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Impact of Covid-19 on the Flow of Overseas Labour Migration from Bangladesh and Earning Remittances

Md Zahidul Islam¹

Abstract

This study examines the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on overseas labour migration and remittance earnings in Bangladesh, using Lee's push and pull theory of migration and the altruistic theory. Based on an analysis of secondary data from various sources, including Bangladesh Bank, BMET, and the World Bank, the study finds that the volume of migration has been dropped by 70% compared to the yearly average flows of migrants from Bangladesh, and a large number of Bangladeshi workers have returned to the country due to COVID-19 related job losses and income reduction. However, despite the decline in migration, Bangladesh received 18.6% higher remittances in 2020 than in 2019, amounting to an additional \$3.5 billion. The study identifies three major factors that contributed to this growth: the 2% incentives on remittance amounts provided by the government, anxiety among migrants about unemployment and income loss, and the spirit of fraternity and humanitarianism among migrant workers. The findings have important implications for decision-makers, civil society, migration experts and think tank members in terms of understanding current migration trends, coping mechanisms for exogenous factors and shocks in the migration sector, exploring new job markets and job demands in the post-pandemic world, developing strategies for sustainable reintegration and crafting well-coordinated policies to respond to emerging realities. This study provides important insights into the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on overseas labour migration and remittance earnings in Bangladesh and highlights the potential for future research in this area.

Keywords: Covid-19, Labour Migration, Remittances, Bangladesh

1. Introduction

Remittance has emerged as one of the key variables for the economy of Bangladesh in recent times because of its tremendous support to the enhancement of national savings, boosting of foreign exchange reserves, an increase of the velocity of money and maintenance of the balance of payments. In recent decades the share of remittance has reached around 35% of the total foreign exchange earning of Bangladesh (Sarkar et al., 2018). However, Covid-19 has intensified multiple socio-economic crises by exposing 13 million Bangladeshi expatriate workers to unemployment, reduced working hours, social discrimination, isolation, poor quality of life and intense stress related to economic uncertainties of their dependents back home (Karim, Islam & Talukder, 2020). The pandemic negatively affected migrant workers' lives and income reduced the flow of labour migration, the flow of remittance and the overall economy of the country (Hossain, 2021). Moreover, there are many factors behind the ebb and flow of the inward stream of remittance which has yet been unexplored. The participation of Bangladeshi workers in the global workforce can hardly be overstated. According to the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET) statistics, since independence and up to 2020 about 13.12 million workers have migrated to more than 165 countries from Bangladesh (BMET, 2021).

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As per the initiative of the World Bank, Global Knowledge Partnership on Migration and Development (KNOMAD) statistics, currently 7.798 million (5% of the total population) Bangladeshis are working as migrants in different countries (Ratha et al., 2021, p.1). The Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) reports that Bangladesh ranks as the world's eighth biggest remittance-earning country and the sixth biggest country of origin for international migrants. Additionally, approximately 50,000 Bangladeshi workers have been learning country each month to work in various countries (Partha & Sakib, 2021). The World Bank had forecasted that the flow of migration, remittances, and income will be disrupted due to travel bans associated with Covid-19 restrictions and the closing of productive sectors, businesses, and services across the globe (World Bank, 2020).

This research seeks to explore the impact of Covid-19 on the outward migration flow and inward remittance flow of Bangladesh. The pandemic has impacted many aspects of life including the global mobility of the population leading to serious disturbance in the flow of migration and remittance due to travel lockdowns and closures of airlines, factories, businesses, services, and non-issuing of visas or cancellation of immigration services (OECD, 2020c). Since early 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic impacted all forms of human mobility and labour migration across international borders as restrictions have been imposed on travelling by many countries around the world (Benton et al., 2021). This research aims to investigate the impact of Covid-19 on overseas labour migration and inflows of remittance to Bangladesh. The empirical component of the study is organized around three specific research questions: to what extent and in what ways Covid-19 has impacted the flow of the labour migration of Bangladesh; how has Covid-19 impacted the trends of remittances flows to Bangladesh; what factors did contribute to the ups or downs of the flows of remittances during Covid-19. This articles organised into six main sections starting with the introduction which explains the background and statement of the problem, research questions, objectives and justifications. In the second section, the related literature on the impact of Covid-19 on overseas labour migration and remittance flow at the global level as well as specific to Bangladesh has been discussed. The third section presents the methodology of the research including the data source and limitations of the study. The fourth section illustrates data analysis and is followed by discussions on findings in the fifth section. The concluding section will further reflect upon the findings and make recommendations and directions for further research in this regard.

