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Editor's Note

Dear Readers,

It is a distinct honour to present this edition of the Police Staff College (PSC) Journal, a distinguished forum where rigorous research intersects with the dynamic challenges of policing, justice, and security in an era of unprecedented transformation. As law enforcement systems worldwide confront rapid social, technological, and environmental change, this issue exemplifies our mission to connect scholarship with practice-providing readers in Bangladesh and beyond a space for critical reflection, evidence-led innovation, and forward-thinking policy development.

The thematic breadth of this volume is both timely and essential. The opening article, Current Practices of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) in Bangladesh: An Assessment of Its Impact and Effectiveness, explores how context-sensitive and innovative mechanisms can ease the burden on an overstretched judiciary while broadening access to justice for marginalised populations. The study goes beyond mapping existing practices, interrogating their effectiveness, adaptability, and sustainability within an evolving socio-legal landscape.

Equally significant is the feature on Climate Change Criminology and Policing: A Framework for Addressing Climate-Induced Crimes in Bangladesh. In a world where climate crises are reshaping vulnerabilities, crime patterns, and social conflict, this article advocates predictive, pluralistic, and rights-based policing models. By positioning law enforcement as proactive agents of community and ecological protection, the work resonates far beyond South Asia, offering insights for policing in an era of climate uncertainty.

This issue further engages with critical dimensions of social and environmental governance. Groundwater Depletion and Contamination in International and Bangladesh Scenario: A Legal Study highlights the intersection of natural resource mismanagement and policing capacity, emphasising the role of law enforcement in environmental stewardship. The article Exploring the Nexus between Drug Abuse and Criminal Behavior among Youth in Dhaka City examines how socio-economic vulnerabilities, peer dynamics, and unstable family contexts

contribute to substance misuse and minor offences, including theft and drug peddling. Its findings reveal the broader societal impacts of these trends, particularly on women and marginalised communities, and underscore the necessity of early intervention, rehabilitative initiatives, and community-centred prevention strategies-advocating a holistic, collaborative approach to law enforcement and social support.

An Investigation into Gender-Based Social Victimization in Rural Bangladesh: Causes and Long-Term Impacts exposes the persistence of patriarchal structures that perpetuate cycles of harm, highlighting the urgent need for gender-responsive policing and legal interventions. Meanwhile, Nature and Extent of Image-Based Sexual Abuse Against Women: Bangladesh Perspective addresses the rising threat of digital violence, calling for robust cybercrime policies, enhanced victim support frameworks, and cross-border cooperation. Finally, Pragmatic Community Policing Activities and Its Challenges in Implementation in Bangladesh challenges conventional paradigms: how can police institutions cultivate authentic trust, not through top-down directives alone, but via sustained, participatory engagement with the communities they serve? Drawing lessons from both the Global South and Global North, the article argues that the future of policing-whether in Dhaka, Delhi, or Durban-depends on empowering citizens as co-creators of safety, justice, and resilience.

At a moment when policing institutions worldwide face intense scrutiny regarding legitimacy, efficacy, and human rights compliance, the PSC Journal reaffirms its role as a platform for critical dialogue, cross-cultural learning, and forward-looking reform. We invite readers-scholars, practitioners, and policymakers-to interrogate the evidence, debate its implications, and translate insights into action. Our aspiration is that this issue not only informs but inspires policing that is more responsive, equitable, and prepared for the challenges of tomorrow.



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Current Practices of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) in Bangladesh: An Assessment of Its Impact and Effectiveness

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Mohammad Shahjahan, PPM (Bar), Ph.D³

Abstract: The study focuses on the current practices of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) in Bangladesh, emphasising its position in addressing the growing caseload within the formal judicial system. ADR is considered a significant alternative to traditional litigation, offering quicker, cost-effective, and more accessible dispute resolution methods, which are crucial in a country overwhelmed by pending cases. This study aims to comprehensively assess ADR's current practices, impact, and effectiveness in the Bangladeshi context. The study employed a mixed methods descriptive research design with quantitative and qualitative approaches. It includes a questionnaire survey of 100 respondents (purposely selected), a document review, and insights from four experts as Key Informants. Findings show that 97% of respondents believe the formal court system in Bangladesh fails to provide speedy trials, while 71% yield for a speedy trial. The study identifies several factors, including the biasedness of mediators, legal and institutional inefficiencies, inadequate resources, and limited enforceability, as crucial challenges hindering ADR implementation. The research underscores the need for reform in ADR practices, focusing on increasing transparency, mediator neutrality, resolution speed, wider enforceability, and public awareness. Despite the challenges, ADR holds significant potential for the future of dispute resolution in Bangladesh. Future studies should explore the socio-cultural dimensions influencing ADR adoption and investigate ways to integrate ADR into the formal legal framework to alleviate the burden on the judiciary.

Keywords: Keywords: Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR), Speedy Trials, Community Perception, ADR Challenges, and ADR vs. formal litigation in Bangladesh

Introduction and Background

In recent years, Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) has emerged as a pivotal mechanism in legal systems worldwide, offering a faster, cost-effective

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alternative to traditional litigation (Chatterjee & Lefcovitch, 2008). Bangladesh, like many other countries, faces a significant backlog of cases, causing extensive delays in justice delivery. As of December 2022, 41,96,603 cases were pending with all the courts in the country after 15,71,617 were filed and 14,71,402 were disposed of (Sarkar, 2023). This devastating load has intensified interest in ADR to provide timely access to justice. ADR encompasses various methods, such as mediation, arbitration, and negotiation, that allow disputing parties to resolve conflicts outside the formal court system. These processes emphasise cooperation and mutual agreement, making them well-suited to resolve disputes without the argumentative nature of litigation (Rau et al., 2002). The use of ADR in Bangladesh is a practical response to the inadequacies of the judicial system reflecting historical and cultural conflict resolution practices. Traditionally, informal community-based mediation, known as *Shalish*, has played an essential role in resolving disputes at the local level. However, with rapid urbanisation and societal changes, there is a growing need for a more structured and formalised ADR approach, which blends traditional methods with modern legal principles (Hak et al., 2013).

Despite its prospective, ADR in Bangladesh faces several challenges. Many people, particularly in rural areas, are unknown with ADR processes, leading to reluctance to accept these methods. Additionally, there is often a lack of trust in local mediators, with concerns over impartiality and corruption frequently raised by community members. The infrastructure for ADR, including trained mediators and arbitration centres, is also underdeveloped, limiting its extensive implementation (Menkel-Meadow, 2001). Institutionalising ADR and ensuring it is accessible, transparent, and fair is critical to its success in Bangladesh. Integrating ADR into the formal justice system could have far-reaching benefits, reducing the backlog of cases and fostering a dispute resolution culture that values speed, efficiency, and equity. As the legal landscape in Bangladesh evolves, ADR presents a promising avenue for reform, capable of addressing the complex demands of a growing society while maintaining the values of community and justice (Creutzfeldt, 2014).

As Bangladesh strives to modernise its legal system, ADR offers a promising solution to many inefficiencies in pursuing the formal judiciary. The advantages of ADR—speed, cost-effectiveness, and accessibility—make it an essential tool in linking the gap between justice and the public. However, for ADR to reach its full potential, combined efforts must be made to address institutional shortcomings, enhance the public's trust in mediators, and expand the legal infrastructure necessary to support ADR. In this context, this study aims to assess the current practices of ADR in Bangladesh, exploring its effectiveness and impact in mitigating the challenges of the formal court system. The

research also seeks to understand community perceptions of ADR, identify the obstacles hindering its application, and propose strategies for enhancing its adoption nationwide. By examining the role of ADR within Bangladesh's legal framework, this study contributes to the broader discourse on improving access to justice in Bangladesh and developing nations.

Rationale of the Research

The significance of this research on current practices of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) in Bangladesh cannot be overstated, as it directly addresses the critical need for an accessible and efficient justice system. Bangladesh's formal court system is severely overburdened, with approximately 3.5 million cases pending across the country's district courts as of December 2022 (Moneruzzaman, 2023). The traditional court system often fails to provide timely justice due to resource limitations, lack of judges, and procedural delays. This backlog results in significant delays for citizens seeking justice, reinforcing the adage "justice delayed is justice denied." The study addresses one of Bangladesh's most pressing legal challenges: the backlog of cases. Traditional litigation is resource-intensive and time-consuming, often leading to delays detrimental to the litigants. As indicated by previous research, countries with established ADR mechanisms have witnessed significant reductions in the caseloads of their formal courts, improving the overall efficiency of their judicial systems (Braun, 2016). This research aims to provide empirical evidence supporting ADR's effectiveness in the Bangladeshi context, potentially prompting policy reforms that could lead to broader adoption of ADR and, consequently, a reduction in the country's judicial backlog. Given this reality, ADR presents a viable solution for alleviating the burden on the formal judiciary and providing timely and cost-effective resolution mechanisms for civil and minor criminal disputes. In a developing country like Bangladesh, where access to justice is a fundamental concern, ADR can play a crucial role in democratising legal processes. Many individuals, particularly from rural or underprivileged backgrounds, are often marginalised by the formal legal system due to high costs, long delays, and complex legal procedures (Hak et al., 2013). ADR offers an alternative, more efficient, and culturally resonant pathway, as community-based dispute resolution has historically been a part of Bangladesh's social fabric through informal mechanisms such as *shalish* (Siddiqi, 2003). ADR's ability to offer quicker resolutions than traditional litigation ensures that disputants can resolve conflicts without protracted legal battles. This reduces the financial and emotional toll on individuals and minimises the burden on the judiciary, allowing courts to focus on more complex cases (Halim, 2011). As Bangladesh evolves socioeconomically, the importance of implementing accessible and efficient legal frameworks becomes more pronounced. ADR's emphasis on conciliation

and mediation offers a non-adversarial method for resolving disputes, which is particularly significant in family, property, and commercial matters that require preserving relationships post-resolution (Katsh & Rifkin, 2001). Legal reforms to institutionalise ADR—such as mandating mediation in some instances or expanding ADR centres across different regions—can ensure that ADR becomes a mainstream dispute resolution mechanism rather than a peripheral option (Bingham, 2008). Furthermore, strengthening the legislative framework around ADR, particularly in enforcing agreements reached through mediation or arbitration, is crucial for building public confidence in this alternative system.

The implementation of ADR in Bangladesh faces challenges such as lack of awareness, inadequate infrastructure, and concerns about mediator impartiality. Therefore, this research aims to identify the root causes hindering the effective implementation of ADR and provide insights into improving trust through transparency, training, and regulatory reform. ADR can potentially reduce case backlog, improve access to justice, and make legal services more affordable for marginalised communities. Additionally, it offers a solution to critical gaps in Bangladesh's justice system. By promoting quicker, cost-effective, and culturally aligned dispute resolution mechanisms, ADR can potentially transform the justice landscape in Bangladesh. Hence, the study's findings will contribute to the ongoing discourse on judicial reform to create a more equitable and efficient system for resolving disputes.

Research Objectives and Questions

This study explores the current practices and key challenges hindering the implementation of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) in Bangladesh, focusing on institutional, cultural, and legal barriers. It seeks to assess the efficacy of ADR in reducing the burden on the formal judicial system by expediting dispute resolution and providing more accessible justice. Additionally, the research examines the types of disputes resolved by ADR and community perceptions towards ADR, particularly concerning trust, mediator impartiality, and the perceived fairness of ADR outcomes. Furthermore, the study proposes strategies for improving ADR's effectiveness and broader acceptance within Bangladesh's socio-legal context. By analysing how ADR contributes to resolving family, property, and commercial disputes, the research also aims to evaluate its role in preserving relationships compared to formal litigation. Overall, the study provides a thorough insight into how ADR can be enhanced to serve as a more efficient and equitable alternative to traditional court processes.

Review of Literature

ADR is a critical component of modern legal systems, providing an alternative to traditional litigation processes. Scholars such as Fisher and Ury (1981) have

contributed significantly to developing principled negotiation, emphasising mutual gains and collaborative problem-solving. Their work has laid the groundwork for ADR practices that preserve relationships between parties while resolving disputes. Bush and Folger (1994) proposed a transformative model of ADR, which suggests that mediation can potentially resolve disputes and transform the dynamics and relationships between disputing parties. This model has influenced the application of mediation in various contexts, particularly in community and family disputes. Historically, the roots of ADR can be traced to ancient societies, where local leaders or religious figures mediated conflicts to maintain social harmony. However, the formalisation of ADR began in the mid-20th century, with the rise of court-connected ADR programs in countries like the United States. The Pound Conference in 1976 marked a significant turning point in integrating ADR into the legal system, encouraging the development of mediation and arbitration as alternatives to litigation (Menkel-Meadow, 2001). ADR's relevance in Bangladesh is underpinned by several theoretical frameworks that focus on non-adversarial methods of conflict resolution. For example, social control theory suggests that societies are more stable when they utilise mechanisms reinforcing order and compliance, such as ADR, enabling communities to resolve disputes without resorting to confrontational court proceedings (Hirschi, 1969). Additionally, social learning theory posits that individuals can learn and adopt positive behaviours, such as collaborative dispute resolution, through the influence of societal norms and local practices (Akers, 1973). Historically, ADR practices in Bangladesh have roots in informal community-based systems such as *shalish*, where local leaders or elders resolve disputes. Although *shalish* was informal, it provided a foundational ADR mechanism that aligned with cultural values of mediation and reconciliation. However, the modern legal framework in Bangladesh began incorporating more formalised ADR mechanisms in the late 20th century as part of global efforts to promote alternative justice systems (Hak et al., 2013). Arbitration, conversely, involves a binding decision by a third-party arbitrator, offering a more formalised resolution process. Conciliation, collaborative law, and hybrid models further contribute to the array of ADR mechanisms available (Mnookin & Kornhauser, 1979).

Several key legal provisions and regulations support Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) in Bangladesh, enhancing access to justice and reducing court backlogs. The Code of Civil Procedure (CPC) was amended in 2012 to mandate mediation in all civil suits, a significant shift from its previous optional status (Uddin, 2022). This change aims to alleviate the burden on the judiciary and promote amicable settlements (Alam, 2014). Despite these provisions, challenges remain, including a lack of specific guidelines for mediators and ongoing court backlogs (Uddin, 2022) (Islam, 2014). The effectiveness of ADR

in criminal cases is also limited, indicating a need for further development in this area (Uddin, 2022). While ADR presents a promising avenue for dispute resolution, its implementation faces hurdles that must be addressed to realise its full potential in the Bangladeshi legal system. Additionally, critical legal provisions that support alternative dispute resolution (ADR) in Bangladesh are outlined in the Industrial Relations Ordinance of 1969 (Labour Act of 2006) and the Money Loan Court Act of 2003. These provisions include mechanisms for negotiation and conciliation (Alam, 2014). Further support for ADR in Bangladesh is provided by the Arbitration Act of 2001, amendments to the Aingoto Sohayota Prodan Ain of 2000, and various statutory regulations governing mediation and arbitration practices (Islam, 2014).

Empirical studies have explored the effectiveness of ADR in diverse contexts. While ADR is often praised for its efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and ability to preserve relationships, challenges persist. Issues such as power imbalances, cultural differences, and the potential for unequal outcomes require careful consideration (Mnookin & Kornhauser, 1979). Additionally, whether ADR should complement or replace traditional litigation remains debatable. In contemporary legal landscapes, ADR has expanded beyond its traditional domains. From family law and commercial disputes to international diplomacy, ADR plays a pivotal role in resolving conflicts. Recent studies have also explored the integration of ADR with online platforms (Katsh & Rifkin, 2001), which has accelerated due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Several recent studies have expanded on the effectiveness and challenges of ADR in various jurisdictions, including Bangladesh. Halim (2011) highlighted the critical need for ADR in Bangladesh, mainly due to the severe backlog of cases in the country's courts. Halim's work points to ADR as a solution for reducing judicial burdens and improving access to justice for marginalised populations. However, Halim also notes that the institutional framework for ADR in Bangladesh is underdeveloped, lacks trained mediators, and has insufficient public awareness about ADR mechanisms. Creutzfeldt (2014) examined ADR's role in consumer disputes across several European countries in a comparative study. This demonstrated that ADR could effectively resolve conflicts in specific sectors, such as consumer protection, where formal litigation may be too cumbersome or costly. Creutzfeldt's findings apply to the Bangladeshi context, where ADR could be expanded to sectors like consumer protection, labour disputes, and small-scale commercial conflicts. Bingham (2008) explored the next generation of ADR practices, focusing on how integrating ADR mechanisms can benefit collaborative governance models and public policy-making. Bingham's research is particularly relevant to understanding how ADR can be institutionalised within Bangladesh's public and governmental sectors, where

corruption and inefficiency often hinder formal litigation processes. Studies on ADR in developing countries, such as those conducted by Hak et al. (2013), have also pointed out the unique challenges these nations face in adopting ADR practices. Oseni and Ahmad explored how cultural and legal traditions and the lack of resources impact the effectiveness of ADR in countries like Bangladesh. Their research underscores the need for local adaptation of ADR models that align with the community's cultural norms and legal traditions. Moreover, Siddiqi (2003) focused on the historical evolution of shalish in Bangladesh, an informal mediation system that has existed for centuries. The study highlighted the strengths and weaknesses of this traditional form of ADR, noting that while it is culturally embedded, shalish often suffers from bias and lack of enforceability. Siddiqi's research is significant in understanding how modern ADR practices could be integrated with traditional dispute resolution systems in Bangladesh to create a hybrid model that is both culturally resonant and legally effective.

Despite the extensive literature on ADR in Bangladesh, there are still gaps in understanding its effectiveness and impact across different sectors. While some studies have explored its historical roots, legal frameworks, and potential to alleviate judicial burdens, comprehensive empirical research is lacking. Additionally, there is limited research on integrating modern ADR practices with traditional informal mechanisms. This study aims to address these gaps by assessing the current ADR practices and analysing their overall impact across various sectors in Bangladesh.

Research Methodology

The study explores the effectiveness, challenges, and perceptions surrounding ADR in the Bangladeshi legal system. It utilised a descriptive research design to examine current practices and perceptions, seeking potential solutions and reforms to enhance effectiveness. The choice of a descriptive design was driven by the need to collect detailed information (Goundar, 2012) about the community's behaviour, attitudes, and the challenges hindering ADR implementation. Given the study's exploratory nature, a mixed-method approach was deemed most appropriate (Creswell, 2014).

The study used purposive sampling to select 100 participants directly involved in or with experience in ADR processes in Bangladesh, including social activists, authors, intellectuals, journalists, teachers, and university students. Insight from four key informants (two advocates and two judges) was also sought to understand community perceptions and institutional challenges better. The study collected data using structured questionnaires and a KII checklist and reviewed relevant documents. A web-based survey was distributed, and

some responses were collected through physical distribution of the survey. The collected data were analysed using Google Workspace to code, categorise, and develop themes, combining quantitative and qualitative data for analysis.

The research strictly followed ethical guidelines to protect participant rights. All participants provided informed consent, and their data was anonymised for confidentiality. Additionally, cultural sensitivity was observed during data collection, especially in rural areas, where traditional norms might affect responses to ADR-related questions (Cohen et al., 2017). Proper citation of secondary data sources was ensured to maintain academic integrity.

Results and Discussion

This section presents the findings, analysis, and discussion based on the data collected for this study on the effectiveness of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) in Bangladesh. The results are organised thematically, addressing the research objectives and questions. Each theme reflects a key area of interest, including community perception toward ADR, the effectiveness of ADR in the eyes of the people, and the primary challenges hindering ADR's success in Bangladesh. Relevant figures and tables from the research are incorporated to support the discussion.

Theme 1: Community Perception Toward ADR

The perception of the community toward ADR processes was a critical focus of the study. The results revealed that most people in Bangladesh are familiar with ADR but have varying levels of trust in its effectiveness. This theme captures the community's understanding of ADR, experience, and trust in local mediators. As shown in Figure 1, the research shows that respondents' **educational qualifications** significantly shape their views on ADR. The study found that 61% of the respondents had completed graduation, 31% were pursuing a bachelor's degree, and 2% had completed higher secondary school. Respondents' higher educational qualifications indicate their potential to understand ADR processes and evaluate them critically.

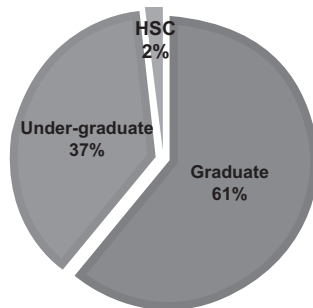


Fig-1: Educational Qualification

The respondents' living area is crucial to understanding geographical variations in ADR perceptions. Figure 2 shows that 71% of the respondents live in urban areas, 17% in semi-urban areas, and 12% in rural areas. These geographical differences are significant, as ADR practices may be more established in urban settings than rural areas, where traditional forms of dispute resolution,

such as shales, are still prevalent. Moreover, figure 3 shows that only 5% of respondents trust local mediators to resolve disputes fairly, while 46% do not trust them and believe corruption is rampant among them. The remaining 49% were undecided, reflecting uncertainty about mediators’ neutrality and effectiveness. This result underscores the low public trust in local mediators, a significant barrier to implementing ADR in Bangladesh. This finding is consistent with the broader literature on ADR in developing countries, where the success of mediation often hinges on the community’s trust in the mediator (Hak et al., 2013). The lack of trust in Bangladesh’s local mediators is a pointed barrier to the widespread adoption of ADR, as successful dispute resolution relies on the perceived fairness and impartiality of the process.

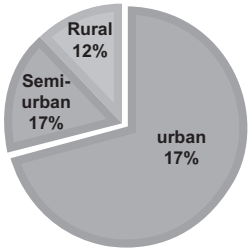


Fig-2: Respondents' Living Area

Theme 2: The Delaying of Justice in the Formal Court System

The study also explored how ADR could be a practical and feasible alternative to

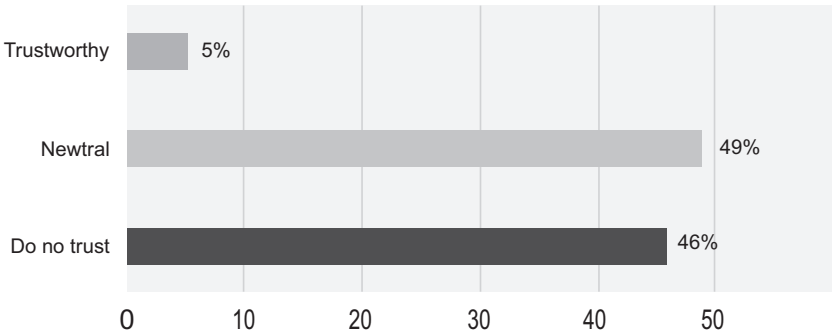


Figure-3: Trust in Local Mediators (%)

Bangladesh’s overburdened formal court system. The data show that a substantial portion of the population believes that the formal court system is inefficient and unable to deliver speedy justice. The results show that most respondents see the potential for ADR to improve the formal court system’s speed significantly.

According to the study, 97% of the respondents believe that the Bangladeshi court system fails to conduct speedy trials, while only 3% think it performs adequately. This overwhelming response indicates a significant problem with the formal court system, where cases often take years to resolve. This finding is consistent with the recently published Supreme Court report, which states that 7,89,179 cases (4,63,235 civil and 3,25,943 criminal cases) have been pending for more than five years with the districts’ courts (Sarkar, 2023).

Table 1 highlights several factors that contribute to judicial delays. Corruption within the legal system emerges as the most significant reason, affecting 86% of cases, followed by the shortage of judges and advocates, which impacts 41% of cases. Delayed investigation processes are responsible for delays in 38% of cases, while frequent adjournments and case backlogs affect 30% and 29%, respectively. Additionally, 25% of cases are hindered by the lack of modern technology in courts and 17% by inadequate infrastructure. Complex legal procedures (20%) and poor coordination between legal bodies (15%) also contribute to the inefficiency of the formal court system in Bangladesh. These factors collectively underscore the systemic issues within the judiciary that impede timely justice.

Several studies and reports align with the issues presented in the table. The case backlog, for instance, has been consistently identified as a critical problem in Bangladesh's judiciary system, contributing to significant delays in case

Table 1: Reasons for delaying justice in the formal court system of Bangladesh.

Reasons for delaying justice in the formal court system of Bangladesh.	Responses		Percent of Cases
	N	Percent	
Case backlog	29	10 %	29 %
Shortage of Judges and Advocates	41	14 %	41 %
Frequent adjournments	30	10 %	30 %
Lack of proper infrastructure	17	6 %	17 %
Corruption within the legal system	86	29 %	86 %
Delayed investigation processes	38	13 %	38 %
Complex legal procedures	20	7 %	20 %
Lack of modern technology in courts	25	8 %	25 %
Lack of coordination between different legal bodies	15	5 %	15 %
Total	301	100 %	
Total Number of Respondents (N): 100			

resolution. Corruption and a significant backlog of cases have impeded the court system, and extending continuances has effectively prevented many defendants from obtaining fair trials (U.S. Department of State, 2019). There is a long-standing issue of a shortage of judges and courts, with 73% of respondents reporting this problem. This shortage is causing delays in handling the increasing number of cases on time. In addition, complex and lengthy execution proceedings are causing further delays in the justice system, with 62% of respondents highlighting this issue. Lack of modern court records and case management facilities is also contributing to the problem, as reported by 56% of respondents (Asrafuzzaman & Hasan, 2021). Moreover, the judicial branch is not perceived as independent, impartial, or professionally competent and suffers from shallow public trust (ME&A, Inc., 2022).

Therefore, this result underscores the need for alternative mechanisms like ADR to alleviate the judicial system’s backlog of cases. In addition, Figure 4 highlights that 71% of respondents consider a speedy trial necessary, and 25% view it as important. The overwhelming majority of the population recognises the need for timely justice, which further supports the case for ADR as a quicker alternative to formal litigation.

Theme 3: Types of Disputes Resolved by ADR

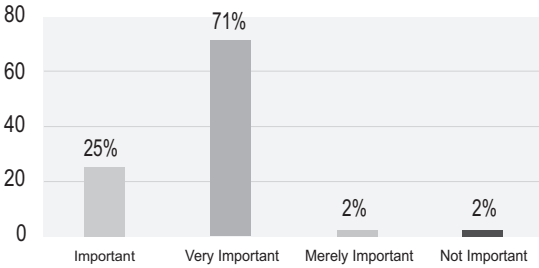


Figure-4: Importance of Speedy Trial

ADR is typically used to resolve specific disputes, such as family, property, and commercial conflicts. The study found that property-related disputes are the most common, followed by family issues. The findings on the types of disputes resolved by ADR indicate that commercial disputes comprise the largest category at 35%, encompassing topics such as contracts, business partnerships, and commercial transactions. Family disputes follow at 25%, involving divorce, child custody, alimony, and property division. Employment disputes account for 15%, addressing workplace conflicts, wrongful termination, discrimination, and wage issues. Civil disputes, which include personal injury, property damage, and neighbourhood conflicts, represent 10% of cases. Landlord-tenant disputes cover 8%, involving rent disagreements, evictions, and lease-related issues. Construction disputes comprise 4%, often relating to contract breaches, project delays, and payment issues, while consumer disputes represent 3%, focusing on conflicts between consumers and businesses over products or services. These categories reflect the diverse nature of disputes commonly resolved through ADR mechanisms.

These findings indicate that ADR is most effective in resolving disputes that require a non-adversarial approach, where preserving relationships is crucial. However, more serious criminal matters, such as murder or theft, are typically handled through the formal court system.

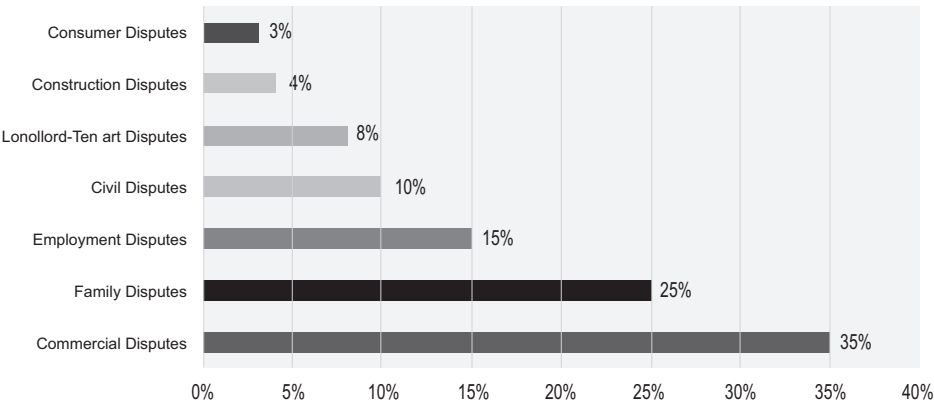


Figure-5: Types of Disputes Resolved by ADR

Theme 4: Challenges Hindering ADR Effectiveness

The research sought to identify the root causes hindering the practical application of ADR in Bangladesh. Table 2 overviews the key challenges hindering the effectiveness of ADR in the context of Bangladesh. The table reports multiple responses from 100 respondents, and the critical obstacles identified are as follows:

1. Bias of Mediators/Arbitrators: The highest challenge reported is the bias of mediators or arbitrators, with 74% of respondents indicating this as a significant issue. This bias may stem from cultural or personal relationships, which can influence impartiality and hinder the effectiveness of ADR processes in Bangladesh (KII-03).
2. Limited Enforceability: Limited enforceability is another primary concern, with 58% of respondents reporting this challenge. This suggests that the outcomes of ADR proceedings may not be readily enforceable under the existing legal framework, impacting the reliability and predictability of ADR outcomes (KII-01).
3. Inadequate Resources: Both inadequate resources and legal and institutional limitations were noted by 50% of the respondents. This highlights insufficient infrastructure, training, and support systems crucial for effective ADR mechanisms (KII-04).

4. Lack of Transparency and Awareness: The lack of transparency (48%) and awareness (40%) also significantly impede the effectiveness of ADR. Lack of transparency could be linked to poor procedural standards and limited accountability. In contrast, lack of awareness suggests that

*Table 2: Challenges Hindering ADR Effectiveness in Bangladesh
(Multiple Responses)*

Challenges Hindering ADR Effectiveness in Bangladesh	Responses		Percent of Cases
	N	Percent	
Biasedness of mediators/arbitrators	74	17 %	74 %
Inadequate resources	50	12 %	50 %
Lack of Awareness	40	9 %	40 %
Lack of Transparency	48	11 %	48 %
Legal and Institutional Limitations	50	12 %	50 %
Limited Enforceability	58	14 %	58 %
Political Interference	44	10 %	44 %
Reluctance to Use ADR	35	8 %	35 %
Social Hierarchies	30	7 %	30 %
Total	429	100 %	
Total Number of Respondents (N): 100			

people may not be adequately informed about the benefits and processes of ADR (Islam, 2011).

