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সংখ্যা ৬৪

চৈত্র ১৪২১-জ্যৈষ্ঠ ১৪২২/এপ্রিল-জুন ২০১৫

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সম্পাদনা পরিষদ

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মোঃ শফিকুল হক

সম্পাদক

ড. এস.এম. জোবায়ের এনামুল করিম

সহকারী সম্পাদক

ড. মোহাম্মদ আমজাদ হোসেন

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Telephone : 7745010-16 (PABX)
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Rajshahi Water Supply and Sewerage Authority: Achievements and Challenges

Dr. Md. Bashirul Alam¹

Abstract: The present study was conducted to assess the achievements of Rajshahi WASA using secondary data in March 2012. Collected information reveals that water supply and related services were improved in last 15 years. Water coverage was 33% in 1995 which increased to 67% in 2010. Per capita per day water production and consumption were 95 liter and 41 liter in 1995 which increased by 10% and 58%(105 liter and 65 liter respectively) in 2010. Services regarding water supply like number of population served, number of house connection, area of water distribution and amount of water sold were increased by 210%, 197%, 524% and 384% respectively from 1995 to 2011. On the other hand, non-revenue water was decreased from 56% (in 1995) to 38% in 2011. All these improvements indicate that management efficiency of Rajshahi WASA was increased considerably in last 16 years. Some challenges were also identified during the research. These were: poor tariff structure, lack of sufficient investment, higher non-revenue water, excess extraction of ground water, unplanned city, lack of necessary manpower and water contamination. Improvement of billing structure, arranging sufficient fund from donor agencies, reduction of non-revenue water, optimum use of surface water, planned city, appointment of necessary manpower and improvement of water quality by reducing contamination were the suggestions to face the challenges.

1. Introduction

1.1 Prelude

Rajshahi City is one of the seven divisional headquarters located in the north-western part of Bangladesh with 787180 people in the total area of 93.47 square kilometers. Population growth rate is about 1.10%. With the increase of population the demand for water and sanitation is increasing day by day. To meet water supply and sanitation needs of the citizens, Rajshahi Water Supply & Sewerage Authority (Rajshahi WASA) was established in 1st August 2010 to provide safe and sufficient water for drinking, industrial and commercial purposes. Before that it was under Rajshahi City Corporation as Water Supply Section. Another objective was to establish improved sewerage system in the city area. But still now it is working only on supply of water to the consumers. There is no any central sewerage system maintained by the government or by any other authority in Rajshahi city. After getting its new entity Rajshahi WASA is maintaining its continuity regarding water supply as water supply section

¹ Chief Estate Officer(west) (Deputy Secretary), Bangladesh Railway, Railbhaban, Rajshahi.

performed earlier. With the advancement of time performances of this organization has been improved no doubt. But no intensive research was carried out on this fissue. The present research is an attempt to assess the achievements of Rajshahi WASA over years.

1.2 Historical Development of Rajshahi WASA

The history of Rajshahi city is quite old. There are different opinions about the nomenclature of this district. According to historian Akshoy Kumar Maytreo, Rajshahi was named by the Jaminder of Natore Rani Bhabani. It is assumed that Rajshahi town was developed by the union of two villages namely- Rampur and Boalia. Primarily it was called Rampur-Boalia but the name Rajshahi became more popular later on². There is another opinion that in 15th century Raja Khan who was popularly known as Raja Gyanesh conquered this area defeating the Sultan of Gaur and took the title Raja Shah. It is generally believed that the name of this city might have been derived from that name-Raja Shah.³

Once upon a time the district headquarter of Rajshahi was at Natore up to 1825. After that district headquarters was shifted to Rampur-Boalia considering Natore as an unhygienic city due to excess water logging⁴. After 51 years in April 1876 Rajshahi Municipality was established during Lieutenant General Sir Richard Tempol (1874-1876). Total population of Rajshahi city was 15000 only. Water supply for drinking and other domestic purposes was one of the major services delivered by the municipality. As Rajshahi city is situated on the bank of river Padma, citizens of Rajshahi city used river water for their daily necessities. On the other hand, there was good number of ponds, ring well and hand tube wells in city area. The then Jamindar maintained these water sources for their raiyot. But due to overgrowth of population of the city, modernization in water supply system became very urgent. Moreover, due to use of unhygienic and untreated water of those open sources citizens were attacked by various water bourne diseases. In 1936 Rajshahi municipality became under electric supply. As a result, water supply

2 Deputy Commissioner's Office, Rajshahi, 2011(www.dcRajshahi.gov.bd(accessed on 20 April, 2012).

3 Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics(BBS), Bangladesh Population Census Report 2001: Community Series: Zila Rajshahi (Dhaka: Reproduction, Documentation and Publishing Wing, BBS, Planning Division, Ministry of Planning, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, 2001), pp.1-4.

4 Ibid

through pipeline was started under the project "Maharani Hemanta Kumari Water Works" in 1937. Maharani Hamanta Kumari was the then Jamindar of Puthia.

Rajshahi municipality started supply of safe drinking water through pipe line in 1937 when D. N. Dasgupta was municipal chairman (1934-1939). A water supply project was taken costing Tk. 257285 out of which Tk. 65000 was paid by the then Jamindar of Puthia Maharani Hemanta Kumari. In the honor of the then Puthia Jamindar the project was named "Maharani Hemanta Kumari's Water Works". Under that project a central water treatment plant was constructed at Hatemkhan area of Rajshahi city (Photo 1). The system had more than 100 street water reservoirs (Dhopkal), each with a capacity of 1779 liters. The street reservoirs were connected to a centrally built iron and hardness removal plant, with a capacity of 700m³ water/day and an elevated service reservoir through reticulated distribution pipes. People collected water from that street reservoir. More than 400 people collected water from one Dhopkal. The mechanism of central reservoir and Dhopkal was very scientific. The project was implemented by the Department of Public Health Engineering, Rajshahi. But with the advance of time, due to population increase and hence expansion of city area, the Dhopkals was destroyed for the construction of roads and buildings. As a result, the central reservoir became abundant in 1965.



Photo 1: Iron and hardness removal plant



Photo 2: Street water reservoir
(Local name Dhopkal)

The Ministry of Works, Calcutta, India started ground water supply system in Rajshahi city. After treating ground water by physico-chemical process water was supplied through pipe lines to the houses. Department

১ আনারুল হক আনা, রাজশাহী মহানগরীর কথা, ২য় সংস্করণ, আলীগড় লাইব্রেরী, ঢাকা/রাজশাহী, ২০০৭। পৃ.-১১৭।

Supply and Sewerage Authority (Rajshahi WASA) was established in 1st August 2010 as an autonomous body under the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. The mission of Rajshahi WASA is to provide safe and sufficient water for drinking, industrial and commercial use. The main responsibility of Rajshahi WASA is:

- Construction, operation and maintenance of the necessary infrastructure for collecting, treating, preserving and supplying water to household, industries and commercial concerns,
- Construction, operation, improvement and maintenance of the necessary infrastructure for collecting, treating and disposing domestic sewerage and other sewerage and
- Construction, operation, improvement and maintenance of the necessary infrastructures for storm water drainage facilities of the city.

1.3 Objectives of the study

The study was conducted with the following objectives:

- 1) To assess the achievements of Rajshahi WASA over years
- 2) To identify the challenges faced by Rajshahi WASA and
- 3) To make some suggestions to solve those challenges

2. Methodology

The data of the present study were mainly collected from various official documents of Rajshahi WASA and other government offices as secondary sources through content analysis method. Data were also collected from concerned government documents, related literatures, books, journals, news papers, articles, theses, and web sites. Face to face interviews were conducted with structured questionnaire with Managing Director and other officials of Rajshahi WASA for necessary information. Descriptive statistics such as mean, percentage etc. were used to describe the variables/indicators of the study. After analysis of data results were presented in various tables and graphs.

3. Achievements of Rajshahi WASA

3.1 Water coverage of Rajshahi WASA

The water coverage of Rajshahi WASA is shown in Table 1 and Figure 1. From Table 1 it is seen that water coverage through household connection and public water points were 32% and 1% respectively in 1995 which increased to 62% and 5% respectively in 2011. The increment in water connections and public water points were 94% and 400% respectively. The total water coverage was 33% in 1995 which increased to almost double (67%) in 2011(Figure 1).

Table 1: Water coverage of Rajshahi WASA

Coverage through (%)	1995	2000	2005	2011	% change from 1995 to 2011
1. Household connection	32	41	59	62	94
2. Public Water points	1	2	3	5	400
3. Total coverage	33	43	62	67	103

Source: Official documents of Rajshahi WASA

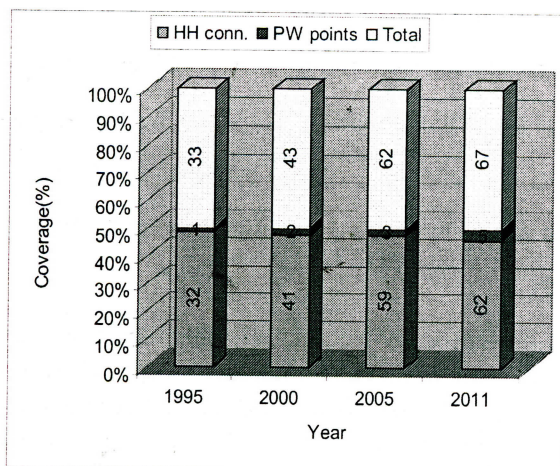


Figure 1: Water coverage of Rajshahi WASA

Note: HH=Household, PW= Public Water

3.2 Water production and consumption

Table 2 shows the water production and consumption of Rajshahi WASA. The data contained in Table 2 indicate that total water production was 16188 cubic meter per day in 1995 which increased to 55440 cubic meter per day in 2011. The growth in water production was 242%. The per capita production and consumption of water was 95 liter and 41 liter

respectively in 1995 which increased to 105 liter and 65 liter respectively in 2011(Figure 2). The rate of increment was 10% and 58% respectively. Due to increase in the number of population of the city over years, both production and consumption of water have been increased.

Table 2: Water production and consumption

Parameters	1995	2000	2005	2011	% change from 1995 to 2011
1. Water production(lpcd)	95	81	87	105	10
2. Water consumption (lpcd)	41	42	50	65	58
3. Total water production (m ³ /day)	16188	20160	32640	55440	242

Source: Official documents of Rajshahi WASA

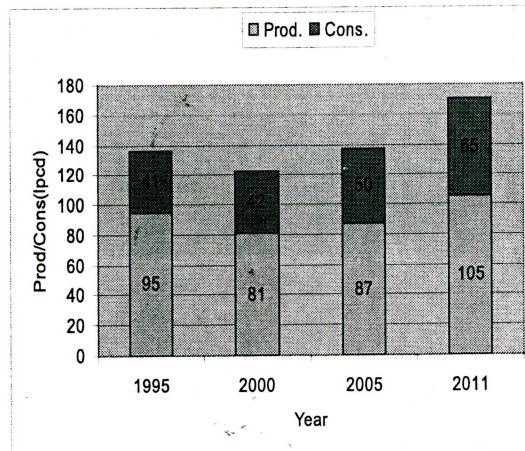


Figure 2: Production and consumption of water

Note: Prod.=Production, Cons.=Consumption

3.3 Non-revenue water (NRW)

The information regarding non-revenue water is presented in Table 3 and Figure 3. From the data furnished in Table 3, it is illustrated that non-revenue water of Rajshahi WASA is decreasing gradually. In 1995 the amount of non-revenue water was 56% which decreased to 38% in 2011(Figure 3). Non-revenue water through pipe line and individual house connection were 111 m³ meter per kilometer per day and 0.90 m³ meter per connection respectively in 1995 which decreased to 42 m³ meters per kilometer per day and 0.71 m³ per connection respectively in 2011. The rate of decrease was 62% and 27% respectively. The overall decrease in non-revenue water was mainly due to improved management efficiency. Rajshahi WASA has fixed a target to reduce it from 38% to

23% (International standard).

Table 3: Non-revenue water (%)

Type of non-revenue water	1995	2000	2005	2011	% change from 1995 to 2011
1. Non-revenue water (%)	56	49	42	38	-32
2. Non-revenue water (m ³ /km/d)	111	49	40	42	-62
3. Non-revenue water (m ³ /conn/d)	0.90	0.67	0.63	0.71	-27

Source: Official documents of Rajshahi WASA

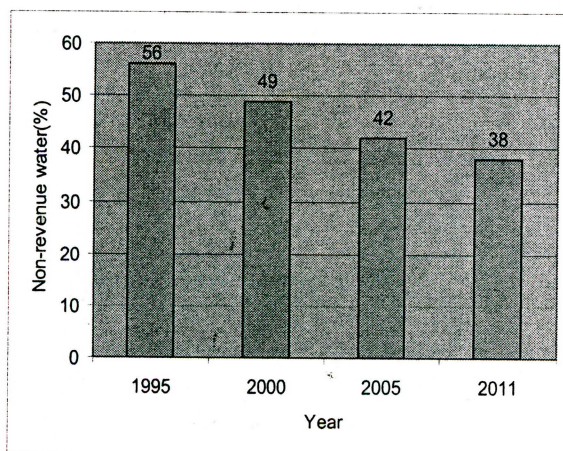


Figure 3: Non-revenue water of Rajshahi WASA

3.4 Water services of Rajshahi WASA

Water services of Rajshahi WASA are shown in Table 4 and Figure 4. From the table, it is observed that population served by water connection, number of water connection, length of water distribution and total water sold in 1995 were 170000, 10090, 82 km and 7063 m³ per day respectively. After 16 years these services were tremendously increased to 528000, 30000, 512 km and 34200 m³ per day respectively in 2011. The increments were 210%, 197%, 524% and 384% respectively. Increment of different parameters of water services of Rajshahi WASA were mainly due to good management.

Table 4: Water services of Rajshahi WASA

Type of water services	1995	2000	2005	2011	% change from 1995 to 2011
1. Population served by connection	170000	239000	374000	528000	210
2. House connection (no.)	10090	14610	21690	30000	197
3. Length of water distribution (km)	82	198	348	512	524
4. Total water sold (m ³ /year)	7063	10373	18870	34200	384
5. Total water production (m ³ /day)	16188	20160	32640	55440	242

Source: Official documents of Rajshahi WASA

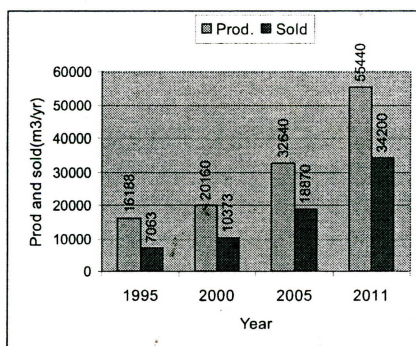


Figure 4: Production vs sold water of Rajshahi WASA

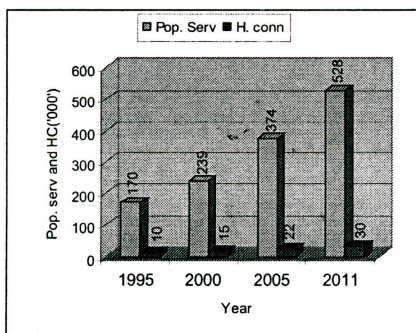


Figure 5: Population served and house connection of Rajshahi WASA

3.5 Quality of service provided by Rajshahi WASA

Table 5 shows the quality of services provided by Rajshahi WASA to the citizens. Duration of water supply was 8 hours/day in 1995 which increased to 12 hours/day in 2011. The duration of water supply through pump machine operation was increased by 50% in last 16 years. As a results number of complaints by the citizens was reduced to a considerable number. The number of complaints alleged by the citizens

was 3650 in 1995 which reduced to 2555 in 2011. The rate of decrease was 30%. Increased duration of water supply ensures water production satisfies customers that reduces complaints.

Table 5: Quality of service provided by Rajshahi WASA

Parameters	1995	2000	2005	2011	% change from 1995 to 2011
1. Duration of service(hrs/d)	8	9	10	12	50
2. Number of complaints	3650	2920	2785	2555	-30

Source: Official documents of Rajshahi WASA

3.6 Total water operational cost

Various operational costs are shown in Table 6 and Figure 6. The labor cost, electricity cost and other cost were Tk. 92 lac, Tk. 68 lac and Tk. 38 lac respectively in 1995. After 16 years these costs were increased to Tk. 259 lac, Tk. 252 lac and Tk. 122 lac respectively in 2011. The rate of increments was 182%, 268% and 223% respectively. Increase in all types of costs was reflected in total cost of water production. In 1995 total cost was Tk. 198 lac which increased to Tk. 633 lac in 2011(Figure 6). Due to inflation of price of different items, the total cost of production was increased.

Table 6: Total water operational cost

Type of cost	1995	2000	2005	2011	% change from 1995 to 2011
1. Labor cost/yr (Lac Tk.)	92	156	158	259	182
2. Electricity cost/yr (Lac Tk.)	68	86	144	252	268
3. Other cost/yr (Lac Tk.)	38	55	89	122	223
4. Total cost/yr (Lac Tk.)	198	297	391	633	220

Source: Official documents of Rajshahi WASA

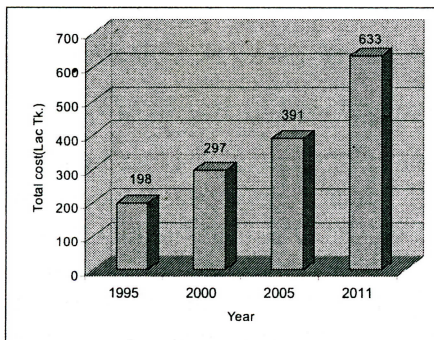


Figure 6: Total operating cost over year

3.7 Revenue earning from water

Revenues earned by Rajshahi WASA from water are presented in Table 7 and Figure 7. The data presented in the table indicate that average tariff and connection charges in 1995 were Tk. 40 per month per connection and Tk. 912 per connection respectively which increased to Tk. 125 per month and Tk. 2653 per connection respectively in 2011. The increments were 212% and 191% from 1995 to 2011. The total revenue earning was Tk. 53 lac in 1995 which increased to Tk. 482 lac in 2011 (Figure 7). A significant change in revenue earning was found in last 16 years and it was 809%. The collection efficiency was also increased to considerable amount. In 1995 collection efficiency was 41% which after 16 years (2011) increased to 54%. Increased manpower and their efficiency have increased collection efficiency.

Table 7: Water operating revenue

Type of revenue	1995	2000	2005	2011	% change from 1995 to 2011
1. Average water tariff (Tk./month/conn.)	40	60	90	125	
2. Average number of house conn./month	45	60	75	100	
3. Connection charges/house(Tk.)	912	1638	1905	2653	
4. Total yearly revenue (Lac Tk.)	53	117	251	482	
5. Collection efficiency (%)	41	43	47	54	

Source: Official documents of Rajshahi WASA

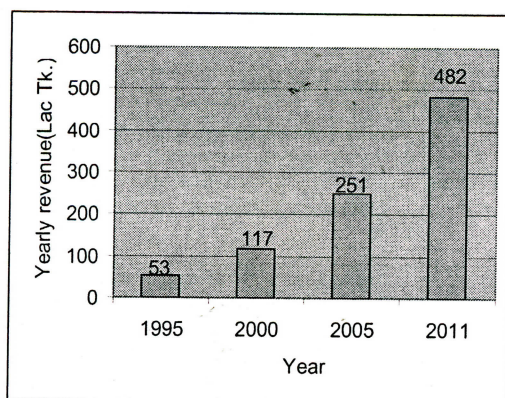


Figure 7: Yearly revenue of Rajshahi WASA

3.8. Key Performance Indicator (KPI)

Rajshahi WASA has already practiced the Benchmarking and Performance Improvement Program (PIP) by using the International Benchmarking Network (IB-Net) format and the Key results of benchmarking data and PIP of Rajshahi WASA are following.

Table 8: Key Performance Indicator (KPI) of Rajshahi WASA

Name of performance indicators	Rajshahi WASA status	Developing countries' standard
1. Population coverage by water supply	67 %	100 %
2. Continuity of water supply	12 hrs/day	24 hrs/day
3. Consumption of water	65 lpcd(liter per capita per day)	145 lpcd(liter per capita per day)
4. Operating ratio	1.30	0.70
5. Collection efficiency	54 %	90 %
6. Non revenue water	38 %	23 %
7. Staff / 1000 connections	7.87	5.00
8. Water quality	Hardness : 300-400 mg/L Iron : 3.5-2.4 mg/L Manganese : 2.0-1.0 mg/L Arsenic : <0.01 mg/L Faecal coli form : 10-12 /100ml	Hardness : 200-500 mg/L Iron : 0.3-1.0 mg/L Manganese : 0.1 mg/L Arsenic : 0.05 mg/L Faecal coli form : Zero

Source: Official documents of Rajshahi WASA

3.9 Targets of Rajshahi WASA:

Table 9: Targets of Rajshahi WASA

Area of performance improvement	Proposed components
Increase water coverage (Form 67% to 100%)	1. Installation of various pipe lines 2. Procurement of water tanker
Increase consumption of water (form 65 lpcd to 145 lpcd)	1. Installation of Production tube-well and water treatment plants 2. Procurement of regeneration unit & water flow meter for each PTW
Decrease operating ratio (form 1.3 to 0.70)	1. Procurement of O&M equipment. 2. Procurement of submersible pump motor for replacing old turbine pump. 3. Installing water flow meter at house connection.
Increase collection efficiency (Form 54% to 90%)	1. Customized software & preparation of computerized Billing System.
Decrease non-revenue water (Form 38% to 23%)	1. Preparation of GIS based pipe line network map. 2. Installing water meter at each house connection.
Improved water quality	1. Procurement of water test lab equipment 2. Installation of washout.

4. Challenges/Problems Faced by Rajshahi WASA

4.1 Poor tariff structure: The problems of tariff structures are: a) Poor billing and collection system (manual billing system). b) Comparatively lower water tariff (3.86 Tk. /m³). c) Lack of tax paying habit of the citizens (About Tk. 80 million water tax is unpaid). d) Comparatively high intensity of non-revenue water (38%) and e) Lower operation ratio (1.30). At the moment Rajshahi WASA provides the cheapest water in the world. The price of 1 cubic meter (1000 liter) of water is only Tk. 3.86(0.04 USD). Provision of water at low cost to the city dwellers is listed as one of the achievements of Rajshahi WASA. Rajshahi WASA is trying to reduce the operating ratio from 0.79 to 0.70 by the end of this year.

The major concern faced by the Rajshahi WASA due to low tariff results less revenue than the cost of supplying water. In 2010-11 financial years the total cost of production was Tk. 633 lac while the total revenue was Tk. 482 lac. Full cost recovery is essential for successful management of water supply. The appropriate water tariff is very much required for Rajshahi WASA to balance the benefits and costs of water usage and to ensure sufficient revenue for the long-term financial sustainability of the water supply business. However low revenues limit the utility's to make a higher contribution to investments.

4.2 Large Investment: Lack of sufficient fund for taking development projects is another challenge for Rajshahi WASA. As a new organization Rajshahi WASA is yet to manage development fund. But it needs massive investment for both production and treatment surface water in order to replace extraction of ground water as it is becoming no more viable. Treating surface water requires huge investment and this is a great challenge for Rajshahi WASA. At present Rajshahi WASA is running one large surface water treatment plant with the help of the government. There is also a great need for more investments in establishing more treatment plants in order to meet the fast-growing water demand in Rajshahi city.

4.3 Non-revenue water: After establishment of Rajshahi WASA, it is trying to reduce unaccounted for water losses and poor performance in revenue collection. In Rajshahi, there is substantial portion of Non-revenue water (NRW) (38%) and system loss which is not billed and this is due to leakage and illegal connections. The reduction of NRW is one of the major challenges for Rajshahi WASA. The rehabilitation and

optimization of Rajshahi WASA's water distribution network is required to minimize losses and to enable 24-pressurized water supply. Rajshahi WASA also needs provision of water quality assurance and control measures to address this challenge.