1.1 Rationale of the Study

Although nearly two years have passed since the outbreak of Covid-19, not much research has been conducted regarding the socio-economic impacts of the pandemic such as how it affects the demand and supply of migrant workers or how it affects the migrant workers, their families and other dependent members. This study aims to address some of these questions. It has already been stated that Bangladesh heavily relies on overseas employment and remittances for its macroeconomic stability. After the export earning RMG sector, the inflow of remittance is the second biggest source of foreign currency earning for Bangladesh (Mannan, 2015). The study will help the government and policymakers to take effective and sustainable measures to cope with the challenges that Covid-19 poses for this sector. Through analyzing the recent years' migration and remittances data, the research will put forward its findings and recommendations that will guide the policymakers in making the right decisions that could potentially help in minimizing the long-term socio-economic impacts of Covid-19 on the country's economy.

2. Literature Review

This research explores the concepts of overseas migration and remittances and their impact on origin and destination countries, examines the effect of global or regional crises on migration and remittances, discusses existing research on the impact of COVID-19 on overseas labour migration and remittances and identifies research gaps and how the current research can contribute to existing scholarship on the topic.

Research shows remittances have significant impacts on the development of Bangladesh (Akca, 2020), with labour migration and remittance flows having positive effects on socioeconomic development in developing countries (Faini, 2002; Ang, 2007). Remittances also contribute to equal capital distribution, improving economic growth and alternative financial development in underdeveloped financial systems (Giuliano & Ruiz-Arranz, 2005). Additionally, remittances improve the socioeconomic well-being of left-behind families by improving access to food, education and healthcare (Barai, 2012). However, Chami et al. (2003) found that remittances may slow down socioeconomic growth by reducing the work hours of family members. The Covid-19 pandemic has led to a decline in working hours and jobs worldwide (ILO, 2020). Van Hear (1994 and 1995) found that involuntary large scale return can lead to a decline in standards of living due to irregular employment. Finally, Siddiqui & Bhuiyan (2013) found that political unrest and civil war can make migrant workers vulnerable, with 40,000 Bangladeshi workers having to return from Libya due to the civil war in 2011.

The World Bank reported that despite Covid-19, remittance inflows to South Asia countries increased by 5.2% in 2020 compared to the previous year, amounting to \$147 billion. While India's remittance inflow fell by 0.2%, Pakistan and Sri Lanka saw an increase of 17% and 5.8%, respectively, and Nepal saw a decline of 2% (World Bank, 2021). However, the World Bank also estimated that global remittance flows may decline by 20% due to the pandemic (World Bank, 2020a), with falling oil prices affecting remittance outflows from GCC countries and Malaysia. The pandemic has led to the closure of industries and services, resulting in job losses for many workers in the manufacturing and service industries (Alfers et al., 2020). Additionally, temporary workers such as taxi drivers, restaurant workers, and small vendors were also directly impacted by the pandemic (Sutradhar, 2020).

