research reports, the Constitution of Bangladesh, present Acts/Ordinances of local government are also used as a source of information.

4.   Literature Review

   Governance is the process by which an organization or institution is governed with the aim of providing services to the citizens. In the context of Local Government, governance involves the ways in which the local institutions provide government services to the local citizens or community at grassroots level. Local governance comprises a set of institutions, mechanisms and processes, through which citizens and their community can articulate their interests and needs, mediate their differences and exercise their rights and responsibilities at the local level. There are various indicators of good local governance which include citizen participation, partnerships among key actors at the local level, capacity of local actors in all sphere, multiple flows of information, institutions of accountability, and a pro-poor orientation (UNDP, 2004)**.** In Bangladesh the age-old local government system has experienced. Governance at local level always existed in Bengal. From the oldest Hindu Religious writing-The Rig Veda in 1200 BC, it has found some forms of village self-government. In the medieval period it was called Panchayet, when the ruler called sher shaha had divided Bengal in the form of medieval local government .Therefore, the current system of local government owes its origin to British colonialism in the subcontinent. The Chawkidari Panchayet Act of 1810 was the initial step towards this direction and was designed to maintain peace in the village areas. Thus, the local Self Government Act 1885, the Village Self Government Act 1919, as the Basic Democracy Order 1959 laid down the foundation of the system of local government in Bangladesh. After Bangladesh was formed the new government of Sheikh Mujib abolished the old system by an Executive Order, 1972 (Kamal & Uddin, 2014). The Constitution of Bangladesh gives the legal basis of the local government institutions. There are few provisions relating to local government in Bangladesh. Articles 9 and 11 of the constitution prescribe for promoting local government, while Articles 59 and 60 of the same guarantee for the establishment of local government (Talukdar, 2009). According to **Article-59, '**Local Government in every administrative unit of the Republic shall be entrusted to bodies, composed of person selected in accordance with law and perform functions prescribed by Act of Parliament, which may include relating to- (a) Administration and the work of public officers; (b) the maintenance of public order;(c) the preparation and implementation of plans relating to public services and economic development.' According to **Article-60, '**For the purpose of giving full effect to the provisions of article 59 Parliament shall, by law,

confer powers on the local government bodies referred to in that article, including power to impose taxes for local purposes ,to prepare their budgets and to maintain funds.'

Local government system in Bangladesh can be categorized distinctly for rural areas and urban areas. There are three tiers of Local Government in rural areas as Zilla Parishad, Upazila Parishad and Union Parishad and two tires in urban areas as City Corporation and Paurashava. Local government is presently operated by various laws in Bangladesh. These include Zilla Parishad Act, 2000, Upazila Parishad Act, 1998, Local Government (Union Parishad) Act, 2009, Local Government (City Corporation) Act, 2009 and Local Government (Paurashava) Act, 2009 for conducting Zilla Parishad, Upazila Parishad, Union Parishad, City Corporation, and Paurashava respectively (Rahman & Hasan, 2014).The President order no 7, 1972, is the first law for independent Bangladesh. Basic democracy system was abolished under this order. Divisional development board was created instead divisional council. The name of union council was changed to union panchayet, thana council to thana development committee and district council to district board or zila board .The present acts / ordinances provide legal basis for local government. Such as - The Local Government (Union Parishad) Act 2009 made lots of positive changes. It recognized the importance of community participation, transparency and accountability to the traditional functions of union parishads, which are vital institutions for local governance and development .The focused issues are-the ward committee, the ward meetings, open budget system, participatory planning etc. The Upazila Parishad (Reintroduction of the Repealed Act and Amendment) Act, 2009 reintroduced Upazila Parishad Act with some amendments .It restored power of MPs and making the chairman virtually powerless. Under the Zila Parishad Act 2000, Zila Parishad consisted of a chairman, 15 members and five women members for reserved seats who will be elected by the electoral college .The Local Government (City Corporation) Act, 2009, No. 60 defines the boundaries of wards, the integrity of the area and, as far as possible, all the responsibilities of the City Corporation, including the population layout, notification policy in the Government Gazette. According to the Local government (Pourashova) Act, 2009, pourashavas are being run. Hill District Local Government Parishad Act 1989.There are three separate acts created for the three hill district local government parishad namely –Rangamati, Khagrachhari and Bandarban in 1989.According to these three Acts the term of the three hill district local government parishad is three years after their constitution and each parishad has 21 functions. These are explained in the book 'Local Government in Bangladesh' by Kamal Siddiqui and Jamshed Ahmed. They added the change in local government is restricted to frequent changes in the format such as number of tiers, tenure of office, manner of election, composition of local bodies etc and not its content meant to ensure greater participatory local governance. They also examined local government system characterized by-Domination by and dependence on the national government mainly for financial support; Increasing women representation in local government but still gender equality is far from achieved ; A

mismatch between formal local government functions, on the other hand, and the means of carrying out the same, on the other; The entire election system has been brutalized (Siddiqui & Ahmed, 2016). Pranab Kumar Panday emphasized on participation and women representation in local government in his writing that recognizing the necessity of having more women active in political life. In both national and local government elections, the government has introduced gender quotas. This initiative has potentially improved the political representation of women. In reality, women usually finding themselves in a situation which is not women-friendly (Panday, 2019).

Despite several governmental and nongovernmental initiatives, legal provisions, women are still left behind in almost every sector. In this regard, involvement in the decision-making process is a far cry from the existing status. Specifically, participation and empowerment of women in the political arena seems to be in no one's interest except some advocates. The elected women member's participation in local government bodies remains generally insufficient and insignificant, as they are not given any specific duties (Ullah, 2018). Election is a general process of governance in both national and local level. The local government's election is not only a mechanism to elect representatives but a means of people's empowerment. The citizens of Bangladesh are more aware and are participating more fully in electoral process (Uddin, 2019). Nurul Islam in his writing focused on the effectiveness of standing committees of local government in Bangladesh. He explained standing committees are formed only. In practice, most of the cases the committees are not performed function effectively. Most of the members neither aware about the standing committees nor attend in the committee's meetings. The main challenges are inadequate manpower, lack of terms of reference, limited scope of training (Islam N., 2016). Local government is an important part of the whole governance process of any country. Local government institutions at different levels perform many functions like the central government such as agriculture, health, education, and infrastructure development, etc. within their legal jurisdictions. The scale and scope of these activities are however, limited (Hussain, Ahsan, & Rahman, 2015). Local government has a lots of problems inside the local bodies. Proper steps such as tier setting, size of constituency, women participation, local government commission, self-budgetary allocation, conducting training, and so on should be embodied to make a strong and effective local self-government system in the context of Bangladesh. Therefore, in order to solve the problems fruitfully the local bodies should not be used as the tools of the central government for achieving their political purposes (Sharmin, Haque, & Islam, 2012). Reviewing the above literature, it seems that there is a lots of research works on the Local Governance in Bangladesh. But it is a considerable shortage of elaborate and updated work on various contemporary issues and major challenges of the local government in Bangladesh. This study attempts to an overview of local government system to explore various recent issues and investigate challenges and to

make contributory recommendations. So hopefully this research will contribute in the study of local government in Bangladesh, and filling the prior gap as well as useful in future research.

5.   Local government structure in Bangladesh

Bangladesh is a country with two layer of government National and Local. The structure of local government has changed many times from colonial period to the present day. Laws and Ordinances have been made to form local bodies at village, Upazila, District and Divisional level from time to time. The Local Government Division (LGD) within Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives (MLGRD&C) is responsible for administration of Local Government in Bangladesh. Alongside Ministry of Hill Tract Affairs administers the Three Hill District Parishads.
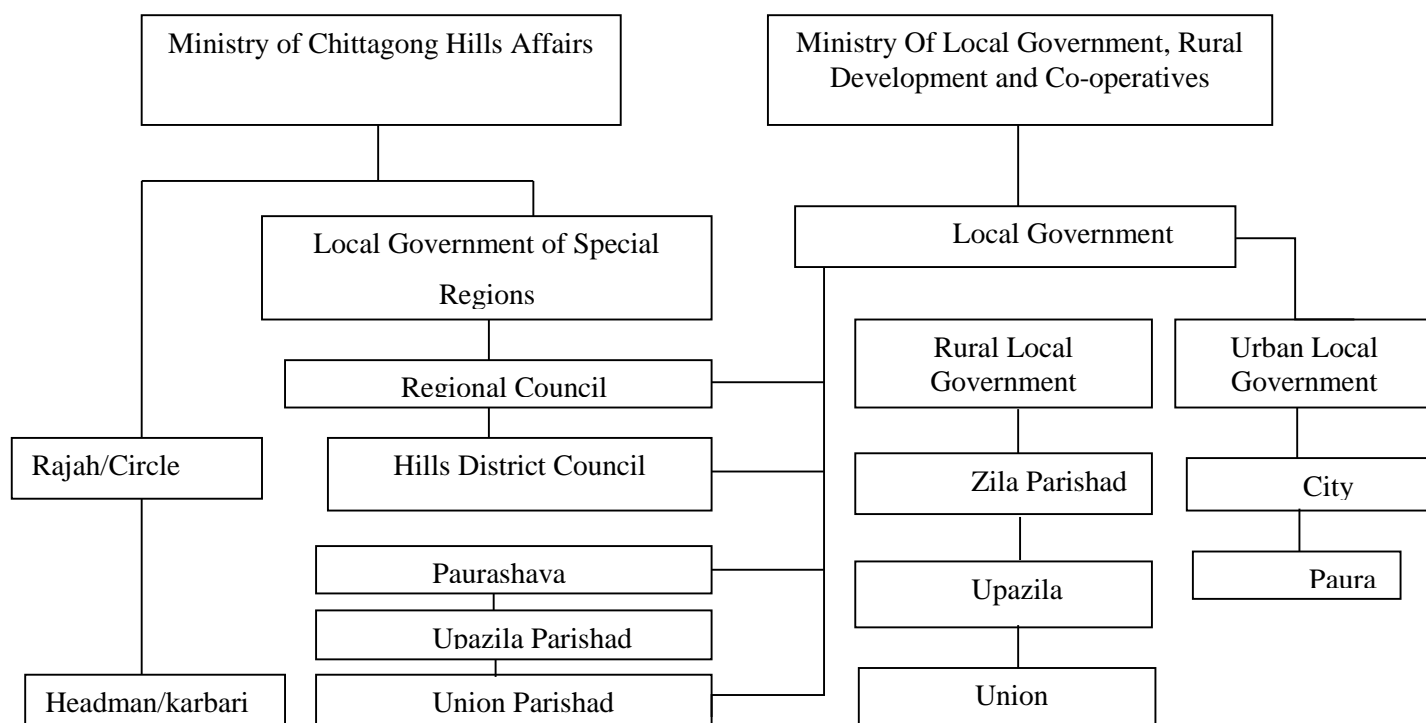
Figure: -Local government system in Bangladesh Source: (Barkat, et al., 2015)