4.4 Switching to surface water from ground water extraction: Rajshahi WASA has 67% water coverage and water demand in Rajshahi city is 118.07 million liter per day (MLD), which more than double to its supply. At present 99% of the supplied water is from ground water abstraction from Rajshahi WASA's 70 production tube wells. The remaining 1% water come surface water treatments. Ground water depletion is occurring at an alarming rate. In most places the layer of ground water has been decreasing by 2-3 meters each year due to lifting of ground water. Rajshahi WASA has to change its focus to using surface water instead of underground water because abstracting ground water is no longer ecologically viable. The ground water aquifer inevitably and urgently needs to be recharged through rain water harvesting. But in Rajshahi region rainfall is comparatively lower than that of other regions of Bangladesh. Moreover, source of surface water near Rajshahi city is very limited. The Padma river and other wetlands are gradually silted and dried up. Points of Padma river in which water is available throughout the year are of long distance (15-30km) from Rajshahi.

However, treating surface water is much more technically complex and expensive than using ground water. Treating surface water became a great challenge for Rajshahi WASA because the large rivers nearest to Rajshahi city are also quite polluted due to indiscriminate discharge of domestic waste water and some industrial effluent. The water quality situation would further deteriorate if no pollution control measures in Rajshahi watershed are undertaken. Continuous falling of ground water layer due to excess use of underground water for irrigation in Rajshahi region. But natural sources of water (river, ponds, beels, haors etc.) for irrigation have been silted up and becoming dried. As a result, farmers have to use underground water for irrigation. Especially in summer season use of underground water is increased due excess need of crops.

4.5 Unplanned City Development and Growth: The rapid growth of Rajshahi city also causes high demand for water along with housing, electricity and gas. Due to tremendous geographical expansion and population growth over the last two decades, the city was developed in a very unplanned manner and as such the planning for the Rajshahi WASA activities is modified time to time to meet fast-growing demand of

Rajshahi city for water and still this is one of the challenges for Rajshahi WASA.

4.6 Lack of efficient manpower: As a new organization Rajshahi WASA is suffering from shortage of efficient manpower. Before establishing Rajshahi WASA water supply section of Rajshahi City Corporation (RCC) looked after the water supply service. After the formation of Rajshahi WASA 62 officers and staffs of water supply section of RCC have been absorbed into Rajshahi WASA. They are only the permanent staffs of Rajshahi WASA. There are some temporary staffs also. But with these limited number of staffs' activities of WASA has become very tough. The organogram of Rajshahi WASA have not yet been approved by competent authority. Without approved organogram Rajshahi WASA could not appoint sufficient manpower for its operation and maintenance activities. So, this is a very vital problem for Rajshahi WASA.

4.7 Contamination of drinking water: During production water is almost safe for drinking and other purposes. But when it is supplied through pipe line became contaminated by biological and chemical means. The chemical contaminants are: excess hardness (300-400 mg/L), iron (2.4-3.5 mg/L) and manganese (1-2 mg/L). On the other hand, biological contaminant is presence of Coliform bacteria (10-12/100ml water) in pipeline.

5. How to Overcome the Challenges

5.1 To Improve Tariff Structure: Probable suggestions are

- Initiation of computerized billing system
- Payment of water tax through banking channel
- Water tariff should be rationalized
- Rajshahi WASA staffs should be trained by experienced Dhaka WASA officials
- Motivation through media (Newspaper, Television etc.) to pay tax regularly.

5.2 Arrangement of sufficient fund

- Timely submission of development project to the government
- Fruitful communication with donor agencies for development fund
- Rajshahi WASA should be financially solvent gradually by revenue earning

5.3 Reduction of Non-revenue Water (from 38% to 23%)

- Reduce water leakage
- Disconnection of illegal water users
- Preparation of GIS pipe line network system

5.4 Optimum Use of Surface Water

- Establishing surface water treatment plant
- Water may be carried out from those points by pipe line.

5.5 Planned city

Rajshahi Development Authority should work for a "Planned Rajshahi City" in coordination with Rajshahi City Corporation, Rajshahi WASA and other related agencies to make Rajshahi as a planned city.

5.6 Appointment of Sufficient Manpower

- The government should approve the Rajshahi WASA organogram for smooth functioning
- After getting the approval of organogram, Rajshahi WASA should appoint necessary manpower to run water supply activities smoothly.

5.7 Reduction of water contamination

- Installation of water test laboratory
- Installation of sufficient water treatment plant
- Installation of washout.

6. Future Development Plan of Rajshahi WASA

Future urbanization, rapid population growth and water demand Rajshahi WASA has taken four development projects for long-term achievements. These are as follows:

1. Development of Water Supply System in Rajshahi City.
2. Feasibility Study for Water Supply in Rajshahi City.
3. Development of Sewerage System in Rajshahi City

7. Conclusions

Though Rajshahi WASA is a very new organization, it is working hard to supply safe water for drinking and other purposes as per requirement of the citizens. Since Rajshahi city is growing rapidly in area and population. So, it is a great challenge for Rajshahi WASA to ensure water of adequate quantity and quality round the year. The ground water table is rapidly declining due to excess abstraction. Therefore, ground water is no longer a viable option. Rajshahi WASA needs sufficient funds for establishing more production tube well, surface water treatment plants and rehabilitation of water pipe lines as well as 100% metering. As new organizations existence of problems in the water supply system of Rajshahi WASA is very much natural. It is also true that challenges/problems faced by Rajshahi WASA are complex in nature but not impossible to solve. Some suggestions have been made to solve those challenges regarding water supply and sewerage system in Rajshahi city. If the government and donor agencies extend their hands of cooperation in this regard then Rajshahi WASA will be able to overcome those challenges and serve the people of Rajshahi city by supplying safe water for drinking and other purposes.

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আনারুল হক আনা, রাজশাহী মহানগরীর কথা, ২য় সংস্করণ, আলীগড় লাইব্রেরী, ঢাকা/রাজশাহী, ২০০৭।

Comprehending the Solutions of Rohingya Refugee and underneath Politics: Bangladesh-Myanmar Perspectives.

Md. Jahangir Alam¹
Tauhid Hossain Khan²

Abstract: In the history no 'Rohingya' word exists before 1951. As a Muslim minority group, Rohingya face systematic discrimination. An outbreak of severe violence in the western Burmese state of Rakhine has refocused international and regional attention on the issue of the area's stateless Muslim threatening to destabilize. An escalation of violence involving local Buddhist and Muslim communities that resulted in an unknown number of deaths and hundreds of home burning. The government, including the military, police and local security forces, has responded with violence including mass arrests and reported use of torture against the Rohingya population. Tensions in the region, which borders Bangladesh, have historically been fueled by Myanmar's denial of citizenship to the Rohingya who are also not recognized as one of the country's official ethnic nationalities. In this paper we have spent the past several years documenting the plight of the Rohingya and believe their story is one of the most forgotten, neglected and worst cases of human rights abuse in Asia. In Myanmar, the Rohingya have been abused, excluded and denied the most basic of human rights and citizenship. As refugees in Bangladesh, they have been neglected and forced to exist in the darkest margins of society, they are unwanted and unwelcome. This paper exposes the stories and also provides evidence of their sheer courage to stay alive whatever the ground beneath their feet which capture the suffering, the struggle and the fortitude of the Rohingya. The paper is accompanied by short accounts of the lives of the subjects and collectively these provide an illuminating cross-section of Rohingya issues.

Keywords: Rohingya, Refugee, Bangladesh, Myanmar.

1. Introduction

Rohingya people who are living in Myanmar don't have rights. Even a bird has rights which can build a nest, give birth, bring food to their children and raise them until they are ready to fly. We don't have basic rights.³ Disowned and excluded by the 1974 Emergency Immigration Act and 1982 Citizenship Act of Myanmar, the Arakanese⁴ living in the northwestern part of the Rakhine State of Myanmar are the world's

1 Assistant Professor, Japan Study Center, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh.

2 Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, Jagannath University, Bangladesh.

3 Constantine, Greg (2012) Exiled to Nowhere: Myanmar's Rohingya. Canada: UNHCR.

4 The Arakanese Muslims also known as Rohingyas.

'nowhere people' with a long history of institutionalized discrimination, state-backed oppression and systematic alienation from the society and state. Since the 1970s, different waves of refugees have arrived in Bangladesh including the major ones in 1978, 1991, 1992 and the latest in 2012.⁵ Failure to draw a plausible consensus between the government of Bangladesh and the government of Myanmar on Rohingya issue has made a durable solution for the refugee situation in Bangladesh elusive. The lives of around 29,000 registered refugees with some 200,000-300,000 unregistered refugees are still now in limbo.⁶ The UNHCR and other human rights organization working for their access to food, fuel, healthcare, education and other basic rights. Only three States are parties to the 1951 Refugee Convention and only one State has signed the 1954 Statelessness Convention. The lack of asylum laws and diversity of national legal frameworks, as well as government practices and protection environments in the region's countries, make achieving regional harmonization challenging. Rohingya exodus of 2012 turned out tortuous as the government of Bangladesh strictly denied hosting new refugees on a durable basis given its incapability and resource constraints. Bangladesh was facing the dilemma between humanity vs. reality. Local politics and the sensitivities of the local people toward the Rohingyas resurfaced sturdily which later made the situation even more complicated for the Bangladesh government to reach in a durable solution. Following such a crisis, while the international community had pressured the Bangladesh government to open up her border for the new influx of Rohingya refugees, they failed to pressurize the Myanmar authority to address and fix this long standing problem effectively.

2. Conceptual framework of the study

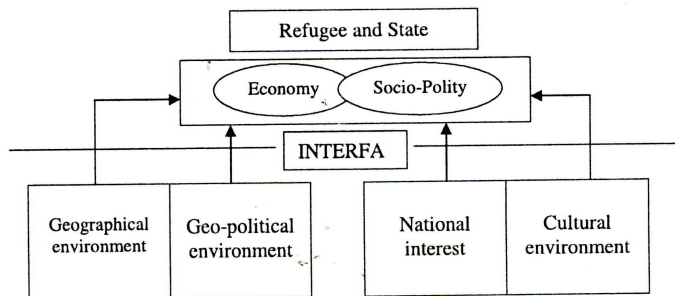
Refugee intrusion across the Bangladesh and Myanmar border as a direct threat to national sovereignty and progress, nevertheless, we should never forget our own agony of being refugee in the recent past that dates back to Liberation War of 1971. In the face of the potential threat of being environmental refugees in the near future, we need to be more compassionate for our fellow human beings who are suffering to their deaths. It is true that Bangladesh may no longer host new Rohingya refugees for a prolonged time period, but it is even more absolute that

5 Nemoto, Kei (2000) The Rohingya Issue: A Thorny Obstacle between Myanmar (Myanmar) and Bangladesh available in http://www.Myanmarlibrary.org/docs14/Kei_Nemoto-Rohingya.pdf, accessed on November 23, 2014.

6 UNHCR Bangladesh Fact-sheet, March 2014

turning Bangladesh's back from those 'unwanted' Rohingyas and pushing their boats to the open sea with an uncertain future are not going to limit or avert refugee problems. It is rather important for the state actor to find out the plausible and doable policy solutions to manage the already stationed refugees and the potential influx of Rohingya refugees effectively. Besides that any attempt taken by the Bangladesh government will not act appropriately if the other stakeholder, that is Myanmar, is not involved in the process. Additionally the international community including state and non state actors like the media and human rights organizations have also important and meaningful role to play in regard of Rohingya issue. Managing Rohingya refugee exodus is no longer just a matter of Bangladesh. Hence Bangladesh can't solve this issue single handed. In this milieu, it's also important to understand the response of the state and non-state actors to the Rohingya refugee issue and also the intricate play of politics that drive their moves.

Diagram 1: Refugee and state relations



Refugee management issue is important in the context of Bangladesh particularly because sectarian violence and state backed discrimination have compelled hundreds and thousands of Rohingyas to flee from Rakhine state to neighboring Bangladesh. The recent two major outbreaks of clash since June, 2012 causing more than 1,10,000 people displaced most of who have fled to Bangladesh. In the face of resource constraints, while hosting any more refugees on a durable basis is getting difficult for Bangladesh, time has ripen on part of Myanmar for initiating new and effective strategies to address and fix this long standing problem. After remaining a long time under tyrannical rule, the political environment of Myanmar is recently experiencing new changes in the wind. Myanmar is in its transition toward democracy. Recognizing the Rohingya issue as of great importance for both Bangladesh and

Myanmar, we have found this issue both important and interesting since the Rohingya problem is also a problem for Bangladesh and it is the collective responsibility of the international community including the state and non state actors.⁷ Bangladesh and of course, Myanmar to work united and dedicatedly to bring effective and sustainable change.

3. Objective of the study

This paper attempted to expose the possible solutions of the Rohingya crisis on part of Bangladesh and Myanmar and also to reflect the politics over these solutions. Finally an attempt has been taken to illustrate a sketch of the future outlook of this problem which is so uncertain up to now. The paper also opens with a succinct history of the Rohingya and a time line of their repression within Myanmar since the early 1960s. We would strongly recommend the ability to address such an important issue and to capture it so movingly is impressive. This paper is an intelligent way to bring us deeper into worldly issues beyond the typical centralized governmental disagreements that absorb so much of our mass media today.

4. Methodology of the Study

This research is a qualitative one. In order to proceed in our research work, we have used survey method where data were collected through expert interview including academia and secondary sources. Expert interviews included NGO personnel working on Rohingya refugees, politicians and government personnel. The reason behind interviewing people of the policy level is to find out state's outlook on this issue and to incorporate the attitudes of government people and the existing strategies in the policy level to deal with refugees. Although, interviewing the local politicians and government representatives of Cox's Bazar would be of immensely beneficial for this respective research, given the time limitation and resource constraints, our focus was rather to follow alternative approaches to attain the most appropriate data while stationed at Dhaka within the limited time frame ranging from March, 2014 to October, 2014 and to update the findings of the paper and facilitate our understanding of how the government of Bangladesh could manage the refugee issues.

7 UNHCR Bangladesh Fact-sheet, March 2014.

5. Present status of Rohingya Refugee in Bangladesh

The Rohingya are a Muslim minority who has lived in the Arakan State of western Myanmar for generations. Myanmar and Rakhine is predominantly Buddhist, the Rohingya have been the minority in Rakhine and their connection to Myanmar has been challenged and manipulated by successive Burmese governments. It's estimated that some 800,000 Rohingya live in the townships of North Rakhine. The legacy of persecution against the Rohingya that there are up to 300,000 Rohingya living in Bangladesh and most are not recognized as refugees and tens of thousands living in Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, and several other countries in the region.⁸ In Myanmar, Rohingya people are subjected to forced labor, land seizures, religious persecution, arbitrary taxes, and constant harassment from the Burmese security force Nasaka.⁹ The Rohingya are a Muslim minority group who predominantly live in the isolated North Rakhine State of western Myanmar. Over the course of only a few months in 1978, many Rohingya fled Myanmar when authorities launched Operation Naga Min, to root out people who lived in Myanmar illegally. But less than three years later, the Burmese government passed the 1982 Citizenship Act, which effectively denied citizenship to the Rohingya. Nations around the world have legislation that defines the criteria on which citizenship is extended to an individual. But the significance of Myanmar's 1982 Citizenship Act is that one of the motives for the drafting of the act was not to define who belonged, but rather who was excluded. In many ways, the Citizenship Act formalized the exclusion that the Rohingya had experienced at the hands of the Burmese military junta since 1961, when General Ne Win took over the country in a military coup and set forth the Burmese Way to Socialism.¹⁰ The Citizenship Act created three categories of citizens, and the Rohingya did not fit any of them. The Rohingya are neither citizens of Myanmar nor Bangladesh.¹¹ With no resolution in sight, many young men choose to leave Bangladesh for third countries like Malaysia, Thailand, and even Saudi Arabia in order to send money home to impoverished families.

8 UNHCR Bangladesh Fact-sheet, March 2014

9 Nasaka is the Burmese Government's border security force.

10 Yegar, Moshe (2002) *Between Integration and Secession: The Muslim Communities of the Southern Philippines, Southern Thailand and Western Myanmar*. Oxford: Lexington Books.

11 Uddin, Nasir (2013) *Life in Locker: The State of the Rohingyas in Bangladesh*. London: Scholar's Press. p.56, Siddiqui, Dr.Habib A Long History of Injustice Ignored

6. Present reforms related to Rohingya Refugee in Myanmar

Thirty years after the 1982 Citizenship Act was passed, the Rohingya remain a stateless people. It is the denial of this right to citizenship that has been used to deprive them of many fundamental rights. As a result of the abuse and hardship, it is estimated that some 300,000 Rohingya have left Burma and now live in southern Bangladesh, where most are not recognized as refugees. (Jafar, age 34), who came to Bangladesh with his family in 1991, feels time is running out. So do a growing number of Rohingya who have lived in Bangladesh for years. Myanmar is my home and that is where I want to go back-Jafar says. But none of us have citizenship and because we don't have citizenship we are like a fish out of water, flapping and unable to breathe. If we were to get citizenship in Burma, we would be like the fish that you catch and then throw back into the water where he belongs. But we can't do anything right now. We are still that fish out of water and when a fish is out of water, he suffocates to death. We don't think the Rohingya in Rakhine State have benefited at all from the new reforms. Many of the abuses the Rohingya are subjected to on a daily basis are totally invisible to the international community. They haven't come in the form of violence or killing. These brutal administrative tactics make life so miserable and untenable for the Rohingya that many find they have no choice but to leave Myanmar in order to live with dignity and a normal life. Rohingya will tell you that all the tactics of the Burmese authorities are motivated by one thing to force the Rohingya into Bangladesh.

7. Possible measures and Subsequent Politics to Manage Refugee Crises

The century old oppressions and persecution that the Rohingya people are facing need immediate attention of the state and non state actors. Standing in twenty first century, when human right protection has emerged as a crucial non-traditional security, we, the citizens of the world, could not afford to remain silent after seeing all the miseries that the Rohingyas are experiencing. Lives of the Rohingyas are not well. They are just suffering well and the ruling powers of Myanmar have proved to be brutal, tyrannical and race-blind. They are neither guarantor nor a protector of minority's human rights. The plight of Rohingya has unfortunately failed to attract the concern of many otherwise good-natured Buddhists.¹² Since this problem originated from Myanmar, the

12 Siddiqui, Dr.Habib A Long History of Injustice Ignored: Rohingya: The Forgotten People of Our Time, available at <http://theamericanmuslim.org/> , accessed on 23 November 2014.

Myanmar government has to take the greater responsibilities and therefore, the following part would attempt to identify the remaining scopes where the respective government could work to bring changes in the present Rohingya situation. And after that, considering the fact that Bangladesh is hosting a huge number of Rohingyas as refugees, an effort would be made to depict the possible steps that the Bangladesh government could take to achieve effective solution to the Rohingya problem.

7.1 Solutions on Part of Myanmar

Myanmar holds the greater responsibility to ensure the security and human rights of the Rohingyas. Given the fact that it is the responsibility of every governments to ensure such rights entitled to citizens regardless their race, ethnicity, religion, political ideologies or sex, Myanmar must have to guarantee quality and secured life to its Rohingya minority and also to bring effective changes in the years old conflicting issue. Apart from this humanitarian ground, Myanmar has to do hard to solve this ethnical tension between the Muslims and the Buddhists for reasons that have strong realistic ground. After a prolonged period of closeness and military rule, Myanmar is recently in a transition to democracy and is gradually opening its door to the global community with windows of opportunities. In chorus with the possibility of such potential development, Myanmar has to assure the international community that it is sincerely working on reducing ethnic tensions and promoting greater human rights since the international community is showing their willingness to ease pressures of previous sanctions posed on Myanmar's military regime. If the government of Myanmar fails to do so, it can easily be assumed that the international community would give a second thought over the issue of withdrawing sanctions on Myanmar.

Considering the reasons about why should the Myanmar government would strive to address the Rohingya problem, it is the time when there should be attempt on part of Myanmar to discover the solutions to the Rohingya issue. However, the followings are certain possible steps that can possibly help to reduce tensions between mainstream Buddhists and Rohingya Muslims of Myanmar.

7.1.1 Addressing Status of the Rohingya

As the historical hindsight has made it evident that the ancestors of the Rohingyas lived in the western part of former Myanmar even before the

first Anglo-Burmese war in 1823 and since then, the Rohingyas have been living there generation after generation, by every considerations, they truly deserve to be treated as full citizens of Myanmar.¹³ By the Citizenship Act of 1982, the Myanmar government has withdrawn citizenship rights to the Rohingyas rendering them foreigners in their own land. Such withdrawal of citizenship status has made the Rohingyas unable to coexist with Buddhist majority and also made them not only stateless but also effectively impoverished them. Additionally, such denial of citizenship status has undoubtedly remained the root cause of the Rohingyas' endless cycle of forced migration. Furthermore, in 1977, the Burmese military government launched an operation called Naga Min, or Dragon King, to register the citizens and prosecute the illegal entrants which started in Rakhine State and ended in the mass arrests and persecution, accompanied by violence and brute force, triggered an exodus in 1978 of approximately 200,000 Rohingyas into Bangladesh.¹⁴ Myanmar president Thein Sein's position that the Rohingyas should find their place in other countries, is a breach of citizenship laws grounded in historical claims, let alone the provision for citizenship by naturalization that countries can and do apply in legitimate cases.¹⁵ Awarding citizenship status would also make the Rohingya Muslims more loyal to the Myanmar government, act more reasonably and would create greater sense of togetherness and ownership in long run.

7.1.2 Assimilation with the conventional society

Once awarding the citizenship status to the Rohingyas, what the Myanmar government has to do is to take effective initiatives to integrate the Rohingyas into the mainstream community. The first obstacle to such integration is the Secret Memorandum of 1988. Through this Secret Memorandum, the Myanmar government has begun a project of institutional discrimination towards the Rohingyas following the demands made by the Rakhine Nationalist Democratic Party. Restricted movements for the Rohingya, restricted higher education and professional courses and introduction of a system to control their birth rate are only a few of the many unequal steps that the nationalists wanted to be imposed on the Rohingyas. So, as the integration of the Rohingyas

¹³ The Daily Star, December 3, 2012.

¹⁴ Holland, Médecins Sans Frontiers (2002) 10 Years for the Rohingya Refugees in Bangladesh: Past, Present and Future. p.10.

¹⁵ The Daily Star, September 24, 2012.

into the mainstream community has appeared as one of the plausible solutions to the long standing Rohingya problem, the Myanmar government has to withdraw such mechanism that promote discriminations to the Rohingyas and prevent them from being truly integrated into the mainstream community. Quality education, access to health care and job could enhance the capacity of the Rohingyas to get integrated into the mainstream society which in turn would lessen the chances of ethnic tensions and conflicts with the majority Buddhists.

7.1.3 Stimulate Collective Accord

The legacy of hate politics between the Buddhists and the Muslims of Myanmar has always persisted as a major hindrance in the way of generating communal harmony. Years old hatred, animosity and suspicion might not be overcome all in a sudden but measures could be taken by the government of Myanmar to ease tensions gradually and ruling out the chance of any further ethnical cleansing or oppression. The existing ethnical discords have appeared as bleeding wounds for Myanmar in its transition to democracy and openness. Therefore, it would be more realistic for the government to strive for solving communal tensions. By awarding the citizenship status to the Rohingyas, government could make the majority Buddhists feel that the Rohingya Muslims too are part of their history, culture and society. Erasing suspicions toward each other would contribute to confidence building and create greater harmony in the community that is so very important for a new Myanmar waiting to be opened up to the world.

7.2 Politics over Solutions

Not surprisingly the presence of politics has appeared as reality making the situation of the Rohingyas more adverse and also the solution to this problem more complicated. Finding solutions are somewhat easier than bringing them into force. The play of politics and the related political gains of the parties in power are much more real than any kind of humanitarian thinking; the ruling power's attempt to find out political solution to a humanitarian problem is evident in this regard. The following sub-points would try to highlight the play of politics over the solutions that have protracted the Rohingya problem and made solutions difficult to achieve.

