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Sajid Karim
Md. Nazmul Islam

SYRIAN CRISIS: GEOPOLITICS AND IMPLICATIONS

Abstract

The Syrian crisis, which started in 2011 as an anti-government protest against President Bashar-al-Assad, transformed into a civil war in the first quarter of 2012. Since then, the war continued unabated resulting as one of the worst humanitarian crises after the Second World War by killing more than 470,000 people and displacing half of the Syria's total population either internally or externally. It has also dragged regional and global powers to wage proxy war in its territory and caused spill-over effects within and beyond the region. In this context, this paper is an attempt to analyse the Syrian crisis, geopolitics behind the crisis and its implications. In doing so, the paper identifies different factors, such as authoritarian nature of President Bashar-al-Assad's government, sectarian division and deteriorated socioeconomic condition within Syria, competing gas export interest from regional as well as global powers, the intervention of foreign powers as major reasons for deepening the crisis and prolonging this war. The ruling Ba'ath Party of Syria headed by President Assad, a coalition of Syrian opposition forces and their military entity, regional and global forces, namely Saudi Arabia, Iran, Turkey, Qatar, the United States, Russia, Lebanon's Shiite militia group Hezbollah and different Sunni armed extremist groups like Al-Nusra Front and Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) are the main actors of this war. The paper argues that apart from its devastating impact on Syria's socio-political and economic condition, the crisis has shaken the entire Middle East in particular and made a corrosive effect on the West's relations with both Russia and China as a whole. It has also caused the biggest wave of disorderly migration since the Second World War and facilitated the emergence of armed extremist organisations like ISIS and Al Nusra Front, which are posing serious threats to national security of Syria and beyond.

1. Introduction

The Syrian crisis, which has evolved from a peaceful protest to a violent conflict, began as an offshoot of the 2010 Arab Spring.¹ The wave of Arab unrest that started with the Tunisian revolution in December 2010, reached Syria on March 2011, when citizens of the city of Deraa gathered to demand the release of fourteen school children who were arrested and reportedly tortured after writing on a wall, the well-known slogan of the mass uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt: "The people want the

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¹ Lucy Rodgers, David Gritten, James Offer and Patrick Asare, "Conflict Background", *BBC News*, 09 October 2015.

downfall of the regime.” Government’s harsh response made the conflict spreading all over the country in a very short period of time. The conflict was initially described as a struggle between President Assad regime and opposition forces, seeking to create a democratic Syria; but over the time, the situation became far more complex and murky.² At present, the crisis in Syria is partly a civil war between the government and opposition rebel forces; a religious war pitting President Assad’s minority Alawite sect, aligned with Shiite fighters from Iran and Hezbollah in Lebanon against Sunni rebel groups; and increasingly a proxy war featuring Russia and Iran against the United States (US) and its allies.³ Since 2011, the conflict has so far killed 470,000 people,⁴ displaced nearly half of the country’s total population, resulted huge irregular and disorderly migration, raised tension among major global powers and facilitated the emergence of extremely capable notorious *Jihadist* organisations like Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and Jabhat-al-Nusra Front, whose existence now pose a very real immediate and long-term threat to national security of Syria as well as potential danger for regional and international security.

Against this backdrop, this paper is an attempt to analyse the Syrian crisis, geopolitics behind the crisis and its implications. In doing so, the paper will try to seek answers to the following questions: What is the background of Syrian crisis? Who are the key actors of the crisis? What are their interests and what role are they playing? What is the geopolitics behind the Syrian crisis? What are the implications of the crisis at national, regional and global level? Efforts have also been made to find out whether the Syrian crisis has any direct or indirect impact on Bangladesh. For the convenience of discussion, the paper is divided into five sections including introduction and conclusion. Following the introduction, section two discusses the genesis of Syrian crisis. Geopolitics of Syrian crisis has been highlighted in section three. Section four analyses the implications of the crisis by linking the internal factors of Syria with regard to regional and global power-politics. Finally, a conclusion has been drawn. The paper is qualitative in nature based on both primary (Key Informant Interviews) and secondary data (e.g., books, journals, news clipping, seminar papers and internet based articles, etc). It limits incorporating data no later than 01 June 2016.

2. Genesis of the Crisis

The genesis and the background of the crisis are very complicated since several state and non-state actors are involved in direct and indirect manner at different levels in this complex geopolitics mix. This section is not an exhaustive of definitive account of the entire story rather a brief description of what was the

² Ted Galen Carpenter, “Tangled Web: The Syrian Civil War and Its Implication”, *Mediterranean Quarterly*, Vol. 24, No. 01, Winter 2013.

³ Kathy Gilsinan, “The Confused Person’s Guide to the Syrian Civil War: A Brief Primer”, *The Atlantic*, 29 October 2015.

⁴ Ian Black, “Report on Syria Conflict Finds 11.5% of Population Killed or Injured”, *The Guardian*, 11 February 2016.

situation before the crisis and what were the dominating factors in the pre-conflict scenario. This section also analyses how the conflict has transformed into the form of counterinsurgency and finally a violent civil war.

For better understanding, it is imperative to define counterinsurgency and civil war at first. Here in this study, counterinsurgency is defined as government's campaign to restore order and ensure its own reach throughout the geographical confines of the state against armed opponents who aims at overthrowing the government. In this case, counterinsurgency in Syria describes Assad regime's attempts to regain control over the whole of its territory, an objective which was abandoned by the fall of 2012.⁵ In contrast, civil war implies controlling the entire territory within the state is no longer feasible, because the armed opposition has become strong enough to stop government's advancement consistently.⁶ In the case of Syria, the insurgency transitioned to a civil war when the opposition forces successfully overran regime's positions in the northern region and in the vicinity of Damascus in 2012.

2.1 *Background*

The current conflict that sparked in 2011 is not the lone incident of conflict in Syrian history. Syria fell to the Ottoman Turks in 1516 and remained a part of Ottoman Empire for four centuries. During this period, Syria witnessed massive deterioration in economic, social and political fields. In 1918, Arab troops led by Emir Feisal and supported by British forces captured Damascus by ending 400 years of Ottoman rule. But in July 1920, French forces occupied Damascus, forcing Feisal to flee abroad. In 1940 during the Second World War, Syria came under the control of the Axis powers after France fell to German forces. In 1941, the British army along with its French allies occupied the country and promised full independence after the end of the war. In 1946, Syria became independent when the last of the French troops left Syria after much protest by the Syrians.

Since its independence, the average lifespan of a government in Syria was less than one year, till Hafez al-Assad captured power in 1970.⁷ The senior Assad provided political stability to Syria and developed close relations with the then Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and Iran. His anti-West, anti-Israel, pro-Palestinian policy reflected the sentiments of Syrians who despised Western support for Israel. On 10 June 2000, President Hafez al-Assad died of a heart attack and his son, Bashar al-Assad was elected President on 10 July 2000. Bashar was partly educated in the West and was perceived to be a liberal. He started to take some positive steps towards liberalising the country, but the well embedded Ba'ath party veterans restrained his hands. While citizens were at first hopeful

⁵ Joseph Holliday, "The Assad Regime: From Counterinsurgency to Civil War", *Middle East Security Report 8*, Institute for the Study of War, March 2013, p. 09.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ V. P. Haran, "Roots of the Syrian Crisis", *IPCS Special Report*, No. 181, March 2016, p. 2.

that the young Assad would usher in a more democratic government, he quickly followed in his father's footsteps — leading with an iron fist, cracking down the dissents and protests and imprisoning political dissidents.⁸ There were many evidences that during Assad's tenure in the office, critics were being imprisoned, domestic media was tightly controlled and economic policies often benefited the elites. The country's human rights record was also not promising at that time.⁹ President Assad maintained its hold on power through usual measures employed by a dictatorship by preventing free speech and denying political expressions. As anti-government protests grew throughout the nation in the spring of 2011, violent clashes eventually broke out which President Assad tried to make silent with brutal force. This prompted the protestors to form groups and eventually to arm themselves against the regime.

In addition to growing political tension, it is believed that the crisis in Syria is in some ways the inevitable re-balancing of power along the ethnic and religious lines. In spite of the fact that Syria is a country of 22.5 million people with a Sunni Muslim majority (74 per cent), the country is run by the member of a minority sect known as Alawite in which President Assad belongs.¹⁰ There were strong allegations that President was giving Alawites special privileges which instigated hatred among some Sunnis and other groups against the Alawites in general. Opposition remains strongest among the poorer section of the majority Sunni community who are deprived of many of their basic and fundamental rights. Along with it, deteriorated social and economic condition is also blamed for the emergence of the crisis. Under the sanctions imposed by the Arab League, the US and the European Union (EU), Syria's two most vital sectors- tourism and oil suffered the most. According to International Monetary Fund (IMF) report, Syria's economy contracted by two per cent in 2011. Unemployment was high at that time and access to basic needs including food, water, electricity and medical supplies was very limited.¹¹ As time went by, corruption deepened through creating a new upper class of people from all religions; who took advantage of the situation and got closer to the Alawite regime in order to further their businesses. This squeezed the traditional middle class and deprived them of much of their income, fomenting anger and hostility towards the regime and towards the Alawites in general.¹²

It is also argued that competing gas interest and future of energy extraction among the countries of the Middle East as well as Russia and the US also contributed to the Syrian crisis. Middle Eastern countries possess about 41 per cent of natural gas reserves of the world, among which Iran has 18.2 per cent and Qatar has 13.4

⁸ Jess Mchugh, "Causes of 2011 Syrian Civil War: Timeline of Five Years of Airstrikes, Bombings, Key Dates And Events", *International Business Times*, 14 March 2016.

⁹ In 2011, Syria ranked 119th among 176 countries of the world in Human Development Index.

¹⁰ Details of demographic features of Syria have been incorporated in section 3.

¹¹ "Syria: Origins of the Uprising", *BBC News*, 08 June 2012.

¹² Nadim Nassar, "What Caused Syria's Civil War?", *World Watch Monitor*, 16 August 2013.

per cent.¹³ Most of the regional and foreign belligerents in the Syrian war are gas-exporting countries with interests in one of the two competing pipeline projects (a graphical representation has been incorporated in Annex B) that seeks to cross Syrian territory to deliver either Qatari or Iranian gas to Europe.¹⁴ In 2009, Qatar's proposal to build a pipeline through Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Syria and Turkey to import its huge reserve of natural gas to Europe was turned down by President Bashar al-Assad. It was believed that President Assad was ostensibly hoping to protect the virtual monopoly enjoyed by its ally, Russia, over the European gas market when he turned down Qatar's proposal.¹⁵ However, at the same time President Assad accepted Iran's proposal to build the Iran-Iraq-Syria pipeline that would pump Iranian gas to Europe. The announcement of the Iran-Iraq-Syria pipeline deal came in 2011, which was welcomed by Russian but not by Qatar. After the inception of the Syrian conflict in 2011, it was reported that Qatar had spent approximately US\$3 billion between 2011 and 2013 to oust the Assad regime.¹⁶ Thus, competition centring gas export and energy extraction among the regional and global powers influenced immensely in consolidation of Syrian crisis.

Water crisis in Syria also worked as a catalyst to trigger the violence in 2011. Though it may sound remote and implausible to many, but there were evidences that people, who were forced to migrate from rural areas to urban centre due to water crisis played an active role in the protest against the government at the beginning of the conflict. Syria experienced a devastating drought in 2006, which had severe impact on more than 1.3 million people. That drought was responsible for killing up to 85 per cent of livestock in some regions and forced people of 160 villages to abandon their residence due to crop failure.¹⁷ Water scarcity due to prolonged drought coupled with internal migration, poverty and unemployment created socio-economic instability. Weak response from the government and international community to address the crisis further triggered violent protest against the government.

There were several blunders on the part of the Syrian government to mitigate the crisis when it began in March 2011 and those faltering and counterproductive responses were responsible to escalate the conflict all over the country. The arrest of the children in Daraa, which ignited the anti-government protest in Syria was insensitive and strongly condemnable. The government's handling of the protests

¹³ Stasa Salacanian, "Oil and Gas reserves: How Long will They Last?", *BQ Magazine*, 01 February 2015, available at <http://www.bq-magazine.com/energy/2015/02/oil-and-gas-reserves-in-the-gcc>, accessed on 27 May 2016.

¹⁴ Mitchell A. Orenstein and George Romer, "Putin's Gas Attack: Is Russia Just in Syria for the Pipelines?", *Foreign Affairs*, 14 October 2015.

¹⁵ Harald Viersen, "Is Natural Gas Fueling the Syrian Conflict?", *Muftah*, 15 October 2015, available at <http://muftah.org/is-natural-gas-fueling-the-syrian-conflict/#.V0bGBvI97rd>, accessed on 26 May 2016.

¹⁶ Roula Khalaf and Abigail Fielding Smith, "Qatar bankrolls Syrian revolt with cash and arms", *Financial Times*, 16 May 2013.

¹⁷ Michael Shank and Emily Wirzba, "How Climate Change Sparked the Crisis in Syria", *US News*, 13 September 2013.

was also inept. Syria had a police force of a few thousands only, which necessitated deployment of security forces with lack of proper training on internal disturbances. Assad regime also used the notorious sectarian, pro-regime militias, known as the *Shabiha*, or “ghosts” in Arabic. These civilian militias, comprised overwhelmingly of Assad’s own minority Alawite sect; were often sent into largely Sunni areas to breakup protests, frequently killing unarmed protesters.¹⁸ There were many instances where excessive force was used, which created mass grievance among the common people. Tanks were sent to troubled areas; and naturally, this was played up in the media. What the government did not explain is that, it did not have sufficient armoured personnel carriers and hence sent tanks, a safe means of transport for soldiers to reach troubled areas.¹⁹ The soldiers were under pressure since there were several cases of rebels abducting their family members, relatives and sending word that they would be released only if they defect. The government’s public relations efforts were totally ineffective. In the initial stages at least over 40 per cent of the casualties were on the government’s side – armed forces, intelligence personnel and government supporters which were not highlighted in the media.²⁰ As a result, opposition forces grabbed the opportunity to accuse the government forces for most of the casualties, which alienated President Assad from the international community and portrayed him as a ruthless leader.

Not only that, the Assad regime had tended to force civilians out of insurgent-held areas; rather than clearing insurgents out of population centres. It was believed that by displacing restive populations, President Assad did more to escalate the conflict than to contain it.²¹ In addition, President Assad’s over dependency on a handful amount of trustworthy military units severely undercut his regime’s available combat power. Assad relied heavily on elite forces and deployed only small and trustworthy detachments from most conventional brigades. Taken together, Assad relied on approximately one-third of the Syrian Army’s doctrinal combat power to conduct his counterinsurgency campaign.²² This had limited the government force’s ability to control all of Syria simultaneously and to suppress the insurgency which subsequently transformed into a civil war.

2.2 Progression of the Crisis

As mentioned earlier, the crisis in Syria began in the southern city of Deraa in March 2011 when locals gathered to demand the release of fourteen school children, who were arrested and reportedly tortured after writing on a wall the well-known slogan of the popular uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt: “The people want the downfall of

¹⁸ Asaad Al-Saleh and Loren White, *Dissecting an Evolving Conflict: The Syrian Uprising and the Future of the Country*, Institute for Social Policy and Understanding and the New American Foundation, 2013.

¹⁹ V. P. Haran, “Roots of the Syrian Crisis”, *IPCS Special Report*, No. 181, March 2016, p. 12.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Joseph Holliday, *op. cit.*

²² *Ibid.*

the regime.”²³ The government’s harsh response deteriorated the situation. Within days, the unrest had spiralled out of control of the local authorities. The Anti-government rebellion got momentum when seven defecting Syrian officer formed Free Syrian Army (FSA), composed of defected Syrian Armed Forces officers and soldiers, aiming “to bring down the system (the Assad government)” with united opposition forces.²⁴ The Syrian National Council, a coalition of anti-government groups based in Turkey, was formed on 23 August 2011. By October 2011, the FSA started to receive active support from Turkey, who allowed the rebel army to operate its command and headquarters from the country’s southern Hatay Province close to the Syrian border, and its field command from inside Syria. In January 2012, Jabhat-al-Nusra – the new al-Qaeda franchise in Syria announced its formation, with Abu Mohammad al-Joulani as its head. Within a very short period of time, this group also embraced violence and terror against government forces as well as civilians.

As part of international effort to mitigate the crisis, Kofi Annan was appointed as the United Nations (UN)-Arab league Joint Special Representative for Syria on 23 February 2012. However, Mr. Annan failed to implement any sustainable peace plan for Syrian conflict and officially resigned on 02 August 2012. The situation in Syria degenerated during the summer of 2012 and the conflict transitioned into a civil war, when opposition forces successfully overran regimes’ positions in the northern region and closed to Damascus.²⁵ For the first time, a UN official, Herve Ladsous, UN’s head of peacekeeping, proclaimed Syria to be in a state of civil war on 12 June 2012.²⁶ The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) also declared Syria in the state of a civil war on 15 July 2012.²⁷

In April 2013, something happened that ultimately proven to be catastrophic for Syria in the long run: al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI), also known as Islamic State in Iraq (ISI) got separated from its central leadership. Abu Bakar al-Baghdadi, the leader of ISI, announced the creation of Islamic State of Iraq and Levant (ISIL) by merging his forces in Iraq and Syria. The leaders of al-Qaeda and al-Nusra both rejected the move. ISIL was formally created by absorbing al-Nusra fighters and territory in northern and eastern Syria in the mid of 2013. In February 2014, ISIL, which changed its name to IS, was formally exiled from al-Qaeda, making it and Jabhat al-Nusra into enemies.²⁸ Thenceforth, the *Jihadist* group proclaimed *Caliphate* in some parts of Syria on 29 June 2014. The competition between these two groups further deteriorated the already worsen situation of Syria.

²³ “Guide: Syria Crisis”, *BBC News*, 09 April 2012.

²⁴ “Free Syrian Army Founded by Seven Officers to Fight the Syrian Army”, *Syria Comment*, 29 July 2011.

²⁵ Joseph Holliday, *op. cit.*, p. 09.

²⁶ “Syria in Civil War, Says UN Official Herve Ladsous”, *BBC News*, 12 June 2012.

²⁷ “Syria in Civil War, Red Cross Says”, *BBC News*, 15 July 2012.

²⁸ Zack Beauchamp, “Syria’s Civil War: A Brief History”, *VOX Explainers*, 02 October 2015, available at <http://www.vox.com/2015/9/14/9319293/syrian-refugees-civil-war>, accessed on 24 May 2016.

The crisis got renewed attention in the mid of August 2014 with the allegation of the government's chemical weapon use on civilians which prompted the international community to consider the issue of intervention more seriously. The attack in the Ghouta region of the Damascus countryside on 21 August 2013 was marked as the watershed moment in the attitude of the US and its allies towards Syrian conflict. The US accused President Assad's force of killing 1,429 people in a poison-gas attack on 21 August incident which was denied by him. Assad blamed the rebels for this deadly attack. A joint statement²⁹ from the US and ten other nations called for a strong international response whereas Russian President Vladimir Putin restated his opposition to any sort of strike.³⁰ The tension between the US and Russia also escalated centring this chemical attack. In addition, differences among the members of the UN Security Council hindered any attempt to create a robust and unified effort to end the violence. Along with China, Russia vetoed three Security Council resolutions condemning the regime's violence.³¹

On 23 September 2014, the US, joined by five Arab allies,³² launched an intense campaign of airstrikes, bombings and cruise-missile attacks against the ISIS and another militant group in Syria – marking the first US military intervention in Syria since the start of that country's crisis in 2011.³³ In March 2015, a coalition, named Army of Conquest was formed by Islamist rebel factions mainly active in the the Idlib Governorate, with some factions active in the Hama and Latakia Governorates. The coalition had eight members³⁴ including Jabhat al-Nusra Front which was actively supported by Turkey and Saudi Arabia. Another major turning event of Syrian civil war was Russia's direct military intervention. On an official request by the Syrian government, Russia launched its first air strike in Syria on 30 September 2015. The areas those were targeted for the airstrike appeared to be held by groups opposed to ISIS and the Syrian government.

Global powers initiated a peace process in Vienna on 30 October 2015 known as the talks of the International Syria Support Group (ISSG) in which Iran took part for the first time. Unfortunately, participants of the talk failed to reach on a common ground regarding the future of Syrian president Basar al-Assad.³⁵ However, the second round of the peace talk, which was held on 14 November 2015, resulted in a peace plan for Syria and was attended by all the all 20 members of ISSG. This time, Russia and

²⁹ This joint statement was issued by the US, Australia, Canada, France, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Turkey and the UK.

³⁰ "Syria Crisis: Russia and US no Closer", *BBC News*, 06 September 2013.

³¹ Asaad Al-Saleh and Loren White, *op. cit.*

³² Five Arab allies participating in the strikes with the USA were Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar and Jordan.

³³ "US, Arab Allies Launch First Wave of Strikes in Syria", *Fox News*, 23 September 2014.

³⁴ Ahrar ash-Sham, al-Nusra Front, Liwa al-Haqq, Jaysh al-Sunna (Its Hama branch merged with Ahrar ash-Sham), Ajnad al-Sham, Imam Bukhari Jamaat, Sham Legion, Turkistan Islamic Party, Jund al-Aqsa (former member).

³⁵ This peace talk was also attended by the UAE, Qatar, Jordan, Egypt, China, France, Germany, Italy, as well as the EU.

the US again remained at discord about a possible role of the Syrian president Bashar al-Assad in any political transition of Syria. The UN again announced the formal start of peace talk for Syria on 01 February 2016 and urged world powers to push for a ceasefire. However, on 03 February 2016, only two days after the formal beginning, the peace talk was suspended by the UN envoy Staffan de Mistura until 25 February 2016. The UN Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2268 on 26 February 2016 that demanded all parties to comply with the terms of a US-Russian deal on a "cessation of hostilities".³⁶ However, the truce involved Syrian government and rebel forces, but not the armed militant groups like ISIS or al-Nusra Front. In spite of the ceasefire, the conflict between government forces, rebel groups and *Jihadist* groups still continued. A total of 135 people were killed in the first week of the truce in areas covered by the cessation of hostilities agreement. It was also observed that 552 people were killed within the same period in the areas not covered by the truce.³⁷ However, in a welcome development, the US announced ceasefire for Aleppo, one of the most war torn cities of Syria, after successful talks with Russia on 04 May 2016. Though, the ceasefire offers some ray of hope to the beleaguered Syrians, but violent conflict still going on in many parts of the country where people are getting killed regularly. It is unfortunate that there exist many stumbling blocks which are restricting the conflicting parties to make any ceasefire or peace accord successful. Some of those obstacles can be enumerated as – presence of a complex web of belligerent parties who share a long history of mistrust and animosity, geopolitical complexity and interest of regional and global powers, the presence of religious extremist entities, etc. This whole gamut of internal and external factors is making it nearly impossible to implement any peace deal in Syria which is causing the worst form of the sufferings for the people of the country.

3. Geopolitics of the Syrian Crisis

Syria's geophysical location coupled with its unique demographic features largely influences the country's ongoing crisis. Without comprehending the geopolitics behind the Syrian crisis, it is extremely difficult to understand the current situation and its implications especially in regional and global sphere. The country is located in the Middle East region that has been world's one of the most turbulent regions throughout the history. It is a Southwest Asian country lies at the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea and north of the Arabian Peninsula. Syria is bordered by Lebanon and Israel on the west, Turkey on the north, Iraq on the east and Jordan on the south. The country's centrality in the region and its proximity to some of the world's largest energy-rich countries has made it a crucial factor in the region. Syria's position has also made it a decisive factor in the prospect of two of the key gas pipelines: Iran-Iraq-Syria pipeline (the "Islamic Pipeline") and the Qatar-Saudi Arabia-Jordan-Syria-Turkey pipeline (the "Qatar-Turkey Pipeline") to supply gas from Iran and Qatar to Europe. It

³⁶ "Syria Conflict: Attacks Reported as Truce Comes into Effect", *BBC News*, 27 February 2016.

³⁷ "Syria Ceasefire: '135 Killed' in First Week of Truce", *Al Jazeera*, 06 March 2016.

is worth mentioning that Europe has significant gas energy needs and a quarter of it comes from Russia, which is one of the important allies of Syria.



Apart from the geophysical factors, Syria is also a key strategic player for Iran and Russia to uphold and secure their interest in the Middle East. Russia desires a stronghold of Syrian Mediterranean port Tartus where the former has its only naval installation outside of its territory. Iran views Syria a secured direct supply line to Hezbollah, the Lebanon based Shiite militia and a tool for Tehran to expand its influence within the “Shiite Crescent” — the growing number of Shiite regimes loyal to the Islamic Republic.³⁹ In contrary, the regime’s well-established hostility with Israel and bitter relationship with Gulf States has further added a new layer of complexity into the politics of the Middle East. Moreover, Syria’s closeness to Russia and Iran and its assistance to Hezbollah have put it odd with the USA.

Moreover, the unique demographic feature of Syria also bears great significance. According to the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) World Factbook 2011⁴⁰, the total Population of Syria is 22.5 million with diverse ethnic and religious groups. Ethnicity in Syria includes Arab-90 per cent, Kurds-8 to 10 per cent, Armenians-1 per cent and others-1 per cent. In terms of religion, Syria’s population is 90 per cent Muslim (74 per

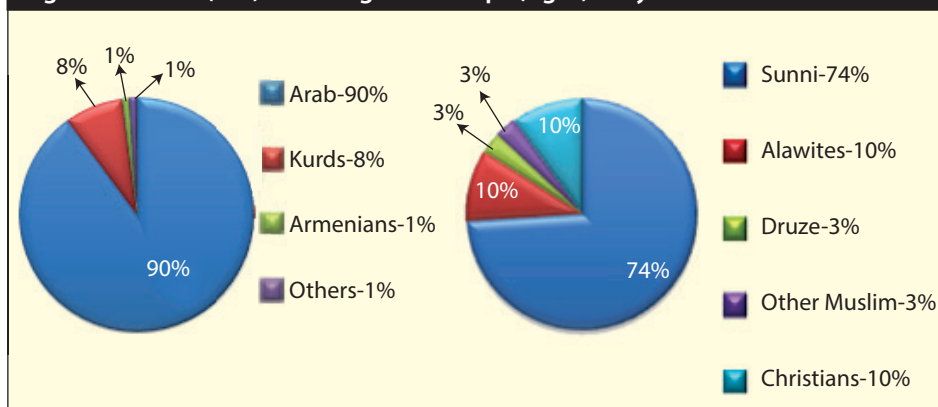
³⁸ Source: “Syria”, *Operation World*, available at <http://www.operationworld.org/syri>, accessed on 10 June 2016.

³⁹ Joseph Hughes, “The Geopolitics of the Syrian Civil War”, *Fair Observer: Make Sense of the World*, 20 July 2014,

⁴⁰ Central Intelligence Agency, *The World Factbook*, 2011.

cent Sunni and 10 per cent Alawites, 3 per cent Druze, 3 per cent others including Ismaili Islam and Ithnaashari) and 10 per cent Christian. There is also a small (4,500) Syrian Jewish community. These ethnic and religious breakdowns are another part of Syria's complexity.

Figure 1: Ethnic (left) and Religious Groups (right) in Syria⁴¹



In addition to socio-economic and geophysical factors, involvement of different actors and interest of different stakeholders have also influenced hugely to Syrian crisis. The ongoing crisis in Syria contains myriad rebel groups.⁴² Because of that, as well as involvement of different local, national, regional and global actors, it is extremely difficult to identify two distinct sides of Syrian conflict. Although it is convenient to identify the current Ba'athist government headed by President Bashar al-Assad and the coalition opposition forces as the main actors of the war; however there are other actors, potentially more important than those engaged in the violence and which at the end might play a larger role than those presently fighting for control.⁴³ Some analysts have divided the combatant groups of Syria into four broad categories: loyalists (regime forces and their supporters); rebels (from "moderate" to Islamist); Kurdish groups (who aren't currently seeking to overthrow Assad, but have won autonomy in north-eastern Syria, which they have fought ISIS to protect); and finally, foreign powers.⁴⁴ From another source of 2013, it was estimated that 13 "major" rebel groups were operating in Syria; and counting smaller ones, the US Defence Intelligence Agency puts the number of groups at much higher than that.⁴⁵ Meanwhile, the number of other countries involved to various degrees has grown; including the US and Russia. The following is an attempt

⁴¹ Compiled from CIA Factbook 2011.

⁴² David E. Cunningham, "Veto Players and Civil War in Syria", in *The Political Science of Syrian War*, Project on Middle East Political Science (POMEPS) Briefings 22, Washington DC, December 2013, p. 26.

⁴³ Mark Bound, "Syrian Conflict Study: Introduction", *Research Gate*, 20 July 2013.

⁴⁴ Kathy Gilsinan, "The Confused Person's Guide to the Syrian Civil War: A brief primer", *The Atlantic*, 29 October 2015, available at <http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2015/10/syrian-civil-war-guide-isis/410746/>, accessed on 26 May 2016.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

to discuss the key actors who have been directly involved in the geopolitics of Syrian crisis.