Sirkeci et al. (2012) found that despite the Global Financial Crisis (2008), remittance flows remained relatively stable due to several factors, including the persistence of migrant stocks and their tendency to send savings back home. This stability was also present during the COVID-19 crisis, which helped explain the stability of remittance flows to countries like Bangladesh and Pakistan in 2020. Exchange rate fluctuations were identified as a major factor that influences remittance-sending behaviour with migrants tending to send extra remittances when their local currency depreciates against the host country's currency. During the COVID-19 crisis, local currency depreciation had a positive effect on remittance behaviour, resulting in increased remittances to countries like Bangladesh. The World Bank attributed the reduced flow of remittances during the initial months of the COVID-19 pandemic to factors such as the sharp fall in oil prices and the significant reduction in migrants' income (World Bank, 2020).

Chowdhury & Chakraborty (2021) argue that Bangladesh's migrant workers have been significantly affected by the worldwide outbreak of COVID-19. Karim, Islam & Talukder (2020) note that the decline in oil prices in 2020, coupled with strict lockdown measures, has resulted in many businesses shutting down and Bangladeshi workers losing their jobs and income.

Besides, the study estimates that around 13 million Bangladeshi migrant workers and 30 million dependents have been directly affected by the pandemic, leading to negative impacts on remittance flows, savings and socio-economic conditions. Palma (2020) claims that COVID-19 has reduced the amount of remittance inflow to Bangladesh by limiting the number of overseas migrant workers from Bangladesh to about 150,000, out of an annual average of 750,000, due to COVID-19 restrictions and lockdowns in various countries.

The pandemic has affected migrant workers and remittances globally, causing health issues, income loss, and insecurity. This highlights the need for better migration governance, but there is a lack of studies on Bangladesh. Existing literature has identified research methods to understand the impact. This study aims to establish a framework for understanding Covid-19's impact on overseas labour migration and remittances in Bangladesh.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

This study examines the impact of Covid-19 on migration using Everett Lee's comprehensive theory of migration proposed in 1966. Lee identified four factors that determine population mobility, including factors related to the place of origin, socio-economic factors of the destination, intervening obstacles and personal choice. Lee argues that every place has its set of positive, negative and neutral factors. Migration is the result of the interplay among these factors. Lee also suggested hypotheses regarding the volume of migration, including the impact of intervening barriers and the fluctuation of the economy. The Covid-19 pandemic occurred at a critical time for global migration, with record-high numbers just before the crisis. The intervening factors and the impact of Covid-19 on the decrease of migration and fluctuation of the economy are pertinent to this study. Covid-19 has altered the landscape of migration at an astonishing pace due to its impact on people's mobility and the global economy (OECD, 2020).

According to Tchouassi and Sikod (2010), an altruistic approach is needed to study remittances, as migrants often work to improve the living standards of their families and community members left behind in their home country. This behaviour stems from social values that motivate workers to support their families during times of crisis. Agarwal and Horowitz (2002) suggest that these altruistic remittances contribute to the improvement of consumption, income, and living standards of the recipients, at the expense of the sender's austerity. However, Tchouassi and Sikod (2010) also note that migrants are not entirely selfless, as they are aware that remittances can contribute to the development of social infrastructure that they may ultimately use upon their return. Additionally, López-Calva (2020) argues that remittances tend to increase when economic situations in the migrants' countries of origin worsen. Despite migrants' struggles to earn a livelihood, they continue to support family and friends facing financial constraints in their home countries, according to López-Calva's study of Latin American and Caribbean migrants.

This study combines two theoretical approaches to address the complexity of the topic. The push and pull and altruism theories guide the collection and analysis of data, providing a framework to understand the impact of Covid-19 on migration trends, remittance earnings and factors driving remittance flows. The push and pull theory helps to explain the effect of Covid-19 restrictions on migration volume, while the altruism approach helps to understand why and how remittance flows fluctuated during the pandemic.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Philosophy

Research philosophy bridges the development of knowledge and the nature of knowledge (Saunders et al., 2009, p.107). Interpretivism helps to understand complex human behaviour and this research follows the subjective meaning of situational actions and in-depth data analysis (Bryman, 2016, p.27; Saunders et al., 2009, p. 119).

