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BREAKING THE MYTH OF THE ‘WHITE WOMAN’S BURDEN’: FEMALE MISSIONARIES IN BENGAL AND THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF *ZENANA* EDUCATION

Asha Islam Nayeem*

Abstract

Any discussion about the initial steps taken for the spread of women’s education in Eastern Bengal in the nineteenth century involves the contribution of female Christian missionaries from England. By the second half of the nineteenth century large numbers of educated young white women were joining the Church as overseas missionaries to work in every corner of the world that England had colonized. In Bengal, the arrival of female Christian missionaries in considerable numbers resulted in bringing Western education to the doorstep of the Bengali woman. The very traditional method of home teaching was established as a parallel system of formal education which in due time was acknowledged by Government as the *Zenana* Education System. The process of the institutionalization of the age-old custom of home teaching is explored in this paper. Also, the paper questions the validity of the assumption that sheer altruism and the noble idea of civilizing the uncivilized was the driving motivation for the women of England to endure the hardship of life away from home, in the colonies.

In the rapidly changing socio-economic and political environment of the nineteenth century colonial Bengal, the uneasiness regarding modernization and its troubled relationship with tradition came into conflict on the question of women’s emancipation through formal education. The *andarmahal*, apart from being a dwelling place for women, functioned as a repository of culture and tradition and it symbolized the one space that colonialism had not yet penetrated. The British Raj came to view it as the ‘unreasonable’, ‘illogical’ space that resisted colonization and where the civilizing rhetoric of colonialism needed to find a foothold. In the second half of the nineteenth century, the *andarmahal*, or, interchangeably, the *zenana mahal*, became the site where the Christian missionaries began active proselytization through institutionalizing the age-old practice of home education which gained cognition as the *Zenana* Education System. This alternative system of institutionalized home education was the direct result of a unique phenomenon in the history of Church missions,

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which involved educated and young women of British, North American and Canadian origin to deliver the Christ's message. These Christian educators would improve the life of Indian women who were apparently looked down upon by their men. Cultural arrogance led the imperialists to believe that it was a humanitarian responsibility of the white race to civilize the Indians. In doing so, they would judge the level of civilization by looking at how the women of a society were treated. The publication in 1899 of Rudyard Kipling's poem 'The White Man's Burden' encapsulated in one phrase the ideological basis of that cultural arrogance, which explains why the phrase 'the white man's burden' became the catchword of the imperialist school of thought as justification for the subjugation of such large numbers of people in Asia and Africa.¹ Female missionaries became part of the imperial design as access to the mothers of future colonial citizens was a cornerstone of the philosophy of cultural imperialism. Two groups of English women began to arrive in India in large numbers in the second half of the nineteenth century. The first group consisted of the wives and other female relatives of the administrative officers of the British Raj, who carried the ideological baggage of racial supremacy and generally, with a few exceptions of course, kept themselves segregated from the inferior natives. The second group was composed of the female missionaries, teachers, nurses and doctors, who took upon themselves the mighty task of alleviating the status of the downtrodden Indian woman; hence we term it the 'white woman's burden'.

However, the questions that perplex us are: why the sudden surge of altruism towards the women of the Empire? Why did the second half of the nineteenth century bring so many women missionaries from Britain, America and Canada to the colonies and why did the phenomenon erode in the first half of the 20th century? Given the dominant-subordinate characteristic of the power structure of the colonial society in Bengal, which category of women benefitted more: the dominant race/ethnic group of the white woman, or the subordinate race/ethnic group of indigenous women? Were the colonies a place where the educated women from England could escape for opportunities of spiritual satisfaction and professional achievement? What effect, if any, did missionary imperialism have

1 For a discussion on Indo-British race relations centering around the so-called moral burden of the white race, see Islam, Sirajul, 'The Briton in India: How Heavy Was the 'White Man's Burden'?', *Bangladesh Historical Studies*, Journal of the Bangladesh History Association, Vol. XVII, 1996-98, pp. 1-33.

on the development of movements and institutions for the progress of Indian women? This paper explores these questions within the cultural, social and political contexts of tradition versus modernity and patriarchal control versus colonial intervention. It attempts to show that the so-called 'white men's burden' was indeed a myth because throughout the second half of the nineteenth century and up to World War I, overseas missions provided the safe haven for white educated females who needed to escape the economic and social degradation back home. The case of Eastern Bengal, the region which is now Bangladesh, has been chosen for this study precisely because it was there where the female Christian missionaries began the practice of home visits to render educational services in the 1840s and it was there where the *Zenana* Education System became most successful compared to other parts of India and endured till 1933. While the imperial school perpetuates the myth of how the British women made huge sacrifices for their *heathen* sisters, this paper attempts to break that myth and show that the benefits, rather than being a one way process, were quite mutual.

Zenana Education before the Colonial Intervention

British colonial documents relating to female education in India during the nineteenth century use the term '*zenana* education' in connection with a certain experiment in the method of female education. *Zenana* is the Persian word for woman. In Bengal, before the term *bhadramahila* caught on as the counterpart of the English gentlewoman,² the term *zenana* was used to refer to the ladies of the upper echelon of society. In Eastern Bengal, the aristocratic classes consisted of Mughal, Afghan and Turkish stock.³ The handful of Mughal, Afghan and Turkish nobility resided in Dhaka as representatives of the central Mughal government in Delhi. The Hindu ladies of the upper classes were also

2 For information on the historical process of the birth of the Bengali *bhadramahila*, see Murshid, Ghulam, *Reluctant Debutante: Response of Bengali Women to Modernization, 1849-1905* (Rajshahi: Sahitya Samsad, Rajshahi University, 1983), Borthwick, Meredith, *The Changing Role of Women in Bengal, 1849-1905* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), and, Amin, Sonia Nishat, *The World of Muslim Women in Colonial Bengal, 1876-1939* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996).

3 For details on the demographic composition of Eastern Bengal, see Ahmed, Sharifuddin, *Dhaka: A Study in Urban History and Development, 1840-1921* (London: Curzon Press Ltd., 1986, 2nd edition by Academic Publishers Limited, Dhaka, 2004), and Mamoon, Muntasir, *Unish Shotokey Purva Banger Samaj, 1857-1905* (The Society of Eastern Bengal in the Nineteenth Century), Dhaka: CSS, Samaj Nirikshan Kendra, 1986.

included in the term *zenana*, as were the ladies of the rising Hindu and Muslim middle classes by the end of the nineteenth century. The domestic space these women occupied or, the women's quarters, was called the *zenana mahal* or, alternatively, the *antahpur*. The several generations of women who lived in that secluded space were called *zenana* or, *antahpurbashini*. Seclusion was a sign of nobility as it meant that they could afford the luxury of a leisured and protected life. Beginning from ancient times, throughout the middle ages, and during the Mughal rule, these upper class ladies were, more often than not, accomplished women of letters. It was not uncommon for them to receive lessons in Arabic and Persian inside the *zenana*.⁴ Apart from the princesses and daughters of ministers, the other group of women who possessed a good knowledge of Vedic literature and poetry were courtesans and concubines.⁵ This education, as was the case in England also, was not institutional or formal. Well-to-do families who could afford it, arranged for the girls of the family to receive rudimentary education based on religious scriptures from in-house governesses or peripatetic teachers.

The daughters of non-elite members of society did, on occasion, attend the village *pathshala*, *madrasah* or *maktab*, the indigenous educational institutions that were set up adjacent to a temple or a mosque to cater to the educational needs of the boys.⁶ The girls who attended these indigenous schools left too young to retain any of the education they gained, as the average age at marriage of a girl ranged between eight and eleven years. In the predominantly agricultural society of Eastern Bengal, formal education for boys was a luxury in itself, while the institutional education of girls was not an option at all. The investment in an education for a girl yielded no benefits, least of all in the marriage market. The Reverend William Adam of Dunfermline, Scotland, who was appointed by the Baptist Missionary Society (BMS) to work in India in 1818 and who later seceded from the BMS in 1821, writes in his reports on indigenous elementary education in Bengal that because it was considered 'improper' to bestow any education on girls and because that sort of knowledge

4 See Keay, F.E., *A History of Education in India and Pakistan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959), and Hossain, Shahanara, *The Social Life of Women in Early Medieval Bengal* (Dhaka: The Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, 1985).

5 Hossain, Shahanara, *Ibid.*, p. 45.

6 For detailed information on indigenous schools, see Shahidullah, Kazi, *Patshalas into Schools: The Development of Indigenous Elementary Education in Bengal, 1854-1905* (Calcutta: Firma KLM Private Limited, 1987).

was supposed to be most inauspicious to their spouses, the husbands were sometimes deceived into believing that their young wives had not acquired any form of literacy.⁷ It is this mindset that the pioneers of women's education, namely, the Christian missionaries, had to contend against and eventually conquer. But how much of this zeal was pure altruism?

How Burdensome was the 'White Woman's Burden'?

The phenomenal rise in the number of female missionaries in every denomination of the Christian Church in the second half of the nineteenth century has been termed by Barbara Ramusack as a period of 'maternal imperialism'. She views the pioneering women whose arrival in India paved the way for other white women as 'cultural missionaries' who preached the gospel of women's uplift.⁸ While the British colonial government was least concerned with initiating reforms for women and the native men were deeply suspicious of any attempt on the part of the imperial power to pervade the sacred area of home and hearth, the British women like Hanna Marshman, Mary Carpenter, Annette Akroyd, Annie Besant, and Margaret Noble made it their mission to alleviate the position of colonized Indian women. Barbara Ramusack records, however, that for most of these single and educated women, India was a kind of escape from the emotional and spiritual barrenness of the post-industrial society of the nineteenth century Britain.⁹ Annette Akroyd, who had shifted her position from one of an ardent activist for the spread of female education in Bengal, to settle into a quiet life of domesticity after her marriage with the notable Orientalist and civil servant Henry Beveridge, thought that life in England was a "boring life of moral classes, ragged school collections, balls, social engagements, visits, journeys to London and yearly trips to the seaside"¹⁰ and to escape such a life of "blankness" and "dreariness inexpressible", she came to Bengal in search of a more meaningful existence that her Unitarian upbringing urged her to lead.

7 Hartog, Sir Philip, *Some Aspects of Indian Education Past and Present*, published for the University of London Institute of Education by Oxford University Press, 1939, p. 53.

8 Ramusack, Barbara N., 'Cultural Missionaries, Maternal Imperialists, Feminist Allies: British Women Activists in India, 1865-1945' in Nupur Chaudhuri and Margaret Strobel (eds.), *Western Women and Imperialism: Complicity and Resistance* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), pp.120-136.

9 *Ibid.*, p. 128.

10 Quoted in Kopf, David, *The Brahma Samaj and the Shaping of the Modern Indian Mind* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), p. 35.

By the second half of the nineteenth century, England had a sizeable number of educated women who suffered emotionally and materially from the lack of gainful employment. These women, who did not belong to the working class and were aspiring to climb the social hierarchical ladder through an education, could only become governesses in upper class homes. There were only so many teaching jobs to be held at formal institutions as primary and secondary education for girls was not all that widespread and higher education was still out of bounds for women. The problem was truly acute for middle class educated women as summarized by Michael Sanderson: “The problem in the 1840-70 period was largely a middle-class one of finding careers for unmarried middle-class ladies ... Around 1850 existing careers were limited and becoming a governess was the only means of earning her livelihood open to the woman of gentle birth.”¹¹ In Rosalind Miles’ opinion, it was the paradox of Empire that while the colonized women fell victim to the domination of white males in addition to their own, ‘Britannia’s daughters’, as she terms the white women who took advantage of their superior position as representatives of the ruling race, seized the opportunity “of escaping the stifling narrowness of home to become doctors, teachers, leaders, fighters or farmers in the field.”¹²

It was not, however, only the British women for whom missionary engagement was a romantic alternative to the “excruciatingly boring life”¹³ of women whose life options were limited to becoming a factory girl or a governess or finding a suitable matrimonial match. In North America, in the nineteenth century, college graduates increasingly began to find joining the women's foreign missionary movement more attractive than taking up a life of improved domesticity and motherhood as a profession. By the end of the nineteenth century, American women missionaries came to numerically dominate the Christian missions in India. In Canada, the Toronto-based Women’s Foreign Missionary Society (WFMS) was set up under the auspices of the Presbyterian Church. Following the footsteps of British and American women, in Canada, by

11 Sanderson, Michael, *Education, economic change and society in England 1780-1870* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995. Second edition published by the Cambridge University Press on behalf of the Economic History Society, 1995), p. 56.

12 Miles, Rosalind, *The Women’s History of the World* (London: Paladin Grafton Books, A Division of the Collins Publishing Group, 1988), p. 216.

13 Barbara Miller Solomon’s *In the Company Educated Women: A History of Women and Higher Education in America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985) describes in detail how frustrated the college educated women were in the second half of the nineteenth century at the lack of meaningful employment.

the 1870s and 1880s, the three largest Protestant denominations, the Methodists, Presbyterians, and Anglicans, began to support women's missionary work. For the Canadian women like Dr. Dean Dow, Dr. Marion Olive, Jean Sinclair or Maggie Mackellar, the work they did in the distant Eastern lands halfway across the globe, held rich possibilities for personal and spiritual fulfillment.¹⁴ The mission fields in India and China provided women with career opportunities that were virtually unavailable in Canada. When these women returned home on furlough or after completing their mission, they were treated as celebrities and recognized as public role models. Though these exceptional women extended the boundaries of women's traditional roles through their work in the mission fields, such contributions did not necessarily open up new and larger opportunities for professional women in Canada.¹⁵

Missionary societies, well aware, by the second half of the nineteenth century of the great reservoir of potential that remained untapped, began to appeal to those 'whose energies find little scope in their own land'.¹⁶ Irene Petrie, a young woman from an upper-middle-class background, had come to Kashmir in 1894 as a missionary of the Church Missionary Society only to die three years later doing mission work in Tibet. Irene Petrie's biographer Carus-Wilson went to great lengths to explain the motive of Petrie and so many other young women like her who joined foreign missions and endured the hardship of life in the colonies. Carus-Wilson, writing in the age of high imperialism, endorses the imperialist ideology of the supremacy of the white race and their mission of civilizing the 'uncivilized' races by stating that it was only in response to the call of duty and purely a sense of altruism that motivated the educated women of Victorian England to sacrifice their lives in the service of the Church.¹⁷ But the truth seems otherwise. For the Victorian women, missionary work not only

¹⁴ The full history of Canadian women's involvement in overseas missionary work can be found in Brouwer, Ruth Compton, *New Women for God: Canadian Presbyterian Women and India Missions, 1876-1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990).

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 193.

¹⁶ *Report of the London Missionary Society for 1882*, p. 32, cited in Fiona Bowie, Deborah Kirkwood and Shirley Ardener (eds.), *Women and Missions: Past and Present: Anthropological and Historical Perceptions* (Providence: Berg Publishers, 1993), p.61.

¹⁷ Carus-Wilson, A., *Irene Petrie: Missionary to Kashmir* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1901), p.27, cited in Bowie, Kirkwood and Ardener (eds.), *Women and Missions, ibid.*, p. 61.

provided avenues for independent adventure, it also created opportunities to forge matrimonial relationships, opportunities which had not been available at home. The missionary historian C.P. Williams shows how mission societies tried to deter women from leaving the missions for marriage or other reasons by signing an agreement stating that the costs of training, outfit and travel would be repaid on a sliding scale according to length of service by those who left the societies within an agreed period, which usually was five years.¹⁸ Nevertheless, a sufficiently large number did get married, which, in the World Missionary Conference of 1910 held in Edinburgh was viewed as a 'grave problem', and created often as a result of taking up a 'mistaken vocation'.¹⁹ The typical salary of about 100 pounds sterling per annum (a single man could expect 140 pounds sterling per annum) together with accommodation, by contemporary standards, was also a temptation to many women as that amount was much more than could be expected in other spheres of work. Having said that, it is important to remember that a large number of women came from a holiness background and the sacred ambition of suffering for Christ's sake and total submission to God's will was axiomatic of that age.

In Britain, the census of 1851 had come as a startling awakening to the fact that a considerable number of women would face the prospect of spinsterhood as the male-female ratio stood at 1,000 men for 1,050 women. According to the Registrar-General, "Out of every 100 females of twenty years of age and upwards, fifty-seven are wives, thirteen are widows, and thirty are spinsters."²⁰ That meant that they would have to carve out occupations for themselves which, in the second half of the nineteenth century, were not easy to come by. The thousands who were being absorbed into the textile industry as 'factory girls' were not the problem. It was the thousands of women of the middle and upper classes who were counted among the "surplus" or the "redundant" women.²¹ Emigration from England to the Americas, to New Zealand, Canada and the

¹⁸ Williams, C.P., 'The Recruitment and Training of Overseas Missionaries in England between 1850 and 1900, with Special Reference to the Records of the Church Missionary Society, the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society, the London Missionary Society and the China Inland Mission', University of Bristol MLitt (1976), cited in Bowie, Kirkwood and Ardener (eds.), *Women and Missions*, p. 62.

¹⁹ World Missionary Conference, 1910 (n.d.), *Report of Commissions*, 10 vols, (Edinburgh: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier, 1910), cited in *ibid*.

²⁰ *Population Return*, 1851, vol. ii, p. clxv, cited in Greg, William Rathbone, *Why Are Women Redundant* (London: N. Trübner & Co., 1869), p. 12.

²¹ W.R. Greg, *Why Are Women Redundant*, p. 18.

colonies, not to mention casualties from the incessant wars England was embroiled in, created the population imbalance. As Rathbone puts it in *Why Are Women Redundant*, it is the women from the middle and upper classes “who were raised by fortune above the necessity of caring for their own subsistence, but to whom employment is a necessity as imperious to the milliner or the husbandman, because only employment can fill the dreary void of an unshared existence; – beautiful lay nuns, involuntary takers of the veil, – who pine for work, who beg for occupation, who pant for interest in life...”²² Inherent in such representations of Victorian women are the tensions of a complex society born out of industrialization in the previous century.²³ As a direct result of the failure of the western societies to provide for their educated women in the professions and in the matrimonial sector, it was the colonies where they were eventually absorbed as educators, nurses, doctors, but most of all, as missionaries of different categories.

Categorizing Female Missionaries

Women were active as missionary apostles from the earliest days of Christianity, as is known from the letters of St. Paul. In his letter to the Romans the apostle Paul seeks all cooperation for Sister Phoebe who served the Church at Chenchrae. Priscilla appears to be the first example of the missionary wife, helping her husband Aquila, as mentioned in the New Testament. Women missionaries maintained a prominent role in the Church throughout the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, but gradually became marginalized from the 17th century onwards as a side effect of the Inquisition’s war against the practice of witchcraft. It was in the second half of the nineteenth century that feminization of the Protestant missions began to take place as the dual effect of the socio-economic changes in post-Industrial England and the establishment of Empire. British missionary activities during that period opened up avenues for American and Canadian missions as well. A distinct feature of renewed female missions was the presence of a large number of single women. They formed a separate category and were missionaries in their own right, doing paid work. Mission historians Stephen Neill, Ruth Compton Brouwer, and Deborah Kirkwood have

²² *Ibid.*, p. 6.

²³ For a discussion on the sharpening cultural devaluation and marginalization of women in metropolitan England and the complex role the colonial enterprise played in the tensions and contradictions of gender, race and class, see Sen, Indrani, *Woman and Empire: Representations in the Writings of British India (1858-1900)* (Hyderabad: Orient Longman Private Limited, 2002).

drawn attention to two more categories, which are, wives of missionaries, and missionary wives. The differences between the two latter categories, the historians insist, should not be overlooked.

Missionaries were encouraged to take their wives with them so that they could set examples of good Christian wives and mothers, serve as models of good female behavior, and, with their husbands, demonstrate the virtues and merits of a monogamous Christian way of live. An important part of their work was the task of imparting knowledge of Western domestic skills like primary health and hygiene, cooking, sewing and laundry to the indigenous women.²⁴ Women who went overseas with their missionary husbands had to set examples of good wives and good mothers as the ultimate Christian ideal in every missionary outpost, whether in India, Africa or Australia, for the locals to see first-hand how Christianity promised a 'better' life. Joining in the proselytizing work of their husbands, beyond their domestic duties, was optional for the wives of missionaries. Many diaries and letters of the wives of missionaries have survived to show how much the Church demanded of them and how little of their work was acknowledged.²⁵ Norman Goodall pays tribute to the wives of missionaries in his authoritative history of the London Missionary Society in the following way:

Apart from all that a wife's companionship means in a man's work, apart from the distinctive contribution in Christian witness which a missionary's home offers, there has always been rendered by missionaries' wives an immense volume of work in schools, dispensaries and cottage industries, in translation and literary work, in the training of women workers, and in experiments that bear the stamp of creative originality. To have attempted a record of this work, or even to have named all the outstanding illustrations of it would have been too large an undertaking.²⁶

Missionary wives, on the other hand, were required by the Church to assist their husbands in their missionary work. In fact, in Deborah Kirk's words, "missionary wives were not only 'married to the job' but they were often married for the job; when a young missionary wife died her widower would

24 For more, see Deborah Kirkwood, 'Protestant Missionary Women: Wives and Spinsters', in Fiona Bowie, Deborah Kirkwood and Shirley Ardener (eds.), *Women and Missions: Past and Present: Anthropological and Historical Perceptions*, pp.23-41.

25 Grimshaw, Patricia and Kirkby, Diane (eds.), *Dealing with Difference: Essays in Gender, Culture and History* (Melbourne: History Department, University of Melbourne, 1997), p. 48.

26 Goodall, Norman, *A History of the London Missionary Society, 1895-1945* (London, 1954), cited in Fiona Bowie et al. (eds.), *Women and Missions, op.cit.*, p. 28.

seek a replacement, very often from within the wider family circle of missionaries.²⁷ There were missions-minded women who sought husbands who would take them to heathen lands, just as male missionaries sought helpmates who would support them in their work. Becoming a missionary wife thus allowed women to have both marriage and career. The relative 'invisibility' of the missionary wives in official reports has caused most researchers to gloss over the crucial contribution they made. The unfortunate part was that in most cases, they were not even remunerated, depending on the financial condition of a particular mission. When a single female missionary got married to a colleague, most Missions, like the LMS, stopped remuneration to the missionary wife even though she continued her work in the field.²⁸ The Church Missionary Society, however, provided a joint allowance to husband and wife.

In whatever category they may have been, female missionaries were invaluable to the Church because unless the women of India could be reached, conversion would remain negligible. Indian women may have had little influence in the public space but in the private space, their effectiveness as the tutor of early religious and moral education of the rising generation was unlimited. Thus, access to women was of vital importance for effective proselytization and such access was next to impossible to gain by male missionaries. Opening schools for girls was the first step towards influencing the future generations of mothers. Education is implicit in the concept of mission and all missionaries, therefore, were educators of sorts. The problem in Bengal, however, appeared to be that the upper classes did not send their female wards to the schools that the missionaries had established. So a method was devised that suited the social norms of Bengal while serving the ends of the Church. That method was the zenana education scheme, where education was taken to the homes of girls through the peripatetic teaching method. Once the missionaries devised the scheme of going from door to door to educate the ladies of the households instead of direct proselytization, the method gained the full support of the Government in the form of grants of financial aid to missionary societies.²⁹

27 Kirkwood, *Ibid.*, p. 27.

28 *Ibid.*, p. 28.

29 The Annual Report on Education for 1877-78 shows that, of the Rs.16,420 spent on zenana education, Rs. 14,804 was spent as grants to missionary societies. Bengal Education Proceedings (A) for the month of July 1878 to July 1879, Circular n. 45 and nos. 3691-92, dated October, 1878, File III, No. 12, NA,B.

In the hands of the Christian missionaries, peripatetic teaching received the cognition of 'zenana education'. *Zenana* education was institutionalized chiefly because the upper class girls, as a rule, maintained strict *purdah* and thus were not sent to the various schools the Christian missionaries had established. The Christian missionaries desperately wanted to convert the social leaders of the native population to achieve the ripple down effect (which did not happen). In course of time, active participation from the colonial government and local agency turned the small ventures of a few missionary women into an institution. As the very epistemology of the term suggests, it was education for the ladies of the upper echelon of Bengal society. It was quite costly to recruit a peripatetic teacher to visit one's home once or twice a week. Meredith Borthwick is rather unceremonious about the non-egalitarian aspect of this mode of education: "*Zenana* education was not freely available to the *chotolok*, and therefore was compatible with the preservation of *bhadralok* status".³⁰

Distinction between Home Education and Zenana Education

The tradition of giving education to upper class girls at home and the institution of *zenana* education were distinct from one another. Meredith Borthwick in her pioneering work, *The Changing Role of Women in Bengal*³¹ says that home education is the education that female wards received informally from the male members of the family. It could be the father, or a brother or the husband. The most illustrious figure in Bengal who was educated at home, secretly, at the dead of night, first by her brother and then by her husband, was Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain. Her contribution to the spread of female education in Calcutta has earned her a permanent place in the annals of the history of female education in Bengal.

30 Borthwick, Meredith, *The Changing Role of Women in Bengal, 1849-1905* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), p. 71.

31 Borthwick, Meredith, *Ibid.*, pp. 68-80. For detailed discussions on zenana education see, Roy, Benoy Bhusan and Ray, Pranati, *Zenana Mission: The Role of Christian Missionaries for the Education of Women in 19th Century Bengal* (Delhi: Indian Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1998), Roy, Benoy Bhusan, *Antahpurer Strisiksha* (A short history of women's education in Bengal), Kolkata: Naya Udyog, 1998, Lahiri, Krishna, 'Education of Women in Bengal, 1849-1882, With Special Reference to Missionary Contributions' (Ph.D. Thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 1979), University Microfilm International, Ann Arbor, Michigan, U.S.A., 1985. References to *zenana* education in other parts of India are available in Minault, Gail, *Secluded Scholars: Women's Education and Muslim Social Reform in Colonial India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998) and Hasan, Zoya and Menon, Ritu, *Educating Muslim Girls: a comparison of five Indian cities* (New Delhi: Women Unlimited, an associate of Kali for Women, 2005).

Women of the elite classes in both the Hindu and Muslim communities would be given rudimentary education so that their respective religious scriptures could be read. They learned how to sew clothes and do some embroidery as well. A clear demarcation between home education and *zenana* education can be made regarding the content of study. The home education scheme did not follow any recognized structure or curricula. Peripatetic teachers called *ustadnis* came to the homes of well-to-do people to teach their daughters how to read chiefly religious scripts. *Zenana* education is different from home education because when Christian missionaries began to teach in the *zenana*, they devised certain curricula and methods. Beginning from the 1860s, Hindu and Brahma centers of *zenana* teaching sprang up with their own structured curricula in reaction to the aggressive proselytization attempts of the female Christian missionaries. By the end of the nineteenth century, the Muslim leaders of society also organized *zenana* teaching centres for their womenfolk and they based that education on the curricula formulated by the Calcutta University. The Muslim *Suhrid Sammilani*, established in Dhaka in 1883 was one such group of enlightened Muslim men who dared not violate *pardah*, but wanted to spread education among Muslim girls. The group drew up a syllabus corresponding to the one in the Calcutta University, distributed books, provided private tuitions and held examinations in the *zenana*. They even distributed certificates.³² Until 1905, the year it ceased to exist, the Muslim *Suhrid Sammilani* had distributed certificates to a total of 37 students from Dhaka, Barisal, Mymensingh and Calcutta. In the latter years after the Indian Education Commission of 1882, popularly known as the Hunter Commission, praised this method which had grown out of the socio-cultural and religious necessities of Bengal as a good method of education and made specific recommendations for its improvement. Government Inspectors monitored *zenana* education centers and took examinations. The indigenous efforts received the cognate of '*Antahpur Stree Shiksha*', the Sankrit for *zenana* education.

The Shift from Missionary Schools to the Zenana Education Scheme

Historians give different dates for the beginning of *zenana* education in Bengal which turned into a parallel institution to the modern formal schools rather than an alternative system. Binoy Bhushon Roy and Pranati Roy mention that *zenana* education was introduced in 1841 in Calcutta by Miss Saville under the

32 Amin, Sonia Nishat, *The World of Muslim Women in Colonial Bengal, 1876-1939* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996), p. 150.

auspices of the Church of Scotland Women's Mission.³³ On the other hand, Helen Barrett Montgomery insists that the practice of *zenana* education began in Jessore of Eastern Bengal when Mrs. John Sully gained access to a local gentleman's home but unfortunately does not give a date!³⁴ Yet another historian, Geraldine Forbes, attributes the beginning of *zenana* education to Ms. H.C. Mullens (spelled Mulence by Benoy Bhushon Roy) who was invited by a gentleman in Calcutta to teach his wife embroidery.³⁵ The missionary newspaper *Somprakash* corroborates this information.³⁶ Hanna Catherine Mullens (or Mulence), however, took over the *zenana* work from Mrs. Elizabeth Sully, wife of the missionary John Sully, when they sailed back to England in 1861.

Prior to gaining government patronage and social recognition throughout the late nineteenth and the early twentieth century, the method of door-to-door teaching faced some resistance from Christian missionaries themselves at the beginning. In 1840, Dr. Thomas, a missionary of the United Free Church of Scotland submitted a proposal for a scheme of door-to-door education of Indian women which was turned down by other missionaries.³⁷ He re-submitted the proposal at the Conference of the Calcutta Missionaries in 1853 which was rejected again on the grounds that it was 'unrealistic'. That was the year Alexander Duff sent Reverend Fordyce to Calcutta. His wife, not a missionary in her own right, assisted him in his work. A conference in Calcutta in 1855 where the missionaries working in Bengal met, Mrs. Fordyce read an article that put forward the necessity of *zenana* education and Dr. Mulence (spelled Mullens by some historians) supported it. The proposal was finally accepted, after which seven denominations, including the Baptist and the London Mission, began *zenana* work immediately. The seven denominations were joined later by other missionary organizations including ones from North America. So it was that although *zenana* work started in approximately 1841, it gained full steam after the 1850s.

33 Roy, Benoy Bhusan and Ray, Pranati, *Ibid.*, p. 19.

34 Montgomery, Helen Barrett, *Western Women in Eastern Lands* (New York, 1910), p. 108.

35 Forbes, Geraldine, 'In Search of the 'Pure Heathen': Missionary Women in Nineteenth Century India', *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. XXI, No. 17, Review of Women Studies, April 26, 1986, p. WS-3.

36 Lewis, C.B., *Zenana Work: its origin and progress*, Calcutta, 1876, p. 5, cited in Roy, Benoy Bhusan and Ray, Pranati, *Ibid.*, p. 184.

37 Roy, Benoy Bhusan and Ray, Pranati, *Ibid.*, p. 19.

Eastern Bengal as a Missionary Outpost

Single white women looking for a vocation kept joining overseas Church missions as the most respectable option. Hence, various denominational churches had the numerical strength to send representatives to the remotest parts of the British Empire. The Roman Catholic Mission had visiting governesses even in the Khasiya and Jaintia Hills. The Raj encouraged missionary activities among the tribal people as part of the grand imperial design to bring them, to use Kalyan Kumar Sengupta's phrase, 'within the vortex of colonial economy and exploitation.'³⁸ In *History of Hindu-Christian Encounters*, Sita Ram Goel, however, has argued the case of the thrust of missionary activity among the tribal people from a strong Hindu nationalistic perspective.³⁹ He argues that, although Alexander Duff, a member of the Committee of Public Instruction in 1834, and T.B. Macaulay, a member of the Governor General's Council, were both highly optimistic that Western education would be instrumental in bringing the idolaters of India under the fold of Christianity,⁴⁰ their dreams were thwarted by one Narendranath Datta (1863-1902), known better as Swami Vivekananda. Swami Vivekananda, says Goel, single-handedly turned the tide against Christianity among the educated, upper class Bengalis, forcing the Christian missionaries to recede into the tribal belts for achieving conversions.⁴¹ Apart from the tribal belts of Mymensingh and Chittagong, *zenana* agencies were at work in Faridpur, Barisal, Bogra, Comilla, Noakhali, and, of course, Dhaka. According to education reports of 1910, *zenana* agencies were planning to extend their work in Pabna and Sylhet.⁴²

Another factor in the proliferation of missionary activity in Eastern Bengal since the latter half of the nineteenth century was the strong anti-missionary reaction that grew in strength from the 1860s in Calcutta. Societies and associations were formed to counter the evangelical attempts of the missionary

38 Sengupta, Kalyan Kumar, 'Peasant and Tribal Movements in Eastern India in the Second Half of the 19th Century: Some Conceptual Problems', in Roy, Ranjit Kumar (ed.), *The Imperial Embrace: Society and Polity under the Raj* (Kolkata: Rabindra Bharati University, 1993), pp. 22.

39 Goel, Sita Ram, *History of Hindu-Christian Encounters: AD 304 to 1996* (New Delhi: Voice of India, 1986), second revised and enlarged edition, 1996, p. 92.

40 *Ibid.*, pp. 93-94.

41 *Ibid.*, p. 92.

42 Education A Proceedings, Government of East Bengal and Assam (Sylhet Proceedings), File No. E/946 of 1909, Nos. 1-8, Bangladesh National Archives, Dhaka.

organizations. The radical nationalist note in the neo-Hindu movement of the 1880s and 1890s was also an added factor.⁴³ It became increasingly difficult for the Christian missions to run smoothly as the Hindu revivalist movement aimed chiefly to attack imperialism and western culture. That made them directly to clash with Christian missions as they represented western culture and were infiltrating Indian homes and ‘corrupting’ the women and children. Thus, while the Christian Evangelist Movement of the 1850s brought a rush of missionary activities in Bengal, the Hindu revivalism of the 1870s, especially ignited by Swami Vivekananda presented missionary activity with serious resistance.⁴⁴ In the face of such resistance that was developing in the major urban centres, the missionary societies moved more into the hinterland and into tribal areas. In the remote, hilly areas, the missionaries did not encounter any resistance from Hindus and Muslims, but were made to feel welcome by the tribal communities. For the Garos and tribals of Khasia, Jyantia mountains, Christianity was accompanied by modern education and a chance to improve their financial conditions, which was why they welcomed the missionaries. It was not, therefore, sheer altruism that Christian missions began working in larger numbers in marginalized communities in the second half of the nineteenth century.

Since the British intrusion in the Khasi and Jyantia Hills in 1824, the Christian missionaries had followed in the heels of government officials, teachers, artisans, in search of new horizons.⁴⁵ The presence of Welsh missionaries in those areas is now almost slipping into oblivion. The Welsh historian Aled Gruffydd Jones regrets that the account of the long association between Bengal and Wales through the missionaries of the Calvinist sect, the Welsh Calvinistic Methodists, has lapsed into historical amnesia.⁴⁶ They had established a base in Shillong in the Khasi Hills in 1840.⁴⁷ Having met little or no resistance from

43 See Chaudhuri, Tripti, ‘The Brahmo and the Neo-Hindu Movements: Perceptions of the British Protestant Missionaries,’ in Roy, Ranjit Kumar (ed.), *The Imperial Embrace: Society and Polity under the Raj* (Kolkata: Rabindra Bharati University, 1993), pp. 51-72.

44 See Goel, Sita Ram, *History of Hindu-Christian Encounters: AD 304 to 1996* (New Delhi: Voice of India, 1st edition, 1986, 2nd and enlarged edition, 1996).

45 Ray, B. Datta elaborates this theme in *The Emergence and Role of the Middle Class in Northern India* (New Delhi: Uppal Publishing House, 1983).

46 See Jones, Aled Gruffydd, ‘Imagining Bengal: Bengali Culture and the Welsh National Awakening, 1840-1966,’ *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh* (Humanities), Vol. 49, Number 1, June, 2004, p. 81,

47 *Ibid.*, p. 83.

Hinduism and Islam, the Christian church they established consisted of thousands of converted members. When the Welsh missionaries extended their work to the plains of Sylhet in 1850, they began to face difficulty in evangelical work and thus conversion became limited. The Islamic civic culture was firmly established in the plains of Sylhet due to the legacy of Hazrat Shah Jalal (R), which the external force of Christianity had no way of challenging.⁴⁸ Despite producing limited results in conversions, the Welsh Calvinistic mission in Sylhet was so successful in providing female missionaries to visit *zenanas* regularly from the 1880s that requests for visitations have been more than the Mission was able to meet.⁴⁹ The missionaries visited the *zenanas* once or twice a week, between twelve noon and five o'clock in the afternoon because that was when the ladies and girls of the household could spare some time out of domestic responsibilities. All the *zenana* pupils were drawn from respectable Hindu and Muslim families. They were taught reading, writing, arithmetic, sewing, cutting and nursing. The Welsh Calvinistic Mission strongly advocated the need for holding examinations and giving prizes and certificates to the successful students to give them a sense of purpose. The Welsh presence in Sylhet continued until 1966.

Recommendations of the Education Commission of 1882

The thrust into the remotest parts of the British Empire got further incentive from the Hunter Commission of 1882 which recommended that government grant-in-aid be extended to peripatetic teachers. On the basis of the apparent demand for peripatetic teachers from both the Hindu and Muslim communities, the Simla Education Conference of 1901 recorded recommendations to formulate proper government policy that would facilitate the expansion of *zenana* education. The greatest impetus, however, came on the eve of the Partition of Bengal in 1905. Eastern Bengal gained an importance it had not hitherto enjoyed in the political game of the colonizers. In the face of nascent nationalist agitation led by the Calcutta-based intelligentsia, the colonial

48 For a discussion on the history of the expansion of Islam in Sylhet, see Karim, Abdul, 'Advent of Islam in Sylhet and Hazrat Shah Jalal (R)' in Ahmed Ahmed, Sharif uddin (ed.), *Sylhet, History and Heritage* (Dhaka: Bangladesh Itihas Samiti, 1999), pp. 129-149.

49 'Circular Issued to Missions Relating to Zenana Classes and Reports coming in from the various Missions,' Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam Education (A) Proceedings, File no. E/946 of 1909, nos. 1-8, pp. 207-215, National Archives of Bangladesh.

government sought to woo the densely populated, vast agricultural hinterland of Eastern Bengal by promising them a better future under the British Raj.⁵⁰

The Eastern part of Bengal could be a strong power base if the hitherto neglected province could be transformed and modernized. A better way to do it was to concentrate on the education for both men and women. The new Government of East Bengal and Assam (1905-1911) took heed of the recommendations made by the Simla Conference. These recommendations were basically a reiteration of the proposals made by the Education Commission of 1882. The Commission had made three main recommendations: a) that grants for *zenana* teaching should be recognized as a charge on public funds; b) that education for the *zenana* should be secular; and, c) that the pupils should be tested by an Inspectress or any other female agent. The Government of India agreed that the instruction given by governesses in *zenanas* ought to be encouraged by grants-in-aid and that the work of *zenana* education should be developed under the control of an adequate female inspecting agency. About the recommendation of a secular curriculum, the Government of India remained silent. But that the Hunter Commission recommended a secular curriculum is a reflection of the strong message the interviewees could get across to the Commission about how they felt about the attempts at proselytization in the name of education in the *zenana*.

Government Experiments with Zenana Education

A qualitative change was introduced among the teaching staff for the *zenana* education at the turn of the new century. In 1902, twelve peripatetic teachers were placed on the Government pay-roll for the first time. None of them were Christian or missionaries, but were Hindus and Muslims. They were to receive salaries of Tk. 30 per month. As they were on the government pay-roll, they were not allowed to take remuneration from the families they were visiting, which was hitherto the practice. The government called this scheme '*zenana* education by house-to-house visitation'. The native aversion towards proselytization by Christian missionary teachers must have been quite pronounced, and the government must have felt obliged to pay attention to that aversion because the peripatetic teachers on government pay-roll had to be

50 See McClane, John R., 'Partition of Bengal 1905: A Political Analysis', in Islam, Sirajul (ed.), *History of Bangladesh 1704-1971* (Dhaka: Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, 1992), Vol. II, pp. 165-67.

orthodox Hindu or Muslim women. However, in the quinquennial report of 1901-02 to 1906-07, the Inspectress of Education, Miss Brock, expressed great dissatisfaction with the work of these twelve governesses. There was a huge question mark about the qualifications of these governesses and their commitment to the work they were entrusted with. The Inspectress felt that the reason that these teachers lacked commitment and showed no eagerness to improve themselves was because their salary did not depend on the exam results obtained by the students. Reports about *zenana* governesses reveal that, in Dhaka, in 1907, a Muslim and Brahmo *zenana* governess would receive Tk. 50 per month, with an additional amount of Tk. 25 per month as conveyance allowance.⁵¹ Twenty-one Hindu and seventeen Muslim girls were on the rolls of these classes during the period between 1901-02 and 1906-07. The Hindu classes appeared to have done good work but, according to the Inspectress' report, the Muslim pupils failed to show progress due to the incompetence of the Muslim teacher.

Government experiments with *zenana* education were extended to Barisal and Noakhali too. A *zenana* class for Muslim *pardanashin* ladies was opened at Ulania in 1903 at an annual cost of Tk. 360. The amount was met from provincial revenues. It had twelve ladies under its instruction but the number dropped to ten the following year. The experiment proved to be a frustrating one both from the financial and the academic points of view. The comments of Mr. H.E. Stapleton, Esq., the Inspector of Schools, Dhaka Division, is worth noting here. Mr. Stapleton remarked that "beyond teaching elements of Bengali language to about a dozen Mohammedan girls of a particular family it did nothing good".⁵² He strongly felt that the primary duty of the State was educating the masses and that the cost of one *zenana* class may help to run half-a-dozen primary schools for girls. Nevertheless, *zenana* classes continued to be held there and the *zenana* teachers were supervised by Miss Moore of the American Baptist Mission. This continuation was consistent with the findings of a report of the Female Education Committee set up in 1908 to improve the condition of female education in the new province of Eastern Bengal and

51 Extract from the Report on the Progress of Education in Eastern Bengal and Assam during the years 1901-1902—1906-1907, Education (A) Proceedings, Assam Secretariat (Sylhet Proceedings), Government of East Bengal and Assam, File No. E/946 of 1909, April 1910, Nos. 1-8, Bangladesh National Archives, Dhaka.

52 Education (A) Proceedings, Assam Secretariat (Sylhet Proceedings), Government of East Bengal and Assam, File No. E-946 of 1909, April 1910, Nos. 1-8, NAL, B.

Assam. The Committee recommended that Government should make a grant of Rs. 100 a month to the American Baptist Mission in Barisal, for the improvement and development of *zenana* work.

The experiment in *zenana* education with governesses on government pay-roll in Noakhali (then a town in the Chittagong Division) appeared to produce better results than that of Barisal. The experiment began in January 1904. The classes started with 60 pupils although the report does not say how many of them were Hindus and how many were Muslims. By the fiscal year 1906-1907 the numbers rose to 105 pupils (98 Hindu and 7 Muslims). In 1907-08, there were 122 pupils enrolled in 18 *zenana* centers. Each centre received a visit from a governess once a month. The governess refused to visit the centers more frequently because of the high cost of conveyance which was not included in her allowance. How much progress can be achieved from one lesson once a month is not too hard to imagine. Nevertheless, the *zenana* work at Noakhali seems to have impressed the Inspectress of Schools, Miss Brock. In her report of 1919-20, she wrote that the governesses at Noakhali were doing the best job in East Bengal.⁵³ In 1909, the report of the Directory of Public Instruction stated that there were eighty-three pupils attending *zenana* classes. Of them, sixty-eight were married or widowed. There was only one teacher for all these pupils. The mistress was Srimati Premamayee Aich, wife of the Head Pandit of the Noakhali Girls' Middle Vernacular School.⁵⁴ Her educational qualifications were up to the Upper Primary Standard and an added advantage was her skill at needlework. The classes were held in nineteen centers, all located in Hindu quarters. The centers were all within a radius of half a mile. The teaching was confined to reading, writing, sewing and knitting, with more attention paid to the latter two. The mistress attended one centre a day where only two or three pupils attended. If the central gathering system could be introduced there, the mistress could make good on time spent on traveling from one centre to the other.

Although most of the missionary outposts of Eastern Bengal that had begun *zenana* education in the middle of the nineteenth century were gradually being taken over by the Government, the Bengal Evangelical Mission remained firmly

53 Report on Public Instruction in Bengal for 1919-20 (Calcutta: The Bengal Secretariat Book Depot, 1921), compiled by W.W. Hornell, Director of Public Instruction, Bengal, p.18.

54 Assam Secretariat (Sylhet Proceedings), Bengal Education (A) Proceedings, April 1910, File No. E-946 of 1909, Nos. 1-8, NAL,B.

stationed in Faridpur, a district south-west of Dhaka. Set up in 1847 by one Mathuranath Basu, the Bengal Evangelical Mission there had sixty women from different religious communities such as the Hindus, the Muslims and the Christians. According to a report of 1911, they would study under three peripatetic teachers.⁵⁵ The Mission report names Mrs. H.B. Sarkar, Miss H. Biswas and Mrs. H. Paul as the three teachers who had to go to the students' houses by boat.⁵⁶ The *zenana* education program ran there at a cost of Rs. 711/- and 5 annas per month. The Government grant-in-aid amounted to Rs. 60/- per month. The Female Education Committee mentions the good work of the Faridpur *Suhrid Sabha* for promoting female education in the district.⁵⁷

Changes in Modes of *Zenana* Education

The *Zenana* education formed a sub-category in female education in the nineteenth and early twentieth century colonial Bengal. After putting the experiment with '*zenana* education by house-to-house visitation' in motion, the Education Department convened a conference of Hindu and Muslim educational officers and took proposals from them regarding what else could be done. The Indian officials came up with a proposal which was accepted by the government. It was called the Central Gathering Scheme. The proposed scheme aimed at tackling the inter-related problem of the dearth of qualified teachers, both Hindu and Muslim, and the small amount of time the available teachers could devote to each pupil under the house-to-house visitation system that was the general practice. The proposal was accepted by the government and it went into force in 1903. A similar scheme was suggested as early as 1877 by the then Director of Public Instruction (DPI) A.W. Croft. To tackle the problem of the dearth of qualified teachers for the *zenana*, the DPI had suggested that *zenana* pupils be concentrated and brought together in one place for more continuous instruction rather than the two hours a week a peripatetic teacher could afford on house-to-house visitations.⁵⁸ The proposal did not create any ripple effect,

55 Cited in Roy, Binoy Bhusan and Ray, Pranati, *Zenana Mission: The Role of Christian Missionaries for the Education of Women in 19th Century Bengal* (Delhi: SPCK, 1998), p.22.

56 *30th Year's Report of the Bengal Evangelical Mission*, Faridpur, 1911, pp. 19-30, cited in Binoy Bhusan and Ray, Pranati, *Ibid.*, p. 22.

57 Education (A) Proceedings, Assam Secretariat (Sylhet Proceedings), Government of East Bengal and Assam, File No. E-349 of 1908, April 1908, Nos. 125-143, NAL,B.

58 Annual Report on Education for 1877-1878 by A.W. Croft, Esq., M.A., Director of Public Instruction, Proceedings for October 1878, Circular No. 45, Nos. 3691-92, October 29, 1878, Government of Bengal, General Department (Education), NAB.

but, in course of time, necessity induced the Education Department to act on such a proposal that had been presented without any reference to the early ideas of A.W. Croft.

The Central Gathering Scheme required students to attend at a designated place, almost in all cases a respectable gentleman's house where the women and girls of the neighborhood would feel comfortable. A small committee of local gentlemen would appoint the teacher and have control over management. They could be orthodox Hindus or Muslims, or their numbers could be in proportion to the pupils of a particular Centre. No male inspector was to visit the centers or contact the teachers. Male inspecting officers not lower in rank than the Deputy Inspectors of Schools were to visit the members of management committee to collect information and make recommendations. Thus, strict *purdah* was ensured and the management committee could be entrusted with the highest responsibility for smooth running of the operation. The Government sanctioned a recurring cost of Tk. 30 per month for each centre. The teacher was to be paid Tk. 20 per month. Tk. 4 per month was to be paid to a servant. And Tk. 6 per month was earmarked for prizes and contingent charges.

Many Central Gathering Centers had sprung up in Dhaka during the first quinquennium of 1901-1902 to 1906-1907. In the Center in Roy Saheb Bazar, such was the assortment of women and children that the age range of the pupils varied from five to forty-five years. In Rokanpur also, there was a mixture of young girls and older women. In the part of Dhaka that is called Becharam Deury, three little girls were learning Bengali and Urdu letters. Some little girls were learning to read Bengali and Urdu in the Center at Bangsal. In the Lakshmi Bazar Center also, Bengali and Urdu letters were being taught. In Narinda, the Center was housed in the governess's own home. In Makim Bazar three girls were learning to read the Koran. The Center in Saheb Sharafat Gunge was teaching five girls who were learning Bengali, one girl who was learning Urdu and there was one girl who was learning both. In the Fulbaria Center the age of the pupils ranged from eleven to forty years. There, six pupils were learning Urdu and Bengali, two were learning only Urdu and one other was learning only Bengali. There were three other Centers in Monoharkhar Bazaar, Kagzitoa and Dakhin Moisondi where the number of pupils is not given in the report of the first quinquennium of the twentieth century.

The Christian missionary lobby was strong enough to extract from the government a Resolution (Resolution of Government of the 4th June 1903)

issuing a caution that “this scheme was not to conflict in any way with the system of *zenana* instruction imparted by Mission ladies”.⁵⁹ At the time when the *Zenana* Education Scheme was abolished in 1933, both the House-to-House Visitation Scheme and the Central Gathering Scheme were in operation. The Central Gathering system proved to be the more popular of the two schemes probably because it provided a chance for *zenana* ladies to venture out of the house and socialize with other ladies.

The Education Policy of 1904 and the Impetus to *Zenana* Education

The *zenana* education was given a significant push in the Indian Education policy of 1904. Although the following year Bengal became divided and the government of the new province of Eastern Bengal and Assam set up a Female Education Committee to review the status of women’s education, the decisions of the Education Policy of 1904 regarding *zenana* education were implemented in Eastern Bengal notwithstanding political and administrative divisions. The most noticeable features of the Policy that gave impetus to female education were: (a) the strengthening of the inspecting staff by appointing of an Inspectress of Schools from England; and (b) facilitating the further expansion of female education by recruiting *zenana* teachers belonging to the orthodox class of Hindus and Muhammedans; and (c) by the opening of training classes for Hindu and Muhammedan widows and school-masters’ wives.⁶⁰ Until then there were three categories of *zenana* teachers. In one category were the single female missionaries coming out of Britain, America and Canada, with the noble mission of freeing the Indian women from the shackles of servitude in a patriarchal society through the light of education and Christianity. The second category would be the wives of missionaries, discussed earlier in the paper, whose method of assisting their husbands was by reaching out to the women of the area where their husbands worked. Thirdly, there were the native converted women who were classified as the Bible Women by *zenana* agencies. These Bible Women assisted the missionaries with their instruction and were very useful as interpreters.

59 Cited in the ‘*Report on Work of Zenana Governesses up to Date*’, Enclosure No. 11, p. 202, Education (A) Proceedings, Assam Secretariat (Sylhet Proceedings), Government of East Bengal and Assam, File No. E/946 of 1909, April 1910, Nos. 1-8, NA, B.

60 General Report on Public Instruction in Bengal for 1903-04, Government of Bengal, General Department Education A Proceedings for the month of February, 1905, Nos. 1-6, File 8-R/3, NAB.

The lack of qualified female teachers was acutely felt in Eastern Bengal by the beginning of the twentieth century when the Muslim community gradually began to embrace the idea of educating their girls. Marriage at an early age, however, remained the norm and, more often than not, girls removed from schools after marriage lapsed into illiteracy. Therefore, the Education Department came to the conclusion that girls' instruction should be continued in the *zenana*; and, if good results were to be secured, the teachers should be neither Christians, nor Brahmos, but Hindus and Muslims.⁶¹ The Hindu and Muslim ladies appointed by the government were to form the fourth category of *zenana* teachers that emerged in the early 20th century.

Bibi Amirunnessa, wife of Maulvi Abdus Samad, became the first Muslim lady in Eastern Bengal to become a Government-appointed peripatetic *zenana* teacher. No other personal information about her could be found from records. Miss M.E.A. Garret, the Inspectress of Schools for the province of Eastern Bengal was highly impressed with the keenness and hard work Bibi Amirunnessa put into her job.⁶² Garret was also pleased to report in the academic year 1910-1911 that there had arisen amongst the Dhaka ladies a demand for an English tutor and a suitable lady, Mrs. Rudra had presented herself at the right time. Mrs. Rudra was unwilling to work on a salary less than Rs. 100 a month, so a grant-in-aid of Rs. 50 a month had been applied for her, the rest being charged from the students at Rs. per student.⁶³ Miss Garret was in praise of the two Hindu teachers on the Government pay-roll, Miss Suniti Chatterji and Miss Giribala Biswas who appeared to be well trained. The Inspectress was disappointed with the performance of the second Muslim teacher, Fayajarenessa Khatun, wife of Ramjan Bhuiya, a teacher of Narinda School. Fayajarenessa Khatun was a village woman with weak command over both Bengali and Urdu languages. The students she had to teach mostly spoke in Urdu. She could do simple arithmetic, but had no drawing or sewing skills. The Inspectress recommended she be sent to the teachers' training classes in Eden School that had opened since 1907.

61 'Report on Public Instruction in Bengal for the year 1905-06', Government of Bengal, Education Proceedings (A) for the month of January, 1907, File 8-R/5, Nos. 138-142, p. 34, NA, B.

62 'Note by Inspectress on Zenana Classes, Dacca, 1910-1911,' *Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam Education (A) Proceedings for the month of January, 1912*, File No. E/25/E, Nos. 53-56, p. 59, National Archives, Bangladesh.

63 *Ibid.*, p. 61.

The Government appointed peripatetic governesses were getting Rs. 50 as salary and Rs. 30 as conveyance allowance. Miss Giribala Biswas worked under the supervision of the Baptist Zenana Mission (BZM), Dhaka, for which the government sanctioned a monthly grant-in-aid of Rs. 76 to the Mission. Before Miss Giribala was appointed, six households belonging to the Subarn Banikya caste were being taught by Miss Shemoyoni Mondol under the supervision of Miss Williamson of the BZM. The age structure of the pupils in those centres ranged from ten, eleven, twelve year-olds to twenty, thirty-six, thirty-seven, thirty-eight and to forty-four year-old ladies. They were taught the Lower Primary and Upper Primary Science Reader, *Saral Shikha* and *Balya Shikha*, easy mathematical problems, tables, plain sewing, and simple drawing. Approximately three hundred ladies in Dhaka were taught to read, write, keep accounts, and acquire special needlework skills by the four governesses appointed by Government. It was Miss Garrett's personal opinion that compared to the results obtained, the expenditure of Rs. 316 a month on governesses' salary and their conveyance allowance, along with a yearly contingent grant of Rs. 300 cannot be called a heavy toll.⁶⁴ Government also sanctioned a sum of Rs. 250 a year to spend on prizes for the *zenana* pupils. Such was the satisfaction of Government with the *zenana* scheme of education.

The work load of the four peripatetic *zenana* teachers was quite heavy. They had to work double shifts and had to cover quite a distance going from one centre to another. The teachers worked six days a week, two shifts a day, with only Sunday as a weekly holiday. Each governess was assigned to six teaching centres. But Bibi Amirunnessa took upon a more hectic workload than usual, which prompted the Inspectress Miss Garret to comment: "I would especially commend Bibi Amirunnessa, wife of Maulvi Abdul Samad, the first Mahommedan lady in the province to undertake such work. Unfortunately she has been over keen and has knocked herself up so that she is now obliged to take leave."⁶⁵ The general impression was that once the attention of the *zenana* ladies could be drawn, they were eager learners.

As an attempt to further facilitate the spread of *zenana* education, and add stimulus to it, the Government of Bengal agreed to the Director of Public Instruction Alexander Pedlar's proposal of modifying the rules and regulations of the scholarship funds for girls in favor of the *zenana* pupils. Because of the custom of early marriage, girls would end up getting married off any time

64 *Ibid.*, p. 58

65 *Ibid.*, p. 61

between the ages of nine to fourteen and invariably would have to drop out of school after marriage. According to the prevailing rules, a girl who had obtained a Primary or a Middle scholarship, had to forfeit the scholarship if she continued her studies in the *zenana* instead of attending a formal institution. As a sure sign of the government's sincere wishes to strengthen the work of *zenana* education, the following relaxation to the rules was made:

If a Hindu or Muhammadan girl obtains a Primary or a Middle scholarship and is unable to attend any recognized school, owing to the custom of the country, or of the particular class to which she belongs, or to distance from a suitable school, the scholarship due to her should not be paid to her month by month. If, however, before the expiration of the period for which the scholarship is to be held, the girl pupil in question submits to an examination by an Inspectress of Schools, or by a female teacher for *zenana* education, or by an Inspector of Schools, or even by a Deputy Inspector of Schools and is found on such examination to have attained the desired higher stage of education, then the scholarship money may be paid to her as a prize.⁶⁶

The relaxation of scholarship rules provided much incentive for the *zenana* education system and proved the government's favorable attitude towards it. The system, by the beginning of the twentieth century, had established itself as a parallel mode of institutional education.

A most pertinent question was, in what way peripatetic governesses could be recruited and how best they could be educated and trained. The dearth of appropriate teachers, was a perennial problem throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Dr. P. Chatterjee, a physician and Inspector of Schools on Special Duty and some other Education Department officials thought that peripatetic governesses could be recruited from the Christian and Brahma communities only, as they began the movement for educating girls from the second half of the nineteenth century and thus could draw from a pool of second-generation educated women in the first quarter of the twentieth century. It was proposed that, should liberal stipends be offered, widows and married women of respectable families of their communities could be trained as peripatetic governesses by European ladies or some member of their own family. There were recommendations for setting up a Normal School for training peripatetic teachers, which led to the opening of training classes for teachers at the Eden Female School in the evenings in 1907.

⁶⁶ Government of Bengal, General Department, Education Branch, From L.S.S. O'Malley, Esq., Under-Secretary to Government of Bengal, to DPI, Bengal, Proceedings 84, June 1904, File 2-S/9-2. West Bengal State Archives.

The Decline and End of the System of *Zenana* Education

Although prospects for the system of *zenana* education were looked bright in the first decade of the twentieth century, it quickly began to decline by the second decade and was completely abandoned by the third decade of the century. There were some very pertinent factors that caused a decline in the missionary efforts of *zenana* education. The First World War (1914-18) seriously crippled the resources of the Missions. The chief resource for continuing *zenana* missions in India were the constant flow of women joining the Church as eager missionaries who were ready to go to great lengths to spread the Gospel. But the war effort now needed these women in the factories and fields at home in England. Women no longer had to look towards the Church as the means of gainful employment. When the War ended, everything changed.

The Christian missionary organizations lost a lot of their earlier support from the natives during the Hindu revivalist movement which had begun in the 1870s and 1880s. These movements eventually turned into the nationalist struggle for independence during the first half of the twentieth century. As a result of anti-colonial movements, the missionaries had to give up, in the face of strong resistance, targeting the upper segment of society and turned to evangelical work in the poorer segments of society instead. There, *zenana* education had never been an option as the lower classes neither could afford the luxury of home education, nor did they deem it necessary for their daughters to have an education in the first place. On the other hand, one of the main reasons behind the institutionalization of *zenana* education had been the social restrictions that required upper class girls to remain at home and in *pardah*. By the 1870s, however, the attitude towards missionaries began to sour. Local newspapers and periodicals published articles condemning the proselytizing methods of the missionaries. The *Dacca Prakash*, an influential weekly paper, regretted that while sewing and English language were the two good things that the British ladies could teach, their wish to convert the ladies of Bengal was what turned the locals against them.⁶⁷

Meanwhile, the spread of modernist ideas and the coming to age of the second generation of English-educated Bengali men and women weakened the *pardah* system also. It was evident during the anti-British political agitation in Calcutta which eventually spilled over in East Bengal. Women all over India were coming out of seclusion and Eastern Bengal was no exception. With the

⁶⁷ *Dacca Prakash*, Editorial for May 21, 1870.

removal of the most tenacious justification for *zenana* education, that of *pardah*, its appeal and necessity was diminished quickly.

The quality of education imparted by the *zenana* teachers had always come under fire from Inspectresses.⁶⁸ This is due to the fact that the instructors not only lacked effective teaching skills, the great majority of the pupils also lacked preliminary instructions in schools. Therefore, the time given by the peripatetic teachers to each house which amounted to not more than two hours a week was painfully inadequate, as those two hours would also include devoting time to Bible stories and needlework. As observed by A.W. Croft, Director of Public Instruction, in the Annual Report on Education for 1877-78, much of the unfavorable results appeared to be due to pressure created on the missions from England to show increasing number of students under instruction year by year.⁶⁹ The same report also stresses that because Christian missionary societies were receiving government aid, the ability of the teachers would have to be guaranteed. The teachers would have to subject themselves to examinations and obtain “certificates of fitness” before beginning work. A.W. Croft further suggested that to test the work of these certified teachers, their pupils would have to be examined and the government grants to the missions would have to be rated on the basis of the result of those examinations.⁷⁰ Such recommendations, however, were never seriously entertained. As the demand for teachers would always exceed the supply, such lofty idea of maintaining high standards of *zenana* education remained a rhetoric only.

By the second decade of the twentieth century, women had crossed an important threshold to venture into tertiary education. Social acceptance and recognition of the fact that women were to be educated drove more and more women towards proper institutional education which rendered more satisfactory and fruitful results. Finally, once prejudice against girls attending schools diminished considerably, institutional education proved much cheaper than peripatetic teaching. Official records abounded with reports about what a drain on the education budget *zenana* education was.