The present structure of local government in Bangladesh is organized into three categories- Rural, Urban and Local Government of Special Regions. Three tiered Rural Local Government system consisting of Union parishads, Upazila parishads and Zila (District) parishads and Hill District Parishads of Chittagong Hill Tracts. Urban Local government Institutions made up of City Corporations and Pourashavas. Local government structure appears more complicated in the three hill districts of Chittagong hill tracts. In this regards, local government is functioning under the circle chief along with the general system (Barkat, et al., 2015). The present structure of local government in Bangladesh is shown in following table-

6. Findings of the Study

Based on the above literature review, this section elicits critical examination of   contemporary issues and major challenges of local government in Bangladesh. Additionally, some contributory recommendations are suggested here.

6.1 Contemporary Issues: Structural issues

At present, the structure of local government institutions in Bangladesh are organized into three broad categories - Rural, Urban and local government for special area. In rural local government, there are three tiers - Union, Upazila and Zila and in urban level, there are 2 tires such as - City Corporation and Pourashava. And finally the special area of local government is hill districts local government council. All these tiers are not same in all time. According to the different Acts and Ordinances of local government in Bangladesh, the structure of local government has been changed in different regimes in different times. The rulers of different regimes tried to intervene in the structure to impose political control over the local government bodies. It is evident that from 1972 to 2009, within 37 years, rural local government structure was reorganized nine times (Islam, 2019). Such unstable local government structure has created a number of anomalies in local level.

6.2 Functional issues

Local government institutions have to perform multiple responsibilities according to existing Acts and Ordinances of local government. The legal basis of local government made local bodies responsible for providing maximum government services at the local level as they are the closest institution to local people. In practice, they perform only a very limited number of functions due to financial, administrative ,personnel and other incapability. This picture is the same at all levels-union, Upazila, zila, pourashava or City Corporation. There are separate functional jurisdictions for each level of local government. For example- According to the present Local Government Acts, there are about 110 tasks assigned to union parishad. In practice, they perform only a limited number of functions such as- construction and development, revenue

collection, registration and issuance of certificates etc. Like union Parishad, Upazila and Zila Parishad have to perform various functions that are assigned to it. But they do not perform all the functions except some development tasks under ADP. Legal provision of Municipality and City Corporation prescribed various functions for town and city governance. Ultimately they perform the same activities on a larger scale. Complaints regarding lack of coordination with other organizations in the issue of functional jurisdiction of city corporations in big cities are very common. Three Hill District Councils have been selected from the beginning. There has been no full autonomy for a long time to perform functions independently. As a result, this institution could not gain the trust of the hill people. Due to adequate manpower, financial crisis and managerial incapability, local government bodies cannot perform their responsibilities effectively.

6.3 Election system

Though local election is the general process held after every five year interval to elect local representatives at different tiers. The recent issues regarding electoral process are:

-introduction of party based election at local level

-indirect election at zila parishad

The introduction of party based election at local level in Bangladesh took place on October 12, 2015 with the decision of the Cabinet. While the government claims that the local government elections will be more participatory by introduction of party-based elections, there are two schools of thoughts opined on this issue, one school argued, As the Union Parishad elections were held on a non-partisan basis in the past, many neutral and locally popular people had opportunities to be elected. This time, however, such people did not come forward in many cases. According to the liberal school of thought, it has opened up an opportunity for the local people to be mindful in selecting their local leaders as well as engaging in the development process at grassroots level. The central political party in power can implement their agenda at the local level (Islam M. T., 2017)**.** Another issue is indirect election system for zila parishad. Election Amendment Act 2016 states that the Zila Parishad will have 21 members. There will be 1 chairman, 15 members and 5 reserved women members. They will be elected by the elected representatives of city corporations, municipalities, upazilas and union parishads. The College of Electoral will consist of public representatives at all levels. They will elect the chairman and members of the district council. Zila parishad election was held in 2016 for the first time. The election of the chairman of the country's district council has been similar to the election of the world-leading American president. The chairman and members of the district council have been elected through electoral system. They were elected not on the basis of people's suffrage but by the votes of the elected representatives of four local government bodies.

6.4 Participation

Participation is one of the vital issues of governance at local level. In the context of Bangladesh local government bodies have several direct and indirect avenues of participation to make accountable and transparent local government bodies to the communities. Under direct avenues, citizens and community are directly engaged. Under indirect avenues, citizens and community elect others to represent them. The direct avenues include – setting up participatory budgeting, community based meeting, committee system, improving access to information. Alongside, Local election is the key indirect mechanism of participation of local people in local governing system. It can be shown in following figure-
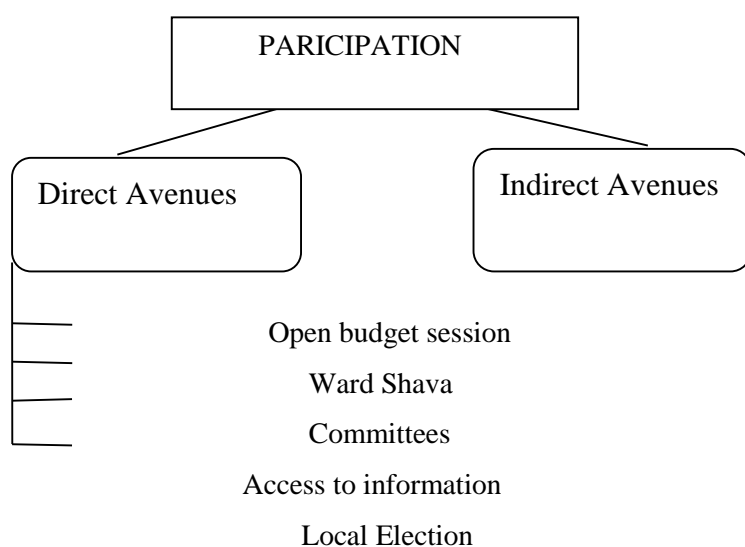
Figure: Avenues of Participation (Source: Author's own)

Participatory budgeting through open budget sessions can ensure involvement of local communities in the financial decision of local government. For example, as per UP Act 2009, the Up is required to organize two open budget session every year and invites the community people to participate in the session, the UP shares the proposed budget and take feedback from participants (Uddin, 2019). In order to increase community participation in the decision-making process of Local Government and to ensure accountability and transparency of their activities, the other mechanism is ward meeting. It consists of all the voters entered the electoral roll. The elected member of the ward act as the Shava Ward chairman, while the elected female member act as an adviser. It is the responsibility of the Ward Shava chairman to present the annual report before the members, and also to let them know about the implementation status of the development projects. The Local Government Acts also provisioned the "Citizens' Charter" through which all citizens should be

notified of what services they are entitled to receive from the local government institutions. Different committees such as ward committees, standing committees at local level play a vital role to increase the effectiveness of local government as well as effective participation of citizens. For ensuring access to information through the use of ICT, the websites of all departments and information centers at district, Upazila and Union levels have been set up. However, one of the vital indirect avenues of participation at local level is local election. In the election process, citizens exercise their voting right to elect representatives. So, local election is a means of ensuring participation at local level.

6.5 Women representation

Legal provision of local government gives the structural framework for women's representation in political decision-making, bringing women to the centre of local development and developing new grassroots level leadership. Recognizing the necessity of having more women active in political life, the government has recently introduced gender quotas in both national and local government elections. This effort has potentially improved the political representation of women, but has not addressed the more fundamental issue of women usually finding themselves in a situation which is not women-friendly (Panday, 2019). The provision of reserved seats for female has increased of female in local politics than ever before .There is also a provision of reserved seats for women in various committees of local government such as – ward committees, standing committees etc. Besides, women representation in the local government activities is limited in some cases. Lack of adequate knowledge about local government functions, male resistance, conservative social values, lack of education all have limited women's effective representations (Nazneen & Tasneem, 2010).