7.2.1 Politics of Religion

Politics over religion has predominantly been a root cause of the Rohingya problem in Myanmar. Throughout the history, Arakan had been ruled as an independent sovereign monarchy by Hindus, Buddhist and Muslims. Arakan was under Muslim influence for approximately 350 years until it was invaded and occupied by Burmese king Boddaw Paya on 28 December 1784.¹⁶ The Rohingya Muslims had coexisted relatively peacefully with the Rakhine Buddhists until the Second World War when the communal riot broke out and the situation worsened when approximately 100,000 Rohingyas were massacred and another 80,000 fled from their ancestral homes on March 28, 1942. In the face of such bitter experience, Muslims carried out an armed rebellion demanding an autonomous state within the Union of Myanmar in 1948 which ultimately failed and resulted in a backlash against the Muslims. Since then, there is a kind of divide and rule policy in place by the Myanmar government that has strained the relationship between the Rohingya Muslims and the Rakhine Buddhists. Today, with a rare exception, most of the Rakhine Buddhists want nothing but decontaminate Arakan of the Rohingya Muslims. The military regime of Myanmar has successfully and systematically used such religious hatred and animosity of the Buddhists and the Muslims to keep them apart.

7.2.2 Policy above Awarding Citizenship Status to the Rohingyas

Awarding citizenship status to the Rohingyas as present remains the most realistic solution to address the statelessness of the Rohingyas. Though the Myanmar government has repeated its commitment to address the Rohingya issues, calm the situations in the Northern Rakhine state and also to address the issue of citizenship for the Rohingya during US President Obama's historic visit to Myanmar, Myanmar President Thein Shein has reportedly held the position that given the present situation, finding a third country to relocate the Rohingyas would be a plausible solution. Such reluctance to recognize the Rohingyas as the citizens of Myanmar is deteriorating the crisis and making it more prolonged. Rohingyas residing in Myanmar are considered by the authorities to be resident foreigners, not citizens and this lack of full citizenship rights in practice means that the Rohingya are subject to other abuses, including restrictions on their freedom of movement, discriminatory limitations on

16 Dr.Habib Siddiqui, A Long History of Injustice Ignored: Rohingya: The Forgotten People of Our Time, available at <http://theamericanmuslim.org/>, accessed on December 7, 2014.

access to education, and arbitrary confiscation of property.¹⁷ The politics that contribute to the denial of citizenship and of the rights that go with it, unavoidably making the achievement of a durable solution to the refugee flows more complicated.

7.2.3 Politics over Local integration

While integration of the Rohingya Muslims into the local community has appeared as a plausible solution, the existing politics has again made the solution difficult to attain. The majority people themselves do not want the Rohingyas to be integrated into the community. They view the Rohingyas as pernicious, capricious and wicked. Therefore, according to them, if the Rohingyas are allowed to be integrated into the local community, they would badly influence the good people, would increase crime rates and destroy the purity of the Buddhist society. Since the Rohingyas are poor and willing to work at a lower wage, the majority Buddhist also presumed that this will create a wage depression against them. All such moves drive the politicians who are also part of the majority to act against the Rohingyas and preventing them from being locally integrated.

7.3 Possible Solutions to the Refugee Crises in Bangladesh

Sectarian violence and state backed discrimination have compelled hundreds and thousands of Rohingyas to flee from Rakhine state to Bangladesh in the year 1978 and 1991. While Bangladesh is currently hosting around 29,000 registered Rohingya refugees and some two to three Lac unregistered, the recent two major outbreaks of clash since June, 2012 in Rakhine state have made more than 1,10,000 people displaced most of whom have fled to Bangladesh in fear of persecution. The dilemma that Bangladesh is facing between humanity vs. reality has further made the scene more complicated. It is, therefore, crucial to find out the possible solutions to the refugee crises on part of Bangladesh. Currently there are three possible solutions to the refugee crisis:

Firstly, Voluntary repatriation to the country of origin if possible,

Secondly, Integration into the asylum country and

Finally, Resettlement in a third country as a final measure.

¹⁷ Human Rights Watch, Burmese Refugees in Bangladesh: Still No Durable Solution. 1 May 2000, C1203 available at <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/3ae6a86f0.html>, accessed December 2, 2014.

7.3.1 Repatriation

The Myanmar government also agreed to an MOU with the UNHCR in November 1993 stating that the refugees would be able to return to their places of origin and be issued appropriate identification papers and assured the returnees 'the same freedom of movement as all other nationals in Rakhine State'; and it also ensured UNHCR's access to all returnees to monitor their reintegration.¹⁸ And only after getting such an assurance of secured presence in Myanmar, the UNHCR took a large scale repatriation program with an aim to repatriate the remaining 190,000 refugees by December 1995. The UNHCR shifted its approach in July 1994, from information sessions to promotion sessions, and from private interviewing to mass registration.¹⁹ The year 1996 marked the arrival of an increasing numbers of Rohingyas, including those previously repatriated, with stories of consistent ill-treatment back home and also marked an increase in the number of refugees reluctant to return home. Apart from such events, the repatriation program continued. Mid-July 1997 marked the time when aggression reached its highest peak causing the deportation of 350 refugees overnight.²⁰ This event initiated a 14 months long strike in the Nayapara by the refugees, involving some militant elements, in which the refugees took over the camps and boycotted humanitarian services and MSF was eventually allowed back in the camp, but other agencies were still barred.²¹ Bangladeshi security forces regained control in the camps by October 1998 resulting in the arrest of hundreds of refugee men and a halt in the repatriation process. Repatriation resumed in November 1998 and in early 2002, the Myanmar authorities verbally agreed to accept approximately 5,000 cleared refugees.²² The last organized repatriation movement from Bangladesh took place in July 2005.

18 Smith, Martin (1991) Myanmar: Insurgency and the politics of Ethnicity. London: Zed Books.p.26

19 Reid, Anthony (1993) Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce, Volume 2 (Expansion and Crisis). London: Yale University Press. p.17.

20 Holland, Médecins Sans Frontiers (2002) 10 Years for the Rohingya Refugees in Bangladesh: Past, Present and Future. p.22.

21 Jilani, AFK. (1999) The Rohingyas of Arakan: Their Quest for Justice. Dhaka: Ahmed Jilani Publication.p.24

22 Uddin, Nasir (2013) Life in Locker: The State of the Rohingyas in Bangladesh. London: Scholar's Press.p.76.

7.3.2 Local Integration

Integrating the Rohingyas into the local community has appeared as a solution to the refugee problem. Local integration involves the long-term or permanent settlement of refugees in the country of first asylum where the success of such integration depends on several factors. These include:

- a. The willingness of the refugees to settle locally;
- b. The receptiveness and commitment of the host country and local population towards the integration of refugee populations;
- c. Access to livelihoods and means for the socio-economic survival;
- d. Opportunities for refugees to acquire citizenship and achieve full integration into the host society.²³

In the total process of local integration, the international community has important role to play which may include financial assistance to the host government, local communities, and to the refugees to assist in their integration into the host society. Apart from all these reluctance of the Bangladeshi government to locally integrate the Rohingyas, local integration might be a feasible solution where sharing the financial burden of integrating the Rohingya into the local society is one option. Local integration, however, must be voluntary.²⁴

7.3.3 Resettlement

Resettlement engages a strategy of transferring refugees from the country of first asylum to a third country which has agreed to provide the refugee with protection. Resettlement is an appropriate protection strategy for refugees whose safety and security cannot be secured in the country of first asylum or who have special humanitarian needs which cannot be met in the country of first asylum and it is also an appropriate durable solution for those who are unable or unwilling to return to their own country or to locally integrate in their country of asylum.²⁵ Recognizing that voluntary repatriation and local integration are not real options in the present context, resettling the Rohingyas in other countries could be another viable option. Donor countries in recent years have offered to resettle thousands of Burmese refugees. Although such proposal may sound

23 UNHCR, *The State of the World's Refugees*, 1997, pp. 92-93, 96-97.

24 UNHCR, *The State of the World's Refugees*, 1997, pp. 92-93, 96-97.

25 Human Rights Watch, *Burmese Refugees in Bangladesh: Still No Durable Solution*, 1 May 2000, C1203 available at <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/3ae6a86f0.html>. Accessed 23 November 2014.

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plausible to many, challenges would definitely be there in terms of implementation.²⁶ There has been little attempt to resettle Rohingya from Bangladesh until recently. This could also be a useful solution where the international community has greater contribution to share in regard of Rohingya refugee crisis.

7.4 Underneath Politics over the Rohingya Crises

Refugees who have fled their country in fear of persecution cannot be forced to repatriate until and unless that is voluntary repatriation and the home country has assured physical and legal safety of the returnees. Unfortunately, there has been well grounded allegation against the government of Bangladesh to often press the refugees to return before the situation in their home country has sufficiently been improved in favor of them. Since these helpless Rohingya people have been accorded prima facie refugee status shortly after their arrival in Bangladesh, under the international law, it is the duty of Bangladesh to provide them assistance and protection. But UNHCR in one of its publication acknowledged that premature or coercive repatriation took place amongst the Rohingya in Bangladesh in 1991-1992, and there is an evident need to prevent any repetition of this scenario.²⁷ A bilateral memorandum of understanding between Bangladesh and Myanmar paved the way to repatriation of some 50,000 Rohingya refugees from September 1992 and November 1993 where the UNHCR participated from October 1992 but withdrew in December when it became clear that the principle of voluntariness was not being respected.²⁸

7.4.1 Politics over Local Integration of the Rohingya People

Local integration could be a plausible solution to the refugee crisis, the play of politics that is so persistent can complicate the situation and make the solution difficult to achieve. In Bangladesh, the government is seriously concerned about the local sensitivities toward the Rohingyas and the associated difficulties that are happening due to hosting refugees. Now, though the official position of the government holds the view that it is unwilling to consider the notion of local integration of the Rohingyas,

26 Available at <http://www.mmtimes.com/index.php/national-news/1778-the-rohingya-conundrum.html>. Accessed on December 4, 2014.

27 Review of the Policy Development and Evaluation Service (PDES) on the UNHCR response to the protracted situations of the stateless Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh, The UNHCR Country Operations Profile, 2012.

28 Human Rights Watch, *Burmese Refugees in Bangladesh: Still No Durable Solution*, 1 May 2000, C1203 available at <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/3ae6a86f0.html>. Accessed December 7, 2014.

the reality is that Bangladeshi society has a history of allowing Rohingyas for integration for decades, if not centuries.²⁹ As is the case revealed by a report of the Human Rights Watch (May, 2000), the Rohingya have been able to make their way into the economy and, in some instances, play a role in the local community and the government apparently is fearing that institutionalization of what already is happening on the ground would attract still more Rohingya, serving as an additional pull factors.

It may be mentioned that information we have got from the local people of the Cox's Bazar are almost same as the regular beliefs that the host community usually hold toward the refugees. They view Rohingyas as problem creating and they also blamed them to be involved in different types of illegal activities. According to local people, crime rates have increased after the Rohingyas came in Cox's Bazar. Moreover, Rohingyas are believed to be involved in the recent Ramu incident where the Buddhist minorities and their holy places were under attack from some religious extremists with political purposes. Given their extreme poor conditions, Rohingyas are willing to work at a lower wage and such willingness would create tensions in employment sector. Such local sentiments are often exploited by the local politicians to gain their personal political gain and such ill motive politicizes the process of integrating the Rohingyas into the local community. Apart from these views, they have also acknowledged the lamentable situation in which the Rohingyas are living. They found the Rohingya situation unchanged or same irrespective of the government in office.

7.4.2 Politics over Resettlement

Recognizing the continuous worsening of situation in Myanmar against Muslims and also the reluctance and incapability of the Bangladesh government to host refugees for a durable basis, attempt could be taken to resettle the refugees in a third country, though implementing such solution in reality might be more challenging. Since 2004, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) has helped to resettled more than 57,000 Burmese refugees from Thailand who belonged to the Karen and Karenni ethnic groups and they were mostly resettled in the US, as well as Australia, Canada and New Zealand.³⁰ But until now there has been little resettlement of Rohingya from Bangladesh which might be

29 Human Rights Watch, *Burmese Refugees in Bangladesh: Still No Durable Solution*, 1 May 2000, C1203 available at <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/3ae6a86f0.html>. Accessed December 7, 2014.

30 Available at <http://www.irinnews.org/indepth/87861/82/Myanmar-s-refugees-still-on-the-run>. Accessed on 23 November 2014.

due to their religious background. Countries like the USA, Canada or New Zealand might be cautious about the reported crime prone and extremist elements present in the Muslim Rohingyas. The Islam phobia on part of these countries is somehow making them reluctant to resettle the Rohingyas in their country. However, it has been reported that Australia has shown interests in hosting Rohingya refugees.

It is noted that emphasis may be given on engaging the stakeholders including Thailand and Malaysia along with Myanmar, Bangladesh in dialogue to resettle the Rohingyas in these countries, whereas he also mentioned the interests and generous funding of the Australian government to solve this issue. Shamsul Bari, PhD (Chairman, RIB) appropriately exposed the reason behind Malaysia's interest in hosting more Rohingya refugees who are supposed to provide the pool of cheap labor. He had also talked about the politics that is very much persistent within and outside the country over the Rohingya issue. Muslim countries, in his opinion, are somehow trying to keep this problem unsolved rather than taking attempts to resettle the Rohingyas.

8. Recommendations

We have tried to make clear the present situation from the perspective of Rohingya Refugee. Some may not count this is a conflict because it has not taken the obvious shape. But it should not be a wise work if we give the decision so early. Because we the academicians of conflict analysis know that conflict crosses many stages to become an obvious one. So, it might be the astute work to identify and find the possible solutions of the conflict when it belongs to the incipient level. We would like to suggest some plausible recommendations to mitigate the problem before taking the fierce shape as follows:

- a. The retribution should be strict in case of the person who are kindles the situation against the minority.
- b. Most of the local people assume that the Refugee of Bangladesh have link with Myanmar.
- c. Special commission should be shaped to overlook the circumstances.
- d. Religion is very touchy issue for all and would be excellent not to share any kind of disparagement relating to religious actions in open.

- e. Confidence building mechanisms should be constant to remove all misperceptions.
- f. The manifestation of dogmatic groups should be prevented through a planned way.
- g. Everybody should be reverential to the religious belief of other.
- h. Particular should have to be constituted to handle any kind of emergency.

9. Conclusion

I am fed up with my life. I neither want to live here nor in Myanmar. I want to go to anywhere else ...anywhere... any place where I can get my own life; I can live a life of human being.³¹ Time Changed but the Rohingya safety security remained unchanged. An understanding of the politics that have provided a crucial impetus to this issue can be helpful in finding out the answer. The Rohingya issue has undoubtedly arisen from Myanmar and therefore, it is the responsibility of the respective government to single out the reasons and moving toward solutions. The undisputed truth is that human movement is an ancient phenomenon which gets stronger with the passage of time despite the simultaneous growth of heavily militarized state borders. Hence, increasing securities across the border, planning and executing strong anti-refugee policies are not going to help the state actor to diminish threats posed by refugee movement. On top of that, Rohingya people with their centuries old experience of being tortured are also evidence of human fluidity. Keeping all these realities in consideration, it is crucial to find out how best the Government of Bangladesh can manage the already residing refugees and control refugee movements across the border while keeping the spirit of humanity in place. And before doing all these policy planning and implementation, it is also equally imperative to understand what Myanmar government can and should do to single out this problem.

31 Male refugee at Nayapara Camp, Age: around 25.

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Role of Transformational Leadership in Managing Change: A Study of Bangladesh Civil Service

Mohammad Mahbubul Alam Majumder¹

Executive Summary: Now-a-days transformational leadership is considered as the core of organisational development. The leaders are responsible for changing the organizational culture as well as overall development. The dynamic and pragmatic approach of this leadership enriches followers' spirit and commitment for the task. Bangladesh Civil Service engages in the traditional leadership practices in different levels. As a result, real development and change are nearly far from the expected outcomes in the country. To find out the best approaches for the Civil Service of Bangladesh, a constructive literature review has been done. After that, general and specific recommendations with action plan have been proposed based on the discussion. The findings of the literature review show that transformational leadership approach creates friendly environment in the organisation by engaging the followers in decision making process and empowering them in completion of the target. This leadership approach can be the best fit for the public organisations of Bangladesh where internal and external forces are demanding overall cultural change and transformation for better future. Similarly, programmes for career planning and pro-people attitude development among the civil servants may prove to be a practical step to inculcate transformational leadership in Bangladesh Civil Service.

1. Introduction

1.1. Background of the project: Transformational leadership is the most talked about issue for the development of any organisation. It is different from the traditional leadership. Most commonly in traditional leadership, top management directs the followers to complete the task which is basically target oriented. On the other hand, transformational leadership represents visionary thinking and long-term planning, creates values and generates changing environment in the organisation. Transformational leadership is that leadership which changes the employees and transforms them more than the expectation (Northouse, 2007). Schein (1992) stated "Transformational leadership is the ability to step outside the culture...to start evolutionary change processes that are more adaptive". Moreover, transformational leadership comprises of intellectual stimulation, idealized influence, individualized consideration and inspirational motivation (Bass & Avolio, 1990b). Above all, transformational leadership attains long-term development, shows the way beyond goals and brings organisational changes.

¹ Senior Assistant Secretary, Government of the people's Republic of Bangladesh.

Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS) inherited the legacy of the Indian Civil Service (ICS) which was originated from the East India Company Civil Service (Ali, 2004). Bangladesh government took a lot of initiatives for the development of the Civil Service. In fact, all these initiatives were not implemented fully due to political instability, imbalance of power, short-term plan, centralization, corruption and lack of accountability. Surprisingly, there is no particular act for the Civil Service of Bangladesh. The officers of Bangladesh Civil Service are directly related with policy making and its implementation. Here, the officers are facing lack of proper guidance and visionary leadership from the top management. It is noticed that whenever there is a change in the power of the government, leadership style also changes concurrently. Therefore, a pragmatic change is required in Bangladesh Civil Service by introducing the transformational leadership approach.

1.2. Overall aim of the project: The overall aim of the project is to explore the role of transformational leadership in developing the organisational structure of Bangladesh Civil Service.

1.3. Objectives of the project:

- To compare traditional leadership and transformational leadership styles.
- To evaluate the appropriateness of transformational leadership in managing change for the Bangladesh Civil Service.
- To design an implementation of transformational leadership in the Bangladesh Civil Service.

1.4. Methodology: This project is based on secondary source. All the information will be taken from the review of existing literature on transformational leadership and change management. Therefore, a complete literature review will be done for the theories applied and the information depicted by the experts in their works. Finally, collected information will be analysed to realize the impact of leadership and change management in the organisation. In this project subjective analysis will be used for the statistical tool.

1.5. Discussion of chapters: This project report consists of four chapters. Firstly, chapter one describes the introduction part of the project. This chapter articulates the background of the project, overall aim of the project, objectives of the project, methodology and discussion of

chapters. Moreover, the introduction part will clarify the underlying principle of the project and how it contributes to the development of the organisation. The second chapter, literature review is the most important part of the project. It requires the relevant and up-to-date literature on the topic of leadership especially on transformational leadership in specific and in general on the change management in the organisations. Next, chapter three explains discussion of the literature review and analysis of the findings from the review. Moreover, there will be a comparative study of the Bangladesh Civil Service and the findings from the literature review. In fine, chapter four sketches the wrapping up on the entire project which will be done from the discussion and findings, and then a recommendation will be made for the development of the organisation as well as Bangladesh Civil Service.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Introduction: This chapter will review the existing literature on transformational leadership and change management. The review will find out how change is promoted by the enthusiastic role of transformational leaders for the long-term development in the organisation. Similarly, it will find out the contribution of this leadership in the change of Bangladesh Civil Service.

2.2 Traditional leadership and transformational leadership:

Effectiveness of transformational leadership is indispensable than traditional leadership in the organization (Willink, 2009). Generally, traditional leadership is based on definite targets, templates, internal constraints and standard incentive arrangements; on the other hand, transformational leadership shapes teams from followers, leads them to achieve the vision and go beyond self-interest. Similarly, traditional leaders accomplish only their tasks whereas transformational leaders have the capability to dream, imagine and transform the organisation. Moreover, traditional leadership deals with personal interest of the leaders and followers; transformational leadership works as collective interest of the leaders and followers for a shared vision (García-Morales et al., 2008).

2.3. Transformational leadership:

Transformational leaders are responsible for significant changes in the organisation by setting organisational vision, leading the followers as teams, motivating them for accomplishment and inspiring them to think

creatively (Michaelis et al., 2010). These leaders always use their imagination and bring changes in the organisation. They analyse the current situation and forecast the upcoming future. Therefore, they are known as visionary leaders. Similarly, transformational leaders have charisma, motivational capacity, insight and intellectual encouragement (Willink, 2009). The leaders train their followers to meet the task, discuss the vision clearly, empower them and create willingness to participate in the new and change process. That is why, they are thought of as charismatic leaders. Moreover, transformational leaders encourage their followers in the decision making process, share a collective vision and gain long term commitment from their followers (Alimo-Metcalfe et al., 2005). Participation in the decision making process creates ownership among the followers and enables them to consider the organisation as family. The followers commit fully to the change process and exceed the target, and expectation. So, the transformational leader serves not only as leader, but also as supervisor, coach, role model and mentor to their followers.

2.4. History of transformational leadership:

Leadership was assumed as give and take relationship between the leaders and the followers. This notion was changed due to the emerging conceptual transcendence in this area. Then leadership was considered as to transform the life of the followers as well as organisational behaviour. The new approach of leadership redesigned organisational vision, values, changes and expectations of the followers. Literally, this approach assisted the relationship between leaders and followers in the level of motivation and morality to gain the vision. The leaders paid special attention to the needs of the followers and helped them to fulfill their targets. Simultaneously, the leaders clarified the vision, gave identity of the followers and offered them more than personal gain. Moreover, new ideas and opinions were encouraged in the change environment from the followers. The followers felt loyalty, confidence, commitment and respect to the leaders. In fact, it was the way of transforming the traditional condition into dynamic and need based development of the organisations. Thus, this approach of leadership was named as transformational leadership. Sometimes transformational leadership integrates as the function of visionary and charismatic leadership (Bass, 1990; Bass & Avolio, 1994; Avolio et al., 2009).

2.5. Importance of transformational leadership:

There is the necessity to change from traditional leadership to transformational leadership to face the global challenges (Willink, 2009). For this reason, four steps are needed in promoting transformational leadership in the organisation like trust, commitment, liberate imagination and capability to take professional risk. At the beginning, it is obvious to eliminate panic for work, risk assessment, share the vision and build a successful team for having trust. Then engage the subordinates in the decision making process, reduce the barriers and share the success to ensure commitment. After that, motivate and empower the employees to think beyond box as imagination by changing the organisational culture. Lastly, flexibility in changing the plan and proper guidance lead to take personal and professional risk for the organization. These steps are required to replace the existing leadership systems by dynamic role in the process of organizational development. It is noticed that when transformational leadership process happens in the organization then managers are transformed into transformational leaders and followers are transformed into transformational supporters. This type of leadership generates collective efforts to the employees as team, changing the morale, creating ownership for the organisation and stimulating the employees to perform more than expectations. Similarly, transformational leadership influences organisational innovation and performance of the employees which promotes organisational change (García-Morales et al., 2008). This leadership ensures the followers' participation in collective decision making in the organisation. Thus, transformational leadership increases emotional attachment, motivation, awareness to the employees in the organisation and creates collective interest for a common goal. Interestingly, transformational leadership is compared as motor and transmitter of creating innovative culture in the organisation and shares the knowledge among the followers for the best performance. Consequently, innovation implementation behavior of followers' depends on transformational leadership which is developed by taking change initiatives in a congenial atmosphere (Michaelis et al., 2010). The leaders are committed to change making initiatives in friendly environment. This leadership brings organisational change by introducing new practices for the employees. The change creates new opportunities, clear understanding of vision and stimulating the employees to achieve the target which ensure a pleasant climate for taking initiative in the organisation. In this way, the followers enjoy recognizing culture, taking

the chance to re-examine new initiatives, leaving old thinking and executing better than previous. Thus, transformational leaders raise change initiatives, motivate the followers effectively, guide towards vision and circumvent the innovation failure.