In 1933, the curtain finally fell on an experiment with female education initiated by the Christian missionaries and supported by the colonial Government that

68 The Inspectress of Schools Mrs. Monmohini Wheeler expressed dissatisfaction about the condition of *zenana* education in Dacca, Tipperah, Backergunge and Furredpore, as well as Calcutta. Annual Report on Education for 1877-78, Bengal Education (A) Proceedings, General Department, Government of Bengal, 1878.

69 *Ibid.*, p. 12, paragraph 31.

70 *Ibid.*

lasted more than half a century. The experiment was called Zenana Education in Government official education records and missionary papers. In the second half of the nineteenth century there had arisen the Bengali counterpart of the missionary *zenana* education scheme which was the *Antahpur Stri Siksa*, run by the native *bhadralok* class. In 1933 the government declared the Zenana Education scheme officially closed and reallocated the scheme's funds to other projects. By that time social and political changes had rendered the *zenana* education system ineffective and unpopular. While the Bengal Legislative Assembly cited reports of the inefficacy and inefficiency of the system as the reason why it should be discontinued, even as late as 1913-14, reports stated that in Bengal the work of the *zenana* agencies was considered to be "full of promise".⁷¹ In 1933, when the *zenana* education scheme was officially abolished, in the whole of Bengal, there were 61 *zenana* teachers with 1,262 pupils.⁷² Some of the *zenana* classes in Eastern Bengal suffered considerably owing to constant change of centres.⁷³ The work was also hampered by the ever increasing cost of conveyance. The *zenana* scheme was, from the perspective of all parties involved, quite expensive.

The high water mark of the *Zenana* Education System had been achieved by 1901, when, at the Simla Education Conference held in that year, the system was praised and policies were formulated thereafter to further expand its activities. Before that, The Education Commission of 1882, popularly known as the Hunter Commission, noted that *zenana* teaching by missionary agency was the most successful means of educating Indian women after they were taken out of school. An important aspect of the *zenana* work was not just the imparting of English language knowledge along with some education. One of the values of *zenana* work was the free exchange of views between the teacher and the pupil who never went out of the house. The peripatetic instructor, be she an English Christian missionary or local teacher, was the window to the outside world for the *pardanishin* lady, a great many of whom never set foot outside their homes.

In 1919 education was transferred from the responsibility of the central government to that of the provincial government. When it had to be maintained from the provincial revenue, if at all, the cost-effectiveness of the *Zenana*

71 Government of India, Department of Education, *Indian Education in 1913-14*, (Calcutta: superintendent Government Printing, 1915).

72 *Report on Public Instruction in Bengal for 1920-1921*, Calcutta: The Bengal Secretariat Book Depot, 1922.

73 *Ibid.*

Education System came into question. Levying taxes for allocating enough money for the zenana schools became increasingly difficult for the elected ministries. The enactment of the Free Primary Education Bill of 1929 and the Communal Award of 1932, and, most importantly, the virtual breaking up of the *purdah* system since the political upheaval of the 1920s made the zenana education scheme an anachronism in the system of modern institutionalized education, and hence it was abolished in 1933.⁷⁴

The history of the beginning of female education in Eastern Bengal, now Bangladesh, is closely linked to the work of female Christian missionaries of all denominations. The spread of education then took its own course and ushered in the process of women's emancipation in this part of the world. Modernity of the colonial stamp had been achieved through the breaking up of old social, economic and political structures. The white woman had borne her share of the 'white man's burden' by sowing the seeds of what resulted in the unshackling of the local woman from the bondage of her traditions. On the question of how far the white women strove to work for pure altruistic reasons, we must take into account that by mid-nineteenth century, for both English men and women, the colonies were a source of employment and livelihood which also provided opportunities for matrimony at a time in British history when the population imbalance created a pool of 'redundant' or 'surplus' women. By the end of the nineteenth century the Victorian domestic ideology had completely limited the fulfillment of a woman's life in the assigned role of wife and mother. Such an ideology was stifling, to say the very least, for the middle-class educated women for whom the only career option was to become a governess and only life option was to embrace spinsterhood. The hardships of the imperial frontier paled in comparison.

74 'Report of the Committee to Advise on the Policy of Advancing Muslim Education in Bengal,' Calcutta Gazette, 1935.

A FRESH ASSESSMENT OF GOPACANDRA IN THE LIGHT OF NUMISMATIC EVIDENCE

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Abstract

This paper reviews the dynasty of Gopacandra on the basis of his two unpublished gold coins which are preserved in the reserve collection at the Bangladesh National Museum. The authors suggest that the coins' legend 'Gopa' may clearly be attributed to Gopacandra, a post-Gupta king of ancient Vanga sub-region (janapada), whose identity has already been determined by the epigraphic records. The paper concludes with an observation that Gopacandra probably ruled over some parts of Gauda, Rada and Orissa and was the most powerful king among the post-Gupta rulers.

The post-Gupta history of ancient Bengal is shrouded with mystery due to the paucity of historical source materials. Only a number of epigraphic records have hitherto been discovered and published which reveal the name of four post-Gupta kings named Dharmāditya, Gopacandra, Dvādaśāditya and Samāchāradeva. They established an independent kingdom in ancient Vanga sub-region (janapada) after the downfall of the imperial Guptas and Varakamandala (Kotalipada in Gopalganj District) was their capital. But these epigraphic records bear very scanty historical facts about them. Genealogical description of these kings is not attached to these records. So, their dynastic history is still unknown. Even their chronological order has not yet been determined. So, newly discovered source materials give us further impetus to review their history. The present paper is an attempt to review the history of Gopacandra on the basis of his two unpublished gold coins.

First, we would like to draw the attention of scholars about two unpublished gold coins which are now preserved in the reserve collection of the Bangladesh National Museum. One gold coin was collected in 1983 from a local coin dealer of Comilla District but its exact find place is not known. Another gold coin was collected in 1987 from a coin collector of Dhaka named Fazlul Haque who sold

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it to the museum along with other 5 post-Gupta gold coins. This coin was collected from a jewelry shop of Dhaka but its exact find place is also not known. The weights of these coins are around 5.7 gram. The museum accession numbers of these coins are respectively 83.1552 and 87.77. The typological and symbolical characteristics of these gold coins are given below.

Obverse: Within a border of large dots a king stands to front with the face turned to left; his left hand holds a bow, while the right hand clasps an arrow; in the right field there is a legend 'Gopa' written in Brāhmī character under the elbow of the king.

Reverse: On the reverse there is an image of a standing female deity holding something in her left hand and behind her is what looks like a billowing cloak, but is often interpreted as several arms.



Obverse



Reverse



Obverse



Reverse

The alphabets of the coins are very distinct and clear to identify the name of the king who issued these. The coin's legend 'Gopa' may clearly be attributed to Gopacandra, a Post-Gupta king of ancient Vanga sub-division (janapada), whose identity has already been determined by the epigraphic records. But it is interesting to note that these gold coins are clearly Samatata type. The weights of these coins are around 5.7 gram which are similar and common weight standard to the other gold coins of Samatata. Large dotted border clearly appear in these coins like the other gold coins of Samatata, such as the gold coins of the Ratas, the Khadgas, the Early Devas, Sri Chakra and Viracandra etc. It is more interesting to mention that the goddess of the coin is holding an uncertain thing in her left hand that is very similar to the object in the hand of the deity represented on the normal gold coins of Samatata. The obverses of all the gold coins of Samatata are clearly Gupta prototype depicting a standing king with arrow and bow. But the reverses of the Samatata gold coins are not like that of the Gupta tradition. Joe Cribb¹ and N.G. Rhodes² has clearly shown that the deity image of Samatata gold coin is derived from the Nana and Ardokso image of Kushana coins. This characteristic makes the Samatata coins different from the other ancient coins of India. However, the gold coins, which are the subject matter of our discussion, are clearly Samatata designed. Certainly these coins were locally minted from Samatata. However, the numismatic evidence provided by these two coins seems to necessitate a fresh assessment of the history of Gopacandra.

Three copper plates of similar nature were discovered in 1891 and 1892 from Kotālipāḍā in Faridpur District (now in Gopalganj). F.E. Pargiter deciphered and published them in the *Indian Antiquary*.³ One of these plates revealed a post-Gupta king named Gopacandra, while the other two inscriptions disclosed another post-Gupta king named Dharmaditya. The Faridpur copper plate of Gopacandra was issued by one of his administrative officers (*Viṣayādhiparāṇa*) from Vārakamaṇḍala (present Kotalipada area of Gopalganj district) during the 18th regnal year of the king. In this inscription, he is titled as *Mahārājādhirāja*. He is compared with the traditional kings Yayāti, Ambariṣ and he is also stated

¹ Joe Cribb, *The Indian Coinage Tradition*, Origins, Continuity and Change, IIRNS Publications, A Division of Indian Institute of Research in Numismatic Studies, p. 27

² N. G. Majumdar, 'Mallasarūl Copper plate of Vijayasena', *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XXIII (1935-36), pp. 155-61

³ F. A. Pargiter, 'The Faridpur Copper Plates', *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XXXIX, 1910, pp. 193-216.

to be without a rival in this earth. These facts apparently suggest that he formed a sovereign kingdom in Vanga sub-region during the post-Gupta period.

When the Faridpur copper plates were published, R. D. Banerjee suggested that these records are forgery. But subsequently the authenticity of the Faridpur copper plate of Gopacandra is proved by the two other epigraphic records and now the scholars are unanimous that these records are very much original. One copper plate was discovered in 1929 from the village Mallasārul situated on the north bank of the Damodar River, within the jurisdiction of Galsi Police Station of the Burdwan district in West Bengal. The plate is published by N.G. Majumdar in 1936 in the *Epigraphia Indica*.⁴ The record was issued by Maharaja Vijayasena, a vassal chief of Gopacandra, who acknowledged his supremacy. His overlord is designated here as *Mahārājādhirāja* Gopacandra, certainly the same name mentioned in the Faridpur copper plates. Maharaja Vijayasena, is the donor, whose name appears on the seal and also in lines 8 and 1. He is identified with *Mahāsāmanta* Vijayasena, the Dutaka of the Gunaighar plate of Vainyagupta (A.D. 507).⁵ But in the present state of our knowledge, it is difficult to determine that the two Vijayasenas are identical person mentioned in the two separate epigraphic records. However, this record clearly indicates that the extent of Gopacandra's kingdom was not limited only in the Vanga sub-region. Some parts of Gauḍa sub-region were also included within this kingdom.

Another copper plate inscription was discovered in 1960 from the village Jayarampur in Balasore district of Orissa.⁶ The record reveals that during the first regnal year of *Mahārājādhirāja* Gopacandra, the area called *Daṇḍabhūkti* was ruled by a *Mahārājā* Acyuta and his title is mentioned as *Mahāsāmanta*. The land was donated by this plate in favour of *Ārya-bhikṣu-sangha* as well as for supplying materials for the worship of the Buddhist deity Avolokiteśvara. This record also reveals the fact that the father's name of Gopacandra was Dhanacandra and his mother's name was Giridevi. This record for the first time

4 N. G. Majumdar, 'Mallasarul Copper plate of Vijayasena', *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XXIII, 1935-36, pp. 155-61

5 D. C. Bhattacharyya, 'A Newly Discovered Copper plate from Tippera', *Indian Historical Quarterly*, Vol. VI, 1930, pp. 45-60.

6 S. N. Rajaguru, 'Jayarampur Copper plate Inscription of the Time of Gopacandra, Regnal Year I, *Orissa Historical Journal*, Vol. XI, No. 4, pp. 206-209.) P. R. Srinivasan, 'Jayarāmpur Copper plate of Gopacandra', *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XXXIX, pp. 142-148.

bears his father's name and it has clearly appeared from the record that his father was not a king and Gopacandra had no royal origin. Mahāsāmanta Acyuta was a great feudal lord who acknowledged his supremacy. It also indicates that some portion of Orissa and Rāḍa was included within his kingdom and he was an overlord of many feudal kings like the great feudal king Mahārājā Acyuta.

Gopacandra assumed the sovereign title *Mahārājādhirāja*, which is known from three separate epigraphic records discovered in the different parts of ancient Bengal. It is probable that at the beginning of his career, he was a feudal king under the Gupta emperor but he formed an independent kingdom after the downfall of the Imperial Guptas. But these epigraphic records do not bear any genealogy or any political activity of the king. So, it is very difficult to determine his chronological order as well as his relationship with other post-Gupta kings. All these records would show that Gopacandra had an extensive kingdom under his rule, which included the south-east and west part of Bengal up to a part of northern Balasore in Orissa. The reference Dinara in the Faridpur copper plate apparently suggests that gold coin was introduced in the kingdom. On the basis of our new findings, it appears that certainly he issued gold coin. The Faridpur copper plate suggests that the center of his administration was at Vārakamaṇḍala near Kotalipāḍā and he was mainly a ruler of Vanga but he extended his kingdom towards Gauda, Rada and Orissa. It is likely that North Bengal was included within his kingdom. On the basis of our new findings, it appears that Samatata probably had been included within the kingdom of Gopacandra from where he issued gold coins. Or these gold coins might have been issued by the local merchant class of Samatata for their business interest imitating the original gold coin of Gopacandra as Devaparvata, the capital of Samatata, was a flourishing international trade center during the 6th century onward. However, these gold coins are very significant as no coin of Gopacandra excepting these two has yet come to light. So far we know, no gold coin of this king has yet been published. His gold coin was known as Dinara mentioned in the Faridpur copper plate. These gold coins also bear the evidence of his sovereign position. However, these gold coins need to be incorporated as a source of writing the history of ancient Bengal during the post-Gupta period.

The Faridpur copper plates disclose the names of two post-Gupta kings- Dharmaditya and Gopacandra. The Ghugrahati copper plate reveals another

Post-Gupta king named Samacharadeva.⁷ On the other hand, the Ramashil copper plate has recently disclosed another forgotten post-Gupta king named Dvādaśāditya.⁸ Some gold coins found from Kotalipādā, Mahasthan and Sabhar bear the legend Sudhanya or Sudhanyaditya, who is supposed to be another post-Gupta king⁹ probably of the same line. Now we have five post-Gupta kings: Dharmāditya, Gopacandra, Dvādaśāditya, Samāchāradeva and Sudhanyāditya. But their epigraphic records do not bear any genealogy or throw light on their political activity. So, it is very difficult to determine their chronological order or their relationship with each other. As a result, the chronological order of Gopacandra or his political history is a matter of uncertainty among the scholars.

On the basis of palaeographic analysis, Pargiter suggests that Dharmāditya was the first king, and Gopacandra succeeded him with none intervening, unless it was for a very short interval.¹⁰ He refers to two types of 'ya' (bipartite and tripartite), and indicates that the earlier form of 'ya' (tripartite) has been detected in the plates of Dharmāditya, while the later form of 'ya' (bipartite) has been incised in the plate of Gopacandra. Secondly, the surveyor of land has been referred to in the plate of Dharmāditya as Śivacandra, while he has been referred to in the copper plate of Gopacandra with an additional epithet as 'Pratita-dharmaśila-Śivacandra'. These two reasons might have prompted Pargiter to make the suggestion that Dharmāditya was the predecessor of Gopacandra. But R.C. Majumdar put forward an opposite view. He comments that palaeography cannot settle chronology of kings who ruled for a short period of time. He has argued that the earliest form of 'ya' has also been used in the Mallasarul copper plate. He added that rather later form of 'śa' has been found in the copper plate of Dharmāditya. He notes that the identity of Vijayasena both in the Gunāighar and the Mallasarul plate can give priority to Gopacandra over Dharmāditya. On the basis of the Jayārāmpur copper plate, he has suggested, "For, if we accept the statement that the father of Gopacandra had no royal title and he was raised to the supremacy by the people, there can be hardly

7 N. K. Bhattasali, 'Ghugrahāti Copper plate of Samāchāradeva', *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XVIII, pp. 77-86; *Dacca Review*, Vol. 10, No. 2 & 3, (1920), p. 55; R. D. Banerji, *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Vol. VII, pp. 289-308; F. E. Pargiter, *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Vol. VII, pp. 475-502.

8 Shariful Islam, 'Kotalipādā Copper plate of Dvādaśāditya', *Journal of the Asiatic Society*, Vol. LIII, No. 4, 2011, pp. 71-82.

9 Firoz Mahmud, 'Fresh Assessment of the Post-Gupta Gold Coins', *Jadughar Samachara*, News Letter of the Bangladesh National Museum, December 1906, p. 3.

10 R. C. Majumdar, *History of Bengal*, Vol. I, University of Dacca, 1943, p. 53.

any doubt that Gopacandra was the founder of this royal family and Dharmāditya came to the throne after him”¹¹

S. C. Mukherji,¹² who has recently added an important work on this subject, supports Pargiter on paleographic ground. He follows Pargiter and goes into details of the paleographic explanation of the different forms of the test letter ‘ya’. Both Pargiter and S. C. Mukherji have pointed out the variations of alphabets and shown the later development of the test letter ‘ya’. But the scholars believe that there was not much gap between the dates of issue of the two Faridpur copper plates of Dharmāditya and the plate of Gopacandra. On the other hand, all these post-Gupta copper plates were written in the eastern variety of the Gupta script. These types of scripts were used in the 4th, 5th and in the early part of the 6th century A.D. and now it is actually very difficult to detect their variations. Hence, this paleographic analysis should not be taken as a sure ground unless it is not supported by other facts. R.C. Majumdar has propounded the case of Vijayasena, a feudal king mentioned in the Gunāighar plate, to settle the comparative chronology. At the same time, the Mallasarul copper plate, which was issued during the 3rd regnal year of Gopacandra, bears the name of another Vijayasena, and whose title is also Mahārājā (great king). R.C. Majumdar thinks that these two Vijayasenas are one and the same person. On the basis of this information, he comes to the conclusion that Gopacandra came to power after Vainyagupta and hence, Gopacandra was the first king of this line.

Dharmaditya, Dvadasaditya and Sudhanyaditya may be of the same line of kings as their names end in ‘āditya’. It is probable that they came to power one after another. But it is difficult to say who the first king of this line was. Gopacandra may be considered as first king of this line. On the other hand, scholars are unanimous that Samacharadeva was the last of the five post-Gupta kings. But in the present state of our knowledge, it is very difficult to determine the exact chronological order of these post-Gupta kings who seem to have ruled in Vanga and Samatata. Gopacandra also probably ruled over some parts of

11 R. C. Majumdar, ‘A Note on King Gopacandra of Bengal’, *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Vol. XIII, No. 1-4, 1971, pp. 189-91.

12 S. C. Mukherji, ‘Some Glimpses of Independent States in Bengal in the Gupta Period and After’, *Journal of Bengal Art*, Vol. 8, 2003, pp. 83-94.

Gauda, Rada and Orissa and was the most powerful king among the rulers whose history we have tired to trace in the text of this paper.

EVOLUTION OF ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES IN BANGLADESH (1972-2010)

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Abstract

This article attempts to examine how the government of Bangladesh has gradually incorporated the environment conservation issues in the national policy regime. The concerns for environment protection were reflected in all the Five Year Plans and different policies of the government of Bangladesh. Major policy initiatives, strategies and plans emphasized environment and natural resources management to achieve sustainable development. It examines all these aspects from a critical perspective including the environmental policy of 1992 which lays emphasis on abatement of pollution and conservation of natural resources. An attempt has been made to study the four decades of environmental policy in Bangladesh right from the independence of the country in 1971.

Introduction

In early years since independence, there was no precise environmental policy in Bangladesh. But it does not mean that the environment absolutely remained as a neglected field. The concerns for environment protection were, however, reflected on the national planning process and several policies. Like all other nations of the world, Bangladesh also acted on the global call for the protection and conservation of natural environment and ecology.¹ In 1989, the Ministry of Environment and Forests was established to address the emerging environment

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1 The English word 'ecology' is taken from the Greek *oikos*, meaning house, the immediate human environment. In 1870, the German Zoologist Ernst Haeckel first gave the word its broader meaning, the study of the natural environment and of the relations of organizations to each other and to their surroundings. General use of the word came only in the late 1800s, when European and American scientists began to call themselves ecologists. The first societies and journals explicitly devoted to ecology appeared in the early decades of this century. Man is an integral part of the ecology of the world. Pressure of population and reduce of the forest and ecological component led to an ecologically unsound decision and to an economic, social and environmental disaster. Local forests are being cut rapidly for firewood. See details, Robert E. Ricklefs, *Ecology* Third Edition, New York: W. H. Freeman and Company 1990, p. 3

related issues.² The government started to take measures, drafted the National Conservation Strategy, adopted the National Environment Policy, 1992 and revised the old law by enacting the Bangladesh Environment Conservation Act, 1995 which has also restructured the Department of Environment (DoE). Moreover, National Environment Management Action Plan has also been prepared, and it is being implemented. A study on the regulatory regime shows that there are about 200 laws that have bearing on environment, directly, indirectly or causally.³ These laws provide for measures relevant for environment conservation, offer protection against various environmental offenses and by prescribing or prohibiting certain activities, lay down rights and duties. Bangladesh is a signatory to as many as forty four international conventions, treaties, and protocols in connection with the conservation and protection of environment and ecology.⁴ Some of them have been ratified. But there are some others which are yet to be ratified. I have attempted to examine how gradually the environment conservation issues were incorporated in the National Planning policy in Bangladesh. This article attempts to analyze the evolution of environmental protection and preservation policies in Bangladesh from a historical perspective. It gives an overall account of environmental protection and preservation through the several Five Years National Planning processes. Eventually, the policy initiative of Bangladesh Government gives a relevant policy and legal instruments that have direct or indirect impacts on environment policy implementation.

Environmental Policy during the Seventies and Eighties (Post-Independence Era)

Any complete system of pollution control will include at least four elements such as formulation of pollution policies, administration of the scheme of control, enforcement of controls, and research.⁵ In the early years of the independence, there was no precise environmental policy in Bangladesh. But it does not mean that the environment absolutely remained as a neglected field.

2 Mohiuddin Farooque, *Environmental Order : The Security of Survival*, Dhaka: BELA, 2004. p. 2

3 Mohiuddin Farooque and S. Rizwana Hasan, *Laws Regulating Environment in Bangladesh*, Dhaka: BELA, 2004, Prelude xvi.

4 See, Annual Report- 2007 of Department of Environment, Ministry of Environment and Forest, GoB, Dhaka: DoE, 2007, p. 63

5 J. McLoughlin and E. G. Bellinger, *Environmental Pollution Control: Introduction to Principles and Practice of Administration* (International Environmental Law & Policy Series), London, U.K: Graham and Trotman Ltd., 1993, p. 21

The concerns for environment protection were, however, reflected in the national planning process as 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th Five Year Plans. The national planning process was started in 1973 in Bangladesh with the formulation of First Five Year Plan. The First (1973-78), Second (1980-85), and Third (1985-90) Five Year Plans laid thrust on the promotion of agriculture and industrialization. Environment-related issues pertaining to the improvement of human environment such as sanitation, public health, nutrition, water supply and housing got due priority in national programs under the first three five year plans. However, environment protection did not receive any significant attention under the development planning except for the development of forestry, fisheries, and agriculture.

Environmental Policy Perspective in the First Five Year Plan (1973-78)

When Bangladesh emerged as a sovereign state in 1971, environmental issues and consideration were not as much prioritized as it is today. Economic development was the main target for all planning activities. Thus in the successive development plans, environmental issues were not included as an integral part of development approach. Different sectorial strategies addressed some of the major environmental considerations.⁶

The *First Five Year Plan (FFYP)* (1973-78) showed maximum concern about agriculture and water sector including rural institutions, irrigation and flood control and had the highest share of resources. This sector included crop production, livestock, forestry, fishery, irrigation, flood control and works program.⁷

In the first Five Year Plan, the objectives in fisheries sector were maximization of the utilization of fishery resources, both inland and marine. The fisheries activities of the public sector was, by and large, limited to inland waters until 1964 when the Fisheries Department Corporation was created for exploiting marine resources.⁸

The FFYP 1973-78 called for the protection of crops from pests and diseases. This led to the enactment of the Pesticide Act⁹ to regulate manufacture,

6 M. Q. Mirza and Ainun Nishat, "Development and Environment in Bangladesh: Past Approach, Present Concerns and Future Issues" in *Bangladesh: Past two decades and the current decade*, ed. Q. K. Ahmed, (Dhaka: BUP, 1994), p. 86

7 The First Five Year Plan (1973-78); Planning Commission, GoB, November 1973, p. 73

8 Ibid, pp. 112-113

9 The Agricultural Pesticides Ordinance, 1971 (Ordinance No II of 1971), GoB.

formulation, labeling and use of pesticides and consolidation of all existing plant protection agencies and wings under a single central authority.¹⁰ Bangladesh is a country where there were numerous tanks fulfilling the multipurpose water requirement in rural areas. It indicated not only re-excavation of existing tanks but also excavation of new tanks.¹¹

Flood control program during the plan period included flood protection embankment to protect low lying areas from floods and coastal embankments to protect land from saline inundation and also to develop polders for irrigation and drainage. Besides, protecting the land from damages to crops, flood protected areas provided improved social security, communication, commerce and trade, land value and environmental condition to the people inhabiting the area.¹²

Large scale destruction of rural and urban houses had taken place during the War of Liberation in 1971. This resulted in heavy felling of trees in rural areas. The situation has been further aggravated by banning timber and firewood extraction from Government forests since early 1972. The first Five-Year Plan demarcated and reserved some areas of unclassified state forests in Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT).¹³

In the twelve broad objectives of the FFYP, the main focus was on the reduction of poverty. This was due to the fact that poverty was thought to be the principal polluter of the environment. Natural resources management was not directly addressed to in the plan.¹⁴ The Plan included massive flood control programme but their impact on environment were not foreseen. However, there was a small sub-chapter on natural resources which focused mainly on its development.

Environmental Policy Perspective in the Two Year Plan (1978-80):

The strategy of the *Two Year Plan (1978-80)* reflected the political programme of the party in power. The plan stated that “if takes specific cognizance of the socio-economic objectives of the President’s Nineteen Point Programme.”¹⁵

10 The First Five Year Plan (1973-78); Planning Commission, GoB, November 1973, p. 133

11 Ibid, p. 145

12 Ibid, p. 149

13 Ibid, p. 118

14 M. Q. Mirza & Ainun Nishat, *Op. cit.*, p. 86

15 The Two Year Plan (1978-80); Planning Commission, GoB, March 1978, p. 29

One of these points was “to strengthen the economy by according top priority to agricultural development”.¹⁶ For this purpose, President Zia-Ur Rahman adopted a campaign of digging canals across the country. The main focus of the plan was to achieve higher economic growth. Environmental aspects of the large scale fertilizer and pesticide use were not evaluated. The Plan encouraged use of groundwater through expansion of shallow and deep tubewells.¹⁷

The *Two Year Plan* recommended that the practical measures would be taken to rationalize and enforce the Fish Conservation Act.¹⁸ The total areas of 52,000 acres were planted in the old forest areas against the target of 55,000 acres.¹⁹ However, the management of natural resources²⁰ was not included in the main objectives of the plan as before. The plan underscored the need of flood-control projects and measures required for combating the drought problems. It also stressed the need for some major flood control drainage and irrigation project such as the Chandpur Irrigation Project, Barisal Irrigation Project, Karnafuli Irrigation Project and Manu Project. These projects did not incorporate environmental considerations. Recently many questions have been raised about adverse environmental impacts of these projects.²¹

Environmental Policy Perspective in the second Five Year Plan (1980-85):

The first objective of the *Second Five Year Plan (SFYP)* was “to bring about a noticeable improvement in the standard of living by ensuring adequate supplies of the basic needs”.²² During the 2nd FYP (1980-85), forestry development strategies were re-structured and reoriented. Emphasis was laid on the development of forest with the participation of people. In 1980, there was 3.25 million acres (9% of total area) of forest managed by the Forest Department.²³ There was a little scope for expansion of production from the Sunderbans, the

16 30th April, 1976, President summed up his policies through the nineteen points.

17 M. Q. Mirza and Ainun Nishat, *Op. cit.*, p. 88.

18 The Two Year Plan (1978-80), p. 98

19 *Ibid*, p. 107

20 Natural Resources management means Water resources, Fisheries, Forestry, Energy, land, Wet-land, River, Canal, Tank etc. management plan.

21 see details, Monirul Quader Mirza, *Environmental Impact Evaluation of Water Resources Development Project. A Case Study of Chandpur Irrigation Project*. BUET, Dhaka: 1991.

22 See, The Second Five Year Plan (1980-85); Planning Commission, GoB, May 1980, Chapter II.

23 The Second Five Year Plan (1980-85); Planning Commission, GoB, May 1980, p. xii 41

inland Sal forests and the home stead forests in the short term and this plan emphasized replenishment of the productive capacity of these resources.²⁴

Forest Plantation included replanting of exploited hill forests (94,000 acres), Coastal (100,000 acres) and USF (Unclassed State Forests) (100,000 acres) afforestation, and rehabilitation of denuded forest areas (65,000 acres). It has been emphasized in Apparent Consumption above that considerable increases in supply will be necessary in order to avoid wood fibre raw material constraints on economic development in future. Furthermore, the environmental effect of deforestation which has already occurred, in particular as this affects the overall productivity of the land, also calls for a large scale approach to reforestation.²⁵

Beginning of the eighties inland fisheries were in real danger due to rapid environmental changes, both natural and man-made. The *Second Five Year Plan* adopted an intensive training of field staff (in the form of workshops, seminars, regular training programs) to enhance their professional efficiencies so that they could contact, motivate and train the fish farmers and local youths in scientific methods of fish farming and conservation practices.²⁶ Like other development plans, the management of natural resources and environment were kept out of the objectives of the plan.

In the forestry sector, the plan expressed concern about Unclassified State Forest (USF) in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. It observed, "This land is completely denuded due to repeated shifting cultivation by local people."²⁷

Environmental Policy Perspective in the Third Five Year Plan (1985-90):

While the First and Second Five Year Plans identified "poverty alleviation" and "improvement of standard of living" as prioritized objectives, the *Third Five Year Plan*'s priority was significantly different from the previous two. Population growth reduction was the prime objective of the Third Plan.²⁸

The *Third Five Year Plan* mentioned that encroachment on forest land had reduced the forest area to a critical level (8% of area) to threaten the whole environment. Since the scarcity of arable land would grow further, a forward looking land use policy was prioritized to avoid creeping environmental entropy. The third FYP noted that national level use and settlement study was on progress at the Directorate of Urban Development and its recommendations

24 Ibid, p. xii 45

25 Ibid, p. xii 46

26 Ibid, p. xii 57

27 The Second Five Year Plan, Chapter II, p. xii 41

28 The Third Five Year Plan (1985-90); Planning Commission, Go, December 1985, P.

would deserve careful consideration for early action. Decentralization of administration and development of upazila headquarters would prove to be a powerful tool not only for implementation of a national land use policy at local level but also for redistribution of human settlements at selective places, relieving thereby pressure on agricultural land.²⁹ One of the major objectives of the Third Five Year Plan (1985-90) was to improve general environment and public health.³⁰ It also incorporated the Upazila Afforestation and Nursery Development Project.

Although the plan admitted the illegal encroachment in the forest areas, it did not suggest a strategy for effective legal action against illegal encroachment.

As in the previous plans, wildlife is also a neglected aspect of the forestry-management programme. But the plan recognizes, "it is of utmost importance to set aside suitable forest areas for adequate protection of animal and plant life particularly those species which are threatened by extinction." The plan did not suggest any particular work-plan or propose to make inventory of threatened or extinct wildlife species of Bangladesh.

The Third Five Year Plan was the first to discuss the cyclone-warning system of the coastal area. It stated that "the objective of such a programme is to minimize effect of such natural calamities on human life and property."³¹

Development of Environmental Policy since the Nineties

The 1990's decade marks the beginning of the history of environmental policy in Bangladesh. The developments taking place during this decade gave a new direction to the policy concerns in the field of environment protection. In the following Five Year Plan, emphasis was made for the first time on environmentally desirable integrated development. During the 1990s, the environmental policy in Bangladesh had taken shape. The policy perspectives were reflected in the Fourth Five Year Plan, and subsequent five year plans. A brief survey of the policy perspectives is made here.

Environmental Policy Perspective in the Fourth Five Year Plan (1990-95):

The Fourth Five Year Plan³² introduced a chapter was incorporated for the first time on "Environment and Sustainable Development".³³ It identified number of

29 The Third Five Year Plan, p. 172

30 The Third Five Year Plan, p. 194

31 The Third Five Year Plan, p. 51

32 The first draft of the Fourth Five Year Plan was brought out in June 1990. The revised draft of the Plan was published in October, 1990.

important factors which would affect environment in now and near future. The environmental activities in Bangladesh were organized by the Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE) through the Water Pollution Control Ordinance of 1973. Municipal bodies in different towns were also involved in some environmental management activities. The promulgation of Environment Pollution Control Ordinance, 1974 and creation of a Department of Environment Pollution Control (DEPC) were significant steps in environmental promotion in this country.

In the Fourth Five Year Plan environmental aspects have been considered directly on many sectors of plan owning, probably, to growing global environmental concern. The Fourth Plan identified environmental degradation as number eleven constraint for achieving the development goal. Although the plan identified environmental degradation as one of the constraints for economic development, the strategy for considering this particular constraint was not discussed in the main strategy of the plan in any form. The management of natural resources was not included as a priority agendum in the plan.³⁴

The main focus of this chapter, however, is not to evaluate the successive plans but to make an analysis of policies directly or indirectly relating to environment. Poverty is one of the main factors of environmental degradation in a developing country. Poverty alleviation has been in focus in all the successive plans but the country had different experiments to face in different plans.³⁵

Environmental Aspects in the Fourth Five Year Plan

Agriculture: The plan has a distinct difference from other plans in respect of development programs in the agriculture sector. It recognized the environmental impacts of the irrigation facilities, application of chemical fertilizer, insecticides and pesticides, and introduction of High Yielding Varieties (HYV). It also recognized the need of indigenous research for environmentally sustainable planning. For this purpose, it considered so far made arrangement between the researchers and planning to be of *ad hoc* nature.³⁶ However, no strategy is set for achieving this goal.

33 Chapter IX, The Fourth Five Year Plan (1990-95), Planning Commission, GoB, June 1995, pp. 1-4

34 M. Q. Mirza and Ainun Nishat, *Op. cit.*, p. 93

35 M. Q. Mirza and Ainun Nishat, *Op. cit.*, p. 93

36 The Fourth Five Year Plan (1990-95), Planning Commission, GoB, June 1995, pp. 1-

Flood Control and Water Resources: The plan considered water resources as one of the crucial elements for achieving agricultural production and productivity. For the first time it was recognized that “ the construction of embankments along with the major rivers and the control of flood levels within adjoining flood-plain compartments undoubtedly have socio-economic as well as environmental implications.³⁷ In 1995, a law concerning flood management was enacted, which required clearance of the Department of Environment for development projects. Since then bottom-up procedure for project approval has attempted to integrate inter-departmental coordination and environmental considerations.

Fishery: The Fourth Five Year Plan covers major environmental concerns of fishery development. The enforcement of the existing laws relating to conservation of fishery resources of the country is a major impediment for its development. The plan recognizes the “defective fish conservation laws and inadequacy of proper processing” as two major factors that affect proper development”.³⁸ But the plan does not include any strategy or policy-option either to implement the existing laws or to formulate new laws or to make necessary amendments in this regard.

Forestry: The plan considered various aspects of the forestry sector development. It envisaged “to rehabilitate or reforest the denuded and degraded national forest lands”³⁹ as a principal objective. All past plans focused on forest resources exploitation rather than afforestation or reforestation.

Wildlife conservation was not included in the list of objectives. However, the plan recognized the need of establishment of protected areas in order to maintain biodiversity, genepool and habitats of rare and endangered plants and animals. It gave importance to protection and preservation of wildlife through strict enforcement of existing laws and establishment of game sanctuaries.

Although the plan envisaged the need of protection and preservation of wildlife, no institutional arrangement was formulated. Nothing was mentioned about the effectiveness of the existing laws for forest conservation.

Industry: Industrial pollution has become a major area of concern in Bangladesh; but the plan ignores it. In fact no attempt has been made to control

37 Ibid, p. V. B.-11

38 Ibid, p. V. C. 2-3

39 Ibid, p. UE-7

the quality of industrial effluents and wastes that have adverse environmental impacts.

Energy: The plan suggested setting up of bio-gas plants, briquetting plants and solar thermal energy conversion. It also envisaged utilization of solar energy, wind energy and mini hydropower on small scale basis. But actual actions towards these alternative energy sources are still to be seen. The plan recognizes that deforestation within Bangladesh as a catalytic factor for flooding, erosion and siltation.

In order to promote environmental consciousness and arrest degradation, the following measures have been undertaken:

A National Environment Policy was finalized in 1992 as a guide to long term sustainable environment friendly development. The environment policy 1992 outlined the following objectives: 1) Preservation and improvement of ecological balance; 2) Identifying and controlling all environment polluting and degrading activities; 3) Minimizing the impact of natural disaster on environment; 4) Ensuring environment friendly development in all sectors; 5) Ensuring long term sustainable/ environmentally sound utilization of natural resources; and 6) Active promotion and participation in all international initiatives for the improvement of global/regional environment.

To achieve these objectives in the long-run, the Environment Policy 1992 identifies possible remedial measures to be taken up by the concerned Ministries/Agencies:

- a) The government has attached high priority to environmental promotion, protection and preservation. This has been highlighted in national and international forum;
- b) A separate Ministry of Environment and Forests and Department of Environment (DoE) have been established;
- c) A National Conservation Strategy is under formulation;
- d) The year 1990 was observed as “Year of Environment” and the nineties have been identified as “The Decade of Environment”;
- e) Environmental concerns have duly been recognized by the development planners and decision-makers. This has been reflected through inclusion of environmental issues in all development projects. Besides, Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) by the Ministry of Environment and Forests has been undertaken. In order to consider the environmental impacts of the public sector development projects, the Ministry for Environment and Forests has been included as a permanent member of the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council;

- f) Formulation of a comprehensive and updated ordinance named “Bangladesh Environment Preservation Ordinance” is in the process of finalization. Two other new laws relating to radiation control and protection of marine environment are under preparation;
- g) Major ecologically critical areas of environmental pollution have been spotted and environmental up-gradation programs have been undertaken by the Department;
- h) Major polluting industries/establishments have been identified and remedial measures are being pursued. Establishment of new industries either in public or private sector requires the clearance of the Ministry of Environment;
- i) Programmes for creation of environmental awareness have been undertaken through the mass media. As a part of educational curricula, “Environment” has been introduced at school level and higher degrees are also being offered on this subject;
- j) Uses of fuel-wood in brick burning and cutting forest reserves have been banned. Social Forestry Program has been undertaken on a priority basis;
- k) In order to maintain ecological balance, preservation of wildlife is being emphasized and killing or exporting frogs, lizards and all kinds of birds and animal species have been banned;
- l) Use of improved varieties of oven/stove and installation of low latrines and tube-wells in rural areas have been undertaken in the public sector which are being complemented by the NGOs;
- m) A Master Plan Organization has been established to effectively manage and improve water resources taking due consideration of environmental issues;
- n) A Coastal Environment Management Plan for Bangladesh has been prepared;
- o) Import of toxic waste and its recycling have been banned;
- p) An International Institute for Environmental Studies and Disaster Management has been established in Dhaka; and
- q) The Montreal Protocol for Protection of ozone layer has been ratified by the Government; and so forth.⁴⁰

The environment and sustainable development program are spread over different sectors such as Agriculture, Rural Development, Water Resources, Physical Planning, Education, Health, Family Welfare, Social Welfare, Labour and Manpower etc. The environmental issues, policies and programs pertaining to various sectors have been discussed in respective sectoral chapters. Besides, around TK. 700.00 crore was invested for environment improvement activities

40 The Fourth Five Year Plan (1990-95), Planning Commission, Ministry of Planning, Govt. People’s Republic of Bangladesh, June 1995, Chapter IX, pp. 1-4

directly under the Department of Environment and Forest Department during the *Fourth Five Year Plan* period.⁴¹

Environmental Policy Perspective in the Fifth Five Year Plan (1997-2002):

The two years (1995-97) till June-1997 has been a sort of plan holiday period for the country meaning that the annual development programs of the country were prepared and implemented outside the frame of a five year plan.⁴² *The Fifth Five Year Plan (1997-2002)* was the most important planning and policy document of the government covering all major sectors of development and intervention. The *Fifth Five Year Plan* emphasized ‘environment and sustainable livelihood.’ After the independence the growth of industries in the country has generally been unplanned without keeping the issue of environmental protection in careful consideration. There are many industries in the residential area causing pollution of air and water through smoke emitting chimney and dumping of untreated effluent. Industrial wastage have polluted the water of the Buriganga, the Shitalakhya, the Karnafuli and the Rupsha rivers. Effluents from tanneries are extremely harmful to human beings since they contain high concentration of chromium compounds. About 250 tanneries in Hazaribagh area⁴³ within the Dhaka city are causing serious environmental pollution and health hazard making the area virtually unsuitable for human habitation.⁴⁴

In order to promote, nurture, protect and expand nature and natural resources and link all development activities with environment towards improving the quality of life, the Fifth Plan enunciates the following objectives:

“i) promoting sustainable livelihood by alleviation of poverty; ii) ensuring active participation of the poor, especially women, in environment protection activities; iii) promoting environment-friendly activities in the development

41 Ibid, Chapter IX, p. 1-4

42 *The Fifth Five Year Plan (1997-2002)*, Planning Commission, Ministry of Planning, Govt. People’s Republic of Bangladesh, June 1997, Foreword.

43 Leather industry in Bangladesh causes horrendous environmental pollution. Of the 270 tanneries in the whole country 90 % are located in Hazaribagh, a densely populated residential area of Dhaka. Of these, tanneries in Hazaribagh alone generate 7.70 million liter liquid waste and 88 MT solid wastes everyday. See details, Philip Gain, Shishir Moral, ed., *Leather Industry Environmental Pollution and Mitigation Measures*, (Dhaka: SEHD, 2010), Preface.

44 *The Fifth Five Year Plan (1997-2002)*, Planning Commission, GoB, June 1997, p. X-

interventions; iv) preserving, protecting and developing the natural resource base; v) strengthening the capabilities of public and private sectors to manage environmental concerns; vi) controlling and preventing environmental pollution and degradation related to soil, water and air; vii) creating public awareness for participation in environment promotion activities; and viii) conserving non-renewable resources and sustaining auto and equi-generation of renewable resources.”⁴⁵

The plan mentioned ‘Polluters Pay Principle’ and it will be followed in order to ensure strict compliance of environmental legislation; incentives, in the form of tax rebate, tax holiday etc. will be provided and the incremental cost incurred by the environment-friendly entrepreneurs will be met in various forms/sources. Although the Environment Conservation Act, 1995 is based on this principle, there is a lack of broad-based standards about the potential and actual damage.⁴⁶ So these standards are required to be set. The plan also mentioned of ‘National Environment Fund’, which would be established in order to provide assistance to the victims of environmental degradation caused by natural disasters and human activities.⁴⁷ The Fifth Plan provides for the expansion of DoE offices and manpower. The goal of such expansion is to make DoE capable of performing its conservation activities in extended perimeters. It has also made provision of establishing the local offices of the Department in 18 greater districts⁴⁸. Necessary orders were issued toward opening Divisional offices of the DoE in Barisal and Sylhet Divisions.⁴⁹

Environmental Policy Perspective in the PRSP-I

The Bangladesh Government in April, 2003 designated the general Economic Division of the Planning Commission as the National Poverty Focal Point (NPFP) and entrusted it with the task of preparing a full-blown Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) for Bangladesh. A National Steering Committee, headed by the Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister and

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, p. X-4

⁴⁶ Jesmul Hasan, “Environmental laws in Bangladesh: In search of a regulatory framework”, in *Bangladesh State of Environment Report 2000*, ed. Quamrul Islam Chowdhury, (Dhaka: FEJB-2000), p. 301

⁴⁷ The Fifth Five Year Plan (1997-2002), Planning Commission, GoB, June 1997, p. X-7

⁴⁸ In 2010, DoE has extended its offices in 21 districts due to all industries and projects under Environment Conservation Act.

⁴⁹ Department of Environment, Ministry of Environment and Forest, GoB, World Environment Day, Dhaka: DoE, 2001, pp. 29-30

consisting of the Secretaries of nineteen relevant Ministries, was also formed in September, 2003 to provide overall guidance to the task of preparing the PRSP.⁵⁰

The completion of the Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (I-PRSP) titled *A National Strategy for Economic Growth, Poverty Reduction and Social Development*, in March 2003, marked an important milestone in the process of renewing the national goal of policy ownership over the formulation of poverty reduction strategies (PRSs). While the commitment to poverty reduction since then continued to be pursued through a wide range of concrete actions, the Government also undertook specific steps to ensure a comprehensive participatory process by which to deepen policy ownership in the formulation of a full-blown PRS.⁵¹

PRSP-I mentioned environment as the major thrust of poverty reduction strategy. The thematic-group report on the environment focuses on resources like land, water, and air which must be kept pollution-free for sustainable development. Pollution affects health, education, energy, livelihood, amenities and heritages and in this way increases poverty as well as the severity of poverty. Hence, environmental balance should be ensured in all sorts of development activities. The importance of proper waste management and recycling activities and an action plan to save endangered animals, fish and plants were recognized. In addition, planned use of land, environment-friendly energy policy and social forestation are emphasized in the report.⁵² Environmental issues, as stated in the PRSP, are mostly to be seen as a cross-cutting issue and integrated into national poverty alleviation strategy.

Environmental Policy Perspective in the PRSP-II

In October 2008, the Caretaker Government published PRSP-II on “*Moving Ahead National Strategy for Accelerated Poverty Reduction II (FY 2009-11)*.” It has a chapter on *Caring for Environment and Tackling Climate Change*.

PRSP-II (Revised):

After the general election of 2008, the new government revised the previous PRSP-II. It is called “*Steps Towards Change: National Strategy for Accelerated*

50 *Unlocking the Potential, National Strategy for Accelerated Poverty Reduction*, General Economic Division, Planning Commission, GoB, October, 2005

51 *Ibid*, p. xi-xii.

52 *Unlocking the Potential, National Strategy for Accelerated Poverty Reduction*, General Economic Division, Planning Commission, GoB, October, 2005, p. 38

Poverty Reduction II (Revised) (FY- 2009-2011)". It has a chapter on 'Environment and Development.'

The Department of Environment (DoE) implements environment policy and development. DoE has extended its offices in 21 districts⁵³ to cover all industries and projects under Environment Conservation Act, 1995 (ECA).⁵⁴ It creates mobile court in order to implement action against ECA violator. Government makes Environment Conservation (Amendment) Act-2010, Environment Court Act, 2010.

Bangladesh implemented 5 successive Five Year Plans (Between FY 1973 and FY 2002) and an interim Two Years Plan (1979-80). From FY 2003 to FY 2010, there was a deviation from the five year plan to a process of shorter term Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). PRSP emphasizes the conservation and expansion of natural resource base so that the poor and vulnerable communities can depend upon the natural resources on a sustainable basis. This objective corresponds to that of National Programme of Action (NPA) particularly, the enhancement of livelihood opportunities in the coastal areas through the conservation and sustainable use of coastal natural resources. The Strategic goals set forth by the PRSP include, the reduction in the rate of deforestation, conservation of biodiversity, solid waste management and improvement of water quality of particular significance is the PRSP's strategic action to improve the coastal water quality by the installation of Effluent Treatment Plants (ETP) in industries and introduction of environmental audit for the ship breaking industry.⁵⁵

Environmental Policy Perspective in the Sixth Five Year Plan (2011-15):

The *Sixth Five Year Plan (SFYP)* has three parts: 1) Strategic Directions and Policy Framework; 2) Sectoral Strategies, Programs and Policies; and 3) Statistical Annex and Technical Framework. It has a slogan of "*Accelerating Growth and Reducing Poverty.*" On its first part, a chapter is included on "Environment, Climate Change and Disaster Management for Sustainable Development."⁵⁶

53 21 districts are Dhaka, Gazipur, Narayanganj, Narsingdi, Mymensingh, Tangail, Munshiganj, Faridpur, Manikganj, Chittagong, Cox's Bazar, Noakhali, Brahmanbaria, Feni, Comilla, Chadpur, Jessore, Kushtia, Bagherhat, Rajshahi, Rangpur.

54 Bangladesh Economic Review- 2011, Economic Department, Ministry of Finance, GoB, p. 230

55 Annual Report 2006, DoE, p. 111.

56 The Sixth Five Year Plan (2011-15), Planning Commission, GoB, (Part-I), Dhaka: July 2011.

While perceiving the long-run consequences of environmental degradation to the country's ecosystem and citizen's welfare, the Government has set a number of goals to attain a sustainable environment and to address the fallout of climate change. With a view to attaining these goals, the main objectives relating to environment and climate change under the Sixth Five Year Plan can be described in the following manners: 1) To monitor, control and prevent environmental pollution and degradation related to soil, water and air; 2) To strengthen the capability of public and private sectors to manage environmental concerns; 3) To ensure active participation of the poor, especially the women in environment management activities at all levels; 4) To promote cooperation with regional and international institutions/ organizations to address local, regional, and global environmental problems; and 5) To improve air quality in major cities through monitoring and prevention measure.⁵⁷ According to the Plan the government will take a number of initiatives to strengthen environmental capacities. In the public sector efforts will continue to strengthen the Department of Environment and other ministries dealing with environment including Agriculture, Land, Water, Energy, Industry and Local government.⁵⁸

With a view to achieving the goal of sustainable development, the SFYP is focusing in integrating poverty, environment and climate change into the process of planning and budgeting. In this context, appropriate policy and institutional capacity building for sustainable land-water management, biodiversity conservation and climate resilient development are crucial. Environment, climate change adaptation and mitigation, and disaster risk reduction must be addressed in a broader development context, recognizing climate change as an added challenge to reduce poverty, hunger, diseases and environmental degradation.⁵⁹

The DoE is formulating and implementing policies and programs that ensure a realistic balance between the existing livelihood requirement of the people and sound environmental resource management. A major part of its activities include environmental impact assessment carried out through the Environment Conservation Rules promulgated under the Environment Conservation Act 1997. These programs will be continued and would be strengthened during the

57 The Sixth Five Year Plan (2011-15), Planning Commission, GoB, (Part-I), July 2011, p. 193

58 *Ibid*, p. 195

59 *Ibid*, p. 421

SFYP. Programs undertaken by the government include raising awareness on environment, environmental management and its monitoring, implementation of the international conventions and protocols signed by the government and programs to implement existing environmental laws of the country.⁶⁰

Policy initiatives of Bangladesh Government:

The concern about environmental issues has been reflected in different policy initiatives taken by the government of Bangladesh. The major policy initiatives, strategies and plans emphasized environment and natural resources management to achieve sustainable development. Extreme pressure of a huge population of more than 170 million on a limited resource base, including land, has strained the country's carrying capacity- in terms of both the source and the functions of the environment. In such an all-pervasive predicament, the importance of sound environment policy-making cannot be overemphasized.⁶¹

The art of environmental policy-making in a developing country like Bangladesh is a new domain, without much of past experience. There are two steps in the formulation of an environmental policy: the choice of an overall goal and the selection of a means to achieve that goal. In practice, these two steps are often linked with the political process because both the choice of a goal and the selection of a mechanism for achieving it have important political ramifications.⁶² The problem is compounded by inter-linkages in the conditions of air, land and water resources, and the time gap between actions as well as effects on the environment. This obviously requires inter-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary expertise, which are lacking in Bangladesh.

Since the 1990s environmental management has become a priority issue in Bangladesh. Already, successive governments have developed detailed policy frameworks. This includes the National Environment Policy- 1992, National Tourism Policy- 1992, National Forestry Policy-1994, New Agriculture Extension Policy-1995, The Energy Policy-1995, Private Sector Power Generation Policy of Bangladesh-1996, Policy Guideline for small Power Plants in Private Sector-1997, National Fisheries Policy-1998, National policy for safe water and sanitation- 1998, National Agricultural policy-1999, National water

⁶⁰ The Sixth Five Year Plan (2011-15), Planning Commission, GoB, (Part-II) July 2011, p. 423

⁶¹ Mizan Khan, "Environment Policy-making in Bangladesh", in *Bangladesh State of Environment Report-1999*, ed. Quamrul Islam Chowdhury, (Dhaka: FEJB, December, 1999), P. 217

⁶² *Ibid*, p. 217

policy- 1999 (National Water Management Plan, 2004), Industrial policy- 1999, National Health Policy-1999, National Shipping policy-2000, Integrated Pest Management Policy-2000, National Land Use policy 2001, National Integrated Pest Management Policy- April, 2002, Renewable Energy Policy of Bangladesh-2008, Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan- 2009, Bangladesh Rubber Policy-2010, National Bio-safety Framework-2010⁶³ all of which aimed to ensure development in harmony with the natural environment. The Wetland policy (draft)⁶⁴ puts special emphasis on the conservation of wetlands.⁶⁵ However, all these array of policies need to be armed by effective policy instruments for their proper implementation.⁶⁶ These policies are often hard for elected politicians to sell to a population which is already faced with financial hardship.⁶⁷

A sound policy-making requires thorough and up-to-date knowledge of the available policy instruments. Such instruments can be categorized into three groups: a) Government regulation and control; b) market mechanisms and; c) social instruments. In Bangladesh, the regulatory regime, with about 200 environment related laws, is protecting the environment. But studies around the world have shown that government regulation as an instrument is difficult, ineffective and costly, in most of the cases.⁶⁸ The policies sound more mission-like, with statements of pious objectives, rather than real policy directions. The sectorial policies and guidelines prescribe Do's and Don'ts, rather than showing how to do or why not to do. There is a chapter in the Industrial Policy (1991) on financial incentives to industries, but no incentive provision for industrial pollution control has been mentioned.

In the formulation of Environmental Policy, different actors and factors played some direct and indirect roles.⁶⁹ The actors were basically of two types, external

63 Abul Kalam Azad, *Integrated Coastal Zone Management in Bangladesh: A Case for Peoples Management*, *biss papers* 20, Dhaka: December-2003, section- III, pp. 87-88

64 Mizan Khan, *Op. cit.*, P. 218

65 Md. Sohrab Ali, *The Development-Environment Conflict: Lessons learnt*, The Daily Star, 13 February, 2010

66 Mizan Khan, *Op. cit.*, p. 218

67 Md. Khalequzzaman, "Environmental Philosophy in the Context of Bangladesh", *Weekly Holiday*, Dhaka: 30 July, 1999.

68 Mizan Khan, *Op. cit.*, p. 218

69 S. M. Aminuzzaman (2010), *Environment Policy of Bangladesh: A case study of an Ambitious policy with Implementation Snag*. Available from: http://www.monash.edu.au/research/Sustainability-institute/asia-project/paper_salahuddin_aminuzzaman.pdf [Accessed 24th December, 2010]

and internal. Among external actors, United Nations General Assembly, international forum, international organizations, donor agencies (IDA, USAID, UNDP, ADB) were major players. Internal actors include, environmental NGOs (CARDMA, BCAS, IUCN, FEJB, ADAB) government agencies i.e. Ministry of Environment and Forest (MoEF), Department of Environment (DoE), Planning Commission, concerned ministries, consultants, bureaucrats, civil society and so on. Although the MoEF was responsible for drafting the policy, in reality it was drafted by an informally organized Task Force composed of the major actors.⁷⁰ Besides the Policy, a National Conservation Strategy (NCS), which has identified all the sectoral issues, the strategies and actions required. Moreover, a National Environment Management Action Plan was made with expert and grass-root level input in its methodology in identifying the problems and priorities. The Bangladesh Country Report to UNCED, Brazil 1992 is a useful source of information. Other materials on this topic include the Task Force Report, 1991 and published documents prepared by donors on the ‘State of Bangladesh Environment’ e.g., DANIDA, CIDA, SIDA, USAID, etc.⁷¹

The salient features of the above policies are appeared as below:

The Cabinet adopted the Environment Policy in November 1992 to provide some general guiding statements and to describe sectoral policies for the Ministries. The objectives of the Environment policy, 1992 are:

- Maintaining ecological balance and ensuring sustainable development of the country through protection and conservation of the environment;
- Protecting the country from natural disasters;
- Identifying and regulating all activities that pollute and destroy the environment;
- Ensuring environment-friendly development in all sectors;
- Ensuring sustainable and environmentally sound management of the natural resources; and
- Maintaining active association, as far as possible, with all international initiatives related to environment.⁷²

Environmental activities encompass all geographical regions and development sectors of the country. The Policy details various specific programs and

⁷⁰ *Ibid*

⁷¹ Mohiuddin Farooque, “Reflections on the State of Environment and Environmental Law in Bangladesh”, in *Environmental Order the Security of Survival*, S. Rizwana Hasan ed., (Dhaka: BELA, 2004), p. 10

⁷² The Environment Policy- 1992, A Compilation of Environmental Laws Administered by the Department of Environment, Dhaka: BEMP-2002, p. 322

principles of their implementation for 15 various sectors.⁷³ It also provides for an environmental action plan toward ensuring its goals and objectives. The action plan is presented under the head 'Implementation Program' in tabular form for each of the 15 sectors.⁷⁴

It would be worth to note the topics being briefed in the said Policy under Articles- 4 and 5. Article-4 of the Policy talks about the legal framework. It says that-

- Amend all laws and regulations related to protection of environment, conservation of natural resources, and control of environment pollution and degradation, to suit the needs of present time.
- Frame new laws in all necessary sectors to control activities related to environmental pollution and degeneration.
- Ensure observance of all clauses of relevant laws/regulations and create widespread mass awareness in this regard.
- Ratify all environment related international laws/conventions/protocols those Bangladesh considers to be ratified and amend/modify existing laws/regulations in line with the ratified laws/conventions/protocols.⁷⁵

Articles-5 of the Policy contains Institutional Arrangements that says as follows:

- The Ministry of Environment and Forest would coordinate the implementation of this Policy.
- A National Environment Committee with the Head of Government as the Chairperson be constituted to give overall direction for implementation of the Environment Policy.
- The Ministry of Environment and Forest would take timely steps for appropriate amendment and adjustment of this Policy on the backdrop of changes in the state of environment and socio-economic and other needs of the country.
- Department of Environment will make final review and approve all EIAs.⁷⁶

73 15 sectors are as Agriculture, Industry, Health & Sanitation, Energy & Fuel, Water Development, Flood Control and Irrigation, Land, Forest, Wildlife and Bio-diversity, Fisheries and Livestock, Food, Coastal and Marine Environment, Transport and Communication, Housing and Urbanization, Population, Education and Public Awareness, Science, Technology and Research.

74 Annual Report 2006, *Environment for Sustainable Development*, Department of Environment, Ministry of Environment and Forest, GoB, p. 8

75 Environment Policy, 1992, GoB.

76 The Environment Policy- 1992, *A Compilation of Environmental Laws Administered by the Department of Environment*, Dhaka: BEMP-2002, p. 327

The National Environment Management Action Plan (NEMAP), 1995:

Formulated in 1995, NEMAP envisages identification of the key environmental issues of immediate concern for Bangladesh and the actions to halt or reduce environmental degradation, improve the natural and man-made environment, conserve biodiversity and its habitat, promote sustainable development and improve the quality indicators of human life. It was developed for a period of 10 years (1995 to 2005) and is likely to have influence in shaping policy directives regarding the environmental issues in the foreseeable future.⁷⁷ To this end, it has grouped all the relevant actions under four heads: institutional, sectoral, location specific and long-term issues.

The institutional aspects reflect the need of inter-sectoral cooperation to tackle environmental problems that need new and appropriate institutional mechanisms at national levels.

The sectoral aspects reflect the way the Ministries and agencies are organized and make it easier to identify the agency to carry out the recommended actions. The location-specific aspect focuses on particularly acute environmental problems at local levels that need to be addressed on a priority basis. The long-term issues include environmental degradation of such a scale that it might become more serious and threatening than they seem to be if their cognizance is not immediately taken.⁷⁸

A National Conservation Strategy (NCS) and a National Environment Management Action Plan (NEMAP) have been formulated. Both NCS and NEMAP contain national strategies and national programs for conservation of sites important from biodiversity consideration. The Sustainable Environment Management Programme (SEMP) had a total of 26 components of which three components were directly concerned with the conservation of biodiversity in the wetlands and in the floodplains of the country through community participations.⁷⁹

Environmental Policy Perspective in the National Energy Policy-1996

The National Energy Policy (NEP) aims to ensure environmentally sound sustainable energy development programs causing minimum damage to environment.

77 ADB (2004), Country Environmental Analysis : Bangladesh. Available from: <http://www.adb.org/Documents/CEA/sBAN/BAN-CEA-Jul-2004.pdf> [Accessed 24th December, 2009]

78 Annual Report 2006, *Environment for Sustainable Development*, Department of Environment, Ministry of Environment and Forest, GoB, p. 8

79 Annual Report 2006, DoE, p. 69

NEP envisages that environmental issues will be considered for all type of fuels and in each and every step of fuel cycle; namely, exploration, appraisal, extraction, conversion, transportation and consumption.

It may be reiterated that at present per capita emission of carbon dioxide gas is very low. It is envisaged that in the foreseeable future, emission of carbon dioxide gas would not exceed the existing average emission of low income developing countries. Environmental issues to be considered under National Energy Policy are to be mandated under National Environment Policy and Environment Act.

Environment Policy on the issue of Energy: The 1996 NEP stresses that a) Environmental Impact Assessment should be made mandatory and should constitute an integral part of any new energy development project; b) Use of economically viable environment friendly technology is to be promoted; c) Use of fuel wood is to be discouraged and replacement fuels are to be made available at an affordable price; d) Popular awareness to be promoted regarding environmental conservation; e) In case of coal based power plants, disposal of ash and reduction of environmental emission are to be considered in technology selection; f) In case of nuclear power plant, internationally acceptable criteria on radiation emission are to be observed. Abandoned hard rock mine faces may be considered for final disposal of such wastes; g) Use of lead free⁸⁰ petrol will be encouraged.