The government of Ba'ath party headed by President Bashar al-Assad remains at the crux of the Syrian conflict which has a number of political and material resources at its disposal and enjoys qualitative military supremacy. Despite defection, regime forces remain essentially intact.⁴⁶ The regime suffered an initial setback at the beginning of the conflict due to strong opposition from the rebels backed by regional and Western powers. Radical Islamist militants also waged war against the government by declaring *Caliphate* in some part of the country further added tremendous pressure to the government. However, with the wholehearted support from Iran and Russia along with military support from Lebanon based Shiite militia group Hezbollah, the Assad government seems well situated to continue fighting and prevent the opposition to take over state power. Assad government is also receiving support from Iraq and China.

The Syrian opposition, which is currently waging a war to oust Assad government is multi-layered, and its power diffuse. The opposition consists of political and military groupings, each of which is divided along multiple, crosscutting, fault lines. They are termed as "insiders" and "outsiders"; "establishment" figures and emerging grassroots leaders; secular, Islamist, and ethno-sectarian factions and combatant groups.⁴⁷ The military component of the opposition consists of an array of armed elements which vary according to their size, combat experience and effectiveness, sources of and access to weaponry, locus of operations, political orientation and relationship to the communities in which they are active. Some militias maintain direct ties with the FSA. Others do not, but nonetheless identify themselves as members of the FSA.⁴⁸ At the beginning of the conflict, the opposition forces formed a coalition named National Council of Syria in August 2011 to topple down the government and establish a modern, civil and democratic state.⁴⁹ Later, it unified with several other opposition groups to form the National Coalition for Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces, commonly named as the Syrian National Coalition. This National Coalition was recognised by many of the regional and world powers, namely Gulf States, the US, France, the UK, the EU etc. as the sole legitimate representative of the Syrian people and was also granted Syrian seat of the Arab league.

Apart from national actors, foreign actors from outside have also been playing very crucial role in the course of the Syrian conflict. Among all external actors Iran's role needs special attention as the country is deeply engaged in this conflict from the beginning and is one of the few allies of President Assad government within the region. Syria has been Iran's closest state ally since the Islamic Republic's inception

⁴⁶ John Calabrese, "The Regional Implications of the Syria Crisis", *Middle East Institute*, 21 December 2012.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ "Q&A: Syrian opposition alliance", *BBC News*, 16 November 2011.

and has been the crucial link between Iran and Lebanese Hezbollah, acting as a hub to transport personnel, weapons and finances.⁵⁰ Iran considers Assad government as an indispensable ally and equates Syria's security with Iran's security.⁵¹ As a result, Iranian assistance to Syrian government gradually increased, both in magnitude and visibility with the advent of the conflict. Tehran helped Syria to circumvent Western and Arab sanctions and extended credit lines and other payment facilities to the country's ministries and facilities.⁵² Most importantly, Tehran provided an uninterrupted flow of weaponry to Assad's forces through the main civilian and military airports of Damascus and helped recognise Syria's battered conventional military airports for urban warfare.⁵³ In addition, Syria's proximity to one of Iran's enemy, Israel, also influences Iran to continue its wholehearted support to Assad regime.

Another important ally of President Assad in the war is President Vladimir Putin as Syria has nurtured a very warm relations with the Russia since independence. Syria has a strong political, economic and defence link with Russia. To Russia, Syrian crisis was a crucial one, since it was unacceptable for Russia to see Syria going down and facing the same fate as Libiya, another key Russian ally.⁵⁴ Therefore, Moscow's approach to the Syrian conflict has been driven by its determination to prevent a repetition of the Libyan intervention and to avoid abandoning a long-term client-state.⁵⁵ Russia's support for Assad government also derived from its intention to secure its military presence in Syria *vis-à-vis* the Middle East and oppose the influence of the US over the region.⁵⁶ Syria has also been a big market for Russian military exports.⁵⁷ At the initial stage, Russia's multiple vetoes⁵⁸ to the UN Security Council worked as strong diplomatic shield for President Assad from world outrage. As the civil war progressed, Russian support for Assad government became more and more vivid which reached its tipping point on 30 September 2015, when Russia launched its first air strike in Syria against Assad's oppositions and rebel forces and elevated herself as one of the most important actors of the war.

Hezbollah, the Lebanon based Shiite militia group, has long been an ally of the Ba'ath Party government of Syria and is currently helping President Assad in his

⁵⁰ Joseph Holliday, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

⁵¹ Emile Hokayem, "Iran, the Gulf States and the Syrian Civil War", *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy*, December 2014-January 2015, The International Institute for Strategic Studies, pp. 71-72.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ Phil Sands, "Iran's Secret Night Flights to Arm Syria's Assad Revealed", *The National World*, 27 October 2013, available at <http://www.thenational.ae/world/middle-east/irans-secret-night-flights-to-arm-syrias-assad-revealed>, accessed on 22 May 2016.

⁵⁴ Stuart Gottlieb, "Syria and the Demise of the Responsibility to Protect", *The National Interest*, 05 November 2013, available at <http://nationalinterest.org/commentary/syria-the-demise-the-responsibility-protect-9360>, accessed on 22 May 2016.

⁵⁵ John Calabrese, *op. cit.*

⁵⁶ Currently, Russia has one naval base in Tartus and one airbase in Khmeimim, Syria. The country has also recently decided to build a military encampment in the ancient Syrian town of Palmyra.

⁵⁷ "Syria Crisis: Where Key Countries Stand", *BBC News*, 30 October 2015.

⁵⁸ Russia along with China vetoed four times on UN Security Council resolution regarding Syria.

campaign against Syrian opposition forces. The US claimed that Jayas-al-Shabi, the loyalist of Assad government, was created and is maintained by Hezbollah and Iran's Revolutionary Guard, by virtue of financing, weapons, training and advice. According to Israeli intelligence sources, Hezbollah is working to forge loyalist government militias into a 100,000-strong irregular army to fight alongside the government's conventional forces.⁵⁹

In contrary, from the beginning of the conflict, Saudi Arabia has been working closely with opposition rebel forces to topple President Bashar al-Assad. The country's strong opposition to the Assad regime is rooted in a combination of personal and geopolitical motivations. Late King Abdullah accused Bashar al-Assad for the assassination of Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri, a close friend of him. Moreover, from a strategic perspective, Saudi Arabia aims to have a strong hand in developing a "new Syria", i.e. one that is not aligned with Iran.⁶⁰ There are allegations that the Saudis are currently providing military and financial assistance to several rebel groups, including those with extremist ideologies to oust President Assad.

Like Saudi Arabia, the Turkish government has been a staunch critic of President Assad since the start of the uprising in Syria. The country is a key supporter of the Syrian opposition and has faced the burden of hosting almost two million refugees.⁶¹ The country has also been referred by Reuters as a major sponsor of the insurgency against President Bashar al-Assad.⁶² However, the Syrian crisis has also posed serious security threat to Turkey as the Kurdistan Workers' Party and its offshoot in Syria; the Democratic Union party is operating freely in south-eastern Turkey-Syria border and recruiting new fighters for its campaign against Turkey. After a terrorist attack in July 2015, Turkey agreed to let the US-led coalition forces to use her air bases for strikes on Syria against ISIS. Conversely, Israel's role in the Syrian civil war is somewhat limited compared to other neighbouring countries, though hostility between these two nations goes back to the countries' creation in the late 1940s, driven by Syria's support for the Palestinian resistance against the new Jewish state. Syria and Israel have no diplomatic relations and both of the countries fought three major wars since 1948. Nevertheless, Israel prefers Assad regime's fall because they regard Iran-Hezbollah-Syria alliance as the gravest threat to Israel. However, Israel is also well aware of the fact that possible demise of the Assad regime might present serious risks for Israel in the form of spill-over of hostilities to the Syria-Israel border and possible attack of radical Islamist in Israeli territory. Because of this ambiguity, Israel's role in the Syrian war is very obscure.

Syria's closeness to Russia and Iran, assistance to Hezbollah, 'anti-Israel' policies and suspected nuclear programme put it at odds with the US. Syria under

⁵⁹ "Let's Try a Less Awkward Embrace", *The Economist*, 23 March 2013.

⁶⁰ John Calabrese, *op. cit.*

⁶¹ "Syria Crisis: Where Key Countries Stand", *BBC News*, 30 October 2015.

⁶² "Backed By Russian Jets, Syrian Army Closes in Aleppo", *The World Post*, 02 April 2016.

the Ba'athist party has been seen as a thorn in the flesh of the US for over 50 years.⁶³ Right from the beginning of the conflict, the US had been accusing President Assad responsible for widespread atrocities and demanding his resignation from the presidency. The US supports Syria's main opposition alliance, the National Coalition and has been providing limited military assistance to the "moderate" rebels. Since September 2014, it has begun air strikes on ISIS and other *Jihadist* groups in Syria as part of an international coalition.

In addition to the aforementioned actors, role and activities of *Jihadist* groups also need special attention as emergence of those groups and their subsequent declaration of *Caliphate* have added a new dimension to the Syrian crisis and aggravated hostility and tension among different actors. The ascendance of the al-Nusra Front and subsequent emergence of ISIS have profoundly affected the future of Syrian crisis and exposed the contradictory position of each regional power. These groups are now well-poised to mount a grave challenge to the stability of the Syrian state in the long run.⁶⁴ Although they operate as separate entities and show a hostile attitude to each other, both groups have one prime objective to overthrow Assad government and establish an Islamic *Caliphate* which will extend beyond Syria's borders.

4. Implications of the Crisis

The implications of different wars might be dissimilar at different levels, but every war is similar in one aspect that it brings countless casualties, ineffable destruction and endless brutalities. The Syrian crisis, which has later transformed into a civil war is not an exception from this regard and so far has negatively impacted not only the domestic order of Syria but also threatened to make the regional and global stability vulnerable. In this regard, this section basically tries to elucidate and analyse the impact of the conflict through linking the internal factors of Syria in regard to regional and global politics. Though Bangladesh is not directly affected by the crisis, but it has some indirect effects on the interests of Bangladesh as the country's foreign reserve largely depends on remittance from the the migrant workers in the Middle East. For this reason, the impact of Syrian crisis on Bangladesh has also been discussed in the latter part of this section in brief.

4.1 National Security and Political Integrity of Syria

The ongoing conflict has a huge devastating impact on Syria and its citizens are the worst victims of the conflict. The death toll is not easy to confirm, but according to the Syrian Centre for Policy Research (SCPR), it is estimated that the

⁶³ V. P. Haran, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

⁶⁴ Elizabeth O'Bagy, *Jihad in Syria*, Middle East Security Report 6, Institute for the Study of War, September 2012.

deadliest war has directly and indirectly killed 470,000 Syrians, a far higher total than the figure of 250,000 used by the UN until it stopped collecting statistics at the end of 2014.⁶⁵ Considering Syria's small population, the death toll is a huge blow to the nation. The remaining Syrians are also living in dire condition and many of them have fled to neighbouring countries to find safety. The UN reports, that nearly one-fifth of the total population has been registered as refugees under the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) and since some refugees do not have the opportunity to register with the programme, the actual number of refugees is probably much higher.⁶⁶ Every year the conflict has witnessed an increasing number of refugees. In 2012, there were 100,000 refugees. By April 2013, there were 800,000. That doubled to 1.6 million in less than four months. There are now 4.3 million Syrians scattered throughout the region, making them the world's largest refugee population under the UN mandate.⁶⁷ The UN predicts there could be 4.7 million registered Syrian refugees by the end of 2016 — the worst exodus since the Rwandan genocide 20 years ago.⁶⁸

Moreover, half of the country's population has been internally displaced. Currently 13.5 million people in Syria are in need of humanitarian assistance.⁶⁹ An entire generation of young people has been exposed to the horrors of war and denied access to basic services such as education and healthcare. An estimated 400,000 people are living in besieged areas where humanitarian access is limited and where some are dying of starvation.⁷⁰ Life expectancy has dropped from 70.5 years in 2010 to an estimated 55.4 years in 2015 and mortality rate increases from 4.4 per thousand in 2010 to 10.9 per thousand in 2015.⁷¹ The impact of war on the Syrian health sector is also devastating as attacks on hospitals since the inception of conflict five years ago have left more than 700 doctors and medical workers dead.⁷² This has severely curtailed Syrian people access to basic health care services.

The youngest refugees in Syria are now facing an uncertain future. Some schools have been able to divide the school day into two shifts and make room for more Syrian students. But there is simply not enough space for all the children, and many families cannot afford the transportation to get their kids to school. According to the UN, more than half of all Syrian refugees are under the age of 18 and most have been out of school for months, if not years. This will surely have an adverse impact

⁶⁵ Ian Black, "Report on Syria Conflict Finds 11.5% of Population Killed or Injured", *The Guardian*, 11 February 2016.

⁶⁶ V. P. Haran, *op. cit.*

⁶⁷ UNHCR, *Syria Regional Refugee Response: Inter-agency Information Sharing Portal*, Geneva, Switzerland: 2015.

⁶⁸ "Quick facts: What You Need to Know about the Syria crisis", *Mercy Corps*, 05 February 2016, <https://www.mercycorps.org/articles/iraq-jordan-lebanon-syria-turkey/quick-facts-what-you-need-know-about-syria-crisis>, accessed on 17 May 2016.

⁶⁹ Raziye Akkoc, "What has been the Real Cost of Syria's Civil War?", *The Telegraph*, 15 March 2016.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² "More Than 700 Doctors, Medical Staff Killed in Syria War, UN Says", *South China Morning Post*, 22 June 2016.

on Syria's future. The youngest are confused and scared by their experiences, lacking the sense of safety and home they need. The older children are forced to grow up too fast, finding work and taking care of their families in desperate circumstances. In this regard it is to mention that children are being actively encouraged and sometimes forced to join the war by the parties to the conflict offering gifts and salaries of up to US\$400 a month.⁷³ This war-torn unusual condition is facilitating radicalisation of the youths of the Syria who are falling easy prey to radical extremist organisations currently operating in Syria to establish Islamic *Caliphate* in the region.

In addition to socio-political impact, the economic impact of Syrian crisis is also enormous. Considering its total economic loss, starting from its wealth and infrastructure to the population and economy; Syria has almost been demolished. The massive destruction of war coupled with economic and other sanctions imposed by the global powers have inflicted heavy toll on Syrian economy and there has been a continuous contraction in the GDP since 2012.⁷⁴ In 2013, the trade sector suffered a drastic annual decline of 46.6 per cent⁷⁵ due to the decrease in the supply of goods, price hike of basic goods and the direct and indirect damage to hundreds of thousands of commercial outlets. As a result in 2014, consumer prices rose by 53 per cent from 2013.⁷⁶ The Syrian pound dropped to one-sixth of its pre-war value and foreign currency reserve depleted to between US\$2 to 5 billion from US\$18 billion.⁷⁷ Prices in conflict zones and besieged areas are much higher than elsewhere in the country. Employment conditions and pay have deteriorated and the number of working women is declining because of security concerns. About 13.8 million Syrians have lost their source of livelihood.⁷⁸ Health, education and income standards have all deteriorated sharply. Poverty increased by 85 per cent in 2015 alone.⁷⁹ Of course, the Syrian people are not concerning themselves with economic issues at present, but, when the war will finally end, the Syrian people will have to bear with a devastated economy and destroyed resources available to rebuild it. Moreover, when the people will not find job opportunities within the country, then they will try to reach other countries in the region and in Europe that will further worsen the ongoing global migration crisis.

The current conflict is a big blow for Syria's tourism and energy sector also. The destruction within Syria has devastated many Syrian cities. The war strategies of both sides involve capturing key strategic areas, and cities like Damascus and Homs have been pounded by incessant bombing and fighting. The damage has been caused to numerous historic buildings and archaeological locations. The war has affected 290 heritage sites, severely damaged 104 and completely destroyed 24, including all six

⁷³ Raziye Akkoc, *op. cit.*

⁷⁴ Syrian Centre for Policy Research (SCPR), *Syria, Alienation and Violence-Impact of Syria Crisis Report 2014*, Damascus, Syria, March 2015, p. 15.

⁷⁵ Syrian Centre for Policy Research (SCPR), *op. cit.*, p. 21.

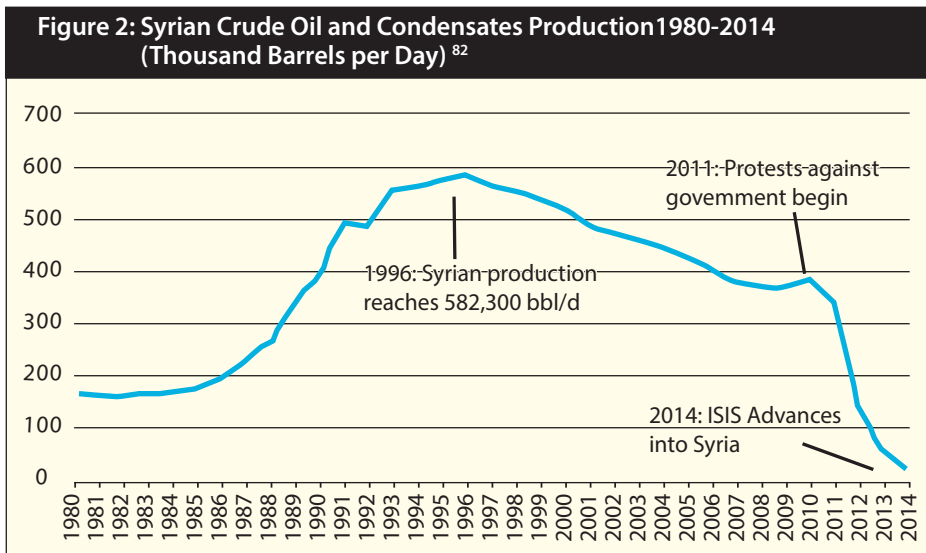
⁷⁶ *Ibid*

⁷⁷ Zachary Laub, "Syria's Crisis and the Global Response", *Council Foreign Relations*, 11 September 2013.

⁷⁸ Ian Black, 2016, *op. cit.*

⁷⁹ Syrian Centre for Policy Research (SCPR), *op. cit.*, p. 46.

the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) World Heritage Sites in the country.⁸⁰ Though much of the world’s attention has focused on pillage and destruction in Palmyra, but damage to the energy supply and potential earnings is probably another big concern. The war between the Syrian government and rebel forces, plus the onslaught of the ISIS, has essentially cut off all meaningful sources of oil production in the country. The country has 2.5 billion barrels of oil reserves, more than any of its neighbours aside from Iraq. But war has damaged much of the country’s infrastructure, including oil and natural gas pipelines, oil fields, and much of the electric grids. Several oil fields have fallen under the control of the ISIS. The country now suffers from power outages and a shortage of refined fuels. Even if the international community could somehow restore peace in the country, it would take many years for Syria’s oil sector to get back on its feet. Simply put, Syria has ceased to be an oil producer, with no prospect of a rebound in the foreseeable future.⁸¹ The following figure shows the production of Syrian Crude oil and impact of conflict on it.



The conflict in Syria is grinding down the country’s national mechanism and creating the conditions for continuing the conflict. Although the national government survives on paper, but it does not exercise direct control over its national security, services and institutions, including the armed forces that might create further mayhem within Syria. Syria is now in a serious threat to become a failed state and if this happens, this might generate political instability, social unrest and armed conflict to its neighbours which will ultimately destabilise the whole Middle Eastern region.

⁸⁰ “Syria’s Six UNESCO World Heritage Sites All Damaged or Destroyed”. *The Independent*, 16 March 2016.
⁸¹ Nick Cunningham, “Why The Syrian War Is Not Pushing Up Oil Prices”, 07 October 2015, available at <http://energyfuse.org/why-the-syrian-war-is-not-pushing-up-oil-prices/>, accessed on 16 July 2016.
⁸² Nick Cunningham, “Why the Syrian War is Not Pushing Up Oil Prices”, *The Fuse*, 07 October 2015, available at <http://energyfuse.org/why-the-syrian-war-is-not-pushing-up-oil-prices/>, accessed on 16 July 2016.

4.2 Regional Outlook

The regional context for the Syrian conflict is as complex as the internal setting reflecting both a triangular geopolitical contest for dominance among Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Turkey and the ancient bitter rivalry between the Sunni and Shiite factions of Islam.⁸³ Moreover, separate and contradictory efforts to oust President Assad at the beginning also exposed growing discontent among the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries centring this war. Many analysts have opined Syrian conflict as a regional proxy war with a loosely knit Sunni coalition consist of the Gulf States; Turkey and other Islamist groups challenging a Shiite axis comprising Syria Alawites, Lebanon's Hezbollah, Iraq and Iran.

The conflict has sparked a regional struggle between Sunni Saudi Arabia and Shiite Iran. From the inception of the crisis, Saudi Arabia has been adamant about calling for President Assad's ouster and for a transitional government in which the FSA and the Syrian National Council would play a major role, whereas Iran remains committed to support the present government by providing various forms of assistance ranging from arms to money. There is a growing concern that tension between Saudi Arabia and Iran might ignite Shiite-Sunni conflict in a larger context and can spread beyond the region. It should also be noted that the rivalry has also been an important factor in the simmering tensions in Bahrain, where a Sunni monarchy rules a majority Shiite population. Tehran has sought to galvanise discontented Bahrainis and Riyadh has backed the current government to the hilt, even sending in the Saudi security forces in 2011 to bolster the monarchy and crush anti-regime demonstrations.⁸⁴ These types of regional conflicts have potential negative global implications as well.

No country in the region is more likely to be affected by the situation in Syria than its neighbour Lebanon. In addition to its geographic proximity, Lebanon's ethnic and religious composition closely resemble to Syria. The conflict in Syria has been negatively affecting Lebanon in several ways. First, it has created a refugee crisis in Lebanon, which is ill prepared to address the issue because its social service networks are underfunded and understaffed. Second, the conflict has re-ignited sectarian, mainly Sunni-Shiite tension at the community and national political levels. Third, it has deepened the political impasse between the country's two most powerful political players - March 8 and March 14 alliances. The March 8 is led by Hezbollah and Amal, two Shiite Muslim parties, which have close links to the Alawite Muslim-dominated Syrian regime, and the March 14, which is led by the predominantly Sunni Muslim Future Movement that is supportive to the Syrian rebellion. Although these two blocs are used to maintain a distance since 2005, the conflict in Syria has served to further polarise the two.⁸⁵

⁸³ Ted Galen Carpenter, *op. cit.*

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ Andre Colling, "The Impact of the Syrian Conflict on Neighbouring States", *News24*, Cape Town, 27 August 2013.

The Syrian conflict has been a major test for Turkey's Middle East policy as well as its domestic politics. Regionally, Syria has become a challenge for Turkey's vision to engage regional actors, including former adversaries, through trade, investment, political and cultural exchanges to implement its "policy of zero problems with neighbours".⁸⁶ On the domestic front, besides the refugee problem, Turkey has been accused of supporting Islamist militants in northern Syria against Kurd groups and seeking to contain its own Kurd separatist campaign in the south east.⁸⁷ Turkey is likely to continue to support armed groups in Syria against its traditional opponents and this support could well have long-term consequences for the Turkish government depending on the outcome of the conflict in Syria.

Identifying any broader impact in Iraq is difficult because it continues to experience nearly daily violence involving Sunni and Shiite Muslim communities since 2003. But it can be assumed that the war in Syria has impacted negatively on the shared border regions with Iraq. Fighting between rebels and Syrian regime forces has regularly been reported, leading to cross-border armed attacks. Sunni militants in Iraq have attempted to establish closer links to their compatriots in Syria and many of them are directly involved in the current conflict. Another concern is any establishment of a Kurd region in northern Iraq is likely to bolster general Kurds' goals for a single Kurd state and will raise tensions with Turkey and Iran, which are both battling with Kurd separatist in their southeast and northwest respectively.

Jordan has primarily experienced a major influx of refugees with approximately 500,000 displaced people moving into the country since 2011.⁸⁸ But, the medium- to long-term impact of the conflict on Jordan remains uncertain. Any post-conflict scenario may witness a return of Jordanians fighting in Syria to Jordan. Existing anti-government sentiment among Jordan's Salafist⁸⁹ community may increase further and develop into a more confrontational position, including armed agitation. Further to this, Jordan has allowed the US military to base a small contingent in its territory to assist its own security forces. This presence boosted the country's overall defensive posture as well as opens it up to possible retaliatory unrest/violence from anti-Western groups based in the country and within the region, which are already heavily critical of Jordan's pro-Western stance.

Currently, the impact on Israel from this conflict, remains relatively low, but Israel has increased its military alert levels in the northern part of the country after the genesis of the crisis.⁹⁰ Israel is monitoring the complicated Syrian conflict with significant concern. Israel views Bashar al- Assad as problematic and predicable enemy and prefers the fall of the Assad regime. On the contrary, the possible demise of the Assad regime

⁸⁶ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Policy of Zero Problems with Neighbours*, Republic of Turkey.

⁸⁷ Nick Danforth, "Turkey's 'Kurdish Problem' – Then and Now", *Foreign Policy Research Institute*, Philadelphia, January 2016.

⁸⁸ UNHCR, *Syria Regional Refugee Response: Inter-agency Information Sharing Portal*, Geneva: Switzerland, 2015

⁸⁹ Salafi Jihadism or Jihadist-Salafism is a transnational religious-political ideology based on a belief in physical jihadism.

⁹⁰ Andre Colling, *op. cit.*

presents serious risks for Israel in the form of the possible transfer of chemical weapons to hostile actors (Hezbollah), the spillover of hostilities to the Golan Heights, or the possible disintegration of Syria.⁹¹ Also, if the regime falls and a rebel government emerge, the reaction from Israel will depend on the make-up of that government because a rebel government with a strong Islamist character is also against Israel's interests.

The Syrian crisis was started to establish democratic rights within the country, but its negative impacts have overshadowed the preliminary noble intent. Now it is evident that the conflict will have a lasting impact on the country and the region regardless of its outcome. The large presence of refugees is expected to take a significant financial toll and influence security environments of the various states along side Syrian border. Sectarian tensions worsened by the war will matter for the medium-term and will serve to influence both domestic and regional political systems. Furthermore, pre-existing tensions, particularly in Lebanon, Iraq and Turkey could deteriorate further and might turn into open conflict.

4.3 *Global Politics*

The problems experienced in Syria are of utmost importance to the entire world as failure to address it could severely harm global peace and stability. It has already made a corrosive effect on the West's relations with both Russia and China. Disagreements about how to deal with the fighting in Syria have produced a bitterness between both sides. Since the start of the conflict, the world has been experiencing the largest wave of disorderly migration after the Second World War. There is a sharp link between unrest in the Middle Eastern region and the global energy market. The threat of existing terrorism and violent extremism has been worsened with the formation of ISIS and other extremist organisations due to the outbreak of the conflict in Syria. Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) is a threat not only to counter the terrorist but also for ensuring regional peace and stability, which is also linked to the global security mechanism.

The initiator of this human tragedy was the authoritarian regime of Bashar al-Assad, but it was made worse by the two rival global powers - the US and Russia and their allies. The conflict has made a rift in the relations between these two nations and their allies. From the beginning of the conflict, there have been different levels of interventions by the global powers, mainly to protect their own interests during and in the post conflict era in the region using the declaratory posture of protecting human rights and combating the rise of terrorism. It cannot be gainsaid that the importance of good relations among the West, Russia and China goes far beyond the issue of Syria. It would be a tragedy if policymakers allow differences regarding Syria policy to disrupt those crucial relations and trigger an East-West cold war.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

The Syrian crisis provides Russia with the golden opportunity to consolidate its strategic footing in the Middle East. The political vacuum that had been created because of the crisis has allowed Russia to initiate a game changing move through direct military intervention in Syria and deepen its involvement in the whole region. Through its reinforcement of the Syrian regime, Russian has attained the status of a dominant player in shaping the future of the Middle East.⁹² The new role of Russia has refrained the US from addressing the asymmetry in the US and Russian level of engagement and forced the US to accept Russia's new dominant role in Syria in particular and in the Middle East as a whole. This has also made Russian President Vladimir Putin indispensable to any political solution in the region. Though, it is very early to predict whether this new role of Russia in the Middle East will give birth to a new East-West cold war, but it can be said that this will abridge the US's hegemony over the politics of the Middle East. In addition, it is also reported that business is booming for Russia's weapon manufacturer after the country showcased its military might in the course of five-month long campaign in Syria.⁹³ Russia's arms exports hit a new record US\$ 14.5 billion in 2015 with orders surging to US\$ 56 billion.⁹⁴ Many security experts believe that Syria is being used as a training ground for Russian military to test new, modern and highly effective high-precision weapons and this ongoing conflict has helped Russia to boost its status as a major arms producer and exporter. In addition, being the largest gas exporter of Europe⁹⁵ and with no hope of a pipeline bringing the Middle Eastern gas through Syria in the near future, Russia is now in well placed to protect its dominant role over the European energy market.