6.6 Financial issue

The issue of financial dependency is very stern attention. In the context of local government, they are mainly depended on central government grants. In most cases, they cannot perform their functions in time properly due to delay in release of these grants by the government. Besides, the central government also permits local bodies to levy taxes and fees on a limited number of resources. Owing to various factors, the local government bodies are not able to fully exercise their taxation powers. Ultimately this type of financial dependency in all tiers creates ineffectiveness of local bodies in their functions.

6.7 Issue of present Upazila system

According to Upazila Parishad act 2009, Upazila chairman was acted as chief executive and Upazila Nirbahi Officer as principal executive officer. But the difference between the two was not clearly stated. As a result a conflict between two has been raised in the issue of who is the supreme decision maker at Upazila level. Moreover, Upazila Parishad (Reintroduction of the repealed Act Amendment) Act 2009 provides the provision that the members of parliament would be advisers to the Upazila Parishads. No

development plans can be taken or no programs can be implemented by the Upazila Parishads without the advice of the concerned MPs. It creates less autonomy and violets the decentralization rules.

6.8 Digital service delivery at local level

To turn Bangladesh into a Digital Bangladesh, the government has taken measures to provide ICT facilities for all. Towards a digital Bangladesh, the government has established digital centers in every union parishad. The local government division has also established digital centres in Upazila Parishad, Zila Parishads, Pourashavas and every ward of City Corporations. Tablet PCs with Teletalk SIMs have been distributed to vice-chairpersons of all Upazila Parishads. Other local government initiatives include hosting official websites, distribution of computers, and ICT training for unemployed youths. Further, steps have also been taken to provide free internet browsing facilities. Birth and death registration and many other services are made available online (clgf SG blog, 2017-18).

6.9 SDG at local level

SDG is the recent development issue which explicitly calls for action by local authorities. At least 12 SDGs require strategies at the community level to overcome the interlinked challenges of poverty and other socio-political underdevelopment. The constitution wisely placed key responsibilities for social and economic development including the preparation and implementation of plans relating to public services and economic development at the grassroots level closest to the beneficiaries with the local government institutions, particularly the union council and the body at the doorstep of the people (Article 59(2)(c)). This constitutional mandate makes it imperative that Bangladesh localize the implementation of the SDGs (Rahman A. , 2019).

6.10 Major challenges

- **Frequent changes of local government structure**

    Frequent changes in the local government structure in accordance with laws under various successive regimes have created challenges for local agencies to function effectively.

- **Lack of effective participation**

    In developing countries like Bangladesh social values, beliefs, systems and norms of rural society do not support the participation of the local people in local government institutions. Moreover, women face various structural and attitudinal barriers in the way of effective participation. In a democratic country, direct election is the vital mechanism to ensure peoples participation. The idea of holding elections on the basis of "universal suffrage" does not apply here. Therefore, public interest in the activities of the district council will naturally be less.

- **Lack of adequate training for the representatives**

The National Institute of Local Government (NILG) is the responsible training organization in Bangladesh for providing training to the local government functionaries. It has little autonomy and is treated as an appendage of the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development. The number of trainers in the NILG is inadequate. Besides training of local government staff is generally limited to officers. Lower level technical or general staff are rarely given any training or chance to improve their skills (Sharmin, Haque, & Islam, 2012).

- **Lack of proper coordination**

In the context of Municipality or City Corporation, Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakha (RAJUK), Water and Sewerage Authority (WASA), Telegraph and Telephone Board (T&T),etc are the major service providing agencies .They are mainly responsible for providing utility services to the town or city dwellers. It is frequently observed that after a road has been built or developed by pourashava or city corporation or RAJUK etc, it is whimsically dug by WASA for laying water lines or by the T&T Board for lying cables. This happens due to lack of proper coordination and communication among such development agencies **(Siddiqui & Ahmed, 2016).** There is hardly any coordination in the activities of these agencies. In the context of Upazila Parishad, lack of coordination between the local MP, the Upazila Parishad Chairman and the Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) is an obstacle to effective local government functioning at Upazila level.

- **Overburdened and overlapped functions of different tiers**

There are specific acts were promulgated for different local government bodies. According to these act, various functions are stated for each body. But the provision is not clear about the jurisdictions. As a result, most of the functions of different bodies are overburdened and overlapping with each other.

- **Violence in local government election**

In the context of Bangladesh it is frequently observed that in local government elections, the abuse of power by local influential leaders are very common. Different types of violence can be noticed on Election Day. In the last union parishad election 2016, Democracy Watch reported about election violence. The report mentioned that the violence took place between supporters of two rival candidates and between the supporters of winning and defeated candidates, clash occurred to snatch ballot box, police men baton charging and opening fire to stop violence (Democracywatch, 2016)

- **Absence of comprehensive local government policy**

In Bangladesh, local government structure has been changed several times. Central government has become authoritative over local bodies due to lack of comprehensive local government policy. Due to absence of such comprehensive policy, local bodies remain weak still now.

- **Weak committee system**

Various standing committees are existed in every tier of local government in Bangladesh according to laws. But they have lack of awareness about their duties and responsibilities. Moreover, meeting of standing committees are not arranged regularly. In practice, there is no publicity system on this issue, lack of initiatives of the members of parishads, lack of pressure from common people, unwillingness of chairman to delegate power and authority, a large section of the people are not aware of it. Due to above reasons the members of the committees are not able to play any effective role.

- **Lack of clear concept of responsibilities**

Mandatory and optional activities are prescribed at different levels of local government according to laws. The local government representatives have no clear idea about their responsibilities and powers. Chairman, members are not properly aware of the mandatory and optional functions of the concerned Parishad as per law. Elected women representatives also cannot take effective decision due to ignorance or they are neglected.

- **Lack of adequate knowledge regarding digital services and SDGs at local level**

Mass people have no adequate knowledge regarding various digital services at local level. They also do not know about sustainable development goal and its implementation in local areas. Besides, many representatives of local government are not aware enough about their own roles and taking steps to make people know about the services.

- **Absence of independent local government Commission**

Local government institutions in Bangladesh still now face the problem of establishing an independent local government Commission.

7. Conclusion and Recommendations

To sum up, local governance is definitely an important and essential dimension in the field of governance and development. In recent times various contemporary issues and multiple challenges are found in governing process at local level. Adequate measures should be taken to address contemporary issues and major challenges related to local government in the context of Bangladesh. Our local government institutions has gone through many changes and faced various challenges. It is high time the country should make strong and effective local government institutions to facilitate government services at root level. In order to make effective, transparent, accountable local government institutions, it should take the following contributory recommendations which are given below-

- Stability of local government structure should be ensured. Legal and institutional reform should be needed and comprehensive local government policy should be formulated which will ensure an effective and stable local government structure.

- The local government system need to ensure grassroots participation of local people. Effective participation in decision-making should be ensured at local level through village courts, standing committees, voters in local election etc.

- It is needed to eliminate social and cultural barriers through implementations of adequate policy measures and raising awareness to increase women representation in governing process at local level.

- Government needs to initiate adequate training facilities and organize the capacity building programs for local representatives and officers so that they can perform their responsibilities efficiently and provide better service delivery to the local people.

- Recent innovations in local government system such as open budget, ward shava, a2i, union digital centre, citizen charter etc. should be implemented properly. These can ensure citizen oriented participatory local government bodies and helps to aware about citizens' rights and responsibilities.

- Elected representatives such as chairmen, members, women members and other officers of local bodies should be conscious and have clear idea of their responsibilities according to laws and the power and authority of local government bodies should be enough clear to avoid performing overburdened and overlapped functions.

- Local government should have the actual rights to make and sanction its own budget and increase financial autonomy. Effective ward committees and standing committees are needed to ensure accountable, transparent and participatory local government bodies at local level to get the better services from it.

- Policymakers should follow the guidelines of the constitution of Bangladesh to make any decision relating to local government. Engagement of civil society organizations should be ensured in local decision-making system.

- All types of corruption and violence in Local government election should be reduced. Alongside, proper coordination among various service providing agencies should be ensured to reduce corruption.

- Adequate knowledge of local people regarding digital services and SDG implementation at grassroots level should be increased. Besides, all representatives should aware of their own roles and take initiatives to make people know about them.

- An independent local government commission should be established to administer local institutions. Proper implementation of a comprehensive Local government policy is also essential to overcome emerging challenges related to local governance.

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Environmental Hazards in Cox's Bazar: Case in Rohingya Refugees in Bangladesh

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Abstract

Rohingya refugees are the most ill-treated people in the world. To keep away from persecution in Myanmar, rohingyas have fled from their country and currently live in their neighboring countries as refugees. The majority, more than a million, of the persecuted rohingya live mainly in Bangladesh. Mostly in Cox's Bazar district, which has the world's longest beach. The refugees accommodated in chock-full refugee camps highly susceptible to the natural disaster in Cox's Bazar. Therefore, due to the rohingya invasion, the host community faces many challenges and problems and social, environmental, legal, and economic impacts. This paper aims to identify the negative environmental issues that occurred due to the rohingya crisis. The rohingya influx is raising major ecological problems. It is plummet the woodland and forest. On the other hand, escalating population and polluting air, water, Sound, and other natural elements. In order to achieve the objective of this research, mainly content analysis method was obtained. Data were collected directly from secondary sources. This study explores environmental hazards in the Cox's Bazar and provides recommendations to resolve the refugee crisis everlastingly.