- i) Petroleum Policy⁸¹ mentioned its objectives as promote measures for environmental impact assessment in this sector.
- ii) Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) shall be mandatory for any project of electricity generation. Clearance of projects from environmental point of view shall be accorded without undue delay so as to avoid cost and schedule over runs.
- iii) The Department of Environment shall prescribe standard contents and formats of EIA to be submitted on electricity projects and also define other regulatory codes, guides and standards on emission and thermal pollution from generating plants. Some environmental standards shall be applicable to the new plants in the private and the public sectors.
- iv) Provisions under the Nuclear Safety and Radiation Control Act⁸² and its regulations in addition to environmental standards of the Department of

80 Lead pollution in the air was very high until the introduction of lead free petrol in the city since 1999.

81 As approved by the Cabinet in its meeting held on 18.07.1993.

82 Act 21 of 1993, the GoB.

Environment shall be mandatory in installation, operation and maintenance of nuclear power plants.

Article (V.2.13) of the National Energy Policy notes that Environment Impact Assessment for possible future power plants to be built by the PBS/REB have to maintain the same standard as applicable for any other power plant.⁸³

National Water Policy- 1999:

Water resource is of immense importance for socio-economic development of the nation. Bangladesh is endowed with a good number of water bodies scattered all over the country. Regional cooperation is indispensable for water management and protection of water resources and rational use of water. In accordance with its election pledge, the government took initiative to formulate a coordinated water policy involving Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Bhutan and to establish regional water security for tackling the prevailing water crisis so as to ensure water resource conservation, Bangladesh's share and proper use in future. An agreement on Ganges water sharing was concluded with India in 1996.⁸⁴ According to the agreement, Ganges water available at Farrakha is being distributed between two countries through joint review team for the period of 1 January to 31 May in every year's dry season. In accordance with the article-IV of the said agreement, an India-Bangladesh Joint Committee was formulated for implementing and monitoring of the flow distribution measures at Farakkah and near Hardings Bridge.⁸⁵ An all out effort has been continuing for formulating water sharing agreement for rest of the 53 rivers, especially for relatively important Tista, Dhorla, Dud Kumar, Monu, Khoai, Gomuti and Muhuri rivers on a priority basis.⁸⁶

National Land Use Policy- 2001:

Optimum use of land and water depends on planned use of land, water resources and natural environment which are the important sources for growth. It is possible to ensure optimum use of scarce land resources by way of integrating the uses of these three natural resources. With this end in view, the Government has approved 'National Land Use Policy, Bangladesh'. The

83 Bangladesh Gazette- 1996.

84 See, Shah Alam, "Ganges Water-Sharing Treaty : How Much is the Scope for Criticism or Opposition?" *The Daily Star*, Dhaka: 16, March, 1997, p. 4

85 Shah Alam, *Shomokalin Antorjatik Ain (Contemporary International Law)*, (Dhaka: New Warsi Book Corporation, September-2000), pp. 68-71

86 Bangladesh Economic Review 2010, Finance Division, Ministry of Finance, April-1011, pp. 243-244

Government has adopted various other national policies and measures to prevent land depletion. These include ‘The National Environment Policy’, ‘National Environment Act and Rules’, ‘National Forestry Policy’ and ‘The National Plan for Agricultural Research’.⁸⁷

Industrial Policy, 1986:

The Industrial Policy, 1986 also incorporates the issue of environment pollution. Regarding pollution control, the 1986 industrial policy suggests that all sanctioning agencies will ensure that in the case of projects involving pollution and health hazards, the project proposals contain adequate measures for affluent treatment/disposal and other pollution control devices. All existing industrial units involving pollution and health hazards shall take appropriate measures for pollution control within the period specified by the Government.⁸⁸

Forest Policy:

The Forest policy of Bangladesh has been highly influenced by political changes that have occurred in the country over a long period of history.⁸⁹ The most widely known forest related law was enacted in 1927. Since then the Forest Act has been amended many times with the last amendment being done in 2000. A private Forest Act was introduced in 1945 which was followed by the promulgation of the Private Forest Ordinance 1959, to regulate forest management on privately owned land. The first forest policy of independence of Bangladesh was enacted in 1979. The latest forest policy came in force in 1994.⁹⁰ In 1989, the forest act was amended to strengthen forest protection by providing for stiffer penalties for offenders and restricting the discretionary powers of the forest officials and local magistrates. The revised act relied on traditional forest protection and did not favour social forestry. The strict provisions did not, however, achieve the desired results. To accommodate social forestry, the act was amended in 2000.

Conclusion

Bangladesh has a long legacy of environment related policies. This paper shows that quite a good number of policies are targeting the environmental issues. For that reason some overlapping may be observed. Since overlapping such policies

87 Bangladesh Economic Review 2010, Finance Division, Ministry of Finance, April-1011, p. 243

88 Industrial Policy 1986, Chapter- xv.

89 Mahbubul Alam, “Evolution of Forest Policies in Bangladesh: A critical Analysis”, *International Journal of Social Forestry (IJSF)*, 2009, 2(2), pp. 149-166.

90 The first forest policy was enacted in 1894 during the colonial era.

create confusion about different institutions role and responsibilities. Since the early 1980s environmental issues have started drawing attention of the policy planners in Bangladesh. Some international and national level organizations initiated a number of studies among which the reports prepared by DANIDA (1989), Department of Environment (1989), CIDA (1989), ADAB (1990), USAID (1990), NORD (1990), SIDA (1991) etc. are notable. Almost in all reports, similar concerns have been expressed. Some reports analytically discussed the policy-options mostly at the national level with less importance on regional and global environmental changes and their implications for Bangladesh. The 1990s marks the beginning of the history of environmental policy in Bangladesh. The developments taking place during this decade gave a new direction to the policy concerns in the field of environment protection. This was evident in the facts that the *Fourth Five Year Plan* introduced a chapter on environment and sustainable development, the *Fifth Five Year Plan* emphasized environment and sustainable livelihood, the *Sixth Five Year Plan* focused on environment, climate change and disaster management for sustainable development. In a nutshell, the major policy initiatives, strategies and plans emphasized environment and natural resources management to achieve sustainable development. This article describes the environment related policy history in Bangladesh. At the same time, it highlights the formulation process of the National Environment Policy 1992. After a long period of 20 years of its implementation, now it is imperative to reevaluate its effectiveness. Moreover, during last two decades a lot of research has been carried out on environmental issues and the capacity of the government, civil society and other stake holders has been enhanced to formulate a better environment policy for Bangladesh.

EXPLAINING RECENT INTELLIGENCE REFORMS IN BANGLADESH*

A.S.M. Ali Ashraf**

Abstract

This paper surveys the major intelligence reform initiatives in Bangladesh and examines the determinants of such reforms. Drawing on the secondary literature and expert interviews, it argues that recent intelligence reforms in the country can be explained by four factors: capacity gaps, coordination needs, crisis-driven demands, and external influence. The effects of these four variables are examined with empirical evidence. The paper concludes with a brief discussion of policy imperatives and directions for further research.

Introduction

Intelligence reform is one of the most important but least understood phenomena in the political discourse of Bangladesh. What is intelligence reform and why should we care about such reform? In their seminal works on intelligence agencies, Ami Pedahzur and Amy B. Zegart identify two major styles of reform: innovation and adaptation.¹ The former involves introducing new intelligence agencies and doctrines, whereas the latter emphasizes reorganizing existing agencies and their coordination structures. Loch Johnson suggests that the differences between innovation and adaptation are often vaguely defined, and the two styles may interact very closely in shaping the intelligence reform practices in a state. For instance, when the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) was established in 1947, the Truman administration thought it to be an innovation in intelligence coordination. However, in the 1980s, the CIA chiefs recognized that smooth integration of intelligence was a distant reality, which led them to create several inter-agency centers and task

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1 Ami Pedahzur, *The Israeli Secret Services & The Struggle Against Terrorism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009); Amy B. Zegart, *Spying Blind: The CIA, the FBI, and the Origins of 9/11* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2007).

forces at the CIA to adapt to the problems of coordination by focusing on “community-wide cooperation.”²

The issue of intelligence reform is quite puzzling in Bangladesh. This is due to the fact that after years of slow responses to change, the intelligence community in Bangladesh has recently gone through a process of innovation and adaptation. For instance, the fight against organized crime and terrorism has led to the creation of new intelligence entities and the expansion of existing ones. In addition, ad hoc structures for central intelligence coordination have been replaced with formal coordination mechanisms. In some cases new laws have replaced old ones providing more clarity to the mandates of security and intelligence agencies. In this backdrop, two central questions emerge:

- How has the intelligence community in Bangladesh changed over time?
- Which factors shaped the intelligence reforms in Bangladesh?

In addressing these questions, this paper is organized into several parts. First, it discusses the research methodology and provides a literature review. Next, it profiles the intelligence community of Bangladesh, and offers a quick snapshot on the major intelligence reform initiatives in the country. The author then develops a few hypotheses on intelligence reform and tests their utility with empirical evidence. The concluding section proposes some policy recommendations, and stresses the need for further research.

Research Methodology

This paper employs the method of structured and focused comparison to analyze various intelligence agencies and their reform practices in Bangladesh.³ It also examines the extent to which changes in the Bangladeshi intelligence community resembles or differs with other countries. For brevity and rigor, such cross-country comparisons are restricted to India, Pakistan, the United Kingdom and the United States.

Data for this paper were generated from standard published materials, such as books, newspapers, peer-reviewed journals, and official reports of concerned

2 Loch K. Johnson, “Preface to a Theory of Strategic Intelligence,” *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence*, Vol. 16, No. 4 (2003), p. 643.

3 For details on the comparative case study method, see, Alexander George and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005), Chapter 3, pp. 67-72.

government organizations. The author also conducted a few interviews with serving and retired officials having firsthand knowledge of the security and intelligence agencies in Bangladesh. Two types of data are of particular interest here: (a) major intelligence reform initiatives taken by successive governments; and (b) immediate and long-term causes of those intelligence reform initiatives.

The timeline covered in this paper includes the reform initiatives introduced in the years between October 2001 and December 2013. This timeline enables us to look at the initiatives taken by three distinct political regimes: (a) the BNP (Bangladesh Nationalist Party)-led four-party alliance government (Oct. 2001-Oct. 2006); (b) the military-backed interim government (Jan. 2007-Dec. 2008); and (c) the AL (Awami League)-led fourteen party alliance government (Jan. 2009-Dec. 2013). It is widely held that political confrontation between the BNP and the AL has strongly encouraged the military to intervene in domestic politics by supporting an interim government from 2007 to 2008.⁴ Despite sharp differences in their political ideologies, successive governments have tended to use intelligence agencies for the consolidation of their power and the suppression of political dissent.

The timeline covered in this paper also coincides with the post-9/11 era. This offers an additional advantage of exploring the effect of the U.S.-led global war on terrorism on the intelligence reform practices in Bangladesh.

Literature Review

James J. Wirtz, a prominent intelligence studies scholar, once observed that unlike the United States, where “intelligence studies are considered to be a legitimate academic field,” the study of intelligence is relatively “underdeveloped” and a “taboo outside the official circles” in other countries.⁵ This is certainly a

4 The two parties follow sharply different ideologies. The BNP is a center-right political party, founded by General Ziaur Rahman, whereas the Awami League is a center-left political party, which led the Bangladesh independence movement at the direction of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. The two parties maintain a dynastic style of leadership evident in the fact that Zia’s wife Khaleda Zia and Mujib’s daughter Sheikh Hasina have effectively centralized all decision making powers regarding their respective parties. In addition to the BNP and AL, there are two other major parties: the center-right Jaitya Party established by former military dictator Hussein Muhammad Ershad, and the Jamaat-e-Islami, which adheres to a fundamentalist Islamist ideology. For details, see Inge Amundsen, “Dynasty or Democracy? Party Politics in Bangladesh,” *CMI Brief*, Vol. 12, No. 6 (2013), pp. 1-4.

5 James J. Wirtz, “The American Approach to Intelligence Studies,” in *Handbook of Intelligence Studies*, edited by Loch K. Johnson (New York: Routledge, 2007), p. 36.

valid statement while referring to intelligence in Bangladesh context. Evidence can be found in the way most Bangladesh observers discuss intelligence issues on the margins of security sector reform (SSR) and counterterrorism studies, instead of treating intelligence as a distinct field of study. For instance, in their studies on SSR in Bangladesh, Imtiaz Ahmed and Jashim Uddin provide more emphasis on government efforts to reorganize the police, the judiciary, and the prison system, and less emphasis on intelligence agencies.⁶ While Amena Mohsin and Siegfried Wolf include the issue of politicization of intelligence, their central focus is on civil military relations and the prospects of democracy in Bangladesh.⁷ The conspicuous absence of intelligence issues as a central theme in the SSR literature is perhaps caused by a culture of silence, established by the colonial-era Official Secrets Act 1923 and sustained by the Right to Information Act 2009.⁸ Successive governments have used these laws, and a host of others, to deny any disclosure of information on the intelligence agencies.

In contrast to the SSR literature, the study of counterterrorism has offered a useful starting point to analyze intelligence reform in Bangladesh. For instance, a study conducted by the Bangladesh Enterprise Institute, a local think tank, stresses the need for intelligence reform in the fight against terrorism.⁹ The reports of the BDR Mutiny inquiry committees have also identified loopholes in the intelligence process and suggested greater coordination efforts to synchronize the intelligence production process.¹⁰ Recent reports on police

6 Imtiaz Ahmed, "Bangladesh," in *Security Sector Reform and Democratization: A Comparative Perspective*, edited by Heiner Hanggi and Carolina G. Hernandez (Geneva and Zurich: DCAF and Lit Verlag, 2013); M. Jashim Uddin, "Security Sector Reform in Bangladesh," *South Asian Survey* 16/2 (2009), pp. 209-230.

7 Amena Mohsin, "Bangladesh: An Uneasy Accommodation," in Muthiah Alagappa, *Coercion and Governance: The Declining Political Role of the Military in Asia* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001), pp. 209-225; Siegfried Wolf, *Civil-Military Relations and Democracy in Bangladesh* (Heidelberg, APSA, 2013).

8 Although the 2009 Right to Information Act created many provisions for public disclosure of information, Section 32 provides a legal blanket against disclosure of information by eight intelligence agencies in Bangladesh.

9 Bangladesh Enterprise Institute, *Public Information: The Role of Intelligence Agencies in Bangladesh, A Strategy Paper* (Dhaka: BEI, 2011).

10 Anis Uz Zaman Khan, Chairman of the Investigation Committee, *Revolt at the BDR Headquarters situated at Peelkhana: Report of the Investigating Committee Created for Investigation of the Heinous Massacre*, Submitted on 21 May 2009; Jahangir Alam Chowdhury, Chairman of the Investigation Committee, *Opinion: Investigation*

reform, terrorist financing, and tax intelligence, produced by the UNDP, the Bangladesh Bank, and the National Board of Revenue have also emphasized the need for intelligence reform.¹¹

While the existing literature on intelligence issues in Bangladesh covers a broad spectrum of administrative reforms, they lack any thorough analysis of intelligence reforms in Bangladesh and their causal explanations. The central goal of this paper is to address this deficiency by developing hypotheses and testing their utility with empirical evidence. A general overview of the intelligence community is presented below before analyzing the reform initiatives.

The Intelligence Community in Bangladesh

The term ‘intelligence community’ is used to refer to disparate security and intelligence agencies working for the protection of internal stability and external security of a country. Since the independence of Bangladesh in 1971, successive governments have established four major categories of intelligence agencies, with often overlapping responsibilities in the domains of: (a) national security; (b) defense services; (c) law enforcement; and (d) financial crime.¹²

The first category of intelligence agencies mainly represent the Directorate General of Forces Intelligence (DGFI) and the National Security Intelligence (NSI) but may also include the Special Security Force (SSF), and the Border Security Bureau (BSB). Collectively, they are responsible for safeguarding vital national interests, physical protection of very important persons (VIPs), and territorial integrity of the country. Among them, the DGFI, the NSI, and the

by the 20 Members of Army, May 2009; Shah Mohammad Saifuddin, ‘BDR Revolt: A Deadly Strategic Game Plan’, *South Asia*, May 20, 2009.

11 Government of Bangladesh, Ministry of Home Affairs, *Towards Police Reform in Bangladesh: Needs Assessment Report 2003* (Dhaka: UNDP, 2004); Police Reform Program, *Baseline Survey on Personal Security and Police Performance in Bangladesh* (Dhaka: UNDP, 2011); Bangladesh Bank, *Recent Reform Initiatives* (Dhaka: Bangladesh Bank 2012); Government of Bangladesh, *National Strategy for Preventing Money Laundering and Combating Financing of Terrorism 2011-2013* (Dhaka: Bangladesh Bank, 2012); National Board of Revenue, *Outline of Modernization Plan (2011-2016)* (Dhaka: NBR, 2011).

12 This typology is modeled on but expands Rob Johnston’s analysis of U.S. intelligence community. Johnston identifies three broad categories: (a) National-technical; (b) defense; and (c) Law Enforcement and Homeland Security agencies. See, Rob Johnston, *Analytic Culture in the U.S. Intelligence Community* (Washington, D.C.: Central Intelligence Agency, 2005), p.126.

SSF report to the Prime Ministers' Office (PMO), while the BSB reports to the reconstituted BGB, an entity under the Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA). The DGFI and the NSI have some foreign intelligence collection capabilities, and they can access the intelligence resources of any other agencies in Bangladesh. The SSF focuses on VIP protection, which gives it the authority to demand information from any security service. Although the BSB operates under the MoHA, the Bangladesh Army maintains considerable influence through commanding and staffing the border force.

A brief profile of the intelligence outfits will provide insights into their origin and development. The DGFI and the NSI were formed in the immediate aftermath of the independence war.¹³ Currently the DGFI is headed by a serving major general while the NSI is led by a retired major general of Bangladesh Army. The two agencies have some overlapping responsibilities, especially in the domains of intelligence, counterintelligence, and counterterrorism. Critics observe that the DGFI and the NSI have often deviated from their original goals of providing impartial assessments on vital issues of national interests, and instead turned into the coercive instruments of political control by successive governments.¹⁴ The twists and turns in the political history of Bangladesh are responsible for such politicization of intelligence agencies.

In contrast to the DGFI and NSI, the SSF has a more recent origin. It was established in June 1986 as the President's Security Force (PSF), and was later renamed to Special Security Force in 1991 after the fall of the Ershad regime and the reintroduction of parliamentary system of government.¹⁵ A senior army official at the rank of major general heads the SSF. The force has four bureaus, including operation and protection, intelligence, logistics and training. Among the four agencies working on national security, the BSB has exclusive responsibility for producing and disseminating intelligence regarding border

13 After achieving independence from Pakistan in 1971, the new government in Bangladesh established the Directorate of Forces Intelligence (DFI) along the line of Pakistan's Directorate for Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI). The DFI was later renamed to DGFI in 1976.

14 Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina also made a similar observation during her visit to the DGFI headquarters in May 2014. See "Govt Does Not Want to Use DGFI Politically: PM," *New Age* (Dhaka), May 14, 2014; See also Mohsin, "Bangladesh: An Uneasy Accommodation," pp. 209-225.

15 Special Security Force (SSF), "History", <http://www.ssf.gov.bd/content/2.html>, accessed June 18, 2014.

crimes. It was created in 2010 as part of a larger reform initiative in the defunct Bangladesh Rifles.

The second category of intelligence agencies represents three defense services. It includes the Directorate of Military (Army) Intelligence, the Directorate of Naval Intelligence, and the Directorate of Air Intelligence. They report to the Ministry of Defense (MoD), which in Bangladesh is historically controlled by the prime minister. There are few publicly available data on such agencies, and hence they are excluded from further discussion.

The third type of intelligence agencies works on law enforcement and crime prevention. It includes the Special Branch (SB), the Criminal Investigation Department (CID), and the intelligence wing of the Rapid Action Battalion (RAB). Although these spy agencies work under the authority of Bangladesh Police, and report to the home ministry, critics observe that the police headquarters and the home ministry have less control over the operations of the RAB than over the SB and the CID. This is largely due to the fact that although RAB is headed by an additional inspector general of police, RAB's administrative and operational activities are heavily dominated by officials deputed from military services, who often interact more closely with the armed forces and the DGFI rather than the police headquarters and the home ministry.¹⁶

The SB, the CID, and the RAB have both clearly defined and overlapping responsibilities. Among its various statutory obligations, the SB works for the collection and analysis of political intelligence and immigration intelligence. It also provides immigration services to Bangladeshi nationals and persons of foreign origin.¹⁷ In that capacity, it plays a crucial role in analyzing political intelligence, and cross-border movement of persons using land, air, and maritime borders. By contrast, the CID is the lead agency for the investigation and analysis of criminal offenses such as murder, human trafficking, and terrorist attacks. Interestingly, the RAB is tasked with some of the core

16 Author's interview with retired and serving officials at various government agencies.

17 The other key responsibilities of the SB include security planning, registration and control of foreigners and verification of personal identification for passport issuing purposes. SB also gives protection to very important persons (VIPs), and works on immigration and passport control. Information regarding the political intelligence reform is classified. See Government of Bangladesh, "The Immigration Service," Bangladesh Police' <www.immi.gov.bd/faq.php> (accessed February 19, 2013).

responsibilities, which are also carried out by other police agencies. For instance, the Armed Police Battalions (Amendment) Act of 2003 authorizes the RAB to collect intelligence in respect of crime and criminal activities; and investigate any offence.¹⁸ These are precisely the domains of the SB, the CID, and their sister organization— the Detective Branch (DB). As a result of such overlapping responsibilities, various entities in the police intelligence network often engage in a turf battle over criminal investigation and crime analysis.

Why is the RAB tasked with some shared responsibilities, and in what ways does it differ from other law enforcement intelligence entities? As explained later in this paper the inability of the law enforcement and intelligence agencies in the countries to contain the growing level of crime and terrorism, especially in the late 1990s and early 2000s, have compelled the government to create a new police unit with more power and legal mandates. In doing so, RAB maintains an organizational structure which is sharply different from other police entities. For instance, as of June 2014, the operations of RAB are organized around fourteen battalions. This ‘battalion-based’ jurisdiction is sharply different from the traditional ‘Thana’ or police station-based anti-crime actions and law and order operations of the Bangladesh Police.

The fourth group of intelligence entities focuses on financial crime analysis. It concerns the acquisition of intelligence role by the Bangladesh Bank (BB) and the National Board of Revenue (NBR). The BB is the central bank and the monetary authority in Bangladesh, while the NBR is the central tax administration in the country. Financial crimes such as money laundering and terrorist financing were long ignored and it was not until 2002, when a new anti-money laundering law was enacted paving the way for the creation of the Anti-Money Laundering Department (AMLDD) at the central bank. The AMLDD was later renamed Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit (BFIU) in 2012 with expanding remit in detecting and analyzing terrorist financing and money laundering.¹⁹ On the other hand the Central Intelligence Cell (CIC) was

18 Government of Bangladesh, *The Armed Police Battalions (Amendment) Act, 2003* (Act no. XXVIII of 2003) <bdlaws.minlaw.gov.bd/print_sections_all.php?id=593> (accessed April 26, 2013).

19 Bangladesh Bank, *Recent Reform Initiatives*, p. 25; “BB Forms New Intelligence Unit to Curb Money Laundering,” *New Age (Dhaka)*, January 29, 2012.

established by the NBR to detect large tax fraud and related financial crimes.²⁰ The BFIU and the CIC report to the central bank and the NBR, respectively, both of which operate under the Ministry of Finance (MoF).

It is quite interesting that the Bangladesh Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) does not have any separate intelligence agency. Instead, various geographical and functional wings of the MOFA and diplomatic missions of Bangladesh conduct research and analysis on foreign policy matters.²¹ There is no precise data on why the research wing of the MOFA has little competence in the domains of intelligence analysis. This is perhaps due to the fact that in making key decisions on external affairs, the foreign minister is heavily dependent on the prime minister who is the executive head of the government. In addition, the prime minister's foreign policy advisor, a post created by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, offers his expertise on vital issues. It is widely held that the prime minister relies on the assessments provided by the DGFI and NSI on important questions of foreign affairs.

In summary, two discerning trends can be observed in the composition of the Bangladeshi intelligence community. First, agencies working on national security and defense services are controlled by the armed forces. By contrast, agencies working on criminal offences, including financial crimes, are controlled by the civilian police, the central bank, and the tax administration, respectively. The first two groups report to the prime minister, while the latter two groups report to the home and finance ministers. Although the independent Anti-Corruption Commission does not belong to any of the category discussed above, it has emerged as a key agency in investigating corruption charges.

Recent Intelligence Reforms in Bangladesh: A Snapshot

Since 2002, successive governments have taken more than a dozen initiatives to reorganize the intelligence agencies in Bangladesh. These reforms have focused on counterterrorism, coordination structure, financial crime, and border intelligence (See table 1).

20 Syed Md. Aminul Karim and Md. Alauddin, "Emerging Tax Issues in Asian Countries," IMF Japan High Level Tax Conference for Asian and Pacific Countries, January 31-February 3, 2002, Tokyo, Japan, p. 27.

21 See Ashfaqur Rahman, "Whither Bangladesh Foreign Office?" *The Daily Star* (Dhaka), January 20, 2013; Staff Correspondent, "The Daily Star-CFAS Roundtable: Proactive Foreign Policy Sought," *The Daily Star* (Dhaka), May 8, 2008.

Table 1: Major Intelligence Reforms in Bangladesh, 2002-2012

Year	Reform Initiatives
2002	Enacting Anti-Money Laundering Act; Creation of Anti-Money Laundering Department (AMLDD) at the Bangladesh Bank (BB)
2002	Opening of DGFI Counterterrorism Wing
2003	Enacting Armed Police Battalion (Amendment) Act
2004	Enacting Anti-Corruption Commission Act; Creation of an independent Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC)
2004	Creation of Central Intelligence Cell (CIC) at the National Board of Revenue (NBR)
2004	Creation of RAB under Bangladesh Police
2004	Creation of NSI Counterterrorism Cell (CTC)
2006	Creation of DGFI Counterterrorism Intelligence Bureau
2007	Reconstitution of Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) by appointing a new ACC chief
2008-present	Modernization of the Special Branch (SB) and the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) as part of the Police Reform Project (PRP)
2009	Creation of National Committee for Intelligence Coordination (NCIC) at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO)
2009	Creation of National Committee on Military Resistance and Prevention (NCMRP) at the Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA)
2009	Creation of National Coordinating Committee (NCC) on financial sector reform at the Ministry of Finance (MoF)
2010-2012	Disbanding the Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) and Creation of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) under the Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA)
2010-2012	Replacement of BDR's Rifles Security Unit (RSU) with Border Security Bureau (BSB) at the Border Guard Bangladesh
2012	Creation of NSI Combined Threat Assessment Center (CTAC)
2012	Enacting Money Laundering Prevention Act and Anti-Terrorism Act
2012	Replacing the AMLDD with the Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit (BFIU) at the Bangladesh Bank

Sources: Media reports and author's interviews.

While the existing list of intelligence reforms presented in table 1 does not provide an exhaustive catalogue, it certainly represents most of the recent reform initiatives discussed in the public domain. One is curious to know the determinants of such reforms. It is in this context, we now turn into the theoretical explanations of intelligence reform in Bangladesh.

Explaining Intelligence Reforms: Some Plausible Hypotheses

Which factors influenced the recent intelligence reforms in Bangladesh? How can one explain the timing of the reforms? In addressing these questions, I argue that it is possible to generate a set of testable propositions on intelligence reform and examine their utility in the context of Bangladesh.

According to Richard A. Best, Jr., most intelligence reforms in the United States have come to address three goals: to improve efficiency of the intelligence community, to respond to specific intelligence failure, and to refocus intelligence community requirements and structure.²² Writing in the U.K. context, Ken Kotani also makes a similar observation. Kotani's analysis of the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC) reforms focuses on the British Government's desire to improve the coordination structure by removing intelligence analysis from the influence of policymakers and politicians.²³ For post-colonial states like Bangladesh, India and Pakistan, such coordination reform cannot be achieved without changing the redundant laws and reducing the political role of secrete services.²⁴

Regarding the timing, most studies suggest that although intelligence reform is a continuing process, the incidence of a major security crisis or intelligence failure can act as a catalyst for drastic reforms. For instance, the Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA) reveals how the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) was created splitting the Intelligence Bureau (IB) in the aftermath of the Indo-China and Indo-Pakistan wars.²⁵ The failure of the IB to predict the war plans of China and Pakistan have played a significant role in shaping the formation of the RAW.²⁶ The reports of the 9/11 Commission and the

22 Richard A. Best, Jr., *Proposals for Intelligence Reorganization, 1949-1996* (Washington, D.C.: CRS, 2004); Mark M. Lowenthal, *Intelligence: From Secrets to Policy* (Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 2006), p. 275.

23 Ken Kotani, "Recent Intelligence Reform in the United Kingdom," *The National Institute for Defense Studies News*, 142 (2010), pp. 1-6.

24 Muhammad Nurul Huda, "Reforming Minds and Attitudes," *The Daily Star (Dhaka)*, August 13, 2011; Hassan Abbas, "Reforming Pakistan's Police and Law Enforcement Infrastructure: Is It Too Flawed to Fix?" *USIP Special Report*, No. 266 (February 2011), pp. 9-12;

25 Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA), *A Case for Intelligence Reform in India: IDSA Task Force Report* (New Delhi: IDSA, 2012)

26 IDSA, *A Case for Intelligence Reform in India*, pp. 15-16; See also, Shirin Mazari, "India's Unconventional War Strategy," *Defence Journal*, January 1999. <http://www.defencejournal.com/jan99/rawfacts.htm>, accessed June 18, 2014.

Silberman-Robb Commission in the United States, and the Butler Committee in the U.K. also offer similar views toward the need for intelligence reforms after major failures.²⁷

The role of external actors is also quite important in understanding the timing of intelligence reform. This is mostly evident in the case of the U.S.-led global war on terrorism. In response to al Qaeda's 9/11 terrorist attacks, the United States invaded Afghanistan and called for an international coalition to fight transnational terrorism. The United Nations and its numerous conventions, protocols, and resolutions on counterterrorism also put enormous pressures on countries to reform their legal and intelligence structures. As a corollary to the UN-led global counterterrorism regime, the Paris-based Financial Action Task Force (FATF) emerged as an initiative of the G-7 industrialized countries in setting international standards on fighting money laundering, terrorist financing, and proliferation financing. Security studies literature is rich with the description of how countries across the world are forced to amend their legal frameworks and intelligence practices to comply with global standards.

On the basis of the above discussions, four hypotheses on intelligence reform can be derived. These hypotheses focus on four independent variables – capacity gaps, coordination needs, crisis-driven demand, and external pressures. The first three variables provide domestic level inputs whereas the remaining variable presents external inputs to shaping the intelligence reforms. The hypotheses and the logic behind them are presented below.

*Hypothesis 1: If serious capacity gaps exist in the security and intelligence agencies of a country, a government will respond by creating new agencies or expanding the remits of existing ones.*²⁸

The logic of the first hypothesis is clear. If capacity gaps in the intelligence agencies are identified in a country, the cost of inaction is prohibitive, as this

27 National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, *The 9/11 commission Report* (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 2004); The Commission on the Intelligence Capabilities of the United States Regarding Weapons of Mass Destruction, *Report to the President of the United States* (Washington, D.C., March 31, 2005); Chairman Lord Butler of Brockwell KG, *Review of Intelligence on Weapons of Mass Destruction: Report of a Committee of Privy Counsellors* (London: TSO, 2004).

28 Stan A. Taylor and David Goldman, "Intelligence Reform: Will More Agencies, Money, and Personnel Help?" *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol. 19, No. 3 (2004), pp. 416-435.

may increase the possibility of intelligence failure.²⁹ Therefore, national decision makers have an incentive to bring necessary changes to address capacity gaps. Several Bangladeshi scholars have also stressed the need for capacity building in law enforcement and intelligence agencies to bolster the counterterrorism efforts of the government.³⁰ Capacity gaps can be measured by looking into the shortfalls in human, financial, and technical resources, as well as the lacking in legal mandates.³¹ As illustrated by the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the effect of capacity gaps should not be overestimated. This is due to the fact that coordination demands may also play a useful role behind intelligence reform. This leads us to develop a second hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2: If the demand for intelligence sharing increases, a government will respond by changing the existing coordination mechanism.

The logic of coordination reform hypothesis is straightforward. Intelligence agencies often work in compartmentalized environment and thus inhibit the demand for sharing.³² Therefore, enhancing the capability of existing agencies will be necessary but not sufficient. Most governments will complement such capacity building approaches by reforming the intelligence coordination structure.³³ Coordination reform may require replacing ad hoc practices with

29 According to Amy B. Zegart, “The vast majority, 268 recommendations, or 79 percent of the total [recommendations offered by various commissions to reform U.S. intelligence community], resulted in no action at all.” Zegart suggest this inaction caused intelligence failure prior to the 9/11 terrorist attacks. See Zegart, *Spying Blind*, pp. 34-36.

30 M. Sakhawat Hossain, “Capacity Building of Law Enforcement and Intelligence Agencies,” in Farooq Sobhan (ed.), *Countering Terrorism in Bangladesh* (Dhaka: UPL, 2008), pp. 37-82; People’s Republic of Bangladesh, *National Strategy for Preventing Money Laundering and Combating Financing of Terrorism 2011-2013* (Dhaka: BFIU, 2012), p. 16.

31 After the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the United States emphasized hiring more analysts with foreign language skills, and expanding the size of covert operators to fight against transnational terrorists. See National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, *The 9/11 commission Report*; Aris A Pappas and James M. Simon, “The Intelligence Community: 2001-2015: Daunting Challenges, Hard Decisions,” *Studies in Intelligence*, Vol. 46, No. 1 (2002), pp. 39-47.

32 Sometimes the compartmentalized culture is created to protect data from adversaries. However, over-emphasis on secrecy may impede the prospect of timely action.

33 Muhammad Nurul Huda, “Capacity Building and Coordination at Field Level of the Government Agencies in Preventing Terrorism,” in Farooq Sobhan (ed.), *Trends in Militancy in Bangladesh: Possible Responses* (Dhaka: UPL, 2010), pp. 101-107.

formal structures or creating a new authority to lead the intelligence community. In the backdrop of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, United States took several initiatives to facilitate coordination reform: the creation of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the introduction of the post of Director of National Intelligence (DNI) are noteworthy here.³⁴ The DHS was designed to bring together various internal security institutions while the DNI would replace the Director of Central Intelligence (DCI) as the new intelligence czar.³⁵

While capacity gaps and coordination needs may be addressed as part of routine transformations in the intelligence community, this is hardly the case. For instance, Amy Zegart argues that, due to their bureaucratic organizational ethos, which discourages drastic change, the U.S. intelligence community failed to adapt to the changing realities of the post-Cold War era.³⁶ She also suggests that unless intelligence failures exposed the limits of American security system, major reforms were not initiated. As stated before, Richard Best's analysis of the U.S. intelligence community and the IDSA report on India's intelligence agencies also stress that intelligence reform initiatives are often taken in response to a specific failure. This leads us to develop a third hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3: If a crisis exposes the failure of intelligence agencies, government officials tend to respond to the crisis by drawing crucial lessons from past failures.

As explained before, the logic of such crisis-induced reform hypothesis is simple: intelligence agencies are bureaucratic organizations, and therefore resistant to change.³⁷ In addition, governments may use such agencies as the

34 The position of Director of National Intelligence was created in the United States to ensure better coordination of disparate intelligence agencies. See Richard A. Best, Jr., *Intelligence Reform After Five Years: The Role of the Director of National Intelligence (DNI)* (Washington, D.C.: CRS, 2010).

35 In the past homeland security responsibilities were split among various agencies whereas the DCI would hold two hats – one for the Central Intelligence Agency and the other for the U.S. intelligence community. In both cases, inter-agency collaboration was a major problem.

36 Amy B. Zegart, "September 11 and the Adaptation Failure of US Intelligence Agencies," *International Security*, Vol. 29, No. 4 (2005), pp. 78-111; Kotani, "Recent Intelligence Reform in the United Kingdom," pp. 3-6.

37 Stafford T. Thomas, "The CIA's Bureaucratic Dimensions," *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence*, Vol. 12, No. 4 (1999-2000), pp. 399-413.

political police, and ignore the demand for necessary reform.³⁸ The effects of such challenges – bureaucratic inertia and politicization – will be weakened in the aftermath of a major intelligence failure. This is due to the fact that the governing elites will learn from past failures, and introduce necessary changes.³⁹

The three hypotheses presented above illustrate the effects of domestic level variables on intelligence reform. By contrast, the next hypothesis stresses the effect of external influence on intelligence reform.⁴⁰

Hypothesis 4: If national decision makers are unwilling or unable to respond to the needs for intelligence reorganization, external influence will facilitate such reform.

External influence may come from diverse actors such as international allies, foreign adversaries, powerful states and international organizations. Foreign actors may use both positive incentives and coercive pressures to persuade intelligence reform in a state. In making crucial decisions on intelligence reform, states may wish to resist coercive external pressures but appreciate any positive incentives such as the offer of financial and technical assistance. However, when the cost of resisting an external pressure outweighs the benefits of doing so, a state is likely to respond positively by introducing intelligence reform.

Since this essay examines intelligence reforms in Bangladesh, it is possible that some hypotheses are more valid than others in explaining a particular reform initiative. It is also possible that the explanatory variables—capacity gaps, coordination needs, crisis moments and external pressures—may interact with each other in causing certain types of reforms.

38 For an excellent analysis of how intelligence agencies may turn into political police, see William W. Keller, *The Liberals and J. Edgar Hoover: Rise and Fall of a Domestic Intelligence State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989). See also, Loch K. Johnston, "Preface to a Theory of Strategic Intelligence," *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence*, Vol. 16, No. 4 (2003), pp. 654-655.

39 John Hollister Hedley, "Learning From Intelligence Failures," *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence*, Vol. 18, No. 3 (2005), pp. 435-450.

40 For a cogent analysis of the domestic versus external determinant of intelligence reform, see Jeanne K. Giraldo and Harold A. Trinkunas, "Terrorist Financing: Explaining Government Responses," in Giraldo and Trinkunas (eds.), *Terrorism Financing and State Responses* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), pp. 282-296.

Research Findings

This section tests the utility of the four hypotheses.

Hypothesis 1: Capacity Gaps

Recent reforms in the domain of counterterrorism intelligence provide useful evidence to support the capacity gaps hypothesis. Let us begin with the DGFI and the NSI—the two most powerful intelligence agencies in the country, which have gradually adapted to the threat of terrorism by opening new cells, wings, and bureaus on counterterrorism. The evolution of the DGFI's Counter Terrorism Intelligence Bureau (CTIB) from the agency's counterterrorism wing and the introduction of the Combined Threat Assessment Center (CTAC) at the NSI reveal that the two agencies have not only been competing against each other but also addressing their capacity gaps in producing all source intelligence on the radical Islamist groups and their clandestine networks.

An interesting question emerges: although civilian law enforcement and intelligence agencies are primarily responsible for fighting terrorism, why did the DGFI as a military-controlled agency and the NSI as a mostly civilian agency come to acquire overlapping responsibilities over counterterrorism intelligence? The answer is straightforward: groups, motivated by left-wing revolutionary ideology and radical Islamism, have often attempted to “undermine the national and territorial integrity of Bangladesh, whether directly or indirectly.”⁴¹ Therefore, terrorism is not considered to be a mere internal security problem, which can be controlled by civilian agencies. Instead, it is rightly seen by the government as a national security threat, the assessment of which requires the involvement of both military and civilian intelligence agencies, with an extensive collection efforts at the national level.

If the acquisition of new counterterrorism responsibilities represented an adaptation for the DGFI and the NSI, the creation of the Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) as a paramilitary force was seen by many as an innovation in law enforcement and intelligence. This is due to the fact that RAB was established in 2004 to augment the capability of Bangladesh Police in fighting serious crime and terrorism.⁴² Former law minister Moudud Ahmed's testimony reveals

41 ATM Amin, “Developing a Counter Terrorism Strategy for Bangladesh,” in Farooq Sobhan (ed.), *Countering Terrorism in Bangladesh* (Dhaka: UPL, 2008), p. 30.

42 International Crisis Group, “Bangladesh: Getting Police Reform on Track,” *Asia Report*, No. 182 (Brussels: ICG, 2009).

the utility of capacity gaps hypothesis. Ahmed, who played a vital role in creating RAB, said: “Our police are inadequate. They do not have sophisticated weapons nor do they have sufficient training. It is not possible to raise the police to a sufficient standard.”⁴³ The creation of RAB, in Ahmed’s view, offered a useful tool to address these concerns with police. This is due to the fact that about half of RAB’s 10,000 personnel are supposed to come from the armed forces whose rigorous physical training and better weapons and tactics were thought to overcome the deficiency in existing law enforcement agencies.

Law minister Moudud and other proponents of the capacity gap hypothesis suggest that government responses to address the deficiency in police came in several stages. Initially, Prime Minister Khaleda Zia’s administration (2001-2006) tried with a few ad hoc police teams, such as the Rapid Enforcement Force, the Rapid Action Team, the Cheetah and the Cobra. These short-term police teams gained initial successes but failed to restore the law and order situation. Khaleda Zia’s government also deployed the army and border force to combat serious crime and terrorism.⁴⁴ Successes achieved during these anti-crime drives by police, army, and border forces were limited and short-lived.⁴⁵ Drawing on the lessons of these anti-crime drives, in 2003 the government amended The Armed Police Battalions Ordinance 1979 to establish the RAB. The Armed Police Battalions (Amendment) Act 2003 authorizes the RAB to perform several internal security duties such as recovery of illegal arms, apprehension of armed gangs of criminals. As stated before, it also gives the RAB two exclusive duties: intelligence and investigation.⁴⁶

Successive governments have not only equipped the RAB with sophisticated weapons, but also provided it with the indemnity for excessive use of force

43 Quoted in Roland Buerk, “Bangladesh’s Feared Elite Police,” *BBC News*, December 15, 2005.

44 The Army-led Operation Clean Heart and the BDR-led Operation Spider Web were aimed at hunting down armed militants and terrorists in the country. See Rounaq Jahan, “Bangladesh in 2003: Vibrant Democracy or Destructive Politics?” *Asian Survey*, Vol. 44, No. 1 (2004), p. 59.

45 ABM Ziaur Rahman, “Countering Terrorism: Responses of Stakeholders,” in Imtiaz Ahmed (ed.), *Terrorism in the 21st Century: Perspectives from Bangladesh* (Dhaka: UPL, 2009), p.169.

46 See Articles 6aa and 6bb of The Armed Police Battalions (Amendment) Act, 2003 (Act No. XXVIII of 2003) <bdlaws.minlaw.gov.bd/print_sections_all.php?id=593> (accessed 26 April 2013).

against criminal suspects. This is evident in numerous extrajudicial killings in RAB operations, some of which are attributed to RAB's intelligence wing.⁴⁷ RAB defends its position by asserting the right to use proportionate force during gunfight with criminal suspects. It also claims that all incidents of gunfight with suspect are investigated either by the police or by judicial magistrates.⁴⁸

The effect of capacity gap is also evident in the SB and the CID. The longstanding employment of these two agencies in spying on private citizens and political parties have not only eroded their professional competence but also turned them into the political police of the incumbent governments. Recognizing their limits, the donor-funded police reform project has targeted, among other strategic priorities, improved efficiency of immigration service, criminal intelligence, and crime investigation. Some of these goals in better policing and intelligence were accomplished by providing new training modules, scientific equipments, and teaching professional ethics.⁴⁹

Recent trends in the domain of financial intelligence seem to further confirm the effect of capacity gap hypothesis. Prior to the creation of the Anti-Money Laundering Department at the Bangladesh Bank in 2002, which was later renamed to Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit in 2012, the government possessed no dedicated agency to collect and analyze information on money laundering and terrorist financing. Similarly, prior to the formation of Central Intelligence Cell at the National Board of Revenue, the tax investigation unit of NBR had serious shortfalls in detecting tax evasion.⁵⁰ The government responded to such limitations by creating the BFIU and the CIC.

Support for the capacity gap hypothesis can also be found in the fact that the Anti-Corruption Commission was formed in 2004 and later reconstituted in 2007. Here the political will of the government proved to be a decisive factor in

47 Human Rights Watch, *Judge, Jury, and Executioner: Torture and Extrajudicial Killings by Bangladesh's Elite Security Force* (New York: HRW, 2006); More recent allegations focus on a criminal case, in which senior RAB officials in Narayanganj city killed seven people in exchange for monetary benefits. See "Ex-RAB Officer Tareque Admits Link," *The Daily Star* (Dhaka), June 18, 2014.

48 Interview with a senior RAB official; Also see, M. Moyeenul Haque, "RAB Operations – An Insider's View," in *RAB Journal 2008* (Dhaka: RAB Legal and Media Wing, 2008), pp. 84-85.

49 Author's interview with UNDP experts on police reform project in Bangladesh.

50 Karim and Alauddin, "Emerging Tax Issues in Asian Countries."

strengthening the anti-corruption investigations. For critics, corruption charges against the lawmakers of the ruling party are hardly investigated and prosecuted, whereas similar charges against the opposition parties are taken quite seriously by the ACC. Interestingly, the partisan role of the ACC was quite different when the military-backed caretaker government of Fakhruddin Ahmed appointed retired army chief General Hassan Moshhud Chowdhury as the ACC chairman. During his tenure as the ACC chairman, Moshhud Chowdhury initiated corruption investigations against many political leaders including the BNP and Awami League party chiefs Khaleda Zia and Sheikh Hasina, respectively. It became quite apparent that while some of the corruption charges against Khaleda and Hasina might have been well substantiated, the ACC was used as an instrument of the military-backed caretaker government to implement a ‘minus two’ formula.⁵¹ The goal of the ‘minus two’ formula was to cleanse Bangladeshi politics by removing the corrupt and the criminals so that a third force of civil society leaders with clean image could come to govern the country.⁵²

In summary, recent intelligence reform practices in the domains of counterterrorism, immigration service, criminal investigation, and financial crime provide useful evidence to support the capacity gap hypothesis.

Hypothesis 2: Coordination Needs

The second hypothesis focuses on coordination needs. Coordination can be centralized or decentralized. The former provides a strategic tool for intelligence sharing by bringing up various agency heads, whereas the second offers a useful mechanism to synthesize field-level intelligence efforts.

Evidence suggests that the absence of an effective intelligence sharing mechanism led to the creation of at least three coordination bodies—the National Committee for Intelligence Coordination (NCIC), the National Committee for Militancy Resistance and Prevention (NMRPP), and the National Coordination Committee (NCC-AML/TF) on anti-money laundering and terrorist financing. Prior to the formation of these coordinating committees, there was hardly any central coordinating body to facilitate intelligence sharing.

51 Iftikharuzzaman, “Can We Expect an Effective ACC?” *The Daily Star* (Dhaka), February 23, 2010.

52 Inam Ahmed, “Walking the Edge,” *India Today*, May 28, 2007.

Instead, national core committees of senior officials worked on intelligence cooperation on an ad hoc basis, which was hampered by bureaucratic inertia, and competition between various agencies.⁵³

After the BDR Mutiny in February 2009 revealed the cracks in the ad hoc intelligence coordination structure, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina established the NCIC in July 2009 to centralize the intelligence coordination process. Located at the Prime Minister's Office, the NCIC is composed of the cabinet secretary, principal secretary to the prime minister's office, director generals of NSI, DGFI, SSF, and inspector general of police.⁵⁴ The chiefs of RAB, SB, and CID assist the NCIC in performing its activities.⁵⁵

A close look at the composition of the NCIC suggests that it addressed the thorny issue of bureaucratic competitions, by giving due importance to both civilian and military intelligence agencies. For instance, in the past the prime minister would give disproportionately more importance to the intelligence assessments of the DGFI and the NSI, and cared less about what analytical reports the other agencies could offer.⁵⁶ However, the government struck a balance between the civilian and military agencies by ensuring that the list of NCIC participants was expanded to include the national police chief, and heads of principal security and intelligence agencies which work under the Ministry of Home Affairs. For many analysts, compared to the past practices of informal coordination, the NCIC represents a major transformation in which various agency heads meet the prime minister on a regular basis and share their assessments with the apex committee members.

According to home ministry officials, the formation of NCMRP in May 2009 was also an innovation in coordinating strategic communications against terrorism and religious militancy.⁵⁷ Although the NCMRP comprises seventeen

53 Kawser Ahmed, "Defining National Security Matters and Need for Founding a National Crisis Management Body and Its Functionaries," in *The Battle Without Borders* (Dhaka: Osder Publications, 2010), p. 167.

54 M Abul Kalam Azad, "Work on Counterintelligence Unit Under Way," *The Daily Star* (Dhaka), January 23, 2010; "PM to Sit with Intel Agencies Today," *News Today* (Dhaka), December 26, 2010.

55 "Security Forces Capacity Building," *Security Risks-Com*, January 1, 2011.

56 Author's interview; "B'Desh Forms National Committee to Coordinate Intelligence Activities," *Zee News* (India), August 3, 2009.

57 Interview with senior officials at the Ministry of Home Affairs.

delegates from various ministries such as the home, law, education, religious affairs, local government, and information ministries, officials from the principal law enforcement and intelligence agencies also attend its meetings. The anti-militancy committee mobilizes concerned agencies at the district, sub-district, and local government levels to denounce terrorism and all forms of extremism. According to former police chief Muhammad Nurul Huda, district-level coordination bodies still exist but they lack any authority to synthesize operational intelligence.⁵⁸ The NCMRP has the potential to address this gap, but critics observe that the NCMRP is overrepresented by the government ministries and security agencies and under-represented by the members of civil society and human rights bodies. This has created a danger of abuses of power by the government and its agencies.⁵⁹

Like the NCIC and the NCMRP, the National Coordination Committee (NCC) on financial crimes was formed in August 2009 under the leadership of finance minister Abul Maal Abdul Muhith. The finance minister chairs the NCC, and its membership comprises the central bank governor, and secretaries of finance and bank divisions, and ministries of home, foreign, and law.⁶⁰ Over the last few years, the NCC was responsible for the formulation and implementation of policies regarding money laundering and terrorist financing.⁶¹ According to one senior official in the Bangladesh Bank, the main task of the NCC was to reform the legal regime so that Bangladesh could gradually improve its compliance with global standards set by the United Nations and other multilateral bodies such as the Financial Action Task Force (FATF).

Although the NCIC, the NCMRP, and the NCC emerged as fully operational coordinating bodies, a few other proposals on intelligence coordination mechanism did not gain any currency. The concepts of the National Crisis Management Committee (NCMC) and the Quick Reaction Force (QRF) are two such cases. In the backdrop of the BDR Mutiny, there were repeated calls for creating a crisis management committee, which would not only include the prime minister and key cabinet members, but also the chair of parliamentary committee on national security, and leader of the opposition party in the

58 Huda, "Capacity Building and Coordination at Field Level," p. 104.

59 Ahmed, "Bangladesh," in *Security Sector Reform and Democratization*, p. 16.

60 See "National Committee Formed to Finalize Anti-Money Laundering Action Plan," *The Financial Express* (Dhaka), August 2, 2009.

61 GoB, *National Strategy*, Annexure, p. iv.

parliament.⁶² Given the highly polarized political culture in the country, in which personal hatred between the key leaders of mainstream political parties often impede the process of democracy; the idea of a crisis management committee was a utopia. Recognizing that NCMC has no future, the Bangladesh Army proposed the formation of a readily deployable quick reaction force, which could be used to deal with mutiny, terrorism, and hostage situations.⁶³ If established, the QRF could also be deployed to the United Nations peace keeping missions. Till date, no concrete actions have been taken to raise the QRF.

The preceding discussion shows the existence of three high level coordinating bodies. Although the NCIC is the most powerful coordination body, it does not include border and financial intelligence agencies. The newly created border intelligence agency BSB is absent from the NCIC structure due to its lack of competence and maturity. On the other hand, since the financial intelligence agencies participate in a finance ministry-led committee, they are perhaps excluded from the NCIC to avoid any duplication of efforts. For critics, the absence of border and financial intelligence entities is largely due to their infancy. Since both entities have been recently formed, their potential contribution to national intelligence coordination is underappreciated at the moment but may increase over time.

Hypothesis 3: Crisis-driven Demand

The third hypothesis posits that intelligence crises and failures can act as a catalyst for major reform. Consistent with the expectation of this hypothesis, intelligence failure leading up to the BDR mutiny had a decisive effect on reshaping the border intelligence.⁶⁴ The reconfiguration of border force intelligence and the creation of two national coordination bodies provide useful evidence to test the crisis-driven reform hypothesis.

The chain of events during the BDR Mutiny suggests that members of the Rifles Security Unit (RSU) failed to report to its higher authorities any sensitive information regarding disaffected border soldiers. Instead of delivering

62 The three defense service chiefs, key intelligence chiefs, and police chief would also represent NCMC. See Azad, "Work on Counterintelligence Unit Under Way."

63 Shakhawat Liton, "Army Seeks to Form Crisis Unit," *The Daily Star* (Dhaka), June 8, 2009.

64 see Anand Kumar, "Reconstitution of the Bangladesh Rifles." *Journal of Defense Studies*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (2010), pp. 116-124.

advanced information to their superior authorities, several dozen RSU members actively participated in the mutiny.⁶⁵ Other agencies also failed to predict the outbreak of a mutiny, which destroyed the BDR's command structure. Lessons learned from the BDR mutiny influenced the way the border guard has been reconstituted since 2010. This is evident in disbanding the BDR and creating the Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) with newly screened personnel. The RSU was also replaced with a new BGB intelligence network, which emphasizes fusion of information among analysts at the battalions, regional sectors, and central headquarters.

In retrospect, intelligence failure prior to the BDR mutiny provides useful lessons, which have strongly shaped the Sheikh Hasina government's decision to form the two coordination committees such as the NCIC and the NCMRP. The national probe committee on BDR mutiny, led by retired government official Anis Uz Zaman, found that the complicity of RSU members with the mutineers, and lack of inter-agency collaboration between the BDR headquarters and the home ministry officials contributed to intelligence failure prior to the mutiny. Therefore, the committee recommended that two intelligence coordinating bodies be established – a central intelligence coordination structure; and a national crisis management committee.⁶⁶ The Anis Uz Zaman committee also emphasized better coordination between various intelligence and law enforcement agencies.⁶⁷ As explained before, the government responded positively to the idea of a central intelligence coordination structure and ignored the concept of crisis management committee.

While the events of BDR Mutiny have had a quick effect on the government's decision to form the NCIC, the idea of creating the anti-militancy national committee (NCMRP) has had a long period of gestation. Political observers suggest that the rise of militant Islamist groups such as the Harkat ul Jihad al

65 After criminal investigations, the Bangladesh Government accused 113 RSU soldiers, of whom four were acquitted and 109 were given prison terms, ranging from four months to seven years. Each convict was fined Taka 100 (less than \$1.5). Four of the accused RSU men were acquitted as allegations against them were not proved. See Staff Correspondent, "RSU Was Aware, but Kept Mum," *The Daily Star* (Dhaka), December 20, 2010; Staff Correspondent, "Intelligence Unit Let It Happen," *The Daily Star* (Dhaka), May 9, 2010.

66 "A Summary of the National Probe Report on the BDR Mutiny," *The Daily Star* (Dhaka), May 29, 2009.

67 Khan, *Revolt at the BDR Headquarters*, p. 26.

Islami (HuJI), the Jamaat ul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB), and the Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh (JMJB), and their alleged involvement in several high profile terrorist attacks from 1999 to 2005 have encouraged the previous governments of Khaleda Zia and Fakhruddin Ahmed to form an inter-agency anti-militancy committee. In fact, both the BNP-led four party alliance government (2001-2006) and the military-backed caretaker government (2007-2008) recognized that an anti-militancy committee would not only coordinate the works of various ministries but also allow the intelligence agencies to share their terrorist threat assessments.

Why was then May 2009 chosen as the timeline for establishing the NCMRP? There are two possible answers: First, although the idea of a similar anti-militancy committee were contemplated for quite some time, especially since the JMB's 2005 country-wide terrorist bombings, bureaucratic inertia and lack of inter-agency collaboration put enormous pressures impeding the birth of the committee. It appears that the home ministry exploited the crisis moment of the post-mutiny period in 2009 to establish the NCMRP. Second, widespread concerns over possible connections between radical Islamist groups and the BDR mutineers offer an additional explanation.⁶⁸ Although no conclusive evidence was found to establish militants-mutineers connections, intelligence assessments warned of the possibility of looted weapons and explosives falling into the hands of criminals and terrorists, who might be intent on destabilizing the country.⁶⁹ Senior officials at the home ministry and the major intelligence agencies note that the NCMRP was created in response to such threat assessments.

In summary, intelligence failures leading to JMB's country-wide terrorist bombings in 2005 and the BDR mutiny in 2009 have significantly shaped the structures of the border intelligence agency and the formation of the national coordination committees. This paper has also mentioned similar crisis-driven reforms in India, the U.K. and the U.S. Are there any historical precedents aside from the 2005 JMB bombings and the 2009 BDR Mutiny, which may provide

68 Md. Asadullah Khan, "Mutiny or Conspiracy?" *The Daily Star* (Dhaka), March 7, 2009. Also see Kumar, "The BDR Mutiny," pp. 109-111.

69 Shafqat Munir, "The BDR Mutiny in Bangladesh: Understanding the National and Regional Implications," *RUSI Commentary*, March 26, 2009; Anand Kumar, "The BDR Mutiny," pp. 109-110.

further credence to the crisis-driven reform hypothesis in Bangladesh? The answer is yes.

The creation of the paramilitary Jatiya Rakkhi Bahini (National Defence Force) as an auxiliary police force in February 1972 and its absorption into the Bangladesh Army in October 1975 also illustrate the crisis-driven reform hypothesis. Although Bangladesh's independence leader Sheikh Mujibur Rahman established the Rakkhi Bahini as a loyal militia force to contain organized crime and terrorism and to consolidate his regime security, the Rakkhi Bahini was eventually turned into a state within state with huge mandates in intelligence gathering and law enforcement.⁷⁰ Despite widespread criticisms of human rights abuses including torture, enforced disappearance, extrajudicial killings, Sheikh Mujib not only planned for the expansion of the Rakkhi Bahini but also enacted the Jatiya Rakkhi Bahini Amendment Act 1974 to give it "immunity from prosecution and other legal proceedings."⁷¹ It was not until the assassination of Mujib in a military coup in August 1975 that the Rakkhi Bahini was abolished and merged with the armed forces through the Jatiya Rakkhi Bahini Absorption Ordinance 1975.⁷²

Several questions flow from the above analysis: To what extent have the DGFI and the NSI seen Mujib's killing in 1975 and Zia's murder in 1981 as cases of intelligence failure? How have successive governments reformed the DGFI and the NSI to enhance their professional competence? It is beyond the scope of this paper to examine the utility of the crisis-driven reform hypothesis with further historical evidence. Further studies should address this deficiency.

The preceding discussions demonstrate the effect of domestic factors on intelligence reform. The next hypothesis examines the effect of external influence on intelligence reform.

Hypothesis 4: External Influence

The fourth hypothesis suggests that if national decision makers fail to respond to the needs for intelligence reform, external influence will facilitate such

70 Talukder Maniruzzaman, "Bangladesh in 1975: The Fall of the Mujib Regime and Its Aftermath," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 16, No. 2 (1976), p. 121.

71 Human Rights Watch, *Ignoring Executions and Torture: Impunity for Bangladesh's Security Forces* (New York: HRW, 2009), p. 5.

72 See, *Jatiya Rakkhi Bahini (Absorption into the Army) Ordinance, 1975* (Ordinance No. LII of 1975). http://bdlaws.minlaw.gov.bd/pdf_part.php?id=505, accessed June 20, 2014.

reform. External influence may come in two forms: carrots and sticks. The first refers to the offer of incentives, while the latter implies the use of coercive pressures. The incentive structure may include funding and technical supports whereas coercive pressures may focus on punitive actions against non-compliant practices. As stated before, external influence may come from two major sources: states and international organizations. For the purpose of brevity, this paper examines the effects of influence from several sources: the United States, the European Union, the United Nations, and the Financial Action Task Force.

Data on criminal and financial intelligence reform in Bangladesh support the validity of the external influence hypothesis. With an estimated US\$45 million multi-year and multi-donor support, Bangladesh Police and the UNDP have embarked on the Police Reform Project, which has not only worked on gender mainstreaming and strategic leadership issues, but also targeted improvement in criminal investigation and criminal intelligence analysis.⁷³ As part of the police reform initiative, funding support from the European Commission, the executive organ of the European Union, has offered an incentive to create the Trafficking in Human Being (THB) Unit at the CID. Although the newly created anti-trafficking unit is too small to cover the mammoth task of investigating hundreds of cases, it offers a useful example of how donor-driven reform agenda can assist an intelligence agency to adapt to the growing threat to human security.⁷⁴

In addition to foreign aid, external pressures have also had positive effect on intelligence reform. This is sharply evident in the case of constant pressures of the U.S. State Department to improve the anti-trafficking regime in Bangladesh.⁷⁵ In a similar manner, pressures from the U.S. Treasury have also had significantly influenced the way the Bangladesh Bank has reformed its financial intelligence unit. According to one Bangladeshi analyst,

73 Bangladesh Police is the implementing agency and the UNDP is a donor coordinating agency for the police reform project. For a detailed critique of the police reform process in Bangladesh, see ICG, “Bangladesh: Getting Police Reform on Track.”