3.2 Research Approach

This research follows the inductive approach, which aims to generate actual findings from data sets and find a better scope of problems based on experience (Saunders et al., 2009). Inductive research is referred to as a bottom-up approach, which emphasizes understanding dynamics, robustness and resilience and is more applicable where the sample size is small (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 127; Flick, 2015). This research explores the actual situations of Covid-19 on overseas labour migration and earning remittances in Bangladesh and built common standpoints about the cause of Covid-19 on migrant workers and remittance inflow trends through data analysis (Bell et al., 2018).

3.3 Research Strategy, Data Collection Tools and Techniques

Research strategy is crucial for accumulating data and answering research questions by connecting research philosophy and approach and emphasizing research objectives (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Due to COVID-19 lockdowns in Bangladesh, primary data collection is challenging, so this study relies on relevant secondary data sets from international and national organizations, such as the World Bank, UNDESA, BMET, MoEWOE, BBS, Bangladesh Bank and ILO. The triangulation technique is applied by using various methods or data sources to verify the development and draw insightful conclusions (Patton, 1999). The qualitative research method is used to find contextual information and actual insight (Neuman, 2014).

3.4 Data Processing and Analysis

Using secondary datasets, this research comparatively analyzed pre and post Covid-19 effects on labour migration and remittances to Bangladesh. Statistical data, including monthly/yearly migration data, country-wise migration data, and migration statistics by gender, were segregated from the datasets. Additionally, thematic analysis of expert commentary on the topic, as published in newspapers and online news sites, was conducted using an inductive approach (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

The research process is explained in Table 1.

Research Questions	Exploring Methods	What Data will be Produced?
1. To what extent and in what ways Covid-19 has impacted the overseas labour migration from Bangladesh?	Analysis of datasets on migration from Bangladesh such as UNDESA, World Bank, Bangladesh Bank, BMET, MoEWOE datasets and secondary data sources from newspapers, journal articles etc.	Statistical data: monthly and yearly migration data. Country-wise migration data. Migration statistics according to gender. How many migrated and how many have returned?
2. How Covid-19 has impacted the trends of remittance flows?	Bangladesh Bank's remittances dataset.	Statistical data: monthly and yearly remittance flow data.
3. What factors contributed to the ups or downs of remittance flow during Covid-19?	Collecting the commentary of the experts in this regard published in the newspapers and the online news sites and conducting thematic analysis.	Narratives of the experts on the issues of remittances flow, factors worked behind the flows of remittances.

Table 1: Summary of Research Process

3.5 Justification of the Research Methods and Limitations of the Research

Due to COVID-19 lockdowns and time constraints, the researcher used secondary data sources for both qualitative and quantitative data analysis. The systematic analysis of secondary data is considered useful and practical (Glaser, 1963). Qualitative data was gathered from free online sources but the perspectives of experts could differ and interpreting these findings may have limitations. Direct interviews with migrants were not included in the study, which could provide more personal insights into their pandemic experiences. Future research should consider exploring these micro-level perspectives.

3.6 Ethical considerations

Ethical issues are very much sensible and have been maintained throughout the entire research activity (Saunders et al., 2009, pp.183-187). In this research, the researcher strictly maintained secondary data security and confidentiality throughout the research tenure (Bryman & Bell, 2015). The research has recognised due credit to the relevant organisations for using their datasets on migration and remittances. Secondary data analysis has ethical advantages as this is non-reactive and not engaged by the active participants. This process is very much effective for sensitive issues and critical time to collect data for the research (Rew et al., 2000; Smith, 2008; Neuman, 2014).

4. Analysis and Results

The study examined the effects of Covid-19 on migration and remittance flows in Bangladesh, using data from various sources and analyzing year-wise migration data spanning several decades as well as secondary data on remittance earnings. Analysing data from 2000-2020, the study found evidence of the pandemic's impact on migration and remittance flows but the limitations include the lack of direct interviews with migrants and the challenges of interpreting data from various sources.