2.6. Transformational leadership influences change:

Successful organisational change is implemented by effective leadership skills and attributes (Manikandaan, 2010). Employees' engagement in decision and discussion process, bottom-up approach of management and flexibility in management are needed for successful change. Additionally, more steps are required for promoting organisational change such as build up case for change, environment and culture assessment, well planning, define success, leading, communication, find out impact of change, get ready for change, win over change and monitor the process of change. Mostly in the organisation, leaders act as change agent as they have the ability to change, direction, quick decision making and risk taking. Followers are learned from skillful and knowledgeable leaders. Top management designs appropriate programs for development of the leadership skills and behaviour. Considering this, leadership behaviour is the root cause of successful change in organisations (Higgs et al., 2005). In the organisation, emergence change is the most successful way of change which is always reflected by leadership behaviour. It is observed that leadership is based on considering the context where change requires meeting the situation. Therefore, leaders set change plan towards goal, make arrangement of resources, motivate the followers and engage them to gain target within the timeframe. It is possible to gain the target when team work and group assignment are done together at the workplace. Leaders are responsible to complete the task with the followers in a successful team. Thus, leadership behaviour is appropriate by guiding the people in implementing change initiatives.

Simultaneously, the nature of leadership is the most vital factor in effective managing change (Alimo-Metcalfe et al., 2005). Building of transformational culture in the organisation is very essential which means a fertile environment including behaviour of leaders and followers. Internal and external stakeholders are measured to assess the demand of change. It is important to involve the followers in setting the vision and empowering the followers to accomplish the work. By doing so, the followers consider them as partners of the entity and engage themselves in the change initiatives. Transformational leaders do their activities in an

understandable, accountable and transparent way which leads a supportive environment for change initiatives. Moreover, transformational leadership requires courage for implementation of tasks in an effective way to lead the whole team. Feedback from the followers is also essential in the changing process of the transformational leadership. Thus, leadership and change management are two interconnected approaches. By doing so, transformational leadership is directly related to change commitment of followers than leadership of change-specific (Herold et al., 2008). Leadership contributes in two ways of organisational change. On the one hand, transformational leadership builds a long-term relationship between leaders and their followers with absolute organisational orientation; on the other hand, change leadership indicates for any specific change with organisational strategy. In fact, transformational leaders have long-term plan having a vision, forecasting capacity, leading the followers and attaining outcome in committing change. This leadership approach and followers' commitment to having change in the organisation are correlated. Change leadership deals with small area of change and requires immediate output. Additionally, change leadership works as moderator when transformational leadership functions.

2.7. Factors influencing change:

Change is considered as an uninterrupted reality for the organisation that needs to survive in challenging times (Merrell, 2012). Change always reflects new things and executes different results for the organisation. It is necessary to clarify task for change and mode of completion before taking change initiatives such as proper planning, understanding the task and disseminating the idea to the employees. Change is successful when it is completed in stipulated time maintaining the cost and target. Six steps are needed for the successful change in organisation. These are leading, communicating, learning, measuring, involving and sustaining. The most crucial step is leading which starts at the beginning of the change. It includes clear vision for change, creating the necessity, engaging the employees in the change process and showing bold approach from the top management. Communication is vital for aligning the whole management into one and motivating the employees towards the target. Employees require skills and knowledge to face the change successfully, and feedback leads learning process. For measuring change, defining success by balanced set of metrics and measuring it by comparing with target within estimated budget on time. Involvement of

employees requires designing change and its implementation. Sustaining change is possible when resource and capabilities are ensured for change implementation and employees empowerment. On the other hand, the success of organisational change is determined by five inter-related issues: strategic thinking, leadership, task management, relationships and resources (Manning, 2012). Strategic thinking requires SWOT analysis of the organisation. Again the most important issue is leadership which needs a clear vision with forecasting capacity and thinking beyond the box. A well described planning indicates a complete task management. It is important to engage employees in the decision making process and listen them confirm good relationship in the organisation. After that, drivers for work like money, people, time and technology indicates resources. Some issues are also required for change in the organization such as support from the top management; regular training and personal development of the employees, common understanding of the vision, team work and collective effort.

Consequently, five principles are essential for successful change of the public sector to attain the desired target (Ostroff, 2006). These are performance improvement against the mission of agency, win over the stakeholders, construct a road map, apply a comprehensive approach and always be a leader not a bureaucrat. The public service is focused on outcomes not on outputs; mission is needed to define among officials and emphasized on the performance improvement. There are two types of stakeholders in public sector: external stakeholders (other than employees) and internal stakeholders (employees of the public sector) which are essential to establish confidence to win over both of the stakeholders. A road map includes three vital aspects, namely identification of performance objectives, position of priorities and roll out the programme for changing the agencies. Applying comprehensive approach in public sector needs redesign of the organisation i.e. arrangement of employee, infrastructure, leadership style, process and performance measurement. The most important principle for the public sector employees is not to act like a bureaucrat; always think and perform as a leader for the agency and for the public.

2.8. Recent trends of Bangladesh Civil Service:

A recent common tradition in the political parties of Bangladesh is to create loyalists within the public organisations (Osman, 2010). This tradition indicates a huge polarisation in the state machinery which is

mainly bureaucracy. Therefore, civil service rearrangement vastly depends on change in political leadership. Different aspects of governance is not found everywhere like accountability, rule of law, transparency, equity, effectiveness and efficiency. As a result, Bangladesh Civil Service is polarized and the officers who are in good book of the government often gain extra benefits. Similarly, sometimes affinity and closeness are measured at the time of promotion rather than merit and seniority. There is no complete career planning in Bangladesh Civil Service. Following this, the high officials of Bangladesh sometimes engage themselves in fulfilling the desires of a few influential persons; not for the fellows of the civil service in general (Zafrullah, 2007). New initiatives are not taken for the development of the civil service rather every senior bureaucrat is busy to confirm their positions. As a result, transformational leadership is absent in the country to perform good governance. It is necessary to improve accountability, leadership and the quality of public service to attain good governance (Mahmood, 2008). A number of initiatives are necessary to improve good governance. They are: increase of financial benefits, benefits for civil servants' dependants, housing facility, various domestic benefits, decentralization of power, maintaining chain of command, accountability, participatory decision making and good interaction among all.

2.9. Leadership crisis in Bangladesh Civil Service:

Public service underperforms due to sloppy mind-set of policy makers and politicization of bureaucracy (Zafrullah et al., 2008). High officials are busy for getting personal facilities. The bureaucrats do not think of their colleagues and juniors; rather they take the facility of promotion, posting and foreign training by depriving the deserving ones. Eventually, the decision making process in Bangladesh is slow due to the centralized hierarchy in the civil service. Opinions from the root level are not considered. Moreover, relationship is assumed for personal gain that ignores the rule and laws of the service. There is not sufficient provision for punishment and incentive for malfunction and achievement of administrative responsibilities and duties respectively. The performance appraisal system is also defective which is totally depended on the sweet desire of senior officers. This indicates poor accountability and transparency which create trouble in the daily activities. Maintaining hierarchy strictly makes the bureaucrats less accountable to followers as well as to the people. In addition, lack of visionary thinking and obstacles of civil service fail to introduce sound principles of public management

ethos. Indeed, poor technical and information capability is responsible for policy implementation. Policy formulation does not usually correspond to the demand from the people. It takes long time for implementation of projects. Sometimes, slow policy implementation process develops off-putting impression to the international donors which affect future. Therefore, inefficiency and poor leadership in Bangladesh Civil Service are largely responsible for the backwardness of the country.

3. Discussion

This chapter will analyze and critically discuss about the functions of transformational leadership and factors relating to change management. It will be done from the literature review described in the previous chapter. In fine, a suitable approach of transformational leadership will be considered based on the discussion of the literature review.

Traditional leadership functions in limited area whereas transformational leadership deals with unlimited imagination (Willink, 2009). Traditional leadership is like a package and deals with small area in the organisation. On the other hand, transformational leadership has a long-term target in the organisation. This leadership indicates a continuous process for the change initiatives with the involvement of the followers. It is observed that traditional leadership works in a small group for the accomplishment of small tasks based on incentive where transformational leadership works as team and the entire team works for long target or vision (García-Morales et al., 2008). Team work increases motivation and spirit of the followers, which leads for an out-of-box target. The followers think the organisation as a family where management and subordinates work together. Followers' engagement in target setting and in implementation process is ensured by liberal decentralization of power. Traditional leaders are responsible for accomplishment of specific tasks given to them. They cannot take initiatives, change the plan and think more than the task. In the context of Bangladesh, plans are usually designed for short term and considered only for tenure of an elected government. These plans cover five years or less and only a few plans were taken for at least ten years or more. Therefore, such short-term plans cannot sustain for long and contribute minimally for continuous change.

It is obvious that followers' participation in decision making process is very important for ensuring constructive change in the organization (García-Morales et al., 2008; Alimo-Metcalfe et al., 2005). The long-term development of the organisation is ensured by the followers' clear

concept of the vision. For this reason, transformational leadership approach engages the followers in the decision making process to set the vision and empowers them in performing. This approach assists the management to obtain firm commitment from the followers. As a whole, transformational leadership approach creates a democratic culture in the workplace. It leads a harmonious and friendly relationship between the management and the followers. By doing so, transformational leadership motivates the followers in implementation of the plans, creates ownership of the entity and attain more than the desired target. Following this, maintaining congenial atmosphere in the workplace is the vital aspect in managing change (Michaelis et al., 2010). Such a good and fertile atmosphere keeps the workplace disciplined and brings satisfaction among the followers. It also indicates performance of the workforce, less absence and secured career of the followers. In Bangladesh Civil Service, mostly the decisions are taken in the Secretariat i.e. head quarters of Ministries. It is matter of wonder that the bureaucrats are interested to keep power in their capture, not to delegate power at the field level. Decisions are taken based on the consensus of the members at the round table. Most of the decisions are implemented at the grassroots levels that are designed for the welfare of mass people. The centralized decision neglects the real want of the mass people. As a result, poor decision making and implementing process do not bring real change to the development of Bangladesh.

Now-a-days transformational leadership is a talked about issue. The leaders are responsible to evaluate the current situation of the entity, probable success criteria and forecast the post situation. On the other hand, creating willingness about the ultimate intension among the followers and empowering them bestow the successful change. Thus, transformational leaders are considered as visionary and charismatic leaders (Michaelis et al., 2010; Willink, 2009). In Bangladesh, the leaders have limited views in thinking and forecasting. They only think the current situation; not to be imaginative on future. Due to the political unrest and governmental rotation in last two decades, new government took power in every five years. It is observed that the party in power generally discontinues and ignores the development initiatives of previous government and highlights the weaknesses. Development plans are changed frequently due to short-term thinking. As a whole, an unhealthy replica emerged in Bangladesh where one party wins over election, engaging in monocracy in the state power and rest of the parties

spend the tenure showing demonstration and making it tough to rule the country. The city corporation and development authority in Dhaka city are almost failed to provide smooth road communication. The inhabitants of Dhaka city require various transportation systems like metro rail, connecting flyover and underground railway. However, roads of Dhaka city are overloaded with vehicles and other transports. As a result, huge traffic jam occurs in the city which kills time and resources. Similarly, in 1998 a multipurpose bridge named 'Jamuna Bridge' was opened for roads and railway. Initially the option for railway was not considered in the bridge. Later on the railway was included in main bridge. Literally, government is planning to construct another separate bridge for railway due to less load capacity of the bridge. In fact, this is the poor forecasting capacity and less visionary thinking of the leaders. Therefore, the country faces loss at all levels.

Leadership behaviour and nature of leadership are considered as root cause of fruitful organisational change (Higgs et al., 2005; Alimo-Metcalfe et al., 2005). Similarly, organisational change is executed by the dynamic approach and skills of leadership (Manikandaan, 2010). Change initiatives are successful or unsuccessful due to the leadership approach. Following the bottom-up approach the leaders engage the followers in the decision making process for setting the vision. By doing so, the followers are motivated for completion of the tasks and think more than the vision. The leaders introduce key initiatives as change agent to implement change such as team building, motivation, empowerment, leading, communicating, training and monitoring the progress. On the other hand, leaders have the capability to take decisions, change plans, leading, flexibility and risk assessment. The leaders create an atmosphere for change that every employee contributes in its completion. Indeed, this is the charisma of the leaders. In the context of Bangladesh, the organisational hierarchy is always top-down. Decisions are taken without consulting the fellow colleagues. Therefore, the plans are designed as per leaders' desire and political will; not considering the necessity of the people. Due to mismatch between priority and allocation; misappropriation and inefficient spending are to common phenomenon in the development management in Bangladesh.

Change is an endless process which demonstrates new pathway for the organisation. It is important to complete the change task within stipulated timeframe and estimated budget. Six steps are considered for successful change such as leading, communicating, learning, measuring, involving

and sustaining (Merrell, 2012). The most essential step is leading which begins with the strategic plan. Leaders set the vision with the followers' involvement in the decision making activities and communicating the target. At the same time, resource is allocated for sustaining the change. Moreover, five inter-related issues are influenced in organisational change. These are strategic thinking, leadership, task management, relationships and resources (Manning, 2012). It is evident that forecasting about the future and planning appropriately on this basis are considered as the essence of the change initiatives. The next step is leadership which requires implementation of the plan with the followers' involvement in the process of the decision making. A consensus vision is set from the different opinions discussed. Thus, good relationships are introduced in the organisation among the management and the followers. This relationship assists in gaining the followers commitment and organisational vision. These activities are considered as the function of a visionary leader which leads to successful completion of the vision. In the same way, there are five principles required in managing change of public sector like performance improvement, win over stakeholders, construct a road map, apply a comprehensive approach and act as leader not as bureaucrat (Ostroff, 2006). The public service always looks for the outcomes which leads long-term development of the entity. It is essential to clarify the organisational mission among the followers. Change activities are driven on the basis of road map which indicates clear concept of the organisational target. Consequently, leadership styles, employees' rearrangement, infrastructure development, allocation of resources and performance measurement are indicated as comprehensive approach. Leaders use bottom-up approach and engaging employees in development activities. Public sector employees must not be bureaucrat in their activities rather they must perform as leaders to the people. The political leaders and high officials of public sector in Bangladesh always act as bureaucrats. Due to the frequent rotation of the power in Bangladesh, the policy, the development initiatives and the strategies taken by the government do not sustain for long.

It is clear from the discussion that transformation in the organisational entity fully depends on the abilities of the visionary leadership. So leaders, not bureaucrats, can transform the organisation from downgraded situation to expected destination. The officers of Bangladesh Civil Service are practicing a stereotype leadership style which is near to transactional leadership. Team work for any project is rarely seen. The

decisions are made from the apex bureaucrats; not from the opinions of the employees in the field level. Due to lack of transformational leaders in development administration, Bangladesh has to spend a huge amount of foreign currency for employing international consultants and multinational consulting firms. So, real development is often jeopardized.

The political parties of Bangladesh are emphasized to create loyalists within the state organisations (Osman, 2010). Now there is a place for more loyal civil servants in the higher positions of the government. The officers of Bangladesh Civil Service are engaged in nepotism and favouritism. At the time of promotion, posting and placement; merit and performance are ignored in many cases. Moreover, senior officials of Bangladesh Civil Service are engaged in fulfilling the based demands of the political leaders (Zafrullah, 2007). They are affectionate of their position. The fellow colleagues are not considered for career development, succession building and empowering. It is often raised from the civil society that bureaucracy is inefficient, not transparent and lost its neutrality. On the other hand, polarization of bureaucracy and corruption are the main reasons of underperforming the Bangladesh Civil Service (Zafrullah, 2008). Decision making process is very sluggish and implementation process is packed of traditional laws and rules. Red-tapism is the main problem of taking any decision. All decisions are taken in head quarters which show over centralization of power and strictness in organisational hierarchy. As a result, this type of poor leadership creates trouble in daily activities. Punishment system for malfunction of responsibilities is rarely seen. Similarly, reward system is also based on either relationship or flattery. Good relationship leads to obtaining good performance appraisal and other lucrative facilities like foreign training and exposure. Efficiency is not important for performance evaluation rather satisfaction of the seniors are really important. Moreover, implementation of projects takes huge time and requires further budget allocation. This slow approach aggrieves the international donors which indicate uncooperative sign for the country. In fact, poor transparency and accountability system in the leadership indicates a lesser amount of development in the country. Therefore, to attain good governance, improvement in accountability and quality in bureaucracy are necessary (Mahmood, 2008).

From the above discussions it is observed that leadership is the most essential element for the change of the organisation. Traditional leadership cannot bring any significant changes in the organisational

change. Only transformational leadership can transform the overall change and development of the organisation. Therefore, organisational change is directly related with the pragmatic approaches of transformational leadership (Herold et al., 2008). In this leadership, combination of opinions and efforts are seen between the management and the employees to accomplish the organisational vision. To find out the effective approach of transformational leadership, the comparison of the opinions is illustrated below:

1	Willink	Vision setting, team formations, leading, empowerment, go beyond self-interest, capability to dream, imagination and transformation.
2	Michaelis et al.	Setting vision, leading in teams, motivation, creativity, forecasting, imagination, friendly environment.
3	García-Morales et al.	Collective interest, shared vision, followers' participation in collective decision making process.
4	Alimo-Metcalfe et al.	Engagement in decision making process, share the vision, commitment from the followers, demand assessment, transformational culture, fertile environment, involvement of the followers in setting vision, empowering and feedback.
5	Manikandan	Employees engagement in the decision and discussion process, bottom-up approach, environment and culture assessment, planning, leading, communication, win over change, monitoring.
6	Higgs et al.	Planning, arrangement of resources, motivation, team work, group assignment, guiding, time frame.
7	Herold et al.	Long-term relationships, vision, forecasting capacity, leading, commitment of followers, outcome.
8	Merrell	Leading, communicating, learning, measuring, involving and sustaining.
9	Manning	Strategic thinking, leadership, task management, relationships and resources.
10	Ostroff	Performance improvement against mission, win over stakeholders, a road map, a comprehensive approach and be a leader not a bureaucrat.

It is clearly shown from the above table of comparison that change occurs and is managed by the need based contribution of the transformational leaders. Thus, these leaders are responsible for the change of the organisation into a dynamic and challenging entity. After analyzing the above mentioned table, the common qualities of transformational leaders are listed below which are also critical for successful change management:

- i. Engaging the followers in decision making.
- ii. Leading the followers.
- iii. Communicating the issues.

- iv. Empowering the followers to perform the target.
- v. Creating sense of purpose.
- vi. Building new culture.
- vii. Encouraging creativity and searching for hyper performance.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

4.1. General recommendations:

It is recognized that public service especially civil service is considered as one of the state machineries. More expressly, bureaucracy is solely part and parcel of the development activities of the country. Public organisations are responsible for policy making, policy implementation and public welfare as a whole. In order to lead those important state functions, the administrative leaders of different levels must take bold decisions with enough foresight. In reality, Bangladesh Civil Service is facing leadership crisis in different levels of public organisations. In fact, the Civil Service of Bangladesh is surrogated by improper knowledge, insufficient leadership skills, backdated technical knowhow and poor forecasting capacities. Therefore, some initiatives are required to build sound leadership in civil service. These are given below:

- i. For overcoming leadership crisis, programmes should be initiated to develop leadership in various sectors of the civil service. Developing leadership capacity in civil service can be started from a section of the organisation.
- ii. Formulating and implementing leadership development programme for the mid-level and top level officers of Bangladesh Civil Service.
- iii. Arranging long term training and foreign exposure for the newly recruited and junior officers to be familiar with the development activities.
- iv. Civil Service Act must be enacted to regulate and develop the officers of Bangladesh Civil Service.
- v. Recruitment, promotion and posting policies need to be neutralized, and performance and merit based.
- vi. Performance based reward system must be introduced.
- vii. Neutrality and impartiality in administrative activity must be

maintained by the civil service.

- viii. Public organisations need to create role models and change champions in order to manage the change in introduction of e-governance, IT based service delivery and business process re-engineering. In this respect, transformational leadership should be an appropriate model for the civil service of Bangladesh.
- ix. It is evident that public organisation suffers from substandard performance. Therefore, we must involve, envision and empower the subordinates in the decision making process.
- x. Replacing the traditional bureaucratic culture by democratic and participative culture in the civil service. We need to ensure everybody's voice in the development activities and consider their opinions.
- xi. As an independent country, Bangladesh demands to be pro-people, pragmatic and pro-active culture in all sectors of the civil service. Therefore, creating new culture for facing the challenges of the 21st century should be introduced in Bangladesh Civil Service.

The above recommendations may be referred to the Ministry of Public Administration (MOPA) which is the central HRM unit of the civil service, for taking time befitting leadership development programmes.

4.2. Specific and implementable recommendations:

For translating my theoretical knowledge into practice project, I consider that it can be implemented in my own section. As a member of Bangladesh Civil Service, I am able to work as section officer (section-in-charge) of Human Resources (HR) in the Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre (BPATC) under the Ministry of Public Administration which is an apex training centre for the officers of all civil servants. It has four regional centres in four divisional head quarters in Bangladesh. In total, the centre has six hundred forty nine staff including officers and employees where HR section deals the personnel matters of these staff. There are sixteen employees working in HR section including head assistant, office assistant, technical supervisor, computer operator, process server and telephone operator. I will practice the process of transformational leadership in the development of HR section. Therefore, the following actions will be taken to demonstrate transformational leadership practices in my day-to-day work as section-in-charge:

- i. Building two teams among the employees in the HR section of Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre (BPATC). At the same time, developing team spirit to work together among the employees.
- ii. Developing a mission for HR section. Mission includes online service delivery, replacing traditional paper based practice, proactive service delivery, quick response for the clients, serve people as per citizen charter, introduce new ways of service delivery, familiarize new form of ICT and improving existing level of performance.
- iii. Approving the mission from the authority. As introduction of new system in the HR section, proper approval will be fruitful and desired assistance will be expected.
- iv. Involving and integrating the section people with the mission. This step will help to recognize the organisational ownership and target oriented task among the staff.
- v. Arranging practical and theoretical training for the staff to disseminate with the new way of task delivery and ICT system.
- vi. Promoting intrinsic way of motivation to the staff. This type of motivation comprises encourage, performance recognition, reward system, create sense of belongingness, encourage innovation of new process, cope with new technology, use of ICT, new process of service delivery and new way of doing thing. Thus, the staff accepts the new circumstances and recognizes the change for the organisation.
- vii. Demonstrating empathetic relationship with the team members. This relationship will be leading trust and commitment for the organisation, and respect for the leader.
- viii. Influencing the behaviour to build a role model among the employees. Discipline, trust, respect, duly work completion, clarifying issues and friendly relationships are the essence for role model.
- ix. Communicating the instructions received from the higher authority to the employees of the section from time to time. A various means of communication will be utilized like verbal, non-verbal, written, lateral, informal, grapevine, small group communication, computer aided communication and exchange of views.

- x. Distributing the task and allocation of resources to perform the task by the staff. Simultaneously, empowering the staff to perform tasks duly with the mission.
- xi. Identifying monitoring indicators to perform the monitoring activities properly in the section.
- xii. Monitoring the task given to the staff. It helps identifying the error and controlling the circumstances. Monitoring also helps checking the task with the desired target.
- xiii. Confirming constructive feedback from the employees to check the performance level. Feedback ensures needful amendment and flexibility to get better outcomes.