74 The THB was created with nine officials only.

75 The State Department’s pressure came in the form of its downgrading Bangladesh from ‘Tier 2’ to ‘Tier 2 Watch List’ in the 2009 Trafficking in Persons Report. This downgrading underscored the necessity of legal and intelligence reform to comply with the global anti-trafficking regime.

The US [United States] has been keeping a close watch over the terror situation in Bangladesh. This is evident from the US pressure on the [Bangladesh] government in 2002 for the enactment of the AMLA [Anti Money Laundering Act], long before the surfacing of JMB [Jamaat ul Mujahideen Bangladesh – a radical Islamist group]. Since then it has been *hammering the government* to complete probe into the alleged money laundering cases and to take some actions (emphasis added).⁷⁶

In addition to the U.S Treasury, the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) has also put enormous pressures on Bangladesh to introduce a series of legal and administrative reforms in the domain of financial intelligence. The FATF is a global standard setter in the fight against money laundering, terrorist financing, and proliferation financing. During interviews, senior officials at the central bank and the ministries of home affairs, foreign affairs, and law and parliamentary affairs describe how Bangladesh risked being blacklisted for non-compliance with the global standards on anti-money laundering and countering of terrorist financing (AML/CFT). According to a senior official at the central bank, Bangladesh has been committed to bringing necessary reform in the financial sector “to avert any global negative impact” and to “meet the demand of global watchdog [such as FATF].”⁷⁷

In order for Bangladesh to improve its compliance with the global AML/CFT regime, there was a need for changing the existing laws regarding anti-terrorism, anti-money laundering, and countering of terrorist financing. These legal reforms would ensure that money laundering, terrorist financing, and proliferation financing are adequately criminalized and an independent financial intelligence unit is created to detect, analyze, and help prosecute such crimes. As stated before, in accordance with the requirements set by the FATF, the finance ministry-led national coordination committee steered the process of legislating the Money Laundering Prevention Act 2012 and the Anti-Terrorism Act 2012.⁷⁸ The new laws have repealed their past versions in an effort to comply with the global AML/CFT standards. As a result, banks and non-banking financial institutions are now required to report suspicious transactions to the Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit (BFIU).

International pressures also came from the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and various multilateral conventions. To understand how the UN

76 Rahman, “Countering Terrorism: Responses of Stakeholders,” p. 175.

77 Nazmul Ahsan, “FATF Lists 5 Deficiencies in BD’s Financial Sec” *The Financial Express* (Dhaka), July 9, 2012.

78 “National Committee Formed,” *The Financial Express* (Dhaka), August 2, 2009.

pressures were channeled, one has to look at the UNSC Resolutions 1267 and 1373, both of which focus on targeted sanctions on terrorist financiers. The UN Counter Terrorism Committee also requires member states to assess their legislation regarding UNSCR 1373. In addition, a host of UN conventions on transnational organized crime and terrorist offences, such as the 1998 Vienna Convention on drugs trafficking, the 1999 UN Convention on the suppression of terrorist financing, and the 2000 Palermo Convention on transnational crime had significantly influenced the way the security and intelligence agencies in Bangladesh have adapted to the evolving threats of transnational crime and terrorism. It is abundantly clear that the cumulative effects of pressures from the FATF and the UN have strongly shaped the way Bangladesh has introduced reforms in the financial intelligence sector.⁷⁹

External influence can also explain the expansion of counterterrorism capabilities of the DGFI, the NSI, and the RAB, each of which competes to become the lead counterterrorism agency in the country. Participants in this research suggest that after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, U.S. pressures played a crucial role in encouraging the DGFI to acquire new counterterrorism responsibilities. These pressures would often come from senior officials at the U.S. State Department's Office of Coordinator of Counterterrorism as well as the Department of Treasury's Financial Crimes Enforcement Network.

Although external variables can provide useful insights into understanding reforms in the domains of counterterrorism and financial intelligence such variables appear to have less utility in analyzing reforms in the border intelligence apparatus, national intelligence coordination, and tax intelligence. As described before, the latter three changes were influenced by domestic pressures such as capacity gaps, coordination demands, and intelligence failure.

Policy Recommendations

Several policy recommendations flow from the central research findings.

- First, capacity building should be an ongoing process. Intelligence practitioners and national decision makers should not wait until a major failure to initiate necessary changes. Although this paper focuses on the capacity of individual agencies, it also recognizes the importance of improving the capability of intelligence coordination structures.

⁷⁹ Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit, *Managing Core Risks of Financial Institutions: Guidance Notes on Prevention of Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing* (Dhaka: Bangladesh Bank, 2012).

- Second, national level intelligence coordination is necessary but not sufficient. There is an urgent need to promote operational collaboration among field level intelligence agencies. In addition, border intelligence and financial intelligence entities need to be strengthened and brought under the purview of the National Committee for Intelligence Coordination.
- Third, an autonomous research center outside the intelligence community should be formed to examine the cases of intelligence failures. The proposed center should study missed opportunities and lessons learned.
- Fourth, external assistance from the EU and the UNDP has brought useful changes to the criminal investigation capability. In addition, pressures from the FATE, the United States, and the United Nations have helped developing the financial intelligence unit and a national coordination body on anti-money laundering. Building on the preexisting reforms, Bangladesh should continue to enhance the capability of intelligence agencies and their coordination structures.

Conclusion

This paper has accomplished several tasks. First, it profiled the intelligence community in Bangladesh and mapped out the major intelligence reforms in the country. Next, it developed a set of testable propositions on intelligence reforms, and examined their utility with empirical evidence. The central research findings show that recent intelligence reforms in Bangladesh can be explained by four factors – capacity gaps, coordination needs, crisis-driven demands, and external influence.

Despite its accomplishments, this paper has a few limitations. It does not address the issue of democratic control of intelligence agencies. Although Bangladesh claims to be a parliamentary democracy, there is no legislative oversight body to control the budgets, personnel or acquisition policy of the intelligence agencies. The judiciary also lacks any control mechanism over the intelligence agencies. In the absence of any legislative or judicial oversight mechanisms, the executive branch in general and the prime minister in particular have effectively monopolized the control over intelligence agencies.

The executive monopoly over the intelligence community has created several problems. It has certainly reduced the possibility for bringing greater degree of transparency and accountability in the way security and intelligence agencies operate. Other problems relate to the absence of any overarching intelligence law and an intelligence strategy which could provide well defined tasking for the agencies and clarity in their legal mandates. A study on Pakistan's

intelligence community suggests that in the absence of any well defined tasks and clear legal mandates, the security and intelligence agencies remain vulnerable to manipulation by the incumbent political regimes.⁸⁰

In conclusion, the four hypotheses tested in this paper offer only plausible explanations. It is important to conduct further research to learn about the changes and continuities in the security and intelligence agencies of Bangladesh. Future studies should expand the timeline of analysis, and include more variables and country cases. They should also give adequate emphasis on the issue of democratic control over the intelligence agencies.

80 See, Frédéric Grare, *Reforming the Intelligence Agencies in Pakistan's Transitional Democracy* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2009).

REPRESENTATION OF PHULBARI COAL MINE ISSUE IN DOCUMENTARY FILMS OF BANGLADESH

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Abstract

Bangladesh has few natural resources of which coal is one. Phulbari is a coal rich area of Bangladesh. On the other Phulbari coal mine project is a burning issue in Bangladesh politics. Global alliance of corporate capital and some local interest wanted to extract coal through open pit mining method at Phulbari which will destroy the particular area. Many people will be dislocated and terrible effects will occur on environment if the coal mine project is implemented. Thousands of life and many stake holders are related with the coal mine project. As we know documentary film is based on real people and real life. It evolves with the actual life of people. In this regard, some documentaries based on this issue were made in our country. In this article, two documentaries *Phulbari* and *Dudh Koyla* have been analyzed to see how this critical issue has been depicted in the documentary films. Nationalism of Indigenous group, quiet and peaceful life, courage, consciousness, unity and determination of general people, uncertainty of people's life, terrible effects on environment, controversial position of policy makers, and comparative images about coal mine have been analysed in this article. Thus, the article helps the concerned people to get the whole dimension of the issue.

Introduction

Open pit coal mine project in Phulbari upazila, of Dinajpur district is a much discussed and important discourse now-a-days. Bangladesh has got few valuable natural resources of which coal is one. The northern part of the country is enriched with coal. In 1962, a German Group of experts first discovered the coal in Jamalganj area of Bogra. Later in 1994 a high quality coal has been discovered at Phulbari in Dinajpur district. To make super profit a global alliance of corporate capital tried to extract coal by open cut mining method at Phulbari which will cause a great harm to the coal enriched area. Many third world countries are also in vulnerable position for the covetousness of these

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international organizations. Since 1980s Bangladesh has adopted the 'development program' determined by stipulations of World Bank, IMF, other donor organizations and developed countries. These organizations fixed a program termed as '*Structural Adjustment*' for the least developed countries as an inevitable condition of getting foreign loans or grants. The key concepts of this program are: free trade specially to liberalize the import policy, reduce the function and responsibility of the state, curtailment of state expenditure in social sector, privatization of productive public institutions, and withdrawing the subsidy in different sectors etc. This program is mainly based on capitalism where free economy is considered as an inevitable part of capitalist economic development. It says, neither state nor political force rather market is the only factor which would control the economy. That is why the government of Bangladesh is taking steps towards different sectors such as health, education, natural resource etc. of the country according to the international donor's prescription. According to the specialists,

The imperialist system works in 'manufacturing consent' within the ruling class and enters into partnerships with them to grab resources and the total economy. The people and the government of Bangladesh have little work to do with the process of production and consumption. Most of the profits go to the private companies and the products are almost entirely exported to other nations. The local ruling class find their existence, power, security and affluence by being connected with global empire. So this is some sort of negotiated arrangement, local ruling classes and the global ruling classes have. With foreign aid, the global ruling class could build a major support base in the consultants, private sector big owners and beneficiaries from different projects. In the process, these bureaucrats, consultants, media and the ruling classes have become the fifth column of global capital and they try to 'rationalize' these grabbing as 'development'. The corporate media helps them in re-enforcing this notion and maintain secrecy in terms of economic dealings.¹

However, due to strong resistance of Phulbari people and the various activist groups, the project of the foreign company has not been successful. Based on this perspective some documentary films are made by different organizations and persons in our country.

Documentary as a Film Genre

As we know, film is an audio visual medium which depicts acts, events and fantasy in more attractive way compared to other medium of mass communication. There are various genres of film. Documentary is one of these genres. In general, documentary is a specific style of expansion where one sort

¹ Manoranjan Pegu, *The Phulbari movement: Resisting Neo liberalism in Bangladesh*. <http://www.meghbarta.info/state-and-politics/172-the-phulbari-movement-resisting-neo-liberalism-in-bangladesh.html>, 2012

of belief is taken place in spectator's mind towards people's surrounding and conscience of person. In other words, documentary is a serious movie, an art form that tries to teach you something and 'authenticity' is closely related to documentary. Patricia Aufderheide in her book *Documentary Film: A Very short Introduction* said,

Documentaries are about real life; they are not real life. They are not even windows on to real life. They are portraits of real life, using real life as their raw material, constructed by artist and technicians who make myriad decisions about what story to tell whom, and for what purpose.²

In fact, documentary is a type of film that is based on the real world and real people, depicting things in a truthful and objective manner. Besides, it has to function with a certain realism of style, on some real location without actors, artificial props or a pre-constructed narrative. It needs, obviously an artistic form, a moral and ideological manner which represents the content systematically.

The term documentary emerged in the nineteenth century which was termed by John Grierson, pioneer of the British documentary movement in the 1920s. He termed the documentary as a creative treatment of actuality. In 1922, an American film maker Robert. J. Flaherty made the first documentary film which was entitled *Nanook of the North*. Later, he made another documentary *Moana* (1926). John Grierson, the eminent documentary film maker, in a review paper, has described *Moana* as a documentary. From that very moment, the word documentary has been used as a terminology in the film dictionary. However, Bangladesh has the tradition of making documentary on different aspects and issues, especially on contemporary issues. Open pit coal mine at Phulbari Upazila is such an important issue.

Method

In this article, two documentary films *Phulbari* directed by Philip Gain and Ronald Haidar, and *Coal Milk (Dudh Koyla)* directed by Molla Sagor are selected for our analysis. The key method of obtaining data for this study is textual analysis as well as in-depth-interview and secondary materials are also used in the article. In the analysis, it is observed that how this sensitive issue is portrayed. The main objective of this article is to view the overall portrayal of Phulbari issue and to examine the quality and style of these two documentaries. The significant difference between these two documentaries is *DudhKoyla* was

² Patricia Aufderheide, *Documentary Film: A very short Introduction*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2008, p. 2

made before the incident at Phulbari had taken place whereas *Phulbari* was made after the incident.

What Happened at Phulbari?

On August 26, 2006, thousands of people from adjacent villages headed towards Phulbari upazila in Dinajpur district to take part in a grand assembly. They demanded that open pit mining should not be allowed in the area. When the protesters marched towards the Asia Energy office to demonstrate their disapproval about open pit mining, security forces opened fire on a section of the rally. At least seven people were killed and around three hundred were injured.

This sanguinary incident was the consequence of mass people's movement against Asia Energy, a British company in contract with the Bangladesh Government to extract the local coal mines. Whether the people will be the authority on their own mineral and energy resources or these resources would be the way of making super profit by another developed state and multinational company— is a big question at present. Initially an agreement was signed on Phulbari coal project between the government of Bangladesh and BHP, an Australian company in 1994. BHP sold its ownership of the project in 1998 to Asia Energy, an inexperienced British company which was formed in 1997. Asia Energy started to work in Phulbari coal project with just one year experience. The company proposed development of an open pit mine to ensure maximum coal production at Phulbari where about 570 million tons coal lies at a depth ranging from 150 to 270 meters. Phulbari is a very densely populated area and known as a granary of Bangladesh. Agriculture is the main source of livelihood in the area with about three crops cultivated in the highly fertile area. The area is also inhabited by various indigenous groups. However, according to the agreement, the full ownership of the mine will be given to company; in contrast Bangladesh will get only six per cent royalty from the project. But why will Bangladesh give an important energy resource to a foreign company? Anu Muhammed argues:

With hundred per cent ownership this company would extract coal; the logic being given behind the open cut method is that coal is essential for the development as well as that is profitable for Bangladesh. They said it has no internal demand that's why it will be exported. But if there is no internal demand, why will it be necessary to extract coal? In fact Bangladesh would not be benefited as they said and coal extraction by open cut method is not necessary. Their words are fully deceptive.³

³ Anu Muhammed, *Phulbari, Kanshat, Garments 2006*, Dhaka, 2007, p. 98

The unskilled company, however, conducted a study on the high quality coal enriched area. As, to extract coal by open cut method, it will need involvement of huge number of people, because countless people would be eradicated from their own land. So without ensuring an understanding with local people it is impossible to start this project. By realizing the fact Asia Energy tried to convince local people. They started working on to create public support among villagers. They propagate, if coal is extracted from the mine, future of the inhabitants will be enriched. They said, the company would make beautiful houses, school, colleges for the villagers. Asia Energy also made some construction such as some small bricks dwelling with a wall, as well as they made a water tank, gave some colour television among young people. Through these works they wanted to motivate the locals that it will be a model town and they can be shifted in this model town. Asia energy tried to get support of some corrupted people for their own sake. To address this Anu Muhammed also argues:

Since Bangladesh is known as a corrupt country to foreign countries, so Asia Energy assumed that the work is very easy. They tried to create some morally degenerated people there for their own sake. But our general public do not practise ill conduct; it was out of their thought. People have the power to read between the lines of the propaganda which they started. They realized that a terrible occurrence is going to be happen. So they decided to protest.⁴

Understanding the company's fraudulence, a vibrant grassroots revolt had begun at the proposed coal mine area. People became united and promised to bear up against the foreign company's ill intention.

The study report of Asia Energy, however, mentioned that coal will be extracted in open cut method because there is a little possibility of accident and by this method ninety per cent coal will be extracted rapidly. But the reality is different from their report. The method contains a lot of complications which includes environmental, socio-economic, cultural, and mental enigma of inhabitants at Phulbari. The Open cut mine project will acquire approximately six thousand hectares of land. It will displace about 200000 people and they will be shifted in another area. To extract coal through open cut method, it will have to dig a deep hole; moreover, this way will need to dry the whole area. That is why underground water will need to be drained out by deep tube well, as a result the whole area of greater Dinajpur would become desert. People who live around the mine would have no means of living. This is because if agricultural lands are deserted there will be no source of earning left. Agricultural land,

⁴ *Ibid*, p. 118

homestead, architectures, graveyard, playground, people's culture, their unity, brotherhood all would be demolished. Water of the whole area would be poisonous. Thus, a great number of people will suffer a great loss and their future will fall in precarious situation. At all events, local people will not give their land to Asia Energy; they made it as their final decision.

Later, National Committee for Oil, Gas, Mineral Resources, Port and Power Protection and civil society had joined with Phulbari people against the agreement between Asia Energy and government of Bangladesh. Thus, the National Committee called for a *Gherao* program on August 26, 2006. To express the feelings, opinion and adverse effect of coal mine a peaceful program was decided on August, 26, 2006. Through this program they wanted to send the message to the government of Bangladesh and international communities. Thousands of people including teachers, students, farmers, and ethnic people as well as people from Dhaka, to express solidarity with peoples of Phulbari, had assembled at Dhaka intersection of Phulbari. They chanted slogan against the Asia Energy and proposed mining method. On the contrary, government deployed a large number of security forces to keep the rally controlled. The rally decided to boycott the Asia Energy and its collaborators socially. After finishing the concluding speeches in one and a half kilometre away from Dhaka intersection the demonstration was concluded. No sooner had it been concluded the security forces opened fire on the rally. Seven people were killed and as many as three hundred were injured. The carnage brought about to halt the democratic voice of disarmed general people, language and strength of the protest. This incident heightened public sentiment against Asia Energy. For the next couple of days the masses in the area boycotted all state machineries and continued their protest. The government representatives finally sat with the protest leaders for a deal. They agreed to meet all the six demands of Phulbari demonstrators which included among others the expulsion of Asia Energy from Bangladesh and dropping the open cut method. As per the agreement, the government would decide the method of mining in the country on the basis of public opinion.⁵

Following a strong protest and bloodshed on August 26, 2006 against the open-pit mining, the project remains postponed for the last seven years. But the plan of open pit mining in Phulbari is still alive as discussion of concerned authority

5 Government agrees to say 'no' to Asia Energy, *The Daily Star*, Dhaka, August 31, 2006.

of government on this issue is on-going. The Government of Bangladesh is thinking and taking initiative to restart mining at Phulbari. On January 29, 2013 Gary Ley, country director of Asia Energy Bangladesh visited Phulbari upazila and the local people brought out a procession protesting the visit. In spite of mass people's protest and demand, lease and license of Asia Energy for exploration of natural resources on the area are not yet cancelled.

Content Analysis of *Dudh Koyla (Coal Milk) and Phulbari*

Dudh Koyla is a documentation of the life of indigenous and Bengali people of Buchigram, a village under Phulbari upazila of Dinajpur. The ethnographic documentary directed by Molla Sagor describes the daily life of local people, their customs, traditions, their affection for own land, country, as well as their apprehension for eradication from own dwelling, their boldness for saving habitation, and the natural beauty of Buchigram village.

On the other hand, the film *Phulbari* describes grass root revolt in Phulbari against open cut mining. It also depicts possible sufferings of the local people and damages to the environment as a result of open cut coal mining. It describes the way of life of people of Phulbari. The film *Phulbari* gives some message to audience for understanding the terrible effect of open cut mining.

Quiet and Peaceful Life of People

The film *Dudh Koyla* starts with peaceful and usual life of Buchigram's people. Most of the people in the village are the indigenous farmers and workers. They have certain customs, traditions, rules, regulation and values. The film shows that, people of this village have been living upon their natural method of agriculture, they do hard work to earn their livelihood from their agricultural land. The cattle, domestic animals, trees, birds, raindrops are their constant friend. They have specific music that they perform by clapping and dancing with the beat of *dholok* (a musical instrument) to invoke rain every year following the scorching patch of draught. It shows that, the people of community paddled a pollution free life. Everything is natural and pure there.

The film *Phulbari* also starts with natural beauty of Phulbari area. In the beginning the film shows that one man is lying on soil and one hen is cackling. Fields are sparkling with golden crops. Men and women are working in their farms. The film maker as the narrator says:

It is quite, and peaceful. Fields are sparkling with golden crops. The simple people live in modest life with their farms and other business. This is the north-eastern region of Bangladesh, also known as granary of country.

Courage, Consciousness, Unity and Determination of General People

Both of the films depicts the people of Phulbari as bold, alert, united and determined about their land and right. In the documentary *Dudh Koyla* (Coal Milk), we see people are very courageous to save their land, their colony. The determination of local people against the coal mine is seen in the film. A man says: 'This is my land and I won't let it to be used for mining. Let see who dares to open the pit here. People are more aware than earlier as we see they said: at first we could not guess anything. Now everybody of us is alert.'

The villagers understand the tricky policy of Coal Company. It shows, people realized that, company treats them as an ethnic minority, they want to drive villagers. But the people do not bother about it; they will never agree to give one inch even not a single dust of their soil. Indicating another coal mine project, people said, two mines have been excavated, where is the sign of development there? What a pollution there, smoke, gas! These statements make clear that people of Buchigram are audacious, and more alert to save their motherland.

The documentary depicts the general people are determined to save their locality. They will never give their land for coal mine. Their unity is too strong against the coal mine. As they said:

Look, you have come to me and I see you as my children. Suppose I am your mother, could you sit here, if I don't let you? Never, I will simply not allow. Isn't it what it should be? Some people have this authority; likewise, if our people hold any control, the mine in Dinajpur wouldn't have been exposed like that.

The villagers realized that they have to resist. At the finishing of documentary they express their final decision that they do not need any mine there.

Similarly, In *Phulbari*, another selected documentary of the paper, we see that people of Phulbari are seriously conscious about their asset i.e. the coal mine and they are much united to save it. When they heard open cut mining will be excavated in their area, they disagreed with this decision. They wanted to tell the nation through a grand rally. People from Dhaka also joined this rally. On the other hand government deployed a large number of security forces to keep the rally controlled. The BDR jawans have been patrolling the streets of Phulbari since morning. Thousands of people with stick in their hand coming ahead to the Phulbari. After getting organized the protesters lead to the Asia Energy office to demonstrate the disapproval of open cut mining this British company contracted with Bangladesh government to develop an open cut mining. They raised anti-mine slogan, such as:

*Traitors like the Razakars of 1971 and Mirzafar of the British era,
When the mine came they became the new henchmen
Catch these henchmen and stuff them in sacks...*

It shows, On August 26, 2006 the protesters begin their march towards the offices of Asia Energy at about 3:30 p.m. The official of the local administration gave their word to the leaders of the movements that, the office of Asia Energy would be withdrawn from the Phulbari. Then the leaders of the movement started to go back. At this moment the BDR and police fired teargas, shells and bullets on a section of the rally. At least three persons were killed on the spot and more than 300 were wounded. The bloodshed led to a protest, a continuous strike in Phulbari. The demand for expulsion of the company from Phulbari and also from the country began. The protesters set deadline for the company. But Asia Energy's employees were still there. So protesters burnt the information centre and ransacked its warehouse where stored samples of coal. Finding no way employees of Asia Energy sealed their main office and left Phulbari with police escort. On the 30th of August the government dramatically agreed to meet all the demands of the protesters. The foremost demands was, to expel Asia Energy from four Upazila including Phulbari and the country. The government also agreed not to opt for open-cut mining in Bangladesh. So we see in this film that people of Phulbari never compromise with their tradition, their love, their mutual relationship and the environment. They never allow the conspiracy to destroy them. In this part the message we get, that demands of people are never ignored and people are very much united about their interest. As a villager says,

We are panicked indeed. Yet, we – our wives, sons, and daughters – all have become united. We have decided not to leave our village, homes and soil. If needed, we will die and be buried here. This is our final decision. We have remained and will remain faithful to our decision.

Uncertainty of People's Life as Damaging Effects on Socio-economic Situation

Open-pit coal mine would cause the detrimental effects on the usual life as inhabitants of Phulbari would fall in an indecisive abode. Both of the documentaries describe the fact through their narratives. The film *Dudh Koyla* starts with anxiety of Buchigram's people due to fear of losing their own homestead. By using image of daily affairs of general people filmmaker tried to depicts the peaceful and calm lifestyle of the community. At first it has shown that, a farmer taking his paddy away from the land, children are playing, men and women are busy in their daily work. A snake is trying to come in human habitation but it could not. In the background chorus of local people *Koyla*

khani chaina against the coal mine are echoing. The director portrayed the image of extraction of coal by coal agency's people and usual and pure lifestyle of people in parallel way. Through these images he wants to say inauspicious things are coming in their quiet and peaceful life. In another image it has shown that people were not informed about coal mine in their village, company's people told them different story to dislocate them from there. However they are now conscious about their rights. They will not give their land for digging coal mine. The director hurled a question through this documentary, *what comes first, coal or human*. It is a big political discourse which is expressed by the documentary.

Everyone's question is that where would they go if they were evicted. The documentary shows, people think it is better to kill than putting them under the severity. They are such a community who love their land with every drop of their blood. They live on the food; they yield in return of their hard work they do to grow crops. In the documentary, people say if they rehabilitate us in a sort of cluster villages and give us space merely for shelter, will it be any solution to quench the hunger? They express their anxiousness about their future by indicating their belly, 'It is my mine; it won't be satisfied with the golden coal.'

Threat to land security will be a significant factor in this project. Agriculture is a key economic activity for people in the project area with 67 per cent of all surveyed households earning income from the sale of agricultural products. While 80 per cent of the land that will be taken for this project is agricultural lands, there is insufficient land left to meet replacement needs. Despite limited possibilities for affected people to purchase productive land, the selection criteria governing access to the limited lands identified as available is not specified.⁶

The villagers have some common question, where will they go from here? Why would they flee from their land; to where?

If we notice the socio-economic impact of German Lignite Industry on Horno village of Germany, the horrible effects of open pit coal mine becomes clear. Horno (Rogow in the Sorb language), a village on the east of Cottbus near the Polish border, was devastated by Vattenfall in 2004 to meet delivery commitments for the Jänschwalde power station. While the deposits of lignite at this location represent only a small fraction of total mining output, the regional lignite committee as well as the Vattenfall predecessors VEAG and LAUBAG

6 Jennifer Kalafut; Roger Moody, *Phulbari Coal Project: Studies on Displacement, Resettlement, Environmental and Social Impact*. Dhaka, 2008, p. 10

maintained that the viability of regional power generation depended crucially on clearing Horno from the path of excavating equipment as it moved north. Upon recommendation of the responsible state authorities for historic preservation (Denkmalschutz), the town council of Horno declared the entire village a protected communal ensemble in April 1993. According to the Constitution of Brandenburg, 159 the integrity of this “established area of settlement” for the Sorb ethnic minority was likewise “guaranteed”. The Brandenburg State Assembly (Landtag) nevertheless passed the controversial “Brown Coal Act” in 1997 that foresaw the destruction of the entire village with resettlement of its 380 inhabitants.

An initial compendium of infringements on communal self-determination was prepared in 1995 by the English author Michael Gromm, a citizen of Horno. He subsequently created the website “Vattenfall Watch” to inform the English-speaking international people about the threat to the village. Michael Gromm has shown that initial employment prognoses in the Jänschwalde Region were inflated to guarantee the dominant status of lignite power generation, after which occupational opportunities progressively declined. Firstly, the lie was propagated and immediately raised to the status of the common weal that only the destruction of Horno would save jobs in the mining industry. Horno or 30,000 jobs!’ was the battle cry at the end of 1993; a year later, after privatization: ‘Horno or 12,000 jobs!’ and in 1997, when the Horno Bill was passing through Parliament: ‘Horno or 4,000 jobs!’. The truth is, that more than 90% of jobs in Lausitz brown coal mining in 1990 have since been lost in a never-ending process of rationalization, which has had nothing to do with Horno. In 2005-06, of 57,000 jobs in Lausitz brown coal mining in 1990 just 2,200–2,400 will remain in the Lausitz as a whole, after Vattenfall, Lars Josefsson has achieved his intended ‘synergy effects’.⁷

This situation would also occur in Phulbari if coal is extracted and this apprehension has come up in the documentary. It depicts, people’s life expenses would be higher if they move up from there. For example, a villager says, *the price of all kinds of meat jumped up. Beef sold over TK 100, buffalo-meat reached to 30-35 from 25...*, and many people would be jobless if they move. Thus, they have to beg, but they know begging is the worst thing to do in Bangladesh. The documentary shows the fear and uncertainty of people’s future life if they have to go away from their own house, land, and locality.

7 Michel H. Jeffery, *Status and Impacts of German Lignite Industry*. Sweden, the Swedish NGO Secretariat, 2008

In the film *Phulbari* it is argued that open cut mining will cause great harm on socio-economic condition of inhabitants of Phulbari if open cut mine is adopted in Phulbari. People will lose their lands, farms, traditions, love. In addition to that, they will lose their educational and religious institutions, graveyards, mosques, and temples. The mining area covers more than hundreds of villages and thousand acres of cropland in four upazilas in Dinajpur district. According to Asia Energy, which had a contract with the Bangladesh government, because of coal exploration, 40,000 people are needed to be relocated, away from the mine area. But the people of this area contend the company's estimate. In the film it is said that Asia Energy claims Bangladesh will receive half of the total profit accrued from the mining operation. But if the calculations are done right about the crops and other benefits from the land for the next 30 years that will benefit more in comparison to what they will get from the mine. As a villager says,

We just have one demand to the intellectuals and that is, they ensure our means of livelihood. Give us land; give us an island that will be only ours and nobody else. Let them tell us you cultivate land, build houses and develop it. But they will offer us some money. What shall we do with money? Say, you give me one lac taka; I will spend the money shortly. Then what? Shall we start begging? We will live or die here.

Cash compensation is a primary feature of this project. However, cash-based compensation, as opposed to land-based compensation, has been found to rarely improve the livelihoods of displaced persons. Furthermore, according to current research on development-induced displacement, "compensation by itself cannot adequately restore and improve the income levels and livelihood standards of people subject to exploration and forced displacement".⁸ It is, however, found in two documentaries—*Dudh Koyla and Phulbari*, open cut mining will make serious damaging effect on socio-economic condition of Phulbari people.

Terrible Effects on Environment

A serious concern of open pit mining is its environmental impacts. The film *Phulbari* gives the message carefully. In the film it is shown that, when coal will extract from mine many mineral come out and mixed with rain water. It will damage the paddy and other crop fields. According to Asia Energy,

The top-soil will be removed and preserved once mining operation begins in a particular block. This top-soil will be brought back and spread on the top of the area after completion of mining at the particular block which may take 3-5 years. It will be very difficult to preserve top-soil for such a long time. Top-soil may be washed

⁸ Michel H. Jeffery, *Status and Impacts of German Lignite Industry*. Sweden, the Swedish NGO Secretariat, 2008, p. 11

away during monsoon. At least 3-5 monsoon will be there before top-soil is used at the top of the filled out mining block. And the fertility of the top-soil will also be lost during these 3-5 rainy seasons.⁹

Besides, it also pollutes river water, kills fish. Deep voids need to be created to reach coal that lies below the surface. Large number of huge water pump need to be set up in a mine area to keep the pit mine dry. The life time of mine is 30 years. Water needs to be constantly pumped out. As a result area surrounding the mine go to dry. Phulbari is a fertile and vital food-growing region that produces between two and four crops per year including rice, the staple crop. As Jennifer Kalafut says about impact on food security of Bangladesh,

The vast majority of people in the Phulbari area are farmers and fisher folk and over 80 per cent of the land being acquired for the project is agricultural land which will not be replaced. The project, however, will not only adversely impact the livelihoods of farmers in Phulbari. As an agricultural area of major importance to Bangladesh, producing three annual harvests of rice plus additional crops and abundant fish, the project location raises serious questions and concerns for the nation as a whole. Due to its elevation, the Phulbari area is one of the only regions of Bangladesh not vulnerable to flooding that has devastated the rest of the country in recent years.¹⁰

The project would also reduce water supplies for the people by lowering the water table far beyond the project area. The mine would cause noise and dust pollution through dynamite explosion. More noise and dust will come from the trucks and trains that would haul the coal away from the mine. Coal dust will pollute the air. Water will be polluted by washing the coal, risking pollution of surrounding water bodies.

An important message given by the film is – transportation of coal is another concern. Although this will create employment and revenue but it would cause noise and water pollution in Sundarbans by the Mongla port.

Comparative Images about Coal Mine in *Phulbari* and *Dudh Koyla*

In the analysis, a rather different standpoint about coal mine in Phulbari Upazila has been found. The documentary *Dudh Koyla* shows that people of Phulbari do not want any coal mine in their locality. They will permit neither open pit mine nor another sort of coal mine extraction in Phulbari. They would rather die than give their land. In a few images of the documentary, it can be seen that some people are chanting the slogan - *Koyla khani chaina*, used as a background

9 Kollol Mostofa, MahubRubayat, AnupomShaikotShanto, *JatiyoShompod, BahujatikPuji and MalikanarTarko*. Dhaka, 2010, p. 112

10 Jennifer Kalafut; Roger Moody, *Phulbari Coal Project: Studies on Displacement, Resettlement, Environmental and Social Impact*. Dhaka, 2008, pp. 12-13

sound. As a villager says, 'We don't need coal mine, if we are to die, we will die here, if we are to live, we will live here.'

In this regard, Molla Sagar, the director of *Dudh Koyla* says,

When anyone thinks coal is our property, then consumption on this property easily come in mind because predominance is closely related to property. The attitude of coal as a resource has been pushed in our psychology. Thus, it remains no more, when it is thought as property, as well as it is tough to create movement against mine. People will be dislocated, environment will be polluted, and lands will be perished, if coal will be extracted by open cut method or underground method whatever it is. It will only create great calamity, after the extraction of coal. So the people of Phulbari do not want coal mine in any method. I tried to depict the fact in my documentary through film language.¹¹

On the other hand, *Phulbari*, shows that people of the mine area are against the open pit project, not against general extraction of coal. Director's camera captures the demand and understanding of people. Local people thought that the ownership of the coal and the fate of the affected people just cannot be handed down to a foreign company. They want to wait until the country develops its own mining expertise and technology. As an inhabitant of Phulbari says:

Let the coal stay under the soil for some more years. It will not evaporate. If the situation permits we will extract it ourselves and use 100% of the coal to meet our own needs. Then the people of Phulbari might say 'yes' and will sacrifice for the country's benefit.

Controversial Position of Policymakers

In the *Dudh Koyla* question arises against the government, and the political parties. It shows if government would not have given the permission for extracting the coal mine to foreign companies, they could not get any chance to savour or destroy our resources. The film describes, factionalism is one of the factor that causes harm for country. Grouping is a vital cause of backward position of our country. As an old woman says in the film,

If you go to the Khaleda and tell her that you are a supporter of the opposition party she will not listen to you. Their grouping has brought about all these mishaps in the country. If public had any control, the mine in Dinajpur wouldn't have been exposed like that. No outsider would have been able to touch our resource. I don't understand these, one thing I feel very strongly, we have to save this land with utmost effort.

So it is clear that in terms of coal mine, policy makers of our country remain in a controversial state. In spite of this, people of Buchigram are united and they do not bother about any political parties. They only want to protect their land from foreign company.

¹¹ Molla Sagar, Interview taken for this study on July 11, 2013.

Nationalism of Indigenous group

Dudh Koyla depicts the life of indigenous Saantal group. Though the Saantal have their own language, the children at the Paathshala sang National Anthem—*amar sonar bangla, ami tomay valobashi*. The film maker expressed it intelligently to establish that the indigenous people are also part of our country, they have also feelings of nationalism and patriotism, and they belong to this country. The children take an oath to they would never leave their motherland, they will revive their lost history, they will do, and surely they will. It is also a symbolic image to identify them as an important part of society and culture.

Besides, the conventional life style of the Saantal community is also shown in the documentary. They have a certain musical program which they perform by clapping and dancing with the sound of *dholok*.

Conclusion

The capitalist world system is threatening the existence of human being by unplanned and harmful programs as well as by polluting the environment in search of profit. Bangladesh is also a victim of the capitalist world. The two documentaries of this paper portrayed the Phulbari issue on this point. The study has identified the facts and how these facts are depicted in *Dudh Koyla* and *Phulbari*. People's emotion, fear, boldness, unity as well as environmental impacts of open pit method of coal mine extraction are portrayed in these two documentaries. It is the story of hope and empowerment of the people as well as the failure of the state to understand the emotions and need of the people. These documentaries portrayed the power of social movements. The people were aware of their rights and scared of dislocation. They were also concerned about the environmental degradation. We have seen how basic human rights were violated and weak governance led to a blood-soaked revolt. It is a portrayal of loving relationship between people and the environment. This popular resistance has definitely paved the way to resistance of any kind of challenges and social crisis with unity. These documentaries thus successfully contributed to our documentary film genre as well as showed the role of media portrayal and analysis of any significant event.

**PEACEBUILDING IN THE CHITTAGONG HILL TRACTS
(CHT): AN INSTITUTIONALIST APPROACH***

Ananda Bikash Chakma**

Abstract

The ethnic tensions in the Chittagong Hill Tracts originated from the hill-men's demands for autonomy and recognition of distinct identity in the newly adopted constitution of Bangladesh in 1972. While successive governments have neglected both demands, they have also established a host of political institutions to address the grievances of the tribal people and to establish peace and security in the CHT. The formation of the Tribal Cultural Institutes and the Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board, the creation of three administrative districts splitting the old CHT district are just a few examples. The foundation of three Hill Local Government Councils and the CHT Regional council, and of late, the Ministry of CHT Affairs are also notable developments. This paper argues that the evolving political institutions created both before and after the 1997 CHT Peace Accord have played varied level of role toward the process of peace-building. The evolution of these political-administrative institutions and their performance are analyzed in this paper. In the end, the author identifies a few challenges toward the full implementation of the CHT Accord in general and the democratic governance of local institutions in particular.

Introduction

Since the independence of Bangladesh in 1971, the ethnic problem in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) has drawn sustained attention from the successive governments, regardless of their political ideology and proximity to the civilian or military leaderships. The problem in the CHT region originated with the demand for special ethnic identity by the hill people and the denial of such special identity by the government of Bangladesh's independence leader Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. It was therefore no surprise that the 1972 Constitution of Bangladesh neither included any provisions for recognizing the distinct identity of the indigenous hill people nor accorded the CHT any special administrative

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status. In response to such utter neglect of the hill people and their demands, Manobendra Narayan Larma (subsequently M.N. Larma), Member of the Parliament for the Chittagong Hill Tracts North constituency, declined to endorse the new constitution. Rajkumari Chandra Roy notes that, Larma's decision was based on the ground that the 1972 Constitution did not include any provisions for safeguarding the indigenous interests; instead it allowed government officials to exercise discretionary powers in the CHT compared to such powers in other administrative districts.¹

It was not only the Chakmas and other hill people in the CHT but the Garos, the Santals and other tribal communities living in the plains and forestlands, who have been denied special ethnic identity in the 1972 Constitution. As revealed in this paper, this identity politics has emerged as a thorny issue due to the fact that the majority of Bengali origin people and the Bangladesh Government have historically perceived any special identity for the Chakmas and other hill people in the CHT as direct threat to the territorial integrity of the newly independent country.² It was also perceived that the demands for special identity would eventually translate into the demand for regional autonomy, which was unconceivable in the political climate of the post-independence period. As a compromise to the demands of the hill people living in the CHT, successive governments have established several institutions to promote peace and development in the CHT.

This paper takes an institutionalist approach to study the peacebuilding initiatives of successive governments in Bangladesh. The institutionalist approach looks at the role of formal institutions such as the legislative, executive, and judiciary as well as political parties and interests groups in understanding politics and political processes of a particular region.³ Drawing on the historical data and secondary materials, it examines the creation of various administrative and political structures and their effect on building peace in the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

1 Rajkumari Chandra Roy, *Land Rights of The Indigenous Peoples of Chittagong Hill Tracts, Bangladesh* (Copenhagen: IWGIA Document No. 99, 2000) p. 47

2 Kalam Shahed, *Ethnic Movements and Hegemony in South Asia* (Dhaka: Hakkani Publishers, 2002) p. 222

3 Guy B. Peters, *Institutional Theory in Political Science* (London: Pinter, 1999); R.A.W. Rhodes, "The Institutional Approach," in D. Marsh and G. Stoker, *Theory and Methods in Political Science* (London: Macmillan, 1995).

Let us begin with the initiatives taken by the first government of independent Bangladesh. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman took several affirmative policies to promote the hill people. For instance, he introduced the special quota system for the tribal students for admission into higher educational institutions. He also continued the traditional tribal circle administration, granted foreign scholarship opportunities for tribal students, and allocated hostels for tribal students in Chittagong and Dhaka. Mujib also nominated a women MP to represent the hill people.⁴ Despite taking such favorable initiatives for the tribal people, some of Mujib's public speeches neglecting the demand for a separate ethnic identity for the tribal communities in the Chittagong Hill Tracts hurt the tribal sentiments.

Having frustrated with Mujib's insensitive attitude towards the hill tribes, M.N. Larma formed the Parbattyo Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samiti (Hill Tracts Peoples Solidarity Association) – the PCJSS, which would act as an umbrella organization of the hill peoples. The movement started without any external assistance and thus lacked the financial resources to expand its base. During its formative years between 1972 and 1975, it had limited ability to mobilize and organize people.⁵ At that time the ethnic leaders attempted to fill up their demands through democratic and constitutional ways, and some sorts of understanding might have been built up between the Bangladesh government and the PCJSS. When the ruling party, Awami League (AL), with its monopolistic control over the parliament, switched to a one-party BKSAL government headed by a president, M. N. Larma joined the BKSAL. But the military coup in August 1975, which killed Mujib and most of his family members, changed the regional ethnic agitation and the political condition in the country quite dramatically. In September 1975 M. N. Larma started an underground movement and soon the PCJSS was transformed overnight into a clandestine party with the Shanti Bahini as its armed wing. It was the time when the Indian government started offering active support to the Shanti Bahini. The Indian support to the Shanti Bahini added fuel to the fire.⁶ This was the turning point of unrest, which highlighted the need for a strong peace building process in the CHT.

4 A. K. Dewan, *Parbottyo Chattagram o Bangabandhu* (Chittagong Hill Tracts and Bangabandhu) (Rangamati: Published by Sudipta Dewan, 2011), pp. 9-11

5 Kalam Sahed, *Op. Cit.*, p. 243

6 S. Kamaluddin, "A tangled web of insurgency" in *Far Easter Economic Review (FEER)*, 23 May 1980.

The military regime led by Ziaur Rahman identified that the ethnic insurgency in the CHT was mostly caused by economic disparity and underdevelopment. Despite that Zia decided to pacify the rising turmoil using both military and administrative strategies. Consequently, he formed the Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board (CHTDB) in 1976 and a Tribal Cultural Institute (TCI) in 1978 in Rangamati as peace building and development initiatives. When General H. M. Ershad came to power, he also undertook several innovative measures to bring peace and stability in the insurgency-prone area. Most notable among Ershad's initiative were holding dialogues with the PCJSS leaders and the armed rebels of the Shanti Bahini, and the formation of three local government councils in 1989. After the restoration of democracy in 1991, the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) came to power under the leadership of Begum Khaleda Zia. Begum Zia paid attention to the CHT insurgency and resumed the dialogue with PCJSS. The success of the BNP government was limited to reaching an agreement on a cease-fire with the Shanti Bahini for five years. When the Awami League came to power in 1996 with Sheikh Hasina as the prime minister, the newly elected government invested its political energy and diplomatic clout to pacify the long-standing unrest in CHT. This eventually led to the signing of the historic Chittagong Hill Tracts Peace Accord of 1997 between the National Committee on Chittagong Hill Tracts and the PCJSS. As a direct result of the CHT Peace Accord, the government formed the Chittagong Hill Tracts Regional Council (CHT RC) and the Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs (MoCHTA).

In summary, the preceding discussion suggests that between 1972 and 2001, successive governments have formed various administrative and political institutions in the Chittagong Hill Tracts to promote socio-economic development. To what extent have those institutions contributed to the peacebuilding efforts in the Chittagong Hill Tracts? This question forms the core of the inquiry in this paper. Before addressing this question, it is pertinent to discuss the concepts and theories of peacebuilding.

Peacebuilding: conceptual and theoretical discussion

Peacebuilding is a modern concept. It is quite difficult to conceptualize the term of 'peace' because it can be used and abused in different aspects and situations. The term peace conjures images of harmony and bliss in psychological, social and political sense. In the academic parlance, the term 'peace' as a concept was

first introduced by Johan Galtung (1964), the founder of the discipline Peace and Conflict Studies. He divided the concept into two categories: negative peace and positive peace. In Galtung's words, negative peace "is the absence of violence, absence of war" while positive peace "is the integration of human society."⁷

What is then peacebuilding? The concept of peacebuilding was first introduced by the former UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali in 1992 in his famous speech titled *An Agenda for Peace* prepared at the request of the UN Security Council. Boutros-Ghali suggests that peacebuilding is an initiative which heightens the sense of security and encourages conflicting parties to turn their energies to work for peaceful restoration of their societies.⁸ The peacebuilding strategies outlined by the UN Secretary-General have greatly influenced the subsequent peace researcher's understanding of the peacebuilding enterprise. Yet most scholars agree that peace is a complex, long term, and multi-layered process. So peacebuilding covers all activities aimed at promoting peace and overcoming violence in a society. Prof. Ho-Won Jeong quite rightly explains the term peacebuilding in the following words:

Peacebuilding involves a process comprising various functions and roles. It often entails a wide range of sequential activities, proceeding from cease fire and refugee settlement to the establishment of a new government and economic reconstruction. The end of violent conflict has to be accompanied by the rebuilding of the physical infrastructure and the restoration of essential government functions that provide basic services.⁹

In the above definition we find that peacebuilding is a long term activity going beyond the short-term imperative of stopping an armed conflict to promoting physical infrastructure and providing basic services to ordinary people through government institutions or functionaries. Thus, a long-term peacebuilding strategy is aimed at addressing "the principal political, economic, social and ethnic imbalances that led to conflict in first place."¹⁰

7 Johan Galtung, 'An Editorial,' *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 1(1), pp. 1-4

8 Report of the Secretary General, *An Agenda for peace: Preventive Diplomacy, Peacemaking and Peacekeeping*, Adopted by the Summit Meeting of the Security Council on 31 January 1992 (A/47/277-S/24111, 17 June 1992. This footnote was cited in the book of *Shanti o Sangharsha Odhyayan* [Peace and Conflict Studies] by Md. Rafiqul Islam, Md. Shahinur Alam and Anurug Chakma, Published by Zhingeyful from Dhaka in 2013, pp. 127

9 Ho-Won Jeong, *Peacebuilding in Post Conflict Societies: Strategy and Process*, (New Delhi: Viva Books Pvt., Ltd, 2006), p. 1

10 Ibid, p. 4

On the other hand, according to John Paul Lederach, “peacebuilding is recognized as dynamic, having something to contribute in every phase of a conflict and always moving/changing in response to the situation and the stage of the peacemaking efforts.”¹¹ It indicates that peacebuilding has no specific starting point. So it entails both short and long-term frameworks. Such frameworks would include demobilization of the armed groups, refugee resettlement, development assistance, institutional reform, and the advancement of human rights. Nonetheless, it is agreeable that not all peace processes are the same, especially in considering the variations in conflict situations. For example, the case of resolving the CHT dispute in Bangladesh is unique. This is due to the fact that the peacebuilding initiatives of the government along with direct dialogues between the government and the rebels have resolved the CHT conflict without any international mediator or third party involvement. In order to understand how the peacebuilding process worked in Bangladesh, we now turn into a brief history of the CHT and the institutions that evolved there to promote the tribal communities’ development priorities.

The Chittagong Hill Tracts under British and Pakistani Regimes

A brief description of the pre-independence history is necessary to understand the administrative structure of the CHT region and the politico-economic status of the tribal people living there. The district of the Chittagong Hill Tracts was formed by separating the hill and forest areas of the old Chittagong district in 1860 A. D. The total area of the district is 5,138 square miles. In 1961 the total population of the district was 385,079 with the tribal people representing about 85 percent of the total population. The district is a hilly region and its historical development has been different from that of alluvial plains of Bangladesh.

The codified laws applicable to other part of Bengal were not considered suited to the requirements of the unsophisticated and simple tribesmen of the Hill Tracts. So, the British government framed an act of simple rules under Regulation 1 of 1900 which formed the basis of criminal, civil and revenue administrations of the district. The rules in the CHT Manual made under Regulation 1 of 1900 were intended to protect the rights and interest of the

¹¹ John Paul Lederach, “Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies” in *The Politics of Ethnic Consciousness* (eds.) by Cora Govers and Hans Vermeulen (Houndmills, UK: Machmillan Press, 1997), pp. 1-30

tribal hill men, as well as their customs and practices, and racial peculiarities and prejudices.¹² From 1900 to 1947, the CHT was governed as the ‘Backward Tracts’ and ‘Excluded Area.’

After the partition of India and Pakistan in 1947, the CHT district became part of the then East Pakistan. The Pakistan Government abolished the tribal area status of the CHT by a constitutional amendment. Article 223 of the Constitution of Pakistan in 1964 codified this abolition of tribal status for the CHT. However, empowered by the regulation 1 of 1900 the deputy commissioner (DC) continued to be head of the administration in the district. As the highest decision-making authority, with huge discretionary power, the DC would play a key role in all matters relating to the CHT. This was the only district in the then East Pakistan having no Municipality. It was only in 1960 that a District Council was set up on the basis of the Basic Democracy Order of 1959. The District Council was composed of 22 members (10 from public officials and 12 from the general public) with the Deputy Commissioner as the chairman. The objective of the Council was to coordinate the work of the various government departments, with emphasis on culture and educational grants for students. Besides, the post of Circle Officer was introduced in the Hill Tracts in 1962; a similar post had long existed in the rest of the province since 1919. The main responsibility of the circle officers (Development) was to implement development works with the help of a Union Council Chairman. The tasks of the circle officer would be supervised by a sub-divisional officer. In 1965, a Town Committee was established in Rangamati. The town committee consisted of a Chairman and six members, all of whom were elected.¹³

Although the administrative structures created by the British colonial government and the Pakistani authority created high hopes, they eventually failed to meet the core demand of the local people for regional autonomy. The construction of Kaptai Dam, which was commissioned in 1962, has brought further irreparable havoc in the socio-economic and cultural life of the tribes. For many tribal people, the Kaptai Lake has snatched away the happiness of tribal life.¹⁴ In order to mitigate the plight of the tribal people, the Pakistan

12 Muhammad Ishaq (ed.) *Bangladesh District Gazetteers: Chittagong Hill Tracts*. (Dacca: Bangladesh Government Press, 1971), pp. 255-256

13 *Ibid*, pp. iv-vi

14 Harikishore Chakma, Tapash Chakma, Preyasi Dewan and Mahfuz Ullah, *Bara Parang* (The Great Exodus: The Tale of the Development Refugees of the CHT) (Dhaka: Centre for Sustainable Development (CFSD), 1995), p. 41

Government established a (private) intermediate college and a girl school in Rangamati in 1965. This was the first college and the first girl school in the region. At that time, according to CHT district Gazetteer, there were only about five hundred persons (teachers 180, health workers 87 other technical jobs 27, administrative clerical and office groups 122, maharis) engaged in government services including teachers, technicians and clerk, peon and guards etc in the district.

The communication in the district was extremely difficult and inadequate. There was no direct road connection between the district headquarters and the sub-divisional headquarters of Ramgar and Bandarban. There was only one metal road from Kaptai to Chittagong. The literacy rate in the Chittagong Hill Tracts district was the lowest in the country. But there were three Circle Chiefs, locally known as Rajas, whose social and political status was considerable in the area.¹⁵ During the Pakistan period, the circle chiefs would participate in the national and provincial elections. M. N. Larma was an exception. He did not come from the tribal royal families, but had the credit of winning the parliamentary election in 1970 from the North CHT constituency.¹⁶

Since the formation of a separate hill district in the Chittagong Hill Tracts by the British colonial government in 1860, the administrative structure of the CHT region has evolved gradually. After the partition of the Indian sub-continent, the CHT lost its tribal status, and the tribal people living in the CHT remained under-represented in various public jobs. Despite various initiatives taken by the successive governments, the roads and communication infrastructure in the CHT remained very poor, and the overall socio-economic status of the local hill people were negligible. How have the successive political regimes in independent Bangladesh addressed the development needs of the CHT people? The remaining of the paper tackles this question.

Peace-building initiatives through creating institutions

I argue that successive governments in Bangladesh have formed various institutions to establish peace and stability in the CHT region. Using the 1997 CHT Peace Accord as the cutting point, these institutions can be divided into two categories: pre-Accord institutions and post-Accord institutions. Table 1 provides a list of these institutions.

15 Muhammad Ishaq, *Op. Cit.*, p. v

16 Raja Tridiv Roy, *he Departed Melody*, (Karachi: PPA Publication, 2003), pp. 201-04

Table 1: Pre-, and Post-Accord Institutions in the CHT

Pre-Accord Institutions	Post-Accord Institutions
Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board (CHTDB)	Chittagong Hill Tracts Regional Council (CHTRC)
Tribal Cultural Institutes in Rangamati, Bandarban and Khagrachari	Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs (MoCHTA)
New Administrative Districts – Bandarban, Khagrachari, and Rangamati	Land Dispute Resolution Commission
Local Government Councils in the Hill Districts	

The Pre-Accord Institutions

Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board

Some tribal-friendly steps were taken by the Sheikh Mujib regime (1972-75). Early in 1973 Mujib decided to set up a separate board for the development of CHT. But he could not do it during his lifespan. After the brutal assassination of Sheikh Mujib along with most of his family members in a military coup in August 1975, Bangladesh fell under military rule for about 15 years. After assuming power, General Zia made several changes to the domestic and external policies of Bangladesh. For instance, in the domestic arena, he replaced Sheikh Mujib's policy of secularism with an overt state policy of Islamization. In the external affairs, he prioritized reaching out to China, the Arab World, and the United States, reversing Mujib's policy of aligning with the Indo-Soviet axis. On the question of the CHT, Zia took a host of policies with civilian and military components. Despite his manifold initiatives, the political situation in the CHT rapidly deteriorated quite sharply.

Among the various initiatives taken by the Zia regime, the formation of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board (CHTDB) deserves special attention. With an aim of promoting peace in the CHT area, the CHTDB was set up in Rangamati under a Presidential Ordinance called 'Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board Ordinance' (No. LXXV11 of 1976) on 14 January 1976.¹⁷ Since inception it has maintained a unique local government structure which exclusively designed for the CHT.

¹⁷ www.chtdb.gov.bd

The CHTDB consists of six members including a chairman and a vice-chairman. The Commissioner of the Chittagong Division was originally made chairman of the Board, with the deputy commissioner of the undivided Chittagong Hill Tracts district acting as the vice-Chairman. After the assassination of Zia in May 1981 and the promulgation of martial law by General Hussein Mohammad Ershad in March 1982, the organizational structure of the CHTDB was changed. In the changed structure, the General Officer Commanding (GOC) of the Chittagong Division Army took over as the Chairman of the Board.¹⁸ For quite a long time the GOC would chair the CHTDB and this tradition returned after the imposition of emergency in the country in January 2007.

Since then the deputy commissioners (district administrative chief) of Rangamati, Bandarban and Khagrachari have been acting as ex-officio members of the CHTDB. When the Awami League came to power in 1996, it appointed a tribal MP as the chairman of the CHTDB, with its bureaucratic structure remaining unchanged. Since 1992, the Board has been placed under the Ministry of Special affairs, headed by the Prime Minister. After the signing of CHT Peace accord in 1997, the CHTDB was placed under Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts (MoCHTA). There is a consultative committee comprised of twenty two local hill people representatives and thirty five delegates from local state institutions and prominent persons. The goal of the consultative committee is to advise and support the implementation of development projects and services initiated by the CHTDB.

It is important to note here that it is the CHTDB which has first introduced a small honorarium for the tribal Chiefs and monthly salary to headmen. Since its foundation, the CHTDB has appeared as a competent institution and a role model in the development history of the CHT. It has played a very effective role in implementing thousands of development projects. Today the successes of CHTDB can be seen in CHT's transformation from a primitive and isolated region to a well-communicated and socio- economically advanced region. The CHTDB has contributed to improving farming technology, road network, enhanced education, health and sanitation – all of which have boosted up the

¹⁸ Amana Mohsin, *The Politics of Nationalism: The Case of Chittagong Hill Tracts* (Dhaka: University Press Ltd, 2nd edition, 2002), p. 123

growth of the Chittagong Hill Tracts.¹⁹ It has also built many roads, schools, hostels, rest houses, bridges, culverts, temples, mosques in CHT area.

Since its establishment in 1976, the CHTDB has rapidly developed its institutional capacity and showed its skill in implementing projects very successfully. Among its various development schemes, the Integrated Community Development Project (ICDP) deserves special attention. Created in the 1980s, the ICDP is a joint initiative of the CHTDB and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). As part of its development schemes, the ICDP has established four tribal residential schools in the CHT region – one in Rangamati and the rest in Bandarban. Among the four schools, one is exclusively designed for the Mro and Khumi tribal students in Bandarban. The government hoped that the rapid development of the area would bring economic benefits to the people and thus reduce the gap between the hill people and Bengalis. Besides, CHTDB embarked on an ambitious scheme to develop the area rapidly. Schools, colleges, roads, electricity, hospital, cottage industries and co-operatives – all bear testimony to the government's economic drive to develop and modernize the area. The annual report of CHTDB of 2011 reveals that up to the year 2010 from 1976 it has implemented around 525 projects. It also shows that up to 2011, around 1,00,121 children got pre-schooling facilities under their ICDP project.²⁰

These massive development works initiated by the CHTDB were not free from complains, During the Zia regime PCJSS became suspicious about the CHTDB's role. They considered the roads (Kharachar to Panchari, Dighinala to Chotomerung, Dighinala to Babuchara and Dighinala to Marishya.) have been strategically built for easy movement of security forces, and the so called cooperative farming or 'model village' project as a tactic for bringing the tribal people together into concentration camps and thus facilitating the deprivation of the hill people of their villages and farm lands. More than 87 percent of the tribal people believed that projects would not change their lot but rather facilitate the influx of outsiders.²¹ During those days of mistrust and counter

19 The Integrated Community Development Project For Chittagong Hill Tracts Area--ICDP (Rangamati: CHTDB, 2010), p.10

20 *Barshik Unnayan Protibedon, 2010-2011* (Annual Progress Report for the Year 2010-2011) (Rangamati: CHTDB, June 2012), pp. 25-30

21 B. P. Barua, *Ethnicity and National Integration in Bangladesh: A Study of the Chittagong Hill Tracts* (New Delhi: Har-Anand Publication Pvt. Ltd., 2001), p. 114

insurgency it was natural from the side of tribal people to misunderstand the CHTDB's development initiatives control by military official. But as far days as went on the attitude started to change and tribal people took part in CHTDB's development works. Among the ICDP project officials around 95 percent were recruited from tribal communities. Up to 2011, ICDP appointed 3500 Para workers, who are mainly from tribal women. In infrastructure sector it brought surprising and tremendous successes.

Tribal Cultural Institutes

There are eleven tribes living in Chittagong Hill Tracts. They have separate own language, culture and heritages. A core demand of the tribal communities in the CHT is to promote, preserve and develop the tribal languages, culture and heritage. In response the demands of the tribal people, in 1978 Zia established the Tribal Cultural Institute in Rangamati and placed it under the Ministry of Education (culture and sports). Establishing the TCI, President Zia hoped that he could attract the mind of the educated tribal elite living in urban areas. Initially, the TCI would have administered as a project of the CHTDB until it was taken over by the Ministry of Sports and Culture in July 1981. During Ershad's tenure, in June 1985 a regional office was established in Bandarban to promote the cultural diversity of the small ethnic communities. Ershad also established a Tribal cultural institute in Bandarban in July 1988, which would operate under the Ministry of Education. The control of TCI in Rangamati was transferred to the Rangamati Hill District Council (RHDC) on 1st May 1993, while the control of TCI in Bandarban was handed over to the Bandarban Hill District Council on 21 November 1993. These changes came into effect after enacting the Bandarban Hill District Local Government Council Act, 1989 [Section 21, 1989 clause 23(kha)].²² The creation of TCIs in Rangamati and Bandarban hill districts in 1978 and 1988 were significant development in recognizing the cultural rights of the hill people. However, it was not until 2001, when the third TCI was established in Khagrachari.

In 2010 the tribal cultural institutes were renamed to Kudra Nri-Goshthir Sangskritik Pratisthan after Bangladesh Parliament passed the Khudra Nri-Goshthir Sangskritik Pratisthan Aine, 2010'' (Act of 23 of 2010). Apparently the goal of such renaming was to accord a new identity "khudra nri gosthi" (in

22 Usha hla Roaza, Rangamati Hill District Council in Brief (Rangamati: RHDC, 2005).

English small ethnic groups) to the hill people. It is beyond the scope of this paper to examine the effect of the cultural institutes and their renaming. As Khaled Belal writes, such institutes were able to open a new chapter in the cultural history of the CHT:

Obviously the motive behind initiating such a revolutionary task was to boost grandeur of tribal culture as an integral component of national culture. In pursuance of that conceived policy, the tribal Cultural Institute embarked on a massive test of training and reformation and has so far achieved great success especially in fields of songs, dances, painting etc. In fact, a total regeneration has taken place in the culture of vocal and instrumental music, dance and dramatics. Interested tribal boys and girls coming from various communities are imparted training under the auspices of the cultural Institute.²³

A brief analysis of the TCIs' achievements would provide credence to Khaled Belal's remarks. The TCIs have accomplished several tasks. They have conducted studies on the customs and practices of the tribal people and arrange tribal language course for officials of the government and autonomous bodies posted in the tribal areas of the CHT. The institutes have also published books, journals, and periodicals focusing on the culture and heritage of hill people. In addition, they also organize seminars, cultural festivals, literary and music competitions, and art exhibitions. The write-ups in the TCI journals such as the *Upjatiya Gabeshana Patrika*, and the *Girinirzhar* are worth mentionable. It is well evident that since the 1980s, the TCIs have turned into a centre for young tribal writers and researchers. The emergence of a new generation of tribal researchers including Ashok Kumar Dewan, Sugata Chakma and Surendralal Tripura, and Probanshu Tripura is worth noting here.