Keywords: Rohingya, Refugees, Crisis, Environment

1. Introduction

The rohingya is an ethnic group in Rakhine, Myanmar. They are among the most mistreated, vulnerable, and browbeaten minorities in the world. Recently gigantic violence broke out in Rakhine state in 2017. Thus, many rohingyas fled from their country and took shelter in the nearest countries, by and large, in Bangladesh, as of 11 December 2017, there were nearly 860,000 rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazar district –of whom 655,000 have arrived since 25 August 2017 (UNOCHA, 2017). Most displaced rohingyas settled in Teknaf and Ukhiya sub-districts of Cox's Bazar. The refugees have outnumbered the local people both in these sub-districts. According to the population census of 2011, the total population of Teknaf is 264,389 while that of Ukhia is 207,379, and the anticipated rohingya population stands at over 1 million and increases incessantly. (UNB, 2017). Cox's Bazar is one of the poorest and most endangered districts in Bangladesh, with an endless hunger and food poverty, and scarcity well above the national average. As a result of the emerging rohingya crisis, Bangladesh, especially Cox's Bazar district, faces many challenges,

such as economic, social, and environmental problems. From the point of view of climate change and sustainable growth, the rohingya population's influx on the local environment and biodiversity in the Cox Bazar area of Bangladesh is the most critical aspect of the rohingya issue. Zaman et al., (2020) has shown that the camps of Cox's Bazar district become overcrowded due to massive influx of rohingya refugees and these camps are highly vulnerable to landslides, tropical cyclones, flash-flooding, and communicable disease outbreak. They try to pursue how the rohingya's cope with risks that are associated with environmental hazards in the Kutupalong rohingya camp in Cox's Bazar district. They also recommended some propositions for enhancing the refugees' future adaptation strategies in their study.

The haphazard cutting of hills increases monsoon landslides' anxiety, and the loss of forest resources has negatively affected the people's livelihoods. Thousands of shallow tube-wells sunk to fulfill the 'refugee's' drinking water needs pose risks to aquifers. Amplified car traffic and smokes made from firewood burnt by 'refugees' contribute to air pollution and raise the risk of diseases carried by air pollution. As no recycling system exists, polyphonic bags and plastic bottles also cause environmental pollution in the region and put the Bay of Bengal at risk of increased plastic pollution. All of these have created a massive challenge to the biodiversity of Bangladesh's environmentally sensitive region. The rohingya refugee crisis has imposed immense environmental challenges for Bangladesh. It is having a prolonged impact on the environment and natural resources of the host community. This article deals with the environmental hazard occurring in Cox's Bazar because of the rohingya influx, discusses various initiatives undertaken to resolve the crisis, and makes a set of recommendations for addressing the rohingya crisis.

2. **Literature Review**

Bangladesh has been hosting the displaced rohingya's for many years due to the violence and deprivation in Rakhine. Rohingya's latest arrivals began after the Myanmar army's brutal crackdown during August 2017, making this the world's fastest-growing refugee crisis. According to the UNHCR refugee population factsheet (2019), the total immigrant population is 913,080 individuals and 210,739 families. Geographically Cox's Bazar carries considerable importance. Cox's Bazar is a district adjoining Myanmar. It is the main entry area for border crossing. Ukhiya and Teknaf Upazilas of Cox's Bazar are the central areas of rohingya camps. Except for these two areas, about 200,000 Rohingyas live in the adjacent area Cox's Bazar and other Chattogram district areas.

Owing to an unforeseen tragedy, the host community faces various serious challenges, such as health risks, criminal threats, and other social, economic, political, and environmental tribulations. The environmental crisis is one of the most harmful consequences of the rohingya influx. The rohingyas severely damage the environment of Cox's Bazar. The refugees collect wood as fuel for cooking and warmth and fell trees to

build shelters. As a result, the land surrounding the refugee camps may be stripped of trees and vegetation. Cutting woods from hills exerted enormous negative impacts on Teknaf wildlife sanctuary. According to the Relief Web (2019) report, most of the camps set up in 24 square kilometers of Cox's Bazar, mostly deforested, often hilly, areas vulnerable to cyclones, floods, and landslides. Extreme congestion, leading to lack of shelter privacy, exposure to numerous natural and human-made hazards, and lack of room for utilities and facilities, are the consequences of over 900,000 people living inside this space.

Teknaf peninsula, one of the oldest reserved forests in Bangladesh, is an ecologically critical area that includes the confined Teknaf Wildlife Sanctuary. Teknaf Wildlife Sanctuary is an area of 11,615 hectares that contains 538 species of plants and 613 species of wildlife, including Asian elephants (Mannan, 2017). Decreasing forests and tree's vulnerabilities stress the climate differently as they are essential in supporting community resilience. Thereby, the current situation of deforestation is alarming for the coastal resilience of the Teknaf peninsula. The movement of thousands of people and the establishment and expansion of existing campsites has led to more than 2000 ha of forest loss in the Cox's Bazar region. Some subsidence may be possible through reforestation. Substitute cooking fuel is vital, so refugees no longer need to cut down trees for firewood. A joint UN project SAFE PLUS is in progress to deal with the urgent need for cooking fuel. This program must continue. Moreover, Soil erosion and landslides are affecting water resources, irrigation, and groundwater reserves. The abrupt increase in Teknaf and Ukhiya impacts instantaneous waterways pollution, and about 10,000 tons of waste produced a month, which are awful environmental challenges for the district.

Besides that, it feared that the groundwater in Ukhiya would soon shrink. Teknaf is already in the danger zone where even deep 600 to 1000 feet deep tube-wells can hardly find water. Moreover, 70% of shallow tube-wells are running out of water already. Furthermore, the e-coli test by the Emergency Response Unit of the International Red Cross portrays a shocking picture. About 70% of the groundwater samples observed heavily from different camps were contaminated. That is not all. Both animals and humans life is at significant risk. There are reported incidents of deer hunting by rohingya for meat, and wild elephants have killed some rohingya. Besides, local poachers may seek to exploit the situation. Furthermore, Local biodiversity, including marine resources, acoustic environment, and air quality, is tainted at an unprecedented rate. Similarly, noise producing from communication among the rohingya people, service providers, aid distributors, and from a quick increase in vehicular movement is also disturbing the wildlife. Also, smoke and dust generated from stoves and traffic are a source of air pollution. These can have a severe impact on local ecology and the welfare of nearby communities.

In Bangladesh's ecologically sensitive zone, protecting environmental and biodiversity-related degradation is necessary for climate change adaptation and mitigation and vital for local, sustainable development.

3. Objective

The main objective of this study is to explore the environmental risks or hazards in Cox's Bazar due to the rohingya crisis. Besides this, its objective is to find out the ways for mitigating environmental degradation.

4. Methodology

Cox's Bazar is one of the most significant districts in Bangladesh. One of the most vital sea beach in the world is located in this district. If the environment in this district is endangered, the whole of Bangladesh may be jeopardized. One of the prime objectives of this study is to assess the environmental damage in the region due to the rohingya influx. This study is based on qualitative method. In order to achieve the objective of this research, mainly content analysis method was obtained. Data were collected directly from secondary sources. Secondary data collected from books of various authors, hand books, thesis, magazines, newspapers, websites, and public records. historical documents, government and non-government organization reports, scholarly articles and research reports, including some articles published in electronic, print, news media and other documents. Gathered information from different sources has also examined the proper ways of mitigating the environmental atmosphere in the city of the largest sea beach.

5. Findings of the study

The study provides a broad understanding of the environmental hazard due to the rohingya influx in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh that has been examined through environmental aspects. Finally, this paper provides a set of recommendations to the policy makers' address to emergent crisis. The impact on the environment is one of the most severe crises, both long-term and short-term. Several aspects of the impact on the environment are pointed out in this study findings. Mainly: a. Forest, b. Water, c. Biodiversity and d. Pollution.

5.1 Forest

The accommodation of approximately more than a million rohingya in the Cox's Bazar area has had a significant effect on the area's environment, which creates an apathetic impact on the local community. Due to rohingya absorption in Cox's Bazar, the preliminary loss of forest area is 3,500 acres from the total forest area of 2,092,016 acres that represents a loss of 1.67% in the forest area of Cox's Bazar and a loss of 0.05% in the total national forest area (Abrar, 2018).