5. Political Interference: 44% of respondents identified political interference, indicating that the ADR process in Bangladesh may be influenced by political agendas, which can compromise fairness and equitable resolutions (KII-02).
6. Social Hierarchies and Reluctance to Use ADR: Social hierarchies (30%) and reluctance to use ADR (35%) highlight Bangladesh's cultural aspects of dispute resolution. People might perceive ADR as

less authoritative than formal court systems or feel discouraged due to existing social power dynamics (Islam, 2011).

The responses reflect a complex mix of infrastructural, cultural, and political issues affecting ADR's effectiveness in Bangladesh. To improve ADR mechanisms, comprehensive reforms involving the judicial system, increased awareness programs, and more robust enforcement measures would be necessary (KII-04).

Theme 5: Efficacy of ADR in the Eyes of the Community

This theme explores the community's perception of ADR's effectiveness compared to formal litigation. The study found that most respondents consider ADR a faster and more cost-effective method for resolving disputes, particularly for family and property issues. As depicted in Figure 5, 49% of survey participants

believe that ADR is quicker than traditional litigation, while 18% disagreed, and 33% were uncertain. These results indicate a generally positive perception of ADR as a speedier dispute resolution method. Furthermore, the study reveals that 56% of respondents prefer mutual resolution through ADR rather than formal litigation. However, 32% were undecided, which suggests that while ADR is gaining acceptance, a considerable portion of the community remains uncertain about its benefits.

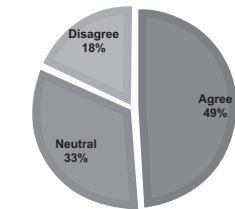


Figure-6: ADR is faster than formal litigation

The table 3 highlights several key factors influencing the effectiveness of ADR in Bangladesh. The most significant factor is the speed of resolution, with 65% of respondents identifying it as critical, underscoring the importance of quick dispute resolution. Neutrality and impartiality are closely followed, with 59% recognising them as essential for maintaining fairness. As cited by 52% of respondents, cost-effectiveness is also a significant factor, reflecting ADR's appeal as a more affordable alternative to litigation. Flexibility, mentioned by 50%, further strengthens ADR's value by allowing for customisable dispute resolution processes. Confidentiality (36%) and preservation of relationships (37%) are also vital aspects, particularly in maintaining privacy and cooperation between disputing parties. On the other hand, enforceability (30%) and mutual agreement (25%) play a lesser but still important role in ensuring compliance and cooperation. Finally, only 20% of respondents noted the expertise of mediators/arbitrators as a critical factor, suggesting a potential need for more qualified professionals in the ADR system. These findings align with broader literature, emphasising ADR's strengths in providing efficient, fair, and cost-effective dispute resolution.

The literature strongly supports these findings on ADR. As highlighted by Islam (2011), the speed and cost-effectiveness of ADR are often the primary motivations for its adoption, especially in countries where the legal system is overburdened, such as Bangladesh. KII-03 discusses how neutrality is fundamental to the

<i>Table 3: Factors affecting the efficacy of ADR in Bangladesh</i>			
Factors affecting the efficacy of ADR in Bangladesh	Responses		Percent of Cases
	N	Percent	
Cost-Effectiveness	52	14 %	52 %
Speed of Resolution	65	17 %	65 %
Confidentiality	36	10 %	36 %
Flexibility	50	13 %	50 %
Expertise of Mediators/Arbitrators	20	5 %	20 %
Mutual Agreement	25	7 %	25 %
Preservation of Relationships	37	10 %	37 %
Neutrality and Impartiality	59	16 %	59 %
Enforceability	30	8 %	30 %
Total	374	100 %	
Total Number of Respondents (N): 100			

trustworthiness of ADR, which enhances its acceptability among disputing parties. Additionally, Key Informants 2 and 4 emphasise the flexibility of ADR as a critical factor in its widespread use, noting that the ability to shape procedures according to the dispute’s needs allows for more equitable solutions.

Theme 6: Opportunities and Potentials for ADR Practices

The final theme on the opportunities and potentials for ADR practices shows that reducing court backlogs is the most significant benefit, with 30% of responses indicating ADR’s ability to alleviate the burden on the judicial system by resolving cases more efficiently. Cost savings follow at 25%, highlighting ADR’s role as a more affordable alternative to litigation due to lower legal and administrative costs. Faster resolution time, accounting for 20%, emphasises ADR’s potential to settle disputes more quickly than traditional court proceedings. Promoting harmonious relationships, noted by 10%, underscores ADR’s capacity to foster amicable settlements, particularly in family and business conflicts.

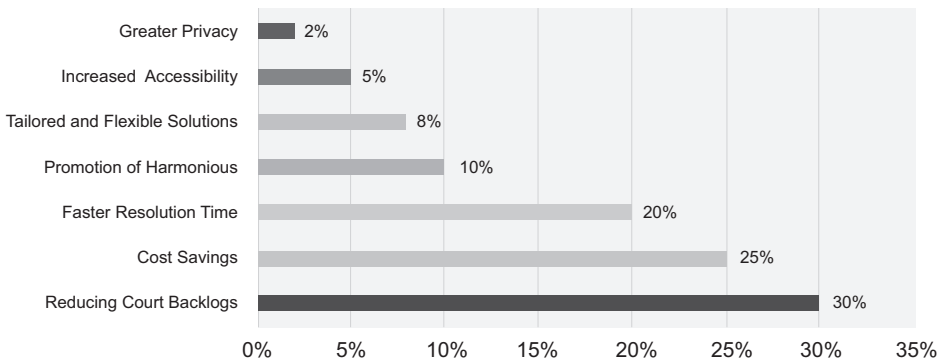


Figure-7: Opportunities and Potentials for ADR Practices

The flexibility of ADR, which offers tailored solutions (8%), allows for customised outcomes that address the parties’ specific needs. Increased accessibility to justice, cited by 5%, reflects ADR’s ability to provide dispute resolution options in areas with limited formal court access. In contrast, greater privacy, mentioned by 2%, highlights ADR’s role in maintaining confidentiality in sensitive cases. These findings demonstrate the wide-ranging benefits of ADR in promoting efficient and equitable dispute resolution.

Overall Observation

The findings of this research align with global trends in adopting ADR, which is increasingly recognised for its efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and ability to preserve relationships. The study indicates that ADR is viewed as a viable alternative to formal litigation in Bangladesh, particularly for commercial, family, and property disputes. However, the study also highlights several challenges that must be addressed for ADR to reach its full potential in Bangladesh. Trust in mediators and the perceived fairness of the process are critical factors influencing the success of ADR (Creutzfeldt, 2014). Therefore, efforts to enhance the expertise of the mediator/arbitrator, ensure transparency, raise mass awareness, and enforce ADR decisions are necessary. Additionally, the study confirms that the formal court system in Bangladesh is overburdened, with significant delays in justice delivery. ADR offers a viable alternative, but its success will depend on addressing the challenges identified, including institutional reforms and public awareness campaigns to promote the benefits of ADR (Halim, 2011). Addressing these challenges through legal reforms, public awareness, and institutional support will be essential for improving the effectiveness of ADR in Bangladesh’s legal landscape. The results suggest that with the right reforms, ADR could play a pivotal role in alleviating the burden on the formal judicial system, providing faster and more accessible justice to the people of Bangladesh.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings from this study provide a comprehensive understanding of the current practices, perceptions, and challenges surrounding Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) in Bangladesh. The research highlights that ADR offers a viable solution to the country's overburdened formal judicial system, providing faster, more cost-effective, and relationship-preserving methods for dispute resolution. The findings reveal that a significant portion of the population acknowledges the importance of speedy trials and prefers ADR for resolving disputes, particularly in family, property, and commercial matters where preserving relationships is crucial. However, several barriers hinder the effective implementation of ADR in the country. The most significant challenges include a lack of trust in local mediators, perceived bias and partiality, the absence of enforceability of ADR outcomes, and institutional resource limitations. These factors have contributed to skepticism about the fairness and impartiality of ADR processes, particularly in rural and semi-urban areas where traditional dispute resolution methods like *shalish* are still prevalent. Additionally, while a large portion of the community recognises the benefits of ADR, such as the preservation of relationships and reduced costs, there is a need for more widespread public awareness of its advantages, particularly in rural areas. For ADR to fulfil its potential in Bangladesh, the findings also underscore the concerted efforts that must be made to address these challenges through institutional reforms, public education, and policy support.

Based on the findings of this study, several suggestions are proposed to enhance the effectiveness and adoption of ADR in Bangladesh:

- i). **Strengthening Mediator Training and Certification:** Standardised training and certification programs for mediators and arbitrators are essential to address concerns about mediator impartiality and bias.
- ii). **Enhancing Legal Frameworks for ADR Enforcement:** One of the primary hurdles detected in this study is the lack of enforceability of ADR outcomes. Developing legal mechanisms, such as court rulings, is crucial to ensure that ADR decisions are binding and enforceable.
- iii). **Public Awareness and Education Campaign:** Public awareness campaigns should be launched to educate the population on the benefits of ADR over formal litigation, such as reduced costs, faster resolution times, and the preservation of relationships.
- iv). **Establishing ADR Centers Nationwide:** Dedicated ADR centres should be established in urban and rural areas to promote the broader use of ADR. These centres could provide mediation and arbitration services, information, and legal assistance for those unfamiliar with ADR processes.

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- v). Integrating ADR into the Formal Judicial Process: To reduce the load on the formal court system, certain types of cases—such as family disputes, property conflicts, and minor commercial disputes—should be mandated to go through ADR before proceeding to court. This would encourage greater use of ADR while allowing the courts to focus on more complex cases.
 - vi). Enhancing Institutional Transparency and Accountability: To build trust in ADR, the government and relevant institutions should take steps to ensure transparency in ADR proceedings. This includes publishing the outcomes of ADR cases and implementing oversight mechanisms to hold mediators accountable for unethical behaviour.
 - vii). Research and Development: Further research should be conducted to monitor the effectiveness of ADR in Bangladesh, particularly about new reforms and practices. This research could focus on longitudinal studies to assess whether public trust in ADR improves over time and how ADR adoption impacts the overall efficiency of the judicial system.

ADR can potentially transform the justice delivery system in Bangladesh by offering an alternative to the lengthy and costly processes of the formal court system. However, for ADR to be genuinely effective, systemic reforms must address issues related to mediator impartiality, decision enforceability, and public trust. The recommendations here aim to create a more robust and trusted ADR system that can benefit individuals and the state, fostering a more just and harmonious society.

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Climate Change Criminology and Policing: A Framework for Addressing Climate-Induced Crimes in Bangladesh

Sarker Omar Faroque¹

Abstract: Climate change is increasingly recognised as a driver of crime, reshaping security landscapes globally. In Bangladesh, one of the most climate-vulnerable nations, ecological stressors such as rising sea levels, resource depletion, and mass displacement have led to growing instances of land conflicts, human trafficking, environmental crimes, and urban violence. This study adopts a qualitative methodology, relying primarily on secondary sources—including newspaper reports, journal articles, and online data—to examine climate-induced crimes in Bangladesh. Given the limited academic literature in the Global South on this issue, the study draws upon theoretical frameworks and empirical insights from the Global North to critically analyse Bangladesh's context. Situated within Green Criminology and Climate Change Criminology, the article proposes a climate-responsive policing model incorporating plural, networked, and hybrid strategies. The study highlights the risks of securitizing climate-affected communities and the increasing criminalization of environmental activism, emphasizing the need for rights-based approaches to eco-dissent policing. Key recommendations include predictive policing using climate data, specialized environmental crime units, community-based interventions, and transnational cooperation. By embedding climate justice principles into security governance, Bangladesh can develop a more proactive and sustainable approach to mitigating climate-induced crime. The findings contribute to global criminological debates on the intersections of climate change, law enforcement, and environmental justice.

Keywords: Climate change criminology, environmental policing, plural policing, climate security governance, eco-dissent policing and predictive policing.

1. Introduction

‘Climate change is the most important international issue facing humanity today, yet until recently criminology has devoted very little attention to this particular issue (White,2018:09)’. According to White (2018:09), ‘this silence within criminology as a field of inquiry is itself a form of denialism – involving as it does passive denial of topicality and importance. There is thereby a systematic failure by this group of social scientists to grapple with and respond to the most important ecological, social and criminological issue of the day.’

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Criminology must address climate change-related security threats and social conflicts. Mitigation efforts can create new harms, worsening environmental and human rights issues (White, 2018). To tackle these challenges, criminology must develop new harm typologies, research methods, and social control strategies, influencing law reform, criminal justice policies, policing, and environmental management (White, 2018). White (2018) notes that climate change policing is crucial in preventing climate-related crimes and maintaining social stability, and criminology must determine its unique role in addressing global warming. *Climate Change Criminology* examines crime and harm, global connectedness and eco-justice, causes and consequences, and power and interests, highlighting the links between environmental crimes and broader social harms while questioning how they are defined and regulated (White, 2018). It further explores the role of political and economic power in driving climate change, emphasising issues of accountability, eco-justice, and the need for systemic change, including the criminalisation of ecocide (White, 2018).

The root causes of climate change lie in human activities, especially industrialisation, modernisation, and globalisation, which have led to the large-scale release of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere (Glover, 2006). These gases trap heat, causing global temperatures to rise, and leading to unpredictable and extreme weather events such as floods, droughts, cyclones, and rising sea levels (Glover, 2006). Bangladesh, due to its geographical location and socio-economic conditions, is considered one of the most vulnerable countries to climate change (Ahmed et al., 2020). In recent decades, Bangladesh has experienced a growing number of climate disasters, including more frequent and intense floods, river erosion, salinity intrusion, and cyclones, which have significantly affected the lives and livelihoods of millions (Ahmed et al., 2020). Climate-induced displacement has already become a harsh reality in Bangladesh, with thousands of people being forced to leave their homes and migrate to urban areas or other regions in search of survival (Ahmed et al., 2020). However, climate change does not only create environmental crises — it also creates social and economic pressures that increase the risk of crime. When communities lose access to essential resources such as land, water, and jobs, competition over these scarce resources intensifies. In many climate-affected areas of Bangladesh, land grabbing, violent disputes over water, theft of relief goods, and human trafficking have become more common (White, 2018; Ahmed et al., 2020). The desperation caused by climate-induced poverty often pushes people towards illegal activities either as perpetrators or victims. For example, displaced women and children are particularly vulnerable to trafficking networks, while displaced men may turn to theft, drug trading, or even organised crime as a means of survival (White, 2018).

In addition to contributing to crime, climate change also weakens the protection of basic human rights such as access to food, clean water, shelter, and security (Humphreys, 2009). In Bangladesh, marginalised communities in climate-vulnerable areas frequently lack strong legal protections and face difficulties accessing justice systems (Ahmed et al., 2020). This weakens their trust in law enforcement agencies and reduces their willingness to report crimes or seek police assistance (Ahmed et al., 2020). As climate stress increases, these communities become even more exposed to exploitation, violence, and injustice, creating a vicious cycle of vulnerability, crime, and insecurity (Humphreys, 2009).

Despite these pressing issues, conventional law enforcement strategies remain largely focused on traditional crimes such as theft, robbery, and physical violence, often overlooking the environmental and socio-political dimensions of climate-driven crime (White, 2018; Ahmed et al., 2020). The policing infrastructure in Bangladesh is not yet equipped to handle the complexities of climate-induced crimes, leading to enforcement gaps and failures in addressing the root causes of these emerging threats (Rahman & Ullah, 2021). To effectively respond, Bangladesh must adopt a climate-responsive policing approach—one that integrates environmental criminology with predictive crime mapping, intelligence-led policing, and specialised training for law enforcement officers (Faroque, 2024).

This article explores the complex nexus between climate change, crime, and policing in Bangladesh. It begins by analysing specific climate-induced crimes, including land and water conflicts, human trafficking, environmental crimes, and urban violence. Drawing on empirical case studies, it illustrates how environmental stress contributes to criminal activities and exacerbates vulnerabilities in affected communities (Ahmed et al., 2020; Alam & Islam, 2024). The discussion then shifts to the challenges of policing in a climate-stressed context, focusing on the evolution of plural, networked, and hybrid policing models that involve multiple stakeholders, including public police, private security, and community groups (Crawford, 2006; Jones & Newburn, 2006). While these models present opportunities for more effective law enforcement, they also introduce risks of securitisation, where climate migrants and environmental activists are perceived as security threats rather than victims, leading to excessive policing measures and human rights violations (Den Boer et al., 2023; Terpstra et al., 2013a).

The article ultimately argues for a climate-responsive policing framework that balances security, human rights, and environmental justice. Such a framework should incorporate community-based climate resilience strategies, enhanced environmental crime intelligence, and transnational cooperation to address climate-induced crime as a cross-border security threat (UNODC, 2022; Fahim,

2025). Bangladesh's response to these challenges can serve as a model for other climate-vulnerable nations, demonstrating how law enforcement can adapt to the evolving security landscape in the era of climate change. By embedding climate awareness into crime prevention and law enforcement practices, Bangladesh can enhance its capacity to mitigate climate-induced crimes while fostering resilience among affected communities (White, 2018; Ahmed et al., 2020).

2. Climate-Induced Crimes in Bangladesh

The impact of climate change in Bangladesh extends beyond environmental degradation, posing significant challenges to social stability, governance, and law enforcement. Climate-induced environmental stressors have triggered a series of crimes, including land and water conflicts, human trafficking, environmental crimes, and urban crimes. These patterns highlight the growing intersection between environmental vulnerabilities and socio-economic insecurities in Bangladesh's climate-affected regions.

2.1 Land and Water Conflicts

The land and water conflicts unfolding in Bangladesh's southern coastal regions represent more than isolated environmental disputes; they demonstrate how climate change drives resource competition and violence in vulnerable societies (Alam & Islam, 2024). Climate-induced displacement, driven by rising sea levels and salinity intrusion, forces communities into informal and unregulated settlements where legal ownership is often unclear (Ahmed et al., 2021). These contested areas become hotspots for land grabbing, forced evictions, and violent disputes, with displaced families fighting to retain access to scarce land and freshwater resources (Rahman et al., 2020).

Weak land governance and inadequate law enforcement allow politically connected elites, influential local actors, and opportunistic land grabbers to exploit the legal ambiguities surrounding displaced communities' land rights (Ahmed et al., 2021). These conflicts are further aggravated by the loss of traditional livelihoods, particularly in agriculture, which has been heavily impacted by increasing soil salinity and water scarcity (Alam & Islam, 2024). In many areas, the shift from rice farming to shrimp aquaculture has intensified these disputes, as land conversion for commercial shrimp farms displaces local farmers, leading to protests, clashes, and cycles of violence (Azad & Jensen, 2020).

Displacement also fragments communities, weakening the local social networks that traditionally helped mediate land and water disputes (Chowdhury, 2021). This creates further openings for powerful actors to manipulate legal processes, bribe officials, and forcibly occupy land and water bodies essential for rural

livelihoods (Ahmed, 2020). In the absence of effective institutional mechanisms for dispute resolution, communities often resort to informal, and at times violent, means to defend their rights (Rahman et al., 2020).

Climate change acts as a catalyst, intensifying pre-existing vulnerabilities related to insecure land tenure, poor governance, and rural poverty (Kabir et al., 2018). The outcome is a landscape where environmental stress, economic desperation, and governance failures combine to trigger conflicts over land and water—conflicts that increasingly demand attention from both environmental policymakers and law enforcement agencies (Fahim, 2025).

2.2 Human Trafficking

Climate change has significantly contributed to forced migration in Bangladesh, with rising sea levels, river erosion, and increased frequency of natural disasters displacing millions (Alam & Islam, 2024). These displaced populations, often resettled in informal urban settlements, face acute economic hardship, forcing many to seek alternative survival strategies, including irregular migration (Ahmed et al., 2020). With limited access to legal employment, many migrants fall prey to traffickers who exploit their vulnerability by offering deceptive promises of work opportunities abroad or safe passage across borders (UNODC, 2022).

The economic desperation caused by climate change-induced displacement makes trafficked individuals particularly vulnerable. Traffickers manipulate this economic distress by offering exploitative labour arrangements, often resulting in forced labour and modern slavery (Ahmed et al., 2020). In regions such as Mongla, Benapole, and Teknaf, informal settlements serve as key transit hubs where traffickers exploit legal loopholes and institutional corruption to operate with minimal interference (Rahman & Ullah, 2021).

The erosion of social cohesion in displaced communities further increases vulnerability. As climate migrants settle in unfamiliar urban areas, traditional social networks that could provide protection and support gradually disappear (Chowdhury, 2021). This social fragmentation weakens collective resistance to crime, leaving individuals more exposed to exploitation (Roy, 2022). Corruption among law enforcement and border control agencies further facilitates trafficking, enabling the illegal movement of vulnerable individuals across national and international boundaries (Rahman & Ullah, 2021).

Addressing human trafficking in the context of climate migration requires a comprehensive strategy. Law enforcement agencies must strengthen surveillance and institutional oversight in trafficking-prone areas, while working closely with community leaders to rebuild informal guardianship structures that deter trafficking (UNODC, 2022). Economic development efforts should prioritise

the creation of sustainable livelihoods in climate-affected regions, reducing the economic desperation that traffickers exploit (Alam & Islam, 2024).

Community-based education and awareness programmes are also crucial to empowering displaced populations with knowledge about trafficking risks and safe migration options (Chowdhury, 2021). Furthermore, anti-trafficking measures should be integrated into broader climate adaptation policies to address the root causes of climate-induced migration and vulnerability (Roy, 2022). Stronger regional cooperation is essential to combat transnational trafficking networks, requiring improved intelligence-sharing, coordinated law enforcement operations, and harmonised legal frameworks (UNODC, 2022).

2. 3 Environmental Crimes in Bangladesh

Environmental crime and its law enforcement issues are seen as “wicked problems” (Australian Public Service Commission, 2007; Rittel & Webber, 1973, p. 161) or “wicked issues” (Shergold, cited in Briggs, 2006, para. 10). Williams (2006) argues these problems cannot be solved by individual agencies and require collaborative action across sectors (Briggs, 2006, p. 254). Due to their complexity, regulators increasingly partner with industry groups, NGOs, and academics (Interpol, n.d., para. 8). These partnerships involve managing diverse, often conflicting, stakeholder interests, with regulators remaining accountable to the public and governments (Pink & Lehane, 2012). Environmental crimes linked to climate change are a growing concern in Bangladesh, especially in areas vulnerable to climate impacts such as coastal belts, forests, and urban centres. Three major categories of environmental crime stand out: deforestation and illegal resource extraction, marine resource exploitation, and industrial pollution.

2.3.1. Deforestation and Illegal Resource Extraction

In the Sundarbans and other forested regions, climate-induced stress such as rising sea levels and saltwater intrusion has made traditional livelihoods, like farming, increasingly difficult. As a result, many turn to illegal logging, poaching, and unauthorised sand mining to survive (Fahim, 2025). This illegal deforestation weakens the Sundarbans’ ability to protect coastal communities from cyclones and storm surges. With fewer mangroves acting as natural buffers, climate risks increase, creating a cycle where environmental damage and illegal resource exploitation feed into each other (Dasgupta et al., 2019; Hossain et al., 2019).

2.3.2. Marine Resource Exploitation

In Bangladesh’s coastal waters, climate change has contributed to declining fish stocks due to rising sea temperatures and habitat degradation. In response, some fishing communities’ resort to illegal methods such as bottom trawling, which

destroys marine ecosystems and further reduces fish populations (Hossain et al., 2019). This degradation affects both biodiversity and the livelihoods of coastal populations, pushing some into other illegal activities like smuggling and piracy (Chowdhury et al., 2023). The loss of healthy marine ecosystems also reduces the ocean's ability to sequester carbon, worsening climate impacts.

2.3.3. Industrial Pollution and Waste Dumping

In rapidly urbanising areas such as Dhaka and Chattogram, industries, particularly in the textile and leather sectors, regularly discharge untreated waste into rivers like the Buriganga and Karnaphuli (Rahman et al., 2021). This toxic pollution contaminates vital water sources, endangers aquatic life, and poses serious health risks to nearby communities. Additionally, the unchecked disposal of hazardous waste—including electronic and medical waste—further pollutes soil and groundwater (Islam et al., 2022). Weak enforcement of environmental regulations allows industries to operate with minimal accountability, worsening both pollution and climate vulnerability (Fahim, 2025). Together, these environmental crimes contribute to a vicious cycle where environmental degradation, climate change, and socio-economic hardship reinforce one another, making effective environmental governance crucial for breaking this destructive link.

2.4 Urban Crimes

The relationship between climate-induced migration and urban crime has harvested significant attention, especially in rapidly urbanising cities of the Global South. In Bangladesh, urban centres like Dhaka and Chattogram exemplify how environmental changes drive migration, exacerbating both environmental and social vulnerabilities (Reuveny, 2007; Chowdhury, 2021). Individuals from rural coastal regions, displaced by rising sea levels and frequent cyclones, often relocate to these cities. Upon arrival, many settle in overcrowded slums lacking basic infrastructure and essential public services. These informal settlements, characterised by extreme poverty, unemployment, and inadequate housing, become breeding grounds for various urban crimes, including theft, drug trafficking, and organised violence (Seddiky et al., 2024).

Several interconnected factors contribute to the rise in urban crime in these areas. A primary issue is the strain on already overstretched urban institutions, particularly law enforcement agencies. The rapid influx of migrants overwhelms local governments, hindering effective policing and adequate crime response (Alam & Islam, 2024). In this environment, criminal groups exploit the vulnerabilities of climate migrants, luring them into illegal financial schemes or coercing them into illicit activities such as drug trading and human trafficking (Ahmed et al., 2019). This exploitation deepens the migrants' social and economic marginalisation, creating a cycle of poverty, crime, and further displacement.

Corruption in disaster relief efforts further complicates this relationship. During climate disasters, corruption often disrupts the delivery of humanitarian aid, with political and criminal actors diverting relief for personal gain (Ahmed, 2020). Climate migrants, who heavily depend on these resources, suffer the most. This corruption weakens public trust in institutions and fosters an environment where crime becomes a regular part of life in migrant communities. For instance, during Cyclone Aila in 2009, large-scale corruption in relief programmes left many affected individuals without proper rehabilitation, highlighting the systemic issues that perpetuate vulnerability and crime (Mukerjee & Chatterton-Dickson, 2022).

Despite clear evidence of a link between climate migration and urban crime, it is essential to recognise the broader structural issues driving these problems. Climate migrants are often unfairly labelled as inherently prone to crime, narratives that overlook systemic inequalities and governance failures prompting migration (Rahman & Rahman, 2024). Instead of criminalising climate migrants, effective policies should address the root causes of displacement. This includes promoting sustainable urban planning, providing legal protections for migrants, and creating economic opportunities that support their integration into urban life (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2022). Initiatives like the Livelihoods Improvement of the Urban Poor Communities (LIUPCP) programme, which aims to develop urban resilience against natural hazards, exemplify efforts to improve the well-being and climate resilience of vulnerable urban populations (UNDP, 2022).

2.5 Discussion

The accelerating impacts of climate change in Bangladesh have created a complex and urgent nexus between environmental degradation, socio-economic inequalities, and the proliferation of diverse forms of criminal activity. Viewed through the analytical lenses of Green Criminology and Climate Change Criminology, this relationship becomes clear: environmental harms not only victimize ecosystems and vulnerable communities but also catalyze conditions conducive to crimes such as land grabbing, human trafficking, environmental offences, and urban violence (White, 2018; Ahmed et al., 2020). This intricate interplay between ecological stress and crime in Bangladesh underscores the urgent need to reimagine law enforcement practices through adaptive, multi-stakeholder frameworks rooted in environmental justice and resilience.

2.5.1 Bangladesh Environmental Conservation Act, 1995 and the Role of Police

The Bangladesh Environmental Conservation Act (ECA), 1995 is the cornerstone of environmental regulation in the country. Enacted to mitigate environmental degradation, the ECA establishes legal parameters for preventing, controlling, and rectifying environmental harm. It empowers the Department of Environment (DoE) to issue directives, impose sanctions, and regulate polluting industries, construction projects, and ecological zones. The Act also provides for environmental clearance certificates, ecological critical area declarations, and punitive measures for violators (MoEF, 1995).

While the DoE is the principal authority for environmental regulation, the Bangladesh Police play a crucial supportive role in enforcing provisions under the Act. This includes responding to complaints of environmental violations, aiding in the arrest of offenders, preventing illegal industrial discharges, and providing security during enforcement drives (Rahman & Karim, 2020). Police involvement is particularly vital during crackdowns on illegal brick kilns, sand mining, deforestation, and encroachment in protected areas.

However, enforcement is often hampered by institutional limitations, lack of environmental training, and poor coordination between police and the DoE (Fahim, 2025). Scholars argue that without capacity-building initiatives and formal integration of environmental mandates into police training curricula, the full implementation of the ECA remains limited (Islam & Afrin, 2020). Given the rise in climate-induced crimes and environmental offences, the Bangladesh Police must be repositioned as key actors within environmental governance structures.

A reformed approach could involve the creation of Environmental Policing Units, similar to wildlife and forest protection task forces in other jurisdictions. Embedding environmental priorities into police operations and forming joint enforcement teams with the DoE can bolster the operationalisation of the ECA, particularly in rural and climate-sensitive areas (White, 2018; Faroque, 2023). Ultimately, the effective enforcement of the ECA, 1995 will depend on inter-agency cooperation, legal empowerment, and a climate-responsive policing philosophy that aligns security enforcement with environmental justice.

2.5.2 Climate Change as a Catalyst for Crime

Bangladesh is globally recognized as one of the countries most vulnerable to climate change, with projections estimating that by 2050, rising sea levels could submerge 17% of the country, displacing 20 million people (BIPR, 2023). These displacements are not merely environmental crises—they actively reshape

the country's criminal landscape. As climate refugees move from coastal and riverine areas to urban centres like Dhaka and Chattogram, they often face economic marginalization, unemployment, and social fragmentation (National Geographic, 2019). These conditions foster the growth of illicit economies, gang violence, and property crimes, as observed in urban slums (Chowdhury, 2021).