The three cultural institutes in the CHT region have been working to enhance the tribal literature, culture and heritage. It is in this backdrop, the Khagrachari Khudra Nri-gosthir Sangskritik Institute has recently published 9 books and trained 230 artists in dance and music under a project on promotion, preservation and documentation of the culture of ethnic minorities of Khagrachari district.²⁴ The Rangamati cultural institute has also taken up a new initiative by opening a tribal museum. The museum has a modest collection of valuable materials showcasing the rich and diverse culture and heritage of the

²³ Khaled Belal (ed.), *The Chittagong Hill Tracts: Falconry in the Hills* (Chittagong: Published by the author, 1992), p. 53

²⁴ Khagrachari Hill District Council, *Mahajot Sarkerer Unnayan o Safallyer 4 bashar*, (4 years of Development and success of Grand Alliance Govt.) (Khagrachari: KHDC, 2013) p. 8

ethnic communities in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. The TCIs have also played an instrumental role in organizing festivals such as the Adivasi Mela and the Boishabi. The Adivasi Mela features indigenous cultures whereas the Boishabi represents the celebration of the New Year.

Splitting Chittagong Hill Tracts District into Three New Districts

The splitting of the Chittagong Hill Tracts district into three administrative districts was another important administrative reform carried out by the Zia and Ershad regimes. During Zia's tenure, the Bandarban subdivision was promoted to district as per a government circular on 18 April 1981. Two years later another subdivision named Khagrachari, located in the northern part of CHT was separated from Chittagong Hill Tracts district to form a new district called Khagrachari Hill District in October 1983. During the same time, the former Rangamati Sadar was turned into Rangamati Hill District.²⁵ As the analysis in this paper suggest, the splitting of the CHT district into three independent administrative districts represent a landmark development. This is due to the fact that since then, all peace building efforts would center on the newly created districts. Through this administrative reform, government services would be decentralized with a view to reaching out closer to the people. In addition, the new districts would create many employment opportunities, albeit in lower ranks, for the local tribes.

Creation of three Hill District Local Government Councils

The introduction of local government structures also contributed to the political emancipation of the tribal people in the CHT. It is in this context in 1989 three Hill District Local Government Councils (LGCs) were established in Rangamati, Bandarban and Khagrachari. General Ershad thought that the LGCs would not only earn the trust of the hill people, they would offer an alternative to the longstanding demands for autonomy in the insurgency-prone hill tracts. Although the LGCs created much hopes among the local communities, for various reasons they could not function properly. The non-cooperation from the PCJSS leaders, anti-autocratic movement against Ershad regime and resignation of the newly elected Chairman of Rangamati HDC are notable among others reasons. However, in the long run, these institutions have appeared as the most

²⁵ Ganendu Bikash Chakma, *Aitihāsik Prekshapate Parbattya Sthanya Sarkar Parishad* [Hill Local Government Council In the Historical Perspective] (Rangamati: Sthanya Sarkar Parishad, 1993), p. 64

effective institutions ever created by the Bangladesh Government for the welfare of the hill people. In retrospect, the LGCs have acted as the stepping-stones for the post-Accord institutional rearrangements in the CHT. In fact, since the signing of the 1997 Peace Accord, most of the development works have been implemented through these institutions in CHT.

The local government system in the CHT needs further analysis. This is due to the fact that it offers a form of local self-government system for the ethnic communities.

Performance of the Pre-Accord Institutions

After General Zia's assassination in May 1981, Vice President Justice Abdus Sattar took over the power. During the short tenure of President Sattar, there was no remarkable progress toward the resolution of the CHT issue. Then came the military regime of Hussein Muhammad Ershad who stayed in power from 1982 to 1990. During his tenure, Ershad took several new measures to address the CHT problem and to bring peace and stability in the area. In a meeting held with the tribal leaders in Chittagong on 19 September 1987, Ershad first declared the CHT problem as a national political crisis.²⁶ He thought that political dialogue rather than military campaigns would be the right path to dealing with the insurgency.

In an effort to reach out to the Shanti Bahini rebels, Ershad formed a liaison committee, headed by Upendralal Chakma, the then parliamentarian from the CHT constituency. The first dialogue between the PCJSS and the Ershad Government was held on 21 October 1985. Thus, the 6th round of dialogue was held between the two Parties. The next scheduled meeting did not take place, as Shelly claimed, due to the some unacceptable preconditions raised by the PCJSS to the Ershad government.²⁷ In fact, both parties were too rigid to move the dialogues continuing. Despite that, Ershad appeared to be more interested to solve the problem as soon as possible. As a manifestation of his intention in September 1987 a high-powered six-member National Committee was formed with retired Air Vice-Marshal A. K. Khandakar as its chair. A.K. Khandakar was then the planning minister of Ershad's cabinet. The committee was charged with identifying the problems of the CHT and proposing solutions.²⁸ The

²⁶ *Ibid*, p. 154

²⁷ Mizanur Rahman Shelly, *The Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh: The Untold Story* (Dhaka: Centre For Development Research, Bangladesh, 1992), p.138

²⁸ Derek Davies, "Four rays of hope", *FEER*, 23 March 1989, pp.20-22

committee held six meetings with representatives of PCJSS at Pujgang of Khagrachari. But the meetings could not yield any positive result because of rigid position of both parties once again. Later on, the Government embarked on a plan to find a permanent solution to the problem in consultation with the tribal leaders, elites and other respectable persons living in the country.²⁹ Four such consultation meetings were held from 1988 to 1989. The last dialogue in this kind was held on 15 February 1989. A renowned journalist and researcher Subir Bhaumik observed:

In January 1989 a meeting of fifty four tribal leaders, including the Chakma and Bohmong Chiefs, and ten non-tribal leaders from the CHT was held at Chittagong with major General Abdus Salam, presently, GOC, 24 Bangladesh infantry division, initiating the discussions. At the end of the meeting the leaders signed a joint communiqué supporting the nine-Point Government plan. The following month, four bills creating separate District Councils for Rangamati, Khagrachari and Bandarban, with some seats reserved for tribals were placed before the Bangladesh National Assembly and adopted as law.³⁰

Interestingly, the fourth dialogue produced some tangible progresses toward the evolution of local government system in the CHT. This was evident on 15 February 1989 when the Ershad government moved and discussed several bills such as the the Rangamati Hill Tracts Local Government Council Bill 1989, the Khagrachari Hill Tracts Local Government Council Bill 1989, the Bandarban Hill Tracts Local Government Council Bill 1989, and the Hill Districts (Repeal and Enforcement of Law and Special Provision) Bill 1989 were moved and discussed in Parliament. The last Bill was adopted on 26 February while the rest were passed on 28 February 1989.³¹ The new LGC Acts of 1989 (Act No.19, 20, 21 of 1989) provided for general elections for the formation of Hill Tracts Local Government Councils. In accordance with the Acts, elections were held on 25 June 1989 to form the LGCs.

Obviously that was the beginning of a new era in the field of much cherished political emancipation of the tribal. Each of these Councils is headed by a chairman who has to be an indigenous person. One of the salient features of the HDCs is that two-third posts of members of local government councils were reserved for the tribal people with the rest for the Bengalis. Table 2 illustrates the composition of the three Hill District Councils.

²⁹ Khaled Belal (ed.), *The Chittagong Hill Tracts : Falconry in the Hills* (Chittagong: Published by the author, 1992), p.10

³⁰ Subir Bhaumik, *Op., Cit.*, p. 304

³¹ Ganendu Bikash Chakma, *Op., Cit.*, p. 171

Table 2. Structure of the Hill District Council.

Position and Name of the representing tribes	Number of seats		
	Rangamati	Khagrachari	Bandarban
Chairman (always tribal)	1	1	1
Members			
Chakma	10	9	1
Marma	4	6	
Tanchangya	2		1
Tripura	1	6	--
Lushai	1	--	--
Pankho	1		
Kheyang	1	--	--
Marma & Khiyang			10
Murong			3
Tripura & Uchai			1
Bom, Panku & Lushai			1
Khumi			1
Chak			1
Total	21	22	20
Bengali	10	9	11
Grand Total	31	31	31

Source: B. P. Barua, *Ethnicity and National Integration in Bangladesh*, 2001, p. 72

Prominent Bangladeshi historian Syed Anwar Hussein summed up the importance of the newly created local government structures in the CHT in the following words:

With an aim to solve the CHT crisis politically the formation of Local Government Council at least theoretically is a meaningful commencement. Note that ... the institution has widened the path of representation for the local people. Yet there might have dispute regarding the process of making the council practically effective, but this is removable in light of necessity. The main goal of political solution which is to involve the local people in the national mainstream politics could be achieved only by based on this tiny but meaningful initiation not by destroying it.³²

In its early stage, under the LGC Acts, The Ershad Government transferred three departments to the councils. These were the departments of health and family Planning, primary education, and agriculture extension department. Later, during the BNP regime (1991-1996), the administrative control of

32 Syed Anwar Hussein, "Parbotyo Chattagram: Samasya o Samadan" [Chittagong Hill Tracts: Problem and Solution] in *Ekata* 1 March 1991 quoted in G.B. Chakama, *Op., Cit.*, pp. 194-195

another six more departments was vested to the councils. They are Cooperative and Social Welfare, District Sports Office, Public health and Engineering, Social Welfare, Small and Cottage Industries, Tribal Cultural Institute, Live stock and Fisheries, Public Library and Shilpakala Academy. The scenario changed after the signing the 1997 Peace Accord. On the basis of the Accord, some major amendments to the aforementioned Hill District Acts were passed in 1998 to ensure greater degree of decentralization of powers targeting the tribal people's empowerment. The 1998 amendments renamed the local government councils to Hill District Council. As per three Hill District Council Acts of 1989 (as amended after the 1997 CHT accord) a total of 33 administrative departments are expected to be transferred from the Ministries to each of the three Hill District Councils. But till 2012 only 12 departments have been transferred from the central ministries in Dhaka to the Hill District Councils in the CHT.³³

Since their inception, the Hill District Councils have been responsible for coordinating the works of various agencies including the Government of Bangladesh and various non-government organizations.

Each council implements various development projects and administers the different government and semi government departments transferred to the council to meet the need of time. After the peace accord government was to take various steps to strengthen the council. Now indeed all development activities related to the transferred departments are being administered through these councils. So, for fulfilling the long cherished goal of its people, these councils have now been regarded as the main focal point of administration as well as development activities of the respective districts. A report regarding HDC's performance reveals that:

The HDCs have successfully managed increasing activities and budget allocation for interventions on education, health, agriculture and women empowerment. Their capacities were enhanced with regards to planning and budgeting, tracking delivery and reporting with better transparency, fair recruitment and procurement processes. Such enhanced capacity will not only support the HDCs in better management of the subjects transferred to the HDC, but will make a stronger case for the transfer of the remaining subjects to the HDCs as per the CHT Peace Accord.³⁴

33 PCJSS, Report on the Status of Implementation of the CHT Accord, Jan, 2013, p. 36 [Hereafter PCJSS Report]

34 Annual Report 2011, Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Facilities (CHTDF)-UNDP, Bangladesh, p. 2

The major peacebuilding contribution of the HDCs is the creation of employment for the educated young from the tribal communities. Those who have been employed in various posts of the council or different departments appear to be happy with their present status and thus lack any incentive to take arms or support an insurgency. Thus a sizeable number of young and educated men and women have been making efforts heart and soul for having a settled life by managing a job rather than going to anti-government movement. Their thought is now centering on how to get a job with a government office or a non-government office. So it can be said that the government policy in diverting the mindset of the tribes is quite successful and it helped bringing peace in the region. Yet, these arrangements are not beyond limitations.

Some argued that the local govt. councils, like those in the plains today, and those all over the then East Pakistan province in the 1960s, are basically development bodies with little or no administrative (and legislative) powers. The creation of the modern district councils in the CHT can at best be considered as the granting of a system which the tribal people in the CHT lacked before. For the critics, the Hill District Councils do not offer an effective system of administrative devolution of power nor do they grant any test of autonomy for the hill people.³⁵ Such criticism derive from the observation that before the accord of 1997, there was a provision of transferring 22 departments to the local government council, but it was increased to 33 subjects/departments by the act of 9 of 1998 after peace accord.

In effect, the large majority of administrative items are still controlled by the central ministries in the capital city Dhaka, with the local hill district councils in the Chittagong Hill Tracts having little control over most of the administrative issues. In addition, the formation of local law enforcement force [police (local) under section 34 c] for the supervision of law and order situation in the district is yet to be fulfilled. On top of that, the provision relating to land administration and forest management of the hill districts are yet to be transferred. The list of non transferred departments is still long one.

The Post-Accord Institutions

As shown in Table 1, after the signing of the historic CHT Accord a few new institutions have been set up. The Chittagong Hill Tracts Regional Council (RC), Ministry of CHT Affairs, and the CHT Land Dispute Commission are

35 Rajkumari Chandra Roy, *Op., Cit.*, p. 34

worth noting. Now let us discuss about RC. Before discussion of Regional Council and Ministry of CHT affairs it is relevant to give a brief background of how the concept of the institution and the much discussed CHT Peace come into being.

Following the National election of June 1996 the Awami League (AL) returned to power after 21 years with Sheik Hasina as the new premier. PM Sheik Hasina applied her political wisdom in reaching an immediate settlement on the CHT issue. Fortunately, she got the cooperation from her Indian counterpart I. K. Gujral in resolving the CHT dispute as well as the Ganges Water dispute. Coincidentally, the AL had a majority but not the two-thirds needed to make the constitutional amendment demanded by the PCJSS to guarantee the rights and identity of the tribal people. This congenial political atmosphere both at home and abroad encouraged the Awami League government to go ahead.

The signing of the historic Ganges Water Sharing Agreement with India in December 1996 is a real manifestation of Hasina's farsighted leadership. In order to resolve the CHT crisis, she formed an 11-members national committee headed by the Chief Whip in Parliament, A. H. Abdullah, in October 1996. The committee included the mayor of the Chittagong City Corporation, and MPs of both ruling and opposition parties. One needs to remember that Hasina's predecessor, Begum Khaleda Zia (1991-96), had also formed a national committee and arranged several peace talks with PCJSS, which resulted in a long ceasefire but did not produce any conclusive end to the insurgency.

As time progressed, the PCJSS rebels were weakened by fighting among themselves. The PCJSS leadership also failed to achieve any specific goal and secure any assurances from India for providing sanctuaries and other material help crucial for carrying out the struggle.³⁶ The Shanti Bahini rebels were also under Indian pressure to withdraw their bases from the Indian soil. All these factors – internal fighting among the Shanti Bahini and lack of support from India – contributed to encourage the PCJSS to think of a negotiated peace.³⁷

Professor Rehman Sobhan, a renowned Bangladeshi scholar, rightly notes that:

Gujral's move to solve outstanding problems extended beyond the Ganges to seek a settlement to the lingering crisis over the CHT where insurgents from the Chakma Community, over the past 15 years, were being sheltered across the

³⁶ B. P. Barua, *Op., Cit.*, p. 129

³⁷ Amena Mohsin, *Op., Cit.*, p. 202

border by India ... The agreement between Hasina government and the Chakma insurgents was facilitated by Gujral's intervention and presumably some pressure on the insurgents, so that they agreed to lay down their arms and eventually returned to Bangladesh with their families.³⁸

That is why, they (insurgents) were also in a positive mood to reach in quick solution relinquishing their previous stance. Considering all these perspectives the National Committee organized by AL, held at least 7 rounds of fresh dialogues with the PCJSS. With the progress of the dialogue, both sides reached a mutually acceptable position which led to the signing of an agreement known as the Chittagong Hill Tracts Peace Accord on 2 December 1997. As stated before, the Chittagong Hill Tracts Regional Council and the Ministry of CHT Affairs are two new administrative structures which came out as a direct result of the Accord. The formation of these two structures and their effects are discussed below.

The CHT Regional Council:

The introduction of CHTRC is a great achievement and also a matter of which our People's Republic is proud as being an institution striving for institutionalizing the democracy ever since her very birth. The formation of CHTRC as per the Accord, 1997 is a straight recognition of human rights of the indigenous peoples living in CHT and of course, also an encouraging indication to the rest of the ethnic indigenous peoples living in other parts of the country.

According to the Chittagong Hill Tracts Regional Council Act, 1998, an interim Regional Council was set up in 1999 consisting of 22 members including the Chairman. The newly formed RC began its operations in May 1999 with PCJSS leader Jyotirindra Bodhipriyo Larma, better known as Santu Larma, as its chair.³⁹ The Regional Council chairman enjoy the status of a state minister and had coordinating and supervisory authority over the three Hill District Councils, the district Police, the civil administration, and the CHT development Board. Undoubtedly it is a tribal dominated body as two-thirds RC members including the chair come from a tribal origin. The RC is to be indirectly elected by the members of the Hill District Councils for a period of five years.

In retrospect, Bangladesh has succeeded in bringing the insurgent group PCJSS into a peaceful and normal life by appointing the rebel leader Shantu Larma and

38 Rehman Sobhan, 'I. K. Gujral: A tribute from Bangladesh', *The Daily Star*, 13 Dec. 2012)

39 CHTRC's Souvenir *One Decade* (Rangamati: CHTRC, 2010), p. 16

his followers as regional council chair and members. As a direct effect of such administrative innovation, the PCJSS has abandoned underground politics and shown a sustained interest in practicing democratic politics. It is an epoch making event in the history of Chittagong Hill Tracts and Bangladesh too. A Change in life style of the PCJSS members is another remarkable side. Since the signing of the 1997 Peace Accord, the PCJSS leaders have not only worked with the CHT regional council but also got involved in legitimate business and voluntary activities. Thus it is a positive feature in peace building history through institutional approach.

The Ministry of CHT Affairs (MoCHTA)

Among the post-Accord institutions, the Ministry of the Chittagong Hill Tracts (MoCHTA) is the principal organization responsible for coordinating the governance and development affairs of the CHT region. As mentioned before, prior to the 1997 Peace Accord, the government of Bangladesh would administered the CHT region under a special affairs division of the office of the Prime Minister. This administrative mechanism would continue until 15 July 1998 when the MoCHTA was established as a separate ministry.⁴⁰ In order to attain legitimacy and legality the Ministry Rules of Business (1996) covering the aforementioned special affairs division was amended by a Cabinet Division Notification of the same year. As per the provisions of the Peace Accord the MoCHTA would be led by a tribal minister. An advisory committee was formed at that time. In principle it was supposed to play a pivotal role and its impact and influence on all matters relating to the CHT was also to be crucial. By establishing this ministry the central government planned to address the coordination problem with regard to the CHT affairs by ensuring direct participation of the tribal people.

The power and authority of the MoCHTA includes the following: I) the residual jurisdiction of the Government to legislate on CHT matters; ii) Supervisory Revisional authority over the functions of the Hill District Councils, the district administration headed by the Deputy Commissioners, and the Regional Councils, and iii) allocation of funds for the Hill District Councils and the Regional Council. The Ministry is additionally entrusted to provide a crosscutting function of keeping relation with other ministries, providing a

⁴⁰ *Barshik Protibedon 2011-2012* [Annual Report] Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs].

linking mechanism to ensure efficient and effective socio-economic promotion of the region. To run the ministry effectively there is a good number of officials of different tiers. For instance, there is a post of Secretary, 2 joint Secretaries, 6 Deputy Secretaries, 6 senior Assistant Secretaries, 1 senior assistant head, 1 personal secretary to the Secretary, 1 personal secretary to the Minister/ State Minister along with 21 posts of first class rank, 14 posts of 2nd class rank, and 28 posts of 3rd and 4th class employees.⁴¹

Performance of the Post-Accord Institutions

The post-Accord institutions have faced numerous challenges which can be divided into five categories: i) legal and procedural complications; ii) bureaucratic non-cooperation; iii) anti-accord activities; iv) lack of elected representatives in the institutions; and v) lack of cooperation and coordination among the institutions.

Lack of political goodwill in the present ruling party (AL) is one of the major impediments to peacebuilding in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. It is ironic that violating the provision of Accord, present government has appointed time and again a state -minister instead of a full cabinet minister for the MoCHTA. There has been no full minister of CHT Affairs from 2001. Furthermore, it is quite disappointing that among the 23 subjects which have been transferred to the Hill District Councils, only three departments (BADC, Health Engineering and Child home) have been transferred during the Awami League's two regimes (1996-2001 and 2009-2013). The advisory committee has not been reconstituted although in effect it does not possess any executive power. It is now remains virtually inactive.

The validity of the important provisions of the Accord relating to CHTRC Act and HDCs Acts has been thrown into uncertainty due to the verdict of the High Court on the two related cases filed on 13 April 2010 which was stayed by the Appellate Division of Supreme Court.⁴² Besides, the rules of business of the CHT Regional Council has not been formulated yet. The absence of rules of business has caused friction between the CHT's administrative and governmental spheres. Even there is no obvious plan for making the RC fully functional by building office infrastructures and allocating sufficient funds for the council. As a result RC is still unable to live up to the expectations of the

41 MoCHTA Annual Report, 2011-2012.

42 PCJSS Report, p. 10

peace process. The RC's power to supervise and coordinate the functions of HDCs has not been materialized. Though several amendment proposals were accepted in an inter-ministerial meeting held on 30 July 2012, the CHT Land Commission Amendment Bill is yet to be placed to the Jatiya Sangsad for unknown reasons. This has created frustrations among the indigenous people of the CHT.

Further, there is lack of clarification of mandates, responsibilities and authorities of the Ministry of CHTs Affairs vis-à-vis other CHTs institutions. There are no clear operational rules and administrative frameworks for most of the CHTs institutions. For example, the supplementary rules and regulations as well as the administrative orders essential to make the government institutions such as the Regional Council operational, are yet to be either elaborated or approved by the Government. As a consequence, the mandates and authorities of the respective CHT institutions tend to overlap considerably. This in turn leads to inter-institutional confusion and differences which greatly undermine the delivery of relevant services to the people. However it is unrealistic to think that there would be peace in the hills without discernible power devolution to the new CHT institutions.

Lack of coordination and cooperation among the CHT institutions is a vital issue. There is also lack of coordination between the MoCHTA and other affiliated institutions such as CHT Regional Councils (CHTRC) and Hill District Councils (HDC). This seriously undermines the functioning of the respective institutions. The CHTRC cannot function properly because of lack of support from the Ministry of CHT Affairs. The Ministry is more in contact with the deputy Commissioners than with the RC Chair about the CHT governance, which rather humiliated the RC.⁴³ On the other hand, the three HDCs and Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board (CHTDB) which are directly under the Ministry of CHT Affairs often ignore the supervisory and coordinating authority of CHTRC. This tends to create frustrations among the office bearers and limit their effectiveness in facilitating and supporting development. Consequently, the CHTRC which was established to resolve the problems of the indigenous peoples has become useless.⁴⁴

43 Mohammad Rashiduzzaman and Mahfuzul Hoque Chowdhury, *Building Peace in Bangladesh, Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT): An Assessment of the 1997 Peace Accord*, Report for the USIOP Project (New Jersey, Glassboro, 2008) [hereafter USIOP Report], p. 43

44 Visit: www.aitpn.org/IRQ/voll-iii/issue_4/story/o7.html

Bureaucratic procrastination is nothing new in the governance system. But in the case of implementing the peace accord it seems to be unbearable. As it was noticeable later, visible assignment of authorities to some tribal dominated organizations (MoCHTA/CHTRC/HDC) caused anxiety among the local bureaucracy accustomed to pride, power, privileges and an unmistakable bearing of public importance.⁴⁵ In many ways, the Accord's institutional prospects became a victim of such unanticipated consequences right from its inauguration.

The perceptible bureaucratic non-cooperation surfaced as the unresolved obstacles. The state minister status of RC Chairman appeared to the MoCHTA and the HDCs as a matter of power struggle. The creation of such high ranking post in local governance system came as an outrage to Bangladeshi civil servants who usually enjoyed the colonial style order of precedence among the local officials and other district-level dignitaries. They seemed uncomfortable with the special privilege of Shantu Larma, who was placed at the highest rank and status over all the Bangladeshi Government officers posted in the CHT and neighboring districts.⁴⁶ Shantu Larma also spoke about this in the same tone:

It is rather paradoxical to note that the inherent colonial stand and outlook of our civic polity aptly manifest its chauvinistic conservatism that unmistakably gets spelled in the general attitude, formulation of national policies and their applications to CHT. Consequently, the diverse feature of our nationhood abjectly suffers at every step. But apparently, our civic polity is often seen not being enough interested in addressing the unwelcome consequences arising out of such non-compatibility.⁴⁷

But the government officials should not forget that the special status of the CHT regional council chair is an arrangement that was designed to bring political stability in the insurgency-prone CHT. The peace accord was undoubtedly a mutual understanding between the Bangladesh Government representatives and the tribal rebel group PCJSS. It ended the decade-long conflict in the CHT. But opposition to the Accord came from many sides. The then opposition party-BNP, Ershad's Jatiya Party, the Bengali community known as 'Bengali Settlers' living CHT and a faction of tribal young group known as the United Peoples Democratic Front (UPDF) are worth mentionable among them. After assuming power in 2001 Begum Khaleda Zia did not deal the peace accord issue

45 USIOP Report, p. 33

46 *Ibid*

47 CHTRC, *One Decade*, see, forward part.

cordially. The appointment of Moni Swapan Dewan, MP from Rangamati as deputy minister for the MoCHTA, and Wadud Bhuinya, MP from Khagrachari as CHT Development Board's chairman are the clear manifestation of her anti-accord stance. It is fortunate that she did not scrap the Accord.

During the whole BNP rule Mr. Dewan could not work properly due to non-cooperation from the government. The emergence of UPDF's as an anti accord party just after signing the accord is concerning enough in this case. The hostile position of the UPDF has turned the post accord intra-tribal harmony into a complex situation. Terming the Accord as a 'compromise and sell out' they scornfully rejected accord-oriented institutions in general and the CHT Regional Council in particular. According to the UPDF leaders, the RC is a futile body without any real governance authority. So almost routinely, the UPDF castigated the new CHT institutions from the commencement of the peace process.⁴⁸ This has certainly put more barriers to institutionalizing the peace building process.

Apart from the above-mentioned challenges, the hostile activities of the Bengali Settlers appeared as a matter of serious concern. It would be relevant to mention here that during the 1970s and 1980s when the tribal insurgency in the CHT was at its peak, the military governments of General Zia, and his successor General Ershad took some deliberate steps to change the demographic balance in the CHT. These steps included, among others, a state-sponsored resettlement program for thousands of landless Bengali families from the plain districts. According to Ziauddin Chowdhury, the then deputy commissioner of Chittagong (1978-81), 'the programme was politically motivated and Major General Manjur, General Officer Commanding (GOC) of Chittagong and commander of counter insurgency campaign, played a key role in planning and implementing the Bengali Settlement programme.'⁴⁹

In mid-1979 General Zia initiated this scheme in consultation with some of his top officials. According to Anti-Slavery Society, in May 1980 Zia's government confirmed its policy towards the Chittagong Hill Tracts and started to encourage settlers to move there. A secret circular from the commissioner of the Chittagong division to government officials in other districts stated that it was

48 USIOP Report

49 Ziauddin Chowdhury, 'Broken Promises' in *Forum* 4 April 2010.

“the desire of the government that the concerned deputy commissioners will give top priority to this work and make the programme a success.”⁵⁰

Under this programme the government brought new settlers in three phases. About 80,000 families with a population of 400,000 were brought to CHT in several phases.⁵¹ As a result, the ratio of Bengali settlers to tribes in CHT rose to 27.05%; whereas in 1947 the ratio had been 2.05%.⁵² Since then the newly settled Bengali people appeared to be a major barrier to the peace building process. On the Accord’s ninth anniversary, nearly 5000 Bengali from different parts of CHT assembled in Rangamati and demanded that the 1997 Accord be scrapped. In the post-accord CHT, whenever the Government proceeded to implement any important provision of the agreement, the newly settled Bengali community vehemently opposed it. They would do so by organizing tougher and destructive political programs. This never ending debate over the accord is not a good symptom of institution building and successful peace process. Given the fact that both the pro-accord and the anti-accord parties have adopted violent tactics, the accord may unravel altogether. The hostility of the anti-Accord UPDF and the Bengali settlers have seriously weakened the Government’s willingness to implement the CHT peace accord.

Lastly, as stated before, the Hill Tracts Local Government Council Acts of 1989 provide for an elected body to administer the council consisting of one chairman (Tribal) and thirty others members of which two-thirds are tribal and one-third is non-tribal. Although the first election of the local government system in the CHT districts were held in 1989, since then there have been no such elections to the Hill District Councils or the Regional Councils. This surely indicates the 1997 Accord’s poor institutionalization and weak governance capacity. Instead of holding general elections, successive governments have preferred to form nominated body with unelected officials. This practice in the long run will create bad impression to common people about government’s sincerity. Moreover, while the PCJSS hoped to demonstrate the RC as its major achievement, the continuation of interim nature has created disappointment among the tribal communities and their leaders.

50 Anti-Slavery Society, *The Chittagong Hill Tracts*, Indigenous Peoples and Development Series, Report No.2, (London, 1984), p.24

51 S. S. Chakma, *The Untold Story*, p. 14

52 Mizanur Rahman Shelly (ed.), *The Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh: The Untold Story*, (Dhaka: CDRB, 1992), p.13

Concluding Remarks

This paper shows that since 1972, successive governments in independent Bangladesh have formed various institutions to address the demands of the tribal communities in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. There are significant differences between the institutions created both before and after the 1997 Peace Accord. The pre-Accord institutions went through a process of recognizing the cultural and development needs of the tribal communities whereas the post-Accord institutions emphasized devolution of power among the local government organizations created for the CHT region. Since the tribal communities in the CHT region have long been involved in a protracted insurgency, with the PCJSS providing a political platform and the Shanti Bahini leading the armed rebellion, both the pre-, and post-Accord institutions made significant contributions toward the process of peacebuilding in the CHT region. It is in this context, one has to evaluate the long-term contributions of the institutions such as the CHT Development Board, the Tribal Cultural Institutes, which were later renamed to the Kudra Nri-Goshthir Sangskritik Pratisthan, the splitting of the CHT District into three administrative districts, and the evolution of the CHT District Councils.

The CHTDB, TCI and the HDCs have been so far able to prove their capacity, efficiency and necessity by focusing on some key sectors such as education, roads and communication infrastructure, women's empowerment, and health care services etc. These institutions transformed the CHT from an inaccessible to accessible area, with increasing improvement in literacy, enhanced communication, and better livelihood opportunities for the tribal communities. The mass tribal people including those who were previously involved in armed rebellion have benefited from these institutions, and are thus living peacefully. All employees including primary school teachers, development workers appointed by these organizations are totally loyal to their institutions. Thus thousands of families involved in directly or indirectly with any of these institutions will never go against his service provider. Briefly speaking, though the CHT predicament is too complex and difficult to meet all expectations; the institutional initiatives adopted by Bangladesh have proved to be quite effective in building peace in the CHT.

US CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS SALES TO TAIWAN: CHINA'S RESPONSE SINCE 1979

Mohammad Morad Hossain Khan *

Abstract

The aim of this paper is to examine how the United States maintains security relationship with Taiwan against any perceived Chinese military threats. Taiwan, which is separated and thus politically divided from mainland China in 1949, is created by the history of a long civil war from roughly 1937 to 1949. The US maintained state to state relationship with Taiwan till 1979 though in 1971 the US recognized that Taiwan was the part of China. It is to be noted that the US reconciled major disputes with China on the condition that the case of Taiwan must be handled peacefully. China cannot force Taiwan for reunification against its will. From the Taiwanese point of view, Taiwan is a sovereign state. She is struggling to enhance her military capability with the help of the US from the inception of the problem. That is why whenever China threatens to capture Taiwan, the US comes forward with its military might according to the Taiwan Relations Act of 1979. It will be interesting to note how the US sustains arms cooperation with Taiwan since the US does not maintain any formal diplomatic relations with Taiwan since 1979. In this regard, Chinese response to the US-Taiwan security relationship in terms of conventional weapons sales will be observed since 1979. On the one hand, Taiwan is a democratic and capitalist state which has diplomatic relations with few states. China, which is still a politically communist country, is growing as a major economic power as well as a military power in the contemporary world, on the other. From the hegemonic stability point and also political realistic point of views, the US simply wants to continue current status-quo in the Asia-Pacific region to curb China's emergence as a possible superpower in the 21st century. In this study, why and how the US provides arms, especially conventional weaponries to Taiwan and China's response to it will mainly be discussed.

Introduction

Taiwan, which is separated and thus politically divided from mainland China in 1949, was created by the history of a long civil war from roughly 1937 to 1949.¹

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¹ Dittmer, Lowell, "The Evolution of China's Policy Towards Taiwan" in J.W. Wheeler (ed.), *China Divide: Evolving Relations Between Taiwan and Mainland China*, Washington: Hudson Institute, 1996, p. 38

Since 1950, especially from the Korean War (1950-1953), the question of Taiwan has been the most complicated issue between the United States (hereafter the US) and the People's Republic of China.² But since 1971 the US-Taiwan relationship took a different turn when the US declared "One China Policy" and considered Taiwan as the part of China.³ Earlier the United States formally maintained state to state relationship with Taiwan while it was known as the Republic of China from 1949 to 1979 though in 1971 the US declared to establish diplomatic relations with China. Diplomatically, the US sets a condition to China that the case of Taiwan must be handled peacefully. That means the US will intervene militarily, if China tries to capture or integrate Taiwan against its will. But realistically or emotionally, is Taiwan ever ready to be the part of China?

The US realistically signed the Mutual Defense Treaty in 1954 with Taiwan. Thus, the US has never allowed the Chinese intervention into Taiwan though China often threatens to use military forces against Taiwanese unilateral declaration of independence or long term separation from China. But the situation of the Taiwan case changed dramatically when the US came forward to reconcile disputes with China through Pakistan during the Bangladesh Liberation War in 1971 from the Cold War perspective against the former Soviet Union-India alliance. According to Lowell Dittmer, "Since Beijing took over Taipei's UN seat in 1971, Taiwan has suffered one blow after another".⁴ But still the US remains as the key security guarantor to Taiwan against any possible Chinese military action into Taiwan. But from the Chinese point of view, Taiwan is her integral part and Taiwan is being separated from China for the time-being.

This paper, on the one hand, deals with why and how the US maintains security relationship with Taiwan- after snapping diplomatic relations and provides different kinds of arms, especially conventional weapons to Taiwan since 1979 to date as well as how the US started maintaining 'One China policy' on the other. The analysis will be based on some government documents, acts and statements of the US, Taiwan and China. The year 1979 is an important turning

² Chiu, Hungdah, "China, the United States, and the Question of Taiwan" in Hungdah Chiu (ed.), *China and the Question of Taiwan: Documents and Analysis*, New York: Praeger Publishers, 1973, p. 112

³ Roy, Denny, *Taiwan: A Political History*, Ithaca (New York): Cornell University Press, 2003, p. 139

⁴ Dittmer, *Op. cit.* p. 44

point for both Taiwan and China since the US officially disconnected diplomatic relations with Taiwan. And in the same year the US established diplomatic relations with China. Despite the fact that the US continues selling conventional weapons to Taiwan as she did before. How this is taking place will be analyzed using Hegemonic Stability Theory and Political Realism in this paper. Usually, conventional weapons mean small weapons like assault rifles, land-mines, tanks, bombs, shells, rockets, missiles, war planes and so on.

Background of the US Arms Sales to Taiwan and China's Reaction

The Taiwan Relations Act of 1979 (the TRA) is the foundation of selling US conventional weapons to Taiwan. The Act was approved in the US Congress on April 10 in 1979.⁵ The reason is that through the TRA, the US maintains and takes all sorts of security measures including arms sales to Taiwan against any Chinese military threat.⁶ According to the Section 2 (5) of the Act, the US is “to provide Taiwan with arms of a defensive character”.⁷ The next section 3 (a) of the Taiwan Relations Act made it more clear: “...the United States will make available to Taiwan such defense articles and defense services in such quantity as may be necessary to enable Taiwan to maintain a sufficient self-defense capacity”.⁸

By this law, the US President and the Congress will take decision about the nature and quantity of arms necessary for the defense of Taiwan in time.⁹ But earlier, the Mutual Defense Treaty between the US and the ROC or Taiwan acted well so far against any outside threat. According to the Article 7 of the Mutual Defense Treaty, Taiwan allowed its land, air and sea for the military purpose of the US.¹⁰

Immediately after the promulgation of the Taiwan Relations Act in 1979, China sharply reacted to it. China questioned the military assistance to a state like

⁵ US-China Institute, *Taiwan Relations Act*, University of Southern California, 2007 (<http://china.usc.edu/ShowArticle.aspx?articleID=393&AspxAutoDetectCookieSupport=1>)

⁶ Kan, Shirley A., Taiwan: Major U.S. Arms Sales Since 1990, *Congressional Research Service, CRS Report for Congress*, 2010, p. 1. (<http://fas.org/sgp/crs/weapons/RL30957.pdf>)

⁷ US-China Institute, *Taiwan Relations Act, Op. cit.*

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid

¹⁰ United Nations Treaty Series (reg. no. 3496), *Mutual Defense Treaty Between the United States of America and the Republic of China*, USA, 1958, pp. 214-216. (<http://www.taiwandocuments.org/mutual01.htm>)

Taiwan, which has no formal relations with the US.¹¹ Historical documents show that, “On March 16, 1979, three days after the Bill passed in both Houses of the Congress, Foreign Minister Huang Hua of China informed U.S. Ambassador Leonard Woodcock that the situation was ‘unacceptable to the Chinese Government’.”¹² According to the law, the US Government would sell arms as much as Taiwan needs for her national security and self-defense.¹³ But the security situation of Taiwan more or less remained same to the US and Taiwan. Even though reservation were raised less China the US approved the sale of arms and ammunitions to Taiwan. The US sold Taiwan \$ 800 million worth of arms immediately after the TRA in the beginning of 1980.¹⁴ Chinese Government reacted seriously against the Dutch Government on arms sale to Taiwan in 1981 and also criticized France on the same issue; but China could do almost nothing against the superpower, the US arms sales like advanced fighters in 1992 and later on.¹⁵ However, Taiwan mainly depends on arms sales from the US against China’s huge numerical advantages in manpower and weapons systems.¹⁶ From the Cold War Perspective, the US made friendly relations with China. And for the Chinese cause, the US had to maintain compromise but realistic diplomacy at that time. That is why according to the Joint Communiqué of the United States of America and the People's Republic of China in August in 1982, the US agreed the following:

... the United States Government states that it does not seek to carry out a long-term policy of arms sales to Taiwan, that its arms sales to Taiwan will not exceed, either in qualitative or in quantitative terms, the level of those supplied in recent years since the establishment of diplomatic relations between the United States and China, and that it intends gradually to reduce its sale of arms to Taiwan, leading over a period of time, to a final resolution.¹⁷

¹¹ Dittmer, *Op. cit.*, p. 33

¹² Ibid

¹³ Dumbaugh, Kerry, “Taiwan-U.S. Relations: Recent Developments and Their Policy Implications”, *Congressional Research Service, CRS Report for Congress*, 2008, p. 20. (<http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/112057.pdf>)

¹⁴ Dittmer, *Op. cit.*, p. 33

¹⁵ Ibid, pp. 40-41.

¹⁶ Roy, Denny, “Taiwan’s Response to the Rise of China” in Kevin J. Cooney and Yoichiro Sato (eds.), *The Rise of China and International Security*, New York: Routledge, 2009, p. 128

¹⁷ United States Information Service, *Joint Communiqué on Arms Sales to Taiwan between the United States of America and the People's Republic of China*, USA, 17 August 1982. (<http://www.taiwandocuments.org/communique03.htm>)

But the ‘Six Assurances to Taiwan’ made by the US former Ambassador John Holdridge consolidated the position of Taiwan well.¹⁸ The most important assurance to Taiwan is that the US would not alter the terms of the TRA and the US would not set any date for the termination of arms sales to Taiwan.¹⁹ It continues, “The United States would not consult with China in advance before making decisions about U.S. arms sales to Taiwan”.²⁰ Thus, the US-Taiwan security cooperation continues to vitiate US-China relations. Taiwan started building its own defense industry gradually and effectively. In the 1980s Taiwan used to spend more than 30 per cent of the national budget in defense purpose, “despite a cutback in the number of members of the armed forces from 600,000 in the early 1950s to 400,000 by 1989”.²¹

The Chinese missile tests and nuclear threat during 1995 and 1996 proved that the US was committed to perform according to the Taiwan Relations Act of 1979 since the US stood by Taiwan with all sorts of necessary means including adequate military deployment in the Taiwan Strait. After the 1995-96 crisis, the US increased its arms sale to Taiwan and enhanced military ties — “in order to maintain a military balance of power between the two sides” of the Taiwan Strait.²² But Chinese officials calculated that the US would not intervene in the Taiwan Strait confrontation from the US experience in Somalia, Bosnia and Haiti.²³ But when the US deployed two aircraft carriers into the Taiwan Strait, China was shocked because the US deployed naval forces which had the capability to destroy virtually the entire naval forces of China swiftly and with virtual impunity.²⁴ Certainly, China was aware of that reality. So, China did not start any military campaign to occupy Taiwan at all.²⁵

Strategically, China is also taking time to be well-prepared to cope with the US and Taiwan at the same time in terms of military power, capability and so on.

¹⁸ Six Assurances, *The "Six Assurances" to Taiwan*, July 1982. (<http://www.taiwandocuments.org/assurances.htm>)

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Dittmer, *Op. cit.*, p. 41

²² Changhe, Su, The role of the United States in cross-strait negotiations: a mainland Chinese perspective in Bercovitch, Jacob *et al.* (eds.), *Conflict Management, Security and Intervention in East Asia*, New York: Routledge, 2008, p. 223

²³ Garver, John W., *Face Off: China, the United States, and Taiwan's Democratization*, Washington: University of Washington Press, 1997, p. 114

²⁴ Ibid. p. 117

²⁵ Ibid.

By January 2007, China succeeded in testing its anti-satellite weapons by destroying old Chinese weather satellite in the space.²⁶ This incident indicates that China is continuing its modernization of its military capability, which appears alarming for the US and its allies.²⁷ It is mentionable that China is the third country after the US and former Soviet Union to have that capability in the world.²⁸ China has been preparing herself for a long time so that she could challenge the US militarily over 100 years at best.²⁹ In this perspective, the US-Taiwan security relationship in terms of conventional arms cooperation will be enhanced to a great extent.

US – Taiwan Military Cooperation

In July 1982, the Reagan administration gave six guarantees to Taiwan. The first two guarantees are very significant: the US has not set a specific date for ending arms sales to Taiwan, and the US has not agreed to consult with China on arms sales to Taiwan.³⁰ Through the six guarantees, it was also assured that the TRA of 1979, the US pillar of political and security commitment to Taiwan, would not be revised and the sovereignty of Taiwan would remain same.³¹ In 1992 the Bush administration agreed to sell sophisticated weapons like 150 F-16 fighters and 4 E-2T AWACS to Taiwan.³² Taiwan co-produces F5-E fighter aircraft for its air defense.³³

²⁶ Goh, Evelyn, “US strategic relations with a rising China: Trajectories and impacts on Asia-Pacific security” in Kevin J. Cooney and Yoichiro Sato (eds.), *The Rise of China and International Security: America and Asia Respond*, New York: Routledge, 2009, p. 82

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Cooney, Kevin J, “Chinese-American hegemonic competition in East Asia: a new cold war or into the arms of America” in Kevin J. Cooney and Yoichiro Sato (eds.), *The Rise of China and International Security: America and Asia Respond*, New York: Routledge, 2009, p. 43-44

²⁹ Ibid. p. 45

³⁰ Chen, Edward I-hsin, The Role of the United States in cross-strait negotiations: A Taiwanese perspective in Bercovitch, Jacob et al (eds.), *Conflict Management, Security and Intervention in East Asia*, New York: Routledge, 2008, p. 197

³¹ Ibid

³² Ibid. p. 200; Garver, *Face Off: China, the United States, and Taiwan's Democratization*, Op. cit., pp. 35; Changhe, The role of the United States in cross-strait negotiations: a mainland Chinese perspective in Bercovitch, Jacob et al. (eds.), *Conflict Management, Security and Intervention in East Asia*, Op.cit. p. 225

³³ Clough, Ralph N., “U.S. Policy Toward Evolving Taiwan-Mainland China Relations” in J.W. Wheeler (ed.), *China Divide: Evolving Relations Between Taiwan and Mainland China*, Washington: Hudson Institute, 1996, p. 105

In the modern warfare, air power including missile is a decisive factor to all powers. The case of Taiwanese security is of no exception. With the help of the US air power over years, Taiwan has built a strong air power capability of international standard.³⁴ The importance of air power can be easily perceived as the 70 per cent surface of the globe is covered by water while 100 per cent is by air.³⁵ Consequently, Taiwan is quite aware of the importance of the advanced military power with its all-out consequences.

Chinese missile threats to Taiwan in 1995 and 1996 made Taiwan more tensed about her over all security. As a result, Taiwan increased its defense budgets.³⁶ During this missile tests crisis, the US declared to have approved the sale of Stringent antiaircraft missiles to Taiwan in defense of Taiwan from China.³⁷ Immediately the US also announced to sell US Patriot antimissiles to Taiwan for better security of Taiwan from any possible Chinese missile attacks.³⁸

But a Chinese spokesman for Taiwan Affairs Office of the Chinese Communist Party Central Committee made comments on Xinhua News Agency three months later of the Chinese missile tests crisis that China demonstrated her full determination and capability to safeguard Chinese sovereignty and territorial integrity through the missile tests.³⁹ But the reality is that Taiwan and the US became more aware of the Chinese strength. And thus, Taiwan developed its own military through the purchase of more sophisticated conventional weapons and technology from the US.

From worldwide sources, including the United States, Taiwan received arms deliveries valued at \$7.7 billion in the eight-year period from 2001 to 2008. Taiwan ranked 7th among leading arms recipients among the developing countries.⁴⁰ On the other hand, in the same period China spent \$ 16.2 billion, ranking 2nd arms buyer in the world. After the Chinese missile threats, the US increased overall military communication and assistance towards Taiwan

³⁴ Edmonds, Martin, Air Power and Taiwan's Security in Martin Edmonds and Michael M. Tsai (eds.), *Taiwan's Security And Air Power: Taiwan's Defense Against The Air Threat From Mainland China*, New York: Routledge Curzon, 2004, p. 25

³⁵ Ibid. p. 13

³⁶ Garver, *Face Off: China, the United States, and Taiwan's Democratization*, *Op. cit.* p. 154

³⁷ Ibid. p. 155

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Kan, Shirley A., *Taiwan: Major U.S. Arms Sales Since 1990*, *Op. cit.*, p. 2

unprecedentedly since 1979 in every possible means less like designing providing ensuing strategy, training, logistics, establishing control and command.⁴¹ According to Shirley Kan, “After the U.S. approval in 1992, Taiwan in 1997 acquired three Patriot missile defense fire units with PAC-2 Guidance Enhanced Missiles”.⁴² Taiwan bought the U.S. Navy’s four available Kidd-class destroyers, costing \$ 875 million, which are the largest warships in Taiwan’s navy and which are equipped with SM-2 air-defense missiles and a joint combat management system in 2005 and 2006.⁴³

In addition, in recent time, Taiwan purchased 60 Black Hawk helicopters from the US after a long discussion and negotiations. In January 2010, the US President Barack Obama notified the US Congress of ‘a sale of the helicopters for \$3.1 billion’.⁴⁴ Thus, Taiwan and the US are going on their security measures against any perceived Chinese threat towards Taiwan. China continuously protests against any sort of arms sales to Taiwan by the US or any other parties.

According to the TRA, the US assists Taiwan in terms of security through the American Institute in Taiwan (AIT) from 1979 to till today. The AIT like embassy provides almost everything Taiwan needs. To some extent, the AIT is stronger than any embassy. The reason is evident according to the TRA:

The absence of diplomatic relations or recognition shall not affect the application of the laws of the United States with respect to Taiwan, and the laws of the United States shall apply with respect to Taiwan in the manner that the laws of the United States applied with respect to Taiwan prior to January 1, 1979.⁴⁵

The US Secretary of State is responsible to convey any agreement made by the institute. That means the AIT is a strongly effective body to represent the US stand on Taiwan. “The U.S. and Taiwan militaries set up a hotline in 2002 to deal with possible crises”,⁴⁶ “...the Acting Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics, Michael Wynne, submitted a letter to Congress on August 29, 2003, that designated Taiwan as a “major non-NATO ally”.⁴⁷ Certainly, Taiwan, being the non-NATO ally, felt much more secured as

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid. p. 14

⁴³ Ibid. p. 2

⁴⁴ Ibid. p. 9

⁴⁵ US-China Institute, *Taiwan Relations Act, Op. cit.*, section 4.

⁴⁶ Kan, Shirley A., *Taiwan: Major U.S. Arms Sales Since 1990, Op. cit.*, p. 4

⁴⁷ Ibid. p. 5.

the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is the strongest transnational military organization in the world.

But Taiwan has not stopped to continue enhancement of its military power. In 2007, Taiwanese Defense Minister Lee Jye confirmed that Taiwan was developing missiles with a range up to 1000 km that could attack Chinese missile bases inside China.⁴⁸ Stephen Young, director of the American Institute in Taiwan, explained quickly by saying that the focus would be defensive, not offensive in nature.⁴⁹ That means there might be close cooperation between the US and Taiwan regarding the missile building of Taiwan as well.

China's Recent Activities

China always criticizes the US-Taiwan military cooperation. China feels that any military cooperation between Taiwan and the US is contrary to its. That is national interest why China simply and continuously tries to keep the US far from Taiwan.⁵⁰ Since 1990s China has been modernizing its military forces and thus China is increasing its military capacity to defend the US aircraft carriers at a long distance using anti-ship ballistic missiles (ASBM).⁵¹

Furthermore, China deployed anti-cruise missile on its ship with the help of Russia and thus China has also developed "modern Russian fighter-bombers equipped with anti-ship missiles".⁵² Against this backdrop, the western countries like the US tried to establish "China threat theory"⁵³ to the world. By this time, China has developed the largest military numbering 2,225,000 active-duty personnel with about 800,000 in reserve.⁵⁴ In this perspective, the US sells arms to Taiwan so that Taiwan and China remain separated for an indefinite

⁴⁸ Roy, "Taiwan's Response to the Rise of China" in Kevin J. Cooney and Yoichiro Sato (eds.), *The Rise of China and International Security*, *Op. cit.*, p. 129

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Schroeter, Thilo *et al*, Challenging US Command of the Commons: Evolving Chinese defense technologies as a threat to American hegemony? *Bologna Center Journal of International Affairs*, 2010, p. 45. (http://bcjournal.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/05/schroeter-sollenberger-verink-from-bcjia-mag_final-3.pdf).

⁵¹ Ibid. p. 46

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Yang, Jian, "The Rise of China: Chinese Perspectives" in Kevin J. Cooney and Yoichiro Sato (eds.), *The Rise of China and International Security: America and Asia Respond*, New York: Routledge, 2009, p. 13

⁵⁴ IISS 2005 in Kay, Sean, "Global Security" in Michael T Snarr & D. Neil Snarr (eds.), *Introducing Global issues*, 4th edition, *Boulder (US)*: Lynne Reiner Publishers, 2008, p. 78

period of time.⁵⁵ According to the Chinese anti-China force like the US has been relentlessly try to divide and contain China using different machination.⁵⁶

US Recent Involvement

In 2011, the Congressional Research Service Report clearly revealed that Taiwan was the leading US arms purchaser during the period 2007-2010. In this period, Taiwan bought the US defense articles and services worth of \$6.6 billion. Even in 2010 among the worldwide purchasers of US defense articles and services, Taiwan was also at the top costing \$ 2.7 billion.⁵⁷

There are some reasons why the US supports Taiwan against China. Firstly, American people believe in democracy and freedom of choice which their government or political parties cannot ignore at all. The US has played a pivotal role in building Taiwan's democratic system which is often called as a model for Asia.⁵⁸

If the US decides to reduce arms cooperation with Taiwan, its allies globally and regionally will undermine the US as no more to be trusted one.⁵⁹ Some East Asian allies like Japan, South Korea, Singapore and the Philippines are very dependent on the US for overall security for a long time. Particularly, Japan which is a very significant strategic US global partner will be shocked at and Japan may doubt the US's reliability. Other countries may also follow Japan in this regard.⁶⁰ Thus, the political image of the US would be endangered globally and regionally. Realistically, the US cannot do that. "...30 senators reminded Obama that 'Taiwan is one of our strongest allies in Asia' ".⁶¹

Secondly, the US defense industry earns a huge amount of money every year from Taiwan by selling arms and defense services.⁶² For example, in 2011, a

⁵⁵ Yang, "The Rise of China: Chinese Perspectives" in Kevin J. Cooney and Yoichiro Sato (eds.), *The Rise of China and International Security: America and Asia Respond*, *Op. cit.*, p. 21

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ Grimmett, Richard F., "U.S. Arms Sales: Agreements with and Deliveries to Major Clients, 2003-2010", *Congressional Research Service*, 2011 (December 16), p. 2-3. (<http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/179578.pdf>).

⁵⁸ Tucker, Nancy Bernkopf and Glaser, Bonnie, Should the United States Abandon Taiwan? *The Washington Quarterly*, 2011 (Fall), p. 34. (http://csis.org/files/publication/twq11_autumntuckerglaser.pdf).

⁵⁹ *Ibid.* p. 33

⁶⁰ *Ibid.* p. 32-33

⁶¹ *Ibid.* p. 29

⁶² *Ibid.* p. 26

bipartisan group of 45 US Senators advocated arms sales to Taiwan since Lockheed Martin's f-16 production would shut down without order from Taiwan. And this shut down would cause the loss of 11,000 jobs in 43 states in the US.⁶³ It is observed that, "Taiwan is the ninth largest trading partner of the United States, and the United States is Taiwan's third largest, with two-way trade rising 32 percent in 2010. The United States is the largest foreign investor in Taiwan".⁶⁴ That is why the Obama administration in its first two years (2009-2010) sold almost \$13 billion worth of weapons to Taiwan.⁶⁵ The US under the Obama administration also provided 60 UH-60M Blackhawk helicopters to Taiwan, and in 2011 sold the Patriot (PAC-3) air defense system for \$2 billion.⁶⁶ Cabestan also mentioned that since 2008 the Obama administration committed more conventional arms sales to Taiwan than the Bush administration in the previous seven years (\$18.3 billion and \$ 12.25 billion respectively).⁶⁷ That means the US not only continues selling weapons to Taiwan but also will deploy more soldiers to the Asia-Pacific region in future.

Since the Shangri La Strategic Dialogue in Singapore in June 2012, the US started refocusing on Asia-Pacific. In her 'rebalancing project' presented by the US Defense Secretary Leon Panetta, the US would deploy more warships and armed forces to the Asia-Pacific region.⁶⁸ The Defense Minister of Taiwan publicly welcomed the US decision.⁶⁹

Analysis

Though the US does not maintain any formal diplomatic relations with Taiwan, the TRA clearly states that the US will provide arms and defense services as much as Taiwan needs (Section 2 of the Taiwan Relations Act). That means the US has already sided with Taiwan in terms of its overall security strongly from the political realistic point of view. From the hegemonic stability point of view,

⁶³ Ibid. p. 26

⁶⁴ Ibid. p. 31-32

⁶⁵ Ibid. p. 34

⁶⁶ Grimmett, Richard F. & Kerr, Paul K, "Conventional Arms Transfers to Developing Nations, 2004-2011", *Congressional Research Service*, 2012 (August), p. 15. (<http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/weapons/R42678.pdf>).

⁶⁷ Cabestan, Jean-Pierre, "Taiwan's Changing Security Environment", *Berlin: German Institute for International and Security Affairs*, 2012, p. 5. (http://www.swp-berlin.org/fileadmin/contents/products/projekt_papiere/Jean-PierreCabestan_Shanghai2012_web.pdf).

⁶⁸ Ibid. p. 14

⁶⁹ Ibid. p.14

the US intends to contain China for an indefinite period of time. Viewed realistically Taiwan maintains good relations with the US for its statehood through the American Institute in Taiwan (AIT) since 1979.

From the Chinese point of view, the question of Taiwan is an internal issue of China. Any US arms sale to Taiwan is against the will or national interest of China. But from the Taiwanese point of view, the Taiwan case is totally different than China's point of view. Taiwan simply wants to survive, that Taiwan has been enjoying since 1949, with the cooperation of the US in particular based on security relationship though the US arms sales like conventional weapons to Taiwan which has been a debating issue between the US and China.

Strategically, the US prefers the peaceful resolution of the conflict between China and Taiwan. Absence of peace between China and Taiwan is against the interests of the US in the Asia-Pacific region (Section 2 of the Taiwan Relations Act). The US believes that Taiwan has rights to defend herself from any Chinese threat. To the Taiwanese, their sovereignty and identity are non-negotiables. Taiwan is never ready to sacrifice its statehood. That is why Taiwan needs to maintain very realistic relations with the US. And for that reason the US from time to time provides different conventional weapons to Taiwan for her defense.

In the strategically post Cold War era, the US termed Taiwan as an important non-NATO ally, which is also very significant. The US recognition to Taiwan as a non-NATO ally acts as a safeguards to the Taiwanese sovereignty, security and national glory indeed. In that sense Taiwan like other NATO member states expects more military cooperation from the US. Thus, Taiwan becomes more dependent on the US for conventional weapons as well. According to US point of view, arms sales to Taiwan are + two prime objectives: one for containing China and another + Taiwan capable so that the US does not need to send huge armed forces to ward off China.⁷⁰

So, it does not matter much whether there is formal diplomatic relations between the US and Taiwan or not. The relationship between the US and Taiwan exists de facto through the TRA. The US declared disconnection of

⁷⁰ Black, Sam, "Arms Sales to Taiwan: A Means to What End?", *Center For Defense Information*, 2007, p.3. (<http://www.isn.ethz.ch/Digital-Library/Articles/Detail/? lng=en& id=53572>).

diplomatic relations with Taiwan in order to calm China since the US emphasized on the diplomatic relations with China by that time. Viewed realistically, the US-Taiwan security relationship has been very successful. The reason is that the US sets 'peaceful solution of Taiwan' very tactfully and diplomatically before China. China has been in a political trap like 'peaceful means or solution' about the Taiwan case since China has agreed in 1972 and 1979 communiqués with the US. So, against the will of Taiwan, China cannot force Taiwan to reunification. Despite the political pressure from China, the US Congressional support for Taiwan has still been very firm. The Congressional Taiwan Caucus has 149 members which is the second largest caucus in the House of Representatives.⁷¹ In May 2011, Senate Taiwan Caucus sent a letter to President Obama urging the approval of modern weaponries including F-16c and D Fighters to Taiwan. "The letter was signed by a total of 45 senators."⁷²

China's government views, any arms sales to Taiwan are nothing but interference in the internal affairs of China. China still believes:

With the return of Hong Kong in 1997 and of Macau in 1999, Chinese leaders see Taiwan as the last remaining obstacle to completion of the communist revolution and restoration of the Chinese nation after a century and a half of foreign intervention and civil strife.⁷³

Conclusion

It appears from the above study, that the US maintained security relationship with Taiwan through the Taiwan Relations Act and different treaties with China. And China continuously tried to oppose any security relationship between the US and Taiwan since China cannot cope with the US-Taiwan alliance in terms of military power. On the other hand, China cannot recognize the fact that Taiwan is a sovereign state which might fuel other parts like Tibet's independence in near future. That is why China diplomatically keeps pressure on the US against any arms sales to Taiwan.

The case of Taiwan cannot be solved militarily. This is a political problem either in China or between China and Taiwan. This may be between China and

⁷¹ Ibid. p. 1

⁷² "Chinese Reactions to Taiwan Arms Sales", *US-Taiwan Business Council, Project 2049 Institute*, 2012 (March), p. 98, (http://www.us-taiwan.org/reports/2012_chinese_reactions_to_taiwan_arms_sales.pdf)

⁷³ Frison, Douglas and Scobell, Andrew, "China's Military Threat to Taiwan In the Era of Hu Jintao", *Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College*, 2004, p. 3. (<http://people.duke.edu/~niou/teaching/FrisonScobell.pdf>).

Taiwan with the involvement of the US because Taiwan no longer believes in their Chinese identity; rather they believe that they are Taiwanese. Since the US earns a huge amount of money by selling conventional weapons to Taiwan, the US does not want to solve the Taiwan problem between China and Taiwan at all. The US simply wants to continue current status-quo in the Asia-Pacific region in order to curb China's emergence as a possible superpower in the 21st century. As much as China grows economically and militarily, the US will cooperate more with one of her longest allies like Taiwan by providing conventional weapons which will serve the purposes of both the US and Taiwan as well. + realistically objective the US cannot retreat from Taiwan since many other allies rely on the US for security and other issues for a long time across the world. Any US withdrawal from Taiwan may influence other allies which may certainly bring huge diplomatic disaster for the US across the globe.