The ratio of forest populated land in Bangladesh is underneath the danger line. Besides this, the threat to the reserve forest in Ukhiya and Teknaf is a significant concern. For the environment, deforestation for settlement and burning of forests will have direct cost implications. As the Rohingyas are felling trees in the forests to collect firewood for cooking, the situation has further deteriorated. According to Bangladesh

reports, to fulfill their daily firewood demand of 800 tons, the Rohingya are destroying forest resources (2021). The people of Bangladesh, especially those living in rural areas, highly depend on natural resources. People in rural areas do not destroy them. In reality, they live with nature contrasting the people of urban culture. Before the rohingya Influx, the host community's poor children collected the wild fruits available in the forest and met their nutrition needs. The elders used to take their cattle to the forest to feed them and collect dry leaves and fallen twigs of trees for cooking. The rohingya refugees collect wood fuel from protected forest reserves for cooking as the cooking fuel is limited. So it has become difficult for the host community to survive as such a vital resource taken from them. Because of the rohingya influx, there is a lacking of cooking fuel in markets, and the price is high. The refugee camps have nearly 194,000 rohingya households, and they all need to cook twice or thrice a day. NGOs operating relief operations there have provided gas stoves to 20,000 to twenty-five thousand families. As a result, they do not need to gather firewood for cooking. Moreover, if another 20,000 families are not known to be using firewood, about 150,000 families will use firewood for cooking. In that case, at least 2,250 tons of firewood is burned daily for cooking purposes only. Government officials at Cox's Bazar say that an area equal to at least four football fields clear every day. All the hills have already become treeless to make room for settlements. To recapitulate, the entire forestland of Cox's Bazar is at significant risk. In the influx area, 50% of the hills have been entirely denuded (Center for Policy Dialogue, 2017).

5.2 **Water**

As per the UNDP, assessment, diminution and contagion of groundwater are the gravest effects caused by the rohingya influx. (UNDP Assessment, 2017). According to the findings from the Red Cross's groundwater samples, 70% of them heavily polluted, which means there is not a large amount of surface water in the influx area. (Kudrat, 2020). Water is an essential element for life. Water is also known as life. No man can live a long time without water. According to the report of the United Nations, about 1 million rohingya are living in Cox's Bazar. Every day, this settlement needs a huge amount of water. They are using a huge amount of water every day, as well as misusing and polluting it. According to the research report by Kudrat (2020), because of the misuse of water by the rohingya's, water levels in the region are going down. The dropping water level could lead to a severe shortage of potable water in the region in the future. Reckless consumption of groundwater might bring a disaster in Cox's Bazar region shortly. The refugees living in the camps need water for daily uses such as drinking, bathing, and washing.

5.3 Biodiversity

Due to the rohingya crisis, biodiversity has been fallen into danger. Many known and unknown species are being disappeared from Cox's Bazar forest area because of unreserved deforestation. Thereby, it creates a massive reaction to the surroundings. Moreover, according to Dhaka Tribune (2019), groundwater diminution and pollution, pitiable indoor air quality, broke waste sludge management, soil and terrain

removal having overall high-risk terrain shifts and impacts on ecosystems. Biodiversity is essential for any environment. Biodiversity builds with the presence of animals, fauna, and humans, and the environment persists in a befitting manner. The rohingya influx in and around Ukhia in Cox's Bazar has resulted in massive deforestation and the killing of animals and birds. As a result, the biodiversity of the area is under threat. According to the report by the Dhaka Tribune (2019), the soil, climate, and animals of this region have suffered a lot. The level of damage has doubled in the last 40 years due to the rohingya influx. If the biodiversity of the region is not restored quickly, the environment could be threatened.

5.4 Pollution

The tiny camps where nearly one million rohingya refugees are living have no proper disposal system. The level of pollution in and around these migrant camps is disturbing. Tarpaulin, aluminum, and bamboo, non-disposable items other than bamboo, are primary shelter materials in the Camp area. Drinking water, which is another non-disposable item and hazardous to the environment, is supplied to the rohingya camps via plastic containers. The refugees' piled-up plastic packets are blocking the water flow almost in every canals and watercourse. Several rohingya families share a toilet set up anywhere and everywhere, and many of them are overflowing. Waterways are badly polluted by human waste, plastic packets, kitchen waste, and other things. The whole camp vicinity stinks of squander, including human waste. Rohingya people living in the campsites are not aware of such items' proper disposal methods; thus, creating wastes that will cause severe environmental hazards in the future.

The government of Bangladesh is obligated to resolve environmental degradation issues as per the national environmental laws and policies concerned. However, this deterioration of the ecosystem and irreversible loss of biodiversity has resulted from a cross-border problem. With its limited resources and large citizens, Bangladesh cannot resolve and solve its problem. Although the Bangladesh government and other development partner organizations have initiated some measures to provide an alternative fuel stable waste management system and re-plantation, the 'eco-restoration' initiatives in the region are still much less than sufficient. Thus, in the light of regional and multilateral environmental legislation, the unexpected problems such as environmental degradation and biodiversity that could also play a role in accelerating the proportion of global climate change and posing a danger to local, global sustainable development should be seen.

Ahmed et al. (2019) has shown in their research that, to accommodate a large number of refugees how forests are being destroyed and the hills have to be cut down in Cox's Bazar district. They try to analyze, how the camps on hills lose soil and become the cause of the landslide.They aimed to develop localized landslide early warning systems for the rohingyas and their host communities in Cox's Bazar.

6.   Conclusion and Recommendations

The rohingya crisis is entirely new and outrageous crisis for Bangladesh. The costs of hosting the rohingya's are enormous. This influx of rohingya has given rise to new multi-faceted challenges to the host community, potentially severe consequences in various areas, especially in the environment. The environmental aspects of the emerged crisis are complex in nature and significant in scale. The study aimed to present an overview of the environmental hazard due to the rohingya crisis in Bangladesh. The rohingya's from Myanmar migrated to the forest areas imposing a significant threat to its sustainable forest maintenance. The continuously increasing population also affects the local resources and the ecosystem, forest resources link too many other issues, such as biodiversity conservation, climate change adaptation and mitigation, and coastal resilience. Likewise, the refugee influx has thrown waste collection and management into complete disorder. In a nutshell, environmental repercussion is a sign of human catastrophes. The Government of Bangladesh has to continue energetic diplomacy, effectively resolved this issue through cordial talks held between Bangladesh, and ensures a safe and voluntary repatriation process of the rohingya refugees that should be monitored by UN officials. Because a smooth and sustainable rohingya repatriation to Myanmar is ultimately the best solution.

Recommendation for mitigating environmental degradation of Cox's Bazar

Because of the emergent challenges, several measures need to undertake. Some of these are as follows:

- The colossal level of firewood collection must stop immediately. Alternative fuel supply, such as LPG cylinder and enhanced cook-stoves, should be distributed among refugees to save the valuable forests.
- Social reforestation should be encouraged. Fast-growing tree plantations are needed to produce firewood for rohingya's and local communities.
- Rohingya refugees should reposition from a confined forest area.
- A sustainable forest management plan must incorporate the rohingya response strategy.
- Pollutants floating on canals and streams should be removed without any delay.
- An adequate disposal system should establish for Cox's Bazar district on a sustainable basis.
- An in-depth research should undertake to address the ecological consequences.
- Environmental costs related to the Rohingya crisis should be estimated.
- A complete policy framework is needed to deal with natural resource management during a humanitarian crisis.

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Information Communication Technology (ICT) as a Potential Tool for Women Empowerment: Practical Experiences from Trishal Upazilla

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Abstract

Women empowerment is the key to economic progress, political stability, and social transformation in this era of globalisation and development. The current age is one of science and globalisation. The world is becoming digital through the use of ICT tools. In order to keep pace with the advancements brought forth by globalisation, we have to be acquainted with modern technology. ICT involves the internet, cell phones, computers, and others communication media. Bangladesh is a developing country with a high density of population, half of which is comprised of women. Rural women' accessibility to the ICT sector is not at a satisfactory level yet, due to a number of constraints. At the same time, Bangladesh is a lower middle-income country, and men contribute much to the reproductive as well as the productive sector. Hence, we need equitable distribution of resources. In this regard, our rural women must be empowered to create a balanced distribution of social and economic capability and power. As the ICT sector is an emerging sector that is capable of addressing this balance, it is high time that rural women become involved in this sector, to make the dream of "Digital Bangladesh" come true.

Key Word: Women Empowerment, ICT, Digital Bangladesh

1. Introduction

Patriarchy and traditional gender roles define women's position in the society. Often, these roles undermine women's growth by restricting them to lowly influential positions. Even when women ascend to top positions, the appointments are merely ceremonial with men wielding power and dictating their activities. As a result, women's self-worth and decision making suffer from continuous oppression. However, women empowerment movements seek to change the status quo, promote gender equality, and alleviate women's socio-economic and political wellbeing (Dr & Krishnan, 2019). ICT is a potential tool for women empowerment because it enhances education, economic stability, and governance, promoting gender equality.

The advent and expansion of the ICT field presents a new opportunity which women should seize to stamp themselves in the society at different levels. ICT has seamlessly presented the whole society with options of exploring other phenomenon (Shaikh, 2020). ICT has directly impacted

the field of education in several ways (United Nations, 2005). Leveraging the various ICT applications in education, women will be on the fast lane fast-tracking their empowerment and recognition in society. Over time there has been a rapid growth in enthusiasm on initiating different initiatives aimed at fostering the use and application of ICT through workshops, research projects, and various development platforms provide an opportunity for women to achieve capacity building, access employment opportunities, and other avenues of advancement. ICT is, therefore, an explicit and powerful catalyst with the potential of propelling women through social, economic, and political spheres into attaining aspects of empowerment which would significantly be strategies of enabling the women to address the gender digital divide both at national levels and at the international frontiers (United Nations, 2005). ICT is, therefore, a critical tool in advancing women's empowerment.