Simultaneously, climate-induced resource scarcity exacerbates land and water disputes in rural areas. Reports in national media—such as *The Daily Star* (2023), Prothom Alo (2024), and *Dhaka Tribune* (2024)—have documented violent clashes in Satkhira, increased human trafficking in Cox's Bazar, and environmental crimes linked to industrial pollution in Chattogram, all stemming from displacement and ecological stress. These developments support the “heat hypothesis,” which posits that extreme environmental stressors, such as rising temperatures, contribute to heightened aggression and conflict (news.com.au, 2024). While data specific to Bangladesh remains emerging, global trends suggest a significant overlap between climate stress and rising crime rates (Financial Times, 2024).

2.5.3 Climate Change as a Policing Challenge in Bangladesh

Climate change presents an unprecedented policing challenge for Bangladesh, a nation acutely vulnerable to climate-induced disasters such as floods, cyclones, and river erosion (Van Steden, 2023). While traditionally viewed as environmental or humanitarian concerns, climate-induced crises increasingly produce security challenges that demand innovative and collaborative policing approaches (Den Boer, De Vries, & Terpstra, 2023). In Bangladesh, climate change drives forced migration, fuels resource conflicts, and magnifies environmental crimes—all of which create complex pressures on the nation's policing infrastructure. In this context, adopting plural, networked, and hybrid policing models offers potential pathways to enhance climate security governance. However, these approaches also raise critical concerns regarding accountability, oversight, and human rights protection (Crawford, 2008).

2.5.3.1 Plural Policing and Climate Governance: A Multi-Actor Approach to Resilience

Criminologists now recognize that policing extends beyond what state police forces do. Recent research in the sociology of policing highlights a shift from focusing solely on public police to understanding a broader range of law enforcement, order maintenance, and regulation by various governmental, commercial, and community bodies. This shift, known as the “pluralization” of

policing (Jones & Newburn, 1998; Loader, 2000), acknowledges that policing is now carried out by diverse networks, including private companies, community groups, citizens, and regulatory agencies (Bayley & Shearing, 2001; Crawford et al., 2005). With the increasing variety of policing providers, the focus has moved from “policing” to “security networks” (Shearing, 1996; Johnston, 2000), making it harder to view security as primarily the role of public police. The concept of fragmented or plural policing systems is now widely accepted in criminology and police studies (Jones & Newburn, 2006).

The concept of ‘pluralization’ in policing is driven by three main developments. First, the growth of the commercial security sector, including the use of technologies like CCTV and private sector involvement in areas traditionally handled by public police, such as traffic enforcement and street patrolling. Second, the ‘commodification’ of public policing, which has become more business-like, consumer-oriented, and promotional (Loader, 1999). Third, the rise of new forms of policing, such as community support officers and municipal police in the UK, and police auxiliaries in the Netherlands, alongside the growing involvement of governmental regulatory agencies in policing tasks (Jones & Newburn, 2002). These changes have varied impacts across different countries, with a significant amount of research focused on North America but also on other regions like Europe, Africa, Asia, and South America.

Policing has pluralised due to various factors. Historically, multiple policing providers existed in most jurisdictions, but recent changes have intensified, especially in the commercial security sector (Bayley & Shearing, 1996; Jones & Newburn, 2002). The rise of security guards, CCTV, and private security companies reflects this shift, often outpacing public police in size and funding. Several factors contribute to these changes, including budget constraints on public police forces, the privatisation of police functions, and the evolving nature of urban spaces (Shearing & Stenning, 1987).

The demand for public policing has risen due to increasing crime rates and growing insecurity, often outstripping the ability of public forces to meet these demands. The neo-liberalisation of social policy, particularly privatisation, has influenced policing structures, though direct privatisation of police functions remains limited in many jurisdictions (Feigenbaum et al., 1999). In contrast, countries like South Africa and Brazil saw private security emerge in response to political and social insecurity (Wood & Cardia, 1999).

The expansion of commercial policing is linked to the rise of privately owned spaces, such as shopping malls and gated communities, where private security is increasingly common (Shearing & Stenning, 1987). Broader societal shifts,

including economic insecurity, social mobility, and individualism, have also contributed to a sense of insecurity, boosting the demand for commercial security (Loader, 1997). Additionally, the “commodification” of security has led to its marketing as a consumer product, further fuelling insecurity and the expansion of the commercial security sector (Jones & Newburn, 2002).

The pluralisation of policing is important for several reasons. First, as Bayley and Shearing (1996, 2001) argue, it marks a significant shift in crime control and law enforcement, particularly the erosion of the state monopoly on policing. This change, characterised by the growing role of private security, citizen responsibility, and the corporatisation of public police, complicates the understanding of policing systems (Newburn, 2003). Despite these global trends, it is crucial not to overgeneralise, as different countries have unique histories and political cultures that shape the pluralisation process (Newburn & Sparks, 2004). Therefore, studying local variations in policing changes is essential (Jones & Newburn, 2002). Furthermore, the ethical and normative implications of pluralisation raise concerns. Some scholars, like Loader (2000) and Ryan and Ward (1989), have critiqued privatisation in crime control, questioning whether these changes are beneficial or harmful. While global forces may drive these shifts, empirical studies of local political cultures reveal significant variation, challenging the notion that all societies are heading in the same direction. Thus, examining these differences is valuable for understanding how policing might evolve in diverse contexts (Jones & Newburn, 2002).

The concept of plural policing—where security responsibilities extend beyond the formal police to include private security, community groups, and civil society actors—has growing relevance in climate-affected Bangladesh (Terpstra & van Stokkom, 2015). Public police play a frontline role in disaster response, managing evacuations, safeguarding relief efforts, and maintaining order in displacement camps. Simultaneously, private security firms are increasingly contracted to protect critical infrastructure such as embankments, power plants, and industrial zones vulnerable to climate shocks.

Community organisations, particularly in rural areas prone to flooding and cyclones, also contribute significantly by coordinating local emergency responses and supporting vulnerable populations. This pluralisation reflects both necessity and pragmatism in Bangladesh, where state policing resources are limited, particularly in remote or disaster-hit areas (Van Steden, 2023). However, as Lister and Jones (2016) caution, plural policing risks weakening democratic oversight, especially in Bangladesh, where governance gaps and limited regulatory capacity already undermine transparency in security governance.

2.5.3.2 Networked Policing: Collaborative Responses to Climate Crises

Beyond pluralism, effective climate policing in Bangladesh requires networked policing, a model emphasising collaborative governance across state, non-state, and community actors (Crawford, 2006). Bangladesh's national disaster management strategies, including its Cyclone Preparedness Programme, exemplify this collaborative ethos—integrating police, disaster management agencies, local governments, and civil society into joint operational responses. Such networks are vital when managing the cascading effects of climate-induced displacement, where land conflicts, urban overcrowding, and competition over livelihoods can escalate into public order threats.

However, networked policing's success depends heavily on effective coordination, trust, and clear command structures (Van Steden, 2023). Experiences from the COVID-19 pandemic in Bangladesh illustrate the dangers of fragmented governance, where inconsistent communication between police, health services, and local authorities undermined the credibility and effectiveness of enforcement measures (Matczak, Loader, & Rowe, 2021). These coordination deficits could similarly weaken climate-related policing efforts if not addressed through formal multi-agency frameworks.

2.5.3.3 Hybrid Policing: Adaptive Strategies for Climate Security

In practice, Bangladesh increasingly witnesses hybrid policing, where diverse actors—public police, private security, environmental officials, and community volunteers—blend their roles within unified operational responses (Ojewale, 2023). During large-scale floods and cyclones, hybrid teams form organically, pooling resources and sharing operational responsibilities. Such blending is especially visible in environmental crime enforcement, where police collaborate with forest guards, local conservation groups, and village watch committees to tackle illegal logging, sand mining, and encroachment in climate-sensitive areas. However, hybrid policing, while adaptive, blurs traditional lines of accountability. In Bangladesh's rural contexts, for example, informal village policing arrangements may exercise coercive authority without clear legal mandates or oversight mechanisms, raising serious human rights concerns (Crawford, 2008). This creates a risk of climate security being excessively securitised—framing climate migrants, displaced communities, or resource competitors primarily as security threats rather than vulnerable populations requiring protection (Verhage & Boels, 2015).

2.5.3.4 Eco-Dissent Policing and the Suppression of Environmental Activism

Environmental protests have undergone significant transformation in recent years, giving rise to a new category of activist known as the Militant Environmental

Activist (MEA). These activists employ highly organised and innovative tactics, reflecting a ‘professionalisation’ of protest, albeit not in the traditional sense of formal qualifications (Button, John, & Brearley, 2002). The policing of environmental protests has become increasingly complex, particularly as many demonstrations occur on private land and often involve legal disputes. Law enforcement agencies must collaborate with private security firms, bailiffs, and regulatory bodies such as the Health and Safety Executive, resulting in a ‘fragmented’ policing structure (Button et al., 2002). This diversification of policing roles presents coordination challenges in managing large-scale and unpredictable protests.

Di Ronco (2023) explores the evolution of protest policing in Western countries, highlighting a shift from aggressive, force-based tactics to a ‘softer negotiated approach’ since the 1980s. This model prioritises negotiation and containment over physical confrontation. However, coercion remains a significant factor, influenced by police culture, organisational structures, and political pressures. Leaderless movements, in particular, are often perceived as ‘transgressive’, prompting more confrontational policing strategies such as ‘strategic incapacitation’—including heavy police presence, riot gear, security zones, and pre-emptive arrests. For instance, the policing of Extinction Rebellion (XR) in the UK saw activists labelled as ‘low-level aggravated’ to justify stricter measures like live facial recognition (Di Ronco, 2023). Similarly, the criminalisation of eco-justice movements through fines, movement restrictions, and police surveillance has been observed in cases such as Italy’s NOTAV and NOTAP protests, which faced militarised repression and severe charges.

Public order policing presents both operational and political challenges, requiring a delicate balance between maintaining order and avoiding escalation. White (2018) identifies three primary strategies for protest control:

1. **Coercive Strategies** – The use of force or weapons to suppress disturbances.
2. **Persuasive Strategies** – Dialogue and negotiation to de-escalate tensions.
3. **Information-Based Strategies** – Intelligence gathering to anticipate disruptions and facilitate strategic planning.

Research suggests that excessive use of force can exacerbate conflicts, whereas a respectful and restrained approach often proves more effective. Political influences also play a crucial role in shaping public order policing, particularly in protests linked to transnational concerns such as anti-globalisation movements. Beyond managing public demonstrations, law enforcement agencies are

increasingly involved in climate-related policing, investigating environmental offences committed by corporations and governments. Given the global nature of environmental crimes, international cooperation is crucial. White (2018) highlights proposals for a planetary police force, supported by an International Environment Court, to address cross-border environmental violations effectively.

Eco-dissent policing refers to the surveillance, regulation, and, in some cases, suppression of environmental activism and climate-related protests. This encompasses legal, administrative, and coercive measures used by the state and law enforcement agencies to manage dissent against environmentally harmful policies or corporate activities (Lynch et al., 2022; Brisman et al., 2022). Tactics include anti-protest laws, activist surveillance, police brutality, and judicial harassment, particularly in countries with weak environmental governance or high corporate influence over state policies (Goyes & South, 2017). In contrast, climate change policing encompasses broader law enforcement responses to climate-related crises, such as natural disasters, resource conflicts, and climate migration (White, 2019). This involves enforcing environmental laws, mitigating climate-induced security threats, and ensuring public order during climate disasters (Brisman & South, 2020). However, when climate change policing is used to suppress activism rather than protect environmental rights, it contradicts the principles of climate justice (Lynch et al., 2023). The increasing criminalisation of environmental activism has raised concerns that eco-dissent policing is being weaponized against grassroots movements, restricting democratic engagement in climate governance (Boyd, 2021).

Bangladesh, one of the most climate-vulnerable countries, faces environmental challenges such as rising sea levels, cyclones, land degradation, and industrial pollution (Huq & Rabbani, 2011). In response, environmental activism has intensified, particularly concerning issues like deforestation, water pollution, and the displacement of indigenous communities (Islam & Afrin, 2020). However, activists often face harassment, arbitrary arrests, and legal restrictions, particularly when protesting against government-backed infrastructure projects or multinational corporations (Rahman, 2021). For instance, protests against coal-fired power plants in Rampal and Banshkhali were met with police crackdowns, mass arrests, and legal intimidation, highlighting the securitisation of environmental dissent (Mahmud, 2022). Similarly, indigenous groups resisting deforestation in the Chittagong Hill Tracts have reported police violence and state surveillance, undermining their right to environmental advocacy (Adnan & Dastidar, 2011). These patterns reflect broader global trends where eco-dissent policing protects corporate and state interests over environmental sustainability (Temper et al., 2020).

To ensure that eco-dissent policing does not violate human rights while addressing legitimate security concerns, several reforms are necessary:

- **Human Rights-Based Approaches** – Law enforcement agencies should align their actions with international frameworks such as the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Defenders (UN, 1998) to safeguard activists' rights.
- **Community-Oriented Policing** – Instead of securitising dissent, dialogue-based engagement with local communities can help de-escalate environmental conflicts (Marks & Fleming, 2020).
- **Legal Reforms** – Bangladesh should review and amend restrictive laws, such as the Digital Security Act, which has been used to silence environmental critics (Rahman, 2021).
- **Environmental Law Enforcement** – Rather than targeting activists, police should prioritise enforcing environmental protection laws and holding polluters accountable (White, 2020).
- **Training and Capacity Building** – Police forces should be trained in climate change, environmental justice, and non-violent protest management to ensure balanced responses to eco-dissent (Della Porta & Reiter, 2022).

Bangladesh's rapid industrialisation and infrastructural expansion, often pursued at the expense of ecological sustainability, have fuelled eco-dissent. This is exemplified by opposition to the Rampal coal power plant, adjacent to the Sundarbans, the world's largest mangrove forest. Activists, academics, and civil intellectuals (Hossain, 2020) have raised concerns over the project's ecological ramifications, yet police repression of peaceful demonstrations has been widely documented (Al Jazeera, 2022). From a Green Criminology perspective, this represents double victimisation: first, through environmental harm inflicted on ecosystems and local communities; second, through the suppression of civic resistance. Climate Change Criminology situates this within global governance failures, where developing nations like Bangladesh bear the environmental and social costs of both local and international policy shortcomings (RUSI, 2022). Addressing these challenges requires a more balanced approach to eco-dissent policing—one that prioritises environmental justice alongside public order and security.

2.5.4 Policy and Practice Implications

Responding effectively to the crime-climate nexus in Bangladesh requires a recalibration of law enforcement strategies to integrate environmental awareness,

social equity, and community resilience. Key recommendations include:

- **Policy Reorientation:** Policies must be designed to address the socio-political realities of climate migration, ensuring displaced communities have access to legal protections and livelihood opportunities (Climate Migration & Environment, 2015).
- **Predictive Policing with Climate Data:** By analyzing meteorological and environmental data, police can anticipate crime surges during extreme weather events, allowing preemptive deployment of resources (Rahman & Islam, 2023).
- **Specialized Environmental Crime Units:** Establishing dedicated teams within law enforcement to monitor and prosecute environmental crimes—such as illegal sand mining, industrial pollution, and deforestation—will enhance ecological protection and legal accountability (Faroque, 2023).
- **Cross-Border Collaboration:** Given the transnational nature of human trafficking and environmental crimes, Bangladesh should strengthen regional cooperation with neighbors like India and Myanmar, in alignment with UNODC recommendations (2022).
- **Community-Based Policing:** Empowering local communities through participatory governance and crime prevention programs ensures that responses are culturally appropriate, sustainable, and equitable (Roy, 2022).
- **Training and Capacity Building:** Police and judicial actors must be educated on environmental law, climate justice, and the socio-economic drivers of climate-linked crimes to foster informed and effective interventions (Faroque, 2023).

3. Conclusion

Climate change has emerged as a critical global challenge, yet criminology has historically overlooked its implications for crime and security (White, 2018). This article has demonstrated that climate change is not just an environmental issue but a significant driver of socio-economic instability and criminal activity, particularly in vulnerable nations like Bangladesh. Rising sea levels, extreme weather events, and resource scarcity have exacerbated land conflicts, human trafficking, and environmental crimes, exposing the inadequacy of traditional policing approaches (Ahmed et al., 2020). Addressing these emerging threats requires a fundamental shift in law enforcement strategies, moving beyond conventional crime control

towards climate-responsive policing that integrates environmental criminology, predictive policing, and community resilience (Faroque, 2023).

Given the complexity of climate-induced crimes, plural policing offers an inclusive approach by engaging public law enforcement, private security, and community groups to enhance security in climate-affected regions (Crawford, 2006). Hybrid policing has also emerged as a practical solution, allowing collaboration between law enforcement agencies, environmental authorities, and local stakeholders to tackle climate-driven offences such as illegal logging and water conflicts (Ojewale, 2023). Meanwhile, networked policing plays a crucial role in disaster response and climate migration management by fostering coordination between police, disaster relief agencies, and local governments to ensure an integrated security response (Crawford, 2006; Van Steden, 2023). However, the growing trend of eco-dissent policing raises concerns, as the criminalisation of environmental activism risks undermining the principles of climate justice and human rights (Lynch et al., 2022).

As Bangladesh navigates the crime-climate nexus, its experience in developing climate-aware policing strategies can serve as a model for other climate-vulnerable nations. By embedding environmental intelligence into crime prevention, strengthening institutional capacity, and fostering transnational cooperation, law enforcement can play a pivotal role in addressing climate-induced crime while ensuring social stability and human rights protections (UNODC, 2022; White, 2018).

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Groundwater Depletion and Contamination in International and Bangladesh Scenario: A Legal Study

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Abstract: Groundwater, a critical resource for drinking, irrigation, and industry globally, faces increasing threats from depletion and contamination, necessitating robust legal frameworks for its sustainable management. This study examines the legal landscape surrounding groundwater in both the international context and specifically within Bangladesh, analyzing the challenges and opportunities for effective governance. The objectives of the study are to have an idea on the groundwater depletion and contamination in international and Bangladesh Scenario. Sources of data collected from notable authorities on law, different journals, daily newspapers, internet etc. International law provides a foundation for managing transboundary water resources, including groundwater, though specific regulations for groundwater are often less developed than those for surface water. Bangladesh, a densely populated country heavily reliant on groundwater, faces severe challenges related to both depletion and contamination. Over-extraction for irrigation, particularly in the dry season, has led to declining water tables and increased pumping costs. The legal framework in Bangladesh, while recognizing the importance of water resources, has limitations in addressing these issues effectively. It also analyses deletion and climate change, step taken worldwide and groundwater contamination. Furthermore, the paper presents, in short, the analysis and assessment of legal framework and government actions in this regard.

Keywords: Groundwater, Depletion, Contamination, International, Bangladesh, Laws, Policies.

1. Introduction

Groundwater is one of the most important renewable resources may play a great role into livelihood, economies and agriculture sector in a nation. Globally, invisible groundwater resources are under increasing pressure due to human activities and climate change. Groundwater provides almost half of all drinking water worldwide, about 40% of water for irrigated agriculture and about 1/3 of water supply required for industry.² Groundwater is an important resource for

1. Director (Research and Publication), Police Staff College, Dhaka, Bangladesh.

2. 'Groundwater Overview: Making the invisible visible' is an UN-Water category III publication, Produced by IGRAC (International Groundwater Resources Assessment Centre), 2018, p.1.

3. UNESCO, 2003. The UN World Water Development Report. Retrieved from <http://www.unesco.org/>; and Molden, D.J., 2007. Water for food, water for life: A Comprehensive assessment of water management in agriculture. Earthscan and the International Water Management Institute, London and Colombo.

livelihoods and the food security of billions of people, and especially in booming Asia's agricultural economies. Globally, groundwater provides approximately 50% of current potable water supplies, 40% of the industrial water demand, and 20% of the water used for irrigation.³ Ground water depletion is the common concern around the world and its effect is more prominent in the developing countries. The water stored underground both in the aquifers and void spaces within soil is known as ground water. It is a resource which is both natural and dynamic. The quantity of this water by calculating the difference between the highest and lowest levels of the water table within the aquifer, which is recharged rainwater during the monsoon.⁴ Groundwater contamination occurs when pollutants are released to the ground and make their way down into groundwater. This type of water pollution can also occur naturally due to the presence of minor and unwanted constituent, contaminant or impurity in the ground water, in which case it is more likely referred to as contamination rather than pollution. Contaminants found in groundwater cover a broad range of physical, inorganic chemical, organic chemical, bacteriological, and radioactive parameters. Many governments have introduced legislation to regulate groundwater development and to constrain, activities that might compromise groundwater availability and quality. This trend reflects increasing competition and conflict between groundwater users, and increasing threat of groundwater pollution.

2. Objective of the Study

The main objective of the present study is, therefore, to have an idea on the groundwater depletion and contamination in International and Bangladesh scenario. Alongside with the main one, the auxiliary objectives are, however, as follows:

- (i) to see how international scenario of groundwater i.e., depletion worldwide, reason behind depletion, effect of depletion, global climate change, steps taken worldwide;
- (ii) to see how groundwater contaminate i.e., pesticides, sewage, nutrients, synthetic organics;
- (iii) to find out groundwater depletion and contamination in Bangladesh like management harvesting laws and policies; and

2. 'Groundwater Overview: Making the invisible visible' is an UN-Water category III publication, Produced by IGRAC (International Groundwater Resources Assessment Centre), 2018, p.1.

3. UNESCO, 2003. The UN World Water Development Report. Retrieved from <http://www.unesco.org/>; and Molden, D.J., 2007. Water for food, water for life: A Comprehensive assessment of water management in agriculture. Earthscan and the International Water Management Institute, London and Colombo.

4. Gronwall, J. and Oduro-Kwarteng, 2018. Groundwater as a strategic resource for improved resilience: A case study from peri-urban Accra. Environ. Earth Sci., Vol.77, No. 6. 10.1007/s12665-017-7181-9.

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- (iv) to make a suggestion as to how proper maintenance of existing surface water treatment plants and construction of more such water-supply system and ensuring rights of the people.

3. Methodology of the Study

This manuscript has been prepared on the basis of the literature reviews of various materials and news features. Primary data are not preferred. Only secondary sources of information or data are used in the study. Secondary data are collected from notable authorities on law, different journals, daily newspapers, internet etc. Data are gone through and analyses, keeping in mind the objectives of the study. The analysis is assessed and commentaries made by different authorities addressed and accommodated in preparing the result.

4. International Scenario

Environment combines a cluster inseparable equipment like air, water, soil and so on. As a popular proverb goes like-water is life; the utility of water is easy comprehensible. Hence, any short of water question marks the future survival of lives on earth.

4.1 Groundwater

Groundwater is the water found underground in the cracks and spaces in soil, sand and rock. It is stored in and moves slowly through geologic formations of soil, sand and rocks called aquifers. Groundwater is water located beneath the ground surface in soil pore spaces and in the fractures of rock formations. A unit of rock or an unconsolidated deposit is called an aquifer when it can yield a usable quantity of water. The depth at which soil pore spaces or fractures and voids in rock become completely saturated with water is called the water table. Groundwater is recharged from, and eventually flows to, the surface naturally; natural discharge often occurs at springs and seeps, and can form oases and wetlands. Groundwater is also often withdrawn for agricultural, municipal and industrial use by constructing and operating extraction wells.

The study of the distribution and movement of groundwater is hydrogeology, also called groundwater hydrology. Typically, groundwater is thought of as liquid water flowing through shallow aquifers, but technically it can also include soil moisture, permafrost (frozen soil), immobile water in very low permeability bedrock, and deep geothermal or oil formation water. Groundwater is hypothesized to provide lubrication that can possibly influence the movement of faults. It is likely that much of the Earth's subsurface contains some water, which may be mixed with other fluids in some instances. Groundwater may not

be confined only to the Earth. The formation of some of the landforms observe on Mars may have been influenced by groundwater. There is also evidence that liquid water also exists in the subsurface of Jupiter's moon Europa. Groundwater is an alternative cause of water in dry season and during the period of natural calamities like draught, cyclone (SIDR⁵ AILA⁶), food etc. In regions with frequent water stress and large aquifer system groundwater is often used as an additional water source. If groundwater abstraction exceeds groundwater recharge for extensive areas and long time, overexploitation or persistent groundwater depletion can occur.⁷ But due to excess withdrawal of groundwater the layer of water in ground declining which commonly known as Groundwater Depletion. In explanation, Rapid decline in groundwater levels means sands of the aquifer are dewatered leaving pore spaces to be filled mainly with air.

4.2 Depletion Worldwide

Groundwater depletion, a term often defined as long-term water-level declines caused by sustained groundwater pumping, is key issue associated with groundwater use. The silent revolution cause and unprecedented increase in groundwater withdrawal across the globe. It has produced and is still produced and is still producing enormous socio-economic benefits around the world, but not without drastically modifying the hydrogeological regimes of many aquifers, particularly those that are recharged at a relatively modest rate, or not at all. The stress placed on groundwater systems by groundwater abstraction builds up when the ratio of abstraction to mean recharge increases. The greatest stress evidently occurs in the more arid parts of the world. Because the groundwater development stress indicator shown here is averaged over entire countries, it cannot show stressed aquifer systems that are much smaller in size. As a result of intensive groundwater development, steady depletion of groundwater storage, accompanied by continuously declining groundwater levels, has spread over significant sections of the earth's arid and semi-arid zones. This produces a wide range of problems⁸ and in many areas a lack of control threatens to result in a complete loss of the groundwater resource as an affordable source for irrigation and domestic water supply in the long run. In the more seriously affected aquifer zones, multi-annual groundwater level declines are typically in the range of one to several meters per years.⁹ Over the past few years, more information has

5. SIDR-Cyclone SIDR was a tropical cyclone that resulted on one of the worst natural disasters in Bangladesh. The storm eventually made landfall in Bangladesh on November 15, 2017, causing large-scale evacuations.

6. AILA-Cyclone AILA was the second named tropical cyclone of the 2009 North Indian Ocean season. Warned by both the Regional Specialized Meteorological Center and Joint Typhoon Warning Center, AILA formed over a disturbance over the Bay of Bengal on May, 23, 2009.

7. Greeson et al., 2010. "Global depletion of groundwater recourses" October, 2010, pp.1-5.

8. J. Van der Gun and A. Lipponen, "Reconciling storage depletion due to groundwater pumping with sustainability: Sustainability", Vol.2, Vo.11, pp.3418-35,201.

9. J.Margat, "Les eaux souterraines dans le monde". Orléans/Paris, BGRM/UNESCO,2008.

become available on the magnitude of groundwater storage depletion. Konikow and Kendy (2005) draw attention to excessive groundwater depletion in several parts of the world and refers to it as a global problem. They estimate that about 700 km³ to 800 km³ of groundwater was depleted from aquifers in the United States during the twentieth century. One of the best documented cases is the 450,000 km² High Plains aquifers system, where the net amount of water removed from storage during the twentieth century was around 243 km³-a reduction of about 6% in the pre-development volume of water held in storage. Konikow and Kendy suggest that the most important impacts of groundwater depletion are not so much a lack of stored groundwater, but an increase in the cost of groundwater (as a result of larger pumping lifts), induced salinity and other water quality changes, land subsidence, reduced baseflows and other environment impacts. They also conclude that, worldwide, the magnitude of groundwater depletion may be so large that it constitutes a measurable contributor to sea level rise. GRACE's recent assessments of the massive groundwater storage depletion observed in California's Central Valley and in north-west India have produced groundwater storage depletion estimates for some large groundwater systems.¹⁰

4.3 Reasons Behind Depletion

Worldwide, the consumption of water is doubling every 20 years-more than twice the rate of increase in pollution. A large amount of water is wasted in agriculture, industry, and urban areas. It has been estimated that with available technologies and better operational practices, agricultural water demand could be cut by about 50%, and that in urban areas by about 33% without affecting the quality or economics of life. But most governments do not have adequate laws or regulations to protect their water system. Due to the increase in population, there has been a rise in the demand for food, space for housing, consumer products, etc., which has in turn resulted in increased industrialization, urbanization, and demands in agriculture thereby leading to both river and groundwater depletion. Groundwater crisis is not the result of natural factors; it has been caused by human actions.

During the past two decades, the water level in several parts of the country has been falling rapidly due to an increase in extraction. The number of wells drilled for irrigation of both food and cash crops have rapidly and indiscriminately increased. World's rapidly rising population and changing lifestyles has also increase the domestic need for water. The water requirement for the industry also shows an overall increase. Intense competition among users-agriculture, industry, and domestic sectors-is driving the groundwater table owner. We are

10. M. Rodell, L. Velicogna, and J. Famiglietti, "Satellite-based estimates of groundwater depletion in India." *Nature*, Vo. 460, doi:10.1038/nature08238, (2009).

using more water than the rate of annual groundwater recharge. Estimation of actual groundwater recharge to the aquifer is a difficult task, which requires a lot of information regarding aquifer and soil property, groundwater, therefore, includes actual recharge water plus some fraction of aquifer storage.

In recent years, the aquifer depletes its storage in order to meet increased demand for water supplies in the city and, consequently, groundwater levels are declining. There are some other reasons behind the groundwater depletion. Among those, withdrawal of surface water in the upstream is one of the important one. For example, in Bangladesh, 54 rivers are shared with India. As a lower riparian country, Bangladesh has no control over them. Unilateral water diversion or withdrawal of water from trans-boundary or international rivers has been the long-standing policy of India. Without any agreement with Bangladesh, it has steadily embarked on constructing dams or diverting water from many trans-boundary rivers such as Teesta, Gumti, Khowai, Dharl, Dudkumar, monu, etc. India has reportedly blocked streams of rivers such as Muhri, Chagalnaiya, Fulchari, Kachu and many others in Tripura flowing into Bangladesh.

Actually, the Dams & Barrages made by India has made the stream of our rivers very slow. Now water scarcity in our rivers is a common scene (except rainy season). Due to such scarcity the main pressure is gone to underground water. As a result, we have been facing the quite unexpected depletion problem. Today, rivers around the countries are being filled up or being encroached upon in such a manner that is threatening the very existence of human habitation. Almost all the rivers are dying because of throwing waste and filth recklessly into the water bodies. An unspecified volume of human and industrial waste gets dumped into the river which causes enormous water pollution. As a result, Evaporation and Percolation gets lower in amount. So, water in ground being depleted.

4.4 Effects of Depletion

Pumping groundwater at a faster rate that it can be recharged can have some negative effects of the environment and the people who make use of the water:

- The most severe consequences of excessive groundwater pumping are that the water table below which the ground is saturated with water, can be lowered. For water to be withdrawn from the ground, water must be pumped from a well that reaches below the water table. Also, as water levels decline, the rate of water the well can yield may decline.
- As the depth to water increases, the water must be lifted higher to reach the land surface. If pumps are used to lift the water (as opposed to artesian wells), more energy is required to drive the pump. Using the well can become prohibitively expensive.