Regarding the Syrian refugee crisis , it is important to mention that in 2015, the world has seen the biggest wave of disorderly migration since the Second World War. International community has been struggling to respond to handle the surge of desperate migrants and among these irregular migrants, more than 50 per cent came from Syria. Half of Syria's total population has been displaced and more than 4.5 million people have fled Syria since the beginning of the conflict, and most of them are women and children.⁹⁶ As the conflict gets worsened, more number of people are being forced to flee. For example, 1.2 million were driven from their homes in 2015 alone.⁹⁷ According to the UNHCR, the total number of worldwide displaced people reached 59.5 million at the end of 2014, with a 40 per cent increase taking place since 2011 and among them Syrian refugees became the largest refugee group in 2014 (3.9 million, 1.55 million more than the previous year), overtaking Afghan refugees (2.6 million) who had been the largest refugee group

⁹² Avinoam Idan, "Russia in Syria and Putin's geopolitical strategy", *The Central Asia-Caucasus Analyst*, 22 October 2015.

⁹³ Christopher Miller, "Booming Business: Russia's Syria Operation Nets Arms Dealers Billions", *Mashable*, 30 March 2016, available at <http://mashable.com/2016/03/29/booming-business-for-russian-arms-dealers/#SN1FnOip2qq3>, accessed on 29 June 2016.

⁹⁴ Mansur Mirovalev, "Syria's War: A Showroom for Russian Arms Sales". *Al Jazeera*, 06 April 2016.

⁹⁵ Russia controls 70 per cent of gas supplies to Europe.

⁹⁶ V. P. Haran, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

⁹⁷ "Syria: The Story of the Conflict", *op. cit.*

for the last three decades.⁹⁸ These data show how the conflict in Syria negatively affecting the global migration especially in the Middle Eastern region and the countries of the Europe as a corollary effect. This huge migrant inflow in Europe has also caused division among the European states regarding a course of action against it. Germany's policy of attracting unfiltered migrants faced heavy criticism from many of the European states. Because of the migration crisis, a possibility has been raised that the European states might re-introduce pre-EU stringent border control which will hurt the European economy very badly in particular and will adversely impact its overall image as a whole.

Though there are strategic differences between Russia and the US, regarding the Syrian conflict but the rise of extremist organisation, especially the emergence of ISIS is a 'horror story' for both of these global powers. ISIS has sparked deep anxieties in the region and around the world by slaughtering minorities, institutionalising sex slavery, vanquishing state armies and executing opponents in gruesome spectacles of violence.⁹⁹ It has destroyed heritage sites, such as temples in the ancient city of Palmyra and fuelled the global antiquities trade. The group has waged terror attacks from France to Yemen and perhaps most perplexing factor is, thousands of young men and women from Europe — not all of Muslim origin — have flocked to join it.¹⁰⁰ ISIS has also attracted many foreign fighters to join the Syrian civil war. According to a report, more than 12,000 foreign fighters from at least 81 countries are stationed in Syria.¹⁰¹ These foreign fighters, apart from their negative role in Syria, will also have worrying consequence when they will return to their home country because of their exposure to an environment of sustained radicalisation and terrible violence.

If Syria's government remains in disorder, then terrorist organisations will have a strong foothold in the country, and their hegemony over the Middle East will spread. This occurrence would directly cause the collapse of global oil market that depends on Middle Eastern resources and will have an adverse impact on global economy. In fact, the decline in the price of oil and the rise of ISIS correlates strongly, which is evident from the fact that ISIS began capturing major cities in Syria and Iraq in early-2014 while global stockpiles of oil started to increase. Another detrimental impact of the Syrian conflict is the destruction of the Syrian culture. This does not pose as much threat as the other aspects of the war, but it is still important to preserve Syrian culture as a tribute to humanity as a whole. Without Syria's precious culture, the world would have a piece missing in its own global culture.

⁹⁸ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), *Mixed Migration into Europe*, Geneva: Switzerland, 2015.

⁹⁹ Philip Issa, "Syrian Civil War: Five Ways the Conflict has Changed the World", *The Independent*, 13 March 2016.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ Jason M. Breslow, "Why Are So Many Westerners Joining ISIS?", *Frontline*, 11 August 2014.

4.4 *Implications for Bangladesh*

The paper basically focuses on the impacts of the Syrian crisis on Middle East region and on global politics, where Bangladesh is not directly involved. Moreover, there are certain factors like geographical distance between Syria and Bangladesh, absence of any diplomatic mission of Bangladesh in Syria suggest why Syria is not directly linked to the interests of Bangladesh. But, Syria's location in the Middle Eastern region creates anxiety for Bangladesh as instability in Syria in particular and in the Middle East as a whole might hamper the labour market of Bangladesh. About 76.43 per cent of total Bangladeshi migrant workers reside in the GCC countries¹⁰² -- Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates which are directly or indirectly involved in the Syrian war and it is assumed that if there is any unrest in these countries due to the crisis then it will definitely impact the overseas employment market of Bangladesh. Fortunately, the Syrian crisis has not been able to adversely impact the current overseas employment trend of Bangladesh in the Middle East countries. Moreover, there has been an increase in the overseas employment rate of Bangladesh in 2014-15 that initially dropped by 30 per cent in 2013 (Annex A). But the matter of concern is remittance income has not accelerated although manpower exports went up significantly and it is reported that remittance fell 8.33 per cent year-on-year to US\$ 1.21 billion in May as low oil prices erode the incomes of the Middle Eastern countries¹⁰³ and it is believed that the decline in the crude oil price is one of the outcomes of the Syrian civil war.

Another growing concern for Bangladesh is that a portion of Bangladeshi diaspora living in the Middle Eastern region might get radicalised by the ideology of the rising extremist groups. But still, this has not happened either as the existing diplomatic missions of Bangladesh in different Middle Eastern countries are working to raise awareness among the Bangladeshis not to get motivated by the perpetrators.

Growing tension between Shiite and Sunni factions of Islam in the Middle East has emerged as another concern for Bangladesh regarding the conflict. As a moderate Muslim country, Bangladesh always wishes for a peaceful co-existence among different factions of the Muslim world. Yet the recent tension between Saudi Arabia and Iran has posed a challenge for Bangladesh because the former is one of the largest partners of Bangladesh's international relations and the latter has become an opportunity for Bangladesh to export products like textiles, chemicals, pharmaceuticals and jute items.¹⁰⁴ Bangladesh can also be benefited from importing oil at a cheaper rate from Iran. In this regard, Bangladesh has to remain careful and sharp in maintaining its bilateral relations with both Saudi Arabia and Iran to stay in a win-win situation.

¹⁰² Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET), *Statistics of the Overseas Employment and Remittance from Bangladesh since 1976 to 2016 (up to May 2016)*, Dhaka 2016.

¹⁰³ "Remittance Falls 8pc in May", *The Daily Star*, 08 June 2016.

¹⁰⁴ Asadul Kibria, "Post-Sanctions Iran Offers Business Opportunities", *The Financial Express*, 25 July 2015.

5. Conclusion

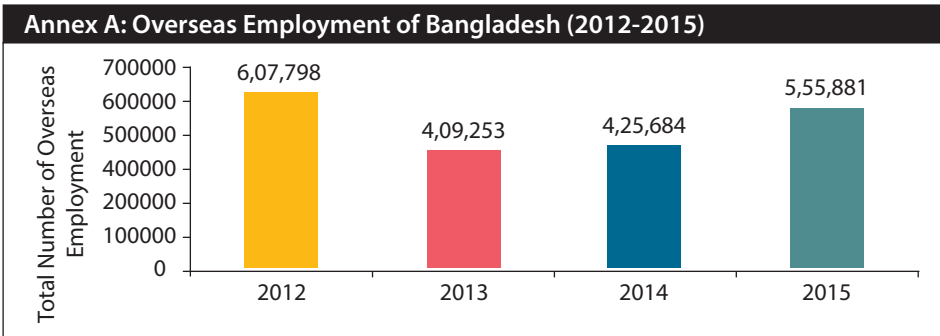
Civil wars are devastating. Both sides destroy infrastructure and wage economic warfare, causing devastation and dislocation. Beyond the casualties of war, human capital is destroyed by the lack of health services and education as investment shifts to weapons.¹⁰⁵ They can damage not only a specific country, but also the implications of that particular war can severely affect other countries. In the current globalised world, no state is isolated from the actions, reactions and interactions among different states. Though every state is individual and sovereign, but one country's internal policy and situation impact the others in the current international system either directly or indirectly both in a positive and negative manner. The ongoing crisis in Syria has epitomised it clearly that how a conflict can severely create a predicament situation not only within the country but also within the region with having an outreach to the global power-politics. It is not sure whether the conflict will ultimately unseat Bashar al-Assad, nevertheless it has already had a major impact on the Middle East and the overall international system and that impact, for good or bad, is likely to continue, even if the guns of the conflicting parties fall silent.

The current crisis has massively destroyed Syria, where more than one per cent of the total population have been killed, half of the population has been displaced and one fifth have become refugees. Surely, the conflict will have a short to midterm negative impact on Syria's education system, culture and economy; but the worst impact is that it is grinding down the country's national mechanism and creating a situation for long lasting internal conflicts. Sectarian tensions deteriorated by the conflict will matter to manipulate both domestic and regional political settings. The large presence of refugees within the region and beyond is not only challenging the governance of global migration, but also influencing the security structure of the various states along with Syria's border and in Europe. The rise of different terrorist organisations is a shock to intensify the existing threat of global terrorism and extremism.

The longer the war drags on, the greater the chance for Syria to turn into a failed state, increasing the likelihood of regional destabilisation as well as creating corrosion in the global peace and stability. Without a significant shift in the balance of power or a major diplomatic breakthrough, the conflict is unlikely to end in the near future.¹⁰⁶ Warring parties, both directly and indirectly involved in the conflict need to exercise greater caution and flexibility, least they should generate additional problems for an already troubled country in particular and the region as a whole.

¹⁰⁵ Brian Michael Jenkins, *The Dynamics of Syria's Civil War*, Washington DC: Rand Corporation, p. 21.

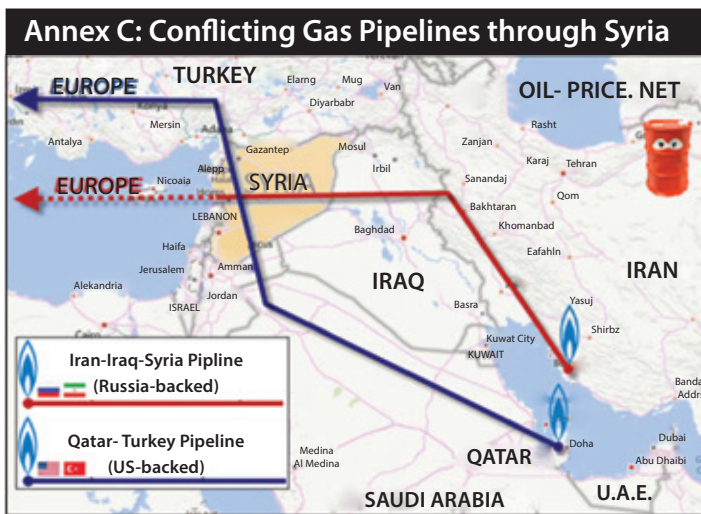
¹⁰⁶ Asaad Al-Saleh and Loren White, *op. cit.*



Source: Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET), *Overseas Employment and Remittance*, Ministry of Expatriates Welfare and Overseas Employment, Government of Bangladesh

Annex B: List of Interviewees

Name	Designation	Date
Mr. Masudur Rahman	Director General, West and Central Asia Wing, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Bangladesh	18 May 2016
Mr. K. M. Ali Reza	Deputy Chief, Ministry of Expatriates Welfare and Overseas Employment, Government of Bangladesh	19 May 2016



Source: Steve Austin, "Oil prices and the Syrian civil war", *Oil-Price.Net*, 14 October 2015, available at <http://www.oil-price.net/en/articles/oil-prices-and-syrian-civil-war.php>, accessed on 10 June 2016.

Mohammad Zahidul Islam Khan

PHILOSOPHICAL DUALISM: TOWARDS A NUANCE UNDERSTANDING OF THE CONCEPT OF TERRORISM

Abstract

Philosophical dualism implies that our thoughts shaped by mind and our understanding of the physical world based on empiricism are both real yet neither can be assimilated. The idealists challenge this distinction, claiming that the physical world is inherently mental as anything empirical is an inter-subjective product of collective interpretation of the experience originating from our mind. The 'mind-body problem' also shapes knowledge creation claiming social science as value-laden and natural science as fact-driven. This paper critically examines the dichotomous postulation of fact and value which arguably separates social science from natural science. Tracing the origin of philosophical dualism and its many manifestations, the paper questions its utility and validity. It argues that any attempt to separate value from fact restricts the intellectual debate, rational inquiry, growth of knowledge and remains impossible to achieve particularly in the context of thick ethical concepts. Illustrating different peculiarities of meaning and how they are construed, the paper demonstrates the centrality of meaning and interpretation in social science inquiry validating that all 'facts' are subject to the gilding and staining with the colours of our own 'values'. Highlighting the descriptive and evaluative aspects of thick concepts in particular, the paper argues that both natural and social sciences are engaged in tracing the conceptual relations and any real difference between the two lies in the aims, nature and methods of inquiry and not in the alleged fact/value distinction. Exemplifying this argument with the concept of terrorism the paper highlights, how the evaluative and descriptive aspects of the concept of terrorism is stained corrupting our sensitivity. Rejecting the consequentialists' argument, the paper takes a deontological approach contending that achieving a global meaning of terrorism requires decoupling it from the concepts of war, religion, as well as a moral upgrade of war and holding both state and non-state actors responsible for committing the act of terrorism with equal spirit and force. By building a common ethos of reciprocity towards the act and the corresponding constitutive rules that emerges from, and are sustained by a web of social practices of the societies and the societies of states can only transform one man's terrorist to be regarded as everyman's terrorist.

1. Introduction

The difficulties of labeling "one man's terrorist as everyman's terrorist" fundamentally reflect the irreducibly normative elements attached to the concept of terrorism. The contested interpretation of such a 'thick' concept captures one of

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the enduring principles that the social world is '*meaningful*' and '*interpretive*' in nature which is essentially shaped by the 'values' as not by the 'facts' alone. Centered around the fact/value dichotomy, social science is often claimed to be *value-laden* and distinct from the natural science riding on the logic that values are 'subjective' or 'untestable' in a way the factual judgments are.¹ 'Fact' is regarded as a statement of reality's true nature, a description of what something *is* like. Science claims to be 'factual' – based on empirical observations often reduced to law like regularities. 'Value' is normative (*i.e.*, prescriptive) about how something *ought* to be. Value, often equated to the expression of ideals, is a group of conceptions of the relative desirability of things.² Arguably, values that are mind-dependent, non-observable and internal to observer are indispensable in any social science inquiry.

Philosophical dualism broadly implies the mind-body problem giving rise to many different dichotomous postulations including the fact/value dichotomy.³ The dualists view that consciousness and thought shaped by the mind and the physical world based on empiricism are both real and neither can be assimilated to the other. The idealists, however, view that the physical world is in fact *inherently* mental as anything empirical is indeed an inter-subjective product of collective interpretation of the experience originating from our mind. Thus, if our mind is always active "in choosing what to accept, revise or reject"⁴ can there be any 'fact' prior to interpretation leading to a value neutral social science? How justifiable is such 'philosophical dualism' and the corresponding distinctions drawn between social science and natural science? Does the reliance of natural science on theory, rules, criteria, belief-justification, etc. for rationale acceptance – that are essentially normative, implies that value judgments are no less testable than factual judgments are? What happens when the analysis involves 'thick' ethical concepts? Can we really separate the evaluative aspects from the descriptive aspects in thick social concepts? What would it take to create a world guided meaning of thick concept like terrorism, allowing us to regard one man's terrorist as everyman's terrorist?

¹ For a detail account on conceptions of science and the historical and philosophical root of social science see Robert C. Bishop, *The Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, New York: Continuum, 2007, pp. 7-80. For an enlightening discussion on value laden concept in light of David Hume's theses, see Rachel Cohon, "Hume's Moral Philosophy", available at, <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2010/entries/hume-moral/>, accessed on 12 March 2016 and William A. Gorton, "The Philosophy of Social Science", available at <http://www.iep.utm.edu/soc-sci/>, accessed on 12 March 2016.

² The distinction (or the lack of) between fact and value, appears in many philosophical writings. The earliest amongst them includes David Hume, (1739) "A Treatise of Human Nature", available at: <http://michaeljohnsonphilosophy.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/5010>, accessed on 09 March 2016. Also see G.E. Moore, *Principia Ethica*, available at, <http://fair-use.org/g-e-moore/principia-ethica/>, accessed on 09 March 2016. For the revised edition of Moore's book, with an introduction of Thomas Baldwin (ed), 1993, available at http://www.colorado.edu/philosophy/heathwood/pdf/moore_pe.pdf, accessed on 15 March 2016.

³ Parallel to 'mind-body problem' implying values related to mind and facts to bodies was drawn by Howard Robinson, "Dualism", available at <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2012/entries/dualism/>, accessed on 15 March 2016.

⁴ See Martin Hollis, *The Philosophy of Social Science: An Introduction*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995, pp.202-224.

Straddled between such puzzles, this paper aims to unpack the notion of philosophical dualism and the associated distinctions it promotes between social science and natural science by critically examining the fact/value dichotomy with a focus on thick ethical concepts in general and the concept of terrorism in particular. The paper is structured as follows. First, tracing the origin and philosophical reasoning of fact/value dichotomy the paper questions the utility and validity for such dichotomous postulation. It argues that the proposition “one cannot derive ‘ought’ from an ‘is’” restricts intellectual debate, growth of knowledge and remains impractical to achieve particularly in ‘thick’ ethical concepts. Distinguishing between the evaluative and descriptive aspects of thick concepts the paper demonstrates the centrality of ‘meaning’ and ‘interpretation’ in social science and highlights different peculiarities of meaning. Second, the paper highlights the concord and discord between the natural and social sciences and argues that both types of sciences are engaged in tracing the conceptual relations; the real difference lies in the aims, nature and methods of inquiry and not in the alleged fact/value distinction. It contends that to remain objective in social science inquiry, one needs to travel adequately through all the peculiarities of the meaning to arrive at acceptable proposition and causal connections. Third, the paper focuses on terrorism — a thick concept, to examine how the descriptive and evaluative aspects of the concept has shifted corrupting its meaning and interpretation. It concludes that arriving at a world guided meaning of terrorism, would require decoupling it from the war paradigm, religion and building a common ethos of reciprocity towards the act irrespective of the category of the actors. Such an ethos and the corresponding constitutive rules that emerge from, and are sustained by a web of social practices of the societies and the societies of states can only transform one man’s terrorist to be regarded as everyman’s terrorist.

The paper has been divided into eight sections. After introduction, the rest of the paper has been organised as follows. Section 2 analyses the celebrated fact/value dichotomy, while Section 3 tries to address whether value can be separated from fact. Section 4 presents the ‘thick’ and ‘thin’ concepts in the context of identifying terrorism. Section 5 describes value while Section 6 analyses ‘meaning’ and ‘objectivity’ from the perspective of social sciences. Section 7 presents the case of global war on terror followed by 9/11 attacks to describe the philosophical evaluative and descriptive aspects of the notion of terrorism. Finally, Section 8 concludes the paper with an attempt to formally frame one man’s terrorist as everyman’s terrorist.

2. The Fact/Value Dichotomy

The origin of the doctrine of fact/value dichotomy is often traced to the eighteenth century Enlightenment Thinkers, who ostensibly declared that the values (such as moral obligations) cannot be defined by facts. Introducing concepts and ideas like ‘Hume’s law’, ‘naturalistic fallacy’ they professed that one cannot derive an ‘ought’ from an ‘is’ – an epistemic attitude that rejects the possibility of deducing

ethical statements from non-ethical statements.⁵ David Hume (1711-1776), the 18th century Scottish philosopher is often cited as a standard reference to distinguish between the cognitive judgment and non-cognitive judgment. Hume in his book, *A Treatise of Human Nature* excludes moral judgments from the realm of knowledge and contends that morality is not an object of reason, because “the distinction of vice and virtue is not founded merely on the relations of objects, nor is perceived by reason”.⁶ He states that it is ‘altogether inconceivable’ to infer an ‘ought and ought-not’ based on the usual copulations of ‘is and is not’ because such a process of reasoning expresses some new relation or affirmation which could be entirely different that are not necessarily observed or explained in the first place. Setting out the distinctive boundaries between the ‘offices of reason’ (*i.e.*, facts) and ‘matter of taste’ (*i.e.*, values), Hume writes⁷:

“The former (*i.e.*, reason) conveys the knowledge of truth and falsehood; The latter (*i.e.*, taste) gives the sentiment of beauty and deformity, vice and virtue. The one discovers objects, as they really stand in nature, without addition or diminution; The other has a productive faculty, and gilding or staining all natural objects with colours, borrowed from internal sentiment, raises, in a manner, a new creation.”

While many philosophers like Richard Hare, Frank Jackson and Karl Popper endorse Hume’s contentions and regarded the ‘Hume’s Law’ as ‘the simplest and the most important point about ethics’,⁸ others like Michael Blake, Arthur Norman Prior, John Rogers Searle, Hilary Putnam refutes the ‘uncontroversial truism’ of the fact/value dichotomy calling for ‘pragmatic pluralism’.⁹

The distinctiveness of the ethical judgment from non-ethical premises also stems from G.E. Moore’s book *Principia Ethica*.¹⁰ Moore coined the term ‘naturalistic fallacy’ – which inherently implies that the content of the ethical thoughts is

⁵ *Ibid*, p.207

⁶ David Hume, *op. cit.*, p.240.

⁷ See David Hume, ‘An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals’, Appendix. 1, 1777, available at http://www.gutenberg.org/files/4320/4320-h/4320-h.htm#2H_4_0003/, accessed on 25 March 2016.

⁸ Richard Hare broadly accepts the empiricist view of facts that excluded moral facts in any unetiolated sense. He argues that emotivism went wrong by connecting the meaning of moral language with its perlocutionary, rather than its illocutionary force. See Richard M. Hare, *The Language of Morals*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1952, pp. 112-14. Karl Popper, although appears to be contesting Hume’s argument on grounds of causality, nevertheless incorporates Hume’s Law in offering a logical analysis “that allows to explain certain psychological attitudes, better than the psychological analysis employed by Hume”. See K. Popper, “what can logic do for philosophy?” *Aristotelian Society Supplementary*, 1948, pp. 141-150. Also see F. Jackson, “Defining the autonomy of ethics”. *The Philosophical Review*, 1971, 83, pp.88-96.

⁹ See M. Blake, “The gap between “is” and “should””, *The Philosophical Review*, 1964, 73(2), pp. 165-181. A. N. Prior, “The autonomy of ethics”, *The Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, 1960, 38, pp.199-206. J. R. Searle, “How to derive ‘ought’ from ‘is’”, *The Philosophical Review*, 1964, 73, pp.43-58. Hilary Putnam, *The Collapse of the Fact/Value Dichotomy and Other Essays*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002.

¹⁰ Thomas Baldwin, editor of Moore’s 1993 edition of *Principia Ethica* cautions that Moore’s thesis was more to ‘establish the distinctiveness’ of the content of ethical statements (*i.e.*, ‘irreducibility’) and less about the debate on deriving an ‘ought’ from an ‘is’ (p. xviii). The later debate is more pronounced in the works of Hume.

irreducible. Moore explains such irreducibility through his inquiry of what is 'good'. He distinguishes between two types of judgments: an 'intrinsically good' state of affairs (*i.e.*, good in itself) and the state of affairs which is judged as 'good in parts'. It would be a mistake to directly 'reduce' the later judgment into the former — *i.e.*, something which is 'good in parts' cannot equate to something which is 'intrinsically good'. Thus, Moore believes that the notion of 'good' cannot be by any manner of means explained to someone who does not already know it. Moore contends that 'good' is not completely analysable in terms of metaphysical or natural properties as he writes: "if I am asked what is 'good'? My answer is that good is good, and that is the end of the matter." He, however, clarifies that when a man confuses two natural objects with one another and defines one by the other (say pleased with pleasure) then it is *not* a naturalistic fallacy. But, if one confuses 'good' in the same sense with any other natural object (say pleasure or desire) then it constitutes a naturalistic fallacy because it is being made with regard to 'good' with a specific meaning. According to Moore, if 'good' is defined as something else, it would be impossible to prove that any other definition of 'good' is wrong or to deny any such definition. Thus, the normative and descriptive spheres must remain separated as any attempt to reduce an ethical concept amounts to the commission of the naturalistic fallacy.

What was apparently a benign inquiry into 'morality' and 'goodness' by Hume and Moore was later absorbed and expanded by the logical positivists of the 20th century, establishing it as a foundational dichotomy essentially prohibiting any attempt to deduce an evaluative conclusion from premises that are entirely non-evaluative.¹¹ Positivists emphasise the centrality of keeping values separated from facts in research and asserted that the 'truth' can only come from 'facts' – derived from experiment and observations; they depreciate 'value' originating from ethics, morals, religion, beliefs, feeling, etc., as mere 'matters of taste' as they are devoid of any rational or objective discussion. Thus, for the logical positivists, to ask whether the act of terrorism is wrong is problematic insofar the act is viewed through the lenses of non-cognitive ethical, moral or religious values as there is no experiment that could be performed to prove the truth of such a value-laden concept.

Over the years, several versions of this positivist and logical empiricists foundational dichotomy proliferated which include: '*is*' vis-à-vis '*ought*', 'matter of fact' vis-à-vis 'relations of ideas', 'synthetic' vis-à-vis 'analytic',¹² 'apprising' verses

¹¹ Positivist and 'empiricist' like Auguste Comte, John Locke, George Berkeley and David Hume all held the view that genuine knowledge of the external world must be grounded in experience and observation. See A. Comte, "The Positive Philosophy of Auguste Comte", H. Martineau (trans). 3 vols. London: George Bell & Sons, 1896; Gorton (*op. cit.*); Michel Bourdeau, "Auguste Comte", available at <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2014/entries/comte/>, accessed on 25 March 2016. B. Williams, *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy*, London: Fontana Press, 1985, p. 122. J. Tullberg and S. Birgitta, "Facts and Values, A Critique of the Naturalistic Fallacy Thesis", *Politics and the Life Sciences*. 2001, Vol. 20, No. 2, pp.165-174. And Gillian Russell, "In defence of Hume's law" In Charles R. Pigden, (ed.), *Hume on Is and Ought*, Great Britain: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010, pp. 151-160.

¹² Synthetic propositions are dependent upon experience for their validation; they are "empirical" or "a pos-

'characterising' value judgments,¹³ etc. While each of these dualisms has its unique logic and distinctiveness, they all broadly contribute to the same notion and the origin of knowledge that drew attention of many philosophers. For example, Willard Van Orman Quine, one of the most influential philosophers of the twentieth century, rejects the synthetic-analytic distinction terming it as one of the 'two dogmas' of empiricism¹⁴ (other being reductionism) while Hilary Putnam, in his book, *Collapse of the Fact/Value Dichotomy and Other Essays* convincingly refutes such dichotomous assumption calling for 'pragmatic pluralism'. Taking a more radical view, Leonard Piekoff calls to eliminate the 'malignant growth' of the analytic-synthetic dichotomy.¹⁵ Thus, the contention that no ethical or evaluative conclusions whatsoever may be validly derived from any set of purely factual premises was not left unchallenged raising the question whether we can really separate value from the facts.

3. Can Values be Separated from Facts?

There are two main arguments that run against the notion of keeping values separated from facts. First, the dichotomous positioning of fact and value is regarded as an "anti-intellectual device" as it shields values from rational inquiry. Indeed, if the prescriptive "ought" is separated from the factual "is", an intellectual analysis of the real world is by definition without normative value. Viewed this way, philosophical dualism works not only as a "discussion-stopper" but also "thought stopper" as one can easily refuse/withdraw from a debate by pointing that: 'that's a value judgment!' Indeed the pattern of argument reflects that values are not just a statement about something in the world but also about one's own *relation* to it. Such a personal relationship may not be open for much critique or general discussion and often becomes a position to defend or acknowledge. Thus, when one run out of logic, value is arguably invoked to save and end the discussion with an air of parity rather than defeat. Adding to such logic, the inherent indivisibility and the absence of a clear separation between beliefs within society and ideas within science that makes separating values from the facts more challenging as opined by many philosophers.

teriori" (*i.e.*, ice floats on water) while the analytical proposition are validated merely by an analysis of the meaning of its constituent concepts. (*i.e.*, man is a rational animal). Kant's distinction is derived from the 16th Century Aristotelian distinction between the logic of truth and logic of probability. See Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Pure Reason*, The Cambridge edition of the work of Immanuel Kant, Paul Guyer and Allen Wood (Trns and eds), Cambridge University Press, ([1781]1998), p.4.

¹³ See Putnam, (*op. cit.* pp.11-23), for the distinction between Immanuel Kant and David Hume's perspective. Ernest Nagel, *The Structure of Science: Problem in the Logic of Scientific Explanation*, New York: Harcolrt, Brace & World, 1961. And Bhaskar Roy, *The Possibility of Naturalism: A Philosophical Critique of Contemporary Human Science*, 4th Ed, New York: Routledge 2015, p.77 and note 88 for a critique of Nagel's perspective.

¹⁴ W. V. Quine, "Main Trends in Recent Philosophy: Two Dogmas of Empiricism", *The Philosophical Review*, Vol. 60, No. 1 January 1951, pp. 20-43.