4.1 Impact of Covid-19 on Migration

This section focuses on the flow of migrants from Bangladesh, examining the trends over the past few decades. It explores the gendered dimension of migration and how it has evolved. It also examines the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on return migration or inward flow to Bangladesh.

4.1.1 Flow of Migrants from Bangladesh: A Decadal Scene

Overseas migration from Bangladesh in the last two decades has experienced positive growth for most of the years despite some negative growth in the years 2007-08, 2008-09, 2009-10, 2012-13, 2013-14 and 2018-19, which is shown in Figure 1 and Figure 2. The flow of labour migration has been witnessing an upward trend over the years until FY 2007-08. Later, it continued to decline over the next three successive fiscal years. The reason is the global economic recession and collapse of the construction sector in the Middle East for which the demand for migrant labour declined.

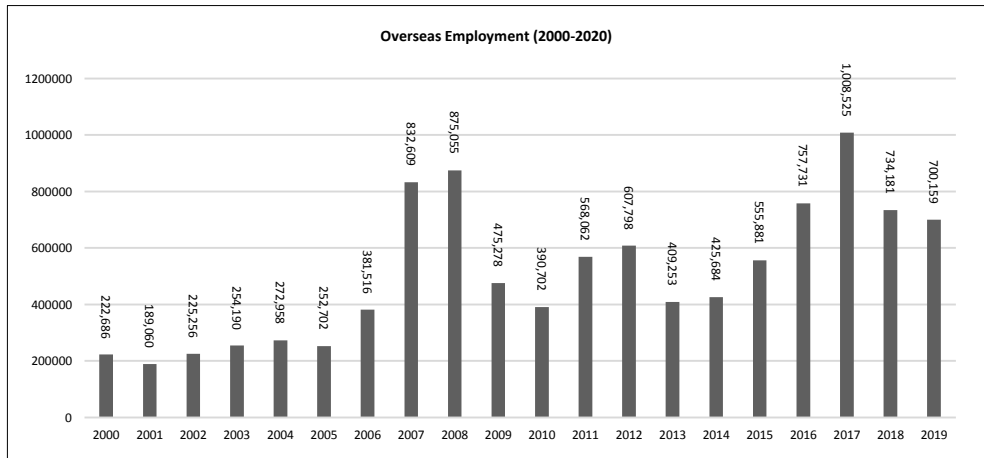


Figure 1: Overseas Employment (2000-2019),

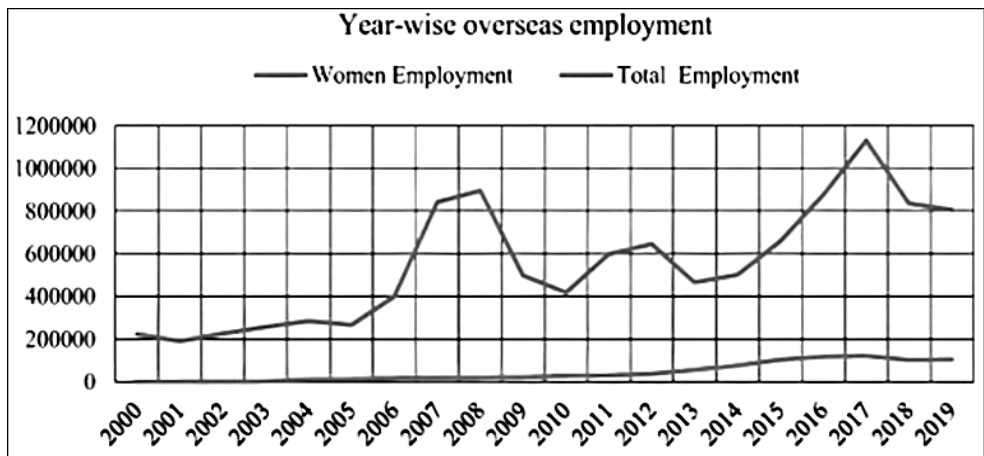


Figure 2: Bangladesh Overseas Women Migration in Last 2 Decades, Source: BMET

Again, the flow of labour migration increased in FY 2011- 12 in comparison with the preceding years. Nevertheless, during the fiscal years of 2011-2013, the rate of labor migration from Bangladesh decreased significantly due to political instability within Bangladesh as well as economic recessions in some Western countries and several Middle Eastern nations. Since 2006 a minimum of 400000 migrants have migrated from Bangladesh on yearly basis. And in the year 2016-17, the number of outmigration reached its peak of 900000 for a specific year.

In the last decade, approximately 400,000 Bangladeshis migrated overseas for employment each year (Figure 2). However, due to Covid-19 restrictions in 2020, only 217,669 Bangladeshis migrated for foreign employment, with the majority leaving from January to March 2020. From April to June 2020, migration drastically decreased due to strict lockdown measures and flight cancellations. From July to December 2020, only 36,413 labour migrants were able to migrate. This resulted in a 69% decrease in overseas employment for Bangladeshis in 2020 compared to the previous year. If the migration trend continued as it did during the initial three months of 2020, there was a possibility to expand the migration rate by 3.52%. However, around 100,000 Bangladeshis who had completed all migration procedures were unable to move due to Covid-19 lockdowns, flight cancellations and border and immigration service closures in the destination countries (Mahmud, 2020; BMET, 2021).