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- There is more of an interaction between the water in lakes and rivers and groundwater than most people think. Some, and often a great deal, of the water flowing in rivers comes from seepage of groundwater into the streambed.
 - Groundwater contributes to streams in most physiographic and climatic settings. The proportion of stream water that comes from groundwater inflows varies according to a region's geography, geology, and climate.
 - Groundwater pumping can alter how water moves between an aquifer and a stream, lake or wetland by either intercepting groundwater flow that discharges into surface-water body under natural conditions, or by increasing the rate of water movement from the surface-water body into an aquifer.
 - The basic cause of land subsidence is a loss of support below ground. In other words, sometimes when water is taken out of the soil, the soil collapses, compacts, and drops. This depends on a number of factors, such as the type of soil and rock below the surface. Land subsidence is most often caused by human activities, mainly from the removal of subsurface water.
 - One water-quality threat to fresh groundwater supplies is contamination from saltwater intrusion. All of the water in the ground is not fresh water; much of the very deep groundwater and water below oceans is saline. In fact, an estimated 3.1 million cubic miles (12.9 cubic kilometers) of saline groundwater exist compared to about 2.6 million cubic miles (10.5 million cubic kilometers) of fresh groundwater.¹¹
 - As the water table lowers, the water must be pumped farther to reach the surface, using more energy. In extreme cases, using such a well can be cost prohibitive.
 - One of the major threats to the city due to declining groundwater levels is land subsidence, which can be triggered by earthquakes of greater magnitudes. For example, recently a series of earthquakes of magnitudes ranging from 4 to 5 on the Richter scale jolted Dhaka and other parts of the country. Although no damage to the infrastructure of the city was reported but there is a great potential of collapse of infrastructures and land subsidence associated with earthquakes particularly in areas of groundwater-storage depletion. Such phenomena were observed in many parts around the world such as Bangkok City (Thailand), Mexico City, (Mexico), several places in California State USA and so forth.

11. P.H. Gleick, "Water resources: In Encyclopedia of Climate and Weather", ed. by S.H. Schneider, Oxford University Press, New York, Vol.2, pp.817-823, (1996).

4.5 Groundwater Depletion and Global Climate Change

Global climate change will profoundly affect hydrologic systems worldwide. Glacial melting and increasing ocean temperatures lead to sea level rise. On the continents, the frequency and severity of floods and droughts are expected to increase, while higher temperatures will reduce winter snowpack and hasten spring snowmelt from mountainous areas. Unchecked, groundwater depletion can exacerbate the impacts of these changes; conversely, controlled management of groundwater depletion can contribute to their mitigation. Assuming that the volume of groundwater depleted during the past 100 years is much greater than can be accounted for by non-transient increases in volumes of water stored in soil, natural channels and lakes, or the atmosphere, then the ultimate sink for the “missing” groundwater is the oceans.

Worldwide, the magnitude of groundwater depletion from storage may be so large as to constitute a measurable contributor to sea-level rise. For example, the total volume depleted from the High Plains aquifer equates to about 0.75 mm, or about 0.5%, of the observed sea-level rise during the 20th century. Reducing future groundwater depletion (and increasing groundwater storage) can help in a small way to reduce future sea-level rise. Historically, society’s response to floods and droughts has been to impound surface water in reservoirs, and to release it as needed. However, a dearth of geologically suitable locations for new dams, combined with increased awareness of their ecological consequences, will hinder this response to future hydrologic extremes, even as their frequency and intensity increase. Long-term temperature rises, will increase the need to store water for distribution over a longer dry season.¹²

In some areas, an integrated solution can be achieved by artificially recharging excess runoff, when available. Thus, depleted aquifers can be transformed into underground “reservoirs” to supplement the flood and drought buffering capacity of existing surface water reservoirs.

4.6 Steps Taken Worldwide and whatmore to be Done

Groundwater is not a resource that could be utilized unmindfully simply because it is available in abundant quantities. Problems and issues such as water logging, salinity, agricultural toxins, and industrial effluents, all need to be properly looked into. Other than legislation and checks to conserve and improve the quality of groundwater, society itself plays a very important role. During the last decade there has been a rising awareness among the common people on the need for conservation and development of groundwater.

12. RF Service (2004) As the West goes dry. *Science* 303: 1124-1127.2

Water use has to be integrated effectively with water regeneration, as was done in many traditional technologies. Renovation of forest tanks in drought-prone regions will have a significant impact wildlife and forest cover. Similarly, in some urban areas of each country there is a need to regenerate groundwater aquifers because of the high degree of dependence on them for drinking water. Rainwater harvesting schemes have been taken up in many countries and even made compulsory in some of them. Temple tanks needs to be renovated and urban wetlands protected. All these will contribute to a rise in the groundwater level and a reduction of salt water ingress. Community awareness and management of freshwater resources should be enhanced.

The government should implement effective groundwater legislation and regulations through self-regulation by communities and local institutions. External support agencies should support freshwater resource management. Environment restoration should be promoted along with household water security. No single action whether community base, legislation, traditional water harvesting systems, or reliance on market forest will in itself alleviate the crisis through the world. The effective answer to the freshwater crisis is to integrate conservation and development activities-from water extraction to water management-at the local level; making communities aware and involving them fully is therefore critical for success. All this will ultimately pave the way for combining conservation of the environment with the basic needs of people. Another thing that can be done is the reduction of groundwater demand. Simple techniques can be used to reduce the demand for water.

The underlying principle is that only part of only part of the rainfall or irrigation water is taken up by plants, the rest percolates into the deep groundwater, or is lost by evaporation from the surface. Therefore, by improving the efficiency of water use, and by reducing its loss due to evaporation, we can reduce water demand.

There are numerous methods to reduce such losses and to improve soil moisture. Some of them are listed below:

- Planting of trees, grass, and bushes breaks the force of rain and helps rainwater penetrate the soil.
- Shelter belts of trees and bushes along the edge of agricultural field slow down the wind speed and reduce evaporation and erosion.
- Mulching, i.e., the application of organic or inorganic materials such as plant debris, compost, etc., slows down the surface run-off, improves the soil moisture, reduces evaporation losses and improves soil fertility.
- Soil cover by crops, slows down run-off and minimizes evaporation losses. Hence, fields should not be left bare for long periods of time.

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- Plough helps to move the soil around. As a consequence, it retains more water thereby reducing evaporation.
 - Fog and dew contain substantial amounts of water that can be used directly by adapted plant species. Artificial surfaces such as netting-surfaced traps or polyethylene sheets can be exposed to fog and dew. The resulting water can be used for crops.
 - Contour farming is adopted in hilly areas and in lowland areas for paddy fields. Farmers recognize the efficiency of contour-based systems for conserving soil and water.
 - Salt-resistant varieties of crops have also been developed recently. Because these grow in saline areas, overall agricultural productivity is increased without making additional demands on freshwater sources. Thus, this is a good water conservation strategy.
 - Desalination technologies such as distillation, electro-dialysis and reverse osmosis are available.
 - Use of efficient watering systems such as drip irrigation and sprinklers will reduce the water consumption by plants.
 - Transfer of water from surplus areas to deficit areas by inter-linking water systems through canals, etc.

4.7 Groundwater Contamination

Many areas of groundwater and surface water are now contaminated with heavy metals POPs (persistent organic pollutants), and nutrients that have an adverse effect on health. Water-borne disease and water-caused health problems are mostly due to inadequate and incompetent management of water resources. Safe water for all can only be assumed when access, sustainability, and equity can be guaranteed. Access can be defined as the number of people who are guaranteed. Access can be defined as the number of people who are guaranteed safe drinking water and sufficient quantities of it. There has to be an effort to sustain it, and there has to be a fair and equal distribution of water to all segments of the society. Urban areas generally have a higher coverage of safe water than the rural areas. Even within an area there is variation: areas that can pay for the services have access to safe water whereas areas that cannot pay for the services have to make do with from hand pumps and other sources. In the urban areas water gets contaminated in many different ways, some of the most common reasons being leaky water pipe joints in areas where the water pipe and sewage line pass close together. Sometimes the water gets polluted at source due to various reasons and mainly due to inflow of sewage into the source.

Groundwater can be contaminated through various sources and some of these are mentioned below:

4.7.1 Pesticides: Run-off from farms, backyards, and golf courses contain pesticides such DDT that in turn contaminate the water. Leachate from landfill

sites is another major contaminating source. Its effects on the ecosystems and health are endocrine and reproductive damage in wildlife. Groundwater is susceptible to contamination, as pesticides are mobile in the soil. It is a matter of concern as these chemicals are persistent in the soil and water.

4.7.2 Sewage: Untreated or inadequately treated municipal sewage is a major source of groundwater and surface water pollution in the developing countries. The organic material that is discharged with municipal waste into the watercourses uses substantial oxygen for biological degradation thereby upsetting the ecological balance of rivers and lakes. Sewage also carries microbial pathogens that are the cause of the spread of disease.

4.7.3 Nutrients: Domestic waste water, agriculture run-off, and industrial effluents contain phosphorus and nitrogen, fertilizer, run-off, manure from livestock operations, which increase the level of nutrients in water bodies and can cause eutrophication in the lakes and rivers and continue on to the coastal areas. The nitrates come mainly from the fertilizer that is added to the fields. Excessive use of fertilizers causes nitrate contamination of groundwater, with the result that nitrate levels in drinking water is far above the safety levels recommended. Good agricultural practices can help in reducing the number of nitrates in the soil and thereby lower its content in the water.

4.7.4 Synthetic Organics: Many of the 100,000 synthetic compounds in use today are found in the aquatic environment and accumulate in the food chain. POPs or Persistent Organic Pollutants, represent the most harmful element for the ecosystem and for human health, for example, industrial chemicals and agricultural pesticides. The chemicals can accumulate in fish and cause serious damage to human health. Where pesticides are used on a large-scale, groundwater gets contaminated and this leads to the chemical contamination of drinking water.

4.7.5 Acidification: Acidification of surface water, mainly lakes and reservoirs, is one of the major environmental impacts of transport over long distance of air pollutants such as sulfur dioxide from power plants, other heavy industry such as steel plant, and motor vehicles. This problem is more severe in the US and in parts of Europe.

5. Bangladesh Scenario

Bangladesh is a country of rivers and floods but groundwater is still a vital resource because it provides bacterially safe water and helps produce food for millions of people. In rural and urban areas almost, the entire population rely on groundwater for potable water. In the early 1990s some 97% of the population used it for drinking, but this has now come down to about 80% due to the

detection of arsenic in shallow groundwater. Use of groundwater in irrigation is increasing every year, and now more than 74% of the irrigated area is covered with groundwater. The country's industries also rely on groundwater for most of their water needs. Though Bangladesh has abundant rain and surface waters, these sources are not available when water demand is the most. Therefore, groundwater can be considered as the country's most important natural resource for ensuring public health and food security.

5.1 Groundwater Depletion and Contamination

Ground water depletion and contamination urban Bangladesh faces a huge water crisis. Groundwater tables are falling rapidly, centuries-old urban water bodies have disappeared or severely polluted and urban floods are a regular occurrence in the rainy season in many cities. In addition to water scarcity, water quality of major rivers and canals is under threat. Groundwater pollution is also a threat to the society. The main cause of water shortage in urban Bangladesh is because the urban water paradigm grossly interferes with the natural hydrological principles. Rain is led away from cities and does not recharge the groundwater, which is being mined extensively. Surface water bodies in most cities have become the receptacles for the city's sewage.

Urban water bodies, which were the sole source of drinking water in many cities, have been systematically destroyed. In 1960, the buildup area was the second lowest land cover type in the city (landfill areas were the lowest and the waterbodies were the highest land cover types). In 2008, the situation completely changed- the buildup area became the highest land cover type. The buildup area increased more than 385 percent in comparison to 1960. There was a loss of 32.57 percent of waterbodies. The land filling and encroachment were the main causes for the loss of wetlands in the city of Dhaka.¹³ The increase in the amount of surface water pollution in Bangladesh across the years has forced the citizens to depend more and more on groundwater. In Dhaka about 87 percent of city supply depends on groundwater.¹⁴

Research by Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation (BADC), said that Dhaka's groundwater level had dropped to 52 meters below mean sea level in 2011, compared with 46 meters in 2004. According to the Dhaka Water and Sewerage Authority (WASA), the groundwater table was at 11.3 meter below the ground level (mbgl) in the 1970s and at 20 mbgl in the 1980s. However, water level has drastically fallen since 1966. According to a study by the Institute of

13. S.Islam, R. Rahman, A.K.M. Sahahabuddin, and R. Ahmed, "Change in wetlands in Dhaka city: trends and physico-environmental consequences", *J. Life Earth Science*, Vol.5,pp37,(2010).

14. Personal communication with Dhaka WASA.

Water Modelling (IWM) in Dhaka in 2009, groundwater in the city is going down three meters every. The researchers of BADC and IWM blamed the decline on low groundwater recharge rates. As per BADC report of 2010, the extraction rate of groundwater per year was more than 53 million Cubic Meters, wherein in the rate of recharge was approximately 50 million Cubic Meters. Now a day the differences is increasing alarmingly. The quality of groundwater, which is extensively used as a source of water supply in most cities of Bangladesh, also deteriorating. Firstly, the groundwater is polluted by sewage and other effluents. Secondly, because of excessive groundwater extraction, there are a variety of quality problems ranging from hardness to arsenic and fluoride contamination.

The scientists of Rajshahi University together with Hokkaido University, Research Group for Applied Geology (RGAG) and Asian Arsenic Network (AAN) of Japan suspect that groundwater of about 63 out of 64 districts of Bangladesh are seriously contaminated with arsenic. There are 11 million tube wells are highly arsenic contaminated. About 80 million people of the affected districts are at risk and the total number of patients suffering from Arsenicosis is about 7000 and out of which about 200 persons already died in last few years. Arsenic is majorly spread and contaminating the shallow aquifer in the region and hence eventually those people who drink water from shallow tube wells are most likely to getting affected with arsenic contamination and arsenicosis. In 1988, British Geological Survey (BGS) collected 2022 water samples from 41 arsenic affected districts. Laboratory tests revealed that 35% of these water samples were found to have arsenic concentrations above 0.05mg/l. Although arsenic is the major inorganic constituent of health concern, problems in the groundwater also exist with high concentrations of iron and manganese. Boron is problematic in some higher-salinity areas in southern Bangladesh.¹⁵

5.2 Groundwater Management and Rainwater Harvesting Laws and Politics

Historically, likely in many under developed countries, the issues such as rights and ownership concerning groundwater have never been viewed seriously in Bangladesh. Over the last four decades, substantial amounts of groundwater have been withdrawn to meet the burgeoning needs of agriculture and the urban sector.

5.2.1 Institution Concerning Management of Water Sector

Overall, the National Water Resources Council (NWRC) chaired by the Prime Minister formulates policies concerning the water sector and oversees

15. Personal communication with NGO Forum and Geology Department, Dhaka University.

their implementation. The Water Resources Planning Organization (WARPO) under the Ministry of Water Resources act as Secretariat of the Executive Committee. A micro level a number of ministries and institutions are involved in the management of the water sector in Bangladesh. The Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives have overall responsibility for monitoring and governing the sector, including policy formulation through its Local Government Division. Within the Divisions, except for the three largest urban areas, Dhaka, Khulna and Chittagong and Rajshahi the Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE) assists municipalities and communities in relation to water supply and management. In Dhaka, Khulna, Chittagong and Rajshahi Water Supply and Sewerage Authority (WASA) is responsible for the water management and supply. Other ministries such as Education, Health and Family Welfare; Water Resources; Environment and Forest; the Planning Commission also influence the sector. The National Water Management Plan (NWMP) in 2004 listed 13 ministries involved in the sector.

5.2.2 Policies and Acts Concerning Groundwater Management

The first effort towards the management of groundwater in Bangladesh came in the form of 'Groundwater Management Ordinance 1985'. The ordinance was basically for the management of groundwater used for the purposes of irrigation. Bangladesh adopted its first National Water Policy in 1999.¹⁶ One of the main objectives addressed in this policy concerning the management of groundwater was the use and development of groundwater in an efficient and equitable way. The policy also recommended a legal and regulatory framework which encourages decentralization, consideration of environmental impacts, and private sector investment for the management of both the ground and surface water. To complement the national water policy, in 2004 WARPO developed a National Water Management Plan (NWMP), which was approved by NWRC. The object of this plan was to implement the National Policy for Arsenic Mitigation.¹⁷

This policy emphasized on alternative safe water supply, particularly preferred surface water over groundwater for drinking water supply. Recently Water Act, 2013 is published. The act is based on the National Water Policy and designed for integrated development, management, extraction distribution, usage, protection and conservation of water resources in Bangladesh. As per Water Act, 2013 all forms of water in Bangladesh belong to the government. As per the act a permit or a license is required for any large scale withdrawn by any individual or organization is not mentioned in the Act. Acknowledging the increasing water needs both in the irrigation and urban areas, the act also stressed on rainwater

16. Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. Ministry of Water Resources (January 1999). "National Water Policy" (PDF). Dhaka. Retrieved 2008-04-22., p.3.

harvesting, especially to sustain the drinking water supply. To strengthen the implementation, the Act also provides provision for punishment and financial penalty for non-compliance with the Act. The maximum penalty for violations is five years of imprisonment and or a monetary penalty of Taka 10000. Bangladesh has already proposed to make rainwater harvesting compulsory in the new Water Act, 2012. Dhaka City Development Authority (Rajdhani Unnayan Kartipakha) proposed few new rules as Dhaka City Building Rules 2011, where rainwater harvesting and groundwater recharge have been made mandatory for buildings harvesting roof area more than 200 square meter. Bangladesh National Building Code is under revision. A separate chapter on Rainwater Management has been incorporated in the draft version. There is a plan to include the provision of “Rainwater Harvesting and Groundwater Recharging” in Dhaka Mahanagar Building (Construction, Development, Protection and Removal) Rule” enacted in 2008. This will be done one the National Building code is amended. Ponds, lake and waterbodies which are bigger recharging systems in urban areas, are protected under Water Body Conservation Act, 2000 and Bangladesh Environment Conservation Act, 1995.

5.2.3 Proposed Functioning

Many mitigation options have been proposed by university researchers and engineers as well as Organizations over the last decade and some are underway which include:

- Proper maintenance of existing surface water treatment plants and construction of more such water-supply system;
- Construction of groundwater well field (analogous to gas field) outside of Dhaka city where groundwater storage is not falling (one such well field has been recognized in Singair Upazila of Manikganj district);
- Rejuvenation of canals and wetlands in and around Dhaka city and all over the country to enhance groundwater recharge to aquifers;
- Artificial recharge to aquifers through a number of measures of which relatively cheap and most popular methods are rainwater harvest, dug well and borehole recharge via natural or injection, basin or pond recharge, and storage reservoirs etc.

6. Recommendations

(A) Legal Frameworks for Groundwater Management:

- **Establishment of Water Rights:** Clear definition of water rights can help prevent over-extraction and ensure equitable access among users.

17. National Policy for Arsenic Mitigation, 2004.

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- **Pollution Control Regulations:** Implementation strict regulations on pollutants that can contaminate groundwater sources is crucial. These includes setting permissible limits for agricultural runoff, industrial discharges, and waste disposal practices.
 - **Monitoring and Enforcement Mechanisms:** Regular monitoring of groundwater quality and quantity is necessary to enforce compliance with legal standards. Establishing independent regulatory bodies can enhance accountability.

(B) International Cooperation:

- **Transboundary Water Agreements:** Countries sharing aquifers should negotiate agreements that outline shared responsibilities for sustainable management.
- **DataSharing Initiatives:** Collaborative efforts to share data on groundwater levels, quality, and usage can improve understanding and management strategies across borders.
- **Joint Research Programs:** Engaging in joint research initiatives can foster innovation in sustainable practices and technologies.

(C) Community Engagement and Education:

- **Public Awareness Campaigns:** Educating communities about the importance of groundwater conservation can lead to more responsible usage practices.
- **Involvement in Decision-Making:** Engaging local stakeholders in decision-making processes ensures that their needs are considered while promoting sustainable practices.
- **Training Programs:** Providing training on sustainable agricultural practices can reduce reliance on chemical fertilizers and pesticides that contribute to contamination.

(D) Specific Recommendations for Bangladesh

In the context of Bangladesh, specific measures are needed to address the unique challenges faced by the country:

- **Arsenic Mitigation Strategies:** Given the widespread arsenic contamination in Bangladesh's groundwater, targeted programs must be implemented to provide safe drinking water alternatives while remediating contaminated sources.

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- **Sustainable Irrigation Practices:** Promoting drip irrigation or rainwater harvesting can reduce dependence on groundwater for agriculture while enhancing resilience against climate variability.
 - **Strengthening Regulatory Frameworks:** Enhancing existing laws related to water management by incorporating stricter penalties for violations related to pollution or over-extraction will improve compliance.

7. Conclusion

In the conclusion we may say that globally, invisible groundwater resources are under increasing pressure due to human activities and climate change. Groundwater resources are extensively used in production processes by large international companies all over the world. Groundwater is the main source of water supply in many cities around the world (Mexico City, Kabul, Dakar, etc.) and increasingly under a pressure due to continuous urbanization, climate change and inadequate water management; for example, groundwater depletion and land subsidence are serious problems in many South Asian cities and elsewhere. Groundwater has acquired a pivotal role in boosting Bangladesh's agricultural economy. Increased ease of access to groundwater fundamentally benefited the livelihoods of millions of rural poor. Over the last three decades, the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) attempted to introduce policies to monitor and regulate (ground) water resources, though practical and sustainable solutions have proven elusive. Addressing groundwater depletion and contamination requires a multifaceted approach involving legal reforms, international cooperation, community engagement, and targeted actions tailored to specific regional challenges like those found in Bangladesh. By implementing these recommendations, countries can work towards ensuring the sustainability of this vital resource.

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Exploring the Nexus between Drug Abuse and Criminal Behavior among Youth in Dhaka City

S M Ashrafuzzaman¹

Abstract: *This study explores the nexus between drug abuse and criminal behavior among youth in Dhaka, focusing on key factors contributing to these issues, the types of crimes associated with drug use, and the impact on community safety and social stability. The primary objectives were to investigate the socio-economic conditions, peer pressure, and family background as contributors to youth drug abuse; to examine the types of crimes linked to drug use, such as theft, robbery, and trafficking; and to assess the impact of drug abuse on community safety and family life. Additionally, the study aimed to propose effective strategies and policy reforms for intervention.*

The study employed a qualitative research design, incorporating fifteen case studies of youth involved in drug abuse and minor criminal activities, alongside insights from two Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with law enforcement officers, social workers, and community leaders. Data were analyzed thematically to identify key patterns and socio-cultural determinants.

The findings reveal that socio-economic vulnerabilities like poverty, lack of education, and unstable family environments significantly contribute to both drug abuse and criminal behavior. Peer pressure and the absence of positive role models were highlighted as major factors. Common crimes associated with drug abuse include petty theft, snatching, drug peddling, and hijacking. The impact on community safety was significant, with increased fear and insecurity reported, especially among women.

The study recommends several policy reforms, including strengthening early intervention programs, increasing access to rehabilitation and reintegration services, and implementing community-based prevention initiatives. Furthermore, it calls for holistic law enforcement approaches that combine rehabilitation with criminal justice measures, alongside stronger community policing efforts. These findings highlight the need for a multi-faceted, collaborative approach to address the root causes and consequences of drug abuse and crime among youth in Dhaka.

Keywords: Drug Abuse, Criminal Behavior, Youth Intervention, Community Safety, policy reform

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1.1 Background of the Study

The rapid urbanization of Dhaka has led to numerous social challenges, one of which is the growing prevalence of drug abuse and its strong connection to youth criminal behavior. This alarming trend has created a vicious cycle where substance abuse not only leads to criminal activities but also traps young individuals in a state of social and economic instability (Rahman & Karim, 2021). The increasing accessibility of illicit drugs such as yaba, heroin, and cannabis has exacerbated this issue, contributing to rising crime rates in urban communities (Ahmed et al., 2020).

Studies indicate that peer pressure, unemployment, and economic hardship are major contributors to drug abuse among the youth in Dhaka. Many young individuals resort to criminal activities such as theft, robbery, and drug peddling to finance their addiction, reinforcing a cycle of substance dependence and legal troubles (Islam et al., 2022). Furthermore, the lack of effective rehabilitation facilities and social reintegration programs has made it difficult for addicted youth to break free from this destructive cycle (Chowdhury & Hasan, 2019).

The impact of drug-related crimes extends beyond individual users, affecting families, communities, and the overall safety of urban areas. Research highlights that neighborhoods with high rates of drug abuse often experience increased incidents of violent crimes, vandalism, and social unrest (Hossain & Akter, 2023). Law enforcement agencies in Dhaka struggle to curb the rising trend of drug-related offenses due to limited resources and corruption within the system (Rahman, 2020).

Addressing this crisis requires a multi-faceted approach that includes stricter law enforcement, public awareness campaigns, and the establishment of comprehensive rehabilitation centers. Additionally, policymakers must focus on creating economic opportunities and educational programs to divert youth away from drug abuse and criminal activities (Khan & Sultana, 2021). Without immediate intervention, the cycle of drug abuse and crime will continue to deteriorate the social fabric of Dhaka City.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Over the past two decades, Dhaka has witnessed a troubling evolution in youth behavior, marked by an alarming rise in drug abuse and its associated criminal consequences. What began as isolated cases of substance experimentation among urban youth has now escalated into a widespread social crisis with far-reaching implications. Once largely confined to marginalized pockets of the city, drug abuse has permeated all socioeconomic strata, with substances like yaba, heroin, and cannabis becoming distressingly accessible (Rahman & Jahan, 2023).

The gravity of this issue lies not only in the growing number of addicted youth but also in the clear and troubling correlation between substance dependency and criminal behavior. Youth, particularly those facing unemployment and socioeconomic hardship, are increasingly turning to theft, robbery, and drug trafficking to finance their addiction (Islam et al., 2022). This has created a vicious cycle in which drug abuse fuels criminality, and criminality, in turn, reinforces dependency undermining both individual well-being and community safety (Khan et al., 2021).

Despite periodic government crackdowns and interventions, efforts to curb this dual menace have been largely ineffective. Systemic corruption, inadequate law enforcement capacity, and the chronic underfunding of rehabilitation and mental health services have hindered progress (Ahmed & Sultana, 2023). Furthermore, punitive approaches to drug-related offenses have proven counterproductive. Many young offenders, upon completing their sentences, reenter society without support structures, only to relapse into addiction and crime (Hossain et al., 2022).

The societal response has also been fraught with challenges. Former drug users frequently face stigma and exclusion, denying them access to employment, education, and social acceptance. This marginalization not only perpetuates their isolation but also reinforces the very cycle that society seeks to break (Chowdhury & Alam, 2023).

Today, the crisis of drug abuse among Dhaka's youth is no longer a fringe concern it is a deeply entrenched problem threatening the fabric of urban life. Its unchecked expansion has contributed to social instability, weakened public trust in institutions, and eroded prospects for sustainable youth development. Given the historical progression and the mounting scale of the crisis, there is a pressing need for a multifaceted and forward-thinking response.

This study, therefore, aims to explore the root causes and evolving patterns of drug abuse among Dhaka's youth, investigate its direct and indirect links to criminal behavior, and assess the broader social implications. Understanding these dynamics is essential to formulating effective policy responses, building community resilience, and ultimately safeguarding the future of an entire generation.

1.3 Rationale of the Study

Drug abuse and its connection to criminal behavior among youth in Dhaka have become pressing concerns, affecting individuals, families, and society at large. The increasing involvement of young people in drug-related crimes highlights a critical need for in-depth research to understand the root causes and consequences of this issue (Rahman & Hossain, 2022). Without timely

intervention, the situation has likely deteriorated, leading to higher crime rates, economic burdens, and social instability (Islam et al., 2023).

This study is significant as it sheds light on the socio-economic, psychological, and environmental factors contributing to drug abuse among Dhaka's youth. Many existing policies focus primarily on law enforcement but overlook the importance of prevention, rehabilitation, and social reintegration (Chowdhury & Alam, 2022).

Furthermore, understanding the link between substance abuse and youth crime is crucial for policymakers, law enforcement agencies, and social workers to develop holistic solutions. This study has contributed to existing literature by providing empirical evidence on how drug abuse fuels criminal activities and the broader implications for community safety and public health (Khan et al., 2021). Additionally, it has emphasized the need for multi-sectoral collaboration, involving the government, NGOs, and local communities, to break the vicious cycle of addiction and crime (Ahmed & Sultana, 2023).

This study is justified as it deepens understanding of youth drug abuse and crime in Dhaka, raises public and policy concern, and fills critical knowledge gaps. It creates a foundation for future research and informs evidence-based policy recommendations for prevention, rehabilitation, and social reintegration strategies.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

1.4.1 Main Objective

The primary objective of this study is to investigate the relationship between drug abuse and criminal behavior among youth in Dhaka. The study aims to explore the underlying causes, consequences, and potential solutions to break the cycle of addiction and crime.

1.4.2 Specific Objectives

The specific objectives with its indicators and respondents are shown in the following table-

Table 01: Indicators and Respondents against Objectives

Objectives	Indicators	Respondents (Cases and FGDs)
Investigate key factors contributing to youth drug abuse in Dhaka	- Socio-economic status of drug users - Influence of peer pressure - Family background and parental supervision	- Youth involved in substance abuse - Social workers - Parents/guardians - Psychologists

Examine crimes linked to drug abuse	- Prevalence of drug-related crimes - Types of offenses (theft, robbery, drug trafficking, violence) - Criminal records and patterns	- Youth involved in criminal activities - Law enforcement officers - Mass Media Reporters - Former drug users
Evaluate impact of drug abuse and Criminal Activities	-Community perceptions of safety - Social and economic consequences - Family Crisis	- Youth involved in criminal activities and drag addicted - Community members - Local government representatives
Recommend strategies and policy reforms	- Effectiveness of current intervention strategies -Feasibility of rehabilitation and reintegration programs - Community-based prevention initiatives - Active and proper action of Low Enforcing Agency	- Policy experts - Rehabilitation center staff - University Faculties - Youth organizations - Community Members

This study aims to provide valuable insights that can help policymakers, law enforcement agencies, social workers, and community leaders develop more effective approaches to combat drug abuse and youth crime in Dhaka.