¹⁵ See L. Peikoff, *The Analytic-Synthetic Dichotomy*; available at, <https://campus.aynrand.org/works/1967/01/01/the-analytic-synthetic-dichotomy/page1/>, accessed on 25 March 2016.

Second, the positivists' claim of 'true knowledge' coming *only* from 'observable facts' itself is problematic as it is not directly confirmable by the same criteria. Indeed, there is no observable test to which we could subject positivists' claim that only the 'synthetic statements' (*i.e.*, statements based on our sensory, data and experience) counts. A simple example, could amplify. In science, until the discovery of the concept of 'mass' and the concept of 'weight' as distinctly different physical properties, both were regarded as the same, hence there was only *one* 'fact' surrounding this issue. The first scientist who observed that a spring scale does not yield the same result as balance scale¹⁶ must have exclaimed: 'it *ought* not to be like this!' It resulted in creating two different concepts one that ties 'mass' (m) with inertial properties¹⁷ and 'weight' (w) with the gravitational force¹⁸ that every object must counter when holding it off the floor in a particular place. Until the discovery of such distinctions and the underlying conceptual theories, both were regarded as the same. Indeed, every new invention of scientific laws, challenges existing belief and are associated with such exclamation. Thus, scientific claim of knowledge rely on principles of 'belief-justification' and 'theory choice' that are themselves normative. The centrality of such 'background assumptions' implies that the value judgments are *no less testable* than factual judgments are. The 'ought' therefore, is inherent in natural science and it comes to our attention only when we discover that the relations between things are *not now* or *not yet* what one thinks they *ought* to be. Therefore, the only thing that *really* exists is not the 'matter of fact' but the 'relations of ideas'.

Arguably, such a view makes the fact/value dichotomy a supreme tool for controlling our concept – particularly in the context of social science. 'Concept control' implies that our thoughts and arguments to frame an (controversial) issue are channelled to use selective categories, terms, indicators and definitions. To illustrate, when we are given a choice like "either you are with us or with them" we embark on an effort to 'define', 'categorise' and 'term' the physical world in an effort to reduce it into 'us' and 'them' through observables. Such a reductionist view and exercise is often stained and gilded by our own perceptions and values that are not confirmable by the same empirical testing. Our quest to 'empirically' shape what it takes to be one of 'us' as opposed to one of 'them' apparently disregards the possibility that there could be a place in between. Thus, a dichotomous positing runs counterintuitive to the rational-intellectual quest for knowledge as it allows the people or societies with power to frame and define the agenda to eventually decide the outcome of the debate and impose what is to be accepted as true or false. In other words, as Piekoff succinctly puts: "it penalises knowledge for being knowledge" restricting our view of the world

¹⁶ The spring scale measures the force of gravity (weight) not mass; as such it needs to be calibrated on-site and certified on that basis, while a balance scale measures mass by balancing the scale against a known (standardized) mass that remains constant even if the scale is moved from equator to pole.

¹⁷ Inertial properties implies the tendency of an object to remain at constant velocity unless acted upon by an outside force. Hence the formula $F \text{ (force)} = m \text{ (mass)} \times a \text{ (acceleration)}$. In other words $m \text{ (mass)} = F/a$.

¹⁸ The size of gravitational force depends on the 'mass' of the object being pulled by the earth and the size of this force is the 'weight' (W) of the object. To standardize weights, scales are always calibrated to read the weight an object would have at a nominal standard gravity of 9.80665 m/s² (approx. 32.174 ft/s²).

in binary terms instead of its many colours and corresponding shades.¹⁹ This raises the question as to how credible is philosophical dualism and is the 'is' of science truly separate from the 'ought' of ethics?

Viewed differently, the fact /value dichotomy may not be an omnipresent and all important gulf, but simply an *inflated* concept, a mistaken category. The ability of connecting 'relations of ideas' (*i.e.*, value) with the 'matter of facts' (*i.e.*, fact) parallels the thought of being able to see the 'forest' and the 'trees' at the same time and not missing one for the other. Such a view, defies Hume's contention that 'relations of ideas' and 'matter of facts' are mutually exclusive. However, it makes sense if we consider both natural and social sciences as a *relation-tracing* activity of concepts. Naturally, then one should be able to view natural sciences as the application of 'ought' – the realisation of value and not as a quest for facts. Viewed this way, the fact/value dichotomy collapses and both natural science and social science can be conceived as tracing the conceptual relations.

4. The 'Thick' and 'Thin' Concepts

Another prominent challenge to the fact/value dichotomy — particularly in the context of social science, is invoked by the oft-cited 'thick' ethical concepts — *i.e.*, the concepts that combine both descriptive and evaluative aspects.²⁰ 'Thick' concepts (such as courage, frugality, promise, brutality etc.) are 'world guided' and their application is determined by what the world is like; in contrast, the 'thin' concepts (such as good, right, etc.) have more of a purely action-guiding role.²¹ Indeed, as Hume contends, the 'matter of fact' of any action resides within one's own feelings and not in the act or its reasons. The self-reflection of the passions, motives, violations and thoughts generated by the act 'stains and gilds' the thick ethical concepts. As Hume explains it in his *Treatise, Moral Distinctions Not Derived From Reasons*²²:

"Take any action allowed to be vicious willful murder for instance. Examine it in all lights, and see if you can find that matter of fact, or real existence which you call *vice*. In whichever way you take it, you find only certain passions, motives, violations and thoughts. There is no other matter of fact in that case. The vice

¹⁹ Leonard Piekoff, *op. cit.* p. 24.

²⁰ Bernard Williams is often credited for distinguishing the 'thick' and 'thin' ethical concepts. See B. Williams, *op. cit.* pp.140-42 and 150-52. However, others find that there isn't much distinction to be drawn except that some ethical concept could be 'maximally-thin' while the other 'not-maximally-thin'. See Michael Smith, "On the Nature and Significance of the Distinction between Thick and Thin Ethical Concepts" In Simon Kirchin (ed.), *Thick Concepts*, Oxford Scholarship Online, 2013, chapter 6. Also see S. Hope, C. Johnston, A. Millar, D. Parfit, B. Saunders, D. Smith and A. Thomas, "There are no thin concepts", available at <https://www.open.ac.uk/Arts/philosophy/docs/thin%20concepts7-10.pdf/>, accessed on 15 April 2016.

²¹ Other examples of 'thick' ethical concepts include discretion, caution, industry, assiduity, economy, good sense, prudence, discernment, treachery, promise, coward, lie, gratitude, lewd, perverted, rude, glorious, graceful, and many more while the 'thin' ethical concepts include good, right, ought etc.

²² David Hume, "The Philosophical Work by David Hume," Edinburgh, Adam Blake and William Tait, 1826, p. 235 (bold added).

entirely escapes you, as long as you consider the object. You never can find it, till you turn your reflection into your own breast, and find a sentiment of disapprobation, which arises in you, towards this action. Here is the matter of fact; **but it is the object of your feeling, not of reason.** It lies in yourself, not in the object.”

The intuitive contrast between the two types of concepts lies in the suggestion that ‘thick’ concepts *somehow hold together* both evaluative and non-evaluative description while the ‘thin’ concepts are more purely evaluative. Table 1 attempts to dissect three such thick concepts into their respective evaluative and descriptive parts. In the descriptive part, one tends to *record* the observable features/acts/indicators say X, Y, and Z that may define the concept and the second part (evaluative) calls for a *judgment* of the moral status attached to the X, Y, and Z.

Table 1: Examples of the evaluative and descriptive aspects of ‘thick’ concepts		
Thick Concepts	Descriptive Aspects	Evaluative Aspects
Courage	Unusually willing to take risks, not deterred by danger or pain	Is the risk/danger/pain taken/ endured worth the cause?
Cruelty	Intentional or unintentional behaviour that causes physical or mental harm and /or pain to another	Perspective flag attached to the concept of ‘mental and physical harm’
Terrorism	An act whose sole purpose is to inflict terror amongst the member of a particular society to achieve political objective	The sensitivity attached to ‘the political objective’, ‘the society’ in or against which the act is conducted.

Putnam demonstrates that the descriptive and evaluative aspects of “courage” (or any other similar normative concepts) are inseparable.²³ For example, calling someone ‘courageous’ does not only mean that s/he is ‘unusually willing to face danger’ but also involves part of the *concept of courage* that the impending danger s/he is willing to undertake is *worth* the cause. How we define what is ‘worth’ taking a risk and perform a courageous act is attached to the moral judgment. For example, if someone rushes into a burning building to rescue one’s own much treasured iPhone as opposed to rescuing a child who is trapped inside, s/he may ‘descriptively’ qualify as a person ‘unusually willing to face danger’ but fails to meet the ‘evaluative’ dimension of being called as ‘courageous’. It implies that there is no value-neutral way to identify what all courageous acts or persons have in common. The degree of ‘thickness’ depends on the extent of evaluative part defining the concept. But crucially all ‘thick’ concepts need to hold together both evaluative and non-evaluative description. This is particularly relevant in social science.

²³ See Hilary Putnam , *op. cit.*, pp.37-39.

5. Value in Social Science

The conceptual complexities of social life, absence of law like irregularities and difficulties in conducting controlled experiments arguably make social science incompatible to scientific investigations as practiced in natural science. In making the distinction between natural and social science, Hollis asserts “physicist do not judge stories about the world told by atom. Atom tell no stories, whereas economic agents do; an economist who thinks these stories significant cannot avoid deciding which to believe.”²⁴ Such realities raise the question: Is social science inherently value-laden? What are the valid goals of social science? Many influential philosophers maintains that the goals and methods of social science are essentially different than the natural science.²⁵ Unlike the natural science, which is anchored in an interest of devising natural laws through experimentation and causal analysis, social science seeks to understand social phenomena and the *interpretive examination of the meanings*, individuals attribute to their actions. The notion of ‘interpretative’ understanding inherent to social science was first advanced by the historian Droysen and later used extensively by Dilthey. However, for them, it meant to extol intuition over rational-causal explanation. Weber, in contrast, saw the method as the first step in the process of establishment of causal relationships. According to Weber (as well as Davidson), grasping a social fact is a matter of both discovering the causal mechanism and interpretation. Because it requires understanding an agent’s reasons for the act and thus requires interpretation. However, the reason for the act by default constitutes a cause, thus the causal connection. Weber argued that grasping of the subjective meaning is facilitated through ‘empathy’ and a ‘reliving of the experience’ to be analysed.²⁶

Be that as it may, the *meaning* ascribed to the ‘action’ of an entity or a system is central to the social inquiry. As Hollis succinctly puts (quoting Dilthey), that human life, can be understood only by means of categories like ‘purpose’, ‘value’, ‘development’ and ‘ideal’ aspects of meaning.²⁷ In natural science the particular behaviour of an atom can be accounted for without reference to its inner motives; it

²⁴ Martin Hollis, *op. cit.* p. 212

²⁵ The criterion for demarcating between natural and social science varies. Wilhelm Dilthey’s differentiation is ontological – *i.e.*, existence of two kinds of modes or materials. Heinrich Rickert and Max Weber’s differentiation is based on the cognitive interest and methodology. See W. Dilthey, *Selected Works, Vol. 3: The Formation of the Historical World in the Human Sciences*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002, pp.91-102. H. Rickert, *The Limits of Concept Formation in Natural Science*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1929 [1986], p.xxii. Max Weber, “Objectivity in Social Science and Social Policy”, available at <http://anthropos-lab.net/wp/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/Weber-objectivity-in-the-social-sciences.pdf>, accessed on 25 April 2016, and Max Weber, “The Methodology of the Social Sciences”, available at http://archive.org/stream/maxweberonmethod00webe/maxweberonmethod00webe_djvu.txt/, accessed on 25 April 2016.

²⁶ See Robert J. Dostal, “The Cambridge Companion to Gadamer”, Cambridge University Press, available at [http://copyright.me/Acervo/livros/CAMBRIDGE%20COMPANIONS.%20DOSTAL,%20Robert%20J.%20\(org\).%20Gadamer.pdf/](http://copyright.me/Acervo/livros/CAMBRIDGE%20COMPANIONS.%20DOSTAL,%20Robert%20J.%20(org).%20Gadamer.pdf/), accessed on 26 April 2016. M. Oakeshott, *Experience and Its Modes*, Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge, 1993.

²⁷ Martin Hollis, *op. cit.* p.17

can also be reduced to aggregate numbers, making it possible to establish positivistic regularities. On the contrary, human action can only be interpreted as it is based on subjective attribution of *meaning* and *values*. For example, depending on the context, raising a hand could mean a number of things like: posing a question, pointing to the ceiling, yawning or even voting at a school board meeting.²⁸ Here, the physical process of 'hand-raising' is just an act and irrelevant to 'explain' the behaviour; what counts is the subjective dimension to interpret the meaning leading to the action. Social scientists seek to understand the subjective dimension of human conduct as it relates to others and is often premised on values. As opposed to natural science which strives to construct a phenomena focusing on empirical regularities, the world of social sciences involves the historical-social reality in which human beings participate, act and conduct to decipher the meanings. Thus, a vivid understanding of *meaning* with all its peculiarities is essential to attain any degree of objectivity in social inquiry.

6. Meaning and Objectivity in Social Science

Values are central to social science because "meaning is peculiar to life and to the historical world." There are at least four peculiarities of *meaning* in social science having no obvious parallel with natural science.²⁹

- Firstly, human agent can derive meaning directly from a 'conscious stock of convictions and symbols' which is expected to be familiar to all other human beings.³⁰ Thus, when we see a flag is flown in half mast, we may fall back to our 'stock of shared conventions' drawing the conclusion that a death is being mourned.
- Secondly, 'shared language' is a peculiarity in social life. All our private thoughts and individual actions presuppose a shared language and these could be viewed as 'text' and construed as if they were utterances. Thus, the distinction between the meaning of an action and what the actor meant often boils down to what the 'word means and what the people mean by them'. Hans-George Gadamer also emphasises the linguisticity of understanding. To understand, in Gadamer's sense, is to articulate (a meaning, a thing, an event) into words/texts/symbols, implying that the core of every understanding process is grounded on a shared language.³¹

²⁸ This example is taken from Gorton Martin Hollis also mentions similar examples like a spontaneous tears (a behaviour that signifies grief), may be due to a physical pain or simply by seeing a flag flown half-mast which means a death being mourned.

²⁹ Hollis, *op.cit*, pp.144-145.

³⁰ Hollis observes that even if animal behaviour displays similar types of traits, it does not draw on a conscious stock of conventions and symbols.

³¹ See Hans-George Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, Trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshal, London: Bloomsbury Academic, 1989, pp.401-455.

- Thirdly, human practices are imbued with normative expectations (such as religious or ethical) that often shapes the meaning. As Hollis explains, “underlying the expectations ... there is usually a broader ethics or often, a set of religious beliefs, which extend the seen world into an unseen world of values, ideals and sacred being.”
- The fourth and final sense of meaning in social science relates to the human agent’s ability to hold together the ‘theories about the nature of things’. Hollis cites that the Freudian psychology has shaped many people’s self-understanding; Game Theory affected the conduct of foreign policy. Our actions are often linked to such theories that remain in our head.

Gadamer also makes similar arguments emphasising the centrality of *psychological reasoning* in social science. He asserts that both natural science and social science applies *inductive methods*, yet the former derives its conclusion from logical reasoning while the later relies on psychological reasoning. He highlights that social science arrives at their conclusion by an “unconscious process” as its practice of induction is tied to a particular ‘physiological condition’ — the unique tact to interpret shared languages, texts, together with intellectual capacities like a well-stocked memories, and the ability to put them together. Such peculiarities of meaning in social science and their associated epistemic norms raise the question as to how one could define a concept that would have an accepted ‘global meaning’ and is it possible to remain objective and value free in the process of any such social science inquiry?

The possibility of conducting a value-free social science research is endorsed by many including Nagel, Pinker and Weber.³² In Weberian sense, a value-free social science inquiry is possible only when the process of inquiry is carried out with an *Olympian detachment*. While values are endemic in the topic selection and outcome of research, the core of the inquiry *i.e.*, investigation process can and should remain unaffected by the researchers’ own value to arrive at the objective generalisation of sociological knowledge. But how to achieve that? Weber suggests ‘adequacy in the level of meaning’ of an action is a prerequisite to arrive at any generalisation of social world. This involves tracing all the peculiarities of the meaning as highlighted before and connecting those with the interlocking causal mechanism that may explain the phenomenon under investigation. Failing that, our generalisation about the social world would remain a “mere statement of statistical probability, either not intelligible at all or imperfectly intelligible”.³³ When a researcher adequately traverses the level of meaning, only then s/he can know what is really going on and with that understanding s/he should return to the causal level to establish generalisation. Reaching such an ‘adequate level of meaning’ signifies an acceptable causal proposition to justify any probability.

³² See Tim May, “Values and ethics in the research process”, in *Social Research: Issues, Methods and Process*, available at [http://www.heron.dmu.ac.uk/2006-02-28/0335200060\(42-62\)51916.pdf/](http://www.heron.dmu.ac.uk/2006-02-28/0335200060(42-62)51916.pdf/), accessed on 8 March 2016.

³³ Martin Hollis, *op. cit.* p.183.

To arrive at a sociological knowledge in a scientific manner, we need to contrast the level of meaning with the causal level and combine them. The causal laws in this context play an attenuated and accompanying role, as a mere mean to explain the social phenomena as opposed to an end as observed in natural science. The 'value-free' knowledge created through such a process can contribute towards forming a shared belief that will be more widely acceptable. With these understandings we can now focus on the particular concept of terrorism to examine how its meaning and interpretation is shaped, and more importantly how can we arrive at creating a world guided meaning of terrorism that would allow us to come closer in regarding one man's terrorist as every man's terrorist.

7. Concept of Terrorism: Philosophical, Evaluative and Descriptive Aspects

The 9/11 attacks and its aftermath has put terrorism firmly on the philosophical agenda like many other fields of social science. However, the concept remains highly contested and there is no universally agreed definition of terrorism. Swedish Philosopher Per Roald Buhn provides one of the earliest book-length philosophical study on terrorism. He defines terrorism as the performance of "violent acts, directed against one or more persons, intended by the performing agent to intimidate one or more persons and thereby to bring about one or more of the agent's political goals."³⁴ Two other oft-cited philosophers on this issue are C.A.J. Coady and Igor Primoratz. Coady views terrorism as a 'tactic' and defines it as "intentional targeting of non-combatants with lethal or severe violence ... meant to produce political results via the creation of fear."³⁵ Primoratz's definition, in addition, distinguishes between the immediate victim of terrorist act and the ultimate objective, as he defines terrorism as: "the deliberate use of violence, or threat of its use, against innocent people, with the aim of intimidating *some other people* into a course of action they otherwise would not take."³⁶ In a study of 109 definitions of terrorism, Schmid and Jongman identify 22 common elements, of which the most frequently presented were 'violence', 'force', 'political', 'fear', and 'threat'.³⁷ Notwithstanding its numerous definitions, the central concordant chord of defining terrorism seems to be its actor (*i.e.*, state and non-state actors), targets (*i.e.*, non-

³⁴ Per Buhn, *Ethical Aspects of Political Terrorism: The Sacrificing of the Innocent*, Lund: Lund University Press, 1989, p. 89.

³⁵ See C. A. J. Coady, "Terrorism", in Becker, Lawrence C., and Becker, Charlotte B., (eds.), *Encyclopaedia of Ethics*, 2nd edn., New York and London: Routledge, Volume. 3, 2001. Also see C. A. J. Coady, "The Morality of Terrorism", *Philosophy*, Vol. 60, No. 231 January, 1985, pp. 47-69

³⁶ See Primoratz Igor, *Terrorism: A Philosophical Investigation*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013, p.24. Primoratz's work on terrorism also includes "The Morality of Terrorism", *Journal of Applied Philosophy*, 1997, 14, pp.221-33. (ed.), *Terrorism: The Philosophical Issues*, Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004. "Terrorism in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: A Case Study in Applied Ethics", *Iyyun: The Jerusalem Philosophical Quarterly*, 2006, 55, pp.27-48 and, "Can the Bombing Be Morally Justified?" in Igor Primoratz (ed.), *Terror from the Sky: The Bombing of German Cities in World War II*, New York: Berghahn Books, 2010, pp.113-33.

³⁷ The frequency of these terms appearing in observed definitions were between 47 - 84 percent. See A. P Schmid and A. Jongman, *Political Terrorism: A New Guide to Actors, Authors, Concepts, Data Bases, Theories, and Literature*, London: Transaction Publishers, 1988, pp.5-8.

combatants/innocent people), and focus on using violence to intimidate *some other people* to achieve a political objective. Insofar as the terrorism is understood in such terms, both the evaluative and descriptive aspects of the concept become relevant and need to hold together to shape its meaning as eluded before.

The evaluative and descriptive meanings of terrorism have shifted considerably, particularly after the 9/11 attack leading to an insurmountable challenge to arrive at a globally accepted definition. The first fundamental shift is the description of *who* should be regarded as terrorists. While the philosophers are silent on this, many working definitions of terrorism limit it as an act carried out *only by non-state actors*. For example, Title 22 of the United States (US) Code, Section 2656f (d) defines terrorism as “premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by *subnational groups or clandestine agents*, usually intended to influence an audience.” Such a claim that non-state actors are the *only* perpetrators invoke the idea that terrorism is “limited to acts of the powerless” and that our purpose of such limited and narrow framing of terrorism is to “justify our own response.”³⁸ The fact that state actors can also be guilty of waging in all sorts of intimidations and violence, such as war, torture, invasion, deliberate civilian casualties, political killing and abduction of people who do not deserve to be killed, abducted, mimed or tortured runs counterintuitive to such framing and restricts our ability to create a shared meaning and reasoning of terrorism.

Highlighting the blurring distinctions between ‘modern wars’ and any act of terrorism, Trotsky argues that “we must either accept terrorism as a legitimate method of struggle in certain circumstances or reject as morally impermissible *all wars, all revolutions and indeed every form of violence*.”³⁹ Drawing parallel with the concept of ‘all-out war’ by state-actors, Simon Keller, suggests that it would be disingenuous to accept the argument that only terrorism deserves condemnations and not war. Keller, goes further in questioning that: “is there any good reason to think that all-out war is something justified and terrorism is not?”⁴⁰ Outlining the ‘Morality of Terrorism’, Coady argues that, insofar terrorism is seen as a tactic for the pursuit of *political ends*, its moral assessment should also be in light of that. Analysing the justificatory endeavour by the state and non-state actors on the morality of violence, Coady reports that many condemnations of terrorism are *inconsistent, hypocritical* as they “insist on applying one kind of morality to the state’s use of violence in war (either international or civil or anti-insurgency) and another kind altogether to the use of violence by the non-state actors.” According to Coady, the Allied area bombing in German cities during the WWII and the US nuclear attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki directed against the non-combatant to subdue the moral of the enemy could only be “justified” in

³⁸ Inquiring whether terrorism is moral or not, Theodore makes a wider point by asking a mirror question “is our response to terrorism moral?” See Theodore P. Seto, *The Morality of Terrorism*, available at: <http://digitalcommons.lmu.edu/llr/vol35/iss4/4/>, accessed on 14 June 2016.

³⁹ See Igor Primoratz, “The Mortality of Terrorism”, p.226.

⁴⁰ Simon Keller, “On what is War on Terror”; in Timothy Shanahan (ed.), *Philosophy 9/11 Thinking About the War on Terrorism*, USA: Carus, 2005, pp. 53-69.

utilitarian term but remains plainly *immoral* from an internal perspective of morality of violence.⁴¹ It thus appears that having two different moral standard is one of the main barriers to frame “one man’s terrorist as everyman’s terrorist.” Such double standard contributes to the consequentialists’ justifications for terrorist acts.

The evaluative aspects of the concept of terrorism are also tainted by coupling it with war parading and religion corrupting the sensitivity and understanding of the society strengthening the consequentialist’s arguments for terrorism. I illustrate this claim of how the sensitivity of arriving at a shared meaning of terrorism has been corrupted through three examples:

First, by aligning a heinous act of transnational violence in the form of 9/11 attacks with ‘war’ and its perpetrators with the religion of Islam, the US opted to respond to it within a war paradigm and attacked Afghanistan and Iraq. Soon after the 9/11 attacks, the US Attorney General John Ashcroft stated: “Islam is a religion in which God requires you to send your son to die for him. Christianity is a faith in which God sends his son to die.”⁴² This presents a clear example of defining the evaluative aspect and corrupting the sensitivity attached to the act by providing a framework to define the society in terms of ‘us’ and ‘them’ through the prism of religion. Such characterisation is not only immoral, but also counterproductive as most of the Muslims while condemn September 11 terrorists’ actions, also resent demonisation of their religion — a position that is in between the ‘us’ and ‘them’ narrative.⁴³ More so, it has also influenced the people or societies who have the power to define the terms.

The second example is from Paul Rogers’s recent book *Irregular War: ISIS and the New Threat from the Margins*. In the very first page of the book, Rogers gives a graphic illustration of the consequence of responding to terrorism through ‘war paradigm’, citing the reporting of an embedded American journalist with the US 101st Airborne Division. The soldiers were responding to an ambush near the river Tigris in Samarra that resulted death of several Iraqi rebels. What followed next with the dead insurgents was most dreadful, as the embedded American journalist reports:⁴⁴

“...five other soldiers from the 101st Airborne Division scrambled down, pulled two of the insurgents’ bodies from the reed and dragged them through the mud.

⁴¹ According to Coady, the ‘utilitarian’ logic is enshrined in justifying and assessing the use of violence solely in terms of its efficiency in contributing to the achievement of the ends’ while the ‘internal’ perspective encompasses the justification and assessment of the use of violence in terms of morally appropriate targets, proportionality and the means used for the act of violence, *op. cit.*, p.56.

⁴² See Shannon Jones, “US attorney general invokes God in “war on terrorism””, available at, <http://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2002/05/ashc-m15.html/>, accessed on 15 September 2016. One needs to take into account that Ashcroft was talking at the National Religious Broadcasters (NRB), representing 1,400 Christian broadcasters in Nashville, Tennessee. However, associating terrorism with Islam has been in rife in the US culminating in several declarations by the Presidential Candidate Donald Trump.

⁴³ Theodore, *op. cit.* p.1261.

⁴⁴ Paul Rogers, *Irregular War: ISIS and the New Threat from the Margins*, London: IB Tauris, 2016, pp.1-2.

'Strap those motherf---s to the hood like a deer,' said Staff Sgt. James Robinson, 25, of Hughes, Ark.

The soldiers heaved the two bodies onto the hood of a Humvee and tied them down with a cord. The dead insurgents' leg and arms flapped in the air as the Humvee rumbled along.

Iraqi families stood in front of the surrounding houses. They watched the corpses ride by and glared at the American soldiers."

Such is the consequence of framing and responding to terrorism through the war paradigm. It can stain even the best trained soldiers contributing in re-generating hate, fear and violence corrupting the sensitivity of the society making the 'winning of hearts and minds' impossible. The snowball effect of such acts unleashes the worst of human nature reaching an irreconcilable position not just for those Iraqi families who "watched the corpses ride by and glared at the American soldiers" but also in many societies that are exposed to similar acts of killing, intimidation and torture in the name of war on terror.

The third example relates to the transcending effects of such corrupted sensitivity by examining the moral dimension of *torture* that re-emerged as "life-saving instrument" in the fight against terrorism⁴⁵ and has been increasingly practiced by the law-enforcing agencies of many state actors following the 9/11. Citing national security interests, many states and intergovernmental institutions have suggested an override of human rights protections, including the prohibition against torture and cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment and punishment may be warranted. Mathias Thaler outlines that incorporating torture as a necessary tool to gather intelligence shares familiar logics such as: (1) the lives of a large number of innocent civilians are in danger; (2) the catastrophe is imminent, therefore time is of the essence and (3) a terrorist has been captured who holds information that could prevent the catastrophe to happen. The "ticking time bomb" exception is put forward as a justification for the use of torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment in the interrogation of terrorist suspects. Thaler argues that if we accept that the reasoning of 'world-guided concepts' is a social activity at the global scale, whose limits are bounded up with the customs and practices of the community of states practicing liberal democracy, then torture as a tool to fight against terrorism "leads to the disintegration of the very culture that forms the basis of liberal democracy."⁴⁶

In sum, these examples amplify how the descriptive and evaluative aspects of terrorism are tainted, arming the consequentialists' argument to find justifications.

⁴⁵ See Mathias Thaler, "A pragmatists defence of the ban on torture: From moral absolutes to constitutive rules of reasoning", *Political Studies*, Vol 64, Issue 3, October 2016, pp. 765-781. Also see 'Terrorism, counterterrorism and torture, international law in the fight against terrorism' available at <http://redress.org/downloads/publications/TerrorismReport.pdf>, accessed on 22 June 2016.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, p. 780.