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বিশ্বজলবায়ু পরিবর্তনের পরিপ্রেক্ষিতে বাংলাদেশের উপকূলীয় কৃষকদের অভিযোজন কৌশল

ড. ইব্রাহিম খলিল*

Abstract: Climate change is one of the much talked about issues of recent times. It is entirely based on clear scientific analysis and explanations, and it is considered the root cause of increasing intensity and velocity of cyclone disaster around the world which becomes evident if the disaster situation of Asia region for the last 30 yaers is analyzed. People living in the coastal areas around world will be severely affected by the disaster emanated from climate change. In Bangladesh, life and livelihood of the coastal people especially agriculture and people associated with agriculture will be severely affected. As a result, food security of the region in particular and the country as a whole would be jeopardized, and millions of farmers will take shelter in towns and other places of their choice losing livelihood opportunities. Under such circumstances, this article discusses the impact of climate change on the coastal farmers and their coping strategies with the impending adverse affect of climate change.

১.০ ভূমিকা

জলবায়ু পরিবর্তন সারা বিশ্বের অস্তিত্বের জন্য একটি গভীর ভাবনার বিষয়। পরিবেশ বিজ্ঞানী ও আবহাওয়াবিদগণ মনে করেন বিশ্বজলবায়ুপরিবর্তনের ফলে সারা বিশ্বে দুর্যোগের সংখ্যা প্রতিনিয়ত বেড়ে চলেছে। বিগত ৩০ বছরে এশীয় অঞ্চলে দুর্যোগের চিত্র বিশ্লেষণ করলে এটি প্রতিভাত হয়ে ওঠে। যেমন: ১৯৭১-৭৫ সময়ে ৭৪টি, ১৯৭৬-৮০ সময়ে ১২৬টি, ১৯৮১-৮৫ সময়ে ১৩৮টি, ১৯৮৬-৯০ সময়ে ১৫৯টি, ১৯৯১-৯৫ সময়ে ১৭৬টি এবং ১৯৯৬-২০০০ এই পাঁচ বছরে ২০৫টি দুর্যোগ আঘাত হেনেছে।^১ দক্ষিণ এশিয়ায় বাংলাদেশকে সবচেয়ে দুর্যোগের ঝুঁকিপূর্ণ দেশ হিসেবে চিহ্নিত করেছে ইন্টার গভার্নমেন্টাল প্যানেল অন কাইমেট চেঞ্জ (আইপিসিসি)। বিশ্বজলবায়ুপরিবর্তনের সরাসরি প্রভাব পড়বে বাংলাদেশের উপকূলীয় এলাকায়। প্রায় ৭১০ কিলোমিটার দীর্ঘ এবং প্রায় ৯,৩৮০ বর্গ কিলোমিটার বিস্তৃত উপকূলীয় অঞ্চলের মধ্যে রয়েছে বহু সংখ্যক দ্বীপ, সোয়াচ অব নো গ্রাউন্ড এবং উত্তর বঙ্গোপসাগরের ফানেলাকার অংশ।^২ এই ফানেল আকৃতির কারণে এখানে স্বাভাবিক মাত্রার চেয়ে বেশি মাত্রায় ঘূর্ণিঝড় আঘাত হানে।^৩ বিশ্বজলবায়ু পরিবর্তন এ সম্ভাবনাকে বাড়িয়ে দিয়েছে বহুলাংশে। বঙ্গোপসাগর তীরবর্তী ১৫টি জেলার ৫২টি উপজেলায় বাস করে প্রায় ১ কোটি ১০ লক্ষ লোক।^৪ ঘূর্ণিঝড় আঘাত হানলে উপকূলীয়

* পিএইচডি গবেষক, আইবিএস, রাজশাহী বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় এবং বিশেষ ভারপ্রাপ্ত কর্মকর্তা (প্রভাষক, সমাজবিজ্ঞান), মাধ্যমিক ও উচ্চ শিক্ষা অধিদপ্তর, বাংলাদেশ, ঢাকা।

১ দৈনিক প্রথম আলো, ১৯ আগস্ট ২০০৪, পৃ. ১।

২ বাংলাপিডিয়া, “উপকূলীয় ব্যবস্থাপনা” ভুক্তি।

৩ A. K. Gain and M. A. Bari, “Effect of Environmental Degradation on National Security of Bangladesh,” Asia Pacific Journal on Environment and Development, vol. 14, no.2[December 2007]:18.

৪ এম. জসিম উদ্দিন, “উপকূলের কোটি মানুষের জীবন ঝুঁকিমুক্ত কবে হবে?”, দৈনিক প্রথম আলো, ১৬ মে ২০০৭, পৃ. ১৩।

এলাকায় জীবন ও সম্পত্তির ব্যাপক ক্ষতির পাশাপাশি কৃষি ক্ষতিগ্রস্ত হয় মারাত্মকভাবে। কৃষি ক্ষতিগ্রস্ত হওয়ার ফলে এদেশের মানুষের ক্রমবর্ধমান জনগোষ্ঠীর খাদ্য-নিরাপত্তা ব্যপকভাবে হুমকির মুখে পতিত হবে এবং বিপুল সংখ্যক মানুষ বাস্তুচ্যুত হবে। সুতরাং বিশ্বজলবায়ুপরিবর্তনের ক্রমবর্ধমান হুমকির মুখে বাংলাদেশের উপকূলীয় অঞ্চলের কৃষকদের টিকে থাকা ও অভিযোজন কৌশল জাতীয় এবং আন্তর্জাতিক পরিমণ্ডলে একটি অত্যন্ত উদ্বেগজনক বিষয়ে পরিণত হয়েছে। এ বিষয়ে পর্যাপ্ত গবেষণাকর্ম সম্পাদন সংশ্লিষ্ট বিষয়ে আমাদের জ্ঞান সমৃদ্ধ করবে ও উপকূলে বসবাসকারী কৃষকদের vulnerability কমিয়ে এনে একটি স্থিতিস্থাপক কৃষক কমিউনিটি গড়ে তুলতে সহায়তা করবে। এ বিষয়টি বিবেচনায় রেখে বর্তমান গবেষণাটি সম্পাদনের উদ্যোগ নেয়া হয়েছে।

১.২ গবেষণার উদ্দেশ্য

বিশ্বজলবায়ুপরিবর্তনের প্রেক্ষিতে বাংলাদেশের উপকূলীয় অঞ্চলের কৃষকদের টিকে থাকা ও অভিযোজন কৌশল বিষয়ে তথ্যানুসন্ধান গবেষণাটির সাধারণ উদ্দেশ্য। তবে বিশেষ উদ্দেশ্য সমূহ হলোঃ

- ক) বিশ্বজলবায়ু পরিবর্তনের ফলে বাংলাদেশের উপকূলীয় অঞ্চলের কৃষকদের উপর প্রভাব জানা এবং
- খ) বিশ্বজলবায়ু পরিবর্তনের প্রভাবের প্রেক্ষিতে কৃষকদের অভিযোজন কৌশল সম্পর্কে তথ্যানুসন্ধান।

১.৩ গবেষণার পদ্ধতি

উদ্দেশ্যের নিরিখে গবেষণা প্রবন্ধটি অনুসন্ধান ও বিশ্লেষণাত্মক ধরনের। এটি প্রাথমিক (Primary) ও সহায়ক (Secondary) এ দু' ধরনের উপকরণের উপর ভিত্তি করে তৈরি করা হয়েছে। এজন্য প্রবন্ধের বিষয়ের সঙ্গে সম্পর্কিত বই, জার্নাল, সরকারি-বেসরকারি প্রতিষ্ঠানের প্রতিবেদন, দৈনিক পত্রিকা এবং সাময়িকী থেকে তথ্য সংগ্রহ করা হয়েছে। এছাড়া, উদ্দেশ্যমূলক নমুনায়নের মাধ্যমে উত্তরদাতা নির্বাচন করে পূর্বেই তৈরিকৃত একটি চেকলিস্টের ভিত্তিতে ফোকাস দল আলোচনার মাধ্যমে মাঠ পর্যায় থেকে তথ্য সংগ্রহ করা হয়েছে। গবেষণা সমস্যা সম্পর্কে স্বল্প সময়ে ধারণা লাভের জন্য বাংলাদেশের ৫২টি উপকূলীয় উপজেলা থেকে উপকূলীয় জেলা বরগুনাধীন পাথরঘাটা উপজেলাস্থ পদ্মা গ্রামটি Shoreline এ অবস্থিত হওয়ায় উদ্দেশ্যমূলক নমুনায়নের মাধ্যমে এটি নির্বাচন করা হয়েছে। উক্ত গ্রামের ৩২জন কৃষকে নিকট এফজিডি'র মাধ্যমে তথ্য সংগ্রহ করা হয়েছে। সীমিত সম্পদ, সময়ের স্বল্পতা ও গবেষণার আকার ছোটো হওয়ার কারণে এ ক্ষেত্রে উদ্দেশ্যমূলক নমুনায়নের মাধ্যমে গবেষণা এলাকা ও উত্তরদাতা নির্বাচন করা হয়েছে।

গবেষণা গ্রামে ৪৪০টি খানায় ২২৭২ জন লোক রয়েছে। এর মধ্যে ২২৯টি পরিবার ভূমিহীন।^১ ভূমিহীন পরিবারের সদস্যরা দৈনিক শ্রম অথবা নিকটস্থ সমুদ্রে মাছ ধরে জীবিকা নির্বাহ করে। ধনীকৃষক পরিবারের সদস্যগণ একদিকে যেমন বাড়তি উৎপাদনের সুফল ভোগ করেন অন্যদিকে তারা আনুষ্ঠানিক কিংবা অনানুষ্ঠানিক কর্মক্ষেত্রে চাকুরীতে নিয়োজিত থেকে

অর্থোপার্জন করে সমাজে ক্ষমতা কাঠামোর কেন্দ্রবিন্দুতে অবস্থান করেন ও বিভিন্ন সুযোগ সুবিধা ভোগ করেন। ফলে এ দুটি শ্রেণীর কৃষকদের অভিযোজন কৌশল ভিন্ন ধরনের। এজন্য এদরকে বর্তমান গবেষণায় তথ্য সংগ্রহের জন্য Target জনগোষ্ঠী হিসেবে গণ্য না করে যে সকল মানুষের ০.৫ শতক বা তার বেশি কৃষি জমি রয়েছে ও যারা নিজেরাই কৃষি কাজ করে থাকেন এবং জীবন ধারণের জন্য যারা কেবল কৃষির উপরই নির্ভরশীল অর্থাৎ খানা প্রধানগণ অনানুষ্ঠানিক বা আনুষ্ঠানিক কোন খাতেই কর্মে বা ব্যবসায় নিয়োজিত নন, এমন ৩২ জন কৃষক বাছাই করে ৪টি গ্রুপ তৈরি করা হয়েছে। প্রতিটি গ্রুপের সঙ্গে ১.৩০-২.০০ ঘণ্টা ধরে আলোচনা করা হয়েছে। এ লক্ষ্যে পূর্বেই একটি সুনির্দিষ্ট গাইডলাইন তৈরি করে ৪টি Focus Group Discussion (FGD) পরিচালনা করা হয়েছে এবং বিশ্বজলবায়ু পরিবর্তন, তাদের এলাকায় এর প্রভাব এবং অভিযোজন কৌশল বিষয়ে কৃষকদের ধারণা লিপিবদ্ধ করা হয়েছে।

কৃষকদের অভিযোজন কৌশল জানতে হলে বাংলাদেশে জলবায়ু পরিবর্তনের প্রভাব সম্পর্কে জ্ঞানার্জন প্রয়োজন। সেজন্য প্রবন্ধটির প্রথমে বাংলাদেশে বিশ্বজলবায়ুপরিবর্তন ও বাংলাদেশে এর প্রভাব সম্পর্কে আলোচনা করা হয়েছে এবং পরবর্তীতে বাংলাদেশের উপকূলীয় অঞ্চলের কৃষকদের উপর জলবায়ু পরিবর্তনের প্রভাব এবং অভিযোজন কৌশল বিষয়ক গবেষণার মাঠ পর্যায়ে প্রাপ্ত তথ্য ও উপাত্ত বিশ্লেষণ পূর্বক উপস্থাপন করা হয়েছে।

২.০ বিশ্বজলবায়ুপরিবর্তন: ধারণা ও প্রত্যয়

বিশ্বজলবায়ু পরিবর্তন নির্ভেজাল বৈজ্ঞানিক ধারণার উপর প্রতিষ্ঠিত একটি প্রপঞ্চ। সূর্য থেকে যে আলোকরশ্মি পৃথিবীতে আসে তা বায়ুমণ্ডলে প্রবেশের আগে কিছু রশ্মি মহাশূন্যে ফিরেও যায়। যে রশ্মি পৃথিবীতে পৌঁছে তা কিছু পরিমাণ শোষিত হয়ে তাপশক্তিতে পরিবর্তিত হয় এবং কিছুটা ভূপৃষ্ঠে পৌঁছে। এ রূপান্তরিত শক্তি বায়ুমণ্ডলে অবস্থিত জলীয়বাষ্প O₂, NO₂, CH₄, O₃ প্রভৃতি শোষণ করে এবং পৃথিবীকে উষ্ণ বা গরম রাখে। এসব গ্যাসগুলোকে বলা হয় গ্রিনহাউজ গ্যাস। স্বাভাবিক প্রাকৃতিক নিয়মে বায়ুমণ্ডলে জলীয় বাষ্পের পরিমাণ বৃদ্ধি পেতে পারে। কিন্তু অন্যান্য গ্রিন হাউজ গ্যাসের নিঃসরণের পিছনে মানুষের প্রত্য ও পরোক্ষ অবদান রয়েছে। যেমন : কার্বন-ডাই-অক্সাইড। এটি বায়ুমণ্ডলের সবচেয়ে তিকর গ্রিনহাউজ গ্যাস। বায়ুমণ্ডলে নির্গত অর্ধেকেরও বেশি কার্বন নির্গম করে পাঁচটি দেশ যেমন: চীন, আমেরিকা, ভারত, রাশিয়া ও জাপান।

ক্র.নং.	কার্বন নির্গমনকারী দেশ	মোট বাৎসরিক নির্গত কার্বনের পরিমাণ(মেগাটন)
১	চীন	৯,৪৪১
২	আমেরিকা	৬,৫৩৯
৩	ভারত	২,২৭৫.৪৫
৪	রাশিয়া	১,৯৬৩
৫	জাপান	১,২০৩

উৎস: দি ডেইলি স্টার ডিসেম্বর ৩, ২০১১, পৃ.১ ও ডিসেম্বর ১৪, ২০১১, পৃ.১৪

নির্গমের শীর্ষ তালিকায় পরবর্তী ৫টি দেশ হচ্ছে ব্রাজিল (১,১৪৪ মেগাটন), জার্মানী, কানাডা, মেক্সিকো ও ইরান। বৃটেন ভিত্তিক ফার্ম ম্যাপলক্রফট এর মতে, উলি-খিত ১০টি

দেশ বিশ্বে মোট কার্বন নির্গমনের দুই তৃতীয়াংশ কার্বন বায়ুমণ্ডলে নির্গমনের জন্য দায়ী। চীন কয়েক বছর আগেই আমেরিকাকে ছাড়িয়ে যায়। যদিও চীন ও ভারতে মাথাপিছু নির্গমন অপেক্ষাকৃত কম কিন্তু এ দু'টি দেশে সামগ্রিক জ্বালানী চাহিদা অনেক বেশি। ব্রাজিলের নির্গমন আরো বেশি হবে যদি বনউজার বিবেচনায় আনা হয়। সোভিয়েত ইউনিয়ন ভেঙে যাওয়ার পরে রাশিয়ার নির্গমন কমে যায় কিন্তু বর্তমানে নির্গমন ক্রমবর্ধমান হারে বাড়ছে।^১ ১৯৯৭ সালে যখন কিয়েটো প্রটোকল স্বাক্ষরিত হয় তখন ৩৭টি দেশ যারা মোট নির্গমনের ৬০ শতাংশের জন্য দায়ী কার্বন নির্গমনের জন্য প্রতিশ্রুতি দিয়েছিলো। কিন্তু বিগত দেড় দশকে চীন, ভারত, দক্ষিণ আফ্রিকা ও ব্রাজিল থেকে কার্বন নির্গমনের মাত্রা বৃদ্ধি পাওয়ার উক্ত ৩৭টি দেশের অংশ ৩০ শতাংশে নেমে এসেছে।^২ বিশ্বব্যাপী গড় মাথাপিছু কার্বন নির্গমনের পরিমাণ ২ টন এর বিপরীতে আমেরিকা, কানাডা ও ইউরোপেরিয়ান ইউনিয়নের অবদান যথাক্রমে ২০ টন, ১৬.৪ টন ও গড়পরতা ১০-১২ টন। ভারত নির্গমন করে ১.৩ টন। কার্বন নির্গমনের বিচারে বিশ্বজলবায়ু পরিবর্তনে বাংলাদেশের অবদান মাথা পিছু প্রতি বছর মাত্র ০.৩ টন। কিন্তু অন্যদের ভোগবিলাসিতার জন্য আমাদের দেশকে প্রতিবছর জীবনহানি ও সম্পদ ক্ষতির ক্ষেত্রে চরম মূল্য দিতে হচ্ছে।^৩

জলবায়ুর পরিবর্তন পর্যবেক্ষণের জন্য ১৯৮৮ সালে জাতিসংঘের Inter Governmental Panel on Climate Change(IPCC) গঠন করা হয়। IPCC ২০০৭ সালের ৬ এপ্রিল আন্তঃ সরকার জলবায়ু পরিবর্তন সংক্রান্ত ৪র্থ প্রতিবেদন প্রকাশের পূর্বে কেউ এ নিয়ে ভাবেননি। রিপোর্ট প্রকাশের পর এ নিয়ে সারা বিশ্বব্যাপি জলবায়ু পরিবর্তন বিষয়টি আলোচনার কেন্দ্র বিন্দুতে পরিণত হয়। জাতিসংঘের আন্তঃ রাষ্ট্রীয় জলবায়ু পরিবর্তন সংক্রান্ত প্যানেল (IPCC) এর তৃতীয় সমীক্ষা প্রতিবেদনে বলা হয়েছে যে, বৈশ্বিক উষ্ণতা ১.৫-২.৫ ডিগ্রি সেন্টিগ্রেড (২.৭-৪.৫ ডিগ্রি ফারেনহাইট) বৃদ্ধি পেলে প্রাণী ও উদ্ভিদের এক তৃতীয়াংশ প্রজাতি হুমকির সম্মুখীন হবে। তা ছাড়া এশিয়ার গ্রীষ্মমণ্ডলীয় অঞ্চলের একশ কোটিরও বেশি লোক ২০৫০ সালের মধ্যে ব্যাপক তির মুখোমুখি হতে পারে। বৃষ্টিপাতের ক্ষেত্রেও ব্যাপক পরিবর্তন দেখা দেবে। এশিয়া ও প্রশান্ত মহাসাগরীয় অঞ্চলের দ্বীপ রাষ্ট্রগুলো তলিয়ে যেতে পারে। আফ্রিকার সাব সাহারা অঞ্চলের খরা আরও বাড়বে। রিপোর্টে বলা হয় বিশ্বের তাপমাত্রা ২১০০ সালের মধ্যে ১.১ ডিগ্রি থেকে ৬.৪ ডিগ্রি সেন্টিগ্রেড বাড়তে পারে।^৪ গ্রিনহাউজ গ্যাসের স্তর বাড়ার ফলে ফলে পৃথিবী হচ্ছে উষ্ণ থেকে উষ্ণতর। যাকে বলা হয় গে-বাল ওয়ার্মিং। এর ফলে বিশ্বজলবায়ুতে পরিবর্তন হচ্ছে যা পৃথিবীর বিভিন্ন স্থানে ঘূর্ণিঝড়, জলোচ্ছ্বাস, খরা ইত্যাদি সৃষ্টি করছে।

৩.০ বাংলাদেশে বিশ্বজলবায়ু পরিবর্তনের প্রভাব

বৈশ্বিক এ জলবায়ুর পরিবর্তনের ফলে অন্যতম ক্ষতিগ্রস্ত দেশগুলোর মধ্যে একটি হবে ঘনবসতির বাংলাদেশ। এ দেশের দক্ষিণ প্রান্ত ছুঁয়ে আছে বঙ্গপোসাগর। উজান থেকে নেমে আসা অসংখ্য নদ-নদী জালের মত বিছিয়ে আছে পুরো দেশটিতে। এ নদীগুলো তাদের

৬ দি ডেইলি স্টার, ডিসেম্বর ৩, ২০১১, পৃ.১

৭ দি ডেইলি স্টার নভেম্বর ৩০, ২০১১ পৃ.১।

৮ Asadullah Khan, "Our vulnerability to Climate Change," Dhaka: The Daily Star, November 26, 2011.

৯ বাংলাদেশ সরকার, বাংলাদেশ অর্থনৈতিক সমীক্ষা ২০০৯, ঢাকা : অর্থনৈতিক উপদেষ্টা অনুবিভাগ, অর্থ বিভাগ, অর্থমন্ত্রণালয়, ২০১০, পৃ. ২১৭।

মোহনায় মিলেছে বঙ্গোপসাগরে। এ দেশের প্রকৃতি, জীবন ও জীবিকার সঙ্গে জড়িয়ে আছে এ সাগর। এটি কাজ করছে দেশের সংকট ও সম্ভাবনার উৎস হিসাবে। বঙ্গোপসাগর মূল ভূখণ্ডের দিকে ফানেলের মতো মুখ করে আছে। ফানেলের মতো মুখ ঝড় ও জলোচ্ছ্বাসের কারণ হয়ে দাঁড়ায়। গত ১৮০ বছরে ৫৭টি বড় ধরনের সামুদ্রিক ঝুর্ণিঝড় বাংলাদেশের ওপর আঘাত হেনেছে। ভবিষ্যতে এ ধরনের প্রাকৃতিক দুর্যোগের হার ও মাত্রা বৃদ্ধি পাবে। ঘূর্ণিঝড় ও জলোচ্ছ্বাস বৃদ্ধির পাশাপাশি সমুদ্রপৃষ্ঠের উচ্চতাও বৃদ্ধি পাবে। জাতিসংঘের আন্তর্জাতিক জলবায়ু পরিবর্তন সংক্রান্ত প্যানেল (IPCC) এর তৃতীয় সমীক্ষা প্রতিবেদন অনুযায়ী সমুদ্রপৃষ্ঠে পানির উচ্চতা ৪৫ সেন্টিমিটার বাড়লে বাংলাদেশের ১১ শতাংশ ভূখণ্ড সমুদ্র গর্ভে নিমজ্জিত হবে। IPCC এর গবেষণা মতে, কার্বন নির্গমনের বর্তমান ধারা অব্যাহত থাকলে ২১০০ সালের মধ্যে সমুদ্রপৃষ্ঠের উচ্চতা ১৮ সেন্টিমিটার হতে ৫৯ সেন্টিমিটার এ উন্নীত হবে। Institute for Water Modelling এর গবেষণা প্রতিবেদনে সমুদ্র পৃষ্ঠের উচ্চতা ৩২ সেন্টিমিটার পর্যন্ত বাড়লে পৃথিবীর বৃহত্তম ম্যানগ্রোভ বন সুন্দরবনের ৮৪ শতাংশ সমুদ্রগর্ভে তলিয়ে যাওয়ার আশঙ্কা করা হয়েছে।^{১০}