1.5 Methodology of the Study

This study has employed a qualitative research approach, applied case studies and focused group discussions (FGDs) to explore the relationship between drug abuse and criminal behavior among youth in Dhaka, specifically in the Mohammadpur and Jatrabari areas. The qualitative method allows for an in-depth understanding of the experiences, motivations, and social contexts of individuals involved in substance abuse and related crimes.

1.5.1 Main Method of the Study

This research employs a case study approach to gather in-depth insights from individuals affected by drug abuse and related criminal activities. The case study method enables a comprehensive understanding of personal experiences, behavioral patterns, and the complex social dynamics surrounding drug dependency and its impact on communities.

1.5.2 Study Location

The study has been conducted in Mohammadpur specifically at Dhaka Udyan, Basila Bridge Geneva Camp and Jatrabari specifically at Shonir Akhra and Kutubkhali of Dhaka City, known for diverse socio-economic conditions, which makes it a relevant setting for investigating youth drug abuse and crime-related issues. The selection of Mohammadpur and Jatrabari allowed for an analysis of both urban and marginalized youth populations affected by this crisis.

1.5.3 Sampling Procedure and Sample Size

A purposive sampling technique has been used to select participants who have firsthand experience or knowledge related to drug abuse and criminal behavior. The study has included fifteen case studies participants, comprising individuals with a history of drug abuse and criminal activities and 2 FGDs at Mohammadpur and Jatrabari, each consisting of 6-8 participants, including local community members, law enforcement officials, family members of affected individuals, social workers, and rehabilitation experts. 8 cases have been studied from Mohammadpur and 7 cases from Jatrabari area.

1.5.4. Data Collection Techniques and Tools

Data has been collected through face-to-face interview by using open ended interview guides for case study and FGDs guide for focus group discussions (FGDs) using open-ended questions. The tools for data collection include:

- Interview Guides: Designed to gather personal experiences, causes of drug abuse, and crime involvement from case study participants.
- FGD Questionnaires: Used to explore community perceptions, policy effectiveness, and social interventions related to youth drug abuse and crime.
- Observation Notes: Researchers has document behavioral patterns and environmental factors observed during field visits.

1.5.5. Data Sources

The study has relied on **primary data sources**, including drug users and former offenders, who has been selected for case studies to provide firsthand insights into their experiences with substance abuse and crime. Additionally, focus group discussions (FGDs) has been conducted with community members, law enforcement officials, and social workers to explore broader societal perspectives on the issue. To ensure a comprehensive understanding, **secondary data sources** has also been utilized.

1.5.6 Data Analysis and Presentation

The collected qualitative data has been analyzed using thematic analysis, where recurring patterns and key themes has been identified from case studies and focus group discussions (FGDs). The data has first be transcribed, followed by systematic coding to categorize major themes related to the causes of drug abuse, its link to criminal activities, and its broader social impact. Emerging insights has been interpreted within the socio-economic and policy context of Dhaka to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the issue.

For data presentation, findings have been organized in narrative form, supported by direct quotes from participants to capture personal experiences and community perspectives. Additionally, qualitative tables and thematic matrices has be used to structure key insights, making it easier to compare different viewpoints. The study has emphasized descriptive analysis to highlight the lived realities of youth affected by drug abuse and crime while ensuring clarity and coherence in reporting.

1.5.7 Data Validity and Reliability

To ensure the validity and reliability of the data collected in this study, several steps has been taken to uphold the credibility and consistency of the research findings:

Content Validity: The interview guides and focus group discussion (FGD) questionnaires has been designed based on extensive literature review and expert input from social workers, law enforcement officials, and researchers specializing in drug abuse and crime. This ensures that the questions address relevant and critical issues surrounding the topic.

Triangulation: Multiple data sources has been used, including case studies, FGDs, and secondary data (government reports, research articles, etc.), which has help cross-check the findings and validate the results. Triangulation allows for a more comprehensive understanding and strengthens the credibility of the study.

Peer Review: The study design, data collection instruments, and analysis techniques has been reviewed by peers or experts in the field to ensure that the methods are appropriate and unbiased.

1.5.8. Ethical Considerations

To ensure ethical research practices, the study has adhered to the following guidelines:

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- a) **Informed Consent:** Participants has been briefed about the study's purpose, and their voluntary consent has been obtained before participation.
 - b) **Confidentiality and Anonymity:** Personal identities of participants has been kept confidential, and pseudonyms has been used in reporting findings.
 - c) **Non-Coercion:** Participation has been entirely voluntary, and no one has been forced or pressured to provide information.
 - d) **Approval from Relevant Authorities:** Necessary permissions has been obtained from local authorities and relevant institutions before data collection.
 - e) **Protection from Harm:** Researchers has ensured that discussions on sensitive topics do not cause emotional distress to participants, and appropriate support referrals has been available if needed.

1.6 Findings of the Study

1.6.1 Basic Information and Analysis of Cases

Drug abuse is deeply intertwined with economic hardship, lack of education, and peer influence. Early intervention programs, educational support, and community-based rehabilitation are crucial to breaking the cycle of youth addiction and crime.

Table 2: Profile of Drug-Addicted Youth Involved in Criminal Activities

Case No.	Case Type	Age	Educational Status	Socio-Economic Status
1	Kishore Gang Member	16	School Dropout	Lower-Middle Class
2	Hijacking	19	College Dropout	Lower Class
3	Petty Theft	17	College Dropout	Slum Dweller
4	Snatching	17	Grate 10 Students	Lower-Middle Class
5	Drug Peddling	20	Did not Admitted at University	Lower Class
6	Mugging	15	School Dropout	Lower Class
7	Kishore Gang Member	15	School Dropout	Poor Family
8	Pickpocketing	16	School Dropout	Slum Dweller

9	Hijacking	18	School Dropout	Lower-Middle Class
10	Petty Theft	19	Technical School Dropout	Lower Class
11	Drug Courier	16	Garde 9 Students	Lower Class
12	Snatching	16	Madrasa Dropout	Slum Dweller
13	Mugging	20	Suspended from School	Poor Family
14	Pickpocketing	15	School Dropout	Street Child
15	Drug Peddling	19	College Dropout (HSC 1st Year)	Lower-Middle Class
Note: Age of youth for this study was fixed in the range of 15-22				

The table presents an overview of 15 drug-addicted youth involved in small-scale criminal activities in Dhaka. It highlights key aspects such as case type, age, educational status, and socio-economic background, providing a basis for understanding the nexus between drug abuse and youth crime. This analysis is supported by secondary literature, demonstrating how socio-economic conditions, education, and peer influence shape criminal behaviors among youth.

A. Age and Youth Vulnerability to Crime

The study focuses on youth aged 15 to 22 years, consistent with both global research and the National Youth Policy of Bangladesh, which defines youth as individuals aged 18 to 35, with particular attention to those in the transitional phase of adolescence. The study define operationally youth 15-22 for drag abuse perspective and international studies indicate that late adolescence and early adulthood are critical periods for the onset of criminal behavior (Moffitt, 1993). During this stage, risk-taking tendencies are heightened due to psychological and social influences, especially among youth experiencing economic hardship, inadequate education, and weak family structures (Farrington, 2005). Urban environments with easy access to illicit substances further increase vulnerability. Research shows that many juvenile offenders begin engaging in criminal activities between the ages of 15 and 20 (Blumstein et al., 1986). Aligning with the policy’s emphasis on youth empowerment and social protection, this study underscores the urgent need for targeted interventions during this high-risk agewindow. Khan, Chowdhury, and Alam (2021) analyze the legal and social responses to youth drug abuse, stressing gaps in enforcement and rehabilitation services. Ahmed and Sultana (2023) focus on the challenges faced by law enforcement in Dhaka, citing corruption and resource shortages as major barriers to effectively controlling drug-related crimes.

B. Education and Criminal Engagement

The table reveals that a significant proportion of these individuals are school or college dropouts, supporting findings that low educational attainment is a major risk factor for youth criminality (Lochner, 2011). Education provides critical cognitive and social skills that deter delinquent behavior, while school dropout increases vulnerability to substance abuse and crime (Hirschi, 1969). Notably: 11 out of 15 cases are school dropouts, which aligns with research indicating that school disengagement is a precursor to criminal involvement (Rumberger & Lim, 2008). Three individuals were expelled or suspended, reinforcing the link between disciplinary issues, social alienation, and criminal behavior (Sweeten, 2006). One case involves a madrasa dropout, indicating that different educational backgrounds may still lead to similar criminal outcomes if social and economic pressures persist. For Structural Inequality, students from religious or formal educational institutions, like madrasas, are vulnerable if they live in poverty, face unemployment, or lack access to social support. These structural issues often override the stabilizing influence of education. Social Exclusion and Limited Opportunities of Madrasa students, in particular, may face marginalization in the mainstream job market due to limited vocational training or recognition of their qualifications, pushing them toward frustration, isolation, or illicit activities.

C. Socio-Economic Status and Crime Participation

Most cases belong to lower-class or slum-dwelling backgrounds, reaffirming theories that link economic deprivation to criminal behavior (Wilson, 1987). Key observations include:

Slum dwellers and street children (cases 3, 8, 12, and 14) often turn to crime due to lack of economic opportunities and social security, consistent with findings that slum areas have higher rates of juvenile crime (Shaw & McKay, 1942). Lower-middle-class youth (cases 1, 4, 9, and 15) are also involved, showing that while extreme poverty is a significant factor, exposure to delinquent peers and family instability can lead even relatively stable youth into crime (Agnew, 1992).

D. Crime Types and Drug Involvement

Youth involved in gang activities, mugging, hijacking, and pickpocketing are often linked to drug abuse. Empirical studies confirm that substance abuse increases the likelihood of violent and acquisitive crimes (Felson & Staff, 2017). Specific patterns in the table indicate:

Kishore gang members (cases 1 and 7) engage in organized youth violence, a growing concern in urban Bangladesh. Studies suggest that gang culture thrives

on peer influence, economic gain, and drug trade involvement (Klein & Maxson, 2006). Hijacking, snatching, and mugging cases (cases 2, 4, 6, 9, and 13) align with literature indicating that drug-addicted youth often commit violent crimes to finance their substance use (Goldstein, 1985). Petty theft and pickpocketing cases (cases 3, 8, 10, and 14) demonstrate that minor offenses are often early indicators of chronic criminal behavior, following Moffitt's (1993) theory of life-course persistent offenders.

E. Drug Peddling and Criminal Exploitation

Three cases (5, 11, and 15) involve youth engaged in drug trafficking, consistent with research showing that drug dependency can push young individuals into the supply chain (UNODC, 2021). Criminal organizations often recruit vulnerable youth to serve as couriers, exposing them to greater risks of long-term criminality (Bourgois, 2003).

The table provides empirical support for the theory that drug abuse and socio-economic vulnerabilities create a cyclical relationship with youth crime.

1.6.2 Key-factor Contributing Drug Abuse to Youth

This section presents a descriptive analysis of the findings from 15 case studies and two Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) conducted for the study. The analysis is structured around the key research objective: Investigating the key factors contributing to youth drug abuse in Dhaka, focusing on socio-economic status, peer influence, and family background/parental supervision.

A) Socio-Economic Status of Drug Users

The study reveals a strong correlation between low socio-economic status and youth drug abuse. Among the 15 cases, most individuals belong to lower-class families or slum areas, with limited access to education, employment, or social mobility. Key findings include:

Economic Hardship as a Driving Force: This study found 9 out of 15 cases involved youth from lower-class backgrounds, often struggling with financial instability. Many participants reported using drugs as an escape from stress, poverty, or joblessness. Several cases (e.g., cases 5, 10, and 15) indicate involvement in drug peddling or courier activities to earn money for survival. The FGDs highlighted that youth from economically disadvantaged areas have limited recreational activities, making them more prone to drug use.

Slum Dwellers and Street Youth at High Risk: This study reveals that 4 cases (3, 8, 12, and 14) were individuals living in urban slums or as street children, where

drug availability is high, and social support is minimal. FGD participants from slum areas pointed out that drug dealers often target homeless or vulnerable youth, exploiting them for drug sales or criminal activities. Many young drug users in slums started with cheaper substances (glue, cannabis, baba) before progressing to harder drugs.

Lower-Middle-Class Youth Also Affected: While poverty is a dominant factor, four cases (1, 4, 9, and 15) belonged to lower-middle-class families, indicating that economic status alone does not explain drug addiction. These individuals reported emotional distress, lack of parental attention, and peer influence as stronger triggers than financial struggles.

About this factor case 5 said,

“I never planned to sell drugs, but what choice did I have? My father was a rickshaw puller, barely earning enough to feed us. I dropped out of college because we couldn’t afford the fees. A friend introduced me to a dealer who offered me easy money for delivering packages. At first, I didn’t even know what was inside. But soon, I realized it was drugs—Yaba, mostly. By then, I was already using it myself. The money was good, and I could afford things I never had before. But after a year, I got caught. My mother cried every night, but what could I do? When you’re poor in this city, you either struggle every day or take shortcuts.”

-Case 5 (Drug Peddling, Age 21, Lower-Class Background):

B) Influence of Peer Pressure

Peer influence emerged as one of the most significant contributors to drug abuse among the youth in this study. Findings indicate that:

Peer Pressure is the Initial Gateway to Drug Use: 11 out of 15 cases admitted that they were first introduced to drugs by friends, gang members, or schoolmates. Kishore gang members (cases 1 and 7) highlighted that gang culture normalizes drug consumption as a way to prove loyalty and gain social status. FGD participants described how group dynamics encourage substance use:

“If you don’t take it, you’re considered weak or an outsider. Everyone around me was doing it, so I thought it was normal.”

Rahman and Jahan (2023) highlight that socio-economic hardships significantly drive drug abuse and criminal behavior among urban youth in Bangladesh, emphasizing the need for integrated social interventions. Similarly, Islam, Ahmed, and Hossain (2022) identify unemployment and peer influence as critical factors exacerbating substance abuse among Dhaka’s youth.

Transition from Experimentation to Addiction: Several participants initially used drugs for fun or excitement but later became dependent due to continuous

exposure in their peer circles. Case 6 (mugging) and Case 9 (hijacking) started using drugs only for recreation with friends but later engaged in criminal activities to sustain their addiction. FGD respondents explained that peer groups often introduce drugs as a means of '*stress relief*' or a way to escape personal problems.

Gang Involvement and Drug Use: Kishore gang members (cases 1 and 7) reported that gangs actively recruit members through drug initiation rituals. Gang leaders provide free drugs initially, later demanding money or participation in crimes to continue access. FGDs with social workers confirmed that gang-affiliated youth are at a much higher risk of long-term drug dependency.

About this factor one case said,

"I was only 13 when I started hanging out with older boys in my neighborhood. They were always having fun—riding bikes, wearing nice clothes, and spending money like kings. I wanted to be like them. One day, they handed me a Yaba pill and said, 'Take this, bro. It'll make you fearless.' I hesitated, but I didn't want to look weak. From that day, I was part of the gang. We started with small thefts, then snatching phones, and soon, we were involved in fights. I became addicted so fast I didn't even realize it. My mother begged me to stop, but my gang was my family. Once you're in, getting out is not easy."

- Case 7 (Kishore Gang Member, Age 15, School Dropout, Poor Family)

C) Family Background and Parental Supervision

The role of family structure and parental supervision was another crucial factor affecting drug use among youth. This may be depicted from the following way-

Lack of Parental Supervision and Family Dysfunction Increases Risk: This study found 10 out of 15 cases came from families with absent or negligent parental figures. Several cases (2, 5, and 13) involved youth from single-parent households or homes with domestic violence, where emotional distress contributed to drug use. FGD participants mentioned that parents working long hours or migrating for jobs led to a lack of supervision, allowing youth to be influenced by negative external factors.

Parental Drug Use and Family Criminality as Risk Factors: Case 12 (madrasa dropout) and case 14 (street child) had parents or close relatives involved in drug use or criminal activities, showing an intergenerational cycle of substance abuse. FGDs with former drug users revealed that children of addicts are more likely to start using substances themselves due to normalization of drug culture at home.

Strict, Authoritarian Parenting Can Backfire: Some cases (e.g., case 4, a Grade 10 student from a lower-middle-class family) reported extreme parental control and pressure, which led to rebellion and secret drug use. FGD

respondents suggested that overly strict parenting without emotional support can push teenagers towards peer groups that encourage substance abuse.

Broken Homes and Neglect as a Trigger for Drug Use: Several cases (cases 3, 6, and 10) had histories of parental separation, loss of a parent, or child neglect, which contributed to psychological distress and drug dependency. FGDs with rehabilitation center staff emphasized that emotional detachment and unresolved trauma were common among young addicts.

Table 03: Summary of Findings about Key Factors

Key Factor	Main Findings from Case Studies & FGDs
Socio-Economic Status	Majority of drug users came from lower-class and slum backgrounds; financial struggles and lack of employment drive involvement in drug-related crimes.
Peer Influence	Most cases (11 out of 15) were introduced to drugs by friends, schoolmates, or gang members; gangs actively use drugs to recruit and control members.
Family Background & Parental Supervision	Lack of parental supervision, domestic violence, and family drug use were major risk factors; strict or absent parenting contributed to youth seeking emotional support in peer groups.

1.6.3 Crimes Linked to Drug Abuse

This section presents a descriptive analysis of the crimes associated with drug abuse among youth in Dhaka, based on findings from two Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and case studies. The study highlights how substance abuse escalates into various forms of criminal activities, including petty theft, mugging, snatching, hijacking, and drug trafficking. These findings are supported by existing literature to validate the observed patterns.

Crimes Commonly Linked to Drug Abuse

The FGDs, conducted with law enforcement officers, social workers, and former drug users, revealed a strong nexus between drug addiction and criminal behavior. Findings indicate that youth involved in drug abuse are often drawn into crimes due to:

- a) The need to sustain addiction (financial motivation)
- b) Peer group influence and gang affiliations
- c) Psychological effects of substance abuse, leading to impulsive or violent behavior

A. Petty Theft and Snatching

According to a sub-inspector from Dhaka Metropolitan Police (Mohammadpur Thana), most drug-addicted youth start with petty crimes such as mobile snatching or shoplifting:

“We see the same pattern over and over again. A teenager gets hooked on Yaba or heroin, spends all their money, and when they can’t afford it anymore, they start stealing. First, it’s from their own home—money, jewelry, mobile phones. Then they move to the streets, snatching from strangers. Most of these offenders we arrest are addicted.”

Case 3: Petty Theft (Age 17, College Dropout, Slum Dweller) discussed that

“I never imagined I would steal. But once I got addicted, I couldn’t help it. I stole my mother’s earrings first. Then I started lifting mobile phones from shop counters. One day, I got caught while trying to snatch a wallet. The police beat me up and let me go, but I kept doing it. What else could I do? I needed the money for drugs.”

This finding aligns with Galea and Vlahov (2002), who argue that economic pressure from drug dependence pushes addicts toward financially motivated crimes, particularly in urban areas.

B. Hijacking and Mugging

Both FGDs emphasized that hijacking and mugging are closely linked to drug addiction. One senior police officer stated that the rise in street muggings is directly connected to drug addiction. Young offenders usually operate in groups, cornering people at night. Police caught many addicts red-handed, some even carrying weapons. They use the stolen money to buy their next fix.

Case 6: Mugging (Age 15, School Dropout, Lower-Class Background) expressed that:

“I was high when we planned to snatch a woman’s purse. She resisted, and my friend pushed her. She fell and got hurt badly. We ran, but the police caught us. That was my first time in jail. But when I got out, I started again. I needed the money, and mugging was easy.”

Research by Goldstein (1985) on the “Economic-Compulsive Model” supports this, suggesting that drug users engage in violent offenses when economic opportunities are limited, and the urgency to sustain addiction is high.

C. Drug Peddling and Courieriering

Drug peddling is another common crime among addicted youth. Many starts as users and later become sellers to support their addiction. A social worker from the FGD-02 noted:

“Drug dealers target addicted youth because they are easy to manipulate. They start as couriers, moving small packages. Later, they get involved in selling to earn commission or free drugs. These kids don’t even realize they’re just pawns in a bigger game.”

Case 5: Drug Peddling (Age 21, Lower-Class Background) said in this regard,

“I was already using drugs when an older guy told me I could make easy money delivering ‘packets.’ At first, I didn’t care what was inside. But when I found out it was Yaba, I didn’t stop. The money was good, and I could use for free. Eventually, I started selling it myself.”

This finding corresponds with research by UNODC (2021), which reports that young drug users in urban areas are frequently recruited by larger drug networks to facilitate street-level distribution.

D. Violent Offenses and Gang Involvement

The FGDs also highlighted that drug addiction leads to violent offenses, often in connection with gang activity. A sub-inspector specializing in juvenile crimes stated:

“Many of these young drug addicts join gangs, where violence is part of daily life. They engage in street fights, robbery, and even murder in some cases. Under the influence of drugs, their aggression increases, and they lose control over their actions.”

Case 1: Kishore Gang Member (Age 16, School Dropout, Lower-Middle-Class Background) said,

“My gang controlled a neighborhood. We protected our area, but that meant fighting against rival gangs. When we were high, we felt unstoppable. We carried knives, sometimes even guns. I was arrested after we attacked another group over a drug dispute.”

This aligns with Jacques and Wright (2015), who found that gang-affiliated drug users are more likely to engage in violent crimes due to territorial disputes and the psychological effects of substance abuse.

1.6.4 Impact of Drug Abuse and Criminal Activities

Drug abuse and criminal activities have far-reaching consequences, affecting not only the individuals involved but also families, communities, and the broader socio-economic landscape. This section examines the impact under three key dimensions: community perceptions of safety, social and economic consequences, and family crises, with support from secondary literature and research findings.

A. Community Perceptions of Safety

Rising Fear and Insecurity: One of the most immediate consequences of drug-related crimes is the sense of fear and insecurity among community members. As crimes such as snatching, mugging, hijacking, and drug trafficking increase, residents begin to feel unsafe in public spaces.

“People are afraid of walking alone at night. We hear about young boys some as young as 14 robbing people at knifepoint just to buy drugs.”

A community leader from a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) shared:

“We arrest the same people multiple times. They serve a short sentence, come back, and continue committing crimes. The root problem drug addiction—is never fully addressed, and the cycle repeats.”

A girl who participated in the FGD, expressing her fear and insecurity about public safety in Bosila, Mohammadpur:

“I feel scared every time I need to go outside after dark. Even walking home from tutoring classes feels unsafe because there are always groups of boys hanging around, some of them clearly high on drugs. They stare, follow, and sometimes even pass comments. My parents warn me not to stay out late, but even during the day, I don’t feel completely safe. In Bosila, we often hear about snatching and harassment, and the police don’t seem to do much about it.”

This aligns with Garner and Visser (2003), who found that neighborhoods with high drug-related crime rates experience a breakdown of community trust, reduced social interactions, and increased fear among residents.

Impact on Local Businesses: Shopkeepers and street vendors are particularly vulnerable to petty theft and extortion by addicted youth and local gangs. Some business owners have reported declining foot traffic, as customers fear becoming victims of snatching or mugging.

According to Sampson, Raudenbush, and Earls (1997), when communities lose a sense of safety, social cohesion deteriorates, and economic activity slows down, further deepening urban poverty.

Law Enforcement Challenges: Police officers involved in the FGDs highlighted that repeat offenders often addicted youth pose a major challenge to maintaining public safety:

This pattern is supported by Goldstein’s (1985) “Systemic Model of Drug-Related Crime”, which explains that drug abuse fosters an ongoing cycle of criminal behavior, making law enforcement efforts ineffective without proper rehabilitation programs.

B. Social and Economic Consequences

Increased Healthcare and Law Enforcement Costs: Drug addiction places a heavy financial burden on healthcare systems, as hospitals must treat overdoses, withdrawal symptoms, and drug-induced psychosis.

A study by UNODC (2021) found that countries with high drug abuse rates spend up to 1-2% of their GDP on drug-related healthcare and law enforcement costs.

Youth Unemployment and Loss of Productivity: Drug addiction severely impacts educational and employment opportunities for young people. School dropouts and unemployed youth are more likely to engage in drug-related crimes. Businesses are reluctant to hire individuals with criminal records, leading to long-term unemployment.

A World Bank report (2019) on urban crime states that drug-related offenses contribute to a “lost generation” of youth who remain trapped in cycles of addiction, crime, and poverty, reducing overall economic growth potential.

Impact on Urban Development and Investment: Areas with high crime rates experience lower property values, as people prefer to move to safer neighborhoods. Foreign and domestic investors hesitate to invest in crime-ridden areas due to security concerns.

Research by Eck and Maguire (2000) confirms that urban crime discourages investment and slows infrastructure development, creating long-term economic stagnation in affected areas.

C. Family Crisis

Emotional and Psychological Toll on Families: Families of drug-addicted individuals experience constant emotional distress, dealing with financial struggles, social stigma, and legal issues. Parents suffer from mental health disorders such as depression and anxiety due to their child’s involvement in drugs and crime.

A study by Barnard (2005) on families of drug users found that parents often blame themselves, experience social isolation, and face difficulties in maintaining a stable household.

Financial Strain on Households: Drug-addicted individuals often steal money or valuables from their own homes to support their addiction. Families struggle with legal costs, rehabilitation expenses, and loss of income if a working member becomes addicted.

A case from this study (Case 3, Petty Theft, 17 years old) reflects this:

“I stole my mother’s gold chain and sold it for drug money. When she found out, she cried for days. But I couldn’t stop—I needed the drugs.”

Breakdown of Family Structure: Many families abandon addicted children due to repeated offenses. Drug addiction often leads to domestic violence, as tension rises between family members. According to Kopak et al. (2016), families of drug offenders often experience increased domestic conflicts, higher divorce rates, and overall disruption of household stability.

1.7 Policy Recommendations and Intervention Strategies

Based on the study findings, which indicate a strong correlation between drug abuse and criminal behavior among youth in Dhaka, the following strategies and policy reforms are recommended to address the issue effectively. These reforms aim to improve intervention strategies, ensure the feasibility of rehabilitation programs, foster community-based prevention initiatives, and enhance the active role of law enforcement.

1.7.1. Effectiveness of Current Intervention Strategies

Strengthen Early Intervention Programs

- a) Launch school-based programs focusing on drug prevention, life skills development, and peer pressure resistance.
- b) Train teachers and school counselors to identify early signs of drug abuse and provide counseling or refer students to appropriate services.
- c) Integrate drug prevention modules into the curriculum to promote awareness and understanding of the long-term consequences of drug abuse.

Improve Access to Supportive Services

- a) Increase funding and resource allocation for drug rehabilitation centers, particularly in low-income urban areas.
- b) Create outreach programs to ensure individuals in need have access to services, especially for youth in high-risk neighborhoods.
- c) Provide mobile rehabilitation units in communities where accessibility is limited, ensuring continuous support for recovery.

1.7.2. Feasibility of Rehabilitation and Reintegration Programs

Vocational Training and Employment Support

- a) Develop vocational training programs alongside rehabilitation efforts, allowing individuals to learn practical skills such as mechanics, carpentry, or IT services.
- b) Partner with local businesses to offer job placement programs for rehabilitated individuals, helping them reintegrate into society.
- c) Offer financial literacy workshops to help youth manage earnings and avoid financial instability post-rehabilitation.

Family Support Programs

- a) Implement family therapy sessions to help families understand addiction dynamics and develop coping mechanisms.
- b) Educate families on how to set boundaries, support recovery, and prevent relapses within the home environment.
- c) Create community support groups where families of addicts can share experiences and offer mutual support.

1.7.3. Community-Based Prevention Initiatives

Strengthen Community Policing and Engagement

- a) Train community leaders to identify at-risk youth and offer guidance or refer them to local support services.
- b) Develop youth-focused community centers that offer safe spaces for recreational activities, education, and support groups.
- c) Encourage community policing where local officers are trained to develop strong relationships with neighborhoods and act as mentors or advisors to youth.
- d) Promote public awareness campaigns to address the stigma around drug addiction and promote community solidarity.

Peer-Led Prevention Programs

- a) Peer influence is a significant driver of drug abuse among youth. Utilizing peer-led programs can reduce stigma and make prevention messages more relatable.
- b) Recommendations:
- c) Train young leaders who have recovered from addiction to mentor at-risk youth and lead drug prevention workshops.
- d) Create youth-led campaigns that promote positive lifestyles and discourage drug use, empowering young people to take ownership of their community's well-being.

1.7.4. Active and Proper Action of Law Enforcement Agencies

Shift Towards a Holistic Approach

- a) Integrate rehabilitation programs within the criminal justice system, so that youth offenders receive the support they need for addiction recovery rather than solely facing punishment.
- b) Decriminalize low-level drug offenses, and focus on rehabilitative measures instead of incarceration, particularly for first-time offenders.
- c) Ensure that youth who have committed drug-related offenses are placed in diversion programs, where they can receive counseling, education, and community service rather than facing jail time.

Strengthen Police Training and Accountability

- a) Conduct regular training sessions for police officers on effective communication and de-escalation techniques when dealing with drug users, especially minors.
- b) Encourage law enforcement agencies to work closely with social services to coordinate efforts for the rehabilitation of youth involved in criminal activities related to drug abuse.
- c) Create a transparent accountability system within the police force to prevent abuse of power, ensuring fair treatment for those caught in the cycle of addiction and criminal behavior.

1.7.5. Long-Term Policy Reforms for Drug Abuse Prevention

Nationwide Policy on Drug Education

Implement nationwide drug education programs that promote awareness about the risks of drug use and its link to crime.

- a) Encourage partnerships between government agencies, NGOs, and community organizations to build a unified front against drug abuse.
- b) Develop a national database of drug offenders, addiction support programs, and rehabilitation success stories to track progress and identify areas that need further intervention.

Increased Government Funding for Drug Abuse Prevention

- a) Allocate specific budgets for drug-related crimes, rehabilitation, and community awareness initiatives at the national and local levels.
- b) Encourage public-private partnerships to expand resources and improve service delivery for youth at risk of drug abuse.

1.8 Concluding Remarks

This study explores the deep connection between drug abuse and criminal behavior among youth in Dhaka, revealing multiple underlying causes. By analyzing 15 case studies and conducting two Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), it became clear that youth especially those from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds face heightened risks due to poverty, unstable family environments, and lack of positive role models. These factors contribute to cycles of addiction and crime that are difficult to escape.

The consequences of this crisis extend beyond individuals to affect entire communities through increased insecurity, strained family relations, and economic losses. This highlights the urgent need for comprehensive strategies addressing not only drug use and crime but also their root causes through prevention, rehabilitation, and social reintegration.

Key gaps identified include insufficient community-based prevention programs, limited access to rehabilitation, and a fragmented law enforcement approach. The study emphasizes prioritizing youth-specific initiatives that combine drug prevention, mental health support, and vocational training. Additionally, it calls for reforming law enforcement through community policing and training that understands addiction's socio-economic dimensions, alongside a shift toward rehabilitative justice in the criminal system.