Indeed, if our preferred normative ethical theory is consequentialism – *i.e.*, the goal is morally important enough, as such *any method* of achieving it is acceptable, we can always find some utilitarian justification of terrorism. Indeed, one can only find the justification of John Ashcroft’s statement at the NRB conventions, Staff Sgt. James Robinson’s act in Iraq, and the increasing practice of torture in recent time as illustrated in the three examples above in utilitarian terms, claiming to achieve a higher ‘moral goal’ of safeguarding the world in general and the US in particular. Yet, the commission of all these three acts taints evaluative aspects of terrorism, corrupts our value system and limits our attempts to create a shared meaning and reasoning against terrorism. Such a departure from the liberal values contributes towards the view of seeing terrorism as a *necessary evil* for some, being used as a tool to fulfil hegemonic desire, regime change/ security, revenge, etc. This raises the fundamental question as to what ethical premise should guide us in framing the concept of terrorism and how can we refrain from corrupting our sensitivity? How can we create and shape the ‘meanings’ of terrorism from a ground that is ethically sound and has a global appeal? In other words, how do we frame one man’s terrorist as everyman’s terrorist?

8. Concluding Remarks

The consequentialist’s position on terrorism is often contrasted with deontological ethical theories —the normative position where the judgement of morality, of an action is based on the action’s adherence to rules. Such an approach entails two mutually inclusive philosophical underpinning relating to the ‘act’ of terrorism and the ‘nature of rules’ to govern that act. First, it recognises the *centrality of the ‘action’* and not the actors and his/her identity. Rejecting the consequentialist’s argument, this approach holds the view that some actions are right because they are ‘intrinsically good’ while others are wrong, some are obligatory while the others are prohibited.⁴⁷ It requires us to consider that the ‘highest good’ must be both ‘good in itself’ and ‘good without qualification’ because ‘good’ consequences could arise by accident from an action that was motivated by a desire to cause harm, while bad consequences could arise from an action that was well-motivated. Different United Nations (UN) documents reflects a deontological approach in framing the concept of terrorism as it rejects terrorism “in all its forms and manifestations by all means” committed by “whomever, wherever and for whatever reasons”.⁴⁸ Contrasting the consequentialists’ arguments, these documents condemn all acts of terrorism and incitement to commit a terrorist act “irrespective of their motivation, whenever and by whomsoever committed” and

⁴⁷ Deontology refers to those kinds of normative theories regarding which choices are morally required, forbidden, or permitted. Immanuel Kant’s moral theory is regarded central to the deontological ethics. See for details, “Deontological Ethics”, available at <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ethics-deontological/#DeoTheMet>, accessed on 21 June 2016.

⁴⁸ See “Global Counter Terrorism Strategy” available at, <https://www.un.org/counterterrorism/ctitf/en/global-counter-terrorism-strategy/>, accessed 15 June 2016. Also see “UN Resolution 1624” available at, <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/1624/>, accessed on 15 June 2016.

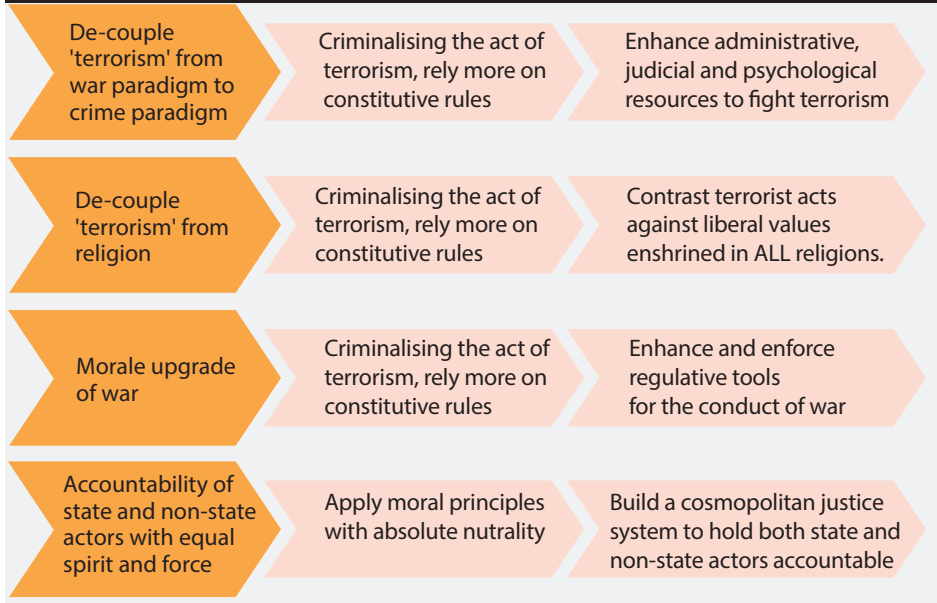
set out several conventions, resolutions and strategies to counter terrorism.⁴⁹ These instruments provide important guidelines for states to set up national legislations criminalising terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.

The second philosophical underpinning relates to the *nature of rules* to govern the act of terrorism. The episteme of social rules is categorised under 'regulative' and 'constitutive' – the latter being more pronounced in the context of thick ethical concepts like terrorism.⁵⁰ Regulative rules regulate antecedently or independently from the existing forms of behavior. It tells us "Do X" or "If Y do X". Constitutive rules, on the other hand constitute and *also* regulate an activity, the existence of which is logically dependent on the pre-existent rules. In other words, constitutive rules do not merely regulate, but also define and /or create (the possibility of) new institutional forms of behaviour. For example, the rules of football do not merely regulate playing football, but also create the very possibility of playing such games. Thus, the rules for 'goal', 'offside', 'corner' can *only* be explained in terms of the game of football. In short, constitutive rules take the form of 'X counts as Y under circumstances C'. The existence of constitutive rules is logically dependent on the circumstances that is conditioned by pre-existent rules. Thus, if a state is indifferent to the issues of human rights and lacks having or enforcing such rules, it will be difficult for such state to constitute and enforce counter terrorism rules effectively. Just as the rules for an 'offside', 'goal', 'corner kick' exist and can be enforced only in the context of the game of football, criminalising terrorism requires a similar overarching 'rules of the game' that not only criminalise terrorism but also respect human rights and ensure human security to achieve legitimacy for its implementations. In short, for terrorism to be considered as morally unacceptable requires us (i) to consider terrorism as *wrong in itself*, because of what it is, rather than only because (and insofar as) its consequences are bad, and (ii) relying more on constitutive rules that emerges from the existing laws and societal norms rather than borrowing regulative rules imposed from the above. Such a lofty approach can be achieved through a process as depicted in Table 2. It starts with our efforts in creating a shared meaning of terrorism by decoupling as well as associating the act of terrorism with certain paradigms as discussed below.

⁴⁹ There are twelve main counter terrorism conventions, and several Security council resolutions. For details of UN counter terrorism efforts, see, <https://www.un.org/counterterrorism/ctitf/en/uncct/>, accessed on 21 June 2016.

⁵⁰ The philosophical distinction between 'regulative' and 'constitutive' rules first gained popularity through the work of John R. Searle. However, several others such as Jaap Hage and Christopher Cherry challenges such distinctions. The aim in this paper is not to delve into the debate of their differences but to point out what value premises should guide the construction of rules in the context of terrorism. See Christopher Cherry, "Regulative Rules and Constitutive Rules", *The Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. 23, No. 93 Oct., 1973, pp. 301-315. Jaap Hage, "Why regulating rules are constitutive rules", available at, https://www.academia.edu/4797454/WHY_REGULATIVE_RULES_ARE_CONSTITUTIVE_RULES/, accessed on 26 June 2016.

Table 2: Pathways for ‘Making One Man’s Terrorist as Everyman’s Terrorist’



Decoupling terrorism from war paradigm. The obvious starting point is to decouple the concept of terrorism from the war paradigm and view it through the prism of ‘crime’. Such realignment implies that governments are to focus more on the administrative, police, psychological resources and the use of judicial systems as a whole to bring terrorists to justice instead of attempting to kill/ eliminate/destroy them through ‘all-out war’, ‘drone attacks’, ‘cross- fire’, ‘encounter’, etc. It is important that the process of criminalising terrorism should be through a mix of regulative and constitutive rules– the latter being more appropriate in the context of terrorism as discussed above. Such measures and strategies can be both deterrent and punitive serving several objectives. First, it amends our vision to separate the terrorist acts from acts of war and restricts our response remaining within the crime paradigm instead of war/fear paradigm. German response to the terrorist attacks amplifies this line of approach. Responding to the terrorist incidences in July 2016, the German Chancellor rejected the fear paradigm calling: “fear cannot be a counsel for political action”.⁵¹ Second, it allows us to view terrorism as a problem arising out of interaction

⁵¹ Horst Seehofer, the chairman of the Cristian Social Union (the Bavarian sister party of Germany’s governing Christian Democrats) denied any links between terrorism and immigration policies and calling it an issue of restoring law and order. See “Europe’s response to the Paris attacks is different this time”, *The Economists*, 14 November 2016, available at: <http://www.economist.com/news/europe/21678514-je-suis-charlie-was-about-free-speech-time-issue-migrants-europe-sees-paris-attacks/>, accessed on 24 April 2016. Also See Connolly Kate, “Angela Merkel defends Germany’s refugee policy after attacks”, *The Guardian*, 28 July 2016, available at <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jul/28/merkel-rejects-calls-to-change-germanys-refugee-policy-after-attacks/>, accessed on 29 July 2016.

between and amongst state(s) and societies. This calls for a greater reflection of how the societies of states interact with each other and how the state agency treats and regards the sub-national social agencies. Such reflections allow us to see it as an issue of distributing justice, both between and within the states restricting its use as a political tool to remain in power, or as a geopolitical instrument aimed at shifting from the strategy of deterrence to preemption. Third, the shift from war paradigm to crime paradigm and the corresponding anchoring on liberal democratic values also enables us to move away from morally controversial strategies and practices both at home and abroad. Externally, it saves us from turning the entire world into a potential battlefield, subverting notions of territorial sovereignty of other states through drone strikes, surgical strikes, etc., and eliminating legal options of neutrality in situations of armed conflict. Domestically, it drains out justifications for controversial practices like torture, abduction, political assassination, cross fire, etc., that undermine the core values of liberal democracy. All these in turn create the space for building a shared meaning of terrorism that is distinctly different from the violence generated in war.

Decoupling terrorism from religion. Historically, religion has been regarded as a catalyst behind extreme fundamentalism in general and the current practice of terrorism in particular. Yet religion is, at best, one element of the brew of politics, culture, economic alienation, strategic warfare and psychology that is exploited in the production of violence through terrorist acts. Aerial Gluckich a theologian at the Georgetown University, contends that the belief in the quarter that “certain religion teaches hatred” is a *myth*; instead “(terrorism) violence comes from a kind of love or desire for love, for one’s own group and a willingness to do whatever it takes to obtain it.”⁵² Thus, decoupling of religion from terrorism is essential to drain out any value based justifications that can act as an accelerant to terrorism. This would require treating and criminalising violence generated with religious justification in line with all sorts of other violence. Second, the ‘speech act’ by the leaders, opinion holders as well as the ‘sensitisation act’ by the media outlets need to consciously reinforce the fact that terrorism has no religion. Instead, the act (and not the actor’s identity or religion) may be contrasted against the shared values and belief of the society as a whole. This allows us to frame and reason the meaning of terrorism based on mutually shared values and practices of the society and society of states that in turn feeds the evaluative aspects of the concept. The fact that an act of terrorism (carried out either by state or non-state actor) kills, maims or destroys the lives or properties of innocent people violates the fundamental human rights and makes us to consider terrorism as *wrong in itself* — irrespective of any religious explanation. Creating a ‘global meaning’ of terrorism requires knowledge production through social inquiries and researches that are essentially ‘value-free’— particularly distancing it from religious misinterpretations and associating it as a violation of liberal values. Such pragmatic practice can generate appropriate constitutive rules that emerge from, and are sustained by a web of social practices making, one man’s terrorist as everyman’s terrorist.

⁵² See Aerial Gluckich, *Dying for Heaven: Holy Pleasure and Suicide Bombers—Why the Best Qualities of Religion Are Also Its Most Dangerous*, U.S.A.: Harper Collins, 2009, pp. 11-41.

Moral upgrade of war. War as an organised violence provides most justificatory reasoning for the consequentialist's argument for terrorism as eluded before. Apart from decoupling terrorism from war paradigm, there is also a need for a moral upgrade of war and its process of producing violence to distance it from shrouding the meaning of terrorism. Justification of war in international law is derived from two distinct moral prisms: *Jus ad bellum* defines the legitimate reasons to engage in war and *Jus in bello* defines the conduct in war. The moral upgrade of war needs to happen at both levels. Indeed the process of decision making on *when* to wage war has been corrupted in many ways in recent times. We need to put in place stringent process establishing that the war (in any form or manner) is only waged as the last resort. When the production of violence in war is associated to 'ensuring energy security', 'hegemonic desire', 'regime change', 'occupation', etc.,⁵³ it loses the higher moral ground and legitimacy that can subsequently corrupt our sensitivity towards terrorism. Thus, a morally upgraded decision to wage war need to pass not only the test of 'maximising good and minimising evil', but also the critical thresholds of being the 'last resort' – having demonstratively tried all other means. Second, the conduct in war (*i.e.*, *Jus in bello*) in general and the targeting in particular also needs a moral upgrade. A morally decisive discontinuity between war and terrorism lies in the fact that war is about attacking legitimate targets (such as enemy's armed forces, equipment, leadership) while terrorism involves illegitimate targets and innocent people. Maintaining such distinctions, including non-transgression of absolute prohibitions (often articulated as war crimes) in the conduct of war can be an absolute necessity in reaffirming the moral discontinuity between the two. Such a distinction in the conduct of war can help us to frame the meaning of terrorism independent of war. Indeed, the provisions of precision attack, banning the use of anti-personnel mines, cluster munitions, etc., to avert civilian casualties are important regulative tools that strengthens *Jus in bello* and provide opportunities for the moral upgrading of war. However, many states have not become parties to such international efforts for the moral upgrading of warfare feeding to the consequentialist arguments of terrorism.⁵⁴

Accountability of state and non-state actors with equal spirit and force. The most fundamental premise of any moral theory is that the moral principles should be neutrally applied. Achieving a global meaning of terrorism, thus require viewing the act of terrorism performed by the state and non-state actors through a similar prism. It requires establishing a cosmopolitan justice system that can effectively hold both state and non-state actors accountable irrespective of their *power* status in the international system. Indeed, such a provision of cosmopolitan justice can only be seen moral if it does not discriminate between the powerful and powerless actors and dispense justice based

⁵³ For an analysis of US influence on EU and ASEAN in securing their participation in the global war on terrorism see Anna Cornelia Beyer, "Hegemony and Power in the Global War on Terrorism", in E. Fels et al. (eds.), *Power in the 21st Century, Global Power Shift*, Berlin, Heidelberg, Springer-Verlag 2012, pp.27- 41.

⁵⁴ For example the Convention on Cluster Munitions that entered into force on August 2010 has 119 states signatories, but 78 states including the US, Israel, India, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia have not yet signed the convention. See for details, <http://www.clusterconvention.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/100-States-Parties-and-19-Signatories-3.pdf/>, accessed on 26 April 2016.

on the 'act'. Conceptually, it requires us to move away from a world view that is anchored in Hobbesian pessimism that considers power is crucial, to the Grotian pragmatism of cooperation amongst the societies of states and finally reaching to the Kantian optimism that regards ideas and legal principles as vital in the international system.⁵⁵ Our ability to conceive rules and establish institutions such as the Rome Statute, and the International Criminal Court (ICC) for the prosecution of genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity reflects our desire to move towards a Kantian world to achieve 'perpetual peace'. Such efforts provide an opportunity to designate terrorism as a crime irrespective of actors, context and its normative roots. These efforts are viewed as the global movement towards greater accountability for atrocity and crimes and the establishment of a ruled-based international order. However, we find many powerful states, including the US and most recently Russian Federation that are opting out of a cosmopolitan legal framework such as ICC, making the project of delivering cosmopolitan justice daunting.⁵⁶

In sum, if meaning is peculiar to life and to the historical world, our focus should be on the interpretive examination of the meaning to make sense of the social world. To create a world guided meaning of a concept like terrorism, we need to strive towards creating a condition where it is considered as wrong in itself — without any qualifications or consequentialist justification. Our ability to strip terrorism from the notion of war, fear, religion and instead viewing and treating it as 'crime', committed not just by a non-state actor, but also state actors operating within or beyond their territory is crucial to the creation of a universal meaning of terrorism. Establishing such common ethos of reciprocity to the act of terrorism, regulated by the constitutive rules would go a long way towards achieving a meaning of terrorism that is truly 'world guided', resulting one man's terrorist to be regarded as everyman's terrorist.

⁵⁵ See Günter Brauch, "The Three Worldviews of Hobbes, Grotius and Kant: Foundations of Modern Thinking on Peace and Security, Contextual Change and Reconceptualization of Security"; available at, http://www.afes-press.de/pdf/Hague/Brauch_Worldviews.pdf, accessed on 30 June 2016.

⁵⁶ There are 124 state parties to the Rome Statute of the ICC. The important exclusion includes US, Russia, China and India. China and India never signed the Statute. US withdrew its signature from the Rome Statute on 06 May 2002. Russia, although signed the Statute in 2000, did not ratify it until it reversed its decision in November 2016, following the ICC report on Crimea annexation by Russia. Three African state (South Africa, Burundi and Gambia) have also recently signaled to pull out of ICC complaining ICC's excessive focus on the African continent. See, https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=XVIII-10&chapter=18&clang=_en#12/, accessed on 15 November 2016 and "Russia withdraws signature from international criminal court statute", available at <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/nov/16/russia-withdraws-signature-from-international-criminal-court-statute/>, accessed on 16 November 2016.

Sultana Jareen
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CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION EFFORTS OF BANGLADESH: AN ASSESSMENT

Abstract

Bangladesh is one of the most vulnerable countries to the effects of climate change. The country is experiencing some of the major impacts of climate change, such as sea level rise, salinity, increased temperature, rainfall variations, flood, drought and cyclone. In response, Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) has been a critical focus of the country. The country has taken a number of policies, programmes and projects to address the issue of CCA. These programmes, policies and plans are supported by institutional mechanisms of relevant ministries. To meet the financial requirement, the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) has established several funds domestically along with seeking fund from international community. This paper assesses the CCA efforts of Bangladesh. It reveals that despite some achievements, there are challenges which include lack of coordination among concerned ministries, loopholes in policies, lack of local level participation, slow pace of implementation along with insufficient funding, lack of adequate monitoring and evaluation, and deficit in transparency and accountability.

1. Introduction

Bangladesh is one of the most vulnerable countries in the world regarding climate change impacts. The 5th Assessment Report of Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) predicts that about 27 million people in Bangladesh will be at risk due to sea level rise by 2050.¹ At present, Bangladesh is experiencing some of the major effects of climate change, such as sea level rise, increased salinity and temperature, erratic rainfall, prolonged flood and drought, and increased frequency of cyclones. These are affecting many living, especially in the low-lying areas, north-west parts and coastal sides of the country. Due to climate change, Bangladesh is likely to face an annual loss of 2 per cent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by 2050 and 9.4 per cent by 2100.² It is projected that yields from rain-fed agriculture in Bangladesh

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¹ "Climate Change 2014 Synthesis Report: Summary for Policy Makers", available at https://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar5/syr/AR5_SYR_FINAL_SPM.pdf, accessed on 24 December 2015.

² Ministry of Environment and Forests (MOEF), *Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDC)*, Dhaka: Government of Bangladesh, 2015.

would be reduced to 50 per cent by 2020;³ therefore, will have adverse effects on food availability. Climate change is considered as a concern for Bangladesh's socio-economic development. Consequently, Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) has been a critical focus of the country's resilience and developmental efforts.

In this backdrop, to address the issue of CCA, the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) has initiated a number of policies, programmes and plan of actions. Of those, National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA) in 2005, Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (BCCSAP) in 2009, upcoming long-term National Adaptation Plan (NAP) and the Seventh Five Year Plan (FYP) 2016-2020 are important. These provide necessary directions and policy framework to integrate the CCA measures with national development plans. To facilitate the integration, necessary institutional framework is being developed, vulnerable zones of the country due to climate change are being identified and adaptation practices in different sectors are being implemented. Besides, local funds are being mobilised and engaging with multiple-level arrangements to receive international funds for implementing CCA programmes is being enhanced.

In this respect, the objective of this paper is to assess the overall CCA efforts of Bangladesh. To attain this objective, this paper reviews literature comprised of books, journals, government documents, documents of various international organisations, newspaper clippings and internet based articles. Besides, it includes data and ideas collected from interviewing experts and officials from the relevant ministries. The paper is divided into five sections. After introduction, the second section deals with conceptual issues about CCA in Bangladesh. The third section covers the existing adaptation efforts. In the fourth section, an assessment has been made. Finally, the fifth section concludes the paper.

2. Climate Change Adaptation in Bangladesh

Adaptation is one of the four components⁴ of addressing climate change issues. CCA is a versatile and iterative process. The term "adaptation" has been used in the climate change community since early 1990s. CCA mainly involves initiatives and measures designed to minimise the vulnerability of natural and human systems against actual or expected climate change effects.⁵ In one of the issues of *Nature* in 2007, it was argued that adapting to climate change effects would be more effective

³ David Braun, "Bangladesh, India Most Threatened by Climate Change, Risk Study Finds", available at http://voices.nationalgeographic.com/2010/10/20/bangladesh_india_at_risk_from_climate_change/, accessed on 25 December 2015.

⁴ According to 'Bali Action Plan', the four components of tackling climate change impacts are mitigation, adaptation, finance, and technology development and transfer.

⁵ Rajib Shaw, Fuad Mallick and Aminul Islam, "Climate Change: Global Perspectives", in Rajib Shaw, Fuad Mallick and Aminul Islam (eds.), *Climate Change Adaption Actions in Bangladesh*, Tokyo: Springer Japan, 2013, p.7.

ways of dealing with global warming than just reducing greenhouse gas emissions. To build resilient societies and foster sustainable development, CCA would be a feasible solution on a gradually warming planet. CCA can be regarded as adjustment in ecological, social or economic systems in response to climate change and their consequences. This term refers to changes in processes, practices or structures to moderate or offset potential damages or to take advantage of opportunities resulting from change in climate.⁶ Again, CCA involves adjustments to enhance the viability of social and economic activities, and reduce their vulnerability to climate, including current variability and extreme events as well as longer-term climate change.⁷

CCA efforts focus on incorporating planning, financing and cost-effective preventive actions into national development processes that are supported by scientific information, integrated climate impact assessments and local climate data.⁸ According to Paris Outcome agreed in the Conference of Parties (COP) 21,

“...adaptation action should follow a country-driven, gender-responsive, participatory and fully transparent approach, taking into consideration vulnerable groups, communities and ecosystems ... with a view to integrating adaptation into relevant socioeconomic and environmental policies and actions, where appropriate.”⁹

The emphasis of CCA initiatives does vary based on different country context.¹⁰ Bangladesh has taken various CCA efforts that intends to ensuring a consistent, comprehensive and a targeted approach to increase climate resilience and decrease vulnerability of the populace, raising awareness, arranging funding for meeting national adaptation needs, strengthening international recognition to facilitate CCA policies, as well as facilitating incorporation of climate change and CCA into national development.

⁶ *Ibid.*

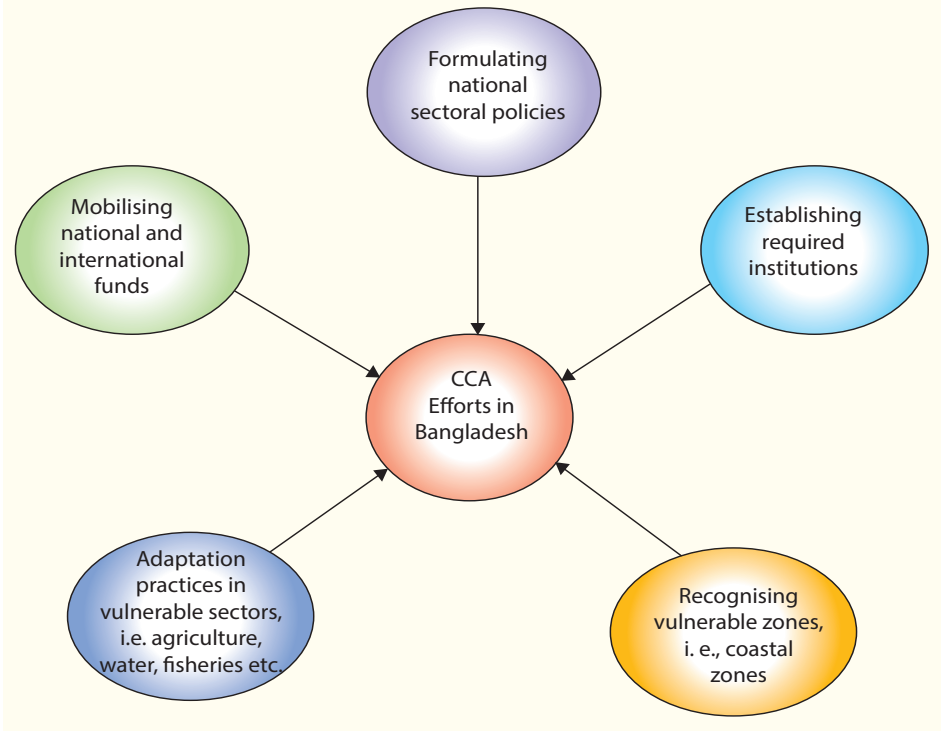
⁷ Barry Smit, Ian Burton, Richard J. T. Klein and J. Wandel, “An Anatomy of Adaptation to Climate Change and Variability”, *Climatic Change*, Netherlands, Vol. 45, 2000, pp. 223-251.

⁸ United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), “Climate Change”, available at http://www.unep.org/pdf/UNEP_Profile/Climate_change.pdf, accessed on 25 December 2015.

⁹ “Draft Paris Outcome”, available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2015/cop21/eng/da01.pdf>, accessed on 30 December 2015.

¹⁰ Aminul Islam, Rajib Shaw and Fuad Mallick, “Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan”, in Rajib Shaw, Fuad Mallick and Aminul Islam (eds.), *Climate Change Adaption Actions in Bangladesh*, *op. cit.*, p. 108.

Figure 1: CCA Initiatives of Bangladesh



Even though Bangladesh is a highly climate vulnerable country, it emits less than 0.35 per cent of global emissions.¹¹ The main focus of Bangladesh is to increase adaptation to the impacts of climate change.¹² In this regard, the GoB has developed various national and sectoral policies with CCA programmes. For workable and effective adaptation measures, public and private actors (e.g., ministries, institutions, non-government organisations, etc.) are considering incorporation of climate change issues in their planning and budgeting at all levels of decision making.¹³ Again, as a process of dealing with adaptation, focus is also given on the affected regions, economic sectors and needs of the affected people by climate change impacts. It aims to reduce the most significant hazards that the people face. Hence, mostly affected areas have been identified and various adaptation measures in those areas are being practiced for the inclusiveness of the process. In addition, for Bangladesh, financial assistance from both national and international sources is required to

¹¹ Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF), 2015, *op. cit.*

¹² Interview with Fazle Rabbi Sadeque Ahmed, Project Coordinator, Community Climate Change Project (CCCP), Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation (PKSF), on 23 December 2015.

¹³ United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), "Climate Change: Impacts, Vulnerabilities and Adaptation in Developing Countries", available at <https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/publications/impacts.pdf>, accessed on 25 December 2015.

support the adaptation programmes.¹⁴ Therefore, several efforts, such as formulating different national and sectoral policies, establishing required institutions, identifying vulnerable zones, adaptation practices in different sectors, mobilising both national and international funds altogether are addressing CCA in Bangladesh (see Figure 1).

3. Adaptation Efforts

The GoB has taken several initiatives to address the issue of CCA as mentioned above. However, for a comprehensive approach, strengthening institutional arrangements, identifying vulnerable zones, carrying on adaptation practices in various sectors and working on mobilising funds to implement CCA programmes are crucial.

3.1 Formulation of National Policies

To structure CCA efforts, the GoB has formulated several national and sectoral policies. One of the important national policies is NAPA. It involves concerned stakeholders as an integral part of the preparatory process for assessing impacts, vulnerabilities and adaptation measures. NAPA covers a wide range of vulnerability profile and adaptation options in the areas of water, agriculture, fisheries and livestock, biodiversity, forestry and land use, health, food security, natural disaster, industry and infrastructure, coastal vulnerability, gender and local governance policies and institutions. NAPA suggests several adaptation measures (see Table 1) to address the adverse effects of climate change including issues of variability and extreme events based on existing coping mechanisms and practices.

¹⁴ United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and Women's Environment and Development Organisation (WEDO), *Financing that Makes a Difference*, UNFPA & WEDO, 2009.