যে হারে বর্তমানে উষ্ণতা বাড়ছে তাতে আইপিসিসি এর হিসাব অনুযায়ী উষ্ণতা আরো বেড়ে যাওয়ার আশঙ্কা রয়েছে। সমুদ্রপৃষ্ঠের উচ্চতা এক মিটার বাড়লে বাংলাদেশের আবাদি জমি নষ্ট হবে প্রায় ১৪ শতাংশ এবং ২৮ থেকে ৩০ শতাংশ বনভূমি ধ্বংস হতে পারে, জলমগ্ন হতে পারে আরও প্রায় ১৫.৮ শতাংশ জমি। এর মধ্যে বৃহত্তর খুলনা জেলার ৬৫, বরিশালের ৯৯, পটুয়াখালীর ১০০, নোয়াখালীর ৪৪ এবং ফরিদপুরের ১২ শতাংশ এলাকা ডুবে যেতে পারে। অর্থাৎ দেশের ৬৪টি জেলার মধ্যে ১৩টি জেলা ক্ষতিগ্রস্ত হবে। ফলে প্রায় ১.৫ কোটি মানুষকে উদ্বাস্তু হয়ে নিরাপদ আশ্রয় ও জীবিকার সন্ধানে দেশের উঁচু ও শহরাঞ্চলে পাড়ি জমাতে হবে।

জলবায়ু পরিবর্তনের ফলে বাংলাদেশে যে ব্যাপক প্রভাব পড়ছে তা গত ১০ বছর ধরে ধীরে ধীরে স্পষ্ট হচ্ছে। বর্ষার সময় বৃষ্টিপাত কম হওয়া, সঠিক সময়ে শীত শুরু না হওয়া, প্রতি বছর তাপমাত্রা অল্প অল্প করে বৃদ্ধি পাওয়া ও রুসলবৈশাখী ঝড়ের সংখ্যা কমে যাওয়াকে বাংলাদেশে জলবায়ু পরিবর্তনের লক্ষণ হিসেবে বিবেচনা করা হয়ে থাকে। ২০০৬ সালে বর্ষার সময়ে স্বাভাবিকের চেয়ে শতকরা ৬০ ভাগ বৃষ্টিপাত কম হয়েছে। ভরা মৌসুমে বৃষ্টি না হয়ে দেশের অনেক স্থানে অসময়ে নেমেছে প্রবল বৃষ্টি।^{১১} ২০০৪ সালের জুলাই মাসের শুরু থেকেই প্রবল বৃষ্টিপাত হয়েছে। দেশের অভ্যন্তরে এবং উজানে এই বৃষ্টিপাত ২০০৪ সালের জুলাই মাসের শুরুতে ব্যাপক বন্যার কারণ হয়েছে। ২০০৩ সালে ভরা বর্ষার কয়েক মাসসহ সাত মাসই বৃষ্টি হয়েছে স্বাভাবিকের তুলনায় কম। এ মাসগুলো হলো-জানুয়ারি, ফেব্রুয়ারি, এপ্রিল, মে, জুলাই, আগস্ট ও সেপ্টেম্বর। অপরদিকে মার্চ ও জুলাই মাসে বৃষ্টি হয়েছে অস্বাভাবিক রকম বেশি। মার্চ মাসে হয়েছে স্বাভাবিকের প্রায় দ্বিগুণ অর্থাৎ ১৯৩ শতাংশ। আর জুন মাসে হয়েছে স্বাভাবিকের চেয়ে ৫০ শতাংশ বেশি। বাংলাদেশে সবচেয়ে বেশি বৃষ্টি হওয়ার কথা জুলাই মাসে। কিন্তু ২০০৩ সালে বৃষ্টি হয়েছে স্বাভাবিকের তুলনায় ২৯ শতাংশ কম। বৃষ্টিপাত ছাড়াও ২০০৩ সালের শুরু থেকেই ছিল অস্বাভাবিকতা। শীত খুব ঝোঁকে বসতে না বসতেই আঘাত হানে দুটি শৈত্য প্রবাহ। এ দুটিই ছিল এমন প্রবল যে, তাপমাত্রা

১০ তদেব।

১১ দৈনিক সমকাল, ৭ এপ্রিল ২০০৭, পৃ. ১।

২০০৩ সালের পূর্ববর্তী পাঁচ বছরের মধ্যে সর্বনিম্নে নেমে যায়। দুবারই মৌসুমের সর্বোচ্চ ও সর্বনিম্ন তাপমাত্রার ব্যবধানও কমে যায়। এর আগে এমনটি কখনও দেখা যায়নি।

প্রাক মৌসুম পূর্বে (বর্ষার আগে) এ অঞ্চলের স্বাভাবিক কালবৈশাখী, টর্নেডো, ঘূর্ণিঝড়ের পরিবর্তে বেশি হয়েছে বজ্রপাত। টর্নেডো প্রায় হয়নি; হয়নি ঘূর্ণিঝড়ও। তবে একাধিক নিম্নচাপ হয়েছিল এবং সে ক্ষেত্রেও অস্বাভাবিকতা ছিল। এর পরে গ্রীষ্মে ছিল শীতের মতো অস্বাভাবিকতা প্রথমত, গ্রীষ্মের তীব্রতা ছিল বেশি। তারপর একাধিক ‘হিট ওয়েব’। সর্বোচ্চ তাপমাত্রার রেকর্ড যদিও অতিক্রম করেনি। এ ধরনের ‘হিট ওয়েব’ আসার কথা মে মাসের দ্বিতীয় সপ্তাহের শেষ থেকে তৃতীয় সপ্তাহের মধ্যে। কিন্তু এসেছে অনেক পরে। আবহাওয়ার এসব অস্বাভাবিকতা একদিকে যেমন জলবায়ু পরিবর্তন ও পরিবেশ বিঘ্নিত হওয়ার ফল, অন্যদিকে তেমনি এসব অস্বাভাবিকতা আবার পরিবেশকে বেশি করে বিঘ্নিত করে। ফলে ক্রমান্বয়ে বেড়ে চলেছে দুর্যোগ^{১২} যেমন : ঘূর্ণিঝড় ও সমুদ্রপৃষ্ঠের উচ্চতা বৃদ্ধি।

সমুদ্রপৃষ্ঠের উচ্চতা বৃদ্ধিও মাধ্যমে উপকূলীয় এলাকা ডুবে গেলে দেশের নিম্নাঞ্চলে জলাবদ্ধতা সৃষ্টি হবে। পানি নিচের দিকে সরে যাওয়ার সুযোগ না থাকার ফলে সে সব এলাকা আটকে পড়া পানিতে ডুবে যাবে। সমুদ্রপৃষ্ঠের উচ্চতা বাড়লে নদীগুলোর পানির উচ্চতাও বাড়বে। ফলে নদী উপচে যাওয়া পানিতে দু’তীরের বিস্তীর্ণ এলাকা তলিয়ে যাবে। বাড়বে বন্যার ব্যাপকতা এবং স্থায়িত্ব। উজান থেকে আসা নদীর পানি ও অতিবর্ষণ এবং সাগরের জোয়ারের পানি সব মিলে এক দুঃসহ অবস্থা সৃষ্টি করবে।^{১৩} বিশেষ করে কৃষিখাত মারাত্মক হুমকির মুখে পড়বে।

৪.০ বাংলাদেশের কৃষি ক্ষেত্রে জলবায়ু পরিবর্তনের প্রভাব

তাপমাত্রা বৃদ্ধি ও জলবায়ু পরিবর্তনের কারণে বাংলাদেশে বৃষ্টিপাত হওয়া প্রভাবিত হচ্ছে। আবহাওয়া বিজ্ঞানীদের হিসাব অনুযায়ী বিশ্বব্যাপী তাপমাত্রা বৃদ্ধির ফলে বাংলাদেশে ২০৩০ সাল নাগাদ মৌসুমী বৃষ্টিপাত বেড়ে যাবে ১০-১৫ শতাংশ এবং শীতকালীন বৃষ্টিপাতের পরিমাণ দাঁড়াবে ৫-১০ শতাংশের বেশি। এতে শস্য উৎপাদন বা কৃষি পদ্ধতিতে পরিবর্তন দেখা দেবে। জলবায়ুর পরিবর্তন ও তাপমাত্রা বৃদ্ধির ফলে খরাও দীর্ঘস্থায়ী হতে পারে। এতে করে বাধাগ্রস্ত হবে কৃষি উৎপাদন, কৃষি নির্ভর সমাজে জীবন ও জীবিকার ধরন যাবে পাল্টে। উষ্ণতা বৃদ্ধি পেলে গ্রীষ্ম ও বর্ষার ফসল হিসেবে আউশ ও আমন জাতীয় ধানের ফলন বাড়বে, কিন্তু কমবে উষ্ণ মৌসুমের গম, আলু ও ডাল জাতীয় রবিশস্যের ফলন। একই সঙ্গে আর্দ্রতা বেড়ে যাওয়ার ফলে ক্ষতিকর পোকামাকড়, ব্যাকটেরিয়া ও ছত্রাকের বংশ বৃদ্ধি এসব ফসলের ক্ষতির পরিমাণ বাড়িয়ে দেবে।^{১৪} শস্য বীজ সঠিক উৎপাদন দিবে না, জমি হারিয়ে ফেলবে স্বাভাবিক ক্ষমতা, জৈব সার তার স্বাভাবিক তেজ হারিয়ে ফেলবে, জলসেচে দেখা দিবে চরম সংকট।

১২ দৈনিক প্রথম আলো, ১৯ আগস্ট ২০০৪, পৃ. ১।

১৩ ধীরাজ কুমার নাথ, “বায়ু পরিবর্তন ও কৃষি উৎপাদন”, আহমেদ তাজুল ইসলাম ও অন্যান্য সম্পাদিত ‘জলবায়ু পরিবর্তন ও তার প্রভাব : প্রসঙ্গ বাংলাদেশ’ গ্রন্থে সংকলিত, (ঢাকা: গণ উন্নয়ন গ্রন্থাগার, ২০০৯), ৮৬-৮৭।

১৪ মাহফুজ উল-হ, “জলবায়ু পরিবর্তন মোকাবেলায় অভিযোজন কৌশল”, আহমেদ তাজুল ইসলাম ও অন্যান্য সম্পাদিত ‘জলবায়ু পরিবর্তন ও তার প্রভাব: প্রসঙ্গ বাংলাদেশ’ গ্রন্থে সংকলিত, (ঢাকা: গণ উন্নয়ন গ্রন্থাগার, ২০০৯), ২৭৪-৭৬।

দেশে প্রতিনিয়ত কৃষি জমি কমে যাচ্ছে। স্বাভাবিকভাবেই বাড়িঘর নির্মাণ, কৃষিজমিতে কারখানা গড়ে উঠা ইত্যাদি কারণে বাংলাদেশে প্রায় প্রতিদিন ২২০ হেক্টর কৃষিজমি বিনষ্ট হচ্ছে এবং ২০৩০ সালের মধ্যে প্রায় এক-চতুর্থাংশ কৃষিজমি কমে যাবে। আবহাওয়ার উষ্ণায়ন বাড়তে থাকলে কৃষি জমি ব্যবহার অনুপযোগী হওয়ার পরিমাণ বাড়বে। প্রতিবছর নদী ভাঙন এর ফলে ১০,০০০ হেক্টর জমি নদীগর্ভে বিলীন হয়ে যাচ্ছে।^{১৫} জলবায়ু পরিবর্তনের ফলে কৃষি জমি নদীগর্ভে বিলীন হওয়ার হার আরও বাড়বে। এতে উপকূলে বসবাসকারি অনেক কৃষক উদ্ভাস্ত হয়ে পড়বে। ফলে প্রান্তিক চাষিদের জীবন ও জীবিকা হবে বিপন্ন।

তিব্বত, ভুটান, ভারত ও নেপাল থেকে নেমে আসা বরফগলা পানির কারণে প্রতিবছরই সাগরের পানি বেড়ে সমুদ্রপৃষ্ঠ স্পীত হচ্ছে।^{১৬} ইতোমধ্যে বাংলাদেশের দণি উপকূলে জমিতে লবণাক্ততার পরিমাণ ক্রমেই বাড়ছে। বাংলাদেশ ইনস্টিটিউট অব ডেভেলপমেন্ট স্টাডিজ (বিআইডিএস) এর গবেষণা মতে, উপকূলীয় ও তীরবর্তী ১৪ হাজার বর্গ কিলোমিটার এলাকার মাটি জলোচ্ছ্বাসজনিত কারণে লবণাক্ত হয়ে পড়েছে। এ অবস্থায় জলবায়ু পরিবর্তনের কারণে সমুদ্রপৃষ্ঠের উচ্চতা যদি আরো ১৫ সেন্টিমিটার বৃদ্ধি পায় তাহলে আরো ১৬ হাজার বর্গকিলোমিটার উপকূলীয় ভূমি তলিয়ে যাবে ও লবণাক্ততা আরও ভেতরে আসবে। এ লবণাক্ততার কারণে কেবল চাষাবাদই নয় বরং খাদ্যের অভাবে গবাদি পশুর সংখ্যাও আশঙ্কাজনক হারে হ্রাস পাচ্ছে।^{১৭} বাংলাদেশের উপকূলীয় জেলাগুলোর কৃষি বর্তমানে যন্ত্র নির্ভরশীল হয়ে পড়েছে। এতে একদিকে যেমন বায়ুমণ্ডলে গ্রীনহাউস গ্যাস যুক্ত হচ্ছে অন্যদিকে কৃষি জমি জৈব সার থেকে বঞ্চিত হয়ে রাসায়নিক সারের উপর নির্ভরশীল হয়ে পড়ছে। রাসায়নিক সার ব্যবহারে কৃষকদের পর্যাপ্ত জ্ঞান না থাকার কারণে রাসায়নিক সারের যথেষ্ট ব্যবহার হচ্ছে। উপকূলীয় ১০-১৫ বছর পূর্বে এলাকায় যে সব ফসল চাষ হতো বিশেষ করে ধানের যে সব জাত চাষ হতো (যেমন : রাজা শাইল, গিরমি, হাইট্রা ইত্যাদি) জলবায়ু পরিবর্তনের কারণে সেগুলো চাষ করা এখন আর লাভজনক হচ্ছে না। তাছাড়া, নতুন জাতের ধানে পোকের উপদ্রব বেশি হওয়ার কারণে এবং কীটনাশক ব্যবহারে কৃষকদের পর্যাপ্ত ধারণা না থাকার কারণে কীটনাশকেরও যথেষ্ট ব্যবহার হচ্ছে যা মানব শরীরে ক্ষতিকর প্রভাব বিস্তার করছে এবং রোগ-ব্যধি বেড়ে চলেছে।

৫.০ উপকূলীয় কৃষকদের অভিযোজন কৌশল

জলবায়ু পরিবর্তনের ফলে সৃষ্ট সমস্যা মোকাবেলায় আজ পৃথিবীজুড়ে বিজ্ঞানীরা অভিযোজন বা খাপ খাইয়ে নেয়ার কৌশলের উপর গুরুত্ব দিচ্ছেন। পরিবর্তিত অবস্থার সঙ্গে খাপ খাওয়ানো বা পরিবর্তন মোকাবেলায় প্রয়োজনীয় ব্যবস্থা নেয়ার নাম অভিযোজন। জলবায়ু পরিবর্তনের সঙ্গে বিভিন্ন প্রজাতি যতবেশি খাপ খাইয়ে নিতে পারবে ততই তা সকলের জন্য মঙ্গল বয়ে আনবে।^{১৮} এ প্রক্রিয়ার অংশ হিসেবে সাম্প্রতিক সময়ে বাংলাদেশের উপকূলীয়

১৫ দনিক প্রথম আলো, ১৯ আগস্ট ২০০৪, পৃ. ১।

১৬ গাজী তানজিয়া, “জলবায়ু পরিবর্তনে বিশ্বব্যাপী পরিবেশ বিপর্যয়ের ঘটাবলি”, পৃ. ১৭।

১৭ তদেব।

১৮ মাহফুজ উল-হা, “জলবায়ু পরিবর্তন মোকাবেলায় অভিযোজন কৌশল”, আহমেদ তাজুল ইসলাম ও অন্যান্য সম্পাদিত ‘জলবায়ু পরিবর্তন ও তার প্রভাব: প্রসঙ্গ বাংলাদেশ’ গ্রন্থে সংকলিত, (ঢাকা: গণ উন্নয়ন গ্রন্থাগার, ২০০৯), ২৭৪-৭৬।

কৃষকরা তাদের ঘরবাড়ি অপেক্ষত উচু স্থানে তৈরি করছে। ঘরবাড়ি তৈরির সময় তারা ঘরের উচ্চতার বিষয়টিও বিবেচনায় রাখছেন। ঘরের উচ্চতা এমন ভাবে দিচ্ছেন যাতে ঘূর্ণিঝড়ের সময় বয়ে যাওয়া বাতাস যেন তাদের ঘরে বেশি না লাগে; আবার এমন নিচু নয় যে জলোচ্ছ্বাস তাদেরকে সহজেই ভাসিয়ে নিয়ে যায়। এজন্য ঘরের পিড়ার (Plinth) উচ্চতা ৩-৪ ফুট এবং ঘরের উচ্চতা ২০-২৫ ফুট পর্যন্ত দিয়ে থাকেন। শক্ত ভিত্তির উপর নির্মিত চৌচালা ঘর অনেকটা ঝড় সহনীয় বলে ফোকাস দল আলোচনায় কৃষকরা জানান।

জলবায়ু পরিবর্তনের প্রভাবে সমুদ্রপৃষ্ঠের উচ্চতা বৃদ্ধির ফলে জমিতে লবণাক্ততা বেড়ে যাওয়ায় ইতোমধ্যে চারণভূমি কমে গিয়েছে বহুলাংশে। যে কারণে দরিদ্র জনগণের অর্থ উপার্জনের কর্মকাণ্ড হিসেবে গবাদিপশু বিশেষ করে ছাগল ও হাঁস-মুরগি পালন অসম্ভব হয়ে উঠছে। এক্ষেত্রে উত্তরাধিকার সূত্রে প্রাপ্ত আয়ের পথ অর্থাৎ স্থানীয় নদী-নালাগুলোতে মাছের ছোট ছোট পোনা ধরাকে বেছে নেয়।^{১৯} কিন্তু এগুলো ধরতে গিয়ে তারা আরো অসংখ্য মাছের পোনা নষ্ট করে ফেলে, যা মৎস্য ও জীববৈচিত্র্য ধ্বংস করার ক্ষেত্রে ভূমিকা পালন করে। কৃষিকাজের জন্য একদা বহুল ব্যবহৃত মহিষ এখন বিলুপ্ত প্রায়। লবণাক্ততা বৃদ্ধি ও উপযুক্ত চারণভূমির অভাবে গবেষণা এলাকা বরগুনা জেলার পাথরঘাটা উপজেলার পদ্মা গ্রামের কোনো কৃষক পরিবারই এখন আর মহিষ পালন করেন না বলে কৃষকরা জানান। এক যুগপূর্বেও প্রতি কৃষক পরিবারেই পাবারিক দুধের চাহিদা মেটানোর জন্য গাভী পালন করা হতো। বর্তমানে লবণাক্ততার কারণে ও পশুচারণ ভূমির অভাবে তারা গাভী পালন তো দূরের কথা চাষের জন্য ব্যবহৃত গরু পালন করতেও পারছেন না। ফলে তারা, ফোকাস দল আলোচনায় কৃষকদের সঙ্গে আলাপকালে জানান যায়, এখন কৃষি কাজের জন্য যান্ত্রিক উপায়ের উপরই বেশি নির্ভরশীল। কৃষকরা জীবাত্ম জ্বালানি পুড়িয়ে দিন দিন যান্ত্রিক চাষাবাদের দিকে ঝুঁকে পড়ছেন, যা প্রকারণের পরিবেশ দূষিত করছে। বর্তমান গবেষণায় দেখা যায় যে, ২০০৭ সালের সুপার সাইকোন সিডরের পর প্রায় সকল কৃষকই (৯১.১৫%) ট্রাক্টর ভাড়া নিয়ে জমি চাষাবাদ করেছেন। ফোকাস দল আলোচনায় কৃষকরা আরও জানান যে, বর্তমানে জমিতে অধিক আগাছা দেখা দিচ্ছে। এতে ফলন কমে গিয়ে উৎপাদন ব্যয় বেড়ে যায়। ফলে অনেকেই কৃষি পেশায় নিরুৎসাহিত হয়ে দ্রব্যবসায় নিয়োজিত হয়েছেন। তাদের গ্রামে এরকম ২০-২৫ জন কৃষক কৃষি পেশা ছেড়ে দিয়ে অন্য পেশা বিশেষ করে ব্যবসা, রিকসা ভ্যান এবং দেশীয় যন্ত্রচালিত যানবাহন চালানোর মাধ্যমে মাধ্যমে জীবিকা নির্বাহ করছেন বলে কৃষকরা জানান।

জলবায়ু পরিবর্তন বিষয়ে জিজ্ঞাসা করা হলে কৃষকরা জানান যে, জলবায়ু পরিবর্তন তারা বোঝেন না। তবে, আবহাওয়া যে আগের মতো নেই সেটা বুঝতে পারেন। শীতকালের স্থায়িত্ব কম হচ্ছে। গ্রীষ্মে প্রচণ্ড তাপদাহের সৃষ্টি হচ্ছে। ধান চাষের জন্য যখন বৃষ্টির প্রয়োজন তখন সেটা না হয়ে বৃষ্টি বিলম্বিত হচ্ছে। আবার কখনও কখনও অতিরিক্ত বৃষ্টি হয়ে ফসল ডুবে যাচ্ছে। কৃষকরা জানান যে, সমুদ্রপৃষ্ঠের উচ্চতা বৃদ্ধি সম্পর্কেও তাদের কোন ধারণা নেই। তবে তারা লক্ষ্য করছেন যে, নদীতে জোয়ারের পানি আগের তুলনায় বেশি হচ্ছে এবং নদী ও সাগরে পানির চাপ বেশি। এজন্য বেড়ি বাধের বাইরে কোন শস্য চাষ করলে তা যে কোন সময়ে তলিয়ে যায়। যেটা কিনা ১০-১৫ বছরের আগেও হতো না। এজন্য কৃষকরা এসব এলাকার জমি চাষাবাদ না করে জমি পতিত রাখতে বাধ্য হচ্ছেন।

১৯ মেঘনা গুহঠাকুরতা এবং সুরাইয়া বেগম, “বাংলাদেশে অভ্যন্তরীণ বাস্তুচ্যুত ব্যক্তিবর্গ” সমাজ নিরীক্ষণ, নং ৯৬ জানুয়ারি-মার্চ ২০০৬।