In conclusion, effectively tackling youth drug abuse and crime in Dhaka demands coordinated efforts across government, law enforcement, healthcare, and communities. Sustainable interventions and supportive policies must empower youth with opportunities and resources to break free from destructive cycles. Only through such integrated, long-term approaches can Dhaka hope to build a safer, healthier future for its young population.

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An Investigation into Gender-Based Social Victimization in Rural Bangladesh: Causes and Long-Term Impacts

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Abstract: This study investigates the causes and long-term impacts of social victimization of women in rural Bangladesh, focusing on gender-based violence and social marginalization. It explores various forms of victimization, including domestic abuse, dowry-related violence, discrimination in workplaces, and societal stigma, particularly in the context of rural settings. Through an in-depth analysis of fifteen case studies and two focus group discussions, this study identifies the contributing factors to social victimization, such as deeply ingrained patriarchal norms, lack of legal protections, and cultural practices that perpetuate violence. The research also examines the personal and social repercussions faced by victims, including psychological trauma, social isolation, and economic dependency.

Furthermore, the study highlights the challenges in providing adequate support and intervention services for victims in rural communities. These include insufficient awareness, lack of legal reforms, and poor coordination between government and non-governmental organizations. In response, the study proposes several policy recommendations, such as the development of awareness programs, the strengthening of institutional support systems, and the introduction of gender-sensitive legal reforms.

The findings suggest that a comprehensive approach, involving legal, social, and economic interventions, is essential to mitigate social victimization in rural Bangladesh. This study aims to contribute to the growing body of literature on gender-based violence and social victimization, providing valuable insights for policymakers, researchers, and practitioners working toward improving the well-being and rights of women in rural communities.

Keywords: social victimization, gender-based violence, domestic violence, social stigma, legal reforms, victim support, victim rights

1.1 Background of the Study

Gender-based social victimization remains a pressing issue in rural Bangladesh, where entrenched patriarchal norms, economic instability, and inadequate legal enforcement contribute to systemic discrimination against women (Chowdhury, 2020). Women in these communities frequently face various forms of social victimization, including domestic violence, child marriage, dowry-related abuse,

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and restricted access to education and employment (Haque & Islam, 2021). The persistence of these challenges is often linked to socio-cultural traditions that reinforce gender inequality and limit women's autonomy (Jahan, 2019).

One of the primary causes of gender-based victimization is economic dependency. Many rural women lack financial independence, making them vulnerable to exploitation and oppression within their families and communities (Kabeer, 2018). Additionally, inadequate access to justice, legal illiteracy, and social stigma prevents victims from reporting abuses, perpetuating a cycle of silence and suffering (Rahman, 2022). Studies indicate that lower literacy rates among women further exacerbate their vulnerability, as education plays a crucial role in raising awareness of legal rights and gender equality (Begum & Hossain, 2020).

The long-term impact of gender-based social victimization extends beyond individual suffering, affecting entire communities and the nation's socio-economic progress. Women facing social victimization often experience severe psychological distress, including depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder, which significantly hinder their social and economic participation (Akter & Sultana, 2023). Furthermore, gender-based violence and discrimination reduce women's labor force participation, limiting their contribution to economic development and reinforcing intergenerational cycles of poverty (Nasrin & Uddin, 2021). Addressing these issues requires a multifaceted approach, including legal reforms, women's empowerment programs, and awareness campaigns that challenge deep-seated gender norms (Ahmed, 2017).

This study mainly investigated the socio-economic and historical causes of social victimization that is very different from criminal victimization. The impact of social victimization is mainly long time in nature effected groups are mainly marginalized groups, minorities, economically disadvantaged people. To find victim people from those group this study focused rural area of Bangladesh.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Gender-based social victimization in rural Bangladesh remains a deeply rooted issue, affecting women across various socio-economic backgrounds. Despite national and international efforts to promote gender equality, women in rural areas continue to suffer from discrimination, violence, and social injustices due to entrenched patriarchal structures and cultural malpractices (Chowdhury, 2020). One of the most significant challenges faced by victims is the lack of awareness about their rights, legal protections, and available support services, leaving them vulnerable to continuous abuse and exploitation (Haque & Islam, 2021).

The male-dominated society in rural Bangladesh reinforces women's subordination, making it difficult for them to voice their grievances or seek

justice (Kabeer, 2018). Women who attempt to challenge their oppression often face low social support and weak family backing, which prevents them from resisting violence and discrimination effectively (Begum & Hossain, 2020). The lack of fair treatment within families further exacerbates victimization, as many women are denied decision-making power and are forced into subservient roles, making them more susceptible to social abuse (Jahan, 2019).

Cultural and historical malpractices, such as dowry, early marriage, and restrictions on women's mobility, continue to suppress female autonomy (Nasrin & Uddin, 2021). Social stigma associated with victimization is another major barrier, as women who report abuse often face blame rather than support, reinforcing their silence and suffering (Ahmed, 2017). The discriminatory attitudes of family elders and community leaders further prevent justice, as they often prioritize family reputation over women's well-being, discouraging legal action against perpetrators (Rahman, 2022).

Another critical issue is the lack of institutional services and support for victims in rural areas. Women who seek protection or legal assistance often encounter bureaucratic delays, unsympathetic law enforcement officers, and an absence of gender-sensitive intervention programs (Akter & Sultana, 2023). Consequently, many cases of domestic violence, workplace harassment, and social victimization remain unreported to law enforcement agencies and mass media due to fear of damaging family reputation, conjugal breakup, or social ostracization (Rahman, 2022). Victims who are employed face additional challenges, as reporting abuse at the workplace may result in job loss, demotion, or further victimization (Chowdhury, 2020).

The failure to address these structural and cultural barriers results in a persistent cycle of victimization that not only harms individual women but also weakens the broader socio-economic fabric of rural Bangladesh. This study aims to critically examine the underlying causes of social victimization, the limitations of existing prevention interventions, and the barriers that prevent victims from seeking justice. By identifying these challenges, this research seeks to provide actionable recommendations to improve institutional support, raise awareness, and develop culturally sensitive interventions that empower women and promote social justice.

1.3 Rationale of the Study

The issue of social victimization of women in rural Bangladesh remains largely overlooked compared to criminal victimization, which is more commonly reported and acknowledged within communities. While crimes such as theft, assault, and murder receive attention from law enforcement and the public, social victimization manifested through gender discrimination, family oppression, workplace

harassment, and cultural stigmatization often goes unnoticed and unaddressed (Chowdhury, 2020). This gap in awareness and intervention necessitates a comprehensive study to highlight the severity and long-term consequences of social victimization.

This research is significant because it has generated new knowledge on the nature, causes, and impacts of social victimization, particularly in rural areas where cultural norms and patriarchal values play a crucial role in reinforcing gender inequality (Haque & Islam, 2021). By examining these socio-cultural dynamics, the study aims to raise awareness among all relevant stakeholders, including families, community leaders, policymakers, law enforcement agencies, and non-governmental organizations (Jahan, 2019). Increased awareness is essential to developing effective prevention strategies and intervention programs that empower women and ensure social justice.

Additionally, this study has served as a valuable literature source for future researchers interested in exploring gender-based victimization in rural contexts. The existing body of research on gender victimization in Bangladesh primarily focuses on criminal offenses such as rape and domestic violence; however, social victimization, which includes discriminatory practices, psychological abuse, and cultural restrictions, remains underexplored (Rahman, 2022). By addressing this gap, the study has contributed to academic discourse and provide a foundation for future research and policy formulation (Kabeer, 2018).

Another key justification for this study is that it proposes practical recommendations for addressing social victimization in rural Bangladesh. These recommendations include policy reforms, legal interventions, awareness campaigns, and community-based support systems that can help mitigate the challenges faced by women (Begum & Hossain, 2020). The study's findings have provided actionable insights for government institutions, advocacy groups, and development organizations seeking to improve women's social and economic conditions.

Ultimately, this research is crucial in promoting gender equality and social justice by shedding light on the hidden struggles of rural women. By making social victimization a recognized issue, this study has help initiate broader discussions, encourage positive societal changes, and contribute to the long-term well-being of women in rural Bangladesh.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

Main Objective

The primary objective of this study is to investigate the causes and long-term impacts of gender-based social victimization in rural Bangladesh and propose

effective interventions to address this issue.

Specific Objectives

To achieve the main objective, the study is guided by the following specific objectives:

1. To examine the key causes of social victimization of women in rural Bangladesh.
2. To analyze the long-term psychological, social, and economic impacts of social victimization on women.
3. To assess the role of cultural and historical practices in perpetuating gender-based social victimization.
4. To explore the intervention challenges to victims by GOs and NGOs.
5. To propose policy recommendations and intervention strategies to prevent and mitigate social victimization.

Objectives Indicators

1.5 Methodology of the Study

This study employs a qualitative research approach to investigate the causes and long-term impacts of gender-based social victimization in rural Bangladesh. A

Specific Objective	Indicators
Investigation of key causes of social victimization of women in rural Bangladesh.	• Prevalence of discriminatory cultural norms • Economic dependence of women • Role of patriarchal family structures
Analyze the long-term psychological, social, and economic impacts of social victimization on women.	• Levels of psychological distress (depression, anxiety, PTSD) • Loss of employment opportunities social exclusion and reduced community participation
Assess the role of cultural and historical practices in perpetuating gender-based social victimization.	• Influence of dowry and early marriage • Traditional family hierarchy restricting women’s rights • Perceived stigma against women seeking justice
Finding intervention challenges to victims by GOs and NGOs	• Challenges of Government Intervention • Challenges in non-government initiatives and programmes • Barriers related to PPP

Propose policy recommendations and intervention strategies to prevent and mitigate social victimization.	• Development of awareness programs • Strengthening institutional support systems • Policy suggestions for gender-sensitive legal reforms
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This structured approach ensured clarity and measurable outcomes for the study.

case study method and focus group discussions (FGDs) are the primary research methods has been used to collect in-depth insights from affected individuals and key stakeholders.

1.5.1 Main Method: Case Study and Focus Group Discussion

The study has adopted a case study approach to document real-life experiences of socially victimized women in rural Bangladesh. Fifteen (15) cases have been studied to capture diverse personal narratives, highlighting causes, impacts, and coping mechanisms. In addition, two (2) FGDs was organized, involving women, community leaders, and local stakeholders to understand broader social perceptions and challenges regarding gender-based social victimization.

1.5.2 Location of the Study

This study was conducted in seven villages located within Faridpur District, under two different police station jurisdictions in the Dhaka Division, Bangladesh. Specifically, five villages Kaolibera, Gharua, Tuzarpur, Nasirabad, and Manikdaha were selected under the jurisdiction of Bhanga Police Station for conducting in-depth case studies. Additionally, two more villages Ramnagar and Talma falling under Nagarkanda Police Station were selected for focus group discussions (FGDs). The villages were randomly selected to ensure representation of diverse socio-economic backgrounds and cultural variations within the rural context. This approach aimed to capture a broad spectrum of gender-based social victimization experiences across different household structures, income levels, and social norms.

The justification for selecting this study location is grounded in alarming regional data. According to the “Violence Against Women Survey 2024” conducted by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) in collaboration with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), approximately 72.9% of women in the Dhaka Division have experienced some form of violence in their lifetime. As part of this high-prevalence division, Faridpur District serves as a relevant and critical site for investigating the causes, impacts, and institutional responses to gender-based social victimization in rural Bangladesh

1.5.3 Sampling Procedure and Sample Size

The study follows a purposive sampling approach to select participants who have directly experienced social victimization.

Case Study Sample: 15 socially victimized women has been selected from the five villages based on their willingness to share their experiences.

FGDs Sample: 2 FGDs has be conducted, each consisting of 8-10 participants (women, local leaders, NGO representatives, and social activists).

This sampling ensures a balanced representation of different victimization experiences and community perspectives.

1.5.4 Data Collection Tools and Techniques

This study employed a qualitative research approach, utilizing multiple methods to ensure depth, reliability, and triangulation of data. Face-to-face interviews were conducted with all fifteen selected cases, using an open-ended case study guide to explore the personal experiences of gender-based social victimization in rural contexts. The interviews were further enriched through direct observation, allowing for contextual understanding of the victims' environments, behaviors, and social dynamics.

In addition, two Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were held in two separate villages using a FGD guide. These group discussions were designed to gather broader community perspectives and validate themes emerging from individual interviews. The combination of individual case narratives and group discussions served to enhance the validity and credibility of the findings through data triangulation along with the support of secondary data form relevant literatures.

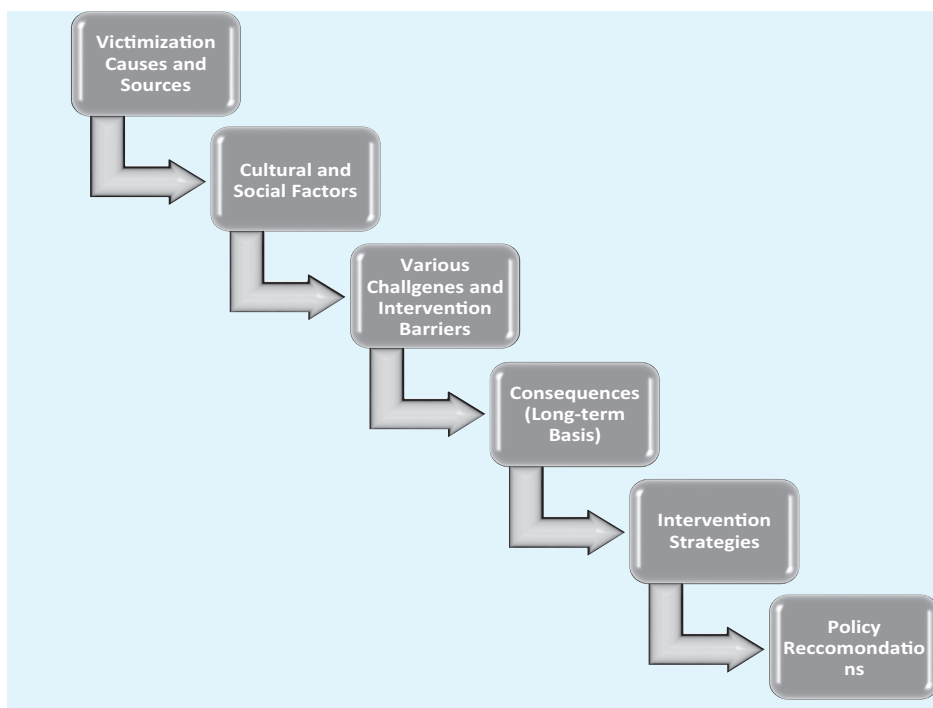
1.5.5 Data Processing and Analysis

The data collected through face-to-face interviews, observations, and focus group discussions were processed and analyzed using thematic analysis. After transcription and careful reading of all qualitative data, emerging themes were identified and categorized manually to uncover patterns related to gender-based social victimization. The analysis was guided by two theoretical frameworks Feminist Theory and Social Exclusion Theory which informed both the design of the interview tools and the interpretation of findings. Themes such as patriarchal dominance, intersectionality, marginalization derived from both individual cases and group discussions.

1.5.6 Data Presentation and Analytical Framework

Findings has been presented using qualitative narratives, thematic matrices, and descriptive summaries. Analytical interpretation has followed a social constructivist perspective, considering cultural and historical influences on gender victimization

Framework for Analysis:



This structured approach has provided a comprehensive understanding of the issue and **practical recommendations for change**.

1.5.7 Ethical Considerations

To maintain ethical standards, the study has followed these principles:

- a) **Informed Consent:** Participants has been informed about the study's purpose, and their voluntary participation has been ensured.
- b) **Confidentiality:** Participants' identities has remained anonymous to protect privacy.
- c) **No Harm Principle:** Emotional and psychological well-being has been considered, with referrals to local support services if needed.

- d) **Data Protection:** Interview recordings and transcripts has been securely stored and used only for academic purposes.

1.6 Theocratical Foundation of this Study

The following table shows the theories that guided in this study and application areas with type of cases.

Theory	Applied Case Numbers	Thematic Focus	Application in Case Selection	Application in Interview Tool Formulation
Feminist Theory	1–5, 9–11, 15	Gender, power dynamics, intersectionality	These cases involve gender-based oppression such as domestic violence (dowry), workplace harassment, drug-related abuse, and sexual harassment reflecting patriarchal control and unequal power structures. (Tong, 2009; hooks, 2000)	Interview tools included open-ended questions focusing on gender roles, power imbalance in family/ workplace, societal reactions, and personal resistance or coping mechanisms.
Social Exclusion Theory	6–8, 12–14	Marginalization by caste, poverty, widowhood	These cases represent socially excluded groups widows, lower-caste women, and those living in poverty who are often neglected in state and community structures. (Silver, 1994; Sen, 2000)	Interview questions emphasized experiences of exclusion, access to resources/ services, stigma, discrimination, and institutional

1.7 Findings of the Study

This study has employed qualitative methods to gain an in-depth understanding of social victimization, distinguishing it from criminal victimization. The impact of social victimization on victims and their families is profound, often leading to long-term emotional and social consequences. Gender-based

social victimization is particularly prevalent in Bangladesh, where women frequently experience victimization due to deeply rooted socio-cultural norms and practices. A significant aspect of this type of victimization is that victims are often reluctant to report incidents, file cases, or take legal action against offenders. This reluctance arises because, in most cases, the offenders are close family members, relatives, or well-known individuals within the community. The following analysis presents various dimensions of social victimization based on the key themes and objectives of this study.

1.7.1 Case related Basic Information and Analysis

The following table provides an analysis based on information of the 15 cases studied in this study. It includes case names, victim types, ages of victims, patterns of victimization, sources of victimization, and offenders.

Case No and Type	Victim Area	Age	Pattern of Victimization	Sources of Victimization	Offenders
Case 1: Domestic Violence (Dowry)	Domestic	19	Physical abuse, emotional neglect	Husband, In-laws (mother-in-law)	Husband, Mother-in-law
Case 2: Drug Abuse & Domestic Abuse	Domestic	26	Psychological manipulation, emotional abuse	Husband (drug addict), Lack of family support	Husband Friends of Husband
Case 3: Workplace Harassment	Workstation and Office	36	Sexual harassment, verbal abuse	Supervisor	Reporting Male Supervisor
Case 4: Gender Discrimination in Workplace	Factory	35	Pay gap, lack of promotions	Employer, Male colleagues	Employer, Male colleagues
Case 5: Harassment in College	Female student at college	17	Body Shaming and online chat	Unwanted comment in Facebook story and invitation	Faculty
Case 6: Widowhood Stigma	Widow in rural community setting	45	Social rejection, isolation	Village community, Local leaders	Community, Neighbors
Case 7: Caste-Based Marginalization	Lower-caste woman in community	30	Social exclusion, lack of acceptance	Neighbors, Local society	Community, Neighbors

Case 8: Poverty & Social Exclusion	Poor woman in village/ community	45	Social isolation, exclusion from events	Neighbors, Community leaders	Village Community, Neighbors
Case 9: Victim of Workplace Harassment (Teacher)	Female teacher in school	40	Sexual harassment, power abuse	Male supervisor, Co-workers	Male Supervisor, Male colleagues
Case 10: Discriminatory Practices in Workplace	Factory	35	Denial of promotions, unequal pay	Employer, Male workers	Employer, Male colleagues
Case 11: Sexual Harassment in College	College	23	Sexual harassment, inappropriate remarks	Male professor	Faculty
Case 12: Victim of Poverty and Social Exclusion	Poor woman from a marginalized family-Community type	40	Social isolation, public rejection	Village community, Neighbors	Neighbors, Local community members
Case 13: Victim of Caste-Based Marginalization	Lower-caste woman in village community	38	Social rejection, exclusion from events	Neighbors, Local society leaders	Community, Local leaders
Case 14: Widowhood Stigma	Widow facing community rejection	45	Social stigma, isolation, blaming for husband's death	Neighbors, Local community members	Community, Neighbors
Case 15: Victim of Dowry and Poverty	Remote Community	22	Social stigma, inability to marry due to dowry issues	Family members, social norms	Potential suitors, Family members

This study examines various forms of social victimization across different settings, including domestic environments, workplaces, educational institutions, and community spaces. The analysis reveals recurring themes such as domestic violence, workplace harassment, gender discrimination, caste-based marginalization, and widowhood stigma. The following discussion provides an in-depth understanding of the cases identified in the study.

Domestic Victimization

Several cases highlight the impact of domestic violence, primarily due to dowry-related abuse, drug addiction, and lack of family support. In Case 1, a 19-year-old woman suffered physical abuse and emotional neglect from her husband and mother-in-law due to unmet dowry demands. She expressed, *“Every day, they reminded me that I am a burden. When my parents couldn’t afford more dowry, I was beaten and deprived of food.”* Similarly, in Case 2, a 26-year-old woman endured psychological manipulation and emotional abuse from her husband, who was addicted to drugs. His addiction made him violent, and he was encouraged by his friends. She shared, *“He would come home intoxicated and accuse me of ruining his life. If I refused to give him money, he would threaten me.”* These cases emphasize the devastating effects of economic and cultural pressures on women in domestic settings.

Workplace Victimization

Gender discrimination and workplace harassment emerged as significant themes in the study. Case 3 and Case 9 reveal incidents of sexual harassment and verbal abuse in offices and schools. A 36-year-old office worker in Case 3 was harassed by her male supervisor, who used his position of power to intimidate her. She stated, *“I feared losing my job if I spoke up.”*

The other male colleagues ignored what was happening.” In Case 4, a factory worker faced pay disparity and lack of promotion opportunities. She noted, *“Despite working harder than my male colleagues, I am paid less and never considered for leadership roles.”* These cases demonstrate systematic workplace discrimination that restricts women’s professional growth.

Educational Institution Victimization

Female students also experienced social victimization in educational settings. In Case 5, a 17-year-old college student was subjected to body shaming and online harassment after faculty members made inappropriate comments on her Facebook posts. She said, *“I was called names, and when I protested, they said I was overreacting.”* Likewise, Case 11 describes a 23-year-old college student who faced sexual harassment and inappropriate remarks from a professor. She shared, *“He would make inappropriate jokes in class, targeting female students. We had no one to report to without risking our grades.”* These cases highlight the lack of protection mechanisms in educational institutions.

Community-Based Social Exclusion

The study also found that widows, lower-caste individuals, and the poor often face severe social rejection and isolation. In Case 6, a 45-year-old widow was ostracized by her community after her husband's death. She expressed, *"People blamed me for his death and refused to invite me to community events."* Similarly, in Case 7 and Case 13, lower-caste women were excluded from social gatherings and denied equal treatment. One participant said, *"Even today, we are not allowed to eat at the same table as upper-caste members."*

Economic vulnerability further worsened social victimization, as seen in Case 8 and Case 12, where poor women were excluded from community events and denied opportunities. A 40-year-old woman shared, *"No one wants to associate with the poor. We are treated as invisible."*

The Burden of Dowry and Marriage-Related Stigma

Unmarried women often face stigma and discrimination due to dowry traditions. In Case 15, a 22-year-old woman from a remote community was unable to marry because her family could not afford a dowry. She explained, *"Suitors come and leave when they hear that my family cannot pay."* This reveals how deep-rooted cultural practices continue to victimize women economically and socially.

The analysis of these cases demonstrates that social victimization is deeply embedded in cultural, economic, and institutional structures. Women, particularly those from marginalized backgrounds, face systemic discrimination, lack of legal protection, and social isolation. These findings emphasize the need for stronger policy measures, awareness programs, and institutional support systems to address social victimization and its long-term consequences

1.7.2 Causes of Social Victimization

This study found various causes social victimization based on the 15 case studies. This following analysis outlines the key reasons why the victims were subjected to abuse or social exclusion and the sources that perpetuated these experiences. Each cause is supported by direct quotations from the victims, illustrating their lived experiences and how these causes manifested in their lives..

Poverty and Economic Status

This study found many women in rural Bangladesh experience victimization due to their family's poverty. The inability to meet economic expectations (such as dowry demands or providing for basic needs) often leads to social exclusion and discrimination. Community members and family members often view women from impoverished backgrounds as inferior or unworthy of respect and opportunity.

"We are poor, and people in the village always look down on us. They say my family is cursed because we can't afford dowry, and no one wants to marry me. It's all because we don't have money."

Gender-based Discrimination

This study reveals that gender discrimination is deeply rooted in rural communities. Women are often treated as inferior, subordinate, and dependent on male family members. This leads to unequal opportunities, physical abuse, and psychological harm. In this pattern most of the cases told that husbands, in-laws, and community leaders enforce patriarchal norms, making women victims of inequality.

“I don’t have any voice in the house. My husband decides everything for me. When I try to speak, they say I should remain silent. It’s because I am a woman, and they think I have no right to speak.”

– Case 2: Domestic Violence (Wife of Drug Addict Husband)

Cultural and Traditional Norms

Cultural norms, such as the belief that women should remain submissive and obedient, create an environment in which women are expected to tolerate abuse and exploitation. The dowry system, caste-based restrictions, and the exclusion of widows are often justified based on tradition. Community members, family elders, and religious leaders enforce these norms, contributing to the marginalization and victimization of women.

“People say that it’s a woman’s fate to suffer, and that’s how life is. They say that if we complain about domestic violence, we are not following the traditions of our ancestors.”

– Case 6: Widowhood Stigma

Drug Addiction and Substance Abuse

From some case this study initiates that substance abuse, particularly drug addiction, in male family members often leads to domestic violence, economic instability, and psychological trauma for women. Victims are often blamed for the problems caused by addiction, further marginalizing them. As source of Victimization, the husband (addicted to drugs), as well as his family members (who may enable the behavior), are often the primary offenders in cases of domestic violence and economic hardship.

“My husband is addicted to drugs. He comes home, hits me, and blames me for his addiction. I don’t know how much longer I can endure this, but I don’t have any other place to go.”

– Case 2: Drug Abuse & Domestic Abuse

Social Exclusion Due to Caste or Social Class

About key reason this study found that women from lower-caste or lower-social-class backgrounds face stigmatization, exclusion, and discrimination. This marginalization creates barriers for women, particularly in education, employment, and social interaction. As source of Victimization this study investigate that community members, local leaders, and caste-based hierarchy play a role in maintaining exclusionary practices.

“I was told that I would never be accepted in this village because of my caste. They say we are not worthy of the same respect as others. I feel humiliated every day.”

– Case 13: Caste-Based Marginalization

Physical and Sexual Harassment in Workplace and Educational Institutions

The present study uncovers that women in workplaces and educational institutions are often subjected to sexual harassment, verbal abuse, and unwanted advances. The abuse of power and gender inequality exacerbate their vulnerability. As Source of victimization, Male supervisors, teachers, and peers contribute to the victimization of women in these environments through harassment and abuse.

“My teacher keeps making inappropriate comments, but when I try to speak out, he threatens to fail me. I feel trapped and humiliated every day.”

– Case 5: Sexual Harassment in College

Emotional and Psychological Abuse by Family Members

Women in patriarchal families experience emotional abuse and psychological manipulation. They are made to feel worthless, powerless, or responsible for their family’s problems. Often, male family members place the blame for their misfortunes on the women. Husbands, in-laws, and sometimes even brothers or fathers are the perpetrators of emotional or psychological abuse.

“I feel like I am always blamed for everything wrong in the house. My husband and his family say that I’m the reason for the family’s problems. They make me feel like I’m not good enough.”

– Case 1: Domestic Violence (Dowry Issue)

Stigmatization of Widowhood

Widows often face stigmatization in rural communities. They are accused of being the cause of their husband’s death and face social ostracism and exclusion from community activities. As Source of victimization community members, especially older women and local elders, perpetuate the stigma surrounding widowhood.

“People say I killed my husband with bad luck, and no one in the village wants to talk to me anymore. I feel abandoned and alone.”

– Case 14: Widowhood Stigma

Lack of Support from Legal and Institutional Systems

Victims of gender-based violence often face institutional neglect and lack of support from law enforcement agencies, health services, or community support systems. This leads to victim-blaming, injustice, and ineffective intervention. Law enforcement agencies, healthcare providers, and community leaders who fail to provide timely support or actively discourage reporting.

Fear of Social Repercussions and Family Reputation

Victims often remain silent due to fear of social stigma, family reputation, and the threat of societal backlash. Women are often pressured by family members not to report abuse, as doing so could lead to a loss of honor or family disruption. As source of victimization, family members, community leaders, and social norms that prioritize family reputation over personal well-being.

“I wanted to tell someone about what’s been happening at home, but my family said it would bring shame to us. They told me to keep quiet, or else everyone in the village would think we are bad people.”

– Case 9: Domestic Abuse

During the FGDs, participants discussed the root causes of social victimization, particularly gender-based violence, in rural Bangladesh. The primary causes identified were deeply ingrained patriarchal norms, lack of awareness about rights, and economic dependency.

“Poverty and dowry are big issues. Families struggle to give dowry and this creates anger and frustration in the husband which leads to violence.”

Participants 02, FGD-01 (Talma)

The above causes and sources of victimization identified in the case studies illustrate how gender inequality, economic status, social norms, and cultural expectations create environments where women face discrimination, abuse, and social exclusion. The primary sources of victimization are family members, community members, employers, and institutional systems, which are often complicit in reinforcing or perpetuating the cycle of victimization.

1.7.3 Impacts of Social Victimization

The long-term impacts of social victimization, as identified in the 15 case studies, significantly affect the lives of women in rural Bangladesh. The thematic

analysis reveals several recurring patterns and consequences of victimization that not only disrupt their emotional and psychological well-being but also severely hinder their social integration, economic stability, and mental health. Below is an explanation and thematic analysis of the long-term impacts found across the cases, categorized by key themes:

Psychological and Emotional Trauma

One of the most profound and consistent long-term impacts found in this study of social victimization is the psychological and emotional trauma that victims endure. Women who experience abuse, social exclusion, and discrimination often suffer from anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). These emotional scars can persist long after the victimization ends, affecting their ability to function in personal, family, and professional contexts. A study found that all respondents (90 women) reported experiencing cyberbullying or harassment online, with 72% victimized weekly and 86% daily. 7.8% of all respondents experiencing high levels of depression and 48.8% suffering from sleep disturbances (Mridha, et al 2024). Major consequences from these types are following-

Psychological Burden: Victims of domestic abuse, caste-based exclusion, or workplace harassment described feelings of helplessness, hopelessness, and anxiety. Many women faced constant fear of their abusers or societal rejection, which created a constant emotional strain.