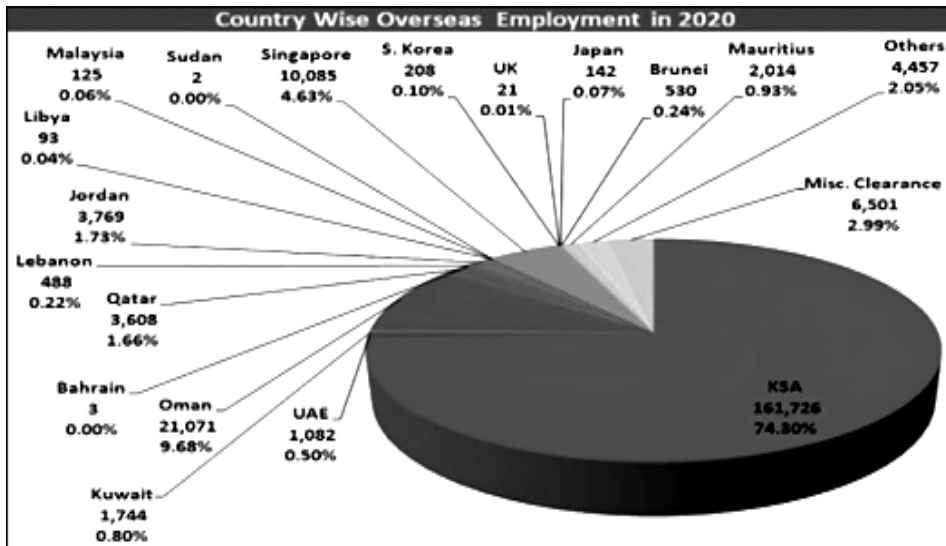


Figure 3: Country-Wise Overseas Employment from Bangladesh in 2020

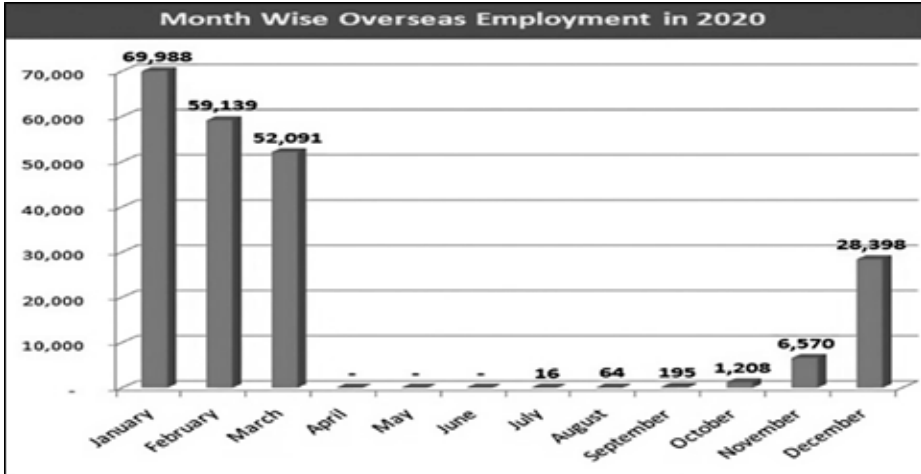


Figure 4: Month-wise Overseas Migration from Bangladesh in 2020, Source: BMET

The highest number of migrants are going to Saudi Arabia, totaling 161,726 or 74.30% of the total flow as shown in Figure 3 which displays the distribution of overseas employment for Bangladeshi workers in 2020. The second-largest stream was headed towards Oman, with 21,071 workers, making up 9.68% of the total. Singapore was the third most popular destination, receiving 10,085 workers, which accounts for 4.63% of the total flows. Jordan followed with 3,769 workers, representing 1.73% of labourers from Bangladesh. Qatar ranked fifth with 3,608 migrants, which amounts to approximately 1.65% of the total number (BMET, 2021). The number of migrant workers in January was 69,988, which decreased by 15.50% to 59,139 in February and by 25.57% to 52,091 in March as shown in Figure 4, which displays the month-wise trend of overseas migration in 2020. Due to the worsening of the global Covid-19 situation, there were no migrations from April to June. From July, migrations resumed with a small number of 16 and gradually increased to 195 in September. From October to December, there was a significant increase, with a rise of 519% (1208 persons) in October and 443% (6570 persons) in November. The number of migrants further increased to 28398 by 332% from November to December, indicating a recovery phase.