আশ্রয়কেন্দ্র কৃষকদের ঘূর্ণিঝড়ের সময়ে কৃষকদের নিকট একটি বিরাট অবলম্বন। কাছাকাছি (দুই কিলোমিটারের মধ্যে) আশ্রয় কেন্দ্র না থাকলে, ঘূর্ণিঝড়ের সময়ে প্রান্তিক কৃষকরা উঁচু রাস্তায় আশ্রয় গ্রহণ করে থাকেন। অবস্থাপন্ন কৃষকেরা নিজ শক্ত বাসস্থান কিংবা শহরে বা অন্য কোন নিরাপদ আশ্রয়ে চলে যান। তাদের মধ্যে শিক্ষা ও সচেতনতার মাত্রা বেশি হওয়ার কারনে অনেকেই নিজেদের বাসস্থান ছেড়ে শহরে বসতি স্থাপন করার চিন্তা-ভাবনাও করছেন। ঘূর্ণি উপদ্রুত এলাকার কৃষকদের সাথে আলাপকালে তারা জানান যে, ঘূর্ণিঝড়ের সময় তারা উঁচু ও নিরাপদ আশ্রয় খোঁজেন। আশ্রয় কেন্দ্রগুলোর অবস্থান তাদের বাড়ির ৫-৬ কিলোমিটার দূরে অবস্থিত হওয়ায় অধিকাংশ সময় তারা সেখানে যেতে চাইলেও যেতে পারেন না। তারা বলেন, আশ্রয় কেন্দ্রগুলো জনবসতির ১-২ কিলোমিটারের মধ্যে নির্মাণ করা উচিত। তবে এ ক্ষেত্রে স্থান নির্বাচন একটি গুরুত্বপূর্ণ বিষয়। কৃষকরা অভিযোগ করে বলেন যে, সাম্প্রতিক সময়ে উক্ত পদ্মা গ্রামে বেসরকারী সংস্থা ব্র্যাকের আর্থিক সহায়তায় বলেশ্বর নদী ও বঙ্গোপসাগর মোহনা থেকে মাত্র ৫০ গজ দূরত্বে একটি ঘূর্ণিঝড় আশ্রয় কেন্দ্র নির্মাণ করা হয়েছে যেটি অব্যাহত ভাঙনের মুখে যে কোনো সময়ে নদীগর্ভে তলিয়ে যেতে পারে। কৃষকরা আরও মত প্রকাশ করেন যে, ঘূর্ণিঝড় শুরু হলে মানুষ সাগরের দিকে না যেয়ে বরং মূল ভূখণ্ডে আশ্রয় খুঁজবে এটাই স্বাভাবিক কিন্তু আশ্রয় কেন্দ্রটি নির্মাণ করা হয়েছে সাগর পাড়ে ফলে এখানে আশ্রয়ের জন্য এখানে যেতে মানুষ আগ্রহী হচ্ছে না। উপরন্তু এটি অব্যাহত ভাঙনের মুখে পড়ে নদীগর্ভে বিলীন হতে চলেছে। উপকূলীয় এলাকায় এ ধরনের আশ্রয়কেন্দ্র নির্মাণের পূর্বে এ বিষয়গুলো ভেবে দেখা দরকার বলে তাঁরা মত প্রকাশ করেন। নইলে সম্পদের অপচয় হবে এবং আশ্রয়কেন্দ্র থাকা সত্ত্বেও উপদ্রুত এলাকার মানুষ সময় বিপদের মধ্যেই থেকে যাবেন। মানুষের জন্য আশ্রয়কেন্দ্র তৈরির পাশপাশি গবাদিপশুর উপযোগী আশ্রয় কেন্দ্র বা কেল-১ তৈরি করাও প্রয়োজন বলে কৃষকরা মন্তব্য করেন। কেননা অনেক কৃষক গবাদি পশু ও অন্যান্য জিনিসপত্র ছেড়ে আশ্রয় কেন্দ্রে যেতে চান না। ফলে তারা বিপদের সম্মুখীন হন এবং জীবন ও সম্পত্তি হারান।

ঘূর্ণিঝড় ও তৎপরবর্তী সময়ে সরকারি-বেসরকারি সহায়তা পাওয়া গেলেও তা পর্যাপ্ত নয়। উপরন্তু বিতরণ প্রক্রিয়াও অনেক সময়ই স্বচ্ছ থাকে না ফলে প্রকৃত প্রয়োজন যাদের তারা না পেয়ে অপেক্ষিত সমাজের প্রভাবশালী ব্যক্তিবর্গ এসব সহায়তা পেয়ে থাকেন। কোনো কোনো ক্ষেত্রে সরকারি-বেসরকারি সহায়তা পেলেও তারা নিজেরাই গ্রামবাসীদের সহায়তায় ও ধার করে টাকা জোগাড় করে বাড়িঘর মেরামত ও জরুরি প্রয়োজন মিটিয়ে থাকেন। ঘূর্ণিঝড় পরবর্তীতে কৃষিকাজ পুনরায় শুরু করা একটি বিরাট সমস্যা। জমিতে লবনের আশ্রয় সরাণো কৃষকদের জন্য দুর্ভাগ্য ব্যাপার। এছাড়া, চাষের জন্য বলদ সংগ্রহ করা ও শস্যের বীজ প্রাপ্তিও সহজসাধ্য নয় বলে তারা উলে-খ করেন। বর্তমানে এলাকায় লোনা পানি ঢুকে যাওয়ার কারনে লোনা পানির উপযোগী শস্য এবং পরিবর্তিত পরিবেশে যে সব খাদ্য-শস্য ফলে সেগুলো চাষ করে নিজেদের টিকিয়ে রাখা চেষ্টা করছেন। যেমন-আগে যে জমিতে ধান চাষ করা হতো এখন সেখানে তরমুজ চাষ করছেন।

২০০৭ সালে আঘাতকৃত সুপার সাইকোন সিডরের অভিজ্ঞতা বর্ণনা করতে গিয়ে একজন কৃষক বলেন যে, বাংলাদেশের সংবাদ মাধ্যমগুলোতে প্রচারিত আবহাওয়ার সংবাদ এখনও অধিকাংশ কৃষকের নিকট সহজে বোধগম্য নয়। তারা মনে করেন, ঘূর্ণিঝড়ের সময় আবহাওয়ার সংবাদ স্থানীয় জনগণের নিকট বোধগম্য ভাষায় প্রচার করা উচিত। কেননা

এখনও বাংলাদেশে নিম্ন আয়ের পরিবারসহ অধিকাংশ কৃষক পরিবারগুলোর সদস্যগণ অশিতি। তাদের অনেকেরই এখনও সংবাদ মাধ্যমের সুযোগ নেই। আর থাকলেও তারা বোঝেন না ৫-১০ ফুট উচ্চতার পানি এবং ১৪০-১৮০ কিলোমিটার বেগে আসা ঝড় কতটুক ক্ষতির কারণ হতে পারে। তাই এ বিষয়ে স্থানীয় ভাষায় সংবাদ মাধ্যমগুলোতে ক্ষয়-ক্ষতির ধরন উল্লেখসহ আবহাওয়ার সতর্কবাণী প্রচার করা উচিত বলে কৃষকরা মন্তব্য করেন। বর্তমানে প্রায় প্রতিটি পরিবারেই মোবাইল ফোন রয়েছে। মোবাইল ফোনের মাধ্যমে বাংলা ভাষায় প্রান্তিক জনগোষ্ঠীর উপযোগী করে ঘূর্ণিঝড় সতর্কীকরণ সংকেত প্রদান করা হলে তা সহজেই সকলের নিকট পৌঁছে যাবে। অভিযোজন প্রক্রিয়া সহজতর করতে ফোকাস দল আলোচনায় কৃষকরা নিম্নোক্ত বিষয়গুলো সুপারিশ করেন। ১) উপকূলীয় এলাকায় যেসব এলাকায় বাধ নেই সে সব এলাকায় বাধ নির্মাণ এবং বাধ থাকলে তা রক্ষণাবেক্ষণে উপযুক্ত ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণ; ২) নারী-পুরুষদের জন্য অলাদা উপযুক্ত সুবিধাসহ সুবিধাজনক স্থানে পর্যাপ্ত আশ্রয় কেন্দ্র নির্মাণ; ৩) লবনাক্ততা সহনীয় ফসলের জাত উদ্ভাবনে সরকারি-বেসরকারি উদ্যোগ গ্রহণ; ৪) হাঁস পালনে কৃষকদের উদ্বুদ্ধকরণ ও সরকারি-বেসরকারি সহায়তাদান; ৫) বৃষ্টির পানি সংরোধে অবকাঠামো নির্মাণে কৃষক পরিবারগুলোকে সহায়তা প্রদান; ৬) লবনাক্ত এলাকায় বিশুদ্ধ পানি সরবরাহকরণ অথবা প্রয়োজনীয় প্রযুক্তি হস্তান্তরে সহায়তা প্রদান; ৭) ঘূর্ণিঝড় সহনীয় বাড়ি তৈরিতে ঋণ বা আর্থিক সমতা বিবেচনায় এনে মঞ্জুরি সহায়তা প্রদান। উলি-খিত বিষয়গুলোতে সরকারি-বেসরকারি সহায়তা নিশ্চিত করা হলে উপকূলীয় কৃষকদের জীবনাযাত্রা সহনীয় হবে বলে কৃষকরা মনে করেন।

৬.০ উপকূলীয় কৃষকদের অভিযোজনে প্রাতিষ্ঠানিক উদ্যোগ

১৯৬০ এর দশকে পূর্ব পাকিস্তান পানি ও বিদ্যুৎ উন্নয়ন কর্তৃপক্ষ উপকূলীয় এলাকাকে জলোচ্ছ্বাস, ঘূর্ণিঝড় এবং লোনা পানি প্রবেশ থেকে রা করার জন্য বেশ কিছু বড় আকারের পোল্ডার এবং এমব্যাঙ্কমেন্ট নির্মাণ করেন। ১^{৯৬০} ২০০৮ সালের সেপ্টেম্বরে লন্ডনে অনুষ্ঠিত যুক্তরাজ্য-বাংলাদেশ জলবায়ু পরিবর্তন সংক্রান্ত সম্মেলনের জন্য বাংলাদেশ সরকার যে প্রতিবেদনটি তৈরি করে, তাতে খাপ খাওয়ানোর জন্য বেড়িবাঁধ ও পোল্ডার নির্মাণের ওপর বিশেষ জোর দেওয়া হয়েছে। বেড়িবাঁধ ও পোল্ডার উপকূলীয় এলাকার মানুষকে জলোচ্ছ্বাস থেকে রা করে বটে তবে সেগুলো যথাযথভাবে পরিচর্যা করা প্রয়োজন বলে কৃষকগণ মনে করেন। পদ্মা গ্রামের পশ্চিম দিকের বেড়িবাঁধটি সংস্কার না করার কারনে সিডরের সময় সহসাই পানি ঢুকে পুরো গ্রামকে তলিয়ে দেয়। এতে শত শত মানুষের বসতবাড়ি জীবন ও সম্পত্তির বিপুল ক্ষতি সাধন হয় বলে কৃষকরা জানান।

১৯৯১ সালে ২৯ এপ্রিলের ভয়াবহ ঘূর্ণিঝড় ও জলোচ্ছ্বাসের পরে অধ্যাপক জামিলুর রেজা চৌধুরীকে আহবায়ক করে গঠিত টাস্কফোর্সের প্রতিবেদন মোতাবেক দেশের ১৫টি উপকূলীয় জেলার ৭১০ কিলোমিটার দীর্ঘ উপকূলীয় এলাকায় ১ কোটি ২০ লাখ লোক প্রাকৃতিক দুর্যোগের ঝুঁকির মধ্যে বসবাস করে। সে অনুযায়ী দুর্যোগের সময়ে উক্ত এলাকার লোকজনের নিরাপদ আশ্রয়ের নিশ্চিত করতে ৩২ হাজার ৬০০টি আশ্রয় কেন্দ্রের প্রয়োজনীয়তা থাকলেও আশ্রয় কেন্দ্র রয়েছে মাত্র দুই হাজারের মত।^{২০} যা এই বিশাল জনগোষ্ঠীর প্রয়োজনের

২০ Sam Jenkins, Alamgir Chowdhury & Mahbub Hossain, "Impact of Small Sacle Coastal Embankment: A Case study of LGED Polder," The Journal of Rural Development, vol.34, no.2[July 2007]:56.

২১ দৈনিক প্রথম আলো, ১৯ আগস্ট ২০০৮, পৃ. ১।

তুলনায় নিতান্তই অপ্রতুল। উপরন্তু রণাবেগ না হওয়ায় এগুলো প্রয়োজনের সময় ব্যবহারের অনুপযোগী হয়ে পড়েছে। এছাড়া, মহিলাদের জন্য আলাদা স্যানিটারি ব্যবস্থা না থাকায় মহিলারা আশ্রয় কেন্দ্রে যেতে উৎসাহ বোধ করেন না। আশ্রয় কেন্দ্রগুলোতে মহিলাদের জন্য আলাদা স্যানিটারি ব্যবস্থা থাকা প্রয়োজন এবং এগুলো রণাবেগে প্রয়োজনীয় ব্যবস্থা নেয়া প্রয়োজন বলে কৃষকরা মনে করেন। অধিকাংশ আশ্রয়কেন্দ্রে স্যানিটারি ব্যবস্থা থাকে নীচতলায় যেটি ঘূর্ণিঝড়ের সময়ে সাধারণত তলিয়ে যায়। এক্ষেত্রে আশ্রয় কেন্দ্র নির্মাণের পূর্বে নকশায় পরিবর্তন আনা প্রয়োজন বলে কৃষকরা মনে করেন। অর্থাৎ দ্বিতীয় তলায়ই এসব সুযোগ-সুবিধা রাখা প্রয়োজন বলে তারা মতামত ব্যক্ত করেন।

৭.০ উপসংহার

ভূ-প্রকৃতিগত অবস্থানের কারণে বাংলাদেশ ঐতিহাসিকভাবে একটি দুর্যোগ-প্রবণ এলাকা। বিশ্বজলবায়ুপরিবর্তনের ফলে বাংলাদেশে দুর্যোগের হার ও মাত্রা ক্রমশ বেড়ে চলেছে। এর সারসরি শিকার এদেশের উপকূলীয় এলাকায় বসবাসকারী মানুষ। জানমালের ব্যাপক ক্ষয়তির পাশাপাশি ক্ষতিগ্রস্ত হচ্ছে বাংলাদেশের কৃষিভিত্তিক অর্থনীতি। কেননা, কেউ কেউ মৎসজীবি হলেও কৃষিই উপকূলীয় অঞ্চলে বসবাসকারী অধিকাংশ মানুষের প্রধান জীবিকা। বিশ্ব জলায়ু পরিবর্তনের জন্য দায়ী কার্বন নির্গমনে বাংলাদেশের ভূমিকা নগণ্য হলেও বাংলাদেশের উপকূলীয় এলাকায় বসবাসকারি মানুষকে তার চরম মূল্য দিতে হচ্ছে। জলবায়ু পরিবর্তন প্রক্রিয়ায় প্রভাব বিস্তারকারী গ্রিনহাউজ গ্যাস নির্গমন কমিয়ে আনার লক্ষ্যে জাতিসংঘের উদ্যোগে বিভিন্ন পর্যায়ে আলোচনা অব্যাহত রয়েছে। কিন্তু পৃথিবী উষ্ণতা বৃদ্ধি নিয়ন্ত্রণের বৈশ্বিক উদ্যোগ হিসাবে কিয়োটো প্রটোকল এর পরবর্তী চুক্তি এখনও পর্যন্ত সম্পাদিত না হওয়ায় পরিস্থিতির আরো অবনতি হচ্ছে। কিয়োটো প্রটোকলের একটি প্রধান লক্ষ্য ছিল ২০১২ সালের মধ্যে পৃথিবীর উষ্ণতা বৃদ্ধির জন্য দায়ী গ্রিনহাউজ গ্যাসসমূহের (কার্বন-ডাই-অক্সাইড, মিথেন) নির্গমন ৫ শতাংশ কমিয়ে ১৯৯০ সালের পর্যায়ে আনা। কিন্তু বাস্তবে ২০১২ সালে এসব গ্যাসের নির্গমন ১৯৯০ সালের তুলনায় ১৭ শতাংশ বেড়েছে। ফলে পৃথিবীর উষ্ণতা বৃদ্ধি অব্যাহত রয়েছে। আর এর বিরূপ প্রভাবগুলো ক্রমেই বেশি করে দেখা দিচ্ছে। বর্তমান দশকে যে কয়টি ঘূর্ণিঝড় আঘাত হেনেছে তা ঘটার সময়ের ব্যবধান ও বেগের দিক থেকে পূর্বের তুলনায় অনেক বেশি। এক দশক পূর্বেও আবহাওয়ায় এত বৈচিত্র্য দেখা যায়নি। এতে বাংলাদেশের মানুষের বিশেষ করে উপকূলীয় এলাকায় বসবাসকারী মানুষের জীবন ও সম্পত্তির ক্ষতির পরিমাণ বেড়ে চলেছে। যার দায়ভার বর্তায় জলবায়ু পরিবর্তনের জন্য দায়ী কার্বন নির্গমনকারী উন্নত দেশগুলোর উপর। তাদেরই উচিত বাংলাদেশসহ উন্নয়নশীল দেশগুলোকে জলবায়ু পরিবর্তনের প্রভাব মোকাবেলার জন্য আর্থিক ও কারিগরি সহায়তা প্রদান করা। এছাড়া, কার্বন নির্গমন কমিয়ে আনার পাশাপাশি কৃষিনির্ভর বাংলাদেশকে খাদ্য নিরাপত্তা ও বিপর্যয় থেকে রা করতে কৃষক সম্প্রদায়ের অভিযোজন কৌশলে সহায়ক কারিগরি সহায়তা নিশ্চিত করার জন্য জাতীয় ও আন্তর্জাতিক পর্যায়ে সমন্বিত উদ্যোগ গ্রহণ করা হলে তা বাংলাদেশের উপকূলে বসবাসকারী কৃষকদের টিকে থাকার ক্ষেত্রে সহায়ক ভূমিকা পালন করবে। অন্যথায় বাংলাদেশের উপকূলীয় এলাকার লক্ষ লক্ষ মানুষ বিশেষ করে কৃষিজীবী মানুষ প্রকৃতির নির্মম রুদ্ররোধের কবলে পড়ে জীবন-জীবিকা হারাতে ও বাস্তব হতে হবে। দেশ সম্মুখীন হবে খাদ্য সংকটের এবং দেখা দিবে মানবিক বিপর্যয়। এজন্য জাতীয় ও আন্তর্জাতিক পর্যায়ে সমন্বিত উদ্যোগই বাংলাদেশের কৃষকদের জীবন ও জীবিকা রায় ভূমিকা পালন করতে পারে।

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The Patterns of Influence of Political Parties on the Local Self-government Elections in Bangladesh: Some Policy Suggestions

Dr. Tareque M. Taufiqur Rahman¹

Dr. Md. Habibullah²

Abstract: The idea of local government had followed the establishment of 'modern government' in different states of the world. Though the local government units were, absolutely, the 'local agents' of the central (State) government, even then, those were a sort of achievement of the 'local people'. Through these local government units the local people, at least, attained some administrative or official facilities. The idea of 'local self-government' came later to the existence to ensure the control and participation in the 'purely local issues' by the local people. 'The local issues and activities would be administered or governed by the representatives of the local people, not by the central government,' was the basic spirit of the concept of local self-government. The local self-government units are functioning in Bangladesh, least or best, from the very inception of the country. In the recent years, the major political parties are significantly intervening in the elections of the local self-governments (LSGs). The present article has studied primarily that new dimension of LSG on Bangladesh perspective and offered some suggestions to address that new phenomenon

Introduction

The Local Self-governments are indispensable parts of any democratic state. Democratic states need powerful and effective local self-government where the local people can participate in local socio-economic and political development activities. The effective Local Self-Governments (LSG) builds up the foundation of democracy at the root level along with all aspects of local development process. So the democracy, for this reason, needs strong, active and powerful LSGs. The LSG is considered as the infra structure of democracy. But the realities of over populated developing countries are different on the local self-governance point of view. As the LSG in those countries enjoys less power and authority, it could not stand on a strong foundation. Eventually it could not be effective in local development process. Moreover it has a nominal financial authority for imposing tax and making budget for local area. It, absolutely, depends on the central authority for the almost

1 Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Rajshahi, Bangladesh.

2 Lecturer, Department of Government & Politics, Asian University of Bangladesh.

development allotments. Since the central authority does not want to strengthen enough the LSG fearing to lose their popularity at the root level, the LSG failed to draw the proper attention from the central authority due to this misconception. Such type of misconception has been increased during the democratic regimes. Obviously it is a matter of regret that all the major political parties were in favor of the autonomous LSG from the very beginning of independent Bangladesh, but they did not implement autonomous LGS when they were in the state power. But it is a reality that the central authority and the political parties show enough interest and attention to the LSG elections. It is considered that the election is a bridge between the political parties and the local people.

Though the influence of political parties on the LSG elections is a common feature of the indigenous politics of Bangladesh, it is, still, to be measured properly, its depth to be revealed in the right way. This influence was limited in the rural power structure based local politics and its leadership which was not considered as a part of formal political process. That is why, there was no proper attention and interest of the experts, the media, the civil society and others on the influence of local leadership. From the very beginning of democratic restoration in 1991 the local level politics has got a direct link with the national level politics. Involvement or relation with the national political parties is regarded as an important factor to influence the rural classical power structure. At the same time the national political parties needed to spread out the organization at the root level to contest in power politics, which is the fundamental way of democratic process. After the independence every political party tried to expand its activities and capture the seats of power. The political parties concentrated their activities on the villages in order to attract the loyalty of people. Political parties, for this reason, had to pay give attention to the LSG elections because the local self-government election is the focal point of local politics. The Local elites try to expose their ability of influence in their locality with their political affiliation. Political parties also try to set up their strong organization in local areas with the help of the local elites. Actually both of them want to be benefited through the role of each other. Eventually the influence of local area has been shifted from classical rural elites to local political leaders who are also the inheritants of rural elites. As a result, local political elites have occupied the fields of influence in local area. This is why the experts, the intellectuals, the media, the civil society and other parts of citizens need to pay a proper attention to the influence of political parties

in the LSG elections. And such type of influence might be a new phenomenon of indigenous politics of Bangladesh, but this is not a new experience for some other developing countries like India.

Objectives

1. To offer the present situation of influence of political parties on LSG elections;
2. To identify the degree of influence of political parties on LSG elections;
3. To understand the attention and interest of political parties in this context;
4. To find out the patterns of influence of political parties on the LSG elections;
5. To consider some policy suggestions;
6. To suggest steps for such kind of practice of political parties.

Research Methodology

Necessary information and data related to this work have been collected from the secondary sources like news papers, published books, articles, unpublished research works and government documents.

Limitations

The role and influence of political parties on LSG elections is not legitimate and formal. So providing observation, evaluation and suggestions would be risky as there is a little proper exercise.

Operational Definition: Influence

Influence, in its simple sense, whether from the social or political point of view or any reason it may have, means the diversion of the behaviors of a particular person or group. General elements of the definition of influence in different fields of social science are: (a) That influence would start a change or it would turn the previous decision, ethics or behavior. (b) Practice of influence (influential activities) will not harm own principles rather it harms others.

According to Morton, 'Influence is not an invisible act of a person; it is a process to mix up two or more persons.' According to the social scientists and political scientist, there is difference between the power and influence, though it is not visible easily. These two concepts are very

close but not same. According to Morton, "In case of 'hierarchy' power, status, position etc may create an 'inter personal influence' but it cannot ensure the limit to judge the influence. On the other hand, H. A. Simon, in his book "Notes on the Observation and Management of Political Power", shows power and influence as synonyms. H. D. Lasswell strongly says, "to study politics means the study of influence and influential.

There are different opinions among the analysts regarding the basement of influence the way of practicing and measuring it. Changing behavior of influenced persons for different reasons such as using suggestions, instead of 'oppression' or formal authority, its practice, imitation etc are called 'influence' not power. Though the value of yield to someone gives the pleasure or service to the influential and powerful persons, punishment is not so severe in case of influence.

This present research will treat influence as the direct but unlawful process of biasing the decision of local voters to take part in local elections. It will highlight the influence of political parties who try to bias the local administration, the mass media and work in favor of them.

Related Issues: Western & Developing World's Perspective

One school of thought in India believed that political parties should be kept away from the politics of Panchayati Raj. It was feared that the association of political parties with the Panchayati Raj would create new problems in the working of these institutions and that the philosophy of Panchayati Raj, viz. to take Swaraj to the people, to become active participants, in the building of a new life, would not be achieved.

It was further argued that the problems and tasks that the village Panchayat normally faces do not call for party solutions, rather they transcend party divisions. Parties and their programmes and politics are hardly relevant to them. Parties create dissensions where unity is called for and exaggerate differences where they should be minimized, parties often put party interest over the national interest.

Supporters of parliamentary democracy reject such arguments on the ground that they are visionary and are likely to lead to some form of totalitarianism. They feel that parliamentary democracy based on organized political parties and direct elections is the only and certain means of effective government. Dr. M.N. Lakshminarasaya observed "when once power is decentralized and authority for Local Government

is vested in statutory constituted institution, it is impossible to conceive of a political vacuum there. In an open society like ours, one cannot keep pockets of political vacuum. In spite of all our efforts, like air, politics will rush in."

Panchayati Raj institutions have to perform many developmental activities, which largely depend on the powers given to these institutions. So long these institutions had little power, there was little reason for political parties to have any interest in them, but once their powers were increased, parties were inevitably drawn to them. It is thus a mistake to think that villagers are constantly being "exploited" by political parties. It is no less true that village functions exploit political parties.