Low Self-Worth: Long-term victimization eroded the sense of self-worth in many victims. For instance, women who faced dowry-related abuse or drug abuse by their husbands mentioned how they were made to feel inferior and responsible for their family's problems.

"Every day I feel like I'm not good enough. I am afraid to speak up because I don't want to make things worse. It feels like I have lost my voice." – **Case 2: Drug Abuse & Domestic Abuse**

"I have felt like I am nobody for years. People look at me differently, and I can't even look my children in the eyes anymore." – **Case 14: Widowhood Stigma**

Social Isolation and Exclusion

Social isolation is another significant long-term impact of social victimization found in this study. Victims, particularly women who face dowry violence, widowhood stigma, or caste-based marginalization, often become socially ostracized. They are excluded from social events, family gatherings, and community activities, leading to a life of loneliness and alienation. Major consequences from these types are following-

Community Alienation: Victims, especially widows or women from lower-caste backgrounds, described how they were excluded from community functions or even isolated within their own homes due to societal prejudices.

Loss of Social Connections: Many women were disconnected from their families and neighbors, who believed that being in the presence of a victim could bring shame upon them or their families.

"After my husband died, no one in the village wants to talk to me. They say I brought misfortune to the family." – Case 6: Widowhood Stigma

"Because I come from a lower caste, I'm not invited to social events. People won't even sit with me." – Case 13: Caste-Based Marginalization

Economic Instability and Dependency

Long-term economic impacts are another significant consequence of social victimization. Women who are victims of domestic violence, workplace harassment, or dowry-related abuse often face economic instability due to their limited opportunities to work, their lack of control over family finances, or being pushed out of employment. Results found from these types are following-

Financial Dependency: Victims often end up financially dependent on their abusers or families, limiting their ability to escape abusive situations. Many reported being unable to support themselves or their children due to financial constraints, which contributed to their vulnerability.

Limited Access to Employment: Women subjected to workplace harassment or discrimination are often forced out of their jobs or denied career advancement, leading to long-term economic hardship.

"I am stuck in this marriage because I have nowhere to go. I can't support myself and my children without him. It's difficult for me to leave because I have no income." – Case 1: Domestic Violence (Dowry Issue)

"After the harassment at work, I was demoted and lost my job. Now, I can't even find a new one because of the reputation I've gained." – Case 3: Sexual Harassment in Workplace

Re-victimization and Retaliation

Another significant long-term impact is the constant fear of retaliation or further victimization, especially when victims try to report abuse or escape their circumstances. Women are often fearful of retribution from their abusers, community members, or even institutional systems that could worsen their situation. Impacts found from these types are following-

Cycle of Abuse: Many women fear that speaking out will lead to worse outcomes. They experience continuous threats from family members or employers, which keeps them in a state of constant fear.

Fear of Retaliation: Victims are often discouraged from reporting abuse to legal authorities due to the fear of societal backlash or the loss of reputation.

<i>"I am afraid that if I go to the police, my husband will hurt me more when I return. It's better to stay quiet and suffer than to make things worse."</i> – Case 9: Domestic Abuse
<i>"My supervisor said if I report him to anyone, he would make sure I lose my job. I have to stay silent for my family's sake."</i> – Case 5: Sexual Harassment in College

Long-Term Health Problems

Victims of social victimization often experience long-term health problems, both physical and mental. These include chronic stress, anxiety disorders, sleep disturbances, chronic pain, and nervous breakdowns. Victims of domestic violence and sexual harassment frequently report ongoing health issues, and many lack the resources to seek professional help. This result includes-

Physical Health Deterioration: Many victims who experienced physical abuse or harassment reported ongoing pain, fatigue, and stress.

Mental Health Consequences: Anxiety, depression, and panic attacks were common among victims of emotional abuse or social exclusion.

<i>"I haven't been able to sleep for months because I'm always worried about my husband coming home drunk. My body is always in pain from the stress."</i> – Case 2: Drug Abuse & Domestic Abuse
<i>"I feel depressed every day. I cry without knowing why. Sometimes, I can't even leave the house because I feel so hopeless."</i> – Case 15: Victim of Dowry and Poverty

Intergenerational Impact

Social victimization has a profound impact not only on the individual but also on future generations. The children of women who face domestic violence, stigmatization, or social exclusion often grow up in environments that normalize abuse, gender inequality, and discrimination. These consequences include flowing impact found in this study-

Children's Well-being: The impact of abuse or stigmatization often spills over to children, who experience emotional neglect, violence, and psychological trauma. These children may grow up internalizing these behaviors as normal, perpetuating the cycle of abuse.

Gender Norms: Children of women who face gender-based violence or exclusion often adopt traditional gender roles, which further limit their understanding of gender equality and justice.

<i>"My children are always scared, and they can't sleep at night. They ask me why their father is always angry at me, and I can't give them an answer." – Case 2: Drug Abuse & Domestic Abuse</i>

<i>"I don't want my daughter to face what I did. I don't want her to feel worthless like I did." – Case 1: Domestic Violence (Dowry Issue)</i>
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The long-term impacts of social victimization in rural Bangladesh are profound and wide-reaching, affecting victims' mental health, physical health, social status, and economic well-being. Victims experience psychological trauma, social exclusion, economic dependency, and health problems that persist long after the victimization ends. Moreover, these impacts can have intergenerational consequences, passing down the effects of victimization to future generations. Addressing these long-term consequences requires comprehensive support systems, awareness programs, and legal reforms to protect and empower vulnerable women in rural communities.

The participants of FGD-02 highlighted various emotional, psychological, and social consequences of social victimization, such as trauma, loss of self-esteem, and isolation from family and society. Victims often endure long-term effects that hinder their ability to live fulfilling lives.

<i>"The shame of being abused by my husband made me lose all confidence in myself. I feel worthless now."</i>

<i>Participants 01, FGD-02 (Ramnagar)</i>

<i>"When a woman faces violence in her home, she is often blamed by her neighbors and family. This increases the shame and trauma."</i>

<i>Participants 08, FGD-02 (Ramnagar)</i>

These statements underline the psychological distress and social stigma faced by victims.

1.8 Challenges in Providing Social Victim Support Services

Government Organizations (GOs) and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) play a crucial role in addressing social victimization in rural Bangladesh. However, they face numerous challenges that hinder their ability to provide effective support services and interventions. These challenges stem from a lack of awareness, weak legal frameworks, societal barriers, limited resources, poor coordination, and resistance to external intervention.

Lack of Awareness and Understanding of Social Victimization

One of the primary challenges is the lack of public awareness regarding victimization and available support services. Many victims, especially women, are unaware of their legal rights due to deep-rooted cultural taboos and societal

stigma. This issue is further exacerbated in rural areas where illiteracy and poor media penetration prevent the dissemination of crucial information.

Government Perspective: Government initiatives often suffer from limited community engagement. Awareness programs are sporadic and fail to consider local cultural contexts, resulting in a lack of public participation.

NGO Perspective: NGOs tend to focus on urban centers, where funding is more accessible. Consequently, remote areas remain underserved, leaving victims without necessary support networks.

"Most victims don't know where to turn. Even if there are laws, they don't know about them. The villagers believe these things are normal and don't talk about them openly."

– NGO worker, FGD-01 (Talma)

Lack of Proper Policy and Legal Framework

Although laws exist to address issues like gender-based violence and workplace harassment, their enforcement remains weak. Victims struggle to access justice due to bureaucratic inefficiencies, corruption, and a general lack of legal knowledge. Rural power structures, often dominated by patriarchal leadership, further hinder legal proceedings.

Policies are often disconnected from the realities of rural communities. While legal protections exist, they fail to address the deep-rooted gender inequalities and cultural barriers that prevent victims from coming forward. Lack of legal recourse is another important challenge in protecting women from social victimization (National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) Bangladesh, 2020).

Societal and Cultural Barriers

Traditional patriarchal norms in rural Bangladesh significantly impact social victimization. Women are often expected to endure abuse, and victims of dowry-related violence, sexual harassment, or domestic abuse are frequently blamed for their suffering. The stigma surrounding victimization discourages many from seeking help, fearing social ostracization and family disgrace. Cultural dynamics that prevent victims from seeking help and the role of community leaders in shaping public opinion (Zaman, 2021).

"The community doesn't understand that abuse is a crime. They think it's a family issue, not something that should involve the law." – P-03, FGD-01

Insufficient Resources and Infrastructure

Limited financial resources pose a major challenge for both GOs and NGOs. Funding shortages restrict the availability of shelters, legal aid, counseling, and vocational training programs for victims. Rural areas suffer from a severe lack

of support services, leaving victims without safe spaces or access to professional assistance. Structural barriers women faced in seeking justice also create further barriers (Barkat, 2015).

Government Perspective: Budget constraints and inadequate staffing weaken the implementation of support programs. Many local government offices lack the necessary personnel and infrastructure to assist victims effectively.

NGO Perspective: Grassroots organizations, despite their commitment, often struggle with financial sustainability. Funding limitations prevent them from expanding their services to reach marginalized groups in remote areas.

Lack of Coordination Between Government and NGOs

The lack of collaboration between GOs and NGOs leads to disjointed victim support services. Many victims require multi-faceted assistance legal, psychological, and financial which is difficult to provide in a fragmented system. Some NGOs operate without formal government approval, further complicating service delivery. NGO is very important stakeholder in this field (UN Women, 2020)

Government Perspective: Bureaucratic inefficiencies and red tape slow down efforts to collaborate with NGOs. There is often a lack of trust between government agencies and non-governmental actors, leading to inefficiencies in service provision.

NGO Perspective: NGOs struggle with slow government responses and a lack of political will to address social victimization effectively. The absence of an integrated approach results in service duplication or gaps in victim support.

Resistance to External Intervention

In rural Bangladesh, community resistance poses a significant challenge to both government and NGO-led interventions. Many views external organizations as a threat to traditional ways of life. Government agencies and NGOs are often perceived as interfering in private family matters, leading to reluctance in accepting their assistance.

In fine, the challenges faced by GOs and NGOs in addressing social victimization in rural Bangladesh are complex and deeply rooted in societal structures. Limited awareness, weak legal frameworks, cultural barriers, inadequate resources, poor coordination, and community resistance all contribute to the difficulties in providing effective support. Addressing these challenges requires a multi-faceted approach that includes legal reforms, increased funding, widespread awareness campaigns, and stronger collaboration between stakeholders. Sustainable change

can only be achieved through a coordinated effort that involves both government agencies and NGOs, alongside active community engagement.

1.9 Policy Recommendations and Intervention Strategies

To effectively address the root causes of social victimization, especially gender-based violence and marginalization, a multifaceted approach is required. Below are some realistic policy recommendations and intervention strategies that can be implemented by the government, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and local community leaders.

1.9.1. Community Awareness and Prevention

- **Local Awareness Campaigns:** Conduct door-to-door campaigns and courtyard meetings in rural villages to educate communities on issues like dowry violence, sexual harassment, and widowhood stigma.
- **School-Based Education:** Integrate gender equality and anti-violence modules into secondary school curricula in collaboration with the Ministry of Education.
- **Use of Local Media:** Disseminate information through radio, posters, folk songs, and street dramas in local dialects to ensure community-wide engagement.

1.9.2. Strengthening Victim Support Systems

- **Establish Rural Women's Support Hubs:** Set up centers at the upazila level with services like emergency shelter, trauma counseling, and paralegal support.
- **Train Police and Union Parishad Members:** Introduce mandatory gender-sensitivity training for law enforcement and local government representatives.
- **Create Referral Networks:** Build strong referral pathways among hospitals, NGOs, and local justice mechanisms to streamline victim assistance.

1.9.3. Gender-Sensitive Legal Reforms

- **Reinforce Dowry and Domestic Violence Laws:** Strictly enforce the Dowry Prohibition Act and Domestic Violence Act with community monitoring groups.

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- Establish Mobile Family Courts: Launch pilot mobile courts in high-prevalence areas to ensure swift and accessible justice for women.
 - Free Legal Aid Desks: Provide government-funded legal aid desks within union parishads, especially targeting poor and marginalized women.

1.9.4. Economic Empowerment of Victims

- Livelihood Training for Survivors: Offer skill-building programs in tailoring, agriculture, or mobile servicing for women who have faced violence or exclusion.
- Access to Microcredit: Collaborate with BRAC, Grameen Bank, and PKSF to provide low-interest loans to survivors.
- Job Linkages: Partner with local industries and NGOs to create job placement opportunities for trained survivors.

1.9.5. Community Engagement and Accountability

- Village Mediation Committees: Form committees of local leaders, women representatives, and youth to mediate conflicts and monitor violence.
- Champion Gender-Sensitive Leaders: Incentivize religious and community leaders to speak against harmful practices and support women's rights.

1.10 Concluding Remarks

This study has explored the multifaceted issue of social victimization in rural Bangladesh, with a particular focus on the causes and long-term impacts of gender-based victimization. Through the analysis of fifteen case studies, we have highlighted the deep-rooted challenges faced by women and marginalized groups in rural communities, including domestic violence, discrimination, and societal stigmas. The findings demonstrate that social victimization in these areas is not only a matter of individual abuse but is intricately linked to structural issues such as patriarchal norms, cultural practices, and a lack of legal and institutional support.

The study reveals that victims of social victimization often suffer from severe emotional, psychological, and social consequences, which can persist long after the immediate harm has occurred. The findings underscore the need for a more comprehensive and holistic approach to addressing these issues, which involves not only legal reforms but also cultural shifts and enhanced support systems at the community and institutional levels.

Furthermore, the study has identified key challenges in providing effective support and interventions, including a lack of awareness, insufficient policy frameworks, and the absence of strong collaboration between governmental bodies, NGOs, and local communities. Despite these challenges, the study has also proposed several actionable recommendations to mitigate social victimization, including the development of awareness programs, strengthening institutional support services, and introducing gender-sensitive legal reforms.

In conclusion, while significant strides have been made in addressing gender-based violence and victimization in Bangladesh, there is still much work to be done. A coordinated and multifaceted effort, involving all sectors of society, is essential to creating a safer and more equitable environment for victims of social victimization. By implementing the recommended policies and interventions, Bangladesh can take significant steps toward breaking the cycle of victimization and ensuring that all individuals, particularly women, can live free from abuse and discrimination.

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Nature and Extent of Image-Based Sexual Abuse Against Women: Bangladesh Perspective

Khaleda Begum¹

Abstract: *Image-based sexual abuse (IBSA) is one of the escalating forms of Technology Facilitated Violence Against Women (TFVAW) all over the world which is evolving day by day with the use of new technology. This article intended to know the nature and extent of such abuse in Bangladesh. It is based on studies of complaints received by Bangladesh police on Image based sexual abuse against women in Bangladesh. The study explores that, the female victims of 13 to 55 years aged experienced IBSA but highest rate is among 18 to 24 years aged. Two natures of perpetration were identified which included - publishing or sharing of the pictures or videos in social media and sexual extortion which is threat to publish those image-based contents for monetary benefit or unwanted sexual activity. In most cases the perpetrators used intimate nude or sexual images or videos of the women and girls. Most of the preparators are former boyfriend of them but others are well-known person like ex-husband, friend, known, relatives, neighbours etc. A significant rate of perpetration using women's digitally modified nude or sexual pictures or videos was found which raise the concern of the misuse of technology in perpetration. The perpetration rate using victim's non-consensual recorded nude or sexual pictures or videos was found low.*

Keywords: Deepfake, Revenge Porn, Sextortion, Bangladesh, IBSA, TFVA, GBV.

1. Introduction

The rapid change of information technology and its rampant use is emerging different forms of cybercrime including Technology Facilitated Violence Against Women (TFVAW). Image based sexual abuse is one of the TFVAW which is changing its pattern with the technological progression. The use of smartphones, internet and social media platform enables people to capture their own and other person's pictures and videos easily and share those contents using the internet. These technological advantages are facilitating the criminals to commit different type of crimes using the images of the victims.

Henry et al. (2019) stated that, image based sexual abuse has three main behavioral traits including non-consensual creation of nude or sexual images, videos or sext, including digitally manipulated pictures and videos edited with another nude or sexual pictures or videos, distribution or publication of the

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nude or sexual images or videos without consent and threatening to distribute or publish those images or videos (Henry et al., 2019; McGlynn and Rackley, 2017). McGlynn and Rackley (2017) argued that, if someone shared his or her nude or sexual pictures or videos voluntarily with consent, still it will be considered as image based sexual abuse while those pictures or videos are distributed or published without consent. Distribution or sharing of the contents is not limited to only online means like social media or email. Distribution, sharing or publication of the contents through printing or using Bluetooth, CD, DVD, Hard drive or any other means is also considered as image based sexual abuse (McGlynn and Rackley, 2017). Researchers identified and defined several forms of image based sexual abuse (IBSA) like - ‘Sextortion’ which involves, “threats to publish or distribute the nude or sexual private images of someone in order to force him/her to engage in unwanted sexual act, put in fear to be in relationship or blackmail for monetary payment or other benefits” (Henry et al., 2017, p. 3). ‘Revenge Porn’ is defined as the dissemination or publication of victim’s non-consensual nude or sexual pictures or videos online or via mobile phones (Henry et al., 2017). ‘Deepfake pornography’ is identified as non-consensual manipulation of an individual’s image through artificial intelligence onto a nude or sexual image giving the illusion that the person depicted is involved in sexually explicit behavior (McGlynn and Rackley, 2017; Okolie, 2023). Several studies, Henry et al. (2017), Dardis and Richards (2022), ESAFETY (2017) and Powell et al. (2022) stated that, both male and female experience the perpetration of Image Based Sexual Abuse and females are more likely to be victim than men. In Bangladesh women are also experiencing different forms of technology facilitated violence including image based sexual abuse.

2. Literature Review

Numerous researches have been found on different factors of victimization and perpetration of image based sexual abuse. Powell et al. (2022) stated that, most researches on perpetration of image based sexual abuse were conducted in Australia, United Kingdom, New Zealand, Europe, Canada and United States (US). The researches worked on different factors of perpetration and victimization on IBSA and mostly focused on IBSA using victim’s previously shared intimate images or videos. Few studies considered all forms of nude or sexual images or videos that portray victim. But it is obvious that now-a-days with the help of AI (Artificial Intelligence) the perpetrators are using women’s personal pictures to make digitally doctored nude or sexual image-based contents of her which sometime becomes difficult to differentiate. Women and girls are also harassed by the perpetrators using their non-consensual recorded obscene pictures or videos. The national survey report of Australia on image based sexual abuse published on October, 2017 brought in to light that, both male

and female were victimized through IBSA and one out of ten adult Australians have experienced their nude/sexual image being shared without their consent (ESAFETY, 2017). Ruvalcaba and Eaton (2020), Dardis and Richards (2022), ESAFETY (2017), Powell et al. (2022) identified that, in case on image-based sexual abuse, comparatively women are more victimized than men and Women of 18-34 years aged have reported higher rate of victimization. The researches on victimization suggested that, dating someone online and engaging in intimacy such as chat using sexually explicated language and sexual self-image sharing behaviors increase the likelihood of perpetration (Powell et al., 2022). Few researches on various factors of perpetration identifies that, personality traits such as machiavellianism, psychopathy, high level of sadism and narcissism increase the likelihood of perpetration (Pina et al., 2017; Karasavva et al., 2022; Karasavva and Forth, 2021). Henry et al. (2017) argued that, the motivation of perpetrators of the IBSA is in diverse range, encompass revenge, personal animosity, financial gain, sexual desire, humiliation, sexual gratification etc. The study, Powell et al. (2022) explored victim- perpetrator relationship which include, mostly intimate partner, ex-partner and friend. Others are carer, colleague and sometimes unknown person.

However, small number of researches have been found about different types technology facilitated violence against women in Bangladesh which conforms with the findings of the international studies. As an emerging violence against women, more research should be carried out on perpetration of different forms of image-based sexual abuse (IBSA) contents to know the nature and prevalence of IBSA perpetration in Bangladesh. This article will explore the extent of different forms of IBSA victimization among the women and girls including the motives and relation of the perpetrators to them. It will also explore the correlation among the different factors of IBSA.

3. Objective

Technology Facilitated Violence against Women is a global concern including Bangladesh. Image Based Sexual Abuse is one of the main forms to TFVAW which is a raising day by day. Bangladesh Police has taken several measures to tackle TFVAW in Bangladesh. The main objective of this study is to explore the nature and prevalence of image-based sexual violence against women in Bangladesh and to provide in-depth knowledge about the patterns of victimization and characteristics of victims and perpetrators in order to combat this type of crime.

4. Research Questions

This study aimed to find out the answers to following questions:

1. What types of images or videos are used to harass the women and girls in Bangladesh?
2. How do these pictures or videos are used to perpetrate?
3. How are the perpetrators of IBSA perpetration related to the female victims?
4. What are the motivations behind the IBSA perpetration in Bangladesh?
5. Is there any association between the demographic characteristics of female victims and perpetrators with the perpetration nature of IBSA?

5. Methodology

The study was based on secondary data source using descriptive statistics and it is exploratory in nature. De tails of the 384 complaints related to IBSA was collected from Police Cyber Support for Women, Police Headquarters, Dhaka. These complaints were received and addressed by this service desk from November, 2022 to April, 2024. Police Cyber Support for Women is a service desk of Bangladesh Police that receives and addresses complaints related to online violence against women. The collected data was scrutinized via consultation with relevant authorities and personnel. In some cases, the concerned police officers and the victims were contacted to get information. Analysis was done following descriptive statistics and Chi square. Chi square test was conducted to find the association between various factors of IBSA perpetration.

6. Findings

The study found that the women and girls of different ages ranging from 13 to 55 years aged were victimized of different types of image based sexual abuse. The female victims are of different professions and from different areas of the country. The study identified that perpetrators used mainly three types of nude or sexual images of women for perpetration as shown in table 1. These are –

1. Nude or sexual images that was previously shared by the women along with private or nude pictures or videos of females recorded from consensual video call with the perpetrator (n=249, 64.8% complaints).
2. Manipulated nude or sexual images or videos of women adding the images of her face to other nude or sexual images or videos using Artificial Intelligence (AI) based or any other image editing tools (n= 122, 31.8% complaints).

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3. Non-consensual recording of women’s sexual or nude pictures or videos of bathing, dress changing or sexual activities with intimate partner, that was recorded from window or by any other means (n= 13, 3.4% complaints).

The Images or videos can be divided into three types. These are-

- a. Intimate nude or sexual image or video
- b. Edited nude or sexual image or video
- c. Non-consensual recorded photo or video

Table 1: Types of IBSA Contents

Types of IBSA contents	Counts	% of Total
Edited nude or sexual image/ video	122	31.8%
Intimate nude or sexual image/video	249	64.8%
Non-consensual recorded photo/video	13	3.4%
Total	384	100%

These image-based contents were either published in social media platform or distributed among the acquaintances of the female victims or sent to victims with threat to publish those contents i.e. Sextortion.

Hence in this study the nature of image based sexual abuse (IBSA) is classified into two types –

- i. Publish or share of picture/video
- ii. Sextortion

The publication, distribution or threat to publish the nude or sexual images or videos (either real or fake) were done using different social media platform including Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram and Email address..

6.1 The female victims of IBSA

The age range of the women and girls (13 years to 55 years) was divided into 5 age groups. These are 13 to 17 years, 18 to 23 years, 24 to 29 years, 30 to 35 years and 36 to 55 years as shown in Figure 1. The study shows that, female victims of all age range were harassed by using three types of image-based contents. As shown in Table 1, 53% (n=204) of the female victims are of 18 to 23 years aged were harassed mostly. The second highest rate 24% (n=93) of

victimization group is 24 to 29 years. These two figures are significantly greater than the victimization rate of 13 to 17 years 10% (n=38), 30 to 35 years 7% (n=28) and, 36 to 55 years old female victims 6% (n=21).

Victim’s Age

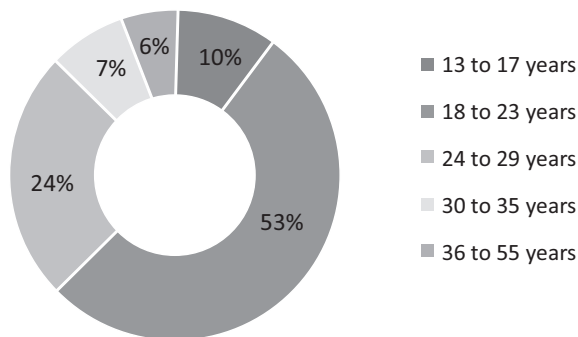


Figure 1: Victim’s Age group

Table 2: Victim’s Age group

Age group	Count	Percentage
12 to 17 years	38	10%
18 to 23 years	204	53%
24 to 29 years	93	24%
30 to 35 years	28	7%
36 to 55 years	21	6%
Total	384	100%

The female victims are from different areas of the country and have a diverse range of professional background which is shown in Figure 2 and 3. Most of them are students (54.9%, n=211) and housewives (29.4%, n=113).

Victim’s place of dwellings

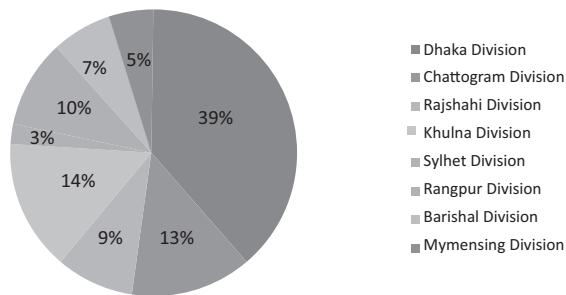


Figure 2: Victim’s place of dwellings

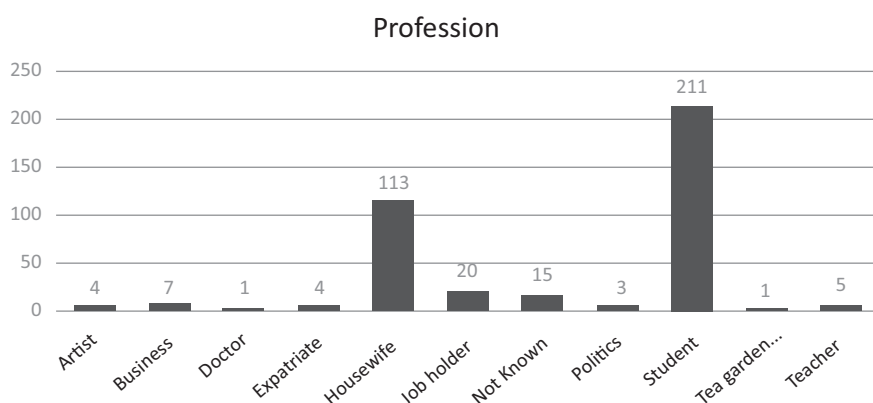


Figure 3: Profession of female victims

6.2 Contents of IBSA

The study explored that, women and girls were mostly harassed by using their intimate nude or sexual photos or videos (64.8%) (n=249). These pictures and videos were published or distributed for (38.5%, n=148) complaints and in (26.3%, n=101) complaints these contents were used for sextortion. A significant rate (31.8%, n=122) of perpetration was explored using digitally modified nude or sexual images or videos of women and girls. 18.2%, (n=70) perpetrators harassed victim by distributing or publishing their edited nude or sexual image or videos and 13.5%, (n=52) used those contents for sextortion. Perpetration rate using women and girl's non-consensual recorded nude or sexual photos or videos were low (3.4%, n=13) but those contents were mostly used for sextortion (2.1%, n=8) as shown in Table 3 and Figure 4. Figure 5 depicts the rate of perpetration among the Female victims, which shows that, females of 18 to 23 years aged are abused mostly by both distribution of their images or videos and sexual extortion.

Chi square analysis revealed that, there is no significant association between women and girls' age and nature of perpetration ($\chi^2[n=384] = 42.8$, $p=0.118$, $df=33$, Cramer's $V=0.334$) and women and girls' profession and nature of perpetration ($\chi^2[n=384] = 10.5$, $p=0.394$, $df=10$, Cramer's $V=0.166$).

But women and girls' image-based contents are significantly associated with their age ($\chi^2[n=384] = 89.2$, $p=0.03$, $df=66$, Cramer's $V=0.341$) and profession ($\chi^2[n=384] = 35.4$, $p=0.018$, $df=20$, Cramer's $V=0.215$).

Table 3: Nature of perpetration			
Perpetration Nature	IBSA Contents	Counts	% of Total
Publish/share of pictures/videos	Edited nude or sexual image/video	70	18.2%
Publish/share of pictures/videos	Intimate nude or sexual image/video	148	38.5%
Publish/share of pictures/videos	Non-consensual recorded photo/video	5	1.3%
Sextortion	Edited nude or sexual image/video	52	13.5%
Sextortion	Intimate nude or sexual image/video	101	26.3%
Sextortion	Non-consensual recorded photo/video	8	2.1%
Total		384	100%

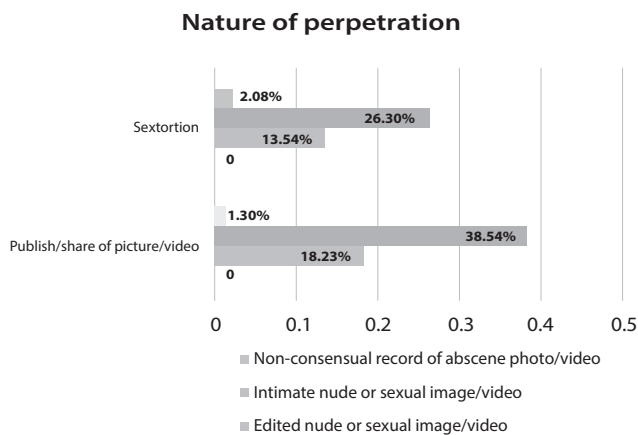


Figure 4: Nature of perpetration

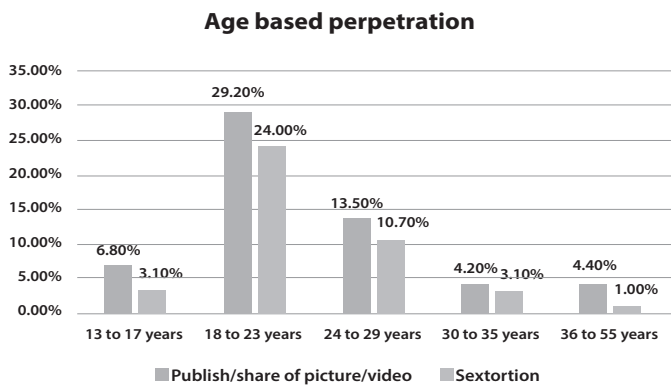


Figure 5: Nature of perpetration based on victim’s age

6.3 The perpetrators of IBSA

As shown in Figure 6, the study found that 92%(n=355) male and 8%(n=29) female were found to be perpetrators of image based sexual abuse (IBSA) against women and girls. The age of the perpetrators ranges from 16 years to 50 years. They are from different professional background and most of the perpetrators are students (n=152), shown in Table 4.