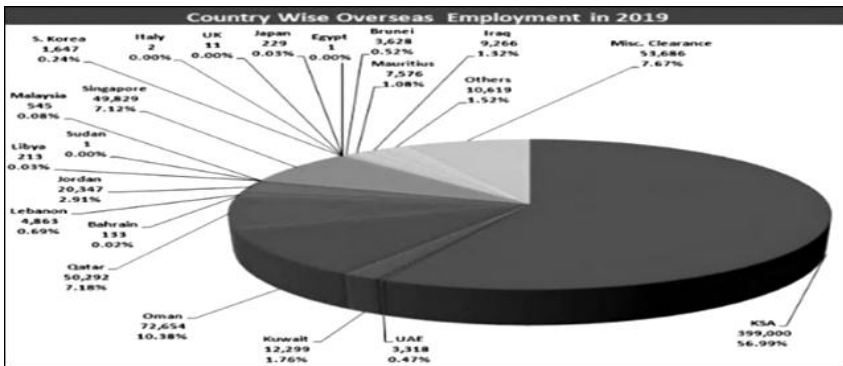


Figure 5: Country-Wise Overseas Employment from Bangladesh in 2019

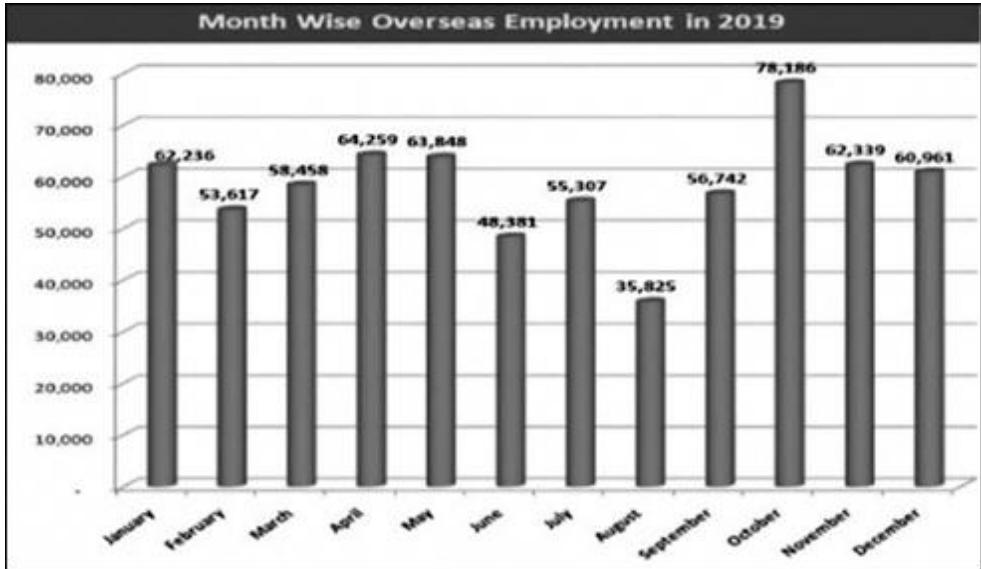


Figure 6: Month-wise Overseas Migration from Bangladesh in 2019, Source: BMET

In 2020, a total of 217,669 Bangladeshi workers migrated to different countries for employment, a decrease of 68.91% from 2019, when 700,159 workers migrated. In 2020, 82% of the migrants went to the Gulf and other Arab states, with Saudi Arabia accounting for 59% of the total flows. The year 2020 witnessed a sharp decline