Panchayati Raj of India is the training ground for leadership and political career and serves as a step toward levels of political hierarchy. This is possible only when the leaders of Panchayati Raj are actively associated with political parties. Many of the present leaders at the state and national level have started their career in Panchayati Raj institutions.

Studies on local self-government of countries like U.S.A. and U.K. show that political parties have assumed an active role in the elections of members of rural local self-governments. The party organizations in the U.S.A. are well connected from rural to the national level. However, their working is being criticized on the ground that they complicate any formal discussion of functions and undermine the "localness" of local Government. Though the elections are conducted on a party basis, the councilors once elected act as independents.

The parliamentary system of government of India necessitates the association of political parties with Panchayati Raj institutions to keep the power linkage from village to the State and to the Centre. The village leaders depend upon the leaders at the state level for getting government aid which they can utilize in the village and strengthen their influence and power. In return the leaders at the State and even at the Centre depend on the Panchayati Raj functionaries for their success in elections. Therefore a close examination would disclose that whenever power has been decentralized both in the developed and developing countries, it has engendered? politics. Those who treat this as an unnatural development ignore the character of power itself and its psychology and mechanism.

Political Party based Results of Different LSG Elections in Bangladesh

LSG elections should have a non political character according to the prohibition of Election Commission (EC). But recently in Bangladesh it is not being followed and political parties are showing a lot of interest to these elections. On the other hand the media has given positive response to the intention of political parties and published news of the LSG elections in a political way. This is why the LSG elections have got a political character. The following tables containing the results of the LSG elections indicate this tendency.

Table-1: Result of Upazilla Parishad election 2009

Name of the party	Secured (chairman) seat
Awami Leauge (AL)	313
Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP)	93
Jatiya Party (Ershad)	17
Jamaat	21
Others	19
Total	475

Source: The Daily Ittefaq, Dhaka, 24th January, 2009.

Table-2: Result of Pouroshava election 2011

Name of the party	Secured (Mayor) seat
Awami Leauge (AL)	111
Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP)	104
Jatiya Party (Ershad)	1
Jamayat	5
Neutrul	15
Total	237

Source: The Daily Ittefaq, Dhaka, 7th February, 2011

Table-3: Result of Union Parishad election 2011

Name of the party	Secured (Chairman) seat
Awami Leauge (AL)	2101
Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP)	1618
Jatiya Party (Ershad)	84
Jamayat	129
Others	83
Neutrul	247
Total	4262

Source: The Daily Jugantor, Dhaka, 7th July, 2011

Pattern of influence of political parties on the LSG elections

Local self-government system is an important element for practices and development of democracy at the root level. Though practice of democratic values is absent in local self-government in Bangladesh perspective but it is true that the LSG is an essential institute for participation of root level people in local politics and development functions. For this reason political parties of Bangladesh have interested regarding the root level socio-economic and political issues so that they can protect their support at the root level which is very significant for power politics. Power and politics go hand in hand. So, political parties are compelled to give attention to the LSG which is organized and operated by the root level mass people. This is one of the most priorities for political parties. They expect that their nominated or supported candidate must win at LSG elections like Union Parishad (UP), Upazilla Parishad (UZP) and City Corporation for retaining their popularity and strength at the local level. Political parties take different methods for the selection of the candidates. Parties give importance to personal qualities and economic position. Most of the candidates are selected on the basis of their popularity in the local areas. Thus political parties could be organized by their supporters and try to do everything for their candidates. Because political parties think that the elections provide a good opportunity for them to seek power as representatives of the people. For this reason position of the political parties according to result in those elections is considered as significant for future politics in local areas. No political party wants to receive unexpected result from those elections. Various types of strategies are taken by major political parties for wining

these positions. Therefore political clash, case filling against the opposition and use of black money in elections is being increased. And such type of tendencies is destroying the local peaceful life. The LSG elections, however, are considered as a challenge for the ruling party. So, they want not only to give support to their own candidates but also try to do everything for gaining their position by dint of local administration and other parameters of manipulation. This experience has been repeating since the very beginning of democratic regime after the independence of Bangladesh. At the same time this experience could hardly bring any positive attainment of socio-economic and political development in Bangladesh. Because this type of process has been operated in the wrong way. Since the LSG of Bangladesh has not awarded financial liberty yet, the LSG is to depend on the central authority. Proper coordination between the LSG and the central authority is very much important for attaining any development grant for the local area of this country. In addition, in any effective initiative and development function might be achieved through a good relation with the ruling party and their local representatives. This type of interest and interference of political parties to the LSG elections are not insignificant but it has not developed properly due to the illegal and unlimited interference by the ruling positions. That is why this interest of political parties to the LSG is being considered as indisciplined from the democratic point of view. The system of LSG of Bangladesh has been suffering severely because of the problematic tendency of major political parties in spite of genuine obligations to the EC prohibitions. So, the LGS system is going to be paralyzed in case of its role playing in local socio-economic and political development. And recently this tendency has increased in the UZP, the Pouroshova, the UP and the City Corporation elections. Meanwhile it is being observed that the media has given a lot of importance to the election of the LSG on the political basis and it has been appreciated significantly by the local people. Some of them have tried to show argument in favor of this tendency. On the other hand most of the media have shown the negative reactions to the tendency. In fact no candidate could contest in the LSG elections with a direct nomination of political parties according to the EC provisions. At the same time no one can use either political party monogram or the photo of respective leaders according to the same provision. Actually there is no opportunity for any body to contest in the LSG election under the banner of any political party. It would be direct violation against the present law, if some body does so. But the major competitors are violating this law by dint of the

weak points of the EC rules. The LSG elections have been operated nonpolitically during the long past. It is also being identified as a socio-economic tradition of rural Bangladesh which is the potential field in generating new leadership for local area. For this reason the EC has introduced a prohibition against the practice of political party-based competition in the LSG elections considering the indigenous socio-cultural and traditional history of Bangladesh. But the major political parties were ignoring the endeavor of the EC. The ruling and the main opposition parties had formed a central committee for the selection of the candidates for the UZP and City Corporation elections and that committee selected candidates for their respective party through the media declaration. The selected candidates were treated as the fellow of respective party in local area and local respective political leaders framed election plan in favor of those candidates. Recently both of the major parties have compromised with their alliances in selecting candidates of the LSG elections. The party-based contest in the LSG election may be considered as a new dimension of indigenous politics of Bangladesh. In the mean time Mr Syed Ashraf Islam, the LGRD Minister and the General Secretary of the ruling party, said the LSG election should be operated on political party basis like national (Parliament) election. This statement could make a good opportunity for a political party-based LSG election amending of the present law. Experts on the LSG have become hopeless for such type of ministerial statement and they have also suspected that the potential field of new leadership might be in trouble.

The patterns of influences of political parties in the LSG elections

1. Forming central committee for selecting candidates

The political parties influence significantly in the LSG elections by forming a central committee for selecting candidates. And this practice is a new feature of the political influence on the LSG election. Recently the ruling party, Awami League (AL) had formed a central committee for selecting candidates in the Pouroshova elections naming Kazi Zafarullah, a Presidium member of AL as the head, Foreign Minister Dr. Dipu Moni, Md. Nasim and Joint Secretary General Mahbubul Alam Hanif as the members. List of AL candidates were finally selected by this committee with the final approval of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the President of the ruling AL. Another list from the Grand Alliance was presented to the Prime Minister for her consideration. At the same time main opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) had formed a same type of

committee led by Mr. MK Anwar, a member of Standing Committee, the highest policy making forum of BNP. Other members of that committee were Nazrul Islam Khan, Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamghir and Rizvi Ahmed. The committee had finalized the list of candidates for Pourashova election coordinating with the Four Party Alliance.

2. Lobbying to get support from the political parties

Maintaining a lobby in to the political parties by influential local leaders is an important factor to get informal nomination from a political party. Since the candidates need political support, they do not hesitate at all to offer a handsome amount of money as bribe to the political leaders, if necessary, to snatch it. There are some vital organs of the LSG like City Corporations and district level Pouroshovas where formal leadership is regarded as an important factor to the political parties. So, competition among political leaders is observed to get support from political party for that formal post. However the central political leaders are divided in favor of their respective candidates. They deliver speeches in the local meetings and to the media in favor of their chosen candidates. Narayanganj City Corporation (NCC), first election of NCC, may be considered as the latest example in case of this tendency.

3. Declaration of selected candidate's name in the media from the respective party

Declaration of selected candidate's name from the respective political party is an important way to influence the local self government election. Non-political LSG elections are being violated due to the support to a specific candidate in spite of having specific prohibition in this case. Such type of objections has been raised in NCC election from the EC and LSG experts. The ruling AL and the main opposition BNP had formally declared their candidate's name for the NCC election violating the prohibition in this concerned issue. Thus the demand of party-based LSG election is getting logistic ground by turns.

4. Withdrawal of candidature from the election due to political pressure

The main opposition BNP had decided that they will not compete in any election under the present government because of their nullified demand of EVM (Electronic Voting Machine) method, deployment of military for creating a free and fair environment for election and restoration of Caretaker government. But the government did not deploy army in the

NCC election in spite of the demand of the EC. As a result BNP has boycotted the election and they created force to their party candidate to withdraw his candidature from the NCC election at the eleventh hour. BNP candidate said, 'I have sacrificed myself for showing my obedience to BNP chief Begum Khaleda Zia.' At the end of the election, political parties did not get any achievement from the NCC election. Neutral candidate, having failed to get support from AL, had won in the election game with huge public support. This disgrace of defeat of major political parties has been heavily criticized by the civil society and the experts. Actually, win of a neutral candidate in the NCC election is nothing but a slap against the party dictatorship. Monirul Islam Sakku, a Central leader of BNP and ex-Chairman of Comilla Pouroshova, had resigned from respective party posts for ensuring his candidature in upcoming Comilla City Corporation (CCC) election. Otherwise he would not be able to compete in the CCC election due to his membership of BNP. Already BNP had declared that they will not compete in the CCC election. BNP has established an example of direct interference in the LSG election which is not a positive sign for the LSG and democracy of Bangladesh. Later, Mr. Sakku won the CCC Mayoral post defeating the ruling party AL supported candidate with a double margin of votes.

6. Field administration influenced by the ruling party

Role of local field administration in LSG election was not seen neutral and fair ever. Rather LSG elections always have got question mark due to the controversial role of field administration where the result goes in favor of the ruling position. It is needless to say that no election could be free and fair under any biased administration. For this reason government should take necessary steps for reshuffling the field administration according to the demand of oppositions. Having no initiatives of the government, main opposition has decided to boycott the LSG election which is considered as a bad sign for the democratic process.

7. Taking part in propaganda and meeting by the local MP and leaders in favor of party candidates

Propaganda is an inevitable accompaniment of elections. Various methods are used by the candidates in this process. It may be classified as 1) the party approach, 2) the key-man approach, 3) the emotional approach, 4) the situational approach. All of these approaches are used in the LSG elections of Bangladesh. The success of the candidates in the elections largely depended upon the nature of the contests. Direct

elections and a straight contest between two candidates necessitated vigorous propaganda by the candidates. Where there are more contestants, it gives an upper hand the candidates who are well supported at least by a political party. The more the number of contestants the better was the chance of victory for such candidates. It is a common tendency in Bangladesh that local MP and leaders must participate in all sorts of arrangement for party candidate in LSG election. Generally local leaders take part in election campaign in favour of their party candidates and motivate voters to work for them by giving different commitment for development so that they can expect success in election. At this period of time these party leaders stay in local area to observe the field situation. Local MP plays a vital role for respective party candidate showing a lot of concentration in to the local people. So they are considered as an important factor for LSG voting politics.

8. Forming an election steering committee

Political party form an election steering committee so that election campaign of respective party runs smoothly as well as local people can be motivated in favour of party candidate. The committee involves various type of election works like poster fitting, banner hanging, arranging election related procession and meeting. Even they try to influence to the voters with unethical way such as offering bribe, material help and so on.

9. Establishing the election offices for operating election campaign

All process of election campaign is organized in election office of political parties so that local voters are attracted by the candidate. Necessary information like voter number from voter list, name of the expected vote centre and so on are provided to the local voters so that the voters may not face any obstacle. And light refreshment is usually served at the campaign centre for the voters by the candidates.

10. Arranging press conference to uphold their position

Arranging press conference of political parties regarding LSG election may be considered as a significant feature of political influence on the LSG election. Target of this conference is to explain their position in the election and try to give messages to the local people from their political point of view. Generally such type of conferences is used as a strategy against one another by the major political parties (AL and BNP). Major opposition party usually demands neutral administration and necessary

steps for level playing ground for all concerned. One the contrary the ruling party appreciates the government for its election related steps as well as they raise objection against the opposition for destroying the election process.

11. Political Show-down

Show-down (huge gathering in a mass procession, would be 'show-up' in a proper use) of political parties along with central leaders and local MP in the LSG election is another important event for campaigning election to make the mass people understand about their strength in local area. It is a new added culture in the LSG elections.

12. Making popular slogans for respective candidate

Political parties and personality of the candidates distinctly influence the election of the candidates. So, making popular slogans for candidate is one of the most important cultures for election based local politics. This is prepared with the name of the top leaders of respective party so that local supporters and voters can be motivated to the party easily. It has been proved that slogans are important and effective strategies for political parties in the elections retaining support within local voters and supporters. So, major political parties try to make the modern and attractive slogans to make it effective for the candidate.

13. Decision of suspension order against the rebel party fellow

The LSG elections have been influenced mostly by political parties in this unconstitutional process. Any one can compete in this non political LSG election according to the EC rules and regulations. In fact political parties have no legal ground for such type of influence. But major political parties are ignoring severely the provision and they are imposing suspension order against those political fellows who want to compete in the LSG elections denying party decision. It is regretful that no one could take any necessary legal action against this undemocratic process.

Impact of Political Influence in the LSG elections

Political factions, conflict and clash happen mostly among the major political parties due to the LSG elections and it is making political condition unrest at the national level. Generally most of this blame of political violence goes against the ruling party because they strictly try to increase their manipulation process in the elections abusing the local

administration what demolishes the peaceful election atmosphere. In addition, ruling party takes various types of strategies for suppressing the oppositions like case filing in the court or police station, occupying vote centre, harassing the opposition supporters physically, showing threat to general voters, ensuring leave of polling agents from the vote centers and other processes of election manipulations are applied in the LSG elections.

Standing of the EC in this regard

The Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) urged all political parties to help them to hold the LSG elections in a transparent and credible manner. The Commission's efforts alone could not ensure to achieve free, fair and transparent election. The civil society, the administration and all the political parties must come forward. The EC expects that the political leaders would not try to influence the LSG elections. Sohul Hossain, member of EC, said that the political parties could not have any large influence in the UP elections. He sought help from all concerned areas including the political parties to make the election free and fair. The EC took initiatives to discuss with the political parties about the political influence, free and peaceful Union Parishad (UP) election. But no political party from the Awami League (AL) led Grand Alliance or opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) led Four Party Alliance turned up at the EC on 24th February 2011 to discuss the ways to keep the upcoming UP election free from political influence. The EC earlier had invited these two alliances for discussions and to find out the ways to keep the LSG elections free from political influence. The EC has urged all political parties not to influence the nomination process of the candidates for the UP polls. Dr. ATM Shamsul Huda, the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC), said, the LSG polls are not completely out of politics; but it is not party based election. The EC had planned to sit on 24th February, 2011 with the political parties having their representatives in parliament to discuss and to find out the ways to keep the upcoming UP polls free from political influence. CEC said, 'we wanted to know the political parties view on keeping the UP election free from political influence, during the dialogue with the representatives of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). The LDP delegation head Jahanara Begum said that her party would help the EC to hold a non-partisan election. The CEC urged former and incumbent ministers and parliament members (MPs) to go by the electoral code of conduct. EC Muhammad Sakhawat Hussain narrating his experience in the municipal election, said there were

allegations that senior leaders had taken money from the candidates for taking part in their campaigns. 'High-handed attitudes and actions of a few law makers of ruling party AL, it seems, are making the task of EC difficult to ensure the freeness and fairness of the ongoing UP election.' Muhammad Sohul Hossain, one of the Election Commissioners, lamented on the third day of the six day's first phase of the election, 'it is difficult if the MPs do not abide by the code of conduct' and said that the Commission was planning to convey (the message) to the highest level of political parties, ironically, but not quiet surprisingly some members of the ruling party who tirelessly professes their commitment to 'free' and 'fair' elections are leading, as the charged, as far as the violation of the electoral code of conduct is concerned. For example, polls in four UP of Pirojpur had to be cancelled after candidates staged a rally in violation of section 144, apparently at the behest of the local AL lawmakers. Moreover, it looks unlikely that the EC's plan to report to the 'highest level' of the political parties about the deliberate violation of the electoral code of conduct by some law makers would return favourable results.

Positions of civil society in this regards

Speakers at a discussion, pre-election dialogue, organized by Sushashaner Jonnya Nagorik (SUJON), said that the upcoming UP election should be free from political influence. The election, if hampered by political parties, will not bring any good to the general people. Humayun Kabir Bhuiyan, chairman of Dhamiha UP in Taraile of Kishoreganj said, Local lawmakers (MP) try to influence their choice the candidates. This practice, he said, is not a good sign for UP election. Parliamentarians actually want influential candidates to benefit their respective party.

Impact of political influence on the traditional rural power structure

The political influence has brought about a new polarization in rural power structure system because of their hold on national politics. Central political authority has spread out the network to have the control on this polarization process. Therefore the root level political elites are compelled to show their responsibilities to implement the decision imposed by the central authority. As a result originality of rural elites has been destroyed as well as political views has been given priority more than social unity in case of selection for a social leadership. Necessary growth of politics in root level is absolutely indispensable for a strong foundation of democracy but that process should be in a proper way so

that it could help rural socio-economic and political development. As the development of politics at the root level has been accelerating since 1990's, major political parties have given attention most to spread out its organizations from that decade. On the other hand any link to the political parties (specially ruling party) is considered as an important factor for being influential in rural society. Politics, recently, has turned into the main source of rural power structure identified in rural related research work. It has radically changed in 1990 decade. Now a days political connection is being considered as the most important element in rural power structure. Recently 97.5% leadership in local area is involved with political parties who are divided into different groups. If one group is involved with BNP politics, another group is involved with AL politics. Both of them enjoy power when their party is in power. Election of the LSG is one of the most significant elements for the power politics in local area and that has brought a new dimension in the politics of rural Bangladesh. Enthusiasm to the election of Bangladeshi people, classical tendency, has got tremendous degree which has been more activated in recent time and politics has been decentralized. Statements of Shamsul Huda Haroon, a prominent researcher, are significant in this regard. Mr. Haroon wrote, 'Bangalies tend to be emotional as the elections warming up to fray, and nothing excites them more than elections which enable them to air their views on issues both explicit and smouldering'. Therefore the LSG elections have been transformed as the focal point of root level politics. Actually eagerness to the local elections is not a matter of consciousness of local people rather it might be considered as a matter of prestige, power and influence in local area which is significant for empowering in local power structure. For this reason big fellows of political parties are winning in the LSG elections any how so that they can harass their political rivals in local area which is a main obstacle for a peaceful local life. That is why the number of political harassment cases against opposition is increasing day by day and that would be an alarming condition in future. The classical settlement process of local disputes has been changed where political intervention imposed by local political leaders becomes important to that settlement. Thus the negative political orientation is influencing to break down the classical power structure which is not desirable for the democratic reforms of Bangladesh.

Policy Suggestions

If political party-based LSG elections are accepted;

a) Forming an independent election commission (EC)

Independent EC must be formed so that it could provide an atmosphere of a free and fair election. The EC will have to ensure that the ruling party must not get any extra opportunity. The EC will perform its responsibilities and authority without any obstacle as well as the executive authority must provide for cooperation mentioned in the Constitution of Bangladesh.

b) Process of nominating the candidates

The Candidates will be nominated by respective political parties according to law what will be framed by the EC so that political parties could follow the procedure to participate in the LSG elections. The nomination process should be controlled by the local units of political parties following a democratic process. On the other hand any manipulation in the process of nomination must be abolished and that nomination process should be monitored by the EC. The local law enforcement agencies must take necessary steps on any violation of the laws, if necessary.

c) Importance of manpower structure for the EC

The EC needs sufficient manpower to perform all necessary actions properly in the LSG elections.

d) Ordinance of electoral code of conduct

EC needs to make a strong and effective ordinance of electoral code of conduct so that all of the candidates of the LSG elections would be compelled to follow the instructions. Poster fitting, wall writing, Banner typing, announcing, procession, meeting and so on must run under the ordinance. In that case the EC should provide a level playing ground for all the contestants so that no one could raise any allegations against the neutrality of the EC.

e) Role of the media

The media should try to draw attention to the political election in local level. As a result local people will inspire to the political election in local level. The praise worthy role of the media can fulfill the expected target

of this process. Party- based local government elections can be held with an amendment to the existing law. The law will have to be changed to make it legal. As a result the members of registered political parties will be allowed to participate. Political parties can be held responsible if any problem occurs.

The Positive Impacts

- Political consciousness at the root level people will be improved.
- Local powerful and influential leaders will inspire to be a candidate in the LSG elections and this would be a positive sign for local development functions.
- Democratic practice at the root level people will be increased with a political link up which is important for a strong democracy.
- Elected body will be compelled to show their responsibilities towards local socio-economic and political development due to a pressure of the members and supporters of respective political parties.

The Negative Impacts

- Political clash and conflict might be increased which could damage the socio-economic and political stability of local area.
- Dishonor and unfair of national politics may be infiltrated in local politics and it might turn the unrest situation.
- Traditional rural power structure what is an inheritance of rural Bangladesh might be decayed.

If political party base LSG election is unacceptable:

Since good governance and democratic process would be hampered due to an unfair political interference in the LSG elections, it should be stopped in the legal way. Therefore the LSG elections must be arranged keeping free from any formal political influence where none can raise any objection against political parties for their support to the party candidates. Necessary policy suggestions might be as:

- The Election Commission needs to bring its weight as the constitutional body to impose on the government and political

parties to ensure that no one, law makers or not, can violate any electoral code of conduct to disrupt UP or any other elections. If there are allegations of disruptions in these elections against someone, the Commission must deter recurrence of violation of the electoral code of conduct.

- The government needs to realise that violation of the electoral code of conduct by some ruling party law makers ultimately puts a question mark over its ability and sincerity to help the EC to conduct elections freely and fairly and also undermines its self professed commitment for a free and fair elections. The government and, of course, the ruling party needs to rein on the trouble making law makers and sends a clear message that such high handedness would not be tolerated. The Speaker, the custodian of the Jatiya Sangsad, needs also to play a role; after all, any aberration by any law maker ultimately undermines the prestige of the august House.
- The LSG elections will become questionable if the EC is not strengthened in every way to attend its tasks completely and efficiently. It must be ensured that the administration and the law enforcement machineries will perform their election related duties, scrupulously and impartially.
- Simultaneously the people will have to show their consciousness in this regard. They will have to take the LSG election as a local affair. So, they should support the candidates who have a strong determination to uphold the socio-economic and political development in local area.
- The media, both electronic and print, should be sincere to ensure the coverage of the LSG elections without any political flavour. If the media abstain from such kind of coverage, The LSG elections might be free from a political flavour.

Conclusion

The existing LSG has failed to satisfy the aspirations of the rural Bangladeshis of an increased participation in local affairs. In principle the LSG should be independent, administratively and financially, but that is not the reality under the political governments. The concept of the LSG is pro-people not pro-political parties. Political parties may not like autonomous and independent local bodies so they may oppose and try to prevent any existence of independent LSG bodies. On the contrary the political parties of Bangladesh show a lot of interest to the LSG elections. This election has significance in national politics of Bangladesh because the elected body plays an important role for mobilizing support among the root level people for political parties in the general election. In addition, it provides useful indication of various issues such as law and order situation, public support to the ruling position etc.

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