2. Research Question/Statement

This research study is set to establish to what extent the adoption and promotion of ICT and its various applications impacted women's empowerment. What experiences have women had through interaction with ICT programs that have affected their empowerment process?

3. Literature Review

The various literature that exists has not comprehensively explored the potential that the field of ICT has on empowering women in society. Past literature has delved so much into the different factors that have mainly promoted gender inequality at the expense of the female gender. The current lack of comprehensive information on the influence of ICT advancements on women empowerment. This study, therefore, undertakes to explicitly establish the extent to which ICT has been critical in positively impacting the realization of women empowerment in different societies based on provisions that has been facilitated by the technological capabilities that are not only based on gender considerations, ICT, Digital Bangladesh.

3.1 Meaning of Women Empowerment

Women empowerment seeks to elevate women's position in society. Women empowerment is a process that enables women's access to various opportunities in the society and to include the gender in the decision-making processes. Women empowerment removes women from the periphery of society through education and training; it equips them with relevant skills to alleviate their position and eliminates systemic barriers inhibiting their growth and development. According to Huis et al. (2017), women empowerment is critical for meeting global sustainable development. For instance, whereas women in Bangladesh can attest to increased opportunities and equality, most females from the rural area struggle to overcome gender restrictions due to

societal values and inadequate regulations protecting their rights. As a result, most of the women in rural Bangladesh have little influence over their lives and are victims of gender-based violence, child marriage, and sexual harassment. Furthermore, Bangladeshi women are considered to be subject to their spouses' who control and restrict their participation in the decision-making process (Kabir et al., 2018). Thus, women empowerment would focus on improving these women's position by increasing their involvement in the decision-making processes and providing them with education and training.

3.2 Women Empowerment Framework

Women empowerment encompasses multiple dimensions because women encounter diverse hurdles including social, political, and economic and self-perception. The Longwe Women's Empowerment Framework is a comprehensive tool for assessing the level of empowerment (Nessa, 2012). The framework focusses on specific dimensions including the ability of women to access resources, their awareness of their rights, and their ability to control their environment in equal status to men. The framework is further enhanced with the inclusion of the dimension of gender equality from an institutional level.

3.3 Women Empowerment and ICT

Technology and its various dimensions continue to shape the way we live, work and experience the world. One of the key goals of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is harnessing technology to advance gender equality and women empowerment. Goal 5 of the Sustainable Development Goals links ICT to women empowerment and gender equality. It acknowledges the value of ICT in providing opportunities for gender equality by ensuring that everyone has access to the same online resources and opportunities (Manandhar et al., 2018). This strengthens the participation of women at the community, national and global stage. However, harnessing ICT for women empowerment extends beyond being a goal in a UN policy. ICT opens the door for women to the outside world by providing access to undistorted information (Sinha & Sahay, 2019). It provides a platform for education, employment, and social change. It creates new opportunities and avenues for women to express themselves and pursue their goals on the same level as men.

ICT is a gateway for social, economic, and political transformation worldwide. Despite these opportunities, there is a need to encourage more developing countries to adopt policies that harness ICT to avoid further social and economic marginalization of women while offering opportunities for education, personal growth, and professional advancement. Eliminating the gender gap in the digital space is one of the key issues for tackling marginalization because the

use of technologies is vitally linked to increased social, economic, and political transformation (Sinha & Sahay, 2019). For example, ICT has been one of the leading creators of employment opportunities globally. While many women have benefited from these opportunities, there are still milestones to be made in ensuring the full participation and empowerment of all women around the world through the use of information technology, which the study seeks to explore.

3.4 Dimensions of Women Empowerment

Longwe's Framework contains five dimensions of women empowerment: access, conscientization, mobilization, control, and gender equality mainstreaming. Access refers to the idea that women can enjoy the same resources and opportunities as men. Access is empowering with regards to the social, political, and economic context of societies. Conscientization refers to an understanding that gender roles and inequality are not naturally occurring or pre-determined by biology (Nessa, 2012). Gender roles are conveyed ion everyday society through norms, laws, and practices. Mobilization is the process of bringing women together to discuss and highlight issues that affect them. Control refers to the difference in power between men and women. It means that women should have the same power as men to control their destinies. Lastly, gender equality mainstreaming refers to the process of transforming gender relations to increase equality.

3.5 Indicators of Women Empowerment

Indicators of women empowerment are the aspects people use to evaluate equality in society. Women empowerment strategies need to account for these factors to develop successful ways of attaining equality thus promoting women's welfare.

3.6 Education

ICT is a potential tool for women empowerment because it enhances education. For instance, limited access to information significantly undermines women's position in Bangladesh. Despite the progress of education policies in promoting women's welfare, females have lower literacy rates than their male counterparts. In rural Bangladesh, child marriage contributes to high school dropouts leading to low literacy levels. Low literacy levels among women negatively impact their health by impairing their ability to make informed medical decisions (Das et al., 2017). Although education is an indicator of women empowerment, stakeholders have to develop policies to promote education among women in rural Bangladesh. According to Williams and Artzberger (2019), women can use ICT to increase communication and share information, thus, increasing literacy levels through diverse education programs. Increased Internet penetration in rural areas facilitates the establishment of ICT structures to promote women's education, thereby playing a

role in empowerment. So, ICT promotes education by sharing information and improving women literacy levels, thus, promoting education as an indicator of women empowerment.

3.7 Economic Empowerment

Furthermore, ICT promotes economic stability as another indicator of women empowerment. Whereas economic stability is an indicator of women empowerment, most women in rural areas live in poverty due to low incomes and limited access to opportunities. According to Adeni (2016), ICT provides rural women with knowledge about improving their economic stability and boosting their living standards. ICT helps to break cultural restrictions that undermine women's economic stability. As more women embrace ICT, they can attain economic freedom through additional sources of income. Besides, ICT promotes capacity building among women, thus, equipping them with skill sets, enabling them to access economic opportunities. Therefore, economic stability is an indicator of women empowerment that benefits from ICT structures; they facilitate access to economic opportunities and boost living conditions.

3.8 Governance

ICT also promotes governance as an indicator of women empowerment. For instance, according to Kabir et al. (2018), women governance in Bangladesh suffers due to underrepresentation and systemic suppression of women's influence in institutions. Furthermore, limited access to resources undermines women's governance as they cannot articulate themselves in the community. Women in rural areas hardly participate in governance activities due to limited engagement with political institutions. However, ICT provides women with a tool to engage with political institutions through improved communication. Through ICT structures, female leaders have a wider pool of resources to address public issues, thus, allowing them to participate in core decision-making processes. Women directly link to locals, allowing them to engage in the public debate, thus increasing women representations. ICT also promotes governance by enhancing the freedom of speech through which movements lobby legislators to tackle issues affecting Bangladeshi women such as child marriage, domestic violence, and sexual harassment. Therefore, governance is an indicator of women empowerment that benefits from ICT structures; it promotes public debate and women representation.

Social and cultural norms undermine efforts by women in rural Bangladesh to overcome gender restrictions. Moreover, weak regulation protecting women's rights contribute to the continuous oppression of women. Nevertheless, there is a paradigm shift in women empowerment due to education, increased opportunities, and equality. ICT is a potential tool for women empowerment because it breaks gender barriers and provides communication channels allowing

information sharing, public participation, and improving women's economic well-being in rural areas.

4. Objectives of the Research

The primary objectives of the study are the following:

a) To examine the current status of the ICT sector (in suburban areas) in Mymensingh division and the accessibility rural women have to it.

b) To analyse the contribution of the ICT sector in empowering women in the social, economic, and technological spheres.

Based on these primary objectives, the research also has the following strategic objectives:

-To identify the actors and factors that influence the status and accessibility of women in the concerned research sector.

- To identify the challenges and gaps in this field that have similarities and comparability with the overall national scenario.

- To recommend/suggest options for the betterment of the proposed research issue, with applicability for similar cases.

5. Research Methodology

This study adopts a mixed-method approach, with both qualitative and quantitative research tools. The study critically involved the establishment of how ICT has impacted the process of women empowerment.

As part of the qualitative research, Focus Group Discussions (FGD) and Key Informant Interviews (KII) were conducted. Simultaneously, case studies from each area (targeting UP level) were collected from respondents based on availability. Respondents of the FGD include female members of the community. Groups will be formed based on their orientation when it comes to ICT. Respondents of the KIIs will be UP Digital Centre Staff, UP Chairman, and relevant NGO/Project staff working on women empowerment or ICT.

As part of the quantitative research, surveys too will be conducted among a sample of 100 persons in four UPs of two upazillas. Respondents have been selected from the working women (female members with income) and members (trained and untrained). All the respondents were recuuited into the study by observing all the ethical requirements, the respondents were subsequently interviewed in the process of collecting information used to generate the data applied in deriving the analysis in the study.

5.1 Data collection

For collection of primary data, the questionnaires have been collected from the working women of the community in four UPs of Bhaluka and Trishal upazillas of Mymensingh district. They were presented to 30 women aged between 18 and 60 years. The research specially targeted working women who are involved in income generation/productive sector and might be skilled or non-skilled in IT issues as well as in the reproductive sector. The accuracy of the women's data was compared to assess the accuracy and the facts checked against documented information in books and journals. The data collected were tested for reliability through ensuring only those respondents who met the descriptions of the study took part in the interviewing process.