On the other hand, China will continuously keep pressure on the US to maintain 'one China policy' which the US committed in 1972 and onwards. Only for the Taiwan case, the two powers like the US and China may engage in any war as both powers have very devastating weapons like nuclear, chemical or biological bombs. That is why the peaceful solution of the Taiwan case is desirable to all. Interestingly, the current status quo is the possible best solution in the Taiwan Strait because this status quo keeps all the concerned countries far from war so far successfully.

**NORTH KOREAN NUCLEAR/MISSILE THREATS AND THE
EFFICACY OF THE U.S.-SOUTH KOREAN ALLIANCE IN
SHAPING REGIONAL SECURITY ORDER***

Ehsanul Haque**

Abstract

The 1950-53 Korean War ended through a truce, not any formal peace treaty, leaving the peninsula divided and in a state of war. As a result, inter-Korean relations for the past six decades have produced an atmosphere of mutual distrust, suspicion, tension, fear, and hostility. This paper makes a critical appraisal of the complex layers of this estranged relationship and its implications for order and stability in Northeast Asia. The study explores the combined role of the United States and its staunch ally South Korea in addressing such a challenging and volatile situation. In particular, the paper makes an attempt to assess the depth, strength, and limitations of the U.S.-South Korean alliance and its potential to pool political, diplomatic, and military resources in deterring an unapproachable and intimidating North Korea and also in anchoring stability on the Korean peninsula and beyond. Given North Korea's conduct of three nuclear tests in 2006, 2009, and 2013 and its formidable advancement of long-range ballistic missile programs, policymakers in Washington and Seoul consider such measures by Pyongyang not only as confrontational but also as critical security challenges to the region. It is against this backdrop that this paper advances an argument that a revitalized U.S.-South Korean understanding, and their overlapping political and strategic visions are central to the viability and credibility of the alliance.

Introduction

The Korean peninsula is one of the fiercely militarized and intensely volatile areas in the world that engenders political tension and intractable conflict in Northeast Asia. Two diametrically opposed and irreconcilable societies – the

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communist/authoritarian Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK or North Korea) and the capitalist/democratic Republic of Korea (ROK or South Korea) – live under a fragile armistice. As the region carries a bitter legacy of the cold war, the military and security situation there is extremely unpredictable and multifaceted. This has led to a vast military development and a formidable deployment of a wide array of troops on both sides. For some observers and analysts, the spot is obviously a dangerous flashpoint in the Asia-Pacific region. At least two factors contribute to this confrontational situation – North Korean nuclear and missile capabilities and the enigma centering the DPRK regime.

The two Koreas remain locked in a state of war as the 1950-53 Korean War ended with a truce, not a peace treaty. As a result, inter-Korean relations in the past six decades have been drawn into a vortex of mutual recrimination, bitterness, aversion, antagonism, and malevolence. In fact, North Korea's overt bellicosity fuels South Korea's security concerns and activism, and constitutes a key factor in the U.S.-South Korean security calculations. Pyongyang's ever more threatening nuclear and ballistic missile programs have catalyzed an extraordinary shift in Seoul's security outlook augmenting direct military cooperation with the U.S. and greater defense self-sufficiency. Indeed, the U.S.-South Korean alliance has been a major component of America's bilateral alliance system in Asia since the end of the World War II.

The focus of this paper falls on the North Korean security threats and the response from and efficacy of the U.S.-South Korean alliance. Drawing upon a body of literature dealing with alliance politics and management, the paper sets out a conceptual framework to raise some critical questions for alliance relationships into the wider context of U.S.-South Korean security configuration. The study posits that Seoul's relationship with Washington is, in large measure, a product of its security concerns vis-à-vis Pyongyang while for the Americans, South Korea ranks high in geopolitical considerations and also in shaping their strategic thinking as they see ROK as a critical counterbalance to DPRK. Given the strategic importance of the U.S. and South Korea to each other, both have developed one of the most constructive and viable alliance relationships in the world. The paper takes a perspective that although the U.S.-ROK alliance is subject to strident and consistent criticisms, it represents more than shared military objectives, structures, and operations; it is the political glue that binds the two states together in ways that go beyond traditional strategic concerns and goals. Also, the study explores the perspectives, policies, and priorities of the new leadership in South Korea under President Park Geun-hye

and her conservative Saenuri party in consolidating and advancing the U.S.-ROK alliance. In the final analysis, the paper contends that a revitalized U.S.-South Korean understanding, and their overlapping strategic and political interests and goals are central to the viability and credibility of the alliance.

Theorizing Alliance Relationships: Management and Maintenance

Alliances play a crucial role in the international system as they are integral to statecraft. As George Liska once stated, it is impossible to contemplate international relations without invoking the notion of alliances.¹ Indeed, alliances have been a fixture of international affairs since antiquity.² In today's world, alliances are generally touted as a path to security, peace, and prosperity.³ More pointedly, alliances fulfill – among many others – two essential functions: deterrence and assurance.⁴ This section explores the concept and theories of alliance relationship with a focus on the question of alliance persistence and management to meet security needs of the participating nations.

Alliances in the contemporary world are strategic vehicles that solidify harmony among countries enjoying special relationships. Nations forge alliances for the reason that such coalitions/partnerships promise better outcomes they expect in a turbulent world.⁵ Throughout history, great powers and the lesser ones commonly formed and acted through alliances. The most comprehensive database on alliances, based on the Alliance Treaty Obligations and Provisions (ATOP) project, lists the existence of around 648 alliances between 1815 and 2003.⁶ It shows that alliance diplomacy characteristically features in foreign relations.

Alliances can be defined in various ways. Ole R. Holsti *et al.* look at an alliance as a formal agreement between two or more nations to work in partnership on

¹ George Liska, *Nations in Alliance: The Limits of Interdependence* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1962), p. 3.

² John R. Deni, *Alliance Management and Maintenance: Restructuring NATO for the 21st Century* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2007), p. 9.

³ Brandon Valeriano, *Becoming Rivals: The Process of Interstate Rivalry Development* (New York: Routledge, 2013), p. 37.

⁴ Brett Ashley Leeds, "Do Alliances Deter Aggression? The Influence of Military Alliances on the Initiation of Militarized Interstate Disputes," *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 47, No. 3, July 2003, p. 427.

⁵ Alastair Smith, "Alliance Formation and War," *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 39, No. 4, 1995, p. 419.

⁶ John S. Duffield, Cynthia Michota and Sara Ann Miller, "Alliances," in Paul D. Williams, ed., *Security Studies: An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2008), p. 292.

national security affairs.⁷ Arnold Wolfers defines an alliance as “a promise of mutual military assistance between two or more sovereign states”.⁸ As stated by Stephen M. Walt, an alliance is “a formal or informal relationship of security cooperation between two or more sovereign states”.⁹ Patricia Weitsman views alliances as “bilateral or multilateral agreements to provide some element of security to the signatories”.¹⁰ Glenn Snyder is of the opinion that the primary function of the alliances is to pool military strength against a common enemy, not to protect alliance members from each other.¹¹ As Jacob Bercovitch maintains, an alliance is a collaborative agreement between two or more states to join together for a stipulated period for pursuing common political, economic, or security interests.¹² In the words of Emerson M.S. Niou and Peter C. Ordeshook, an alliance is

a collective security arrangement among states in which all members of the alliance agree to not threaten each other, to punish defectors from this agreement whenever possible, and to threaten countries outside of the alliance whenever it is in their individual interest to do so.¹³

It is evident from the above viewpoints and perspectives that states enter into alliances for multiple purposes – to counter potential threats, to fend off aggression, and to forge political and economic cooperation. An alliance is, therefore, more than a mere treaty and more than simply a military relationship; it covers an entire web of relationships – joint military exercises, intelligence sharing, political understanding, economic preferences, and the like. Thus, an alliance epitomizes the fundamental interests, intentions, commitments, obligations, and responses of its member states. There is a compelling and convincing logic for launching and joining an alliance as states are

⁷ Ole R. Holsti, P. Terrence Hopmann, John D. Sullivan, *Unity and Disintegration in International Alliances: Comparative Studies* (New York: John Wiley, 1973), p. 4.

⁸ Arnold Wolfers, “Alliances,” in David L. Sills (ed.), *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* (New York: Macmillan, 1968), p. 268.

⁹ Stephen M. Walt, *Origins of Alliances* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987), p. 1.

¹⁰ Patricia A. Weitsman, *Dangerous Alliances: Proponents of Peace, Weapons of War* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), p. 27.

¹¹ Glenn H. Snyder, *Alliance Politics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), p. 4.

¹² Jacob Bercovitch, “Alliances in International Relations: Aspects of Performance and Problems of Management”, in Jacob Bercovitch, ed., *ANZUS in Crisis: Alliance Management in International Affairs*, (London: Macmillan Press, 1988), p. 8.

¹³ Emerson M.S. Niou and Peter C. Ordeshook, *Alliances in Anarchic International Systems*, Social Science Working Paper 161 (Pasadena: California Institute of Technology, 1991), p. 7.

interdependent and hence, cannot act in isolation in a competitive world.¹⁴ In general, defensive/military alliances are formed in response to perceived threats and since the international system is not adequately equipped to guarantee security, the potential benefits of a collective provision of security through alliances are tremendous.¹⁵ An alliance, according to Robert Osgood, reflects a

latent war community, based on general cooperation that goes beyond formal provisions and that the signatories must continually cultivate in order to preserve mutual confidence in each other's fidelity to specified obligations.¹⁶

However, the war functions of the alliances may not only be latent but also manifest and the alliances may operate both in peacetime and in time of conflict/war.¹⁷ It is apparent that alliances are largely outwardly oriented, intended to augment the security of their members vis-à-vis external parties with aggressive designs.¹⁸

An alliance is an external source of confidence and strength which enables small or weak states to preserve and protect their core values and interests. It is central to the pursuit of national security and is the product of threats emanating from the foreign front that is often difficult for any country to eliminate. In other words, an alliance is designed not only to raise the costs of aggression against alliance members but also to ward off threats to their independence and territorial integrity. Conventionally, alliances have been seen as tools that either add to power or repel aggression by opposing states.¹⁹ Nevertheless, alliances are powerful only when they are credible and dependable.²⁰

Evidence from contemporary alliances indicates that ideological affinity is a significant determinant for the foundation of alliances. In the opinion of Jacob

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Robert E. Osgood, *Alliances and American Foreign Policy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1968), p. 19.

¹⁷ Francis A Beer, "Introduction," in *Alliances: Latent War Communities in the Contemporary World* ed., Francis A Beer (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston Inc., 1970), p. 4.

¹⁸ John S. Duffield, Cynthia Michota and Sara Ann Miller, "Alliances," in Paul D. Williams, ed., *Security Studies: An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2008), p. 292.

¹⁹ Brandon Valeriano, *Becoming Rivals: The Process of Interstate Rivalry Development* (New York: Routledge, 2013), p. 37.

²⁰ Brett Ashley Leeds and T. Clifton Morgan, "The Quest for Security: Alliances and Arms", in Sara McLaughlin Mitchell, Paul F. Diehl and James D. Morrow, eds., *Guide to the Scientific Study of International Processes* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), p. 140.

Bercovitch, a shared ideology or a common socio-political system helps distinguish potential friends from potential enemies.²¹ Indeed, ideological resemblance is central to alliances which give them endurance, discipline, and a degree of unity needed for collaborative actions to promote and protect common interests. In addition, alliances are set up in order to level out perceived imbalances in the distribution of international power. Hence, alliances are seen as effective tools for managing regional and global balance of power.

An oft-cited reason for alliance formation is balance of power theory.²² It posits that since an unbalanced power alone poses a threat to less powerful ones, states join alliances in order to balance the power of other states, especially when they cannot balance power through their individual efforts or when the costs of such internal balancing exceed those of alliance membership. Therefore, a relatively weak state confronted by a more powerful state, will decide to ally with a dominant power. An important refinement of balance of power theory is balance of threat theory. Stephen M. Walt addressed this issue by making a case that states form alliances in response to common threats, not just power.²³ Nonetheless, a decline in the level of threat posed by an adversary will result in the weakening or dissolution of the alliance.²⁴

With the intention of boosting strength and protecting security, vulnerable states develop a propensity toward building alliances with influential states that possess impressive military capabilities. At one end, states at risk opt for alliances when they seek protection and defense against strong states. At the other end, strong states show interest in alliances to oppose and counter other strong states for the purpose of maintaining balance of power. It is generally assumed that alliance members would provide military and diplomatic assistance in times of conflict and war.²⁵

Theorizing about why states form alliances has led to expectations about who allies with whom. In particular, theories suggest that in deciding whether to

²¹ Jacob Bercovitch, *Op. cit.*, p. 10.

²² Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1979), pp. 117-123.

²³ Stephen M. Walt, *Origins of Alliances* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987)

²⁴ John S. Duffield, Cynthia Michota and Sara Ann Miller, *Op. cit.*, p. 296.

²⁵ Sangit Sarita Dwivedi, "Alliances in International Relations Theory," *International Journal of Social Science & Interdisciplinary Research*, Vol. 1, Issue 8, August 2012, p. 224.

form alliances and with whom, states should consider: (i) their own power and the threats they face; (ii) their potential ally's power and the threats the ally faces; (iii) the extent to which they share policy goals with their potential ally; and (iv) the credibility of the alliance.²⁶ As George Liska maintained, small/weak powers ally with stronger powers to attain security, stability, and status.²⁷ Given their perceived defenselessness, alliance with great powers can enhance small/weak states' strength and confidence. For smaller states with limited military capability, dependence on alliances is a choice for survival. In view of this, forming alliances and bringing them into play is a logical response to the dangers of aggression and the opportunities for aggrandizement. From discernible trends, it turns out that military alliances contribute to bolstering the cohesion and integrity of each bloc through which a regional security system progressively takes shape.²⁸ Such alliances are designed to provide security to member states and thus to respond prudentially to their national interests.²⁹

The effectiveness and value of the alliances exist in the perception of a common strategic environment and a common threat. When the perceptions of the allies do not coalesce, the efficacy and utility of an alliance may be in question.³⁰ In fact, the main purpose of most alliances is to pool the members' capabilities in a way that advances their interests. States join alliances in order to supplement each other's strengths and capabilities. If alliances are understood as the vehicles that aggregate capabilities, stronger states would have more allies.³¹

On the other side of the spectrum, membership in alliance engenders a strong feeling of involvement/obligation, complicity, and often a compromise over sovereignty.³² Undeniably, the commitment in an alliance is mutual, reciprocal, and equitable among partners. This means that each of the alliance members

²⁶ Brett Ashley Leeds and T. Clifton Morgan, "The Quest for Security: Alliances and Arms", in Sara McLaughlin Mitchell, Paul F. Diehl and James D. Morrow, eds., *Guide to the Scientific Study of International Processes* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), pp. 140-141.

²⁷ George Liska, *Op. cit.*

²⁸ Ki-Jung Kim and Myongsob Kim, "The United States and the East Asian Regional Order: Historical Recasting and Forecasting", in G. John Ikenberry and Chung-in Moon, eds., *The United States and Northeast Asia: Debates, Issues, and New Order* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2007), p. 320.

²⁹ Robert Jackson, *The Global Covenant: Human Conduct in a World of States* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 118.

³⁰ Jacob Bercovitch, *Op. cit.*, p. 18.

³¹ Brett Ashley Leeds and T. Clifton Morgan, *Op. cit.*, p. 141.

³² Jacob Bercovitch, *Op. cit.*, p. 12.

cannot only expect rewards of external assistance in the event of a severe threat but also the drawbacks of the risk of getting entangled in conflicts of the partner(s) and, thus, of paying high costs should this risk materialize. There is a broad agreement among scholars that alliances inherently involve risks and dangers.³³ In a similar vein, alliances are the key triggers for rivalry process and are responsible for the outbreak of complex wars.³⁴ Put differently, alliance membership entails both potential benefits and costs. The costs are in the form of creation of dependence and hence, a compromise over sovereignty.³⁵

In recent times, balancing between the need for protection and the desire for keeping independence intact has been one of the dilemmas of alliance maintenance and management. It has been observed that while small states seek security, they are not ready to be treated as the appendages of great powers. However, the legitimacy of such attitudes is questioned on the ground that the small states cannot expect to act as mere consumers of security or any other collective gain as long as they stay in the alliance. In fact, they are treaty-bound to contribute to the overall performance of an alliance and share the burden of retaining the status quo. Besides, they are to respect alliance commitments and to remain united in the wake of any dissension.

Despite the possible risks of being members in an alliance, there is ample evidence indicating that small states find the benefits derived from such a partnership are rewarding and hence, go beyond its costs and dangers. However, small states need to contribute their share to the overall functions of an alliance and to the creation of a viable security arrangement. An alliance thus promises a reciprocal relationship or a form of assurance against external aggression.³⁶

Alliance between less powerful states and great powers demonstrates a realist approach that differs with the idealist aspirations of many small states. In most cases, cooperation between alliance members and integrative tendencies within alliances are results of internal cohesion and collaborative spirit. The higher the degree of alliance cohesion and collaboration, the greater the chance of acting in unison. When cohesion and concord diminish, disintegrative forces rise.³⁷ Nonetheless, it is difficult to measure the capabilities and intentions of states

³³ Brett Ashley Leeds and T. Clifton Morgan, *Op. cit.*, p. 140.

³⁴ Brandon Valeriano and John A. Vasquez, "Identifying and Classifying Complex Interstate Wars", *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 54, No. 2, 2010, pp. 561-582.

³⁵ John S. Duffield, Cynthia Michota and Sara Ann Miller, *Op. cit.*, p. 295.

³⁶ Jacob Bercovitch, *Op. cit.*, p. 14.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

with any degree of precision and this difficulty gives rise to uncertainty about what exactly constitutes a winning alliance.³⁸

The views of scholars and experts on the efficacy of alliances are at variance. While some argue that vigilant handling of military alliances to create countervailing coalitions will deter potential aggressors and prevent war,³⁹ others assert that alliance commitments can serve to provoke and expand war.⁴⁰ The mutual defense pact is an example of the most common alliance. In such a treaty, the parties promise one another sturdy military support in the event one or more is attacked.⁴¹ Examples demonstrate that defensive alliances with no offensive component are more durable and credible. Moreover, scholars have suggested that alliances among liberal democratic states are likely to be especially strong and resilient.⁴²

Indisputably, states would presumably not form or maintain alliances if they were not thought of advancing the interests of member states in ways that were otherwise impossible or less cost-effective.

Acrimony between the Two Koreas and the Northern Military Buildup

One of the most protracted, complex, and bitter tensions in Northeast Asia emanates from the relationship between North and South Korea. The two countries are currently at loggerheads over a number of critical issues. Even though they share a common history, language, religion, tradition, and culture, they are two hostile countries with entirely different political and economic systems. More than six decades of conflicting political ideologies have shaped peoples' outlooks and living standards, pitching the impoverished and virulently nationalistic/militaristic North in stark contrast to the capitalist/industrialized South.

³⁸ Steve Chan, *International Relations in Perspective: The Pursuit of Security, Welfare, and Justice* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1984), p. 136.

³⁹ See, Edward V. Gulick, *Europe's Classical Balance of Power* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1955); Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1967); and Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1979).

⁴⁰ See, Thomas J. Christensen and Jack Snyder, "Chain Gangs and Passed Bucks: Predicting Alliance Patterns in Multipolarity," *International Organization*, Vol. 44, No. 2, 1990, pp. 137-168; Randolph M. Siverson and Harvey Starr, *The Diffusion of War* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1991); and John A. Vasquez, *The War Puzzle* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

⁴¹ Brett Ashley Leeds, *Op. cit.*, p. 430.

⁴² Kurt Taylor Gaubatz, "Democratic States and Commitment in International Relations," *International Organization*, Vol. 50, No. 1, 1996, pp. 109-150.

Since no peace treaty was concluded to end the Korean War, small-scale military clashes recurrently flare up along both land and sea borders of the two countries. Apprehensions and sporadic low intensity military conflicts characterize this relationship. As a result, mutual prejudice, mistrust, suspicion, and animosity between the two countries run deep and wide. In fact, North Korea has a long history of ratcheting up pugnacious rhetoric and posing dreadful threats against South Korea and its allies – the U.S. and Japan.

For the preceding sixty years, North Korea has constituted endemic difficulties for South Korean and American policymakers. Pyongyang's relations with Seoul and Washington have been notoriously confrontational, with periods of negotiated peace continually disrupted by Northern intimidations. The DPRK is called by analysts as one of the most enigmatic states of the world with a huge standing army and conventional weapons arsenal, a chemical and biological warfare capability, a long-range missile program, and an ambitious nuclear program.⁴³ The country's governance is shaped by the national mottos of *Juche*⁴⁴ and *Songun*⁴⁵ focusing respectively on the ideas of revolutionary communism and militarized society. While North Korea once enjoyed an economic advantage over South Korea,⁴⁶ now the country suffers from an ailing economy, and chronic food crisis continues to plague the country since the 1990s.⁴⁷

Historically, North and South Korea perceive each other as enemies and the DPRK has a horrifying record of targeting the ROK – in 1968, Pyongyang dispatched commandos to the presidential Blue House in Seoul in an abortive attempt to assassinate South Korea's president Park Chung-hee; the 1983 North

⁴³ Larry M. Nicksch, "North Korea's Weapons of Mass Destruction", in Young Whan Kihl and Hong Nack Kim (eds.), *North Korea: The Politics of Regime Survival* (Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe Inc., 2006), p. 107. See also, Ravi Shekhar Narain Singh, *Asian Strategic and Military Perspective* (New Delhi: Lancer Publishers, 2005), p. 235.

⁴⁴ *Juche* means that popular masses are the "masters" of revolution. It is typically interpreted as a self-oriented, self-reliant, and independent ideology. In fact, it implies a philosophy of strict domestic control and international independence.

⁴⁵ *Songun* is translated as "military first" which prioritizes the armed forces in the state affairs and allocates resources to the army first. The *Songun* doctrine was introduced by Kim Jong Il.

⁴⁶ Steve Grunau, "Negotiating Survival: The Problem of Commitment in U.S.-North Korean Relations." *Journal of Public and International Affairs*, Vol. 15, Spring 2004, p. 106.

⁴⁷ Stefano Felician, North and South Korea: A Frozen Conflict on the Verge of Unfreezing?, IAI Working Papers 11, Rome, August 2011, p. 6.

Korea-orchestrated bombing killed 17 high profile South Korean officials while they were on a state visit to Myanmar; and agents from the North were held responsible for bombing a South Korean airline in 1987.⁴⁸ While a full-blown war is not an option for each side, tit-for-tat reprisals occur periodically which heighten the risk of escalation that could trigger a war.

For many years now, North and South Korea have been locked in conflict and rivalry and have not been able to close their differences. Paradoxically, they have deliberately restricted contacts since 1953. The most disastrous humanitarian consequence of this bitter partition is that in 1997 there were an estimated ten million divided family members who have had no chances to contact each other, in stark contrast to the case of Germany prior to the country's unification in 1990.⁴⁹

In recent years, North Korean attitudes reflect how desperate and belligerent the country's leadership is – in 2009, Pyongyang announced that it no longer had any obligation to the 1953 armistice which ended the Korean War. Tensions between North and South Korea peaked significantly leading to the sharp worsening of relations following the sinking of a South Korean warship – the *Cheonan* – by North Korean torpedo/mine attack in March, 2010 which caused the death of forty-six sailors. More alarmingly, the North Korean shelling of the small South Korean-held island of Yeonpyeong (which houses military installations and a small civilian population) in November, 2010 wrecked the fragile Korean equilibrium killing several people, including ROK marines. This tragic episode was called the worst military incident since 1953 that set off a severe crisis on the Korean peninsula and beyond. Consequently, the U.S. and the ROK started a new round of military drills that were intended to project the scale, credibility, and strength of their bilateral alliance relationship. Indeed, the sinking of the *Cheonan* and the shelling of Yeonpyeong amply demonstrate the persistent volatility and danger of the current less-than-peace situation on the peninsula.

⁴⁸ A former North Korean spy recently revealed fresh details of the 1987 Korean Airlines flight bombing in an interview with Australia's ABC News. The bombing mission was personally instructed by North Korean leader Kim Jong-il, the spy said, in an effort to discourage visitors from attending the 1988 Seoul Olympics. See, Ann Hui, "Ex-North Korean spy sheds new light on fatal 1987 Korean Airline bombing", *The Globe and Mail*, April 11, 2013.

⁴⁹ Gabriel Jonsson, *Towards Korean Reconciliation: Socio-Cultural Exchanges and Cooperation* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2006), p. 55.

Since late 2012, North Korea has initiated a new series of provocations and war propaganda that once again brought the peninsula to the brink of open conflict and that dashed hopes that the new DPRK leader Kim Jong-un would lead his country in a new direction. After successfully launching a long-range, multi-stage rocket (under the guise of a satellite launch) on December 12 – the second in 2012 – Pyongyang conducted its third and the biggest nuclear test on February 12, 2013 and stepped up its fiery rhetoric against South Korea and the U.S. to include the threat of pre-emptive nuclear strikes.⁵⁰ These weapons tests moved the DPRK closer to its goals of developing a viable nuclear weapon and a long-range delivery vehicle in an attempt to secure recognition from the international community as a nuclear weapons state. The DPRK's Central Military Commission (CMC) outlined these goals in a February 21, 2013 statement that claimed, "the underground nuclear test... represented a great political and military victory as it made the international community confidently recognize the status of the DPRK as a strategic rocket and nuclear weapons state."⁵¹ In fact, the U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates estimated in January 2011 that North Korea was within five years of being able to develop an Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) capable of striking the United States.⁵²

A noted American expert on North Korea's nuclear and missile programs recently stated that the North has by now developed a deliverable nuclear warhead for its intermediate-range ballistic missiles.⁵³ If there is any authenticity in this claim, this means that population centers and U.S. bases in Japan and South Korea could already be within the range of a North Korean nuclear strike. Although ballistic missiles would be the preferred delivery system for a North Korean nuclear weapon, it is not known whether the regime is capable of designing and testing a warhead that would be small enough and sufficiently reliable for placement on the tip of a missile.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ Emma Chanlett-Avery and Ian E. Rinehart, *North Korea: U.S. Relations, Nuclear Diplomacy, and Internal Situation*, Congressional Research Service, April 2013, p. 1.

⁵¹ "N. Korea claims winning international recognition as nuclear weapons state," *Yonhap*, February 21, 2013, Available at: <<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/northkorea/2013/02/21/52/0401000000AEN20130221010400315F.HTML>>

⁵² Elisabeth Bumiller and David E. Sanger, "Gates Warns of North Korea Missile Threat to U.S.," *New York Times*, January 11, 2011, Available at: <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/12/world/asia/12military.html?_r=0>

⁵³ David Albright, "North Korean Miniaturization," *38 North*, February 13, 2013, Available at: <<http://38north.org/2013/02/albright021313/>>

⁵⁴ Greg Thielmann, "Sorting Out the Nuclear and Missile Threats from North Korea", *Arms Control Association (ACA) Threat Assessment Brief*, Washington, DC, May 21, 2013, p. 5.

The development of ballistic missiles by North Korea have long been seen by the U.S. and its allies in Northeast Asia as a key security threat and a source of regional volatility. Moreover, the political developments in North Korea since Kim Jong-un's assumption of power in 2011 indicate a renewed focus on advancing its missile capabilities. The most alarming development is the DPRK's deployment of an estimated 600 short-range ballistic missiles capable of striking parts or all of South Korea, and perhaps 150-200 medium-range Nodong missiles which could potentially hit South Korea and Japan.⁵⁵ Experts believe the North has over 200 Nodong missiles⁵⁶ that could reach most of Japan. In fact, North Korea has developed a formidable war machine as it possesses a vast defense system. The unified Korean People's Army (KPA) now ranks the fourth largest in the world, behind the forces of the U.S., China, and India.⁵⁷

As some reports suggest, North Korea has nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons and is currently developing missiles of all ranges.⁵⁸ A recent unclassified U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) report reveals that the North currently has nuclear weapons capable of delivery by ballistic missiles.⁵⁹ As Bruce Klingner of The Heritage Foundation wrote in 2011, the DIA Director Lieutenant General Ronald Burgess testified that North Korea "may now have several plutonium-based nuclear warheads that it can deliver by ballistic missiles and aircraft as well as unconventional means."⁶⁰ In early 2013 the U.S. Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel stated that the North Koreans had nuclear capacity with missile delivery capacity.⁶¹ However, the intelligence debate

⁵⁵ An Overview of North Korea's Ballistic Missile Program, The National Committee on North Korea (NCNK) Issue Brief 2013, Washington DC, p. 1.

⁵⁶ Cited in Ernest Z. Bower, Victor Cha, Karl F. Inderfurth, Christopher K. Johnson, Gary A. Powell and Stephanie Sanok, U.S. Force Posture Strategy in the Asia Pacific Region: An Independent Assessment (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2012), p. 26.

⁵⁷ International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), *The Military Balance 2011* (London: Routledge, 2011), p. 205.

⁵⁸ Mark B. Schneider, "Does North Korea Have a Missile-Deliverable Nuclear Weapon?," The Heritage Foundation Commentary, May 22, 2013.

⁵⁹ Reuters, "Pentagon Says North Korea Can Likely Launch Nuclear Missile," April 11, 2013, Available at: <<http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/04/11/us-korea-north-usa-idUSBRE93A15N20130411>>

⁶⁰ Bruce Klingner, "North Korea May Have Nuclear Warheads," The Heritage Foundation Commentary, March 15, 2011.

⁶¹ "Remarks by Secretary Hagel at the National Defense University, Ft. McNair, Washington, D.C.," April 3, 2013, available at: <http://www.defense.gov/transcripts/transcript.aspx?transcriptid=5213>.

continues and intensifies on whether North Korea has built the capacity to miniaturize nuclear warheads for ballistic missile delivery.⁶²

Eventually, Pyongyang nullified the 1953 armistice with Seoul in early 2013 and announced that it was withdrawing from all non-aggression pacts with South Korea, shutting down joint border crossings, and disconnecting the hotline between the two Koreas. On March 30, 2013 Kim Jong-un announced that his country was in a “state of war” with South Korea and vowed to close the Kaesong industrial complex, a joint venture between the two Koreas.⁶³ In fact, this industrial zone is one of the last remaining sites of peaceful engagement between North and South Korea, and is often considered a symbol of cooperation between them. Moreover, Kim Jong-un repeatedly stresses that North Korea’s nuclear weapons are no longer negotiable.⁶⁴

Despite harsh economic sanctions and vigorous diplomatic efforts by regional/global powers, Pyongyang has continued to develop a nuclear weapons capability, with quantities of plutonium sufficient to produce nuclear warheads and a uranium enrichment program of unknown but potentially greater capacity.⁶⁵ Its rocket launch in December, 2012 and its nuclear detonation in February, 2013 occurred in flagrant defiance of the U.N. Security Council resolutions prohibiting such activities. Besides, North Korea breached the Leap Day Agreement, 2012 signed with the U.S. in which it agreed to return to the negotiating table and freeze nuclear and missile tests in exchange for substantial food aid.⁶⁶ Likewise, Pyongyang announced in March 2013 that it would reconstruct the Yongbyon reactor, which had been closed in 2007 and partly

⁶² Chung Min Lee, “The Park Geun-hye Administration’s Foreign and Security Policy Challenges”, Korea Chair Platform, Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), Washington, DC, May 1, 2013.

⁶³ Global Voices, “South and North Korea in a State of War”, 3 April, 2013 Available at: <<http://globalvoicesonline.org/2013/04/03/south-and-north-korea-in-state-of-war/>>

⁶⁴ Hanns Günther Hilpert and Oliver Meier, “Charting a New Course on North Korea’s Nuclear Programme? The Options and the Non-Proliferation Treaty”, *SWP Comments 19*, German Institute for International and Security Affairs, June 2013, p. 1.

⁶⁵ Cited in the Institute for Science and International Security’s (IISS) *The North Korean Plutonium Stock Mid-2006* Available at: <<http://isis-online.org/publications/dprk/dprkplutonium.pdf>>

⁶⁶ Hanns Günther Hilpert and Oliver Meier, “Charting a New Course on North Korea’s Nuclear Programme? The Options and the Non-Proliferation Treaty”, *SWP Comments 19*, German Institute for International and Security Affairs, June 2013, p. 3.

dismantled. It also continues to construct a light-water nuclear reactor which it claims will be used for civilian power generation starting in 2014.⁶⁷

As a close ally of South Korea, the U.S. has also been threatened by North Korea to be “dissolved” if it becomes a party to the inter-Korean conflict. The latest threat includes North Korea targeting South Korea and the U.S. mainland as well as its military installations in Hawaii and Guam.⁶⁸ While North Korea’s periodic nuclear threats are not new, the scope, magnitude, and frequency of such threats have vastly increased during 2012-13. These have commonly included threats of thermonuclear attack on the U.S. and its allies, a verbal declaration of war, and repeated statements that the 1953 armistice has ended.⁶⁹

The U.S.-South Korean Alliance and Deterring the Northern Threat

The U.S.-South Korean alliance, based on the Mutual Defense Treaty of 1953, has been the capstone of the six-decade old bilateral relationship. It is one of the most integrated, robust, and durable military alliances in the world. This strategic cooperation is often called “blood alliance” which is fundamental to South Korean national security and integral to America’s policy toward Northeast Asia. In effect, the U.S.-ROK security alliance is at the core of American presence, power, and prestige in the Asia-Pacific region while for most South Koreans, the alliance is beneficial – even indispensable – for the country.

Under the alliance agreement and principles, the U.S. and South Korea have built up one of the strongest and most impressive combined defense postures in the world. The alliance stands out as a strong pillar for regional peace and stability by concurrently containing North Korea and projecting American military power into Northeast Asia. It is a distinct arrangement as it rests on a strong edifice of security imperatives, politico-economic interests, and shared values. It is in this context that the weekly *Economist* in a 2012 issue dubbed South Korea as “a model American ally”.⁷⁰

The U.S. has maintained a constant, and vigilant military presence on the peninsula since the inception of 1953 treaty and focused on supporting South

⁶⁷ Greg Thielmann, “Sorting Out the Nuclear and Missile Threats From North Korea”, Arms Control Association (ACA) Threat Assessment Brief, Washington, DC, May 21, 2013, pp.4-5.

⁶⁸ Choe Sang-Hun, “North Korea Calls Hawaii and U.S. Mainland targets”, *The New York Times*, March 26, 2013.

⁶⁹ Mark B. Schneider, *Op. cit.*

⁷⁰ *The Economist*, “Obama’s Most Improved Bilateral Alliance”, March 31, 2012.

Korea reconstruct its economy and also on establishing a resilient alliance through close political and military collaboration. Currently, the North Korean threat is at the top of the U.S.-ROK alliance agenda and the U.S. Forces Korea (USFK) is committed to the defense of South Korea and has been critical in deterring North Korean aggression and attacks.

As stated before, the U.S. has been devoted to averting and defeating North Korean aggression against South Korea since 1953. This commitment has consistently been given by American policymakers as an issue directly linked to U.S. security – a vital interest – and not merely a formal commitment to support an ally under threat.⁷¹ Born out of conflict at the peak of the cold war, the U.S.-ROK alliance is now the linchpin of American efforts not only to defend South Korea against any aggression from the North but also to shape the larger strategic equilibrium in the Asia-Pacific region. The U.S. presently maintains about 28,500 troops in South Korea and Seoul is included under Washington’s “nuclear umbrella”, also known as “extended deterrence” that applies to other non-nuclear U.S. allies too.⁷²

Any outbreak of conflict on the Korean peninsula or even the instability/collapse of the regime in Pyongyang could upset the status quo in the region.⁷³ Against this backdrop, a number of Korea specialists have identified several factors that drive the scope and state of the U.S.-South Korean alliance:⁷⁴ (i) the challenges posed by North Korea, particularly its weapons of mass destruction program and perceptions in Washington and Seoul of whether the despotic regime constitutes a threat, through its belligerence and/or the risk of its downfall; (ii) the growing aspiration of South Korean leaders to use the country’s middle power status to play a greater regional and global role; (iii) China’s increasing influence and leverage in Northeast Asia, which is a critical issue in U.S.-South Korean strategic thinking; (iv) the transformation of South

⁷¹ Thomas L. Wilborn, “U.S. Security Policy for Northeast Asia: Handmaiden for Export Promotion?”, in Tae-Hwan Kwak, ed., *The Major Powers of Northeast Asia: Seeking Peace and Security* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1996), p. 150.

⁷² Mark E. Manyin, Emma Chanlett-Avery and Mary Beth Nikitin, U.S.-South Korea Relations, Congressional Research Service (CRS) Report, May 15, 2012, p. 18.

⁷³ Emma Chanlett-Avery and Ian E. Rinehart, North Korea: U.S. Relations, Nuclear Diplomacy, and Internal Situation, Congressional Research Service (CRS) Report, April 2013, p. 5.

⁷⁴ Mark E. Manyin, Emma Chanlett-Avery and Mary Beth Nikitin, U.S.-South Korea Relations, Congressional Research Service (CRS) Report, May 15, 2012, p. 7.

Korea into one of the world's leading economies; and (v) South Korea's vibrant democratization which has given people voice in the country's foreign policy.

The ROK has espoused a modernization plan for the military and crafted a new vision for the U.S.-ROK alliance as crucial elements of its security strategy in response to a multitude of challenges and its aspiration to play a greater role in regional and global security. The South Korean government is in the process of implementing two important reform initiatives: Defense Reform 2020 – a 15-year, \$550 million program passed by the National Assembly in 2006 and planned to reduce ROK force levels while promoting more modernized military hardware and technology to augment war fighting capability; and Defense Reformation Plan 307 – a complement to Defense Reform 2020 designed to strengthen coordination among the services and building capabilities to engage in military activities short of full-scale war in response to future threats, provocations, and attacks by North Korea similar to the 2010 *Cheonan* attack.⁷⁵ The bases for this modernization plan are the 2009 Joint Vision for the U.S.-ROK alliance, an extensive strategic document/plan for bolstering defense cooperation between the U.S. and South Korea,⁷⁶ and Strategic Alliance 2015, a roadmap for the alliance that specifies the transition to two independent commands for the U.S. and the ROK after a proposed transfer of wartime Operational Control (OPCON) of South Korean forces to the ROK government in December 2015.⁷⁷

Rationale, Strength, and Resilience of the U.S.-ROK Alliance

Obviously, South Korea's relationship with the U.S. is, in large measure, the product of its security fears vis-à-vis the DPRK. The American commitment has not only been indispensable to the survival and progress of South Korea, it also reflects an ethical dimension – the U.S., having virtually created ROK in 1948, assumed obligations to the truncated country.

⁷⁵ Ernest Z. Bower, Victor Cha, Karl F. Inderfurth, Christopher K. Johnson, Gary A. Powell, and Stephanie Sanok, *U.S. Force Posture Strategy in the Asia Pacific Region: An Independent Assessment* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic & International Studies, 2012), p. 27.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ As per the current arrangement, which is a legacy of U.S. involvement in the 1950-1953 Korean War, South Korean soldiers would be placed under the command of U.S. forces in the event of the outbreak of a war on the peninsula. See for details, Ernest Z. Bower, Victor Cha, Karl F. Inderfurth, Christopher K. Johnson, Gary A. Powell and Stephanie Sanok, *U.S. Force Posture Strategy in the Asia Pacific Region: An Independent Assessment* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2012), p. 27.

For many years, the catchphrase for the U.S.-South Korean alliance has been *Katchi-Kapshida* (We Go Together). This Korean phrase carries an appeal of longstanding and intimate relationship between the American military forces and those of South Korea. The USFK members frequently use the phrase to signify the weight and value of the U.S.-South Korea alliance.⁷⁸ Seoul, on its part, has proven on core issues of Washington's concern that it is a trusted and dependable alliance partner. To cite an example, ROK's support for the 2003 Iraq war reflects the country's alliance commitment since the government justified the decision as an alliance obligation rather than an international obligation.⁷⁹

Looking ahead, the question remains whether the U.S.-South Korean alliance will sustain in a vastly altered political and strategic environment. The defenders of the alliance argue that the alliance is no less important now as it was in the past. Not only do they claim that the U.S.-ROK alliance is essential to prevent the resurgence of the instability that spawned intractable conflicts in the Northeast Asian region, they also contend that the continuation of Washington's alliance leadership role symbolized by the continued stationing of American troops in South Korea is imperative as well. Since the alliance is an important pillar for U.S. influence in the region, many assert that any U.S. retrenchment would severely jeopardize South Korean and American politico-security interests in the region. In fact, the *Cheonan* attack and Yeonpyeong island shelling of 2010, DPRK's rocket launching of 2012, and nuclear test of 2013 – all have sharpened the South Korean threat perceptions reinforcing and legitimizing the U.S.-South Korean alliance.⁸⁰

However, the U.S.-South Korean alliance, largely successful for more than half a century, has been under strains and stresses for the last several decades. There are several reasons for a downturn in Korean people's attitudes toward American military presence. As pointed out by G. John Ikenberry, as democracy thrived and populist politics entrenched in South Korea, it is now easier for that country's leaders to question its client status and dependence on

⁷⁸ Lee Tae-hoon, "USFK commander too media shy for own good", *The Korea Times*, April 18, 2012.

⁷⁹ Daniel F. Baltrusaitis, *Friends Indeed: Coalition Burden Sharing and the War in Iraq* (Ann Arbor: ProQuest, 2008), p. 223.

⁸⁰ Jim Garamone, "Cheonan Tragedy Strengthens U.S.-South Korean Alliance", U.S. Department of Defense, July 21, 2010, Available at: < <http://www.defense.gov/News/NewsArticle.aspx?ID=60103> >

alliance with America.⁸¹ Others like Seung-Hwan Kim maintain that the U.S. military bases in ROK, South Korean media's prejudice against the U.S., and a resentment of U.S. global policy evoke anti-American sentiments.⁸² Further sources of anti-Americanism in South Korea include historical perceptions, cultural differences, America's dealings with North Korea, the neoliberal prescription for the Asian Financial Crisis, and the influence of South Korean left-wing political leaders.⁸³ Some other sources of anti-Americanism are anti-western sentiment, anti-capitalism, the fear of a nuclear war, and an antipathy toward the hegemonic power.⁸⁴

Considering the above facts, both the U.S. and South Korean policymakers have adopted several measures to overhaul the alliance in order to project a better image of the alliance performance, in particular and the U.S. role, in general. During the George Bush presidency (2000-2008), the U.S. decided to pull out 12,500 of the 37,000 American troops stationed in South Korea by the end of 2008, while agreeing to provide \$11 billion to augment the deterrence and defense capabilities of the remaining U.S. forces and the ROK military.⁸⁵ The U.S. also agreed to return the Yongsan base in Seoul to South Korea and to eventually relocate all U.S. forces, including the Second Infantry Division along the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), to south of the Han River – in an apparent attempt to ease tensions with local citizens.⁸⁶

A confluence of factors contributed to the above decisions. Among the main reasons were a prudent review of the U.S. global defense posture, American troop needs elsewhere in the world in response to the global war on terror, and the South Korean military's increased capability to defend the country.

⁸¹ G. John Ikenberry, "A New Order in East Asia?", in Kent E. Calder and Francis Fukuyama (eds.), *East Asian Multilateralism: Prospects for Regional Stability* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), p. 218.

⁸² Seung-Hwan Kim, "Anti-Americanism in Korea," *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 26, No. 1, Winter 2002-03, p. 111.

⁸³ Chang Hun Oh and Celeste Arrington, "Democratization and Changing Anti-American Sentiments in South Korea," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 47, No. 2, March 2007, p. 329.

⁸⁴ Gi-wook Shin, "South Korean anti-Americanism: A Comparative Perspective," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 36, No. 8, August 1996, p. 789.

⁸⁵ Randy Schriver, "The U.S.-ROK Alliance: Regional Challenges for An Evolving Alliance", in Kurt M. Campbell, Victor D. Cha, Lindsey Ford, Nirav Patel, Randy Schriver, and Vikram J. Singh, eds., *Going Global: The Future of the U.S.-South Korea Alliance* (Washington, DC: Center for New American Security, 2009), p. 50.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

Moreover, the U.S. experienced strong anti-Americanism in South Korea, particularly during the 1980s and 1990s, which saw the rise of the “3-8-6 Generation”.⁸⁷ This generation, which tended to strongly support former president Roh Moo-hyun, held less favorable views of the U.S. based on a convergence of factors: diminished memory of the Korean War and American contributions to South Korean security in the height of the cold war, resentment of the lack of U.S. support for the South Korean democratization movement, and a low-keyed threat emanating from North Korea.⁸⁸

Of course, at the official level, South Korea considers its alliance relationship with the U.S. at the forefront of the country’s national security agenda. There were concerns among South Korean policymakers when in an academic writing former U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice regarded South Korea a “global partner” but Japan and Australia as “allies”.⁸⁹ However, after assuming office in 2009 president Barack Obama prioritized building up a strong and productive relationship with ROK – a traditional ally and military partner. While only a few years ago many analysts were envisaging the dissolution of the U.S.-ROK alliance during the presidency of South Korea’s progressive leader Roh Moo-hyun, the alliance has successfully weathered the obstacles and challenges.⁹⁰

A 2012 opinion poll indicates that despite a declining support for sustaining U.S. military budget and bases overseas, there is a full-throated support for American bases in South Korea, with a majority (60%) of the Americans in favor of continuing long-term military bases there⁹¹ whereas South Koreans overwhelmingly continue to see the U.S.-ROK alliance as indispensable in the future (95%), even after a potential reunification with North Korea (84%). They are also supportive of the U.S. military presence (67%), perhaps because a considerable number of South Koreans do not think they alone are sufficiently

⁸⁷ A label coined in South Korea in the late 1990s for people in their 30s who attended university in the 1980s and were born in the 1960s.

⁸⁸ Randy Schriver, *Op. cit.*, pp. 50-51.

⁸⁹ Condoleezza Rice, “Rethinking the National Interest: American Realism for a New World”, *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2008.

⁹⁰ Scott Snyder, “Expanding the US-South Korea Alliance”, in Scott Snyder, ed., *The US-South Korea Alliance: Meeting New Security Challenges* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2012), p. 2.

⁹¹ The Chicago Council on Global Affairs, Working Paper on the U.S.-ROK Alliance, December 2012, p. 2, Available at: <http://www.thechicagocouncil.org/UserFiles/File/Task%20Force%20Reports/2012_CCS_US-ROKConferenceReport.pdf>

capable of deterring (24%), or defeating (26%) North Korea.⁹² On the other hand, a recent poll conducted by the Seoul-based influential Asan Institute shows that 91% of the South Koreans believe the alliance is strongly justifiable, and 75% consider the alliance relevant and necessary even after the unification of the two Koreas.⁹³

However, questions linger about how well positioned and equipped the U.S.-ROK alliance is to cope with emerging regional issues beyond the Korean peninsula. In the present-day world, South Korea finds itself in a challenging security milieu where a host of developments continue to occur transitioning into an uncertain and chaotic future – the relative decline of U.S. power and the post-9/11 stress on “strategic flexibility”; the demise of North Korean leader Kim Jong-Il and succession; a rising and ambitious China and its increasingly assertive foreign policy; political crisis in Japan; and global economic recession. All these beg a fundamental question – how effectively and to what degree can South Korea respond to the changing political and security conditions under the U.S.-ROK alliance system?

The U.S. commitment to South Korea stretches beyond the concept of assuring security and stability. America’s alliance with South Korea and the forward presence of its military forces have become a symbol of U.S. engagement in this region. This U.S. military presence has constituted a dominant force not only in the ROK security paradigm but also in Northeast Asian power politics. Most importantly, the current U.S. strategy focuses on the elevation of the U.S.-ROK security alliance from the defense of South Korea to one that more actively involves Seoul in maintaining and managing regional security. While the alliance fulfills the security needs of South Korea and addresses its other concerns, it opens up new frontiers of cooperation and collaboration between the two allies. Since 2009, the two partners have initiated measures to transform the U.S.-ROK alliance, enlarging it from its key purpose of defending against North Korean attack to a regional and global partnership.⁹⁴

⁹² The Chicago Council on Global Affairs, Working Paper on the U.S.-ROK Alliance, December 2012, p. 4, Available at: <http://www.thechicagocouncil.org/UserFiles/File/Task%20Force%20Reports/2012_CCS_US-ROKConferenceReport.pdf>

⁹³ Ernest Z. Bower, Victor Cha, Karl F. Inderfurth, Christopher K. Johnson, Gary A. Powell and Stephanie Sanok, *U.S. Force Posture Strategy in the Asia Pacific Region: An Independent Assessment* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2012), p. 26.

⁹⁴ Mark E. Manyin, Emma Chanlett-Avery and Mary Beth Nikitin, U.S.-South Korea Relations, Congressional Research Service (CRS) Report, May 15, 2012, p. 19.

Victor D. Cha, one of the most authoritative and influential scholars in the field, holds an extremely positive view that the U.S.-ROK alliance has outperformed expectations in many respects since its foundation in 1953. In view of the rapid changes in world politics, he suggests the following principles to rationalize the alliance and to make it more effective and sustainable in future:⁹⁵

First, the alliance should be seen as standing for shared visions and values, rather than just standing in opposition to North Korean antagonism and aggression. The democratic values, free market economy, rule of law, and respect for human rights would synchronize the global objectives of Washington and Seoul. Second, as the alliance expands in scope and function, its leaders need to inject intrinsic values, not only strategic values into the alliance. As a democratic South Korea plays an important and constructive role in global affairs, the alliance proves intrinsically valuable. Thus, the U.S.-ROK alliance would sustain logically and consistently even after the end of the North Korean menace. Third, the men behind the alliance need to find out new frontiers of cooperation where their interests converge which would help define the alliance outside the peninsular context. The global war on terror is a case in point where Seoul has already showed the alliance's extra-peninsular context. The ROK played a major and distinct role in Iraq, supplying the third largest ground contingent, and in Afghanistan, where it extended logistics and medical support. In addition, South Korea's shining record of peacekeeping operations in different parts of the world such as South Sudan, East Timor, Cyprus, and Lebanon shows that Seoul is capable of playing an inspiring role in other areas of instability. The ROK navy is now capable of delivering important regional tasks to preserve freedom of navigation in Asian waters. For instance, South Korea earned much international recognition when in January 2011 its naval commandos stormed one of the country's cargo ships hijacked in the Arabian Sea and rescued its crew members defeating the pirates of Somalia.⁹⁶

⁹⁵ Victor D. Cha, "Outperforming Expectations: The U.S.-ROK Alliance", in Kurt M. Campbell, Victor D. Cha, Lindsey Ford, Nirav Patel, Randy Schriver, and Vikram J. Singh, eds., *Going Global: The Future of the U.S.-South Korea Alliance* (Washington, DC: Center for New American Security, 2009), pp. 9-10. For an analysis along these lines, see Scott Snyder, "Expanding the US-South Korea Alliance", in Scott Snyder, ed., *The US-South Korea Alliance: Meeting New Security Challenges* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2012).

⁹⁶ Justin McCurry, "Eight Somali pirates killed as South Korea rescues freighter crew", *The Guardian*, January 21, 2011.

Obviously, the U.S.-ROK alliance entitles South Korea to an active and wider leadership role in shaping regional/global agendas. The vitality, strength, and relevance of this alliance relationship lies in former South Korean president Lee Myung-bak and U.S. president Barack Obama's references to a "Global Korea" – a country that looks beyond the security of the peninsula to address the world's problems.⁹⁷ This labeling not only elevates South Korea's global profile but also creates avenues for the country's contribution to global peace and development. In recent years, South Korea has stepped up its efforts to demonstrate leadership role in multilateral global forums by hosting the G20 summit in Seoul in November 2010, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee's (DAC) High Level Forum in Busan in November 2011, and the nuclear security summit in Seoul in March 2012.⁹⁸ Hence, South Korea emerges more of a producer of global security than a mere consumer of security. With its newfound capacity and willingness, South Korea now plays an important role in securing its own defense and increasingly contributes to the areas of peacekeeping, overseas development assistance (ODA), anti-piracy, counter-proliferation, and post-conflict stabilization.⁹⁹ As a recent study of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) reveals, South Korea had the twelfth largest military expenditures in 2010 which exceeded that of Australia and Canada, representing an expansion of capacity that has enabled its contributions to international security beyond the peninsula.¹⁰⁰ In terms of gross domestic product (GDP), South Korea's current military spending is 2.6% which is larger than that of China, Japan, and Brazil.¹⁰¹ Thus, a stable peninsula would favor South Korea's goal of meeting the specific international needs within the U.S.-ROK alliance framework. This will help both the partners adjust

⁹⁷ *The Economist*, "Obama's most improved bilateral alliance", March 31, 2012.

⁹⁸ Scott Snyder, "Overview", in Scott Snyder, ed., *Global Korea: South Korea's Contributions to International Security* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 2012), p. 5.

⁹⁹ Scott Snyder, "Expanding the US-South Korea Alliance", in Scott Snyder, ed., *The US-South Korea Alliance: Meeting New Security Challenges* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2012), p. 4.

¹⁰⁰ Cited in Scott Snyder, "Overview", in Scott Snyder, ed., *Global Korea: South Korea's Contributions to International Security* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 2012), p. 2.

¹⁰¹ Ted Galen Carpenter, "On North Korea, Keep Calm and Carry On", *U.S. News and World Report*, April 11, 2013. Also see, *The Economist*, Obama's most improved bilateral alliance, March 31, 2012.

the re-orientation of the alliance from the one confined to the peninsula toward a greater regional and global posture.

Future Directions in Park Geun-hye's Alliance Policy

In the projected future, the troubled stand-off between the two Koreas and the frustratingly slow progress in inter-Korean reconciliation process will continue to stress the U.S.-South Korean alliance partnership. As the alliance has long been an anchor of the American strategic role in Northeast Asia undergirding its national security strategy, and as the alliance provides South Korea a maneuvering room in dealing with its neighbors – particularly China and North Korea – both Washington and Seoul find a strong ground to further consolidate and advance the alliance. Hence, any disbanding or weakening of the alliance could result in a power vacuum and imbalance inviting fierce arms race that could cause upheaval and instability in the region. Moreover, in the absence of the alliance and American retrenchment, it would be extremely difficult for South Korea to find a replacement of the U.S. who could offer credible extended deterrence using full range of military capabilities, including nuclear umbrella, conventional strike, and missile defense capabilities.

It is important to see in what ways the recent developments and trends in South Korean domestic politics are connected to the functioning and future sustenance of the U.S.-ROK alliance. In December 2012, Park Geun-hye of the conservative Saenuri (New Frontier) Party (NFP) was elected as the president of South Korea. On the surface, with Park's election victory there was a sense of euphoria and optimism among the Koreans and a great deal of confidence was gained in relation to U.S.-South Korea relationship. During the election campaign, Park Geun-hye's contestant Moon Jae-in of the progressive Minjoo (Democratic United) Party (DUP) declared certain policies which, had he been elected, could put U.S.-ROK relations on risk – specifically, he was in favor of re-negotiation of provisions of the 2007 Korea-U.S. Free Trade Agreement (KORUS FTA) and South Korea's unconditional engagement with North Korea which ran counter to U.S. policy and Six-Party Talks principles of conditionality, reciprocity, and transparency.¹⁰²

¹⁰² Bruce Klingner, Conservative South Korean Victory Will Affirm Strong U.S. Alliance, *The Daily Signal*, December 20, 2012. See also, Matthew Winkler and Sangwon Yoon, Moon Sees United Opposition Front in S. Korea President Race, *Bloomberg News*, October 9, 2012.

In contrast, Park Geun-hye is widely credited for being a strong advocate of and voice for the U.S.-South Korean alliance. Arguably, much of the current U.S.-South Korean understanding owes to the policies of her predecessor Lee Myung-bak, who attached highest priority to this relationship. Park looks at the U.S.-ROK relationship through Lee's lens and finds the alliance as the bedrock of ROK's national security agenda. In recognition of the value and importance of the U.S.-South Korea relationship and the need for building credibility, trust, and cooperation, Park chose the U.S. as the first destination of her overseas trip in May 2013 which also marked the sixtieth anniversary of the U.S.-ROK alliance. During her meeting with President Barack Obama she mentioned that the alliance should continue to serve as a linchpin for peace and stability on the Korean peninsula and in Asia.¹⁰³ In her statement, Park asserted that North Korean provocations, including nuclear and missile threats, would not succeed if South Korea was backed by the power of the alliance.¹⁰⁴ In fact, adroit handling of North Korea, as Park maintains, is an overriding strategic element in the U.S.-South Korean alliance partnership. Under the Lee Myung-bak and Barack Obama presidencies, the two countries' policies toward North Korea converged. However, before the election Park Geun-hye campaigned on a platform of *trustpolitik*¹⁰⁵ that is based on retaining robust deterrence and defense capabilities with the simultaneous promise of humanitarian assistance to North Korea provided Pyongyang denuclearizes and abides by the agreements concluded with South Korea and the international community.¹⁰⁶ President Park pursues a different approach – with Washington's support – toward Pyongyang than that of Lee Myung-bak who, in the wake of *Cheonan* and *Yeongpyeong* disasters, devised an unyielding/hardline policy toward the

¹⁰³ Samantha Stainburn, "Park: South Korea-US alliance 'a linchpin for peace in Asia'", *Global Post*, May 7, 2013.

¹⁰⁴ Terry Atlas, "South Korea's Park Sees Strong U.S. Ties as Key in Facing North", *Bloomberg Businessweek*, May 8, 2013, Available at: < <http://www.businessweek.com/news/2013-05-08/north-korean-provocations-won-t-succeed-south-korea-s-park-says>>

¹⁰⁵ For details on *trustpolitik* see, Park Geun-hye, "A New Kind of Korea: Building Trust between Seoul and Pyongyang", *Foreign Affairs*, September/October 2011.

¹⁰⁶ Shorenstein Asia-Pacific Research Center, *The North Korea Problem and the Necessity for South Korean Leadership*, Policy Report, Stanford, March 4, 2013, p. 4. Also see, Robert A. Manning, "Park-Obama summit bolsters US-ROK alliance", *East Asia Forum*, May 16, 2013

DPRK which was a reversal from the previous ‘sunshine policy’¹⁰⁷ of President Kim Dae-jung. However, it remains to be seen to what extent Park’s *trustpolitik* succeeds in coordinating Washington and Seoul’s North Korea policies.

South Korea, under Park Geun-hye, is now wedded to a policy of advancing and revitalizing the U.S.-ROK alliance. Park’s credentials give her considerable political leverage and leeway for such an effort. In fact, in the presidential election Park gained a majority of voters’ support securing more than fifty percent of the votes since the end of autocracy and restoration of democracy in South Korea in 1987.¹⁰⁸ So, she has the domestic constituency and popular mandate to shore up and sustain the alliance.

The U.S.-ROK alliance remains one of America’s most durable and valuable security partnerships. By all measures, the alliance has proved its efficiency and validity. On the plus side, the U.S.-South Korea alliance has evidently outgrown the patron-client status that once characterized the relationship.¹⁰⁹ Although the U.S. has given the highest level of assurance about its commitment to South Korea, there will be uncertainties on the resilience of America’s “extended deterrence” and the degree of U.S. support for South Korea’s capability to field more defense forces on the peninsula. At the same time, a more “equal” alliance is an issue that continues to echo in U.S.-ROK relationship and narrowing this perception gap is one of the major goals that Park Geun-hye needs to work toward.¹¹⁰ In fact, Park administration’s alliance management capabilities would depend on how judiciously and sensibly it handles the emerging issues relating to the alliance relationship.

¹⁰⁷ ‘Sunshine policy’ was an offer of aid and cooperation to North Korea in return for dialogue for compromise and reconciliation on the Korean peninsula. During the two liberal administrations of ROK, Kim Dae-jung and Roh Moo-hyun, the relationship between Washington and Seoul vitiated as South Korea favored “sunshine policy” towards North Korea. The George Bush administration was very skeptical about this policy, which it considered an appeasement of North Korea. See for details, Sook-Jong Lee, “Allying with the United States: Changing South Korean Attitudes,” *Korean Journal of Defense Analysis*, 2005, pp. 81-104.

¹⁰⁸ *The Washington Post*, December 20, 2012.

¹⁰⁹ Scott Snyder, “Expanding the US-South Korea Alliance”, in Scott Snyder, ed., *The US-South Korea Alliance: Meeting New Security Challenges* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2012), p. 11.

¹¹⁰ Chung Min Lee, “The Park Geun-hye Administration’s Foreign and Security Policy Challenges”, Korea Chair Platform, Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), Washington, DC, May 1, 2013.

In spite of everything, alliances should be assessed by their successes and achievements over a reasonable amount of time, not by their short-term activities. There are moments of dissension in all alliances; alliances experience periods of crisis and friction during which the tone in the relationship is unpleasant – the U.S.-Britain, U.S.-New Zealand, U.S.-Australia, U.S.-Japan, and U.S.-Israel relationships have all had their odd moments. What is important is whether agreements can be negotiated, bargained, and hammered out in those critical times and whether the alliance partners are still agreeable to work in unison.¹¹¹ On balance, the U.S.-South Korean alliance appears to be a successful one.

Concluding Reflections

Irrefutably, South Korea's alliance with the U.S. has been a double-edged sword which has both costs and benefits. As is seen, it is hard to downgrade/discount the magnitude and significance of this alliance. While it has, at times, endured unpopularity and disapproval in South Korea, and pressures to trim down U.S. overseas defense expenditures, the U.S.-ROK alliance not only succeeded in saving South Korea from North Korean invasion for the past six decades but also contributed to the advancement of industrialization and democratization in the ROK. For the U.S., the alliance has seemingly preserved the much-sought peace and stability in Northeast Asia and averted nuclear ambitions of some Asian powers. What is more, the alliance has been an important counterweight to the growing but alarming influence of China.