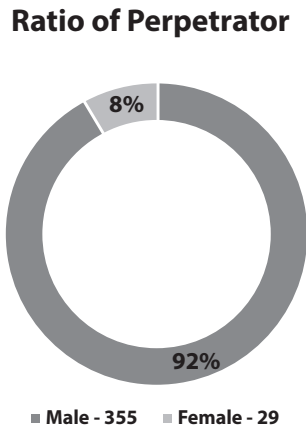


Figure 6: Ratio of perpetrators

Table 4: Profession of perpetrators

Perpetrator’s profession	Count	% of Total
Barber	1	0.3%
Business	25	6.5%
Engineer	2	0.5%
Expatriate	12	3.1%
Farmer	2	0.6%
Housewife	12	3.1%
Job holder	67	17.4%
Student	152	39.6%
Teacher	3	0.8%
Unemployed	30	7.8%
Worker	14	3.7%
Not Known	64	16.6%
Total	384	100%

The Chi square test findings found that, perpetrator's age is not associated with the nature of perpetration ($\chi^2[n=384] = 20.5$, $df=29$, $p= 0.875$, Cramer's $V= 0.231$) and three types of image-based contents of female victims ($\chi^2[n=384] =73.3$, $df= 58$, $p= 0.085$, Cramer's $V= 0.309$).

6.3.1 Motives behind the perpetration

According to the findings of study, the motivations behind the perpetration encompass personal conflict, business conflict, monetary benefit, perverseness and sometimes personal gain of the perpetrator as shown in Figure 7. The main reason of IBSA perpetration among both the male and female perpetrators is personal conflict. 37.7% (n=145) male and 5.70% (n=22) female perpetrators harassed women and girl's for personal conflict with the them. Small rate of other motivations of the female perpetrators are - monetary benefit (1.0%), perverseness (0.5%) and conflict with the family members of the women and girls (0.5%). On the other hand, among the male perpetrators 26.6% (n=102) harassed women and girl's for perverseness, 25.70% (n=99) harassed for monetary benefit. Significantly small rate of motivations is conflict with female victim's family members (1.30% n=5) and personal gain of the perpetrator (1.0%, n=2). Here perverseness means forcing victim for nude pictures or unwanted sex through video call.

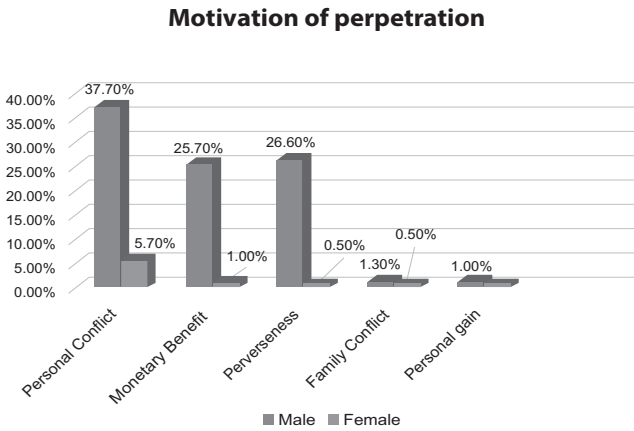


Figure 7: Motivation of perpetration

6.3.2 Relationship between the perpetrator and victim

Regarding the relationship of perpetrator with the female victims the study reveals that, most of the perpetrators are well known to the female victims. These people include women and girl's ex-boyfriend, ex-husband, friend, relative, neighbor, colleague, known person and unknown person. Here known person means a person

who is not a relative, friend or in any relationship with victim but known to the victim through acquaintance at work, residence or by other means. These people collected or accessed victim's device to get her private pictures or videos and harassed her using those contents. According to the analysis as depicted in Figure 8, 21% (n=80) perpetrators are ex-boyfriend of the female victims who harassed them by publishing or sharing of victims' intimate or edited nude or sexual images or videos. For 9% (n=34) complaints the female victims were threatened and forced by their ex-boyfriends. The motives of these perpetrators were personal conflict with the women and girls, to have monetary benefit and due to perverseness.

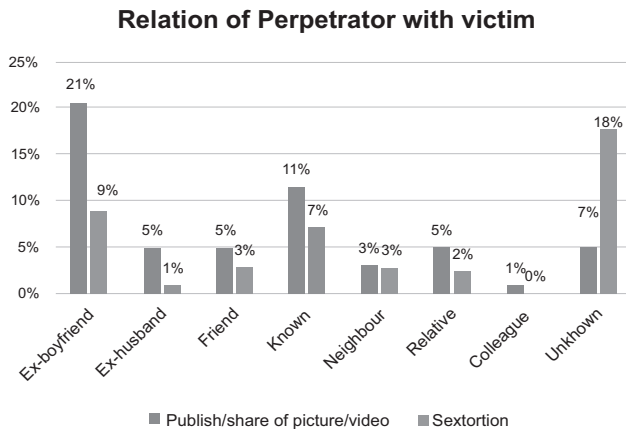


Figure 8: Perpetrator's relation to victim

Among the perpetrators who were known person to female victims by any means, 11% (n=44) of them harassed by publishing women and girl's intimate or edited pictures or video and 7% (n=27) of them intimidated for sextortion. Other perpetrators are ex-husband (6% (n=22)), friends (8% (n=29)), neighbour (6% (n=21)), relatives (7% (n=28)), colleague (1% (n=3)). All of them used victim's intimate or edited pictures or videos in perpetration. Their motivations include personal conflict, perverseness monetary benefit and conflict with victim's family members as shown in Table 5 and Figure 9.

18% (n=68) unknown person to women and girls, mostly intimated for sextortion and 7% (n=28) of them harassed female victims by publishing or sharing intimate or edited nude or sexual pictures or videos. These unknown people were the hackers and fraudsters who hacked victims' private pictures or videos or managed victim to share her nude pictures or to talk in video call in the disguise of online doctor, priest or online female friend. The motives of unknown person were mainly perverseness 11.50% (n=46), monetary benefit 11.5% (n=44) and personal gain 1% (n=2).

Female victims experienced IBSA using their non-consensual recorded nude or sexual pictures or videos by their neighbour, known person and relatives. These contents were mostly used by the perpetrators to threaten the victim for sextortion. Chi square tests were conducted to know if there is any significant association between victim's relation to perpetrator and nature of perpetration, the analysis showed that both of them are significantly associated with each other ($\chi^2[n=384] = 51.7, p=0.001, df=7, \text{Cramer's } V=0.37$). The test also showed that, nature of perpetration is not associated with the contents of IBSA ($\chi^2[n=384] = 2.27, p=0.32, df=2, \text{Cramer's } V= 0.07$).

Table 5: Motivation of perpetrators

Perpetrators	Personal conflict	Monetary benefit	Perverseness	Family Conflict	Personal gain	Not known
Ex-boyfriend	81	20	13	0	0	0
Ex-husband	20	2	0	0	0	0
Friend	18	5	6	0	0	0
Known	25	19	25	2	0	0
Neighbour	3	8	9	1	0	0
Relative	13	5	7	3	0	0
Colleague	3	0	0	0	0	0
Unknown	0	44	46	0	4	2
Total	163	103	106	6	4	2
Unemployed	30	7.8%				
Worker	14	3.7%				
Not Known	64	16.6%				
Total	384	100%				

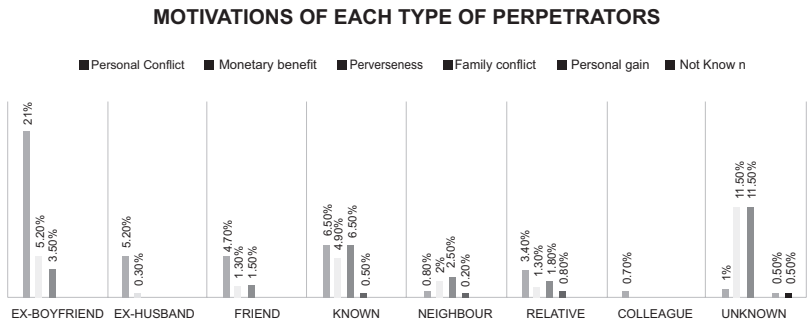


Figure 9: Perpetrator's motivations

7. Limitations of the study

The study was conducted based on the details of 384 complaints on image-based sexual abuse against women received by Police Cyber Support for Women of Bangladesh Police from November, 2022 to April, 2024. We know that a large proportion of female victims of crime are not interested to report to the police and take any legal action. Hence unreported complaints could not be reviewed here. Güss et al. (2020) asserted that, police reports do not always contain complete dataset and the quality of information might not be as expected as the information can be biased in some cases. Güss et al. (2020) also suggested that, police reports can be good source of data for victim characteristics, description of incidents, details of crime etc. Collected data from Police Cyber Support for Women of Bangladesh Police was scrutinized through consultation with the police officers and validating the documents. The reported complaints do not include the harassment of women of different socio-demographic background equally. Nevertheless, the analysis of the study demonstrates the nature and extent of image-based sexual abuse against women in Bangladesh. Moreover, it focuses on the diversity of perpetrators and their motivation of perpetration.

8. Discussion

The study explores that women of 18 to 29 years aged are more prone to be victims of IBSA. They are mostly victimized through their intimate nude or sexual pictures or videos. Both the male and female were found to be perpetrator of IBSA but male perpetrators are the highest in number. These findings echo with the gendered nature of IBSA found by many studies (Ruvalcaba and Eaton, 2020; Henry et al., 2019) which identify that, the perpetrators of IBSA are mostly male. These perpetrators are mostly well known to victim including ex-boyfriend, ex-husband, friend, known, relatives etc. In most cases, female victims were harassed by their ex-boyfriend by publishing or sharing their intimate nude or sexual pictures or videos. victims were also intimidated by using their intimate pictures or videos mostly. This indicates the sharing behaviour of consensual self-image or video among the female victims (Powell et al., 2022). The main motivation of the perpetration was personal conflict with the women and girls. The findings of the study have got similarity with the studies, Powell et al. (2022) and Ruvalcaba and Eaton (2020). They argued that, most of the perpetrators are related to female victims. But it is worth noting that, a good number of female victims experienced IBSA by their digitally altered nude or sexual images or videos. Though the study found few complaints of IBSA using the non-consensual recorded nude photos or videos, it is noteworthy. In most cases, these photos and videos were recorded to intimidate the female victims for money or any other benefit. The study revealed that these types of image or videos were used for perpetration by the neighbour, known person and relative of victim.

9. Conclusion

Sexual Harassment against women is a primitive crime. In this modern era sexual abuse perpetration against women has changed its space, facets and form using information technology and shifted to cyber space. Image-based sexual abuse perpetration is one of them. From this study, it is found that most of the female victims experienced perpetration using their intimate pictures or videos but a significant number of women are harassed by using their digitally modified nude or sexual images or videos and their non-consensual recorded nude or sexual images or videos. Any woman would not have any idea of her harassment until these pictures or videos are published or until those are sent to her. We can anticipate that these type of harassment will increase day by day with the ubiquitous use of technology. Importantly besides ex-boyfriend in most cases perpetrators are well known to the women and girls and they have a diverse range of motivations which include personal conflict with the victim, perverseness and monetary benefit mostly. The findings of the study will be able to give a perception that, in case of image-based sexual abuse perpetration against women, it is not always the case that, the women and girls share or opportunistize to get her nude or sexual photos or videos consensually. In many cases the perpetrator himself or herself perpetrate the women and girl by collecting or altering her nude or sexual photos or videos or recording them without her knowledge. This study can be a directive to the policy makers of Bangladesh in taking necessary steps in raising awareness and taking preventive measures to reduce and eradicate this type of perpetration. The role of the police in addressing technological violence against women is crucial. Therefore, as a first responder and an investigating officer of TF-GBV including IBSA, a police officer must have a proper understanding on the current trends and patterns of crime along with the relevant factors of perpetration. This article can provide in-depth knowledge on current pattern of IBSA, purposes of perpetration and demographics characteristics of potential perpetrators of IBSA in Bangladesh. The advancement of technology continues to raise the technology facilitated gender-based violence, so the police must be keen and skilled in handling technological tools and tactics to combat such multifaceted crimes. Specially in investigation as well as digital evidence collection and preservation for ensuring justice to the survivors.

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Pragmatic Community Policing Activities and its Challenges in Implementation in Bangladesh

Dr. M.A. Sobhan¹

Abstract: *Community policing is a proactive policing where the involvements of citizens are necessary and fix up the priorities of problems and solve the problem with the help of community. In almost all over the world there are community policing with different forms and structured. But all procedures and phenomena are not effective. Now, the pragmatic community policing is the most discussing issues not only in police personnel but also for social scientists. These policing practices upgrade police image, ensure community involvement and solve the community problems. In addition, it would like to focus on the challenges behind the implementation of community policing in Bangladesh and the initiation of actual community cooperation that bring legitimacy, fairness, community engagement and coordination as well as communication between police and community. However, the study is an endeavour to extract the problems through community engagement and find out probable solutions as much make the community policing pragmatic.*

Keywords: Pragmatic, police, community, policing, cooperation, endeavour

1. Introduction

Pragmatic community policing is a practical, community-centred endeavour that focuses on cooperation between law enforcers and, members of the society to proactively address safety concerns, crime prevention and elevate the standard of life. It could be exemplified by the Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy (CAPS) of USA involves law enforcing agency and society working together to have a concern about crime of the locality. In principle, the pragmatic community policing activities are exercised by neighbourhood watch programs, community policing teams, collaborative problem-solving initiatives, public safety campaigns, feedback mechanisms etc.

The aims of pragmatic community policing in Bangladesh is to strengthen the cooperation between law enforcers and society. Moreover, it enhances citizen trust and security through localized initiatives, including community meetings, youth's participation, and neighbourhood watch programs and perform proactive policing activities in hotspots. These activities foster police confidence, encourage community involvement, and enable proactive crime prevention within various social settings. This approach focuses on problem-solving and adapting police methods to fulfil

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the unique needs of each community, prioritizing local partnerships, trust-building and preventive measures. Furthermore, pragmatic community policing encourages officers to engage directly with residents, use flexible strategies to tackle root causes of crime, and work alongside social services to address broader social issues, ultimately aiming to foster safer and more cohesive communities (Goldstein, 1990; David and John, 2004; Reisig and Parks, 2004).

In addition, pragmatic community policing emphasis on practical, context-specific strategies that aligns with the problems and realities of communities. In Bangladesh, the community policing activities try to busy the citizens in crime prevention, resolving problems and conflicts, and building partnerships between police and community members. The main activities comprise are neighbourhood patrols, community participation, meetings and sharing. Besides, the establishment of community policing forums, awareness campaigns about crime and security concerns of community are being getting preference. This approach is grounded in the idea that the local communities, when empowered and involved, may substantially contribute to maintaining law and order. In spite of these challenges, community policing remains a promising strategy to enhance public safety and developed rapport between law enforcers and societies. By addressing those issues of resources, trust, and political influence, Bangladesh could make advance towards more effective and sustainable community policing initiatives (Ahmed, 2020; Hossain and Rahman, 2018).

2. Methodology

The article has made through review of literature from different booklets, books, journals, dailies, magazines, online resources and seminars. Primary and secondary sources have been used to collect data and related information. Moreover, briefing and discussions with high officials and interview and speeches of high officers of police was also recorded for the study.

3.1 Components of Community Policing

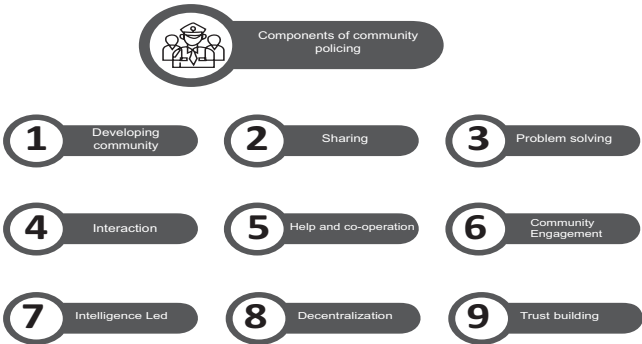


Diagram-1: Components of community policing

3.1.1 Developing Community Partnerships

In community policing the partnerships help police and communities find solutions to problem solving. It improves public trust. It changes the attitude and approaches of people towards police. It upgrades police image. Active community engagement could help in developing community partnerships that lessen the crime and criminal activities (Kelling's, 1982; Biasi, 2021).

3.1.2. Sharing.

It is reported that a section of police and public are driven by conventional mentality and mindset. A section of police officers has dominating attitude and some of them are not interested to share their power, information, resources and responsibility. This type of attitudes discourages the people to come forward to get involved in community engagement activities.

3.1.3. Problem Solving

The prime philosophy of community policing is problem solving processes. Instead of reacting policing, community policing takes initiatives to find out prior solutions for any problems for improving community safety (Goldstein, 1979; Eck and Spelman, 1987).

Furthermore, problem solving approaches had better introduce in all police actions that could give the right way in decision-making endeavors. The law enforcers are being motivated to change their approaches regarding their duties and responsibilities.

In addition, instead of, rush movements towards particulars problems by police; police and community can encourage to detect the problems and real solutions and provide services for the people. Additionally, actual problem-solving activities demands finding out alternative strategies for law and order of the society and be enhanced by community preferences (Mastrofski et al., 1995).

3.1.4. Interaction

Interaction is the base of community policing. Researchers argue that meaningful engagement improves cooperation and fosters shared responsibility for crime prevention. Congenial relations between community and police are necessary to develop trust and confidence between police and community. It could be less effective in curbing crime prevention without building relation and gain trust on community. Without having police legitimacy, police cannot be effective. Without police legitimacy, even, if the police do a great contribution in preventing crime, the people may not trust police. Through interaction, people could know the problems or limitations of police.

Besides, interaction develops trust between police and citizens. It increases police image and develops and strengthen friendship. Neighborhood meetings, school and youth programs, community liaison officers and social media as well as online forums are the vital approaches for interaction that plays a significant role in community policing (Trojanowicz and Bucqueroux, 1990).

3.1.5. Help and Co-Operation

At present police cannot do their work alone, they need help and cooperation from the members of all layers of society. In Asian countries, the police station might have the huge jurisdiction. So, due to longer area, shortages of logistical supports or manpower police cannot rush towards the place of occurrence instantly. Furthermore, defence party can be used in prevention of crime, patrolling and most importantly for intelligence gathering. In rural areas, anyone might keep important role in resolving minor disputes and providing information to police. The trained defence party members can strengthen existing police force (Cordner, 2014).

3.1.6. Community Engagement

By community engagement is meant that the active participation and involovement of community in policing activities to solve the issues. The aims of community engagement in policing are to develop trust, hasten collaboration, and involving community people in the development of public safety procedures. This phenomenon is the nucleus to community policing, because it changes the point of concentration from reactive policing to proactive problem-solving, sharing, cooperation and partnership (Skogan, 2006; Kappeler and Gaines, 2015). It is necessary to raise voice by the communities that could lead to law enforcers preferences wherever fitted (Mackenzie and Henry, 2009).

Furthermore, community engagement relies on intimate relations between law enforcers and citizen wherever law enforcers are familiar and dedicated to the desires of local communities (Fielding, 2005). Additionally, the law enforcing agencies are based on capability to interact, communicate, negotiate and persuade, rather than coercive approach (Innes, 2005). For this reason, the achievements of community policing activities are beset on the extent of community engagement in policing processes.

3.1.7. Intelligence Led

In community policing, community people act as the source of intelligence. Moreover, the meetings of community policing forum help in intelligence sharing. In the community policing activities, the community members could be employed

in the hot spots to collect intelligence and address issues collaboratively. Besides, the local committees of community policing can play a significant role in gathering intelligence and building trust. Intelligence led policing helps in minimizing resources, time, money and energy. Through utilizing intelligences, community police perform preventive measures which could provide protection for saving citizen as well as their assets (Carter, 2016; Cope, 2004).

3.1.8. Decentralization

Decentralization facilitates the vulnerable group's daily law enforcing activities which make the sentiment of a liability to them. Those groups could practice some power and contribute in problem solving and crime prevention processes. In addition, decentralization of works, duties and roles in the police department refers that police officers in field have to be capable for fulfilling the demands of community as much as do the solution judiciously and actually (Mackenzie and Henry, 2009).

3.1.9. Trust Building

Trust building means to secure the beliefs of mass people. It is necessary to have police legitimacy. It could be done through community policing as well as control and prevent crime along with community and community supports. Trust building is a centre of community engagement activities, emphasis on the creation for mutual respect, legitimacy, and collaboration police and the society. Trust encourages cooperation, facilitates information sharing, and enhances the overall effectiveness of policing strategies (Tyler, 2004; Skogan, 2006 ; Hawdon, 2008).

3.2 Challenges of Community Policing



Diagram-2: Challenges of community policing

3.2.1. Institutional Resistance and Police Culture

The main barriers of community policing are the resistance from the law enforcing agencies. It has been reported that a section of law enforcers of Bangladesh is not interested to share their power, so community engagement is difficult at some extents. Moreover, some police officers have dominating attitude to impose their decision on the citizens. This type of attitudes discourages the people to come forward to get involved in community policing activities (Islam and Rahman, 2017; Bayley and Shearing, 2001).

3.2.2. Political Intervention and Attitudes of Citizens

It revealed that the political people made an intervention in community policing tasks and tries to be the member of community policing committee and community police forum. They are tried to dominate in open house day, meeting and community policing activities. In addition, a section of citizens of community policing forum are trying to do all arbitration, negotiation and would be the centre of all policing activities at the concerned localities. Moreover, some people think that police can do each and every thing. For this, they are not showing any interest to help police and do not involve community policing phenomena.

3.2.3. Limited Resources and Funding

Limited allocations in police budget are the main barriers for implementations of community policing. Resources are needed for setting ups of offices, training, operations, and networking. In addition, the shortages of manpower is also a hindrance in implementations of community policing activities (Islam and Rahman, 2017; Ahmed et al. 2012).

3.2.4. Public Mistrust, Conventional Mindset and Communication Gaps

Both police and public are driven by conventional mentality and mindset. They are not willing to accept something new. This type of negative perception is a vital barrier to community engagement. It has been found that some people are anti police. In addition, there is a mindset that police are corrupt and they are above the accountability as well as they could not do anything. For these negative perceptions developed in people's mind about police that disappointed and discourages people to help and work with police. They never help the police; so, they avoid and discourage others to help police. It has been found that without building relation and gain trust on community, it could be less effective in curbing crime prevention. However, generally people depend on police for their security (Friedmann, 2013).

3.2.5. Socio-Cultural Barriers

Socio-Cultural barriers are also the substantial problems in community policing processes. In some cases, the vulnerable communities, the poor, the women and the specially challenged people are not included in the community policing committees. Furthermore, the limited public awareness regarding community policing are still now in Bangladesh (Bayley and Shearing, 2001).

3.2.6. Centralized Decision-Making and Bureaucratic Challenges

Community policing is proactive and decentralised approach, where the field’s officers have the authority and autonomy to take decisions from their knowledge and experience from empirical worlds. Nevertheless, in Bangladesh police, there is a hierarchy and decisions come from the top level (Friedmann, 2013).

3.3 How to overcome the challenges and make effective the community policing activities

This is fact that there are many problems in the implementations of community policing in Bangladesh. It has been finding out some ideas, opinions and pragmatic solutions to overcome the challenges and make effective the community policing activities. These are the similar and that are described below.

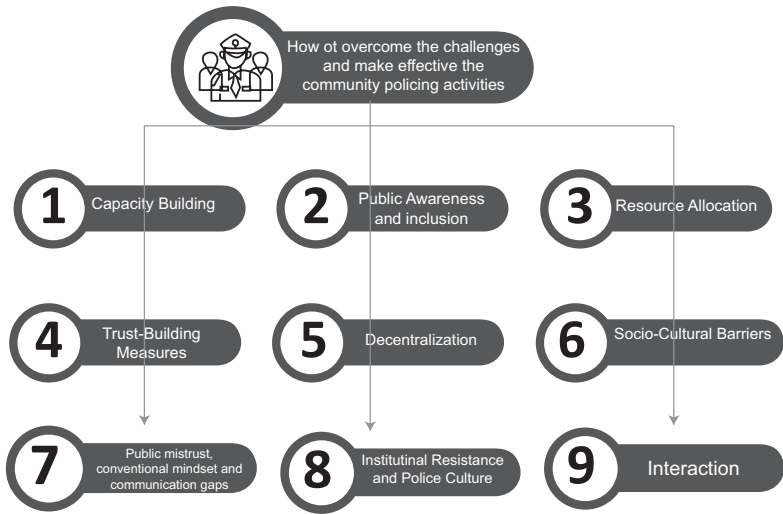


Diagram-3: How to overcome the challenges

3.3.1. Capacity Building

Inclusive training phenomena have to be taken for the officers and forces regarding community policing, skill development and problem solving. The police reform programme has been given the proposals for pragmatic skilled based training activities (Miller and Klofas, 2000). Comprehensive training programs for officers on community engagement and problem-solving are essential. The Bangladesh Police Reform Programme (2010) advocates for skill-based training to align police practices with community expectations (Miller and Klofas, 2000).

3.3.2. Public Awareness and Inclusion

Awareness building programmes could facilitate the greater participation of general mass in community engagement programme. The participations of people from all layers of the society like old, women, and marginalised group as much as financially insolvent and victimised family can make the community policing successful (Walker, 2001).

3.3.3. Resource Allocation

It is well known that without fund, policing is somewhat difficult. For doing the community policing effective, it is necessary to do an organisational change. Furthermore, for the implementations of community policing setting up offices, operation and for intelligence collection are necessary and that needs a lots of resources allocations (Islam and Rahman, 2017; Ahmed et al., 2012).

3.3.4. Trust-Building Measures

Establishment of transparency, accountability, fairness, impartiality, simple living and high thinking, interaction, the highest endeavour, performances and efficiencies of community policing could upgrade community trust and police image (Skogan, 2006; Tyler, 2004; Katz and Maguire, 2003).

3.3.5. Decentralization

Bangladesh police is certainly an organisation of centralised nature. However, the community policing is local based and decentralised. For this, the community policing and beat policing officers have to give autonomy, power and authority to perform their work then it would be increased, the expected police services, rush movement, lesser response time and the higher effectiveness of community policing (Friedmann, 2013).

3.3.6. Socio-Cultural Barriers

For making community policing fruitful, it is necessary to overcome the socio-cultural barriers. So, it needs the planned strategies which address trust issues, cultural misreading, and systemic biases that could be used to overcome socio-cultural barriers are like as building trust through transparency and accountability, cultural awareness and sensitivity training, engaging community leaders, enhancing communication, recruitment from underrepresented groups, institutionalizing community policing structures, encouraging dialogue and collaboration, addressing gender sensitivity, leveraging technology and continuous evaluation and feedback. By administering these strategies, the law enforcers can effectively overcome socio-cultural barriers, nurturing a cooperative environment that supports the goals of community policing (Rosenbaum, et al. 2011; Myhill and Quinton 2011).

3.3.7. Public Mistrust, Conventional Mindset and Communication Gaps

Overcoming public mistrust, a conventional mindset, and communication gaps is critical for the success of community policing. By addressing public mistrust, overcoming conventional mindsets and bridging communication gaps, it is possible to make effective the community policing. Furthermore, through considering these challenges holistically, community policing could transform relationships between police and the community people, improving safety and collaboration (Rosenbaum, et al. 2011; Tyler, 2004; Chan, 1997).

3.3.8. Institutional Resistance and Police Culture

Institutional resistance and entrenched police culture are substantial challenges for implementing community policing efficiently and effectively. Overcoming institutional resistance, transforming police culture and enhancing organizational adaptability could be the right ways to make pragmatism in community policing activities. By addressing institutional resistance and reshaping police culture, law enforcement agencies could create a supportive environment for the sustained success of community policing initiatives (Rosenbaum et al. 2011; Myhill and Quinton, 2011).

3.3.9. Interaction

It was revealed that there is a gap between police and community. Furthermore, there are some people who are not interested to involve policing. Therefore, it has to increase the interaction through attending the police officers in community programmes, maintaining informal relations as well as providing service to grass root people. Then, it would create a congenial atmosphere between community and police to work altogether.

3.4 Needs of Pragmatic Approaches

It revealed that there is community policing in almost all countries across the world. These are in different forms and styles. In Bangladesh, it has been found new ideas and forms of community policing also. Never the less, it is not so much effective. However, it is required to conduct a survey and research as well as find out the limitations and shortcomings behind the implementations of Community policing and Beat policing. Then, the community policing processes would be effective as much as pragmatic. Moreover, it could take a pilot projects before introduce the new ideas, concepts and styles of community policing. From this study, it has extracted some pragmatic solutions, opinions and ideas to make the community policing effective.

4. Findings

It has extracted some finding about the poor or limited outcomes of community policing in Bangladesh. At first, it comes up that there should not launched formal research before introduction and also no pilot projects had taken in this regard in Bangladesh. Moreover, limited allocations, police culture and a gap between police community were excited. Now we have to change our approaches, we have to work together, and then it is possible to solve all problems from our societies in concerted approaches.

5. Conclusion

Community policing in Bangladesh has the significant role in law and order development as well as in crime prevention, detection and conviction. There are lots of challenges are faced by the police and community in implementation of community policing in Bangladesh such as lack of awareness and understanding, cultural barriers, resource constraints, political interference, corruption and misconduct, inadequate training, urbanization and crime trends, insufficient coordination, fear of retaliation, lack of policy framework, resistance to change etc. Besides, the implementation faces significant obstacles, including limited resources, historical distrust, and inconsistent application across regions, and political influences that can affect impartiality. To address these challenges requires concerted efforts from the government, police departments, citizens and community organizations are required to foster understanding, build trust, and implement effective community policing strategies promote for the better policing practices in Bangladesh.

As the community policing in Bangladesh shows promise for improving safety and community relations, effective implementation requires overcoming challenges related to resources, training, and public trust. For this, sustained support from the government, standardized training, and a commitment from police leadership to

foster a culture of transparency and community collaboration are significant for the long-term achievements with the help of community in Bangladesh. In fine, it could say this is an endeavor for addressing the sustained government support, standardized training, adequate resources, and active community engagement to secure pragmatic, effective and sustainable community policing in Bangladesh.

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