5.2 Data Analysis Plans:

In order to make the research more evocative and personable, two sources of data and information have been used widely. Data was collected using a semi-structured questionnaire and analysed in SPSS software. The analysed data was presented graphically in the research report.

I. Primary sources of data included respondents who satisfy the following criteria:

a. Women involved in the productive sector

b. Rural representatives, UP digital centre staff

c. Government and non-government initiatives/projects

II. The secondary sources of data are the following:

a. Websites of the government/others

b. Study-related books and journals

c. NGO reports

5.3 Coverage of study area

Two upazillas of Mymensingh district – Bhaluka and Trishal – were chosen for the survey, from which four UPs were selected as research areas for the detailed study through the survey.
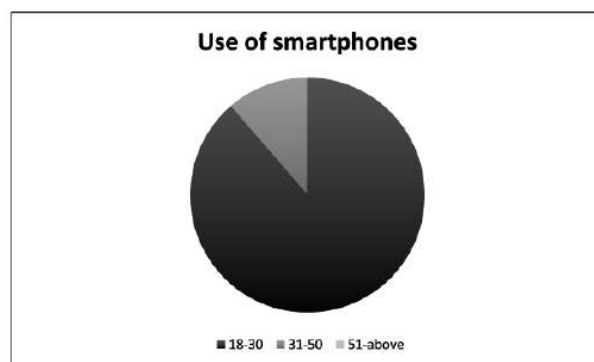
Field Study and Analysis

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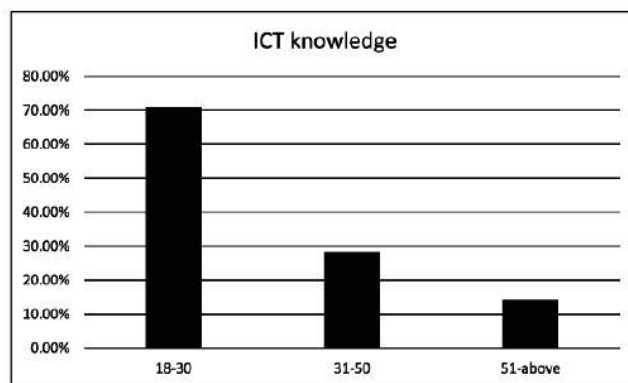
Age 18–30 – 70.9% have ICT knowledge.

Age 31–50 – 28.3% have ICT knowledge.

Age 51 and above – 14.2% have ICT knowledge.

5.4 Indicators / observations

• Women have no adequate knowledge for using ICT tools.

• The family does not provide women with adequate facilities to use ICT tools due to socio-cultural factors as well as conservatism.


Age 18–30 – 50 % have smartphones.

Age 31–50 – 6.4% have smartphones.

Age 51 and above – 0.00% have smartphones.

5.5 Indicators / observations

• The family does not allow girls/women below 30 to use smartphones.

• Middle-aged women below 50 have little knowledge regarding the way to use ICT tools such as smartphones but watch TV regularly for entertainment.

• Women above 50 have no idea how to use ICT tools such as smartphones, but they sometimes enjoy watching TV.
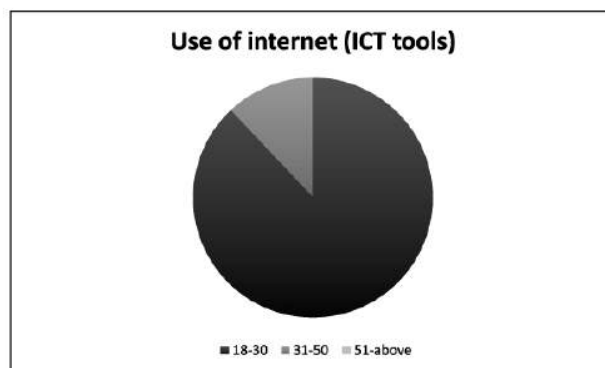
Age 18–30 – 46.8% use Internet.

Age 31–50 – 6.4% use Internet.

Age 51 and above – 0.00% use Internet.

5.6 Indicators / observations

• 46.8% of girls/women under 30 use Internet for entertainment, such as using Facebook and enjoying YouTube, but the rest of them have no interest in using Internet for other purposes such as e-medicine, e-learning, and so on due to information gap.

A small percentage of women (6.4%) under 50 use Internet for connecting with relatives who live abroad, while the rest of them have no knowledge of what Internet is-
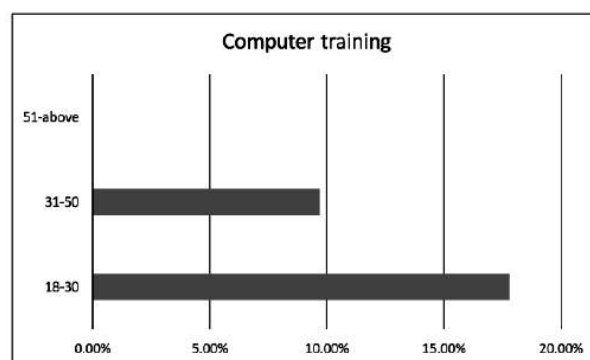
Age18–30 – 17.8% have computer skills.

Age 31–50 – 9.7% have computer skills.

Age 51 and above – 0.00% have computer skills.

5.7 Indicators / observations

• Most girls/women under 30 are given some opportunity by the family to undergo computer training. However, only a small percentage of women have actually undergone computer training with the notion of it affording them better job opportunities.

• Middle-aged and older women have no interest in computer training, as they consider it unnecessary in view of their age, apart from lacking the requisite confidence and awareness.
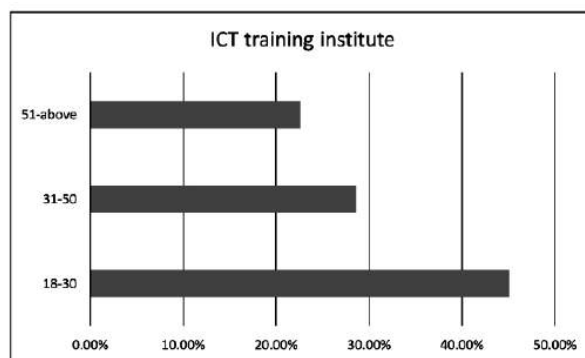

Age 18–30 – 45.1 % know about ICT infrastructure.
Age 31–50 – 28.6 % know about ICT infrastructure.
Age 51 and above – 22.6 % know about ICT infrastructure.

5.8 Indicators / observations
• Approximately, 54.8% of the women/girls have no idea about the ICT training institute in their locality, as they lack interest and awareness of computer technology.
• Most of the middle-aged and older women have no information about ICT training institutes in their locality or area due to lack of interest, information, and necessity.
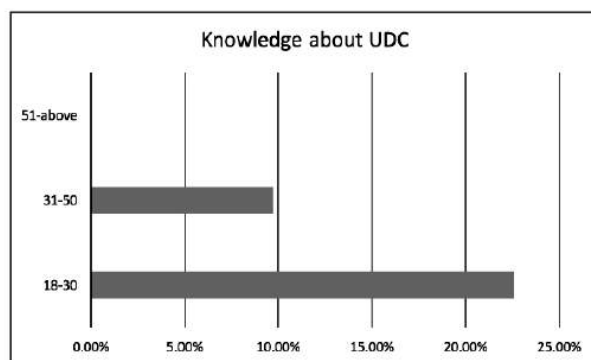
Age 18–30 – 22.6% know about UDC.
Age 31–50 – 9.7% know about UDC.
Age 51 and above – 0.00% know about UDC.

5.9 Indicators/ observations

• A small percentage of women have knowledge about UDC and its activities, as they have been availing its services (results of competitive exam, job application, printing, composing, and so on). However, the majority of women have inadequate information on UDC. They are not accustomed to availing UDC's service and do not know of the services it provides.

• Some middle-aged women under 50 complain that the UDC and its employees were not cooperative, hospitable, or caring when they availed its services for modifying name on birth certificate, on national ID, and so on.
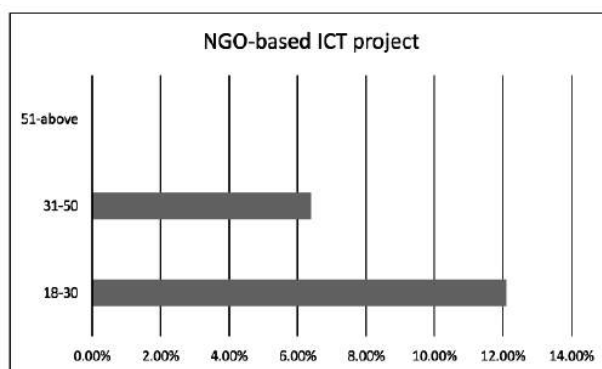

NGO-based ICT project

Age18–30 – 12.1% know about the NGO- based ICT project.
Age 31–50 – 6.4% know about the project.
Age 51 and above – 0.00% know about the project.