By all indications, the U.S.-ROK alliance has to be redefined and reshaped to fit the changing realities of global politics and to preserve trust and mutual confidence. Both Washington and Seoul show sensitivity to this requirement recognizing the value and the vulnerability of the relationship. Of late, the U.S.-ROK alliance has spawned a large area of overlapping interests – extending both to economic collaboration and off-peninsula security cooperation. The two allies are now poised to reset and revitalize the alliance and in this process they have initiated a step to enlarge the strategic aperture for alliance-based cooperation and commitment to emphasize on pressing global agendas. As a

¹¹¹ Victor D. Cha, "Outperforming Expectations: The U.S.-ROK Alliance", in Kurt M. Campbell, Victor D. Cha, Lindsey Ford, Nirav Patel, Randy Schriver, and Vikram J. Singh, eds., *Going Global: The Future of the U.S.-South Korea Alliance* (Washington, DC: Center for New American Security, 2009), p. 12.

result, the alliance now branches out into the areas of peacekeeping, overseas development assistance (ODA), anti-piracy, counter-proliferation, climate change, energy security, and post-conflict stabilization.¹¹² These new fields of alliance cooperation are not meant to replace North Korea as the prime focus of the U.S.-ROK alliance, but they greatly broaden the scope and justification of the alliance to prominent world issues that had previously not been addressed by it. If the alliance is now upgraded to a multi-faceted strategic level, it would turn into a stronger, broader, and more comprehensive arrangement.

¹¹² Mark E. Manyin, Emma Chanlett-Avery, Mary Beth Nikitin and Mi Ae Taylor, U.S.-South Korea Relations, Congressional Research Service (CRS) Report, November 3, 2010, p. 6.

POLITICS OF NATURAL DISASTERS: MODELING
PRESIDENTIAL RESPONSE TIME TO NATURAL
DISASTERS IN THE UNITED STATES, 1960–2005

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Abstract

When collective misfortunes such as natural disasters strike a society, people may expect their governments to rescue them from sufferings. Failure on the part of a government to respond in a timely fashion may lead people to blame their government for inaction and negligence of duty. This article examines presidential response time to natural disasters in the United States of America for the time between 1960 and 2005. It addresses two broader questions regarding timeliness of presidential response: Why is it that some presidents have been quicker to respond to natural disasters than others? And, why are the presidential responses quicker with respect to some disaster events while slower with respect to others? This study finds that, all other things being equal, Democratic presidents declare emergencies more quickly than Republican presidents. Consistent with the electoral logic of presidential response, presidents who are in their second term respond to disasters more slowly than presidents who are in their first term. Furthermore, increase in pre-disaster approval rating of the presidents appears to be associated with slightly higher chance of responding quickly. In addition to these substantive conclusions, this article makes further contribution by examining a series of regression frameworks appropriate for duration data. Considering presence of unobserved heterogeneity and frailty effects (dissimilar effects of disaster types) in the data, this research suggests that a Cox Proportional Hazard framework that allows a frailty (random effects) parameter is a better choice for modeling disaster event to governmental response time.

Introduction

When collective misfortunes such as natural disasters strike a society, people may expect their government to rescue them from sufferings. Failure on the part of a government to respond in a timely fashion may lead people to blame their government for inaction and negligence of duty. When a heat-wave killed between 400 to 1,500 persons in Chicago (USA) in 1995 in a matter of five days,¹ and Hurricane Katrina in 2005 killed more than 1,300 persons and left thousands homeless,² the federal governments in general, and the presidential administration in particular, were criticized for not responding to these disasters in a timely fashion. Belated presidential response damaged President George W.

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¹ Eric Klinenberg, "When Chicago Baked: Unheeded Lessons from Another Great Catastrophe." *Slate*, 2005

² MSNBC, "Katrina: The Long Road Back" <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/11281267>, 2006

Bush's political reputation. His approval rating, which had been just above 50 percent in mid-2004, prior to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, dipped to about 35 percent following the hurricanes by the end of 2005.³ Some presidents, however, have been able to maintain or increase their approval rating by responding to disaster events promptly. President Jimmy Carter's approval rating hiked up from 30 percent to 33 percent after his quick response to Hurricane Frederick in September 1979, and President Clinton's approval rating went up from 57 percent to 59 percent after his response to a tornado in early March 1997. Why is it that some presidents have been quicker to respond to natural disasters than others? And, why are the presidential responses quicker with respect to some disaster events while slower with respect to others? More generally, what is the politics of the presidential response to natural disasters? This paper addresses these questions by analyzing presidential response time to disaster events that have taken place in the United States of America (USA) between 1960 and 2005.

Literature Review

Natural disasters are among the most tangible crises that governments face. They occur in a political space. Politics may not bring on disasters, but disasters, once they strike, definitely influence the political landscape of a country. The classic work of F. Glenn Abney and Larry B. Hill showed this relationship between natural disasters and politics decades ago.⁴ They investigated how political actors react to natural disasters that create a strain in the status quo of the political system. In the context of politically hostile environment New Orleans's incumbent Mayor Victor Schiro managed to win the 1965 Mayoral election by "capitalizing upon the disaster" created by Hurricane Betsy.⁵ Their study concludes, Mayor's political ingenuity and skill in administering large rescue and relief operation outwitted the thriving opposition campaign of James Fitzmorris.⁶

3 Wall Street Journal, "How the presidents stack up", <<http://online.wsj.com/public/resources/documents/info-presapp0605-31.html>>, 2008

4 F Abney Glenn, and Larry B. Hill, "Natural disasters as a political variable: He effect of a hurricane on an urban election" *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 60 (4), 1966, pp. 974-981

5 F Abney Glenn, and Larry B. Hill, *Natural disasters as a political variable*, p. 975

6 F Abney Glenn, and Larry B. Hill, *Natural disasters as a political variable*, p. 975

A number of recent works have investigated how natural shocks dramatically change voters' perception and evaluation of the incumbent government.⁷ T. Garrett and Sobel demonstrate that political considerations explain half of all federal disaster relief in the USA.⁸ Mary Downton and Pielke Jr. show that presidents are more inclined to issue disaster declarations during reelection campaigns, and that second term presidents are less likely to pay adequate attention to disaster events than presidents in their first term.⁹ The political dimensions of natural disasters have also been examined in the vast literature on disaster preparedness, prevention and post-disaster management.¹⁰

Charles Cohen and Werker offer a political economy model of natural disasters. They argue that some regimes (or governments) use disaster events as political and economic instruments.¹¹ These governments, in order to attract international aid funds, do not prepare well for disasters. Once received, these funds are often used for political patronage and corruption.¹² Although developed in the context of international regimes, the insight, that governments tinker with their

7 Kevin Arceneaux and Robert M. Stein, "Who is Held Responsible when Disaster Strikes? The Attribution of Responsibility for a Natural Disaster in an Urban Election." *Journal of Urban Affairs*, Vol. 28(1), 2006, pp.43-53, Christopher H. Achen and Larry Bartels, "Blind Retrospection: Electoral Responses to Drought, Flu, and Shark Attacks." Working Paper, Princeton University, 2004, and A. J. Healy, "Do Voters Blame Politicians for Bad Luck? The Uneducated Ones Do." Working Paper, Loyola Marymount University Working Paper, 2008

8 T. A. Garrett and Sobel, "The Political Economy of FEMA disaster payments." *Economic Inquiry*, Vol. 41(3), 2003, pp. 496-509.

9 Mary W. Downton and Roger A. Pielke Jr., "Discretion without accountability: Politics, flood damage, and climate" *Natural Hazard Review*, Vol. 2(4), 2001, pp.157-166.

10 See for example: Richard Stuart Olson, "Toward a politics of disaster: Losses, agendas, and blame", *International journal of Mass Emergencies and Disasters*, Vol. 18(2), 2000, pp. 256-87; Rutherford Platt, *Disasters and democracy: The politics of extreme natural events*, Washington DC: Island. 1999; David Alexander, "Natural Disasters: A Framework for Research and Teaching." *Disasters*, Vol. 15(3), 1991, pp.209-226; J. M. Albala-Berrand, *Political Economy of Large Natural Disasters: With Special Reference to Developing Countries*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993; and Claude Gilbert, "Studying Disaster: Changes in the main conceptual tools" in E.L. Quarantelli edited *What is a Disaster?: Perspective on the Question*, London and New York: Routledge, 1998.

11 Charles Cohen and Eric D. Werke, "The Political Economy of "Natural" Disasters", *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 52(6), 2008, pp.795-819

12 Peter T. Leeson and Russell S. Sobel, "Weathering Corruption", *Journal of Law and Economics*, Vol. 51, 2008, p. 667 (pp. 667-681)

preparedness in order to attract more outside funds in the form of disaster relief, is also found in works that investigate the case of Hurricane Katrina in the USA.¹³

The existing literature provides insights into the political space within which political actors operate, particularly, how politicians exploit such exogenous events as hurricanes, earthquakes or floods to manipulate the way voters evaluate them. However, this literature is mostly focused on the management dimension of disaster response (i.e. prevention, mitigation, relief and aid management and rehabilitation), and is limited to case studies of a few “mega-disasters” such as Hurricanes Katrina or Andrew. In this paper, I present a systematic analysis of presidential response to natural disasters historically and across all states of the USA.

Presidential response time, defined as the difference between the actual date of the striking of a disaster and the date when presidents declare disaster emergency, is investigated for the terms of ten presidents, starting in 1960, the second term of Eisenhower, to 2005, the second term of George W. Bush. I consider all disaster events that occurred within this time period in all US states. Controlling for disaster types and magnitude, the speed of presidential response is considered to be a function of a number of political factors including whether presidents are Republican or Democratic and whether they are serving their second term (and thus whether they have electoral incentives to respond late).

Governmental Response

Federal Response Mechanism

At the core of the relationship between disaster and government response is the issue of distribution of public funds (e.g. various disaster related relief and reconstruction funds) to affected areas. In the USA, a presidential declaration of a major disaster or emergency is the key action that makes federal disaster relief available to states, local governments, businesses, and individuals affected by

13 See for example, Russell S. Sobel and Peter T. Leeson, “Government’s Response to Hurricane Katrina: A Public Choice Analysis” *Public Choice*, Vol. 127, 2006, pp.55-73; Roger D. Congleton, “The story of Katrina: New Orleans and the political economy of catastrophe” *Public Choice*, Vol. 127, 2006, pp. 5-30; and William F. Shugart II, “Katerinonomics: The Politics and Economics of Disaster Relief”, *Public Choice*, Vol. 127, 2006, pp.31-53.

disasters.¹⁴ The Federal Response Plan (FRP) implements the provisions of the Stafford Act (Public Law 93-288, as amended), which defines the events that may be considered disasters (earthquakes, hurricanes, and typhoons, tornados, and volcanic eruptions), describes the basic mechanisms and structures through which federal aid and assistance will be provided, and outlines the coordination of various federal agencies to fulfill the emergency support functions.¹⁵ The FRP identifies the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) as the pivotal federal agency in the US government's disaster response mechanism. The FRP begins to operate when a series of actions have been taken:

- “Contact is made between the affected state and the FEMA regional office. This contact may take place prior to or immediately following a disaster.
- If it appears that the situation is beyond state and local capacity, the state requests FEMA to conduct a joint Preliminary Damage Assessment, or PDA. Participants in the PDA include FEMA, state and local government representatives and other federal agencies.
- Based on the PDA, the governor submits a request to the President through the FEMA regional director for either a major disaster or an emergency declaration.
- The FEMA regional office submits a summary of the disaster “event” along with a recommendation based on the results of the PDA. The summary and recommendation are submitted to FEMA headquarters, accompanied by the governor's request.
- Once Headquarters receive these documents, senior staffs meet to discuss the request and determine what recommendation they will make to the President.
- FEMA's recommendation is forwarded to the White House for review.
- The President declares a major disaster or an emergency”.¹⁶

The last provision culminates the previous steps. Once the documents are in the president's hands, it is entirely within his discretion, whether he declares a major disaster or an emergency and whether he includes the whole region or

14 Mary W. Downton and Roger A. Pielke Jr. ,“Discretion without accountability: Politics, flood damage, and climate”

15 *Disaster Handbook*, National edition, University of Florida: Institute of Food and Agriculture Sciences, 1998

16 *Disaster Handbook*, Section 3.7, p.4

part of it. However, the president, if he feels it necessary, may also make such a decision without going through the above sequential steps outlined in the FRP.

Presidential Response

The consequence of a presidential declaration is that federal resources (for security, rehabilitation, and reconstruction purposes) become available to the affected people at the local level. As important as the availability of resources is the speed with which they become available. In the wake of a disaster, the victims not only suffer death, loss of property, displacement, and homelessness, but also insecurity and exposure to criminal activities such as looting, murder, and theft.

Yet, presidents differ in how quickly they respond to natural disasters. In the case of Hurricane Katrina, for example, President Bush responded four days after the hurricane occurred, and this response time is generally criticized as late.¹⁷ But, how late was President Bush compared to his own previous actions and those of other presidents? According to the data collected for this paper (see Appendix, Table 4), it turns out that on average President Bush took about 4.35 days to respond to the hurricanes he faced during his two terms, while President Clinton took about 2.35 days to respond to hurricanes he faced during his two terms.

Why do the presidents differ in their response time? There are at least two possible political reasons: First, partisanship of the presidents: Republicans are

17 See Thomas Birkland, and Sarah Waterman, "Is Federalism the Reason for Policy Failure in Hurricane Katrina?" *Publius: The Journal of Federalism*, Vol. 38(4), 2008, pp.692–714; and Peter Dreiter, "Katrina and Power in America", *Urban Affairs Review*, Vol. 41(4), 2006, pp.528–549, and Sandra Schneider, "Who's to Blame? (Mis) perception of the Intergovernmental Response to Disaster." *Publius: The Journal of Federalism*, Vol. 38(4), 2008, pp.715–738.

In the wake of hurricane Katrina in 2005, although New Orleans officials "clamored for more assistance from Washington" (Eric Klinenberg 2005), they received the federal response only after four days when President Bush declared that "an emergency exists in the State of Louisiana and ordered Federal aid to supplement state and local response efforts in the parishes located in the path of Hurricane Katrina" (White House press release, August 27, 2007). (Statement on Federal Emergency Assistance for Louisiana, For Immediate Release, Office of the Press Secretary, August 27, 2005: <www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2005/08/20050827-1.html>, Accessed December 12. Given the magnitude of Katrina (both in terms of meteorological scale as well as human suffering and wealth loss), federal response after "four days" is considered late (see the previous footnote for Birkland and Waterman 2008, Dreiter 2006, and Schneider 2008).

less likely to spend government money for public welfare than Democrats.¹⁸ Second, term of the presidency: A president in his second term has no incentive to worry about the electoral consequences of his inaction because he is no longer eligible to run for presidency.¹⁹ For example, considering the case of Hurricane Katrina, President Bush, serving his second term in the White House, “had little incentive to worry about the future electoral consequences of inaction, especially in a region (Louisiana) where, since Ronald Reagan, voters’ presidential preferences had been reliably Republican”.²⁰ On the other hand, when, in August 2004, Hurricane Charley struck Florida—the electoral-vote-rich, battleground state—he, in the middle of his reelection campaign, responded within two days that is faster by two days than his response to Katrina.²¹ Thus, Bush, a Republican serving his second term as president was slow to respond to Hurricane Katrina, but he was faster when he was in his first term and running a reelection campaign towards the second term.

In order to test whether these conclusions about the effect of President Bush’s party identity and term in office are generalizable to other presidents, I test the following two hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1 Republican presidents take more time than Democrats in responding to natural disasters.

Hypothesis 2 If the president is in his second term, he will be slower than presidents who are in their first term.

In addition to party identity of a president and his term in office, I also expect that pre-disaster approval ratings of the president predict his response rate. If the pre-disaster approval rating is low, the president might consider the disaster event as a chance to improve his public support. Case studies of disaster response by chief executives in other countries confirm the insight about the

18 Any disaster declaration involves marshaling federal resources to the welfare of a particular region. It is common knowledge that Republicans (presidents) would require more justification (therefore, time) before they decide to spend.

19 The twenty-second amendment of the constitution of the United States of America (ratified by the Congress on March 21, 1947 and by the requisite number of states on February 27, 1951) sets that no person can participate in elections to the office of President of the United States more than twice.

20 William F. Shugart II, “Katerinanomics: The Politics and Economics of Disaster Relief”, *Public Choice*, Vol. 127, 2006, p. 38 (pp.31-53).

21 William F. Shugart II, “Katerinanomics”.

relationship between a chief executive's popularity or approval ratings and his or her response rate. For example, Evelyn Bytzek reports that before the federal election of 2002 in Germany, the popularity of the incumbent government coalition of Social Democrats and the Green Party had declined (44%).²² But that popularity shifted in favor of the coalition government (53%) within a short time period following the Elbe flash flood.²³ Chancellor Gerhard Schroder's timely and astute response to the flood earned him positive public evaluations and eventual success in the 2002 election.²⁴

A late response from a president, thus, maybe viewed by people as ineffective leadership and carelessness and this may be politically damaging to him.²⁵ Voters may perceive the crisis management action of their governments as symbolic action, and the speed of government response to crises increase the value of such symbolic action. This analysis suggests that public approval ratings of US presidents, immediately prior to disaster events, might also explain the speed of their response. Hence the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3 Presidents who have lower approval rating are quicker at responding to natural disasters than presidents who have higher approval rating.

State Governors

Like presidents, governors of the affected states also act on the basis of political incentives. Governors are more likely to respond to disaster events in ways that would attract federal funds to their states.²⁶ In the eyes of voters, the ability to attract federal funds may be an important mark of a governor's political skill. Thus, governors might request federal support even when the disaster events could be managed locally.²⁷ It is, however, also reasonable to assume that

22 Evelyn Bytzek, "Flood response and political survival: Gerhard Schroder and the 2002 Elbe flood in Germany" in Paul t'Hart Arjen Boin, Allan McConnell Ed., *Governing After Crisis: The Politics of Investigation, Account-ability and Learning*, Cambridge University Press, 2008, pp. 85-113.

23 Evelyn Bytzek, "Flood response and political survival"

24 Evelyn Bytzek, "Flood response and political survival"

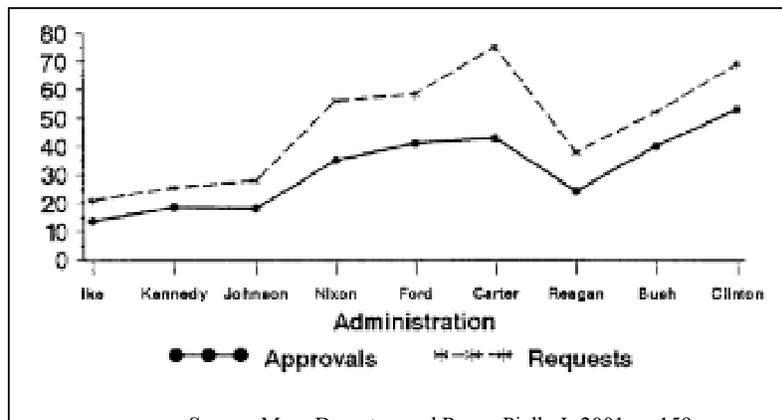
25 The New York Times editorialized on 1 September 2005 to characterize President George W. Bush based on his actions in response to Hurricane Katrina.

26 Charles Cohen and Eric D. Werke, "The Political Economy of "Natural" Disasters", *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 52(6), 2008, pp.795-819

27 Governors in general have their own funds (e.g. Rainy Day Funds) to use as part of their initial response efforts.

presidents would know about such motivations of the governors, and thus would be conservative in their response to governors' call of federal assistance. Under the FRP, the president would respond to a governor's call only after a positive White House review of the call. Presidents, however, may not respect all calls of Governors. In fact, as figure 1 shows for floods, the number of presidential disaster declarations has generally been lower than the number of requests from the governors of the affected states. In cases of positive White House review, the president may eventually respond. But understandably, the review process takes time, and therefore, some delay in presidential response is expected.

Figure 1: Average Annual Number of Gubernatorial Requests and Presidential Declaration, Floods 1953-1997



Source: Mary Downton and Roger Pielke Jr 2001, p. 159

The expected procedural delay, as described above, can be compounded by Governors' political ideology or partisanship. Republicans, in general, like to avoid involvement of the federal government in local affairs to secure the autonomy of the local political authorities. One might expect that Republican governors would less likely to invite federal government unless they are compelled by the severity of the disaster events. It takes time to assess the severity of a disaster; when the disaster is severe enough, it might already be late. Such a late call from the Governor adds up to the expected procedural delay, and therefore, the eventual presidential response to the disaster is expected to be late. I, thus, hypothesize:

Hypothesis 4 Presidential responses to disasters are slower when the governor of the affected area is a Republican.

Furthermore, both presidents and governors would like to claim credit of post-disaster management successes and relief efforts, but neither would shoulder the burden of blame if anything goes wrong. For example, in the case of Katrina, there was a tension between the President and Governor Kathleen Blanco regarding claims of credit—who was the savior of the people? On his first post-Katrina visit to Louisiana, on Friday, 2 September, President Bush is reported to have asked Governor Blanco, a Democrat, to relinquish control of local law enforcement and National Guard troops under her command. He probably wanted to follow what his father (George H. Bush) had done after the 1992 riots in Los Angeles by sending National Guard units to the affected area.²⁸ However, Blanco refused, after thinking about it for 24 hours, evidently believing that the proposal was motivated by the president's eagerness to claim credit for a relief operation that was finally showing progress.²⁹ Evidently, the discordant relationship induced by relative credit claiming between the president and the governor delayed decision-making, and partly explains why the president was slower to respond. Their competitive political stance can be considered as an indicator of such discordant relationship. I hypothesize:

Hypothesis 5 When both the president and the governor come from the same political party, presidential response is faster than if they are from different parties.

Implementing Federal Departments and Agencies

Although presidents have long responded to natural disasters by mobilizing federal funds through using their declaration power, the process of presidential disaster declarations was firmly established in 1974 by the Disaster Relief Act.³⁰ The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) came into being five years later, in 1979, through President Carter's Executive Order 12127, that merged several disaster-related responsibilities into FEMA. Before 1979, all major disaster responses were made through Federal Disaster Assistance Administration (FDAA), established within the Department of Housing and

28 E. Thomas, "The lost city." *Newsweek*, Vol. 146, 2005, p.48 (pp.42–52.)

29 A. Repley et al, "An American tragedy: four places where the system broke down." *Time*, Vol. 166, 2006, p.39 (pp. 34-41)

30 All the historical facts regarding these Federal Agencies have been collected from FEMA's website at <www.fema.gov/about/history.htm>

Urban Development (HUD). Presidents and the federal government used HUD to respond to such major disaster events as Hurricane Carla in 1962, Alaskan Earthquake hit in 1964, Hurricane Betsy in 1965, Hurricane Camille in 1969, San Fernando Earthquake in 1971, and Hurricane Agnes in 1972. Later, hazards associated with nuclear power plants and the transportation of hazardous substances were also added to natural disasters, and more than 100 federal agencies were involved, in support of HUD, in some aspect of disasters, hazards and emergencies.

After the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, FEMA focused on issues of national preparedness and homeland security. The agency coordinated its activities with the newly formed Office of Homeland Security, and FEMA's Office of National Preparedness was given responsibility for helping to ensure that the nation's first responders were trained and equipped to deal with weapons of mass destruction. Substantial new funding was appropriated to FEMA to help communities face the threat of terrorism. In March 2003, FEMA joined 22 other federal agencies, programs and offices to form the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).³¹ Following the alleged failure of President Bush and FEMA (DHS in general) in responding to and managing the crises ensued by Katrina in 2005, President Bush signed into law the Post-Katrina Emergency Reform Act on October 4, 2006 that significantly reorganized FEMA and provided it with substantial new authority to remedy gaps that became apparent in the response to Hurricane Katrina in August 2005.

The above historical account shows that presidents have used at least three different administrative mechanisms to respond to natural disasters—HUD (FDAA), FEMA as an independent agency, and FEMA under DHS. Although, after 1979, FEMA, as an administrative unit, remained with the direct responsibilities to address disasters, its administrative location, issue areas and independence varied during the following thirty years. The movement of FEMA from one administrative location to another, and from one issue focus (e.g. natural disaster in general) to another (e.g. Nuclear hazards, terrorism) has substantially affected its ability as well as its incentives to respond to natural disasters. Many have, therefore, speculated that if FEMA were still an independent agency in 2005, President Bush would have been informed about

31 FEMA no longer enjoys the Independent Agency status; although exists as a separate unit, it is now under the direct control of DHS.

the severity of Katrina much earlier and the presidential declaration would also have been faster. In order to test the effect of this varied organizational position of FEMA (generally the implementing agency), I hypothesize:

Hypothesis 6 Presidential response to natural disaster is quicker when FEMA (during the period between 1979 and 2002) is an independent agency than when it is not.

Measures and Data

My unit of analysis in this study is a natural disaster. To identify all natural disasters that struck the United States, I used the natural disaster database that is maintained as the Emergency Event Database (EM-DAT) by the WHO Collaborating Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters.³² The dataset includes cross-country information about start and end dates of disasters, types of disasters, number of people killed, number of people affected, and estimated total resources damaged per disaster. I utilized these information regarding natural disasters that occurred between 1960 and 2005 in the USA in a series of event-history regression models to test the hypothesized relationships formulated above.

The dependent variable of this paper (TIME) measures the time (in days) taken by a presidential government before it responded to a natural disaster event. I measured the interval as the number of days between the start of the disaster and the date when presidents issued the disaster declaration. I collected the presidential disaster and emergency declaration dates primarily from the websites of the White House of the United States and FEMA's websites. Based on this information, I calculated $TIME = (\text{'Presidential Response Date'} - \text{'Start Date of a Disaster'})$. This is a continuous variable, the lower limit of which is 0—since response time cannot be negative—and the upper limit is theoretically unbounded. The unit of time is day.

The covariates of interest are partisanship of the presidents, their pre-disaster approval rating, whether the presidents are in their second term, partisanship of the governors of the affected areas, organizational independence of the implementing agencies (e.g. FEMA), and president-governor partisan differences. A measure of severity LN (AFFECTED) is used as a control variable.

32 Emergency Events Database at <<http://www.emdat.be/>>

Table 1 provides the description and summary statistics of these variables. Appendix A at the end of the paper provides information regarding measurement of the variables and their sources. The appendix also includes three tables that provide information about average number of natural disasters per state, frequency distribution of disaster events per presidents, and average time taken by each president in responding to disasters, all covering the time frame studied in this paper.

Table 1: Description and summary statistics of the major variables.

Variable	Description	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
TIME	Duration in days.	11	20.49	1	100
PARTYID	Partisanship of the presidents. Democrat =1, Republican =0.	0	0.49	0	1
APPROVAL	Approval rating of presidents just before a disaster occurred	54	9.60	30	84
SECONDTERM	1 if the president is in his second term, 0 otherwise.	0	.46	0	1
GOVID	Partisanship of the governors. Democratic = 1, Independent = 2, Republican = 3.	2	.99	1	3
ORGINDEP	Organizational independence of the implementing agency. 1 if independent, 0 otherwise.	1	.46	1	2
PGdiff	1 if the president and the governor are from different parties, 0 otherwise.	0	.99	0	2
LN(AFFECTED)	Ln(Total People Killed + Injured + Affected)	6	3.70	0.69	14.91

Source: see Appendix at the end of text. Total number of observations for all variables: 558. Out of 558 events, presidents responded to 302 and did not respond to 256 events. The non-responded observations are censored (46%) according to the requirements of survival analysis.

Standard Cox Regression Model

Since the dependent variable measures the duration of time that presidents have taken before responding to natural disasters, the appropriate statistical model to summarize the effects of the covariates on the time variable is a duration model.

The Cox Semi-parametric Model – by far the most popular approach to deal with time-to-event data in political science – is the most used duration model due to its computational feasibility and elegance.³³ The general functional form of the Cox model is as follows:

$$h_i(t) = h_0(t) \exp(\beta'X) \quad (1)$$

where $h_0(t)$ is the baseline hazard function, $\beta'X$ are the covariates and regression parameters, and none of the covariates vary over time.

The Cox regression model allows analysts the flexibility to obtain estimates of the covariates of interest while leaving the particular form of the duration dependency unspecified.³⁴ Cox model is a member of proportional hazard models. However, unlike parametric models such as Weibull or Gompertz, it does not assume any particular distributional form of time duration. The shape of the hazard over time can be constant, increasing, decreasing, or a mixture of increasing and decreasing. Mario Cleaves et al observe that “whatever is the general shape, it is the same for everyone”.³⁵ In this model the ratio of the hazards for two subjects or individuals at the same time h_i/h_j , where $i \neq j$, is constant and does not depend on time. This assumption allows the model to avoid any specific parameterization of the baseline hazard ratio $h_0(t)$. All this is possible because the Cox model uses a partial likelihood estimation procedure that, instead of maximizing the full likelihood function, maximizes the portion of the function that depends on the regression coefficients (β) but not on $h_0(t)$ (Allison 2004). The quantity $h_0(t)$ depends solely on the order in which the event occurs without identifying the exact time of the event. Consequently, the $h_0(t)$ term can safely be left unestimated.³⁶ As a corollary of this assumption, thus, it embeds the regression constant term β_0 into the

33 Mario A Cleaves, William W. Gould and Roberto G. Gutierrez, *An Introduction to Survival Analysis Using STATA*. Second ed. College Station, Texas: STATA Press, 2004

34 Janet Box-Steffensmeier and Bradford Jones, *Event History Modeling: A Guide for Social Scientists*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004

35 Mario A Cleaves, William W. Gould and Roberto G. Gutierrez, *An Introduction to Survival Analysis Using STATA*, p.129

36 Mario A Cleaves, William W. Gould and Roberto G. Gutierrez, *An Introduction to Survival Analysis Using STATA*.

baseline hazard function, which is not directly estimated in the model.³⁷ Therefore, the Cox estimation process does not directly calculate and report any regression constant term.

For the purpose of intuitive interpretation, the Cox model is expressed in scalar form³⁸ as

$$\log h_i(t) = \beta_1 x_{i1} + \beta_2 x_{i2} + \dots + \beta_k x_{ik} \quad (2)$$

where

$$\log h_i(t) = \log\left(\frac{h_i(t)}{h_0(t)}\right)$$

Considering the hypotheses developed in the “Governmental Response” section above, the model for our present purpose is

$$\begin{aligned} \log h_i(t) = & [\beta_1(\text{PARTY ID})] + [\beta_2(\text{APPROV AL})] + [-\beta_3(\text{SECONDTERM})] \quad (3) \\ & + [-\beta_4(\text{GOV ID})] + [\beta_5(\text{PGdiff})] + [\beta_6(\text{ORGINDEP})] \\ & + [\beta_7(\text{TOTPOLAPNT})] + [-\beta_8(\log \text{AFFECTED})] \\ & + [\beta_{91-8}(\text{DISTY PE}_{1-9})] + [\beta_{101-8}(\text{PRESNUM}_{1-9})]. \end{aligned}$$

In this model, when the sign of the coefficient is negative, the hazard rate is less than 1: an increase of the coefficient indicates a decrease in the hazard and therefore, the time taken to respond increases. When the sign is positive, the hazard rate is more than one: the hazard increases with the covariate, thus, the time taken to respond decreases. For example, when the hazard rate is .8, $\log(.8)$ is **-.22** ; when the hazard is 1.5, $\log(1.5)$ is .41.

The results from the above Cox duration model are reported in the first column of Table 2 (at the end of next section). The results are presented in terms of the log of the hazard ratio. As such, whenever a hazard ratio is less than 1, the sign of the coefficient (log of the hazard ratio) takes negative, this means that the risk decreases as the coefficient increases, thus resulting in a longer time (slower response) until a President declares emergency for an affected region. In contrast, a hazard ratio of more than one makes the sign of the coefficient

37 Janet Box-Steffensmeier and Bradford Jones, *Event History Modeling*.

38 See Paul D. Allison, “Event History Analysis”, in Melissa Hardy & Alan Bryman edited *Handbook of Data Analysis*, London and Thousand Oaks and New Delhi: SAGE Publications, chapter 16, 2004, pp. 369–385, and Janet Box-Steffensmeier and Bradford Jones, *Event History Modeling*.

positive, implying that the risk increases with the covariate. This suggests the duration until the presidential response is decreasing.

I expected, in hypothesis 1, that Republican presidents take more time than Democrats in responding to natural disasters. The coefficient for the independent variable for this hypothesis PARTYID is 3.18, significant at $p < .10$ level. This means that, all other things being equal, a president being democrat is associated with substantially higher risk (hazard rate $\exp(3.182) = 24.1$ is substantially greater than 1) of responding to a disaster event. In other words, Democratic presidents are significantly faster to declare emergencies than are Republican presidents. The non-parametric Kaplan-Meier survival estimates for Democratic and Republican presidents, as shown in Figure 2, affirms this conclusion. The coefficient of SECONDTerm (-.611) is significant at $p < .10$ level, and thus confirms the second hypothesis. The hazard ratio $\exp(-.611) = .54$ is less than one, indicating that, all other things being constant, presidents who are in their second term respond to disasters more slowly than presidents who are in their first term. This result is consistent with the electoral logic of presidential responses as proposed by such authors as William Shugart II and Mary Downton and Pielke Jr.³⁹

However, contrary to my third hypothesis regarding pre-disaster presidential approval rating, the APPROVAL variable, with a coefficient equal to .043 significant at $p < .01$, takes an opposite sign. The current coefficient indicates that an increase in approval ratings of the presidents is associated with slightly higher chance (hazard rate $\exp(.043) = 1.04$ is slightly higher than 1) of responding quickly, all other things being equal. Three other variables of interests—GOVID, PGdiff, and ORGINDEP—did not turn out to be significant. The null hypotheses against which hypotheses four, five and six were proposed, thus, cannot be rejected.

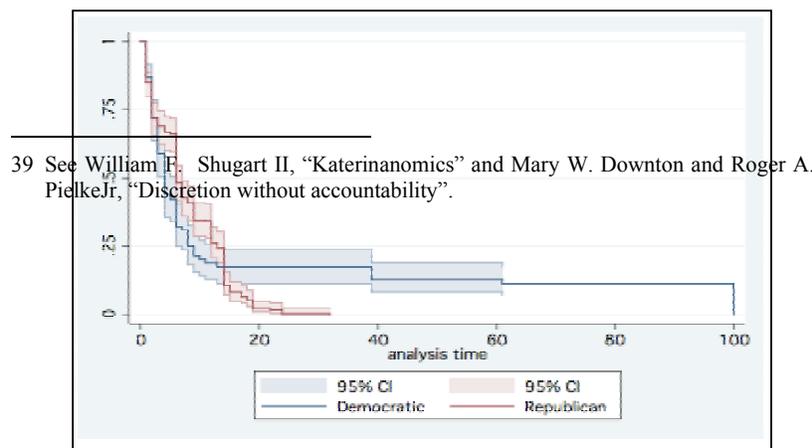


Figure 2: Kaplan-Meier Survival Estimates

Cox Regression with Shared Frailties

So far my analysis of presidential declaration to disaster events has been based on the assumption that the model is completely specified on the basis of the baseline hazard function and the values of the covariates; the hypothesized covariates exhaust all factors that explain why some presidents respond quicker than others. All presidents from the same party and same term (i.e. second term) have the same underlying distribution of survival time. If there is no censoring, the observed response-time is independent observations from a distribution with the same kinds of parameters.

However, such assumptions seem problematic because the standard Cox model does not account for the heterogeneity of the subjects that might exist even after knowing a set of covariates that is able to explain much of the variability in duration time. Presidents might have individual leadership characteristics that differ from each other significantly. Floods might be disasters that attract the attention of presidents more slowly than hurricanes. Perhaps some events, because of their inherent characteristics, attract attention differently than others.

There may be at least two sources of variability or heterogeneity in a typical time to event data set: theoretically predictable variability that is generally accounted for by observed risk factors included in the data set, and theoretically unpredictable heterogeneity that is caused by unobserved factors that have not been included in the data set. Even when the possible sources of heterogeneity are measured, it is not possible to know their relative risk rate. Thus, the case of theoretically predictable heterogeneity is often a trivial one. In social science, it

is always impossible to include in analysis all possible risk factors because detailed information of many social events are often unknown.

Survival analysts have offered the idea of ‘frailty’ to account for such unknown or unobserved heterogeneity in the data. Accounting for unobserved heterogeneity is important because patterns of heterogeneity in the data set might represent a selection process and, thus, cause selection bias. If some disaster events are experiencing higher rate of response due to some unknown factors, then the rest of the events are experiencing lower rate of response. If the unobserved frailty is not accounted for, regression models would underestimate the hazard function to an increasingly greater extent as time goes by.⁴⁰

A standard frailty model incorporates an unmeasured random effect (z_i) into the hazard function to account for the heterogeneity yielding the following functional form:

$$h_i(t) = h_0(t) z_i \exp(\beta' X) \quad (4)$$

where $h_0(t)$ and $\beta' X$ are the same as before. The frailty term (z_i), a random variable, represents a mixture component capturing the fact that in the population there is a mixture of individual subjects with different risks (generated by unknown sources). Duration models with frailty, generally, assumes that (z_i) is independent of any censoring that may take place, it is time-independent, and it acts multiplicatively on the underlying baseline hazard function. While the independence assumptions are statistical, the choice of incorporating (z_i) multiplicatively is to remain consistent with the proportional hazard assumption.⁴¹ The precise nature of the relationship between the individual and population (of presidential response) depends on the frailty distribution among individual subjects (individual case of presidential response).

It is a challenge to select an appropriate statistical distribution for frailty that takes account of the fact that hazard cannot be negative. Considering this property of hazard and following many other cases of mixed distribution, previous works on frailty suggests use of a Gamma distribution with mean equal to 1 and variance parameter θ . Gamma offers computational simplicity,

40 Andreas Wienke, *Frailty Models in Survival Analysis*, Chapman and Hall CRC Biostatistics Series Boca Raton, USA: CRC Press: Taylor and Francis Group, 2011

41 Andreas Wienke, *Frailty Models in Survival Analysis*.

closed form (in most cases analytical solution is available through Laplace transformation) and intuitive shape. The Gamma distribution $\Gamma(k, \lambda)$ is flexible since it can take variety of shapes as k changes.⁴² “When $k = 1$, it is identical to well-known exponential distribution; when k is large, it takes a bell shaped form reminiscent of normal distribution”.⁴³ Correspondingly, when the variance parameter of the distribution is equal to 1 its density function decreases monotonically, but as the variance gets smaller the distribution function increasingly approaches normal distribution—it gradually increases, reaches a maximum point, and then decreases.⁴⁴ Overall, therefore, a frailty value (z_i) greater than 1 indicates that the subject has a larger than average hazard, making it more “frail”; a frailty value less than 1 implies that the subject is less “frail” than an average subject.⁴⁵

The shared frailty model extends the above univariate (where cluster size is one only) frailty model to incorporate random-effects (for larger size of clusters of events) and multivariate analysis of time-to-event data. Consequently, the shared frailty model differs from the simple frailty model in that it defines frailty as a measure of the relative risk that individual disasters responses in a group (such as flood or hurricane group) share. In other words, the frailty variable z_i is associated with clusters of events rather than individual events per se. It assumes that all response time (failure times) in a cluster are conditionally independent given the frailties. Andreas Wienke observes that the “value of the frailty term is constant over time and common to all individual events in the cluster”.⁴⁶ The main focus of the shared frailty models, therefore, is to account for the intra-group correlations in the regression analysis. If $i = 1, 2, \dots, g$ groups and $j = 1, 2, \dots, n$ subjects in the i^{th} group, then the shared frailty model takes the following functional form:

$$h_i(t) = h_0 z_i(t) \exp(\beta X_{i,j}) \quad (5)$$

42 Andreas Wienke, *Frailty Models in Survival Analysis*; David W. Hosmer, Stanley Lemeshow and Susanne May, *Applied Survival Analysis: Regression Modeling of Time-to-Event Data*, New Jersey: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 2008; and Janet Box-Steffensmeier and Bradford Jones, *Event History Modeling*

43 Andreas Wienke, *Frailty Models in Survival Analysis*. p. 72

44 Andreas Wienke, *Frailty Models in Survival Analysis*. p. 72

45 David W. Hosmer, Stanley Lemeshow and Susanne May, *Applied Survival Analysis*.

46 Andreas Wienke, *Frailty Models in Survival Analysis*. p.135

where $h_i(t)$ and $\beta'X$ are the same as before (equation 4), and some of the covariates in X_{ij} are at a group level and are constant over subjects within each group. The frailties z_i ($i = 1, 2, \dots, n$) are assumed to be independently and identically distributed (iid) with density function $f(z)$ that depends on unknown parameters, including θ to be estimated. All individual cases within cluster i share the same value of frailty z_i ($i = 1, 2, \dots, n$).

The above shared frailty model is just a restricted version of a stratified model $h_i(t) = h_0(t) \exp(\beta'X_{ij})$ where $h_{0i}(t) = h_0(t)z_i$ is the stratum-specific baseline hazard function.⁴⁷ It is restrictive in the sense that it has incorporated the frailty z_i that is assumed to have a specific distribution, Gamma, with mean equal to 1 and variance θ . David Hosmer *et al* favors frailty model over a stratified model, particularly when covariates include dichotomous variables and the group is 5 or larger. They argue that the “little is to be gained by using a more complicated random effects model when the group size is 5 or larger.”⁴⁸ They, thus, conclude that whenever it is computationally convenient frailty model is to be preferred to stratified models.

If the z variable in the shared frailty model is a nonrandom constant, it indicates that there exists no dependence among individual responses within a given cluster. That means, the events are independent and there is no unobserved heterogeneity in the data. Consequently, it reduces to the standard proportional hazard model.

Although dealing with shared frailty parametrically is straightforward and elegant, it is not possible to include the frailty directly into semiparametric regression models such as the Cox, where baseline hazard function does not have a specific distributional form (as discussed earlier) and is left out of the estimation process done through partial likelihood estimation procedure. Since in such models direct maximization of the marginal likelihood is not possible the literature on shared frailty models proposes an Expectation-Maximization (EM) algorithm to produce a solution numerically.⁴⁹ EM algorithm operates in

⁴⁷ David W. Hosmer, Stanley Lemeshow and Susanne May, *Applied Survival Analysis*, p.299

⁴⁸ David W. Hosmer, Stanley Lemeshow and Susanne May, *Applied Survival Analysis*, p.303

⁴⁹ David W. Hosmer, Stanley Lemeshow and Susanne May, *Applied Survival Analysis* and Andreas Wienke, *Frailty Models in Survival Analysis*.

two steps: at the first, Expectation (E) step, besides current parameter estimates, the expectation of the unobserved frailties is calculated based on the observed data. This is simply calculating, for each subject, an estimate of the value of its frailty \hat{z}_i . The computation of \hat{z}_i uses the following formula:

$$\hat{z}_i = \frac{1 + \theta \times c_i}{1 + \theta \times \hat{h}_i(t)}$$

where $\hat{h}_i(t)$ is the proportional hazard estimates (Cox) for each subject without frailty. In the second, maximization (M) step, these estimates are used for maximization to obtain new parameter estimates given the frailties estimated in the E step. At this step, the following estimation is done:

$$h_i(t) = h_0 z_i(t) \exp(\beta' X_{ij}) = h_0 z_i(t) \exp[\beta' X_{ij} + \ln(\hat{z}_i)] \quad (6).$$

I will not further detail the EM algorithm here; David Hosmer et al show the complete steps of the EM algorithm and related maximization procedure.⁵⁰

The shared frailty model estimates the variance parameter θ , which distinguishes the model from a standard Cox proportional hazard model that does not account for frailty. In the shared gamma frailty models, the frailty variance is interpreted as a measure of the correlation between the response times taken by presidents conditional on these responses being in the same cluster of disaster events. This implies that a likelihood ratio test (G) of the null hypothesis that $H_0: \theta = 0$ can be used as an evidence that whether the model with frailty is statistically different from the standard Cox proportional hazard model.⁵¹ Under this test if the p-value = 1, the estimate of θ is close to zero and if the p-value is $0.5 \times \Pr[\chi^2(1) > G]$ then the estimate is not zero.⁵²

Column two of table 2 reports the result of a shared frailty Cox model applied on the presidential response data. In this model, disaster type is considered as the clustering variable. I used disaster types as the clustering variables because of the qualitative differences among disasters, between the consequences of floods and hurricanes, for example. Once flooding occurs, for example, its

50 David W. Hosmer, Stanley Lemeshow and Susanne May, *Applied Survival Analysis*.

51 $G = 2 [L(\hat{\theta}, \hat{\beta}) - L(0, \hat{\beta})]$. Computation of the p-value for G uses a mixture of a χ^2 with df = 1 and a distribution with point mass 1.0 at the value $\theta = 0$ (David Hosmer, Lemeshow & May 2008, 303).

52 David W. Hosmer, Stanley Lemeshow and Susanne May, *Applied Survival Analysis*, p.303

effects remain longer, both the affected citizens and governments (locals well as federal) have time to assess the magnitude of the event. As a result presidential declaration may come understandably late. On the other hand, earthquakes, even hurricanes, do not give much time to the citizens and the governments. In a post earthquake or hurricane situation, presidents are expected to act faster.

The fact that disaster events are different from each other and presidents consider each of the disaster types differently is also confirmed in the standard Cox model, reported in column one of the same table. In the standard Cox model I included fixed effects of the disaster types and a few of the disaster types (Flood and Storm) appeared to have significant effect on the presidential response time.⁵³ A few others (hurricane, forest, earthquake) also show strong effect on presidential response time, although coefficients of these categories are not significant in the fixed effect model. Bases on the findings of the fixed effect Cox model and general knowledge about the qualitative difference among disaster types, I found it reasonable to conceive of disaster types as the clustering variable.

The interpretation of the frailty models is little different from that of the standard Cox model since in the frailty models interpretation of coefficients must account for the effect of the frailties. For example, the APPROVAL variable, with coefficient equal to .038 that is significant at $p < .01$ level, indicates that among disasters with the same value of the frailty or random effect, a one percent increase in pre-disaster approval rating of a president is associated with a higher chance (hazard rate $-\exp(.038) = 1.038$ is greater than 1) of responding quickly. This is almost the same effect (.040) of the APPROVAL variable as found in the standard Cox model without frailties. So, inclusion of frailties did not really change the effects of this variable on presidential respond time. As can be seen in column two of table 2, similar conclusions can also be drawn for coefficient of most of the variables that have not changed much after inclusion of the frailties. However, two important variables of interest—PARTYID and ORGINDEP—did change their coefficients. The coefficient of PARTYID (1.007) now is no longer significant and its hazard magnitude ($\exp(1.007) = 2.73$) is dramatically smaller. Similarly, ORGINDEP, although it is not significant in either case, also appears to have a dramatically

⁵³ Flood is the baseline category for disaster type, thus not reported. When I changed the baseline category to hurricane, flood category had significant coefficient $\beta = -.53$ and β SE = .27. As expected, the coefficient of flood is negative implying that presidents take longer time to respond to flood than the baseline category hurricane.

smaller effect (-.0158) with an opposite sign. Major shifts in the effects of these variables, thus, indicate that there is in fact a frailty effect in the data set.

The presence of the frailty effect in the data is also confirmed by the estimated variance parameter θ . As noted earlier, the null hypothesis that $H_0: \theta = 0$ can be used as an evidence that whether the model with frailty is statistically different from the standard Cox proportional hazard model. As reported in table 2, $\theta = 3.89$ and the likelihood ratio test of θ is significant ($\chi^2 = .024$) which indicates that $H_0: \theta = 0$ cannot be rejected. This is a proof of significant heterogeneity and intra-cluster correlation in the data.⁵⁴ In order to see the consistency of the frailty effect, I also ran the same model using Weibull regression with gamma frailty, a parametric counterpart of Cox proportional hazard model. Column three of table 2 reports the result of this model. The θ parameter in this model also appears to be significant ($\chi^2 = .000$) indicating strong frailty effect.

Table 1: Comparing regression models[§]

VARIABLES	(1) Cox (Standard)	(2) Cox (Shared Frailty) [†]	(3) Weibull (Frailty) [†]
PARTYID	3.182* (1.760)	1.007 (0.867)	-2.762* (1.506)
APPROVAL	0.0403*** (0.00966)	0.0382*** (0.00898)	-0.0453*** (0.00774)
SECONDDTERM	-0.611* (0.334)	-0.627* (0.321)	0.479 (0.297)
GOVID	-0.0709 (0.0641)	-0.0731 (0.0628)	0.0952* (0.0552)
PGdiff	0.0679 (0.0835)	0.0714 (0.0818)	-0.0825 (0.0715)
ORGINDEP	0.238 (0.849)	-0.0158 (0.752)	0.0196 (0.679)
Log(AFFECTED)	-0.00834 (0.0179)	-0.00840 (0.0174)	0.0205 (0.0155)
(Eisenhower) [‡]	3.843** (1.657)	3.898** (1.621)	-3.495** (1.431)
(Johnson)		4.234* (2.304)	
(Nixon)	2.445* (1.470)	2.498* (1.443)	-2.312* (1.262)
(Ford)	1.228 (0.805)	1.291 (0.797)	-1.044 (0.694)
(Carter)	-0.508 (1.294)	3.602*** (1.203)	0.131 (1.107)

⁵⁴ David W. Hosmer, Stanley Lemeshow and Susanne May, *Applied Survival Analysis: Regression Modeling of Time-to-Event Data*, p.304

(Reagan)	0.939 (1.102)	1.236 (0.992)	-1.102 (0.916)
(G-Bush)	-1.810* (1.049)	-1.486 (0.974)	1.549* (0.863)
(Clinton)	-4.376* (2.377)		4.214** (2.020)
(Hurricane) [‡]	0.531 (0.327)		
(Tornado)	-0.0347 (0.325)		
(Storm)	0.834** (0.357)		
(Forest)	0.433 (0.444)		
(Extreme)	0.135 (0.424)		
(Earthquake)	0.349 (0.699)		
(Other Disaster Types)	-0.166 (1.162)		
Constant			6.576*** (1.333)
ln p			0.142*** (0.040)
ln(θ)		.0481164 (.0458027)	-1.507* (0.627)
LR-test(θ)		3.89 p $\chi^2 = 0.024$	22.04 p $\chi^2 = 0.000$

§ Standard errors in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

† Frailty variable is 'Disaster Type'

‡ For Presidents, W-Bush is the baseline. For disaster types, flood category is the baseline.

Concluding Remarks and Discussion

Disasters happen in political space, and when it comes to presidential disaster declarations, presidents are very political. In this study, I have found that there is a substantial difference between a Democratic president and Republican president in their response time: all other things being equal, Democratic presidents declare emergencies more quickly than Republican presidents. Consistent with the electoral logic of presidential response, presidents who are in their second term respond to disasters more slowly than presidents who are in their first term. However, contrary to what I expected, increase in pre-disaster approval rating of the presidents appears to be associated with slightly higher chance of responding quickly. Given the lack of an alternative insight about how pre-disaster approval rating determines the behavior of an incumbent president, at this point I am not sure why should this be the case. I drew this hypothesis from observing the behavior of German Chancellor (a non-presidential system) in the wake of a flash flood. The opposite sign of the

approval variable clearly indicates that the U.S. presidential response mechanism is at least not the same as that of Germany. This striking result demands careful theorizing about the relationship between presidents' disaster response behavior and their pre-disaster approval rating. In this study, I did not find significant effect of partisanship of the governors of the affected areas, organizational independence of the implementing agencies, and president-governor partisan differences on the presidential response time.

In addition to making a contribution to our understanding of the political determinants of presidential response to natural disasters in the U.S., in this paper I have also explored possible ways to statistically model duration data with unobserved heterogeneity due to intra-group correlations. I have explored the disaster type specific effects by incorporating a frailty parameter within the Cox proportional hazard model. Modeling frailty effects is important for the current data because it is not reasonable to assume that all disaster types are the same. There exists significant heterogeneity with respect to disaster types in the data. Presidents' responses to flooding are expected to differ systematically from their response to Hurricanes. Presidential responses, therefore, are probably systematically faster with respect to some types of disaster than others. Standard Cox proportional hazard model cannot recognize this systematic group effect (the effects of frailty on regression coefficients), and, therefore, is inappropriate for the current data. A shared frailty term had to be incorporated into the Cox model to appropriately capture the frailty effects.

A common alternative to frailty approach is fixed effect proportional hazard approach. A common way to incorporate fixed effect is to include $j - 1$ disaster types indicator covariates in the model (see column 1, table 2). However, it is to note here that the general literature on multi-level modeling is divided in terms of their advice on whether to rely on fixed effect or random effects model to identify unobserved heterogeneity in the data having more than one level. While some scholars make 'rule of thumb' arguments that if group size is less than 10 uses fixed effects⁵⁵, others recommends to "always" use

55 Tom Snijders and Roel Bosker, *Multilevel Analysis: An Introduction to Basic and Advanced Multilevel Modeling*, London and Thousand Oaks and New Delhi: SAGE Publications, 1999

random effects models.⁵⁶ Andersen Klein and Zhang conducted a comprehensive Monte-Carlo study that tests relative performances of fixed effects and frailty models in survival analysis.⁵⁷ They conclude “the fixed effects test [Likelihood Ratio, Score and Wald] for a center [group variable] effect tends to reject the null hypothesis [when it is in fact true] of no center effect too often when the number of subjects per center is small. The random effects test does, however, appear to maintain the correct significance level for these small sample cases”.⁵⁸ Overall, they recommend use of frailty model, particularly when dealing with small group size. Similarly, Allison, in a Monte-Carlo study of repeated events, finds “serious inflation of parameter estimates” in fixed effects Cox regression with dummy variables “when the number of interval per individual is low and percentage of censored cases is high”.⁵⁹ Janet Box-Steffensmeier and Jones also observe that in fixed effects model “the effects are a fixed quantity to be estimated and have consistency problem”.⁶⁰

Overall, therefore, it seems that in the context of survival analysis with small or imbalanced group size (see tables in Appendix for the current data) and substantive proportion of censoring (46 percent in the current data set) frailty or random effects model is better than fixed effects model. Such conclusion, however, can still be premature given that we have almost no knowledge about the relative performance of fixed and random effect model applied to the kind of data (natural disaster onset to presidential declarations time) used in this paper. A Monte-Carlo study incorporating the assumptions made in this data set would shed some important lights on the issue. However, I set that study aside for now as a separate but important project. Based on the current study, I recommend that further event history analyses of the presidential declaration process that go beyond one particular disaster event should avoid the temptation to use a simple Cox model, and take the frailty effects into consideration.

56 Andrew Gelman, and Jennifer Hill, *Data Analysis Using Regression and Multi-level/Hierarchical Models. Analytical Methods for Social Research*, 5th printing ed., New York, Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2008

57 Per Kragh Andersen, John P. Klein and Mei-Jie Zhang, “Testing For Centre Effects in Multi-Centre Survival Studies: A Monte Carlo Comparison of Fixed and Random Effects Tests.” *Statistics in Medicine*, Vol. 18: 1999, pp.1489–1500

58 Per Kragh Andersen, John P. Klein and Mei-Jie Zhang, *Statistics in Medicine*, p.1493

59 Paul D. Allison, “Bias in Fixed-Effects Cox Regression with Dummy Variables”, 2002, URL: <www.ssc.upenn.edu/allison>, p.8

60 Janet Box-Steffensmeier and Bradford Jones, *Event History Modeling*, p.162, footnote 5.

Appendix

Measurement and Sources of Data

- Political ideology of the presidents (PARTYID). This is a dichotomous variable that takes 1 if the President is a Democrat, and 0 if the President is a Republican. Source: The American Presidency Project of The University of California, Santa Barbara, found at <<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/>>
- Presidential second terms (SECONDTERM). This is a dichotomous variable that takes 1 if the President is in his second term when he responded to a natural disaster and 0 otherwise. Source: The American Presidency Project of the University of California, Santa Barbara.
- Presidential approval (APPROVAL). This variable measures the level of popularity of presidents by percentage of job approval received by presidents in the last weekly Gallup poll before a disaster strikes. Gallup poll used the question: “Do you approve or disapprove of the way [first and last name] is handling his job as President?” Source: The weekly Gallup poll results are available at www.gallup.com/tag/Presidential%2bJob%2bApproval.aspx, and also The American Presidency Project of The University of California, Santa Barbara. Note: this variable changes over time for a particular president. This requires that in duration model this variable should be considered as time varying covariates. However, since in this paper I am particularly interested to explore if the presidential response data has any frailty effect, I will leave an in-depth consideration of time varying covariates for a future exercise.
- Political ideology of the governors (GOVID). This variable takes 1 if the governor is a Democrat, 2 if s/he is independent or from local parties, and 3 if s/he is a Republican. Source: National Governors Association, found at <<http://www.nga.org>>.
- Organizational independence of the implementing agency (ORGINDEP). This is a dichotomous variable that takes 1 if the implementing agency is an Independent Agency (FEMA), and 0 otherwise (FDAA under HUD before FEMA was created in 1979 or FEMA under DHS). Source: Federal Emergency Management Agency, found at <<<http://www.fema.gov/>>>.
- Total political appointees in the implementing agency’s rank and file (TOTPOLAPNT). This variable counts the total political appointees (usually every new president replaces such posts as agency director, deputy director etc. by his own appointees) present in the implementing agency’s rank and file when presidents respond to disasters. This variable takes 0 if there is no political appointee (during or immediately after presidential regime change, many posts are made vacant so that new presidential appointees can assume the offices.) when presidents respond to disasters, and any number n, where (n = 1, 2, 3 ...) otherwise, depending on the count of such appointees. When federal disaster management was under HUD I counted all the presidential appointees under FDAA, and when it is under the HS I counted all the presidential appointees under FEMA. Source: United States Government Manuals for all years, and the United States Government Policy and Supporting Positions (published every 4 years) for all years between 1960 and 2005.

- A measure of total disaster related loss (AFFECTED). This is an interval level measure, where $AFFECTED = (\text{Total Number of People Killed} + \text{Total Number of People Injured} + \text{Total Number of People Affected})$. I use the Natural Log of this measure ($\log AFFECTED$). From the calculation of $\log AFFECTED$ I dropped property or resource damage dimension in order to secure a reasonable sample size. The EM-DAT data set does not have information on property or resources for all disaster events. Source: Emergency Events Database (EM-DAT) at <http://www.emdat.be/>
- President-Governor Difference (PGdiff). This variable takes 0 if both the president and the governor are from the same political party, and 1 if they are from different parties (Democrat vs. Republican). Source: My calculations based on the above information.
- PRESNUM is an index variable that simply identifies presidents, for example, Eisenhower = 1 ... G-W Bush = 10.
- Disaster Type (DISTYPE). This is a nominal variable, where 1 = Hurricane; 2 = Tornado; 3 = Storm; 4 = Forest related disasters (e.g. wildfire); 5 = Extreme Temperature (e.g. Winter, Heat-wave); 6 = Geological; 7 = Flood; 8 = Drought; and 9 = Others all other types of disaster events. Source: EM-DAT data set.

Table 1: Average Presidential Response Time and Death Counts by States, 1960-2005

State	Time	Death	State	Time	Death
AK	1	131	MT	39	2
AL	10	170.11	NC	7.52	29.23
AR	17	19.3	ND	8	38.50
AZ	26.2	15.6	NE	8.72	7.27
CA	5.93	16.13	NH	6.66	62.33
CO	6	9.5	NJ	17.37	44.12
CT	22	52	NM	100	35
DE	22.83	49.83	NV	23	26.20
FL	4.88	75.61	NY	15.55	35.55
GA	5.61	106	OH	6.5	30
HI	2.2	15.4	OK	8.37	17
IA	12.2	7.5	OR	8.5	16.5
ID	17.66	7.33	PA	16.22	43.77
IL	5.75	13.75	RI	6.4	55.4
IN	9	16.8	SC	6.81	39.45
KS	8.66	17.55	SD	7.2	64.2
KY	10.33	18.83	TN	7	33.33
LA	7.6	126.66	TX	12.8	20.54
MA	22	52	UT	7.25	11
MD	16.22	45.66	VA	15.08	79.08
ME	7.25	50	VT	3	38.5
MI	8.75	17.5	WA	13.2	30.6
MN	29	19.16	WI	21	16.66
MO	27.2	17.8	WV	3.2	37.2
MS	12.41	159.83			
Total Average				11.62	48.11

Table 2: Frequency of disasters during presidential regimes, 1960-2005

President	Hurricane				Geological				Total
	Hurricane	Tornado	Storm	Forest	Earthquake	Flood	Extreme	Others	
Eisenhower	16	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	17
Johnson	5	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	8
Nixon	16	1	0	0	0	2	1	0	20
Ford	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	3
Carter	6	2	0	0	1	3	0	0	12
Reagan	30	17	14	0	0	2	13	0	76
H-Bush	17	3	23	5	2	12	0	0	62
Clinton	26	66	41	6	2	19	66	4	230
W-Bush	34	27	26	6	2	1	26	1	123
Total	151	117	106	17	10	39	106	5	551

Table 3: Average Response Time of Presidents by Disaster Type, 1960–2005

President	Hurricane	Tornado	Storm	Forest	Geological	Flood	Extreme	Total
Eisenhower	2.25	.	.	.	.	.	.	2.29
Johnson	5.20	3.00	.	.	7.00	.	.	5.37
Nixon	5.75	3.00	.	.	.	2.00	.	5.21
Ford	11.00	.	2.00	.	.	.	.	5.00
Carter	1.83	2.00	.	.	4.00	3.00	.	2.27
Reagan	10.03	7.00	.	.	.	.	.	9.12
H-Bush	5.33	12.00	10.75	11.00	.	6.40	.	8.54
Clinton	2.35	41.82	4.15	11.00	1.00	23.5	8.18	20.40
W-Bush	4.35	6.00	15.00	3.00	.	.	.	4.98
Total	5.14	26.16	6.60	9.22	4.40	13.53	8.18	11.50

**DEBUNKING THE MYTHS OF INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE:
TOWARDS A POLITICAL ECOLOGY OF THE MANDI OF
MADHUPUR, BANGLADESH***

Samina Luthfa**

Abstract

This paper examines the concept of indigenous knowledge and its role in the politics of indigenous movements from a political ecology perspective. It offers an empirical analysis of indigenous knowledge among the Mandi (Mande/Garo), a matrilineal ethnic group in Bangladesh. This study shows that Mandi farmers do not identify their knowledge as indigenous although they identified themselves as different from the majority population of the country. Drawing from the literature and ethnography, I find that indigenous knowledge as a concept is untenable, both theoretically and empirically. However, the concept is very popular in the development discourse and in indigenous movement. At one hand, the international development organizations use it as a tool for making the indigenous habitat available for capitalist market penetration, on the other, the indigenous people regard this concept as a way to get their voices heard in the local and global development planning. Indigenous knowledge lives because it serves the role of a weapon for both sides of the development apparatus.