Table 1: Adaptation Measures in NAPA¹⁵

- Coastal afforestation with community participation; providing drinking water to coastal communities to combat enhanced salinity; promoting adaptation to coastal crop agriculture to combat increased salinity;
- Capacity building for integrating climate change in planning, designing of infrastructure, conflict management and land water zoning for water management institutions;
- Information dissemination to vulnerable community for emergency preparedness measures and awareness raising on enhanced climatic disasters;
- Construction of flood shelter, information and assistance centre to cope with enhanced recurrent floods in major floodplains;
- Mainstreaming adaptation to climate change policies and programmes in different sectors (focusing on disaster management, water, agriculture, health and industry);
- Inclusion of climate change issues in curriculum at secondary and tertiary educational institutions;
- Enhancing resilience of urban infrastructure and industries;
- Development of eco-specific adaptive knowledge (including indigenous knowledge) on adaptation to climate variability;
- Promotion of research on drought, flood and saline tolerant varieties of crops;
- Adaptation to agriculture systems in the areas prone to enhanced flash flooding especially in northeast and central region;
- Adaptation to fisheries in the areas prone to enhanced flooding in northeast and central region through adaptive and diversified fish culture practices; promoting adaptation to coastal fisheries through culture of salt-tolerant fish;
- Exploring options for insurance and other emergency preparedness measures to cope with enhanced climatic disasters;

BCCSAP is another important national policy addressing CCA issues. It is formulated in line with Bali Action Plan. BCCSAP is comprised of six pillars and 44 programmes.¹⁶ Five among the six pillars are focused on adaptation measures (see Table 2). It is worth mentioning that Bangladesh was the first country in the world to have such an action plan on climate change.

¹⁵ Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF), *National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA)*, Dhaka: Government of Bangladesh, 2009.

¹⁶ Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF), *Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan 2009*, Dhaka: Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, 2009.

Table 2: Six Pillars of BCCSAP¹⁷

Pillars	Objective(s)
Food security, social protection and health	Ensuring protection to the poorest and most vulnerable from climate change by focusing on food security, safe housing, employment and access to basic services
Comprehensive disaster management	Strengthening disaster management systems
Infrastructure	Ensuring well maintained infrastructure to cope with climate change impacts
Research and knowledge management	Predicting the likely scale of impacts on different sectors of the economy and socio-economic groups
Mitigation and low-carbon development	Evolving low carbon development options and their implementation
Capacity building and institutional strengthening	Enhancing the capacity of relevant ministries, agencies, civil society and private sector(s)

Moreover, NAP was agreed to be prepared at COP17 in 2011. It is supposed to be comprehensive in nature and would integrate adaptation into national planning at all levels (including national, sectoral and local level development plans). NAP would no longer be on developing a “plan” but about initiating a “planning process” to integrate adaptation within national development plans.¹⁸ The roadmap for NAP of Bangladesh has been developed by MoEF in April 2015, setting priorities of projects for the short- and medium-term periods. The plan is expected to be finalised by 2016.¹⁹ The 7th FYP recognises the issue of adaptation considerably which is shown in Table 3.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Saleemul Huq, “Politics of Climate Change Adaptation Plan”, *The Daily Star*, Dhaka, 14 November 2012.

¹⁹ Interview with Mirza Shawkat Ali, Deputy Director, Climate Change & International Convention, and Focal Point, Climate Change Cell, Department of Environment, Ministry of Environment and Forests., Government of Bangladesh, Dated 21 December 2015.

Table 3: Important Ten Steps for CCA in the 7th FYP²⁰

- Promote a whole-of government approach for climate change readiness
- Enhance understanding, knowledge, capacity and coordination
- Prioritise programmes and projects
- Improve implementation, monitoring and shared learning
- Enhance CCA financing
- Integrate gender sensitivity in project design
- Food security, social protection and health
- Managing hazards and disasters
- Infrastructural functioning and maintenance
- Curbing internal migration and displacement

Not only NAPA, BCCSAP, forthcoming NAP and the 7th FYP, but also the Perspective Plan of Bangladesh for 2010-2021 and National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS) 2010-2021 recognise the issue of CCA. The Perspective Plan emphasises adaptation as the main focus to tackle climate change impacts and stresses on appropriate structural and non-structural measures to adapt with climate change impacts. In this plan, emphasis is given on capacity building and mobilisation of the communities affected by extreme climatic events.²¹ The NSDS also recognises adverse impacts of climate change on economic development, life and livelihoods of the poor. It emphasises on strategic elements of CCA, such as coastal char land aforestation, introduction of climate stress tolerant crop varieties and utilisation of climate change funds.²²

3.2 *Establishing Institutional Arrangements*

The institutional and legal frameworks are crucial for the success of CCA actions. The GoB has already set up an institutional approach²³ in this regard. Currently, the MoEF is the key institution where Climate Change Cell (CCC), established in 2004, is working as focal point of all climate change related activities of the GoB. The CCC is trying to establish linkage among the sectoral agencies along with NGOs and to

²⁰ General Economics Division, *Seventh Five Year Plan FY2016 - FY2020*, Dhaka: Planning Commission, Government of Bangladesh, 2015.

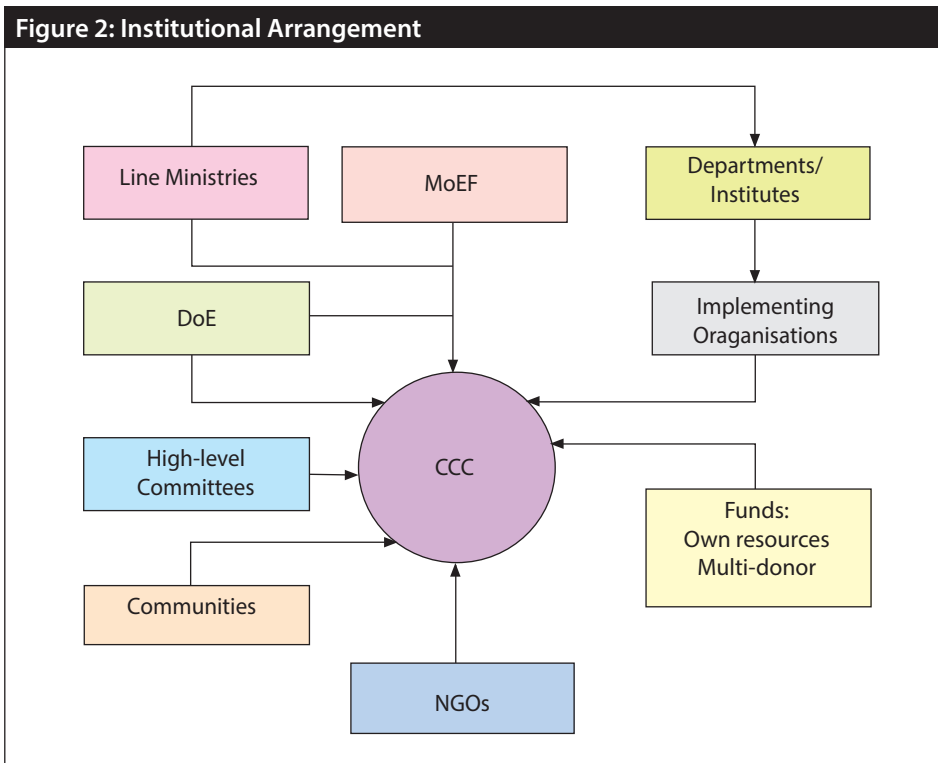
²¹General Economics Division, *Perspective Plan of Bangladesh (2010-2021)*, Dhaka: Planning Commission, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, 2012.

²² General Economics Division, *National Sustainable Development Strategy (2010-2021)*, Dhaka: Planning Commission, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, 2013.

²³ The approach is to engage the government and non-governmental stakeholders in climate change adaptation process.

prepare a common knowledge based on climate change related issues. To accelerate the functioning of CCC, the Ministry of Planning (MoP) has undertaken several efforts by integrating climate change issues in national development processes. The MoP is addressing CCA issues in designing and planning of all projects under Annual Development Programme (ADP). Besides, as CCA entails multi-sectoral response, the MoEF is integrating climate change issues along with gender, environmental and poverty issues. In 2013, realising the need for coordinated efforts on gender issues in CCA initiatives, the GoB has finalised the Bangladesh Climate Change and Gender Action Plan.²⁴ Therefore, Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MoWCA) has also been involved in CCA related activities.²⁵

Figure 2: Institutional Arrangement



This figure depicts the synergies between institutions that deal with CCA issues. The CCC under MoEF contributes in coordination and negotiation efforts. It enhances the technical capacity of Department of Environment (DoE) in supporting the government in climate change related policy and programme development like

²⁴ Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF), *Bangladesh Climate Change and Gender Action Plan*, Dhaka: Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh, 2013.

²⁵ General Economics Division, *Capacity Building Strategy for Climate Mainstreaming: A Strategy for Public Sector Planning Professionals*, Dhaka: Planning Commission, Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh, 2014.

BCCSAP and NAPA. The GoB has established different high-level committees on CCA issues. The line ministries, such as MoP and MoWCA help to perform the activities of CCC through various departments/institutes and implementing organisations. Moreover, NGOs are also implementing some projects through donor funds and contributing to mainstreaming through awareness, capacity building and information at community level. Communities are also one of the stakeholders in this process.

Community-based adaptation (CBA) to climate change is widely practiced in Bangladesh since 2002.²⁶ In Bangladesh, this approach mainly encompasses participatory climate change risk assessment, development of CCA plan by assisting the local government, motivation to implement CCA plan by organising awareness campaign, and familiarisation of household level climate change sensitive livelihood adaptation options through school sessions. For instance, the Comprehensive Disaster Management Programme (CDMP) is developed from an assessment of risks at community level through sector and cross sectoral analysis.²⁷ By realising the challenges and impact of climate change, CDMP is designed to create synergies between Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and CCA.²⁸ It demonstrates a process that can integrate and address climate change related risks and disasters in a comprehensive manner.²⁹

For institutionalising the implementation of BCCSAP, Climate Change Trust (CCT) (under Climate Change Trust Act, 2010), a technical wing, has been set up in the MoEF so that technical issues are better taken care of and technical support are provided to other stakeholders and national agencies. Bangladesh Climate Change Trust Fund (BCCTF) was constituted by the GoB from domestic resources in fiscal year 2009-10 and Bangladesh Climate Change Resilience Fund (BCCRF), a multi-donor grant fund, was also set up jointly by GoB and its bilateral development partners.³⁰ A person nominated by MoEF representing GoB performs the role of Designated Authority (DA) to liaise with the Adaptation Fund (AF). The DA is supposed to work with a National Implementing Entity (NIE) to seek project specific funds from AF and to help NIE to identify fundable projects and their respective executing agencies. The Economic Resources Division (ERD) of MoP has been identified as the National Designated Authority (NDA) for Bangladesh to deal with the formalities of Green Climate Fund (GCF).

²⁶ Community based adaptation is emerged from community based programmes in climate change sub-sector, disability sectors and poverty reduction sectors. This is largely based on a community based approach to development. See, A. K. M. Mamunur Rashid and Mizan R. Khan, "Community Based Adaptation: Theory and Practice", in Rajib Shaw, Fuad Mallick and Aminul Islam (eds.), *Climate Change Adaption Actions in Bangladesh*, op. cit., p. 342.

²⁷ Bangladesh Center for Advanced Studies, *The Scoping Assessment on Climate Change Adaptation in Bangladesh*, Bangkok: AIT-UNEP RRC. AP, 2010.

²⁸ The integration of DRR and CCA within the national plan and programmes has been recommended in COP13, Bali 2007 as part of the UNFCCC negotiation process.

²⁹ Aminul Islam and Abu Sumon, "Integration of Climate Change Adaptation, Disaster Risk Reduction and Social Protection in Bangladesh: Contemporary Views and Experiences", in Rajib Shaw, Fuad Mallick and Aminul Islam (eds.), *Climate Change Adaption Actions in Bangladesh*, op. cit., p. 84.

³⁰ Mousumi Pervin, "Mainstreaming Climate Change Resilience into Development Planning in Bangladesh", IIED country report, London: IIED, 2013.

3.3 Recognising Vulnerable Zones

Along with formulating national policies and establishing required institutions, it is necessary to identify climate change vulnerable zones for effective implementation of CCA plan. In Bangladesh, climate change vulnerable zones are determined based on hazard exposures, impact on biodiversity and conservation of marine and coastal resources, impact on water and agriculture, impact on life, livelihood and wellbeing of inhabitants of those areas.³¹ The major vulnerable zones in Bangladesh are as follows:

Types of Zones	Districts
Saline-affected coastal zones	Satkhira, Khulna, Jessore, Bagerhat, Patuakhali, Barguna
Flood-affected areas and char lands	Barisal, Cox’s Bazar, Jamalpur, Mymensingh, Bagerhat, Jessore, Khulna, Kurigram, Nilphamari
Drought-affected or rain-scarce areas in north western Bangladesh	Chuadanga, Jessore, Naogaon, Rajshahi, Satkhira, Natore
Cyclone-risk zones	Coastal districts located in the southern area

3.4 Adaptation Practices in Different Sectors

The GoB is also focusing on both structural and sector oriented practices. Climate change has been creating adverse impacts on infrastructures, agriculture, fisheries, and livestock in Bangladesh. These sectors require policies, mechanisms and resource mobilisation for more coherent CCA. Therefore, sectoral plans, policies and initiatives are being developed taking the issue of CCA into consideration (see Table 5).

³¹ A.K.M. Mamunur Rashid, “Climate Change Vulnerability in Bangladesh”, available at <https://www.danchurchaid.org/content/download/77264/642627/version/1/file/Climate+Change+Vulnerability+in+Bangladesh,+2009.pdf>, accessed on 20 December 2015.

³² General Economics Division, Seventh Five Year Plan FY2016 - FY2020, Dhaka: Planning Commission, Government of Bangladesh, 2015.

Table 5: Adaptation Practices in Different Sectors³³

Sectors	Adaptation Practices
Structural Adaptation Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Flood shelter, cyclone shelter and school/college/madrasa building, coastal and flood embankment construction - Plinth raising of house in the flood prone and coastal areas - Tree plantation in the floodplains and drought prone areas
Agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Undertaking programmes on agricultural diversification - Bringing changes in cropping pattern considering drought, flood, coastal/salinity and water logging - Familiarising zero tillage, mulching, priming, homestead gardening in the drought prone areas - Introducing floating beds and flood tolerant paddy variety³⁴ in flood-prone areas - Creating water reservoir, drip irrigation and alternative wetting and drying method for irrigation
Fisheries/Aquaculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Culturing saline water tolerant fish variety - Crab fattening in coastal areas - Raising height of the bank of ponds and its width to protect fishes from the risks of flood and tidal surge
Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rainwater harvesting and conservation in community ponds, reservoirs and household tanks - Installation of different water technologies like deep tube-well, deep set pump for the drought, hilly, floodplains and coastal areas, where the ground water level is very low, arsenic contaminated and saline - National Water Management Plan (NWMP) recognises climate change as one of the future factors affecting supply and demand of water - Bangladesh Delta Plan is processing for a long-term climate adaptive water resource management which has a target of 100 years. It will incorporate the knowledge and experiences from all existing studies and sectoral plans including Perspective Plan (2010-2021), NWMP, Haor and Wetland Development Master Plan, and Southern Agriculture Master Plan³⁵

³³ S. M. Alauddin and Khan Ferdousour Rahman, "Vulnerability to Climate Change and Adaptation Practices in Bangladesh", *Journal of State University Bangladesh*, Dhaka, Vol. 4, No. 2, 2013, pp. 25-42.

³⁴ Bangladesh Rice Research Institute (BRRI) at Joydevpur, Gazipur, playing leading role in research and innovation of flood tolerant (Sharna 1 and BRRI 17) and high yielding paddy variety in Bangladesh. It has also innovated several saline tolerant crop varieties for coastal areas.

³⁵ Shamsun N. Ahmed and Aminul Islam, "Equity and Justice Issues for Climate Change Adaptation in Water Resource Sector", in Rajib Shaw, Fuad Mallick and Aminul Islam (eds.), *Climate Change Adaption Actions in Bangladesh*, op. cit., p. 159.

Disaster Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National Plan for Disaster Management mentions adaptation as a matter of acceptance at the cognitive level of the exposed entity.³⁶ To address adaptation, different safety net programmes are implemented, e.g., Test Relief (TR), Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF), Vulnerable Group Development (VGD), Food for Work (FFW), etc. Different programmes including institutional feeding, rural infrastructure maintenance, risk reduction, road maintenance and house building grants has also been implemented - The Coastal Zone Policy (2005) incorporates the issue of CCA with disaster risk management
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3.5 Climate Financing for Adaptation

As Bangladesh is one of the most climate vulnerable countries, it requires financial assistance to support the adaptation programme. Climate financing in Bangladesh comes through national, bilateral and multilateral sources.

Bangladesh mobilises domestic funds, takes grants and concessional loans to finance CCA projects. Over the last three decades, Bangladesh has invested over US\$10 billion to make the country more climate resilient and less vulnerable to natural disasters.³⁷ The GoB generally spends around 6 to 7 per cent of its annual combined development and non-development budget on climate sensitive activities.³⁸ Of total spending in CCA, about 17.5 per cent is spent on disaster management.³⁹ The government allocated US\$385 million to BCCTF from fiscal year 2009-2010 to 2014-15.⁴⁰ Most of that fund was allocated for adaptation measures.⁴¹

Bangladesh also seeks technical assistance from bilateral and multilateral donors for adaptation and mitigation purposes. At the international level, the GoB has taken several initiatives to draw international attention and cooperation to address CCA in Bangladesh. In the Bali Action Plan, Bangladesh emphasised on specific interventions within the country to ensure security of food, water, energy and livelihoods. On behalf of the Least Developing Countries (LDCs), Bangladesh highlighted requirement of immediate international support in building resilience to climate change at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in February 2008.⁴² Bangladesh is a founding member of the Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF). The LDCs including Bangladesh have sought for US\$100 billion each year to be made through the GCF for tackling climate change. The GCF board has decided to allocate half of

³⁶ Disaster Management Bureau, *National Plan for Disaster Management (2010-2015)*, Dhaka: Disaster Management and Relief Division, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, 2010.

³⁷ MoEF, 2015, *op. cit.*

³⁸ General Economics Division, *Public Expenditure for Climate Change: Bangladesh Climate Public Expenditure and Institutional Review*, Dhaka: Planning Commission, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, 2012.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ Available at <http://www.bcct.gov.bd/index.php/83-home?start=5>, accessed on 23 December 2015.

⁴¹ General Economics Division, 2012, *op. cit.*

⁴² World Bank, *Bangladesh: Strategic Program for Climate Resilience (SPCR)*, Dhaka, 2010.

those funds to adaptation.⁴³ Bangladesh submitted its adaptation target cost (40 billion up to 2030)⁴⁴, and looked for technical and financial support at COP 21.⁴⁵

Bangladesh is seeking assistance from developed countries through its 'Climate Change Network' (CCN) and 'Climate Change Knowledge Network' (CCKN) for adaptation friendly technology transfer. But the degree of satisfaction is low due to difference in technology priorities of countries and Intellectual Property Rights (IPR).⁴⁶ In recent years a number of international agencies and development partners/donors including UKAID/British High Commission/British Council Bangladesh, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Danida (Denmark's development cooperation)/Embassy of Denmark, EC-Bangladesh, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), World Bank and Asian Development Bank (ADB) have become active in supporting CCA programmes in Bangladesh.

At regional level, Bangladesh plays an important role to establish an 'Inter-Governmental Expert Group on Climate Change' to develop policy directions for regional cooperation as envisaged in the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Plan of Action on Climate Change.⁴⁷

4. An Assessment

An assessment of CCA efforts is necessary to identify how far these actions can address the adaptation issue properly. Bangladesh has taken various CCA efforts to ensure a consistent, wide-ranging approach and to enhance climate resilience, assembling funding for meeting national adaptation needs and incorporating climate change issues into national development agenda.⁴⁸ Climate change response policies are most effective when they are fully integrated within an overall sustainable development strategy and policy. Regarding CCA initiatives in Bangladesh a question arises how far the CCA plans and policies, e.g., BCCSAP, NAPA, etc. come in line with national development plans and different sectoral arrangements (e.g., National Water Policy (NWP), National Water Management Plan (NWMP), National Environmental Management Action Plan (NEMAP), National Land Use Policy (NLUP) and National Forest Policy). As a result, implementation of the action plans or programmes continues to be an isolated initiative. In addition, policy oriented gaps cannot also be ignored.

⁴³ Interview with Shanchita Haque, Senior Director, Economic Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Dated 19 December 2015.

⁴⁴ MoEF, 2015, *op. cit.*

⁴⁵ Interview with Mr. Md. Mustafizur Rahman, Director General, United Nations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Dated 19 December 2015.

⁴⁶ Interview with Riaz Hamidullah, Director General, Economic Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Dated 20 December 2015.

⁴⁷ World Bank, *op. cit.*

⁴⁸ Interview with Fazle Rabbi Sadeque Ahmed, *op.cit.*

Among the CCA policies, NAPA is not an all-inclusive, long-term plan but an urgent and immediate response to climate change impacts.⁴⁹ Of the fifteen projects taken by NAPA, only one has received funding under the coastal afforestation programme.⁵⁰ The document was produced through a project led by a steering committee, headed by MoEF and members of other key ministries. The process involved selected vulnerable communities while conducted consultations in the capital and other divisional cities. This document has been seen as an external requirement and did not receive sufficient political attention.⁵¹ Due to lack of planning as well as financing, NAPA has not become a holistic adaptation programme. NAPA is revised in 2009 and aligned with BCCSAP. The later has been prepared through a consultative process involving the GoB, civil society and development partners. However, the participation of vulnerable communities is yet to be taken into adequate consideration. Therefore, BCCSAP can be viewed as a top-down approach. Without the active participation of local people how this action plan would be functionalised is a big concern.⁵² On the other hand, BCCSAP did not fully incorporate many adaptation issues, e.g., biodiversity and ecosystem conservation, adaptation to local level perspective, and knowledge sharing at regional level. However, these are addressed later in Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDC), 2015.⁵³ Besides, the slow pace of BCCSAP and other sectoral policies is considered as a setback towards implementing CCA. It is to note that only 41 projects out of 236 BCCSAP-funded projects have been implemented till 2013.⁵⁴

Therefore, BCCSAP can be reevaluated with the participation of relevant ministries, public representatives, and members of parliamentary committee, civil society, NGOs and climate change victims. Moreover, as amalgamating CCA programmes and national (sectoral) development policies is essential, mainstreaming climate change into planning needs to be done at every level. Sectoral ministries related to water management, agriculture, health and others also need to mainstream climate change into their respective sectoral plans. The process of developing CCA measures has to be grounded on certain principles that will integrate the NAPA, BCCSAP, NAP and other sectoral policies into a coherent planning process. The lessons learnt from NAPA and BCCSAP need to be considered for preparing upcoming NAP. The NAP process should be seen as a process of mainstreaming rather than producing a stand-alone plan.⁵⁵

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ Nathan Thanki, "Adaptation in Bangladesh: Closer Look at NAPA", available at <http://www.earthinbrackets.org/.../adptation>, accessed on 27 December 2015.

⁵¹ Khurshid Alam, Thomas Tanner, Md. Shamsuddoha, A. K. M. Mamunur Rashid, Moshahida Sultana, Muhammad Jahedul Huq, Sumaiya S. Kabir, and Sifayet Ullah, "Planning 'Exceptionalism?' Political Economy of Climate Resilient Development in Bangladesh", in Rajib Shaw, Fuad Mallick and Aminul Islam (eds.), *Climate Change Adaption Actions in Bangladesh*, op. cit., p. 342.

⁵² Network on Climate Change, Bangladesh (NCC,B), *Implementation of BCCSAP: An Overview on Status, Gaps and Opportunities*, Dhaka: NCC,B Secretariat, 2013.

⁵³ Interview with Mirza Shawkat Ali, op.cit.

⁵⁴ NCC,B, op. cit.

⁵⁵ Oxfam, op. cit., p.25.

Since MoEF is the focal point, it is set up to coordinate the institutional matters. Integrating concerned ministries and institutions even at local level is necessary. Again, Local level institutions cannot adequately address climate change issues with their limited managerial capacity. Though local government is important, among the 44 actions under BCCSAP there is no plan related to capacity development of local government. Government officials, especially at local institutions do not have adequate management skills to respond to various impacts of climate change. Moreover, NGOs can play an important role in implementing CCA programmes at the local level. NGOs are often treated as sub-assistant of government, but not as a co-partner for implementing some selective actions of adaptation plan. There is a coordination gap between the government agencies and NGOs. As a result, sporadic programmes have been taken in small scale by NGOs which lack affiliation of government agencies. However, an initiative was taken by disbursing ten per cent special allocation for the NGOs for implementing the BCCSAP. Still a number of questions were raised on transparency and accountability of NGO selection process. In order to gear up current institutional arrangement and to ensure proper collaboration with multiple stakeholders, institutional revitalisation and strengthening is an immediate necessity.⁵⁶ Prevailing capacity involving technical know-how of officials, financial and coordinating issues need to be examined to make arrangement more functional. The prevailing knowledge gap between central and local government institutions must be fulfilled.

Another key concern is prioritising programmes or projects in different policies as Bangladesh lacks financial resources, institutional capacity and skilled human resources. For example, BCCSAP prioritises projects in broader perspective but without having a tentative log frame. Again, *Sidr* and *Cyclone Aila* were given the highest priority in the 6th Five Year Plan. On the other hand, an estimation of current investment of BCCTF through government agencies shows that the highest investment goes to infrastructure thematic area of BCCSAP. Capacity building and institutional strengthening get the lowest allocation.⁵⁷ So, a priority list and cost of adaptation needs to be created so that it will be aligned with the 7th Five Year Plan and forthcoming NAP. The list of prioritisation can be taken on the basis of “degree of adverse effects of climate change, poverty reduction to enhance adaptive capacity, synergy with other multilateral environmental agreements and cost-effectiveness”.⁵⁸

Furthermore, though Research and Development (R&D) should be prioritised for long term adaptation plan, national policies put little emphasis on this issue. For example, only eight projects have been identified under BCCSAP with an allocation of US\$0.77 million in seven years⁵⁹. Inadequate allocation interrupts in accessing to

⁵⁶ Interview with Mirza Shawkat Ali, *op. cit.*

⁵⁷ “Bangladesh Climate Change Trust Fund”, available at <http://www.bcct.gov.bd/index.php/83-home/147-home-2>, accessed on 20 December 2015.

⁵⁸ *ibid*, p.11.

⁵⁹ NCCB, *op. cit.*

the latest ideas and technologies, generating knowledge and forming data banks regarding CCA.⁶⁰ Budgetary allocation can be enhanced for further developing research and knowledge capacities. Promotion of research on drought, flood and saline tolerant varieties of crops to facilitate adaptation in future needs to be encouraged. In this regard, 'Climate Change Knowledge Management' should be established as a national node for scientific knowledge on climate change vulnerability as well as to share information on technology sharing, scientific data, etc.⁶¹

Not only in R&D but as a whole, lack of funding is also the most important challenge. Till now, BCCTF has acquired roughly US\$385 million from domestic fund to implement the adaptation projects of BCCSAP.⁶² At the initial stage, BCCTF has got US\$89.4 million (2009-10) which is gradually decreasing and now it is only US\$12.8 million (2015-16).⁶³ On the contrary, bilateral and multilateral donors committed to provide approximately US\$186.2 million, but disbursed only US\$130 million up to 2015.⁶⁴ Therefore, gradual declining of national fund and inadequate international fund obstruct the implementation of CCA projects. The most important to CCA is to mobilise required fund. On the one hand, increasing domestic allocation in the BCCTF and BCCRF is essential. On the other hand, functions of BCCTF and BCCRF need to be reassessed in line with the demands of other relevant ministries (e.g., Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Co-operatives, etc.), who are assigned to address CCA. Bangladesh's readiness to harness CCA oriented available international support is below par, which needs to be addressed on an urgent basis. The National Implementing Entity (NIE) for both AF and GCF needs to be aware of this issue. Assistance in the form of technology transfer is also essential for Bangladesh. As adaptation friendly technologies are not only expensive but also protected by IPR of developed countries, the acquisition of technologies by countries like Bangladesh need to be supported through diplomatic initiatives, global and bilateral financing and direct access.⁶⁵ Along with funding problem, lack of monitoring and evaluation of projects have been concerns for BCCSAP. So, reevaluation of BCCSAP and other policies should be taken immediately. This approach needs to be "bottom-up". It is important to develop a set of effective indicators of monitoring and evaluation to ensure accountability and transparency while implementing CCA programme. For any large scale programme of action, there should a system of monitoring and evaluation. A robust monitoring and evaluation procedure can ensure transparency as well as accountability of relevant stakeholders.

⁶⁰ Oxfam, *Looking to a Future Climate-Smart Development in Bangladesh: A Critical Review of Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan*, Dhaka: Oxfam, 2013.

⁶¹ *Ibid*, p.7.

⁶² "Bangladesh Climate Change Trust", available at www.bcct.gov.bd, accessed on 23 December 2015.

⁶³ *Ibid*.

⁶⁴ Saleemul Huq, "Politics of Climate Change: The Next Phase in the Global Battle", *The Daily Star*, Dhaka, 21 September 2015.

⁶⁵ Interview with Mirza Shawkat Ali, *op. cit*.