5.10 Indicators / observations

• Only a minor percentage of women under 30 know about the NGO-based ICT project in their locality, while most of them have no idea about and no access to the NGO-based ICT project; according to them, very few NGOs have launched ICT projects in their settlement.
• Most of the women under 50 are acquainted with the NGO- based ICT project in their settlement although a number of them are illiterate. Further, they argue that NGOs launch only microcredit programmes in their settlement and not any ICT project.
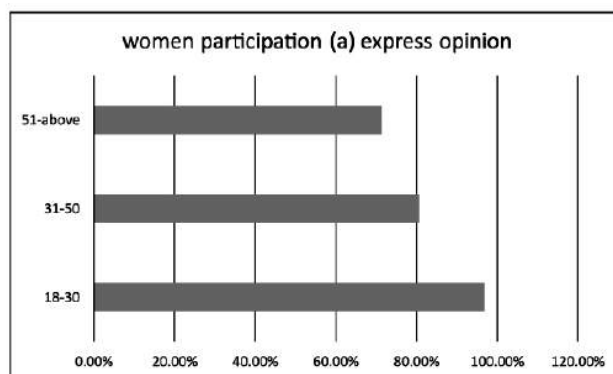
Age 18–30 – 96.8% women believe that ICT helps ensure women's participation in decision-making.

Age 31–50 – 80.7% women believe that ICT helps ensure women's participation in decision-making.

Age 51 and above – 71.4% women believe that ICT helps ensure women's participation in decision-making.

5.11 Indicators / observations

• Most of the girls/women under 30 believe that ICT helps ensure women's participation in decision-making, as, according to them, Information Technology as well as ICT provide information about the fundamental rights of women (through television, Facebook, and other online media), ways to protect their rights against violations, and the manner in which they can offer their opinion in decision-making. They felt too that the use of ICT tools and their widespread positive influences will create a better ambience for enabling decision-making by and the articulation of their personal opinion. Women under 50 too believe that ICT helps ensure women's participation in decision-making and feel that its use would make them more conscious about their rights.

• Women above 50 believe that the use of ICT tools has both positive and negative impacts: the positive impact is that it would help women take better decisions for the family, while the negative impact is that it would be harmful for youth, specially the girls, who tend to be misled and use ICT tools for inappropriate purposes.
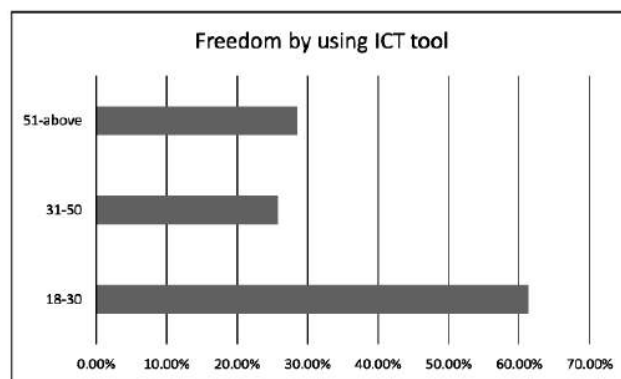
Age 18–30 – 61.3% of the women have enjoyed freedom by using ICT tools.

Age 31–50 – 25.8% of the women have enjoyed freedom by using ICT tools.

Age 51 and above – 28.6 % of the women have enjoyed freedom by using ICT tools.

5.12 Indicators / observations

• Most of the girls/women under 30 have enjoyed freedom through the use of ICT tools. They believe that their male counterparts in authority in their family realised the necessity of providing them access to information technology. They believe too that information technology as well as the use of ICT tools will bring them more consciousness about their rights and duties to the family and society as well as in the 18-30 31-50 51-above 0.00% 10.00% 20.00% 30.00% 40.00% 50.00% 60.00% 70.00% Freedom by using ICT tool country. However, in most cases, it has been seen that the family or parents do not give priority to youth/women's access to and use of ICT tools due to traditionalism and illiteracy.

• A very low proportion of the middle-aged and older women have accessed ICT tools such as smartphones, computer, laptop, internet, and so on but have enjoyed the freedom of watching television as an ICT tool, for the purpose of securing entertainment and news/information.

Empowerment: speaking without fear
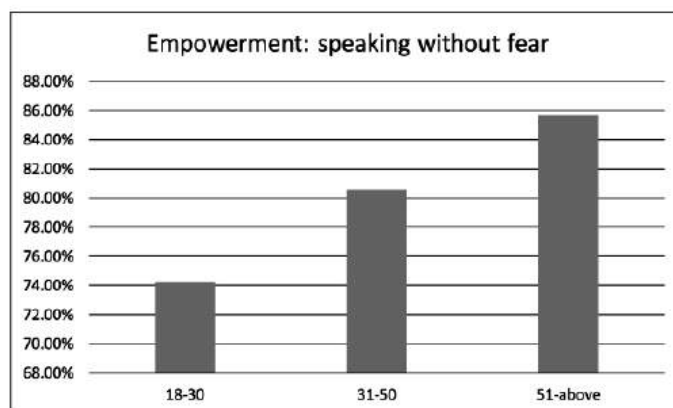
Age 18–30 – 74.2% women are able to articulate their problem without fear.

Age 31–50 – 80.6% women are able to articulate their problem without fear.

Age 51 and above – 85.7% women are able to articulate their problem without fear.

5.13 Indicators / observations

• Approximately 74.1% women under 30 are able to speak about their problem without fear, while the rest are dominated by their parents or husbands and hence unable to articulate their problems fairly. The main reason for this is considered to be male domination, with most parents affording greater priority to the opinions of their sons.

• Most middle-aged and older women are able to speak about their problem without fear due to their status as the most respected persons. They act as the authority and consultant in a family.

freedom from husband or family coercion

Age18–30 – 45.1% women are free from pressure from the husband or family to do their work.

Age 31–50 – 67.7% of the women are free from pressure from the husband or family to do their work.

Age 51 and above – 57.1% of the women are free from husband or family pressure to do their work.

5.14 Indicators / observations

• Most women under 30 are pressurized by their husband or family while they are involved in any activity without the permission of the male members, as the males argue that females should be responsible only for indoor activities such as cooking, childcare, and household chores.

• Most the middle-aged and older women are free from husband or family pressure in doing their work, because they themselves are the managers, leaders, and parents of a family, and most of them are treated with extreme honor as parents.
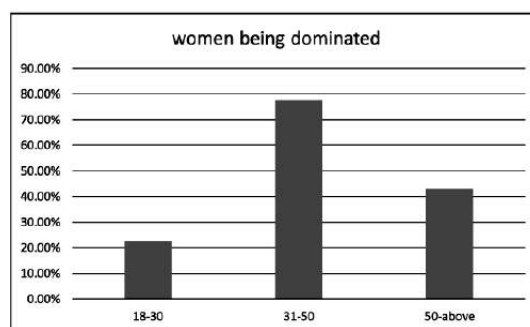
Age 18–30 – 22.6% of the women are dominated by males or family members.
Age 31–50 – 77.4% of the women are dominated by males or family members.
Age 51 and above – 42.9% of the women are dominated by males or family members.

Indicators / observations

• 22.6% of the women under 30 are dominated in all spheres, especially while taking decisions involving outdoor activities such as learning, training, and co-curricular activities, attesting to the widespread prevalence of male domination. Most of the middle-aged and older women are dominated by male members in a family because, in the male perception, women lack sufficient skills to take vital decisions or to manage.

6. Recommendation & Conclusion

ICT programs have penetrated different societies through which its impacts have been felt far and wide. The impacts of ICT transcends different spheres of life, social, economic, and political. On the social dimension, ICT has provided an opportunity for women to actually unleash their potential in different ways, thus positioning them as the equals of their male counterparts. ICT has proven from the different observations in the study is a critical contributor in the whole

process of women empowerment in different areas. To further enhance the influence of ICT in the promotion of women empowerment, there are several roles that ICT would achieve in the society in the process of promoting women empowerment , the strategies would target mostly the rural areas where the aspect of gender inequality still appears predominant.

Some strategic recommendations for solving the backwardness of rural women through ICT are:

- **Engagement of women in community-based ICT institutions and projects:**
Community-based services can be delivered to the doorstep of rural people through effective institutions such as community clinics, which have become very popular in rural areas. In order to engage rural women in ICT, there is no alternative to setting up community-based institutions and projects.

- **Adoption of the modern telecommunication system:**
Our rural telecommunication system is still not modernized. This is one of the major constraints in providing and introducing ICT-based services amongst rural women. Hence, a modern telecommunication system should be adopted in rural areas with a 3G or 4G network.

- **Ensuring education for all:**
Most rural women are not well-educated and have limited ICT knowledge. Hence, not only general education but also ICT education should be imparted to them universally.

- **Adequate training, workshop, and seminar facilities:**
In rural areas, training is a pre-requisite for acquiring expertise. Hence, adequate training should be imparted to rural women in order to enable them to access and utilise ICT resources.

- **Need for collaboration of ICT agents with the rural women:**
Collaboration among government, development organisations, NGOs, and other stakeholders needs to be encouraged for finding solutions to common problems through the application of appropriate ICT services in rural areas, where the government sector is still lagging behind considerably. Persons involved in the promotion of ICT – government officials or NGO/private organisation officials – can be introduced as ICT agents and their current low level of collaboration with rural women be increased adequately.

- **ICT knowledge-based cultural program should be arranged in rural areas:**

Often, different NGOs arrange many cultural programs in rural areas to increase awareness among the masses. This strategy can be adapted and adopted to bring the concept of ICT knowledge to rural women effectively.

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