1. Introduction

This reciprocal relationship between nature and humans—humans are naturalized and nature is humanized—in which labor is active, transformative, and social (the appropriation of Nature is determined by social relations, particularly relations of ownership and control). The properties of natural resources and environmental processes shape, in complex ways, the transformation process and the social relations of production.¹

Early writings in political ecology focused on unequal power relations, conflict and cultural ‘modernization’ under a global capitalist political economy as key forces in reshaping and destabilizing human interactions with the physical environment.² Political ecology combines the concerns for ecology and political

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1 N. M. Peluso and M. Watts (eds.), *Violent Environment*, New York: Cornell University Press, 2001

2 P.A. Walker, Political Ecology: Where is the ecology? *Progress in Human Geography*, Vol. 29, No. 1, 2005, p. 74

economy that encompasses the constantly shifting dialectic between society (classes and groups within it) and land-based resources.³ Political ecology developed around a set of core concepts: first, resource use is organized and transmitted through social relations that may result in the imposition of excessive pressure of production on the environment. Second, the field recognizes plurality of positions, perceptions, interests and rationalities in relation to the environment such that one's profit may be another's displacement. Third, global connectedness shapes local spaces and is shaped by it through extra-local political economic processes and forth, interconnectedness of political, economic and ecological expressions mutually reinforce local marginality.⁴ This paper critiques the concept indigenous knowledge to expose the political ecology of the concept within the empirical case of Mandi farmers in Madhupur, Bangladesh. In doing so, the third and forth core concepts of political ecology remains relevant.

The concept of indigenous knowledge has been widely used by academics as well as development activists throughout the world to explain the relationship between indigenous populations and their environments to bring sustainable development to the indigenous populations worldwide. My research inquires how the concept of indigenous knowledge functions theoretically and empirically. Since there has been considerable debate about the content, usage and impact of indigenous knowledge in sustainable development of indigenous communities, analyzing existing theoretical positions about this concept is important for positioning myself on this widely debated issue. Moreover, in this research, I also enquire, how this concept functions for a specific indigenous community.

Existing literature on indigenous knowledge includes three different perspectives about the relationship of indigenous knowledge with the environment and its impact on development. One view condemns indigenous knowledge because it poses a threat to the ecosystem by over exploitation of natural resources and through abusive agricultural practices.⁵ Another view

3 P.M. Blaikie & H. Brookfield (Eds.), *Land degradation and society*. London: Methuen, 1987, pp. 13-17.

4 L. Gezon & S. Paulsen, 'Place, Power, Difference' in *Political Ecology across Spaces, Scales and Social Groups*; S. Paulson, L. Gezon & M. Watts (Eds.), New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2005, p. 2.

5 M.R. Dove. "The life cycle of indigenous knowledge, and the case of Natural Rubber Production" in *Indigenous Knowledge and its transformations: critical anthropological perspectives* R. Ellen, P. Parkes, A. Bicker (Eds.). Amsterdam:

suggests that indigenous knowledge is ‘the science of the people’ that is inherently conservationist and in harmony with the eco-system.⁶ However, there is a third perspective, which is close to political ecology approach. According to this perspective, dividing knowledge into scientific and indigenous is flawed, since scientifically valid knowledge cannot be separated from its indigenous base.⁷ According to this view, indigenous knowledge does not have either positive or negative relationship to the environment, this so-called relationship was created by the Western scholars, reflecting the dichotomy between tradition versus modernity in the distinction of indigenous *versus* scientific. This relationship separating indigenous from scientific, either in a positive or negative view indirectly helps to open up remote indigenous habitats for the contemporary global capitalist accumulation.

Examining the case of the Mandi farmers (an indigenous group), of Bangladesh, I show how global connectedness in political, economic and ecological way reinforced local marginality. Moreover, I show that the local space is not only shaped by his connectedness, it also shapes. I show these through an empirical case.

The major problems that I address in this research are; how does indigenous knowledge as a concept function in academic and development discourse? How does indigenous knowledge function in a particular indigenous community in question? Also, how does the indigenous community negotiate with the globally connected processes of development through using indigenous knowledge?

1.1. Rationale

For years scientists have labeled local agricultural knowledge of ethnic minorities as destructive to the environment and have tried to end such ethnic

Harwood academic publishers. 2000; G. Masipiquena, A. Persoon and D. J. Snelder. “The Use of Fire in the Northeastern Luzon (Philippines): Conflicting view of Local People, scientists and government officials” in *Indigenous Knowledge and its transformations: critical anthropological perspective's*, 2000.

6 L. Grenier, *Working with indigenous knowledge: a guide for researchers*. Ottawa: International Development Research Centre (IDRC), 1998; and N. Sundar, “The construction and destruction of ‘indigenous’ knowledge in India’s joint forest management programme” *Indigenous Knowledge and its transformations: critical anthropological perspectives*, R. Ellen, P. Parkes & A. Bicker (Eds.), Amsterdam: Harwood, 2000

7 A. Agrawal, “Dismantling the divide between Indigenous and Scientific Knowledge” in *Development and Change* Vol. 26, 1995a, pp. 413-439; and R. Ellen & H. Harris, “Introduction” in *Indigenous Knowledge and its transformations*, Amsterdam: Harwood, 2000

practices that are rooted in local knowledge. This decade-long predominance led governments of many countries to plan projects to conserve local ecology by removing the indigenous people from their environment.⁸ However, the opposite 'romantic' view of indigenous knowledge suggesting that indigenous knowledge is more eco-friendly than western science has political implications since it allows indigenous communities to lobby for and/or fight for their land rights. Therefore, the rationale behind studying this concept is two fold; first, critically examining the discourse of the indigenous knowledge presents the need for an alternative to the indigenous development model. Secondly, the results of research on the Mandi farming community have practical implications on critiquing the concept of indigenous knowledge can be useful for the Mandi, the government of Bangladesh and other local, national, and international organizations to prioritize their development goals in the country

2. Methodology

Ethnographic research on agricultural practices, indigenous knowledge and environment of the Mandi was conducted in two villages named Beribaid and Gayrabaid of Madhupur in Tangail district of Bangladesh in summer of 2005 and 2007. I conducted elite interviews and focus group discussions with Mandi farmers and Bangali executives of local non-government organizations. I also used detailed observations of Mandi farmlands, homesteads and marketing process (including transportation of the produce from the remote areas) to gain knowledge about the popular crops and current cropping pattern. The Mandi as a group was selected because of their unique lineage features and convenience of access to the community. Due to the weather extremes, time and resource constraints no other contrasting groups could be studied. Taking into consideration of the limitation of one case based research I consider this case study to be the essential first step towards an empirical understanding of functioning of indigenous knowledge.

2.1. Methods

In order to keep record of the observation, I took extensive field notes and photos. I conducted semi-structured interviews of two local Mandi farmers (one

8 G.K. Chakma, *Bangladesh: Report on indigenous people and protected areas*. Dhaka: International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity Indigenous Peoples Conservation Committee. 2004; P. Gain, *The last forests of Bangladesh: dying forests, mistaken plantations and immense sufferings of the forest people feature the forests of Bangladesh*. Dhaka: SHED, 1998; and P. Parkes, "Enclaved knowledge: indigent and indignant representations of Environmental Management and development among the Kalasha of Pakistan", *Indigenous Knowledge and its transformations: critical anthropological perspectives*, Amsterdam: Harwood, 2000.

female) and two NGO-workers that work with the Mandi. My interviews generated information about the Mandi agriculture and indigenous knowledge including sifting cultivation, the history of use of modern farming methods among the Mandi, and the current mode of agriculture and their perception of the relationship between agriculture and the environment.

Interviews of the NGO workers generated information about the perception of the NGO and the project personnel about the Mandi, their agriculture, environment and indigenous knowledge. The data identified the processes that these organizations perform in order to motivate such development through the planning and implementation of their projects.

There were 6 (six) FGDs performed with Mandi farmers of different age and sex groups (Table 1). All FGDs used the same checklist that generated information on the current agricultural practices, their advantages and disadvantages, justification for changing the form of cultivation from swidden to wet rice and other plantation agriculture, and the Mandi's perception of environment, agriculture and indigenous knowledge. The basic focus of these FGDs was on the current agricultural practices and their relationship with indigenous knowledge and environment. Age and sex differentiated data revealed differences of opinion and even of facts and experiences.⁹ All of the participants were married. The males started their agricultural activities only after their marriage when they moved into the wife's or her parents' house.

Table 1: Demographic Features of the Mandi of Madhupur.

Age Groups			Sex		Level of Education		
20-30	31- 70	71+	Male	Female	Illiterate	Up to Class 10	SSC
-	-	11	6	5	8	3	-
-	11	-	6	5	2	8	1
14	-	-	6	8	-	12	2
Total = 36			Total= 36		Total=10	Total = 26	

Author's calculation (2005)

9 For example, male and female participants differed about who used to cut the trees during *jhum*. Males said they used to cut the trees but the females of the same age group reported that during the British rule, the forest department used to cut the trees for auction. Both could be true, but such differences of opinion could never be revealed if different sex groups were not contrasted.

2.2. Introducing my case: The Mandi of Madhupur

Bangladesh has about 20 - 56¹⁰ different indigenous tribal groups. The Mandi¹¹ are a matrilineal ethnic group living mostly in North Central Bangladesh.¹² In Bangladesh, there are about 100,000 Mandis who live mainly in the old Mymensingh district and in its bordering areas of the Indian State of Meghalaya at the southern edge of the Garo hills and adjacent plains. Gradually, they have spread through Mymensingh, Netrokona, Sherpur, and Tangail districts.¹³

The Mandi are a distinct ethnic group with unique physical features, social, cultural and economic practices. Physically they are closer to the South East Asians than South Asians. In the recent past, they used to have slash and burn agriculture but now mostly cultivate wet rice in the low-lying lands of the Madhupur forest tract (Figure 1). They often grow cash crops like pineapple, banana, etc. on their higher lands. Although their rice agriculture hardly differs from their Bangali neighbors, Mandi women continue to use agricultural knowledge and practices learned during the slash and burn period in their homestead gardens. The strength and openness of the Mandi women is one of the most appealing features of the group.¹⁴

Christianity and changing government policies have had the largest impact on Mandi communities in recent decades. Unlike their neighbors, more than 90 percent of the Mandi are Christians.¹⁵ Due to the presence of educated Christian missionaries in the neighborhood, the Mandi have high level of literacy.

10 The broad range may be the result of the ongoing debate about some community's indigenous identity.

11 Other ethnonyms are: Garo and Mande. Bangalis tend to call them Garo. Though for the Garos, "Garo" is a outsiders' word, not their own and since their experience with outsiders has sometimes been unhappy, they resent the term Garo. I use the word 'Mandi' to refer to this group because they use it. The word 'Mandi' like many other indigenous names means human being.

12 E. Bal, *They ask if we eat frogs: Social boundaries, ethnic categorization and the Garo people in Bangladesh*. Delft, Netherlands: Eburon, 2000; R. Burling, *The Strong Women of Madhupur*. Dhaka, University Press Limited, 1997

13 S. Islam (Ed). *Banglapedia: National Encyclopedia of Bangladesh*, Multimedia CD, Asiatic Society Bangladesh, Dhaka, 2004

14 R. Burling, *Strong Women of Madhupur*, 1997

15 E. Bal, *They Say We Eat Frogs*, 2000.

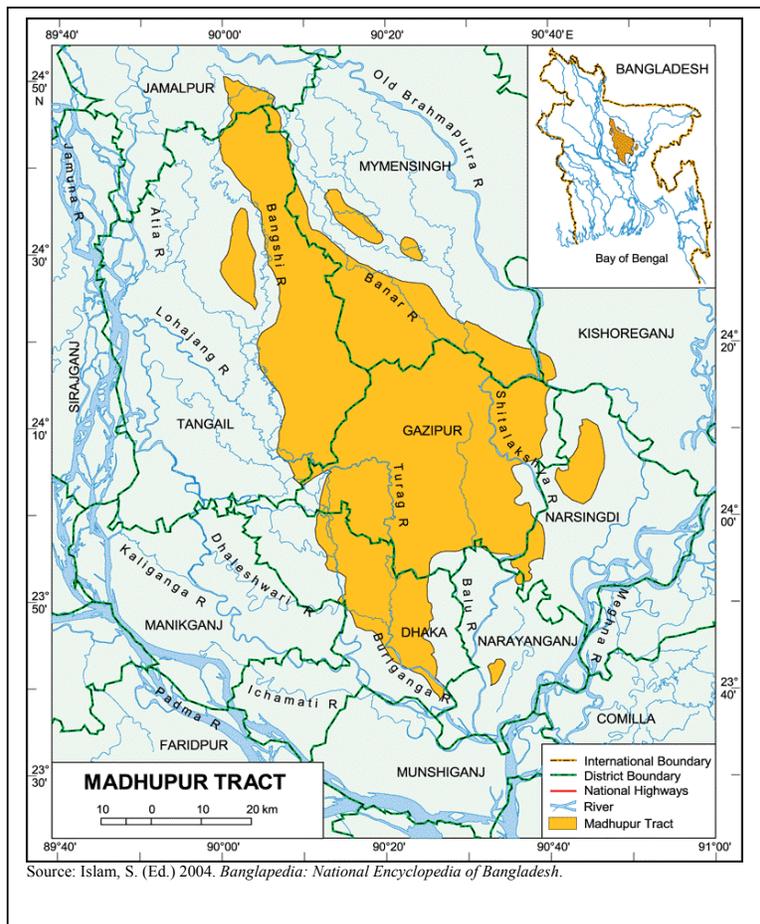


Figure 1: Madhupur Tract

The Mandis constitute less than one tenth of one per cent of the population in Bangladesh, a tiny minority among more than one hundred fifty million Bangladeshis. Inevitably, the Bangalis have a far larger presence in the day-to-day life of the Mandis than Mandis have in the lives of Bangalis. Historically, the Mandi did not own land and whatever land they now hold in possession, they do so without any ownership documents. Their indigenous identity is a major development dilemma that generated a debate around the concept.

2.3. Indigenous Knowledge

A very early definitio¹⁶ of indigenous technical knowledge regards this knowledge as the result of a general intellectual process of creating order out of disorder and not simply as a response to practical human needs.¹⁷ Indigenous knowledge is the unique, traditional, local knowledge existing within and developed around the specific conditions of women and men localized for generations to a particular geographic area. Such knowledge systems are cumulative, representing generations of experiences, careful observations, and trial-and-error experiments. New knowledge is continuously added to this system of knowledge¹⁸ Some are more specific in defining indigenous knowledge as local environmental knowledge (knowledge of plants, animals, soils and other natural components) with practical applications.¹⁹

Indigenous knowledge as an object of study has emerged in the development literature for about 20-30 years.²⁰ The use of the term 'indigenous' began with

16 Indigenous knowledge as a concept stands on contentious and disputed ground. I came across the following terminologies in existing literature - traditional, local, folk, indigenous environmental/ technical knowledge, ethnoscience, rural peoples' knowledge, and so on. All these have been used interchangeably and with shared inter-subjective understanding with the term indigenous knowledge. I shall use the term indigenous knowledge instead of one or the other of all these variants since they all refer to the same focal semantic space.

17 M. Howes and R. Chambers. "Indigenous Technical Knowledge: Analysis, Implications and Issues" in *Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Development* D. Brokensha, D.M. Warren & O. Werner (Eds.). Washington DC: University Press of America, 1980, p. 324.

18 L. Grenier. *Working with indigenous knowledge: a guide for researchers*. Ottawa, Canada: International Development Research Centre (IDRC), 1998, p.1.

19 R. Ellen and H. Harris, "Introduction" in *Indigenous Knowledge and its transformations: critical anthropological perspectives*, 2000, pp. 2-5

20 F. Berkes, J. Colding and C. Folke, "Rediscovery of Traditional Knowledge as adaptive management" in *Ecological Applications*, Vol. 10, No. 5, 2000, pp. 1251-1262; J.S. Jerome. "Intellectual Property Rights and indigenous peoples: a history of the topic as an object of study" in *Regional Worlds: cultural environments and development debate*, 1996.; A. Agrawal. "Dismantling the divide between Indigenous and Scientific Knowledge" in *Development and Change* Vol. 26, 1995a, pp. 413-439; A. Agrawal, "Indigenous and Scientific Knowledge: Some Critical Comments" in comments and response in *Indigenous Knowledge and Development Monitor*, Vol. 3(3-4), Vol. 4(1-2), 1995b; P. Sillitoe, "The development of Indigenous Knowledge: a new Anthropology" in *Current Anthropology*, Vol. 39, No. 2, 1995b: pp. 223-252; M.R. Dove. "Hybrid history and the indigenous knowledge among Asian rubber small-holders" in *International Social Science Journal: Indigenous Knowledge* Special Issue September, 2002, p. 173

Robert Chambers' group at the Institute of Development Studies in 1979 influenced by the disillusionment with the top-down development practices by the end of 1970s due to the lack of understanding of local situations and reliance on misconceptions and erroneous information²¹ As a result development activists started to look for 'alternative wisdom in development initiatives' for their projects' success. Indigenous knowledge for sustainable development served this purpose and emerged as a significant focus of study in the past decades in the global development discourse around the globe. There has been considerable debate about the content, usage and impact of indigenous knowledge in development of indigenous communities. There are three different perspectives; the modernism, the indigenism and the politics of indigenous knowledge discourse. Now I present each of these perspectives one by one with their implications for my empirical case, the Mandi of Madhupur. At the end, I show how the Mandi actors are not mere subjects of this rhetoric rather successfully use this concept as an opportunity.

3. Modernism/ Tribalist Discourse

The inherent ethnocentrism and elitism of twentieth century global science presents a heritage of denial, which has been justified by methodological reductionism and evaluative process in the realm of scientific knowledge that render indigenous knowledge as "unscientific". During the late European colonial period, in scientific fieldwork at South and South-East Asia, traditional local knowledge was evident but mute since the source of such local knowledge in the scientific literature was not specified and indigenous sources were almost never referred to.

With the inexorable rise of modernity at the end of colonial era, this knowledge became relegated to ignorance and superstition. This was seen as useless and negligible compared to the useful and superior scientific knowledge.²²

21 J. Ferguson, *The Anti-politics Machine: 'Development', Depoliticization, and Bureaucratic power in Lesotho*. Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 2002; L. Grenier, *Working with Indigenous Knowledge*, 1998; J.C. Scott, *Seeing like a State: how certain schemes to improve human condition have failed*. New Haven: Yale University Press, b 1998; P. Sillitoe, "The development of Indigenous Knowledge: a new Anthropology" in *Current Anthropology*, Vol. 39, No. 2, 1999, pp. 223-252

22 M. Howes, "The use of Indigenous Technical Knowledge in development" in *Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Development*, D. Brokensha, D.M. Warren and O. Werner (Eds.), Washington DC: University Press of America, 1980; M. Howes and R. Chambers, 1980, "Indigenous Technical Knowledge: Analysis, Implications and Issues" in *Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Development*, 1980

Modernism needed to overcome tradition. For more than fifty years, development models were based on knowledge generated in laboratories, research centers and universities and only then transferred as technology to ignorant peasants of the underdeveloped world.²³

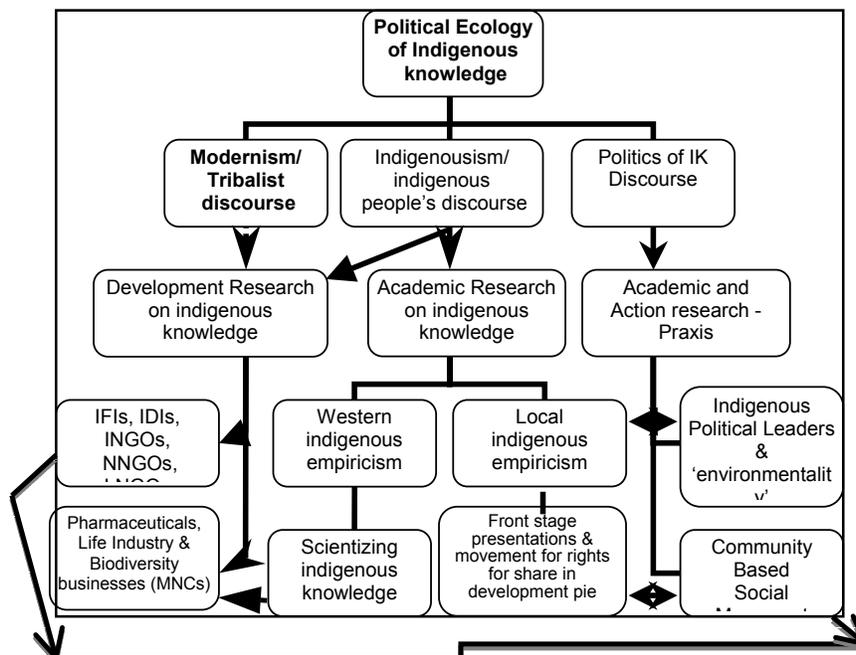


Figure 2: Indigenous Knowledge Debate and its Sides

To the proponents of high modernism based development projects indigenous knowledge appeared to be mystical and irrational. To these scholars, indigenous knowledge had little scientific validity and had negative impact on the environment via abusive practices such as use of fire in the swidden fields and overexploitation of the resource base.²⁴

²³ Chamber and Richards 1995, cited in R. Ellen, R and H. Harris, "Introduction" in *Indigenous Knowledge and its transformations: critical anthropological perspectives*, 2000.

²⁴ A. Masipiquena, G.A. Persoon and D.J. Snelder, "The Use of Fire in the Northeastern Luzon" 2000.

3.1. Modernism – the Mandi Case

In the case of the Mandi, the Garo self image presented a critique of ‘Garo’ as a social category.²⁵ The Garo discourse is shaped by the interaction of both the tribalist and indigenous discourse. In the tribalist discourse, scholars, and tribal people themselves reproduce the image of indigenous groups as primitive and isolated people without history. Even though historical scrutiny refutes the very notion of a tribal category in South Asia, South Asian perceptions of tribe have remained remarkably uncontested. A close scrutiny of the discourse on *Garoness* reveals that their perceptions and presentations of collective self reflect a number of elements of tribalist discourse. Concretely, the history of the Mandis of Bangladesh shows that their contemporary notions of ‘Garoness’ are by no means a reflection of ‘a primitive people without history’ but also the recent outcome of the convergence of colonial and indigenous categorizations through the complex interaction of colonization and resistance, decolonization and state-formation, ethnicism, Islamization, Christianization, and modernization.²⁶

The Mandi self image reflects the difference between the image they wish to convey to outsiders (front stage) and the image they have of themselves (backstage). In backstage discourse, Mandi present their identity first as primitive - fixed by birth and tied with nature in a deterministic and inflexible way. Secondly, their identity is of a ‘pure tribe’ loosing its distinct culture through ‘feeling Garo, acting Bangali’ image. However, in the public image of the Mandi in national, international media, politics and public debates the Mandis emphasize the following: first, they have outgrown their primordial tribal identity and became *modern*, second, the Mandis as proud minority have been victimized by economic and political developments and, third, they are inextricably linked with nature and so cannot live without forests.²⁷

Although the Mandi self image depends on being a pure natural tribe, due to the negative social connotation of ‘tribal’ arising from modernism, they create a public image that they have outgrown this tribalness. Memories of victimization by the Bangali Muslims motivate the Mandis to project images of their vulnerability so that state, national and international development and humanitarian organizations can help protect them from the majority. The Mandi

25 E. Bal, *They Ask if We Eat Frog*, 2000.

26 E. Bal, *They Ask if We Eat Frogs*, 2000, pp. 15-16

27 Ibid.

image as ‘the children of the forest’ is crucial for those living in Madhupur to make sure that their forest does not become an eco-park forcing eviction of the community from their ancestral land.

3.1.1. Madhupur Forest and the Mandi Agriculture

After the independence of Pakistan in 1947 from British rule, Madhupur was declared a reserve forest in 1952 and a national park in 1961.²⁸ However, in 1971 with the establishment of Bangladesh, the Forest Department banned the Mandi from entry and usage of the uplands or forest coverage (*chala*). The Mandi were forced to remain within the low-lying lands of the tract, which were also *khas*²⁹ land. Legally, citizens do not have any possession or usage right to this type of land. They can only use these with government permission. However, both the Mandi and Bangali inhabitants of Madhupur tract considered that their usage of the land gave them disposal right. They even transferred, sold and inherited such land without possessing any Record of Rights (ROR) issued by proper government authority. They do it in two ways: first, secretly continuing *jhum* in the upland tracts despite opposition from the government forces. The other is through creating a new self-image as indigenous community victimized by the majority. The first presents us with how the tribalist discourse works for the Mandi and the second one shows how the indigenism works.

Farmers participating in the FGDs reported that they were engaged in wet rice cultivation and fruit and vegetable plantations like their neighboring Bangalis. According to their account, they stopped their generation-old *jhum* cultivation and switched to ‘modern’ cultivation techniques for the following reasons: the government-imposed ban restricted Mandi’s access to the forests of Madhupur, increased Mandi population put extra pressure on *jhum* land and yield, increased need for more profitable crop production led to search for new production techniques, and social and technological changes made modern cultivation techniques easier to adopt.

Accounts of the farmers identify why the Mandi farmers had to stop *jhum*. One of the farmers said:

28 S. Dey, P. B. Resurreccion and P. Doneys, “Gender and environmental struggles: voices from Adivasi Garo community in Bangladesh” in *Gender, Place & Culture: A Journal of Feminist Geography*, 2000.

29 Khas land is land that is under government’s reserve (*khas*) which is unsettled.

Jhum formally ended at the end of Pakistani regime when Madhupur was declared a 'reserved forest' and the Mandi were forbidden to enter the forest. It was not until the liberation of Bangladesh that the ban actually took effect.

Similarly, the respondents in my study, from all three age groups reported to have done or seen *jhum* cultivation until early 1980s. There are two possible explanations as follows; either *jhum* cultivation continued to be performed illegally decades after the formal ban, or the Mandi were too fascinated with the idea of telling outsiders about their shifting cultivation and thereby tell stories of their parents as their own. However, earlier research findings suggest that the Mandi communities of Chunia (a village close to my study villages) still enter the forest and practice *jhum* and they do this as a form of resistance against the ban³⁰. The ban shows the extent of the role of modernism in the lives of the Mandi.

In sum, indigenous subsistence practices which have emerged from poverty and insufficient resources were regarded as wasteful by the modernists. This continued until recently when the western scholars became interested in traditional knowledge. This was partly because of the failure of top-down development schemes and the crisis in the high modernist projects of science and technology envisioned by the western scholars.³¹

4. Indigenouism

Some scholars referred to the emergence, growth and contemporary attention to the indigenous knowledge as a 'revolution' occurring in the field of development. This romantic view defines indigenous knowledge as 'people's science' and proposes that people with this knowledge are like scientists who have a complex set of classifications and abstract philosophical ideas which can provide systematic accounts of various aspects of the world.³²

Indigenous knowledge is now seen as a way to preserve nature and environment because traditional, indigenous or primitive people are in some kind of idyllic

30 Dey *et al.*, *Gender and Environmental Struggle*, 2013

31 J.C. Scott, *Seeing like a State: how certain schemes to improve human condition have failed*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998

32 P. Sillitoe, "The development of Indigenous Knowledge: a new Anthropology" in *Current Anthropology*, Vol. 39, No. 2, 1998, pp. 223-252; N. Sundar, "The construction and destruction of 'indigenous' knowledge in India's joint forest management programme" in *Indigenous Knowledge and its transformations: critical anthropological perspectives*. 2000.

harmony with the nature.³³ This harmony enables indigenous people to identify plant life, their uses, and relationship with the wider eco-system better than the western-trained scientists. Indigenous knowledge is also regarded to have comparative advantage over scientific knowledge in assessing changes in eco-system. Therefore, the proponents of indigenism suggested using indigenous knowledge as the ‘eyes and ears of science’. For both western and non-western elites alike, indigenous knowledge refer to great traditions – a tradition of acceptance where whatever is indigenous is good and significant for development.³⁴

Interestingly, this grass root-focused paradigm of indigenism emerged from market liberals, who promote market forces and decry state interventions along with the neo-populists who advocate participation and empowerment³⁵. This recognition of the indigenous is also due to the understanding that such knowledge can contribute to the conservation of bio-diversity, rare species, protected areas, ecological processes and to sustainable resource use in general. This view envisioned connecting local peoples’ understanding and practices with those of outside researchers and development workers by recording and scientising the useful and best indigenous practices.³⁶

In recent decades this tradition is articulated through the voices of governments, NGOs, scientists, citizens. Also, some academic and development professionals make indigenous knowledge more acceptable with catchwords like ‘participation’, ‘empowerment’, ‘bottom – up’ that can be slotted into the western development paradigms.

33 Bessaignet 1964 cited in E. Bal, *They Ask If We Eat Frogs*, 2000, R. Ellen and H. Harris, “Introduction” in *Indigenous Knowledge and its transformations*, 2000.

34 M. Howes, “The use of Indigenous Technical Knowledge in development”, *Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Development*, 1980, p. 337

35 Agro-chemical, pharmaceutical, food and seed industry that is termed as the life industry—all share common interest for indigenous knowledge due to scientific and economic benefits. Since the US Supreme Court ruled in 1980 that a human made strain of microorganism could be considered a patentable product, the life industry had become interested in indigenous knowledge. After this rule, regulated and unregulated bio-prospecting in the South became possible in a profitable way.

36 F. Berkes, J Colding and C. Folke, “Rediscovery of Traditional Knowledge as adaptive management” in *Ecological Applications*, Vol. 10, No. 5, 2000, pp. 1251-1262; A. Kalland, “Indigenous Knowledge: Prospects and Limitations” in *Indigenous Knowledge and its transformations*, 2000, p. 324; P. Sillitoe, “The development of Indigenous Knowledge: a new Anthropology” in *Current Anthropology*, 1998

Table 2: Myths of Indigenous Knowledge.

Modernism/ Tribalist discourse	Indigenouism	Third View (Debunking myths)
<i>superstition of savages</i>	<i>science of people though not just science</i>	Dividing knowledge is erroneous. It summarizes diverse sources of knowledge under two categories
no scientific element in it	more scientific than western <i>science</i>	<i>indigenous</i> and <i>scientific</i> cannot possibly be untouched by and separated from each other
traditional and static	can be preserved by recording and codifying	reification of traditional knowledge and loses distinctiveness if archived
depletes and destroys the environment	inherently conducive to environment	Only indigenouism can not explain people's relation with environment
Natural resource bases have to be protected from indigenous practices	Conserving indigenous knowledge will conserve nature and environment	Existing economic and political relations is to be considered to think about environment
Detrimental to development efforts	great utilitarian value for bottom-up sustainable development efforts	Both types of development stakeholders have use of indigenous knowledge

Although the proponents of indigenouism formulated their theory in opposition to the modernistic view of the indigenous, they inherited the same dualism of tradition versus modernity. This dualism persists through relegating the knowledge of indigenous people as something different (less) than what is called 'scientific' and by unifying a wide range of diverse knowledge and practices of varied communities under the same umbrella concept of indigenouism.

4.1. Mandi way of Indigenouism - New Agriculture

The Mandi farmers possessed a vast amount of knowledge about their land, crops, climate change, tree coverage and crop production. They learned techniques of agriculture through ancestral teaching and, in recent years, from Bangali neighbors, NGOs and extension workers. However, to my surprise, when asked they said they did not consider these as knowledge.³⁷

They have given up their traditional way of shifting cultivation to the newer agricultural practices and had to learn and adjust with the newer agriculture. As

37 For similar findings see, R. Burling, Strong Women of Madhupur, 1997.

such, they possess knowledge about both forms of agricultural practices. However, they did not regard this as indigenous knowledge. The respondents of the study claimed that knowledge comes from books and they did not have knowledge. This points to two things: first, the western concept of ‘knowledge’ had a different meaning to the Mandi. Secondly, indigenous knowledge represents an empirically untenable dichotomy based on the representation of the ‘indigenous’ through western lenses.

The front stage discourse about the Mandi conception of knowledge and relationship about environment is similarly exemplified by the portrayal of old agriculture as inherently environment-friendly by younger Mandi males. According to the oldest respondents, during the ‘days of *jhum*’ site selection for cultivation was based on the slopes of land and soil fertility. The latter was ascertained by the abundance of earth-worms in the land. Moreover, due to the British government imposed ban on cutting of *sal* trees, the presence of smaller number of *sal* trees in the particular piece of land to be used for *jhum* was an important deciding factor. Not so surprisingly, according to one of the most educated participants of the FGDs, the rationale for such taboo emerged from the Mandi consciousness about their environment rather than the regulations of the British rulers against cutting *sal* trees. This reflects how an educated Mandi reinforces the ‘children of the forest’ image as the front stage discourse of the Mandi.

For example, the schoolteacher, who held the romantic view of traditional Mandi way of life, emphasized the sacred and supernatural power of the Mandi rituals and agricultural rites and the special environmental ties of the Mandi with nature and the forest. No other participants talked about the Mandi rituals with such emotional vividness. The school-teacher said,

...farmers used to make decision about the sites for *jhum* based on the dreams they had after performing the site selection rituals. If you were asked not to cut a tree in your dream and you still went ahead – terrible things would happen. Someone got killed while trying to cut a very old sacred tree in a nearby village.

This was a sign of a trained understanding of the ‘environment’ inspired by indigenism. The Mandi self-image regarded this sort of indigenism as the ‘front stage’ presentation of their image to the outsiders to prove that they are the ‘children of the forest’. The front stage presentation of indigenism stems from the opposition to the tribalist modernism. Through these self-images of ‘victimhood’ and ‘children of the forest’, they try to interact with the majority and mingle with them without losing their unique Garones. This is a

way to gain access to the ‘development’ by participating in the indigenous discourse.³⁸

The Mandi use their indigenous identity to unite as a group that provide them with the political platform to struggle for their rights as indigenous people in the era of global attention to their indigenous identity as ‘children of the forest’. However, in the next section, I show why indigenous knowledge, in particular, after being criticized for over a decade, is still important in both local, national and international agenda for development of the indigenous communities, including the Mandi of Bangladesh.

5. Towards a Political Ecology of Indigenous Knowledge

Studying indigenous knowledge has a vantage point from the political ecology approach.³⁹ Political ecology opened up the category of environment to explore its multi-form representations. One way to approach this environment is to examine knowledge of the environment and why and how particular forms of knowledge predominate. Critiques of indigenous knowledge argued that it is outlandish for any knowledge to be forever marked or fixed as ‘indigenous’ or ‘western’.⁴⁰ In fact the same knowledge can be classified one way or the other, depending on the interests it serves, the purposes for which it is harnessed, or the manner in which it is generated. Western scientific knowledge and the procedures of generating such knowledge serve western interests. To privilege this over other forms of knowledge and procedures of knowledge generation (indigenous) is ethnocentric and reductionist.

This helps to open up the indigenous habitat for neoliberal expansion. In this case, by romanticizing indigenous as good, indigenousism creates a space for collecting good and useful indigenous knowledge as objects of development intervention. Moreover, the life industry opens up remote indigenous habitats

38 E. Bal, *They Ask if We Eat Frogs*, 2000

39 Watts, 2003 in P.A. Walker, Political Ecology: where is the ecology? *Progress in Human Geography* 29, 1, 2005, pp. 73–82

40 A. Agrawal, “Dismantling the divide between Indigenous and Scientific Knowledge” in *Development and Change*, Vol. 26, 1995a, pp. 413-439; A. Agrawal, Indigenous and Scientific Knowledge: Some Critical Comments” in comments and response in *Indigenous Knowledge and Development Monitor*, Vol.3(3-4), Vol.4(1-2), 1995b; A. Agrawal, “Indigenous knowledge and the politics of classification” in *International Social Science Journal: Indigenous Knowledge*, Special Issue September 2002, p.173; A. Agrawal, “Environmentality: Community, intimate government and environmental subjects in Kumaon, India” in *Current Anthropology*, Vol.46(2), 2005.

for bio-prospecting for herbal medicine and many more. In the process of organizing, recording and separating the so-called useful indigenous knowledge, many local and national non-governmental organizations become involved and the remote indigenous habitat also opens up for their operation of 'sustainable development'.

In reality, the epistemic origin of much knowledge is hidden and this secrecy has contributed to the emergence of a perceived divide between the scientific and indigenous. However, due to the contact, variation, transformation, exchange, communication, and learning over last several centuries, it is impossible to see indigenous and scientific knowledge as separate⁴¹. Much of what we recognize as scientific knowledge of the natural world was constituted during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in a way that absorbed pre-existing local knowledge. Part of the residue re-emerged as recognized folk knowledge in the late twentieth century and has been subjected to the kind of cultural revival.

In addition, the transformation of European botanical science occurred through contact with South Asian methodologies of classification during the colonial era. Given the long history of mutual knowledge transfer going back to ancient times, any division between European and Asian botanical systems must be construed as arbitrary. Driven by the "scientific" fervor of twentieth century, western or western-trained scholars could rarely recognize such mutual reciprocity in the pursuit of scientific knowledge that was responsible for undermining the validity of indigenous knowledge as a concept under study, which was reversed at the end of the twentieth century.

When knowledge is divided into two and is being extracted, local indigenous knowledge gets detached from its social, cultural and political context. Turning this 'parochial' and 'relative' local knowledge into scientific knowledge is difficult, if not impossible. Recording, codifying and abstracting such knowledge detaches it from its locale, generalizing it and making it non-indigenous and non-contextual.⁴²

Ultimately, by demarcating useful versus useless knowledge of the indigenous people through 'scientizing' it, knowledge is separated and cloistered from the

41 R. Ellen and H. Harris, "Introduction" in *Indigenous Knowledge and its transformations: critical anthropological perspectives*, 2000, p.7

42 A. Agrawal, "Environmentality: Community, intimate government and environmental subjects in Kumaon, India" in *Current Anthropology*, Vol. 46(2), 2005

people and also depoliticized. It fails to address the embedded power inequality between the indigenous and the non-indigenous that is responsible for the very existence of indigeness. In the end we open up the indigenous livelihood for bio-prospecting by the life industry and development prospecting by the NGOs for their development. After the extraction there is little reason left to pay much attention to the indigenous people. Thus documenting and 'scientizing' such knowledge channel resources away from more crucial political task of transforming existing power relations and provide a means to more powerful social actors to appropriate useful indigenous knowledge.⁴³ It is more sensible to focus on multiple domains and types of knowledge with differing logics and epistemologies than distinguishing the binary.

Therefore, the concept of indigenous knowledge in its romantic view implies a system that is static and outside history because dividing indigenous from non-indigenous knowledge obscures power relations, interactions and contestation between them. The concept of indigenous knowledge, therefore, glosses over differences in self-interest as differences in knowledge and represents political challenges of authority and rights as a pedagogical challenge to reveal unrecorded indigenous knowledge.⁴⁴

Different communities residing even in the same ecological environment can have different indigenous knowledge bases, or different interpretations of the similar knowledge or practices. As such, demarking the territory of the concept, indigenous knowledge becomes problematic. Two tribal groups in Sarawak, Malaysia, had different reaction to timber logging when both were aware of the harmful affects of logging on their sacred environment.⁴⁵ When one group resisted excessive timber logging to save their homes, the other not only accepted such logging but also were involved in it. The second group was obligated to respect their elites who supported the timber merchants. Therefore,

43 A. Agrawal, "Indigenous knowledge and the politics of classification" in *International Social Science Journal: Indigenous Knowledge*, 2002.

44 M.R. Dove, "The life cycle of indigenous knowledge, and the case of Natural Rubber production" in *Indigenous Knowledge and its transformations*, 2000. pp. 230-236

45 I. Nicolaisen, "Timber, Culture, and Ethnicity: The Politicization of Ethnic Identity among the *Punan Bah*" *Indigenous People and the State: Politics, land, and ethnicity in the Malayan Peninsula and Borneo*, R. L. Winzeler (ED). Connecticut: Yale Southeast Asia Studies, 1998, pp. 228, 259; J.P. Brosius, "Local Knowledge, Global Claims: On the significance of Indigenous Ecologies in Sarawak, East Malaysia", *Indigenous Traditions and Ecology: The interbeing of cosmology and community*, J.A. Grim (Ed.), Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2001, pp.125- 157

grouping these very diverse set of indigenous values and knowledge into one broad category obscures diversity.

Example: the Mandi Way

As described earlier, the Mandi now grow what the majority Bangalis grow for example banana, pineapple, wet rice, papaya instead of the Mi-mandi (Mandi paddy), cassava and more traditional *jhum* crops. This is because most of their traditional Mandi crops are either extinct or are cultivated by the Bangalis more profitably. According to an old farmer in Gayra,

we do not grow the crops we used to grow during the *jhum* cultivation as those are no longer profitable. Now we grow wet rice three times a year; banana, pineapple, ginger, mustard, soybean, cassava, jute, papaya, vegetables and fruits of different kinds, etc. We grow crops that bring more profit or meet our consumption needs. We grow *boro* rice (High Yielding Variety) in the *naama* or low lands and other crops in their *thaan* or uplands.

Many other traditional agricultural roles of the Mandi farmers have changed or become obsolete due to the new farming technology they have now adopted. For example, their traditional role of preserving their own seeds is no longer relevant since they get rice seeds from the government owned Bangladesh Agriculture Development Corporation (BADC). They buy seeds for other crops like fruits and vegetables from either Bangali neighbours or traders in the marketplace. They also reported that they use chemical fertilizers, pesticides and hormones though only in their plantations or in their rice fields. They do not use these in kitchen gardens or where they grow vegetables for household consumption.

Recently, most Mandi farmers lease out their plantations to *mahajans*⁴⁶ when they cannot afford all the input costs for the crops. Supendra (50) one of my key informants, leased out his land to *Mahajan* for 7 years for only Taka 50,000 (Bangladesh currency) in 2006, because he 'did not have enough money for input costs'. This contrasts with the perceptions of the Bangali farmers in another part of the country. Many Bangali farmers from Trishal, Mymensingh

⁴⁶ Traditional money-lenders were called the *mahajans*. This term had long been used to denote the usury collectors in rural Bangladesh. This type of usury collecting *mahajans* is very rare now. In its more recent usage, *mahajans* are a group of traders who lend money to someone with a contract in exchange of the money or goods or labour. However, among the Mandi farmers, *mahajans* can be any of the following types: leasers, intermediary merchants of agricultural products, and investors in contract growing.

cultivated their own land even in the face of declining yields and financial disadvantages rather than leasing out.⁴⁷

The decision to produce a crop was influenced by factors like cost of living and financial strength of the household. Mandi farmers chose the crops that had most potential for better yields and prices. They would grow rice for their own consumption and sell any excess. In the case of banana or pineapple plantations, they would prefer bananas over pineapple as bananas have a shorter growth period (9 months) than pineapple (18 months). Soybean, mustard, indigo also have similar advantages, as banana and Mandi farmers are interested to grow these crops.

I find it fascinating to expose the profit motivation among the respondents of this study. Subsistence concerns had overridden their so-called environmental consciousness. I do not tend to say that these people do not care about their forest, they do. I argue that they cannot protect it by being the 'children of the forest' and starving at the same time. They have children to feed, and for this reason they needed money which comes quickly only from cash crops like bananas or pineapples. Answering why they always need so much cash, one Mandi farmer reported, "the Mandi day-laborers were hired by the big tree traders to cut trees of the forest illegally and when they got caught they needed cash for the trial and other legal costs."

Keeping in mind the dangers of high yielding varieties, I realize that romanticizing about indigenous people as in idyllic harmony with nature while the western world reaches the stars is as ethnocentric as it is to neglect indigenous knowledge as superstition. All the respondents described *mi-Mandi* (Mandi rice) with respect and passion but none was convinced to produce those species for living because it was not a sustainable option today. Discussion on the Mandi agriculture with these farmers was full of front stage images (children of the forest) of the Mandis. This also described the Garo victimization and vulnerability that supports the theory about the front stage image of Garoness.⁴⁸

The word 'environment' itself was not a significant part of Mandi lives. However, the Mandi farmers recognized and identified their relationships with

47 S. Luthfa, "Structural Adjustment Policy, Agriculture and Pauperization in Bangladesh", *The Social Science Review*, The Dhaka University Studies Part D, Vol. 12, No. 1, 2004.

48 E. Bal, *They Ask if We Eat Frogs*, 2000

the soil, water, rainfall and trees. Mandi seeds had almost become extinct from the Madhupur forest area. The participants said since they no longer cultivate those crops they did not find any reason to save the seeds. This reveals a very significant point that the Mandi are no more (or less) environmentally conscious than the farmers of non-indigenous origin. Just as during crop selection the farmers would select to grow the crop that had shorter growth period and lower input cost and higher price in the market. In such decisions, environment is a minor issue. However, looking at it from a macro political ecology point of view, this loss of bio-diversity is non-repairable for our ecology.

Their recent agricultural practices are no different than any Bangali farmers. Their knowledge about this new livelihood option is also similar to that of the Bangali farmers. Therefore, their knowledge is not indigenous in especially positive way, rather it is knowledge that any farmers anywhere in the world could possess about their specific livelihoods. The difference among the Mandi and Bangali farmers lies not in their possession of knowledge, rather in the fact that, the Mandi are deprived by the non-indigenous people through absence of land rights, government sanctions against their entrance to the forest, lack of resources, oppression and violence based on their ethnic identity and social categorization as tribal for centuries if not longer.

What the third view overlooks is the fact that creating this dichotomy regards the indigenous people as having no agency of their own. They always remain at the receiving end of the scientising process with no history, no resilience and no politics of their own. The politics of indigenous knowledge accounts for how the indigenous community acts to negotiate and bargain with the governmental forces.

5.1. A weapon for the both: the Mandi way

Knowledge is neither static nor an end in itself. It cannot create social change unless other factors like existing power structure, over population, impact of market economy, government policy, and so on are taken into consideration. Moreover, dividing knowledge into indigenous and scientific dichotomy and regarding indigenous knowledge as having either negative or positive impact on environment is an ineffective way to deal with knowledge, agriculture and environment of the people of indigenous communities. In this section, I present a description of different development actors, how they form different sets of clusters and their diverse politics around the indigenous knowledge rhetoric.

5.1.1. Cluster one

This cluster consists of actors such as development researchers, international development institutions including international financial institutions like World Bank, and other international aid agencies, and national and local NGOs that accept development funds from the above institutions as well as, multinational pharmaceutical companies and life industry. The development researchers emerging out of the discourse on indigenism, are the proponents of retrieval, recording and dissemination of indigenous knowledge for development with a bottom up participatory focus. However, since indigenism is embedded in the basic dichotomy of modernism, these researchers cannot allow people to be actors of their own fate. They play the role of modernizers. Indigenist scholars prescribe to fix the problems of the less-developed world by assisting them with their local knowledge. Their optimism for increases in financial and programmatic interest of UK or US government’s funding agency through the use of scientising indigenous knowledge points to the vested interest of these scholars with the international funding agencies.

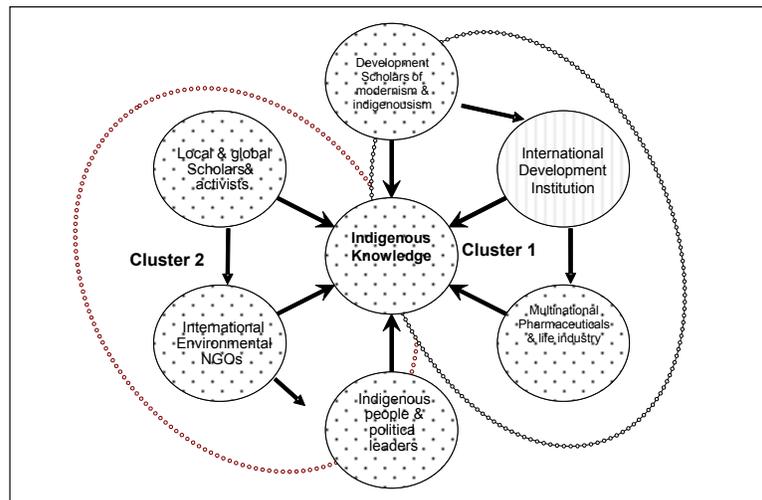


Figure 3: Weapon of the Both

Most important IDIs were created during the cold war to encourage third world countries to develop western style capitalist democracy. They all hold a high modernistic ideology with a neo-liberal approach. Their goal is to simplify, generalize and bring every society under the umbrella of ‘development’. The

historical goals of such institutions involved economic growth, growth with equity, basic needs, which had to make room to invite participatory development, sustainable development, sustainable livelihood, and so on to accommodate alternatives to failed development projects. Indigenous knowledge is one such alternative weapon for the development scholars, IDIs and multinational pharmaceutical industry.

These institutions invested a great deal of their research and development funds in the less-developed regions of the world to 'scientize' indigenous knowledge as a way to achieve tailored social change in those regions. Considerable amount of money was invested to create databases of facets of indigenous knowledge that are useful for the development.⁴⁹ There exists contradictions in such endeavors, for instance, World Bank, through its 'scietization' projects; first, artificially divide indigenous knowledge into useful and useless. Secondly, the indigenous is separated from the base and from the people who posses this knowledge. For the developers like the World Bank, when the useful knowledge is extracted little is left for the people who possessed them, as the process of scientization itself is regarded as conservation.

The most important effect is a political one. Investigating who uses this database, shows clearly that the IDIs benefit the most and communities the least. This is more so because the local knowledge when coded and recorded and archived in national research centers, no longer remains the same knowledge nor is it the property of the people from whom it was collected. Therefore, they can easily be exploited by the bio-prospecting of multinational pharmaceuticals and other life industries, the third component of Cluster 1 (Figure 3).

5.1.2. Cluster Two

This cluster includes the indigenous people, their political and intellectual representatives, and the environmental NGOs (like Genetic Resources Action International, Third World Network). These components act as academic and political lobbyists for transnational networking to end bio-prospecting from the indigenous people of the south. Now this cluster includes both modernists and indigenouists. The Mandi activists who are fighting against the eco-park in Madhupur are included in this cluster, so are the scholars that criticize both

49 P. Sillitoe, "The development of Indigenous Knowledge: a new Anthropology" in *Current Anthropology*, 1998; A. Agrawal, "Indigenous knowledge and the politics of classification" in *International Social Science Journal: Indigenous Knowledge*, 2002

modernistic and indigenouist view of the indigenous and are fighting to gain control over their endangered livelihoods of Mandi farmers. My rationale behind such a position originates from the very nature of indigenouism – inherited dualism, severance of knowledge from the people, creating opportunities for the powerful social actors to gain from the whole process leaving the local people in subjected ‘otherness’ and not including the existing global, regional and national power relationships in the frame of reference.

Indigenous people, like the Mandi from my case study, reflects the burdens of indigenouism in their front stage presentation of their Mandi self. Cluster 1 is analogous to the anti – politics machine⁵⁰, not necessarily acting with an evil intention but because of the constructed misconception and inherent dualism in modernistic ideology. The Cluster 2, in this case the Mandi activists and scholars uses indigenous knowledge as a weapon to represent ‘Mandiness’, despite this is no longer relevant in their mode of production. They see the danger of indigenouism and falsely identify themselves with the concept as a way to fight for their rights. They view that indigenous knowledge serves as an instrument to get heard in the research and academic arena, which is supported by the information collected by the ethnographic study among them.

Bangalis, who had better knowledge of the official land administration system, often settled in the lands that were once cultivated by the Mandis. Since the Mandi lacked enough knowledge of official rules of the land management systems they suffered a lot. However, the Mandi have now started organizing themselves to obtain land ownership rights for their cultivated land based on the UN declaration for indigenous population. Struggle for land rights is one of the most significant political and social movements among the Mandi in recent years. In this struggle, the concept of indigenous knowledge remains useful.

Moreover respondents did not have any significant understanding of the term ‘indigenous knowledge’, they use their Mandi identity politically. As actors Mandi farmers takes in to account their importance as ‘conservationists’ and use this to protect their natural habitat and resources from neo-liberal capitalist invasions, for example setting up of a eco-park in Madhupur. I do not intend to criticize the Mandi efforts to fight for their rights. My intention is to show how it utilizes its inherited dualism and the false identity of indigenouism to its own service. However, this falsehood, forms their everyday encounter with the

50 J. Ferguson, *The Anti-politics Machine*, 1994.

non-indigenous and allows them to survive market penetration and potential displacement threats.

The concept of indigenous knowledge has gone through a developmental cycle, in which it was first more useful and then subsequently less useful. Originally conceived as a radical conceptual breakthrough this concept succumbed to growing critiques, disillusionment, and rejection. Initially, the concept was a deconstruction of a heritage, a heritage of denial. Overtime, this deconstruction became less deconstruction and more a heritage⁵¹ From a conceptually innovative tool, indigenous knowledge in two decades turned into a clichéd dichotomy- “indigenous knowledge is dead, long live indigenous knowledge”.⁵²

6. Conclusion

Indigenous knowledge has been a popular concept in the development literature both for the scholars and the activists for years. The life cycle of this concept has passed through phases of disregard, enthusiasm, and stern critique. Along this life cycle, the concept of indigenous knowledge involved myths in the scholarly literature as well as in the development discourse. Some of the myths, for example, condemned indigenous knowledge to be harmful for environment and regarded it as superstition while others held romantic view of this ‘people’s science’ to have better ecological insight than scientific knowledge. However, some others critiqued the use of this concept by considering the dichotomy as false.

In this research, I traveled through all these different perspectives in academia about indigenous knowledge. I also collected ethnographic information about the agricultural practices and conception of indigenous knowledge among a group of farmers from the Mandi community in Bangladesh, which revealed that Mandi farmers did not identify their knowledge as indigenous. My analysis of literature and the ethnography about the Mandi led me to construe that different sides of the development apparatus are using the concept of indigenous knowledge for differing interests regardless of the fact that this concept is theoretically and empirically untenable.

51 M.R. Dove, “The life cycle of indigenous knowledge, and the case of Natural Rubber Production” in *Indigenous Knowledge and its transformations: critical anthropological perspectives*, 1994, pp. 350-357.

52 R. Ellen, P. Parkes and A. Bicker, Introduction, *Indigenous Knowledge and its transformation*, 2000

Indigenous people as well as many other interest groups employ the notion of indigenous knowledge to push their varied agenda and, in the process, raise related questions about tradition, locality, and indigenous. They also hold the belief that although they no longer employ indigenous knowledge for their subsistence, traditional indigenous knowledge is valuable for defining their cultural identity vis-à-vis the state and other outside development actors. It became purely a political symbol of strategic value in mobilizing the community against forest department.⁵³ The notion of indigenouness offers these people who are often marginalized in the national politics, a political platform. It also provides a world-wide network and a reason to ask for support and attention from the international aid agencies, human rights organizations, etc. The concept still provides a modern basis of the dichotomization and 'othering'.⁵⁴ This activism stems out of the depoliticized mainstream NGO-led perception of indigenouism, which is not oriented towards change in the existing power relations that is responsible for the disadvantaged position of the indigenous population. The community participation provides a more reasonable approach to the analysis of development process by reorienting state policies to allow members of endangered populations to determine their own future, thus facilitating *in situ* preservation of local knowledge and allowing the local people to gain control over the use of their land and resources, intellectual, physical, and biological. Those who are seen to possess knowledge and resources should also possess the right to decide on how to conserve their knowledge and resources, and how, and by whom will it be used.

53 A. Baviskar, "Claims to knowledge, claims to control: Environmental conflict in the great Himalayan National Park, India", *Indigenous Knowledge and its transformations: critical anthropological perspectives*, 2000, pp. 101-117

54 E. Bal, *They Ask We Eat Frogs*, 2000, pp. 36-37

Book Review

Alamgir Muhammad Serajuddin, *Muslim Family Law, Secular Courts and Muslim Women of South Asia: A Study in Judicial Activism*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2011

Muslim family law has undergone profound transformation around the world over the last decades to accommodate social change and demand. Such transformation is necessitated by the need to address the classical Shari'a law on family relations which leads to legal and social discrimination against women. The discrimination is especially evident in many important areas such as marriage, divorce, maintenance, guardianship and custody of children and inheritance. Progressive interpretation and liberal judicial decisions are continuously shaping the content of the Muslim family law for better protection of women rights and ensuring gender equality within the Islamic legal framework. Judiciary of South Asia is no exception. The book under review unfolds the development of the Muslim family law emphasizing the protection of Muslim women's rights by the judiciary in South Asia. The author, an eminent scholar in this field, makes a valuable and timely contribution to the cause of a rejuvenated approach to the study of Muslim family law. The book is distinguished by its clarity, critical analysis and objectivity.

The book is conveniently divided into six chapters. Chapter 1 explains the broad theme of the book and examines the concept of judicial activism and creativity, especially, in the context of South Asia. Chapter 2 deals with the rules of interpretation of Shari'a law as laid down by the Privy Council, the application of the rules by the colonial courts prior to independence of India in 1947 and the introduction of the English common law doctrine of *stare decisis*. The author notes that contrary to Islamic tradition, Shari'a law was interpreted and applied in South Asia by a hierarchy of secular courts, the judges of the higher courts generally being British, who had no expert knowledge on Islamic law. As a result, sound exposition of Shari'a law suffered from certain drawbacks during colonial rule.

In Chapter 3, the author traces the evolution of Muslim family law in India during the period of 1947-1970. Through analysis of many judicial decisions delivered during this period, the author noted that the Indian court had taken a rigid approach to the interpretation of Muslim family law. Chapter 4 contains evolution of Muslim family law in Pakistan during the similar period. In contrast to India, during this period, the higher judiciary of Pakistan had adopted rather more proactive and liberal approach to the interpretation of the Muslim Family Law. According to author, this period had witnessed far-reaching changes in two important areas of Muslim family law, first, the higher judiciary asserted their right to independent interpretation of the Qur'an and second, their right to differ from the doctrines of traditionally authoritative legal texts which are not based on any specific injunctions of the Qur'an and Sunnah.

Chapter 5 highlights the development of judicial decisions on Muslim family law in Bangladesh in general and judicial interpretation of Muslim women's legal rights in particular. In this chapter, the author has argued that Bangladesh has demonstrated remarkable judicial maturity and activism regarding Muslim personal law since 1971 as courts are responsive to the new social needs and realities.

Chapter 6 underlines the necessity of judicial activism in the realm of Muslim family law as some rules of the traditional Muslim family law relating to polygamy, divorce, maintenance, custody and guardianship of children, inheritance are incompatible with the changing social conditions of the present times and degrading to Muslim women's legal status and social position. As the legislature is reluctant to amend, alter or reform these laws to meet the demands of a modern, progressive society, the judiciary has to step in to fill up the void in legislation. Even though some beneficial legislation were enacted to address this problem, mere enactment of such laws cannot solve the problems of society at large, unless the judges keep in mind the intention of the legislature and liberally interpret and apply the law. Judicial activism has made it possible to make Muslim family law to adapt with changing needs. Judicial activism has brought about beneficial changes in many areas of Muslim personal law in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh though it has not gone unchallenged. Judicial activism has emerged as an important instrument of creativity in interpretation of law and policy by judges around the world and tool of redressing injustice when legal formalism fails to take into account the demands of justice. But what is a legitimate form of judicial activism that strikes a proper balance between

judicial excessiveness and self-restraint has generated scholarly debate. Therefore, the author has reminded the proper demarcation of judicial activism and sounded a caution against too much judicial law-making which is often ad hoc and piecemeal in nature.

The main contribution of the book lies in the fact that it not only takes a comparative perspective on the development of judicial decisions on Muslim family law in three countries- India, Pakistan and Bangladesh but also offers a clear exposition of vast literature and numerous case laws on the subject. The author rightly emphasizes the necessity for collaboration of the three jurisdictions and the mutual advantages of harmonized approach of addressing the vital issues of reform and modernization of Muslim family law. The author has presented the most up-to-date cases and analysed those from diverse perspectives. In this way, the book is a unique blend of pedagogic value and practical aspects of the issues discussed. The book offers a comprehensive account of development of judicial activism on Muslim personal law in South Asia and examines contours of the concept of balanced judicial activism. This is an important study that illuminates an important dimension of Muslim family law that is less explored in Bangladesh. The book also avoids technical words and legal jargons, which make it extremely readable. No doubt this excellent book will be of great interest to anyone, researchers, practitioners and academics alike, with an interest in Muslim family law.

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