5. Concluding Remarks

Bangladesh is one of the most vulnerable countries to the effects of climate change. Since the country is not a major greenhouse gas emitter, the main focus of Bangladesh is on adaptation to tackle climate change impacts. CCA encompasses various initiatives and measures designed to reduce the vulnerability of natural and human systems due to climate change effects. To address climate change issues, a holistic adaptation plan is needed that incorporates planning, financing and cost-effective preventative actions into national development processes. Formulating different national and sectoral policies, unifying CCA in national development process, setting up of necessary institutions, identifying climate change affected areas, practicing adaptation measures on those areas and mobilising funds for adaptation programmes — these initiatives altogether have addressed CCA efforts in Bangladesh.

The GoB has taken a number of policies, programmes and projects to promote CCA. NAPA covers a wide range of vulnerability profile and adaptation options in the areas of water, coastal areas, natural disaster, health, agriculture, fisheries and livestock, biodiversity, forestry, land use, industry and infrastructure, food security, livelihood, gender and local governance. In addition, BCCSAP covers different adaptation measures under five pillars including food security and social protection, disaster risk management, infrastructure, research and knowledge sharing, and capacity building and institutional strengthening. The 7th Five Year Plan also recognises the issue of adaptation to climate change. After initiating and undergoing through all these efforts, the forthcoming NAP integrates adaptation into national planning at all levels. It is much bigger and long-term planning exercise. These programmes, policies and plans are supported by institutional mechanism, where CCC under MoEF serves as focal point to implement the programmes supported by relevant ministries. Along with initiating national policies and establishing required institutions, various climate change vulnerable zones have been identified across the country and sector wise adaptation measures are practicing in those areas. To support these adaptation programmes, the GoB has established several funds like BCCTF and BCCRF along with seeking fund and technology from international community.

As the magnitude and long-term nature of the climate change threat is increasingly better understood, it becomes clear that simply implementing a set of adaptation projects, although useful, is not going to be sufficient. If long-term resilience to climate change impacts is to be built into the economy and society of the country, CCA needs to be embedded into regular national development planning and actions at all levels and finally, a comprehensive CCA strategy needs to be initiated. Besides, loopholes also remain in existing national policies, sectoral plans, institutional and financial mechanism. One of the most important predicaments is to incorporate CCA programmes in national development plans. Lack of coordination

among concerned ministries and local level institutions is another setback. Again, NGOs are playing important role in addressing climate change issues at local level. While combined efforts of the GoB and NGOs would be more efficient, the later are functioning sporadically. Efficiency suffers in this regard. In addition, policy oriented gaps cannot be overlooked. The NAPA lacks holistic approach and BCCSAP is regarded as top-down approach that ignores community level participation. Another key concern is prioritising programmes or projects in different policies as Bangladesh lacks financial resources, institutional and human capabilities. Although R&D should be prioritised for long-term adaptation strategy, national policies put little emphasis on that matter. Again, funding is also a big concern to implement CCA initiatives. Gradual declining of national fund and inadequate international fund obstruct the implementation of CCA projects.

To address these loopholes, institutional revitalisation and strengthening, engaging all concerned stakeholders, amalgamation of CCA programme and national (sectoral) development policies, and developing research and knowledge skills are essential. Priorities need to be set based on adverse effects of climate change, poverty reduction and cost-effectiveness. Moreover, mobilising required funds, increasing domestic allocation, reassessment of BCCTF and BCCRF in line with the demand of the concerned ministries, enhancing readiness to avail international support and lobbying for technology transfer are some possible options to effectively address CCA efforts in Bangladesh.

Shanjida Shahab Uddin

REGIONAL AND SUB-REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY ARRANGEMENTS: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR BANGLADESH

Abstract

Connectivity initiatives in the present era are considered as a significant prerequisite for developing transport sector, people to people engagement, institutional linkages and hence in the long run, contributing to the economic development. Bangladesh's unique location puts it in the vicinity of two regional powers - India and China and landlocked countries – Bhutan and Nepal. With two operational seaports, one forthcoming deep-sea port and several land ports, Bangladesh can easily reap a myriad of benefits by turning itself into a regional and trading hub. Therefore, the paper explains the possible benefits that Bangladesh and its neighbours could gain from already established and forthcoming connectivity arrangements at the regional and sub-regional level. The paper also reviewed the existing and possible impending challenges that Bangladesh would face in transforming itself as a connectivity centre and suggested policy recommendations to address these challenges.

1. Introduction

Emerged in the mid-20th century, the concept of regional and sub-regional cooperation reflects the understanding that no country, irrespective of size and wealth, can achieve economic prosperity in isolation.¹ Transport cost of goods also plays a significant role in determining trade competitiveness in global economy. In this regard, connectivity plays significant role and is perceived to be an important driver of trade, transport, energy cooperation, investment, tourism and people-to-people contact. Strong physical, institutional and people-to-people connectivity encourage economic prosperity in a region. South Asia, being the least integrated region in the world, is yet to attain its potential.² In South Asia, Bangladesh has enormous scope in leveraging connectivity initiatives and it is contemplated that the country could also be benefited from regional and sub-regional cooperation through connectivity for sustainable economic development, combating terrorism, facing climate change and reducing poverty. It is also believed that these connectivity initiatives could also bring significant benefits to the participating countries by accelerating transport, trade and

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¹ M. Rahmatullah, "Regional Transport Connectivity: Its Current State", *The Daily Star*, 24 March 2013.

² Hasanuzzaman and Zeeshan Rahman, "Bangladesh and Regional Connectivity: Best Practices from Global Experiences", Centre for Policy Dialogue, *Occasional Paper 89*, April 2010.

investment³. Studies revealed that Bangladesh can be a potential connectivity centre due to its distinctive position between two regional economic giants – India and China and having two landlocked neighbouring countries – Nepal and Bhutan and a semi-landlocked territory in India's northeast comprising the Seven Sister States and the Himalayan state of Sikkim.⁴

It is important for Bangladesh to be able to make use of this advantageous geographical setting and participate actively in connectivity plans, using its transport network to facilitate trade integration and gap reduction with neighbours, provide new markets, boost tourism and energy cooperation, etc. However, Bangladesh is already a member of two important regional forums - the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), and the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC). It recently joined several forward-looking sub-regional connectivity initiatives, such as Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal (BBIN); Bangladesh, China, India and Myanmar Economic Corridor (BCIM-EC); and Myanmar-Bangladesh-India (MBI) Pipeline Project.

Given this backdrop, the objective of this paper is to identify Bangladesh's opportunities and challenges over connectivity and find suitable ways to deal with them. There are six sections in this paper following the introduction. The second section of the paper evaluates the general state of connectivity from Bangladesh's perspective. The third section looks into the existing connectivity initiatives in Asia by examining how Bangladesh is engaging with several Asian connectivity plans. The fourth section attempts to find out possible opportunities that Bangladesh could grab if it becomes a regional connectivity hub and also investigates possible challenges it could face as a host country. The fifth section suggest some possible ways to address these concerns and the final section concludes the paper.

2. Connectivity: Bangladesh Perspective

Effective regional economic cooperation is unachievable without better communication and transport connectivity. In this regard, Bangladesh's favourable location could bring huge opportunity for gearing up connectivity among the neighbours as well as boosting up trade and commerce. Since non-cooperation at bilateral, regional or global level is never a sustainable option for economic prosperity especially for a developing country like Bangladesh, it should take the opportunity of practising connectivity initiatives.

³ Bangladesh Ambassador to the United States, Mohammad Ziauddin's Interview with *The Diplomat* on "Regional connectivity, maritime disputes, and regional security threats", 18 November 2015, available at <http://thediplomat.com/2015/11/diplomatic-access-bangladesh/>, accessed on 27 November 2015.

⁴ M. Rahmatullah, "Regional Connectivity: Opportunities for Bangladesh to be a Regional Hub", *Journal of Bangladesh Institute of Planners*, Dhaka, Vol. 2, December 2009, p. 13.

Bangladesh has become a lower middle-income country with the GNI per capita of US\$1,080. Doing Business 2016 report shows that Bangladesh slipped two positions to 174 in 2016 among the 185 economies compared to the position of 172 in 2015. The other South Asian countries, which were below in 2015, have all developed their position in the latest ranking. Thus, it should be treated as a wake-up call for Bangladesh to give focus on regional connectivity for encouraging more investments in Bangladesh.⁵ According to United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific (UN-ESCAP) Statistical Yearbook 2015, Bangladesh is still lagging behind in railway density and upgraded road network.⁶ World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness report 2016-17 showed that Bangladesh's position was the 106th out of 138 countries. The performance of each country is examined based on 12 parameters. Of them, Bangladesh's position was 114 in infrastructure sector. Road transport is still underdeveloped but little progress observed compared to the preceding year⁷. Although Bangladesh has all the potentials to scale up its transport network, it is not still gearing up the way it should be.

Economic integration depends on the density and quality of connectivity. A stronger connectivity strengthens intra and inter-regional trade and generates higher income and prosperity. Weak connectivity is one of the main reasons of poor performance in regional trade. Better infrastructure for regional connectivity would encourage fragmentation of production and enhance regional and global trade.⁸ Since Bangladesh is located between India and China and positioned as a bridge between Central, South and East Asia, it can become an Asian commercial hub through better land, air and sea connectivity.⁹

Bangladesh, by providing transit to its neighbours, can also sell transport services for which there is currently no competitor in the region. With this, Bangladesh can also lessen its trade deficit with neighbouring countries. Map 1 below is showing the location of Bangladesh bordering India and Myanmar. The country is also adjacent to two landlocked countries – Nepal and Bhutan. The BBIN's possible route plan for motor vehicle transport connectivity and the route of MBI are also in the maps below. These maps are proving the importance of Bangladesh's cooperation in regional and sub-regional connectivity plans. Bangladesh is also in the plan of the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway (TAR).

⁵ World Bank, *Doing Business Report*, 2016

⁶ UNESCAP, *Statistical Yearbook for Asia and the Pacific*, 2015

⁷ World Economic Forum, *The Global Competitiveness Report 2016-2017*

⁸ Prabir De, *Connectivity, Trade Facilitation and Regional Cooperation in South Asia*, London, Commonwealth Secretariat, 2013

⁹ Mustafizur Rahman, Khondaker Golam Moazzem, Mehruna Islam Chowdhury and Farzana Sehrin, *Connecting South Asia and Southeast Asia: A Bangladesh Country Study*, ADBI Working Paper Series, Asian Development Bank Institute, September 2014

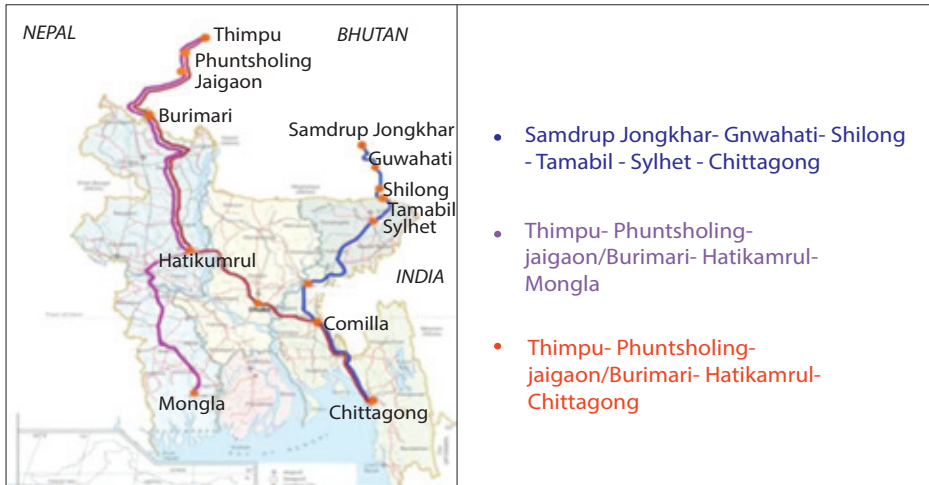
Map1: TAR route through Bangladesh¹⁰



Map2: MBI Gas Pipeline through Bangladesh¹¹



Map3: Possible Bangladesh-Bhutan route in BBIN Motor Vehicle Agreement¹²

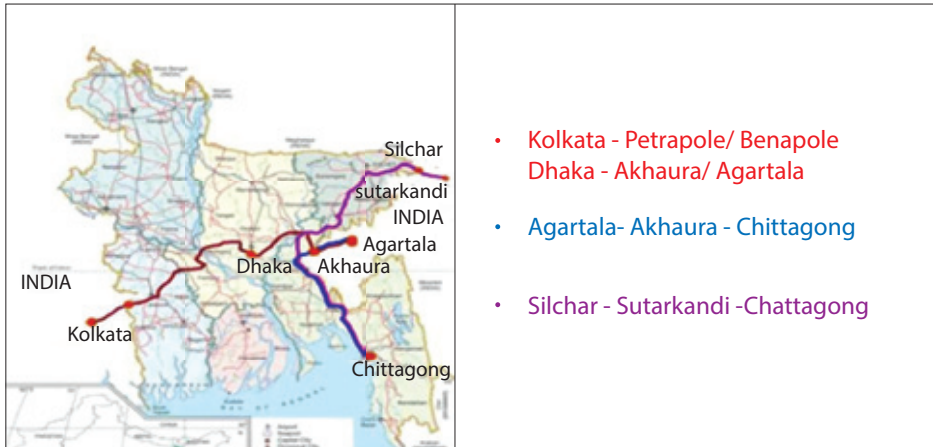


¹⁰ Rejaul Karim Byron, "Target Trans-Asian Railway Linkages", *The Daily Star*, 20 April 2016

¹¹ Myanmar, Bangladesh, India Gas Pipeline, available at https://www.google.com.bd/search?q=myanmar+bangladesh+india+gas+pipeline&biw=1366&bih=610&source=Inms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiE kJrg0ovQAhVGNy8KHwYHD_kQ_AUIBigB#imgrc=L-w-6fyt1rg6EM%3A, accessed on 27 March 2016

¹² Sajid Karim and Gazi Quamrul Hasan, "Motor Vehicle Agreement Between Bangladesh Bhutan India and Nepal: Implications and Challenges", *BISS Journal*, Vol. 36, No. 2, 2015.

Map 4: Possible Bangladesh-India route in BBIN Motor Vehicle Agreement¹³



Map 5: Possible Bangladesh-Nepal route in BBIN Motor Vehicle Agreement¹⁴



South Asia has huge potential regarding connectivity and it could be a bridge between South and Southeast Asia, between South and Central Asia, and between South and West Asia. In this regard, Bangladesh has huge possibilities to become a connectivity centre. Bangladesh, by providing transport connectivity to its neighbouring countries, can also get the benefits from the earning of transportation charges, port charges, border crossing charges, etc.¹⁵

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Abu Saleh Md. Yousuf and Mohammad Jashim, Uddin, "Economic Integration in South Asia", *BISS Journal*, Vol 34, No. 1, January 2013, pp. 16-36

Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) in its study showed that regional connectivity is a prerequisite for the growth of trade, commerce and investment. In South Asia, several regional connectivity initiatives have been taking place and a failure to respond to these emerging initiatives will result in higher cost of non-cooperation. This will lead to lower economic integration and less engagement with global opportunities. Since Bangladesh has the potentials for regional connectivity, the government should take steps to operationalise the connectivity agenda through transport interconnection, border clearance, secured transport market access, and developing route capacity.¹⁶ In this regard, Rahmatullah¹⁷ rightly showed that Bangladesh will gain a win-win situation if connectivity is fully materialised by all modes and transit of goods and containers allowed across its territory.

For the implementation of vision 2021, the government of Bangladesh has formulated a perspective plan (2010-2021) and two five year plans – 6th (2011-2015) and 7th (2016-2020) where the issue of connectivity through transport, people-to-people contact, energy cooperation, etc. received much consideration.¹⁸ In the 7th Five Year Plan, the top priorities for the transport infrastructure strategy are, to address implementation gaps of 6th Five Year Plan; taking new initiatives to promote regional connectivity by improving transport communication with neighbouring countries through development of intermodal transport network and supporting TAR and Asian Highway; to address the anticipated Chittagong Port capacity constraints and setting reformation of Public-Private Partnership (PPP) strategy to achieve stronger progress. Apart from these priorities, 7th Five Year Plan emphasises on another important task which is to identify incomplete infrastructure projects and timely completion of such projects. Regarding regional connectivity, table 1 below is showing the sector-wise targets of 7th Five Year Plan which will aid Bangladesh to be a hub of regional connectivity.

¹⁶ Hasanuzzaman and Zeeshan Rahman, *op.cit.*

¹⁷ M. Rahmatullah, 2009, *op.cit.*

¹⁸ General Economic Division (GED), Planning Commission, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, *Seventh Five Year Plan (2016-2020)*, Final Draft.

Table 1: Targets in the 7th Five Year Plan to aid Bangladesh to be a connectivity hub

Sectors	Targets to Achieve
Roads and Highways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timely completion of important road links related to regional and multi-regional connectivity • Construction of Padma Multipurpose Bridge that will connect southwest part of the country to northern and eastern regions • Conversion of nationally important highways into four-lanes • Connecting important economic activity hubs, such as Payra Port and Economic Zones to national highways
Railways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuation of reforming and modernising railways • Strengthening South Asia Regional and TAR connectivity through constructing new rail track in the Bangladesh side of TAR
Waterways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction of landing stations and river ports • Construction of a new container terminal
Airways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction of a new airport named Khan Jahan Ali Airport
Port and Terminal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction of the third sea port at Payra in Patuakhali • Construction of a sea port and Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) terminal at Moheshkhali • Construction of the third terminal at Hazrat Shah Jalal International Airport

Source: 7th Five Year Plan 2016-2020.

Several policy initiatives and institutional reforms also happened during the recently implemented 6th Five Year Plan, such as “National Integrated Multimodal Transport Policy 2013”, “Road Fund Board Law 2013”, “Vehicle Axle Load Control Station Operation Policy 2012” and “River Protection Commission Act 2013”. During the recently implemented 6th Five Year Plan, the GDP growth rate remained steady at 6 per cent for a number of years and it is expected to accelerate during the tenure of 7th Five Year Plan. For that reason, a more balanced and efficient multimodal transport system is very much important for Bangladesh.

3. Bangladesh in Regional and Sub-regional Connectivity Arrangements

Connectivity has become a buzzword in the field of development. Although there are many setbacks in regional cooperation, Asian countries are practicing some joint initiatives to tackle specific and common concerns. This section tries to explore all the regional arrangements in which Bangladesh is involved. In the Asia region, there are several worth-notable connectivity initiatives, such as SAARC, BIMSTEC, BCIM-EC, BBIN, etc. Bangladesh is a member of all of these forums.

SAARC, which was established in 1985, is the oldest regional forum. Under the SAARC platform, SAARC-MVA is the Motor Vehicle Agreement for the regulation of Passenger and Cargo Vehicular Traffic amongst SAARC member states. The agreement was drafted and proposed for approval at the 18th SAARC Summit in Kathmundo in 2014. But it was not approved at the summit because Pakistan backtracked from its support and denied to approve the agreement. The mistrust between India and Pakistan has been a major obstacle in the path of progressing with SAARC-MVA.¹⁹ However, this agreement has the aim to make closer regional cooperation and integration through enhanced regional connectivity by allowing movement of goods and passengers through road transport. Within SAARC, Bangladesh and India have some MVAs. The Kolkata-Dhaka Bus service (1999) and the Dhaka-Agartala Bus service (2001) are the earliest two road transport initiatives between Bangladesh and India. Though these two countries have huge potential in establishing seamless multimodal connectivity, they lack in terms of joint multimodal connectivity. Despite several setbacks, these two countries are currently undertaking some connectivity initiatives.²⁰ Of them, Ashuganj River Port for transshipment is the latest development between India and Bangladesh.

Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) started its journey in 1967. Bangladesh is a member of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). Recently, ASEAN has taken the Master Plan of ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC) flagship project towards an integrated Southeast Asian region by enhancing region's physical infrastructure, institutions and people-to-people relations to achieve seamless movement of people, goods and services.²¹ Recently ASEAN launched a "Dhaka Committee" to nurture relationship with Bangladesh. It is a remarkable step since this type of committee usually forms in the dialogue partner country but Bangladesh still not a dialogue partner of ASEAN. Thus, this step bears significance for Bangladesh-ASEAN relations. Bangladesh also has an interest to intensify its political, economic and cultural connectivity with ASEAN countries as a dialogue country. Both the ASEAN members and Bangladesh will be benefitted, since ASEAN has a plan about regional connectivity and to have an open market for the member countries.²² Bangladesh has the ability to make stronger trade relation with ASEAN countries in the field of exporting goods include non-traditional goods, manpower export and exporting services including tourism, culture and education. Moreover, Bangladesh has the ability to become an investment destination since it has cheaper labour market. The low cost of labour may attract the ASEAN countries to invest in Bangladesh.²³

¹⁹ Joyeeta Bhattacharjee, "When SAARC Became A Tool to Embarrass Than Cooperate", *Observer Research Foundation*, available at <http://www.orfonline.org/research/when-saarc-became-a-tool-to-embarrass-than-cooperate/>, accessed on 3 March 2016.

²⁰ Sultana Yeasmin, "Tapping Potential of Indo-Bangladesh Connectivity", *The Financial Express*, available at <http://print.thefinancialexpress-bd.com/2015/08/21/104715>, accessed on 25 April 2016.

²¹ Joyece A Teodoro, "ASEAN's Connectivity Challenges", *The Diplomat*, available at <http://thediplomat.com/2015/06/aseans-connectivity-challenge/>, accessed on 20 February 2016.

²² "Bangladesh Hopes to deepen Ties with ASEAN", *The Daily Star*, Dhaka, 9 August 2016.

²³ Nasim Uddin, "Moving Forward With ASEAN", *Dhaka Tribune*, Dhaka, 22 May 2014.

In the area of Asian connectivity, Asian Highway network attracted considerable attention, although at one point it slowed down for several reasons. It is a collaborative project among countries in Asia and Europe with the support of UNESCAP to improve the road connectivity. Thirty-two countries signed this agreement. This project is supposed to receive the fund from Japan, China, India and Asian Development Bank (ADB). It will help to develop the road transportation throughout the Asia. The plan of this project is to make maximum use of existing roads by further necessary reconstruction instead of constructing new roads. Bangladesh is also a member of the Asian Highway Network. It is supposed to run three routes for 1,741 km through Bangladesh. However, Bangladesh's part of this project has failed to meet the required standard. Because the Bangladesh government constructed only 72 km four-lanes highway of the 1,741 km Bangladeshi part of the Asian Highway and this does not meet the primary category standard. Primary refers to access-controlled highways which are exclusively used by automobiles. The remaining 1,553 km or 89 per cent of the Bangladesh part of Asian Highway meets class II standards. Thus, Bangladesh needs to take this opportunity with great importance.²⁴

Like Asian Highway, TAR project is another initiative which aims to develop rail connectivity. It aims to create an integrated freight railway across Europe and Asia. This railway network will cover 28 countries, including Bangladesh. In 2007, Bangladesh approved the proposal of TAR with the aim to improve its rail communication and expand connectivity with other Asian countries and subsequently with European countries in the near future. Recently the Bangladesh government has revised a project to lay 129 km long rail track from Dohazari to Gundam near Myanmar border via Cox's Bazar at a cost of Tk. 18,034 crore. The newly revised project will connect Bangladesh with the TAR and hopes to boost the country's trade with Myanmar, China and Thailand.²⁵

Several energy cooperation initiatives also took place in this region under several pre-established regional forums and newly established energy cooperation. The Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) is such an initiative, which is fully dedicated to the energy cooperation. It is proposed and developed by the ADB. Recently, Bangladesh has also expressed its interest to join TAPI. Bangladesh has already sent an initial proposal to the TAPI steering committee expressing its interest to join in this natural gas pipeline project.²⁶ Under this project, the natural gas from the Caspian Sea will be transported to India via Afghanistan and Pakistan.

BBIN Initiative is another sub-regional cooperation in South Asia. It focuses on multimodal transport connectivity, freight and trade infrastructure and other areas

²⁴ Shohel Mamun, "UN-ESCAP: Bangladesh's Asian Highway Routes not up to Scratch", *The Daily Star*, available at <http://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/2015/apr/20/un-escap-bangladeshs-asian-highway-routes-not-scratch>, accessed on 20 February 2016.

²⁵ Rejayul Karim Byron, "Target Trans-Asian Railway Linkages", *The Daily Star*, available at <http://www.thedailystar.net/frontpage/target-trans-asian-railway-linkage-1211422>, accessed on 20 February 2016.

²⁶ "Bangladesh Lobbies Turkmenistan in Renewed Case for Joining TAPI Gas Line", available at <http://www.platts.com/latest-news/natural-gas/dhaka-bangladesh/bangladesh-lobbies-turkmenistan-in-renewed-case-26797223>, accessed on 22 February 2016.

of cooperation, such as water resources management and power grid connectivity. To strengthen sub-regional transport connectivity, BBIN countries signed MVA on 15 June 2015. It is a framework agreement that allows movement of personnel, passenger and cargo vehicles by road among the four countries. It will be a huge opportunity for the BBIN countries for mutual cross-border movement of passengers and goods for overall economic development of the region. The people of the four countries will be benefited through the seamless movement of goods and passengers across borders.²⁷

BCIM-EC is another sub-regional forum aims to foster greater integration of trade and investment among these countries. It is an initiative which will help foster multimodal connectivity, harness economic integration, and enhance people-to-people relations. The primary focus of the economic corridor is to facilitate trade and connectivity between the landlocked and less developed southwestern parts of China and the Northeastern states of India.

Like BBIN and BCIM-EC sub-regional cooperation, MBI is another important plan, which is mainly devoted to the energy cooperation. This pipeline project was first mooted in 1997. The Mohona Holdings Limited of Bangladesh proposed a 900km pipeline from Myanmar through Bangladesh to provide natural gas to India. In that plan, Bangladesh would have received natural gas for providing transit facility for this pipeline. Afterwards, three countries have reached to an agreement in 2005. Later on, it was doomed due to India's refusal of additional conditions proposed by Bangladesh. Recently, the government of Bangladesh has approved this project. India is also trying to revive this pipeline project. During India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Bangladesh in 2015, this pipeline project was re-evaluated.

The Bay of Bengal Industrial Growth Belt (Big-B) is another new initiative with the slogan of "toward growth beyond borders". It is an initiative between Japan and Bangladesh. The BIG-B will help in turning Bangladesh into a nodal point of regional growth. This initiative revolves around the infrastructure development including construction of a deep sea port at Sonadia, developing a primary energy supply terminal at Matarbari and developing the arterial Dhaka-Chittagong-Cox's Bazar highway for smoother transportation of goods and services.²⁸

Another initiative is One Belt One Road (OBOR), a Chinese initiative, which aims to build an economic land belt and a maritime silk road and Bangladesh is also part of this initiative. The economic land belt will include Central Asia, West Asia, Middle East, Europe and Maritime Silk Road will cover from the African Coast through the Suez Canal into the Mediterranean.²⁹

²⁷ Nihar R. Nayak, "BBIN-MVA : Pushing Regional Integration through Sub-Regional Cooperation", available at http://www.idsa.in/idsacomments/BBIN-MVAPushing_RegionalIntegration_nnayak_190615, accessed on 15 March 2016.

²⁸ Syed Fattahul Alim, "Turning Dream of Big-B into Reality", available at <http://www.thedailystar.net/turning-dream-of-big-b-into-reality-40632>, accessed on 15 March 2016.

²⁹ Francis Cheung and Alexious Lee, "One Belt One Road: A Brilliant Plan", *Credit Lyonnais Securities Asia*

The above-mentioned regional initiatives for developing connectivity within the region are working well, although these initiatives need a more thorough work plan and future strategies for better sustainability. Compared to other continents, Asia is still one of the least integrated continents. Bangladesh has enough potential to link itself in the regional connectivity network. It can also contribute as a connectivity hub, linking South and East Asia.

4. Opportunities and Challenges for Bangladesh

Bangladesh can be a potential regional connectivity conduit in the South Asia region. It will create opportunities for neighbouring countries to use connectivity corridor through Bangladesh. This will help the country to become a regional development centre. Since India surrounded Bangladesh from three sides — east, west and north and Myanmar has borders with Bangladesh in the Southeast, Bangladesh can be a conduit for connecting India on the west and with China on the east through Myanmar. The country has two operational sea ports Chittagong and Mongla which are very much under-utilised. Landlocked Nepal, Bhutan and some Indian states can be benefited from using these sea ports. The potential for developing a deep-sea port is under active planning which may be used by other countries of the region including China, India and Myanmar. Sub-regional connectivity initiatives, such as BBIN, BCIM, etc. can also create scope for Bangladesh to be a connectivity conduit for neighbouring countries. Thus, Bangladesh for its unique geographical location should develop its communication infrastructures for exploiting the opportunities.

Economic integration is an important prerequisite for achieving trade and economic prosperity. Therefore, if Bangladesh utilises its transport potential and allow its transport connectivity facilities to the neighbouring countries for movement of goods, services and people; it will be benefitted by getting access to India's Northeastern states, Nepal and Bhutan. Bangladeshi products have huge demand in many Indian states, Nepal and Bhutan but due to poor transport facility people do not have access to Bangladeshi market and Bangladeshi traders do not have access to these markets to sell their products. Thus, it will be a great opportunity for Bangladesh to reduce its large trade deficit with India and as well as with China.³⁰

Augmenting investment is another important input, which should be increased to achieve double-digit growth for the economy. It is one of the growth propelling forces that should be promoted massively. Bangladesh is already a lower middle-income country and it has all the potential to make it up the ladder to be an upper middle-income country in near future. Bangladesh can utilise of her transport facilities by allowing the access to its neighbours; in exchange the user neighbours will bring further investments to develop the already existing transport network.

(CLSA), available at <https://www.clsa.com/special/onebeltoneroad/>, accessed on 26 April 2016.

³⁰ Rahmatullah, 2009, *op.cit.*

A developed transport network would translate as a boost for the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), which is an imperative to achieve higher economic growth.

Bangladesh has been experiencing a sharp rise in energy consumption over the past two decades. The connectivity initiative will increase the energy trade among neighbouring countries which will help Bangladesh to mitigate its energy need. However, to meet that challenge, sub-regional initiatives; such as BBIN, BCIM, MBI pipeline, etc. have the potential to increase energy cooperation among the member countries. Of them, MBI Pipeline has the purpose of transporting natural gas from Myanmar via Bangladesh to India. Thus, to meet domestic energy demand, several pipeline and grid connectivity initiatives among neighbouring countries, which are already in the pipeline should be materialised as soon as possible. In this cooperation, Bangladesh can extend its support to make these connectivity initiatives prompt and successful.

Although Bangladesh has developed its transportation infrastructure since its independence, it has still many outmoded roads and rail communication which need to be renovated as soon as possible. Thus, if Bangladesh allows its territory to be a regional connectivity centre, it will create opportunity for Bangladesh to upgrade its outdated transport infrastructure. Regarding this, Bangladesh can get financial and technical support to upgrade its outmoded transport facilities which will be convenient for the government as well. Bangladesh will also get transit fees for this purpose which it can use to upgrade its transport infrastructural development. Another important thing is that Bangladesh has the potential on transport connectivity that no one else have in this region. Therefore, Bangladesh should grab this opportunity to trade its transport services. This transport trading opportunity will benefit Bangladesh with huge transit fees and transportation charges. It will also create scope for having huge Indian investment for developing the transport network.³¹

The people-to-people engagement is an important part of connectivity. An all inclusive and participatory regional community could be an asset for a region to develop. Civil society engagement among countries is imperative to accelerate people to people connectivity. This issue is very much important for Bangladesh. If Bangladeshi people can have the opportunity to mingle with people from neighbouring countries and beyond, it will create space for new opportunities such as in education, employment, tourism and cultural exchange. Since the Asian region has many diverse cultures, the "*cultural mosaic model*"³² could be followed by all the people across Asia. By following this model, each and every country will be benefitted by knowing and respecting each other. Bangladesh will also be benefitted from knowing and sharing positive values and exchange programmes from its neighbours.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² Cultural Mosaic Model refers the idea of multiculturalism which advocates a pluralistic society build up out of various religious, cultural and ethnic minorities. This idea supports that everyone can perform their cultural identity that makes a broad cultural diversity in the state's society. Canada is the best example of this model.

Bangladesh is the home of vibrant cultures, panoramic beauty, historical sites, longest sandy sea beach, flora and fauna, and wildlife. The tourism industry will be largely benefitted if Bangladesh becomes a regional connectivity hub. With its attractive tourist sites, it can attract more tourists once it becomes a connectivity centre-point.

Although the connectivity issue is an important opportunity for Bangladesh, it also comes with numerous challenges and concerns for the host country. As a host country, hesitation in taking a political stand, lack of trust, security concerns, several off-putting perception and rivalry like situation, etc. can hamper the process of any kind of connectivity initiatives. Following are some key obstacles that can hamper connectivity projects.

A strong and bold political decision for joining in any connectivity initiatives is always an important issue. Since, it involves more countries to collaborate, it needs a rapid and timely decision. In this case, most of the time government failed to take proper and timely decision to grab any opportunity. For Bangladesh, taking political decisions for connectivity issue is an important part and several connectivity initiatives have been doomed due to lack of political will. For example, the case of the MBI Pipeline initiative was doomed due to political hesitation and failure of proper negotiation among participating countries – India, Myanmar and Bangladesh. If that initiative was implemented successfully, then Bangladesh as a transit country could have earned US\$125 million annually in transit fee and Bangladesh could have used the gas to mitigate its energy scarcity. The failure of the negotiation doomed the overall project and as a result Bangladesh lost the opportunity of getting benefits from it. Although this doomed initiative is being trying to restart, but the situation is not as favourable as it was before. Thus, timely political decision is paramount to make any connectivity initiative successful.

The need for trust is the key to make connectivity arrangement successful in South Asia. The legacy of mistrust among countries still exists. The government of Bangladesh government also lacked the trust regarding transit issue, but it has accepted and joined in several sub-regional connectivity initiatives which is a positive sign for developing trust upon neighbouring countries. Physical connectivity is key for all the major connectivity plans and no deals will be successful without trust and confidence. Thus, guaranteeing trust and confidence is vital which should be ensured by the governments of the South Asian countries.

Security concern is a big challenge for the host country in the case of connectivity. If Bangladesh tries to become a regional connectivity hub, then it also has to deal with few security related concerns. To open its territory for transit and transshipment, Bangladesh has to be cautious due to several security concerns. While opening up its border for transit, it is crucial to ensure effective inspection in both

entry and exit point to ensure security. Use of container scanner is also crucial to detect contraband products. Border security should be more strengthened to be able to tackle any security concerns.

Connectivity is still considered as a sensitive issue due to several security concerns. Although the Bangladesh government is willing to accept any development related project, but it still has some pre-existed perception regarding its neighbours. In Bangladeshi society, perceptions are influenced by several elements, such as geographical location, identity process, history, power setting, policy initiatives and 'India factor'.³³ Of them, the 'India factor' is perceived to have importance in Bangladesh's foreign policy. Regarding the connectivity issue, India plays an important role in making the regional cooperation successful. Over the past years, Bangladesh-India relations experienced an uneven trajectory. When new government came into power in Bangladesh in 2009, the relations between the two countries seen positive synergy in exploring the areas of mutual benefit. As a result, several policy initiatives, such as signing of the Land Boundary Agreement, giving facilities to India for accessing its Northeastern states, collaboration on security issues such as cooperation in counter-terrorism, increasing Bangladeshi goods' export to Indian market, relaxed visa procedure to improve people-to-people contacts, and improving political relations by a series of high-level visits, etc. have been made which contributed significantly in the development of bilateral relations. Thus, the Bangladesh government has to work on building up positive and warm relations with its neighbours in the region and beyond the region, which will help the country in implementing connectivity initiatives in future.

Finally, rivalry between India and Pakistan, two major countries in South Asia has been the major setback in the process of connectivity. If there is any rivalry existing in the region or among the neighbours, then it will ultimately hamper any holistic connectivity approach.

5. Options for Moving Forward

Previous discussion proved that Bangladesh has enough potentials for being a connectivity centre between South and Southeast Asia, between South and Central Asia, and between South and West Asia. Although lots of challenges will come on the way to hamper the connectivity process, Bangladesh should not fall back to avoid hurdle. Because of the most favourable potential, Bangladesh needs to exercise action plan for making successful initiatives to be an operational connectivity hub. Therefore, the government needs to consider following actions which might have policy significance in developing Bangladesh's position as a regional connectivity conduit.

³³ M. Humayun Kabir, "Changing Relations between Bangladesh and India: Perceptions in Bangladesh", in Vishal Chandra (ed.), *India and South Asia: Exploring Regional Perceptions*, Pentagon Press, New Delhi, 2015, pp.29-41.

Ensuring security is a very sensitive issue in implementing transport connectivity. In the 7th Five Year Plan, there is a lack of specific guidelines or roadmap in terms of handling security challenges of transit/transshipment connectivity. In Bangladesh, people have several perceptions on security issues in allowing transit and transshipment facilities through Bangladesh territory to other neighbouring countries. They have not-so-good feeling about the security issue related to the transit/transshipment and corridor. Thus, if the Bangladesh government wants to give transit/transshipment/corridor facility to its neighbours, then at first the government should ensure the security of the whole transport connectivity. Many of the security concerns that voiced earlier were related to increases in smuggling of Indian goods and chances of Bangladesh's susceptibility to the insurgencies in Northeast India. These concerns should be taken into consideration.

Immediate steps, such as scanning containers, strict supervision of goods and containers, etc. need to be implemented as soon as possible. To identify illicit and contraband products, proper use of scanning machine is important. It will also reduce the chances of informal trade. Individual inspection by different authorities who are involved in the goods carrying process should be involved in scanning and supervising the process at both entry and exit point. Weighbridge or truck scale that used to weigh rail/road vehicles for calculating weight should also be installed at the entry and exit point to check overloading. Pilferage is another security concern in which a small part can be theft from large package or shipping container. Thus, pilferage prevention mechanism should be installed to ensure safe goods transport.³⁴

Bangladesh needs to maintain warm relations with its immediate neighbours and beyond the region for making any connectivity initiatives successful. "India factor" is always a crucial fact for Bangladesh foreign policy. Thus, it is always important for Bangladesh to maintain warm relation with India. In terms of connectivity, relations with India is of paramount importance. To be a connectivity hub, Bangladesh needs positive support from India.

Diplomatic negotiation capability is important for gaining any successful foreign policy objective. For connectivity purpose, Bangladeshi diplomats should gain skill and art of negotiation to assert the idea or proposal without damaging the relationship. Public diplomacy is very important in this regard.

Most of the people of Bangladesh do not have accurate knowledge about how Bangladesh government is using the transit/transshipment/corridor for connectivity purpose. There is even a lack of knowledge about the function of transit and transshipment. Therefore, more accurate and up-to-date information should be shared with mass people so that they can have a precise picture about all these connectivity initiatives.

³⁴ M. Rahmatullah, 2009, *op.cit*

Rail transportation is an important tool of connectivity. In Bangladesh's case, the railway is safer and cost-effective for long distance movement. Through transshipment by railway, security could also be better monitored. Since goods are carried in containers while carrying via railway, it is easier to do security check and scan. Bangladesh railway has some spare capacity and could be improved with minimal investment. There are also some gauge difficulties, but this could be managed with modern transshipment. Bangladesh railway has some constraints in terms of loop length in the border stations in Bangladesh which need to be solved. Lack of compatibility between the rolling stock of India and Bangladesh railway is also a problem. This problem should be dealt with immediate action.³⁵

Bangladesh's road transport system is still less developed. Most of the highways still have two lanes. Recently, Dhaka-Chittagong highway and Mymensingh-Joydebpur highway were upgraded into four-lanes. In terms of carrying capacity, Bangladesh's highways has axle-load limit of 8.2 compared to 10.2 tons axle load limit in India, Nepal and Bhutan. On the other hand, most of the trucks of India, Nepal and Bhutan have two-axle load capacity. Thus, these trucks with heavily loaded goods could not move on the Bangladeshi roads. Therefore, up-gradation of Bangladeshi highways is imperative in this context.³⁶

Air connectivity is another crucial way to connect places easily. Bangladesh needs to give focus on increasing air connectivity. There are either no direct flights or has a low frequency of flights among the countries in South Asia. Thus, for a stronger regional connectivity, air connectivity is a crucial one.

Waterways are also useful tools for transportation. Currently, 22 river ports are operational in Bangladesh. Recently, the Bangladesh government has gazetted 11 more new river ports.³⁷ Though there are a number of river ports, these are largely outdated since most of them have little up-to-date infrastructure, less or no equipment for weighing goods and no equipment for scanning goods. Recently, Ashuganj river port has been inaugurated for transshipment between India and Bangladesh, although it lacks enough equipment for weighing, scanning and monitoring system. Thus, to maintain connectivity initiatives through river ports, the government needs to take immediate steps for building up the necessary infrastructure for handling heavy goods, installing the scanning machine to check contraband goods. Moreover, these ports do not have weighing machine. Thus, for sustainable and safe transport, government should immediately install necessary machines and equipment.

Based on the 7th Five Year Plan, Bangladesh government needs to prioritise following action plans for a sustainable regional connectivity:

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority, website: http://www.biwta.gov.bd/website/?page_id=2

- Completing all the identified high-priority projects, including completion of the Padma bridge; conversion of important highways into four lanes; connecting important ports and economic zones to highways; completion of constructing the Payra seaport, the Moheshkhali LNG terminal and the Khan Jahan Ali airport; strengthening Biman's fleet capacity and management quality.
- Completing critical transport links in road, rail and river ways that are related to promote regional and multi-regional connectivity.
- Addressing security challenges and identifying relevant solutions to ensure safe transportation.
- Setting a logical pricing policy for using transit/transshipment through Bangladesh's territory.
- Developing a balanced 3R (rail, road, river) based multimodal transportation system.
- Participating actively in all regional and sub-regional connectivity forums.
- Setting up proper monitoring and evaluation system.³⁸

Apart from the 7th Five Year Plan, the government needs to focus on other issues as well for the promotion of successful regional and sub-regional connectivity. Such issues are includes:

- Promotion of intercultural learning which might erase out negative perception upon each other and develop a regional consciousness;
- Promotion of informal meetings and dialogues which might help in figuring out meaningful ways to resolve challenges that hamper connectivity initiatives; and
- Patronising socialisation process in the region by exchange of youth groups at school/college/university level under regional and sub-regional forum. It might help in developing new generation's understanding about the relationship among countries across the region. It might also help in mitigating many existing problems among countries.

In addition, contributions from expert, practitioner and academia have importance in making any kind of connectivity approach successful. It is more

³⁸ Seventh Five Year Plan, *Op.Cit.*

important for the policy makers to get innovative policy suggestions and advice from practitioners and academician regarding connectivity initiatives. Frequent engagement at national and international level among local and external experts could be productive in this regard. Public intellectuals across the region who have a significant national audience play a positive role in upholding connectivity issues to make awareness among the citizens. Thus, at first, connectivity among the intellectuals is needed to make a common forum of ideas to develop a regional discourse which in the long run will help upholding common regional initiatives. Bangladesh, pertaining to this issue, can take regular initiatives to arrange experts' engagement so that the connectivity issue does not go in vain.

Role of media is very important. Media can take a strong role for reshaping and correcting misperceptions related to connectivity initiatives. To promote connectivity and gain support from local people, media can use its wider broadcasting coverage to disseminate truth and positive stories. Media should also play crucial role in investigating any mishandle or security concerns related to connectivity initiatives.

There are notable opportunities for Bangladesh in establishing itself as a functional regional connectivity hub. Bangladesh and its neighbours will achieve a win-win situation if the connectivity system becomes fully operational. Although there are many challenges, but there are also options for addressing those challenges. If the connectivity centre-point becomes operational, donor countries and funding agencies/organisations might come forward to make this sustainable.

6. Conclusion

Bangladesh can be a leading connectivity hub if it utilises its unique geographical positioning and makes use of the opportunities in this regard. Using its unique geographical location, Bangladesh can contribute largely to the transport connectivity among her neighbouring countries. It is identified that although South Asia has all the potential for economic and social development, but due to the lack of regional connectivity, it is still lagging behind from other parts of the world. It is seen in the paper that Bangladesh has already been a member of many regional forums. Bangladesh can connect those forums and ease their initiatives by developing integrated connectivity network. Regarding transport connectivity, Bangladesh has the potential to facilitate regional transport network through full transit facility to the neighbouring countries through road, rail and water. By providing transport facilities to the neighbours, Bangladesh can trade its transport services as well. The trading of transportation services has no market in the South Asia region. By utilising this opportunity, Bangladesh can also reduce its trade gap with its neighbours.

A developed transport facility will also attract foreign investment in the country which is important for economic development. Bangladesh can also make

valuable contributions in several gas pipeline and power grid connectivity among neighbouring countries by providing a transit facility in its territory. This will largely help in mitigating energy shortage among the South Asian countries. Bangladesh will also largely benefitted by these initiatives since it will get a share of gas and power transferred through pipelines and grids and also get the transit fee. The developed transport network will also ease people-to-people connectivity which will eventually create scopes for education and cultural exchange among countries, promote tourism and create employment.

It is also revealed in this paper that for being a connectivity hub, Bangladesh has to address several difficulties and challenges, such as lack of strong and bold political decision for joining any connectivity initiative specially related to transit and transshipment, ensuring proper security in each and every connectivity initiative, setting trust among countries, etc. To tackle these challenges, several policy initiatives, such as experts' involvement, media engagement, massive upgradation of road, rail and air connectivity, setting warm bilateral relation with neighbours, and ensuring proper security measures are also suggested in this paper.

With all these relevant recommendations taking into consideration, the Government of Bangladesh needs to take effective action to tackle challenges and create a strong connectivity network so that it can notably contribute in making a regionally integrated South Asia. An integrated region can provide substantial benefit to its countries – small, big, landlocked, rich or poor and give access to the world market. This will ultimately help Bangladesh to achieve the upper middle-income country status with the huge success in the other social and economic development goals.

BOOK REVIEW

Impact of Migration on Poverty and Local Development in Bangladesh, by Tasneem Siddiqui and Raisul Awal Mahmood, published by Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMRU) Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMRU), Dhaka, 2015; xxi, 200 pages.

Migration, more specifically labour migration, has long been playing a significant role in Bangladesh's economic development. On one hand, through foreign remittance, it is injecting crucial foreign exchange into the economy, which is critical to the smooth functioning and growth of the economy. On the other hand, by creating employment for more than 10 million people so far, it has reduced pressure on the domestic labour market. In the process, labour migration is naturally expected to have an impact on the poverty situation both at household and national level. The impact of migration on poverty in Bangladesh is the subject for the book..

The book is the outcome of a survey conducted by RMMRU on 5,084 households covering both male and female; internal, international and non-migrant households across 17 districts of Bangladesh. The study uses internal migrant (IM) and non-migrant households as control groups to which international migrant households, defined in the book as Short Term International Migrant (STIM), have been compared.

The long term goal of the survey mentioned above is to create a panel data on international migrant workers of Bangladesh which, the authors believe, will help in policy evaluation aimed at harnessing the full potential gain from international migration from Bangladesh. With that long term goal in view, the book aims to see i) the nature of the relationship between international migration and poverty, ii) the impact of remittance on local development through consumption and investment and iii) the role of international migration in community development and tries to highlight the implications of the observed relationships for policy planning.

As far as the long term goal is concerned, the study is a commendable initiative. Sampling method used by the study is sound, making the sample a good representative of the population as well as covering some desired aspects of international and internal migration such as female migration and climate change induced migration. The study has collected cross-sectional data on a wide range of issues. If this can be transformed into panel data, as vowed by the authors, it surely will be of great help to understand the dynamics of migration-poverty alleviation-local development nexus.

Following the introductory chapter, the book includes a short literature review, research gap, rationale and research questions of the study, the second

chapter discusses conceptual and methodological framework of migration, poverty and local development used in the study. Then after making a short discussion on the current trend in international migration from Bangladesh, the authors examine the socio-demographic and economic profile of the sample migrant and non-migrant households to see who are more likely to migrate – within and beyond the border. Then they describe the migration experiences of the sample migrant households which give an idea on drivers, cost, sources of finance, duration, destination and other aspects of migration. Both the profile of the sample households and migration experience of sample STIM households have important policy implications. The following chapters deal elaborately with the main objectives of the study – tracing the differential impact of migration on household poverty and migrants' contribution in local development through investment, consumption and community participation.

As mentioned above, the study examines various socio-demographic characteristics of the sample households like family size, religion of the household, gender, marital status and age group of household members. It finds that: i) On average, STIM households have the largest family size, ii) Households having more male members, are more likely to migrate – be it internal or international, iii) In case of education the picture is mixed; upto SSC, STIM households lead but beyond that level, they lag behind IM households. The findings of the study suggest that in case of migration, demographic composition of households matters more than social characteristics like education.

The study also examines economic profile of all sample households and reviews the migration experiences of the migrant households. Major findings are as follows.

First, STIM households have higher monthly income compared to IM and non-migrant households which confirms the general belief. What is interesting is that the mean annual income of non-migrant households is higher than IM households.

Second, regarding the occupation, there is not much difference among the STIM, IM and non-migrant household members. Skilled work (tailors, welders, drivers, etc.), service work (hotel, transport, sales), farm work and production/manufacturing work are the major occupations for both STIM and IM household members and there is no significant difference among migrant and non-migrant households in this regard.

Third, prior to migration, a high proportion of the sample migrants, both national and international, were unemployed. Among those who were employed prior to migration, farming, skilled work and construction work were the major economic activities and in this case too, there is not much difference among the STIM and IM households.

Fourth, education level of the internal migrants was better than that of the international migrants. This finding is not surprising if one keeps in mind the education and skill composition of international migrants of Bangladesh.

Fifth, economic compulsion is the primary driver of migration, be it internal or international. Other drivers of migration are downward trend in agricultural production, natural calamities and riverbank erosion.

Sixth, almost all international migrants borrow money to bear the cost of migration.

Seventh, in case of international migrants, the majority (52 per cent) carry out the migration process through *dalals*, followed by relatives and family members (37 per cent). In case of internal migrants, it is the migrant himself/herself or their family members/relatives who accomplish the migration process.

Among all the above-mentioned findings, some confirming the existing beliefs and bringing some new facts into the light, have significant policy implications.

The first objective of the study is to find out the impact of international migration on poverty. The study deals with this issue elaborately but the methodology used in this case suffers from a major flaw. Based on per capita income of households for the year 2014 (for which data was collected through the household survey), the study shows that the poverty rate (headcount ratio) of STIM, IM and Non-migrant households are respectively 13 per cent, 46.1 per cent and 40.2 per cent. The study finds similar results by comparing the living standard (which included the nature of construction and size of the homestead, source of drinking water, type of toilet, sources of power etc.) among the three groups of households. From these evidences, the authors conclude that "international migration does play a significant role in reducing poverty." However, it is to be noted that from poverty rate or data on standard of living in one year, one cannot say whether poverty has increased or decreased. The authors themselves warn, "An analysis of the HIES 2005 data found that poverty amongst remittance receiving HH was 17 per cent but, in the case of non-remittance receiving HHs, as high as 42 per cent. This lower rate of poverty may not only be due to remittance flows, however, as the migrant HHs may be better-off to begin with." (Introduction, p. 4)

How the authors could be certain about the redeeming impact of international migration on poverty from the data of one year? Although the authors did not explain it explicitly, one explanation can be found in their process of selecting non-migrant households. "These non-migrant HHs were located with the help of the migrant HHs. The migrant HHs were requested to identify non-migrant neighbours who were in a similar economic condition as them when a member of the migrant family first

migrated.” Thus, as per their explanation, since the STIM and Non-migrant HHs were of similar socioeconomic background before the STIM HHs started the migration, the difference in headcount ratio between these two groups in the study year reflects the impact of migration on poverty.

Even if one accepts the above argument, the conclusion seems to be grounded on weak foundation. The determining similarity of two households in socioeconomic condition is too complex an issue to be left to the judgment of the respondents. This is more so when one makes an important claim based on such judgment. Rather, the study could have used the headcount ratio and other measurements of living standard of the three groups only to show their poverty scenario. Later on, when in its course, the study will transform this baseline data into panel data, the difference of headcount ratio and other measurements over time can be used to measure the impact of international migration on poverty. The same view was held by the experts participating in the dissemination workshop, as is mentioned in the Recommendation section of the book.

The authors identify five factors that they think influence the observed relationship between international migration and poverty. These are: geographic location, gender of family head, duration of migration, the number of migrants in the family and family size. Among those, the last three factors seem to be superfluous. There is not much point in saying that the lower the family size or the higher the number of international migrants in the family or the longer the duration of migration; the higher is the poverty reduction impact of migration. There is no doubt that the first two factors are important, but it would have been better if the authors could give some indications why those factors are affecting the said relation.

The second objective of the study is to examine the impact of migration on local level development which the authors identify as an important research gap in the existing literature on the impact of migration in Bangladesh. This objective has been dealt in the book quite elaborately and successfully.

That international migration helps local development through increased consumption of food and non-food items, education and healthcare service is a known fact. Going beyond this limit, the study intends to see whether and how international migrants contribute in local development through investment. To its success, the study reveals many interesting and significant features regarding the investment behaviour of migrant and non-migrant households.

The authors, with support of various empirical evidences, rightly challenge the traditional notion that migrant (international) households do not invest in productive activities. Their study shows that compared to IM and Non-migrant households, STIM households invest more in some sectors like agriculture, business enterprises (shops) and financial instruments.

The study finds all three groups of households (STIM, IM and Non-migrant) to make their highest amount of investment in agricultural production, both as landowners and sharecroppers. According to the authors compared to IM and Non-migrant households, STIM households contribute more in agricultural development through use of improved seeds and adequate fertiliser, regular irrigation and higher investment in modern agricultural equipments. This is because these agricultural activities require cash flow and the STIM households have better access to it. In contrary, among all three groups, IM households lead in agro-based industries which include poultry, animal husbandry and pisciculture.

The next important sector of investment for STIM and IM households is the transport, in which around 10 per cent of them invest. The type of transport, however, differs between these two groups. In all three groups, a small fraction (three to five per cent) is found to invest in shops and quite expectedly, a very little of them (less than one per cent for STIM and Non-migrant and zero for IM households) invest in mills and factories.

The critical link between migration and agriculture found by the study deserves attention. On one hand this link suggests that agriculture sector of Bangladesh is in dire needs of credit and in the absence of other inexpensive sources, remittance has become a good source of it. On the other hand, the heavy dependence of STIM households on agriculture indicates lack of investment opportunity. New avenues for investing remittance of STIM households should be opened up through proper policy intervention. Agro-based industry can be one such example in which STIM households still lag behind.

The authors claim that the findings of the study on migrant and non-migrant investment in financial instruments, shed new light on investment behaviour of migrants. So far, according to them, almost every study has found evidences of very little investment by migrants in financial instrument but their study tells a different story. It finds that about 20 STIM households invested in monthly DPS and 64 per cent possess one or the other type of financial instrument. The figures are significant indeed and more importantly, these are far higher compared to that of IM and non-migrant households.

It should be noted however that while the study establishes the international migrants as a good source of investment, it should not be taken to mean that international migrants "have a tendency to invest more" compared to IM and Non-migrant households. From the data presented in the book, one cannot be certain about whether the higher investment by STIM households is the result of the impact of migration on investment behaviour per se or is it the indirect impact of migration through increased income. If the latter is true, then any non-migrant household with income equal to a STIM household will invest equally.

A notable finding of the study is that international migration creates employment at home. International migrants create jobs for their household members, local non-migrants as well as intra and inter-district IMs. They create employment through renting out their agricultural land. They also hire workers to manage their poultry farms, livestock and small-scale enterprises. The authors find in their household survey that 46.4 per cent STIM households employed one or more workers during the sowing and harvesting season, which is significantly higher than IM and non-migrant households. Their community series data also find the incidence of seasonal in-migration is far higher (79.6 per cent) in high STIM areas compared to medium (41.7 per cent) and low (33.3 per cent) STIM areas. Another important observation of the study, which deserves attention is that high and medium STIM areas have higher wage rates while low STIM areas have lower wage rates.

International migrations stimulate local development through increased consumption - this already established fact, is re-enforced by the study which finds that compared to IM and Non-migrant households, STIM households annually spend 31 per cent and 24 per cent more respectively on food and other expenditure.

The third objective of the study is to examine the role of international migration in community development. The authors depict the participation of international migrants in community development as a channel through which migration contributes in local development. The authors cited various studies which show the contribution of Diaspora in local development. For example, a World Bank-NDS study found that the Nepali Diaspora had contributed to the establishment of public libraries, trade schools and health posts in rural areas. A study on Bangladeshi Diaspora in the UK and the USA also found them running educational scholarship programmes and health camps.

In case of the present study, the authors found the international migrants supporting community libraries and schools as well as contributing in infrastructure development in their community series data but they admit that their household survey could not capture such information. In fact, the picture that emerges through the household survey is not encouraging at all. The household survey data show that 64 per cent, 44 per cent and 42 per cent of STIM, IM and Non-migrant households respectively contributed in community development work while 92 per cent, 94 per cent and 89 per cent of these households who made such contributions, contributed either in mosques/temples or in madrassas. Migrants' and non-migrants' contribution to establishment and support to school/college/training centre or development of infrastructure is either absent or negligible. The authors believe that the migrants contribute to Madrasa with the intention of helping the poor children, which leads them to hope that if vocational training centres or other similar ventures could be developed in rural areas, the migrant and non-migrants would provide assistance to those as well. This is indeed a very good recommendation. However, in the

sociocultural context of Bangladesh its implementation is quite difficult and it will require a rigorous mass campaign.

Throughout the book, the authors use the gender issue as a crosscutting issue and found that females, both migrant and non-migrant, lag behind their male counterparts in many cases such as education, employment, land ownership, income, remittance, investment etc. This certainly deserves concern of the policy makers.

Finally, it can be said that the study, of which the book is a result, has a commendable aim and the book can be considered as a good start with that end in view. The sample has been selected carefully following a sound sampling method. The book is well articulated, rich in information and is written in a reader friendly style; but it seems that less care is taken about the index. The book has no doubt enriched the literature on the impact of migration in Bangladesh. The contribution will be even more if the data presented in the book are transformed into a panel data through a few follow-up studies.

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