and rise in the number of migrations due to Covid-19, whereas the trend was steady in 2019, with only a nominal drop of 2.04% from January to December.

4.1.2 Gendered Dimension

A total of 21,934 female workers migrated from Bangladesh for work in 2020 (Figure 7). In 2019 the total number of female workers who migrated from Bangladesh stood at 104,786 (Figure 8). Female migration from Bangladesh in 2020 reduced to 79% compared to the previous year.

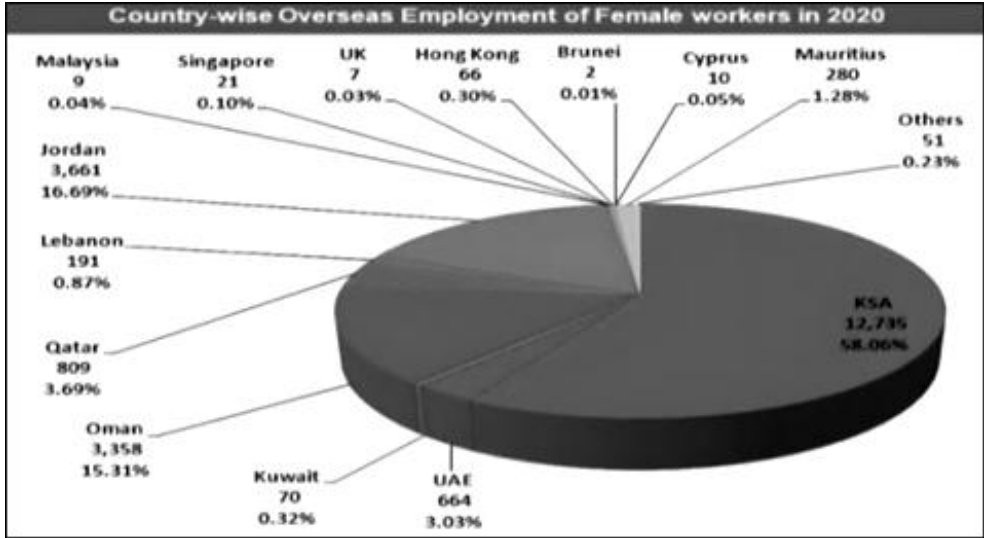


Figure 7: Country-wise Overseas Female Employment in 2020

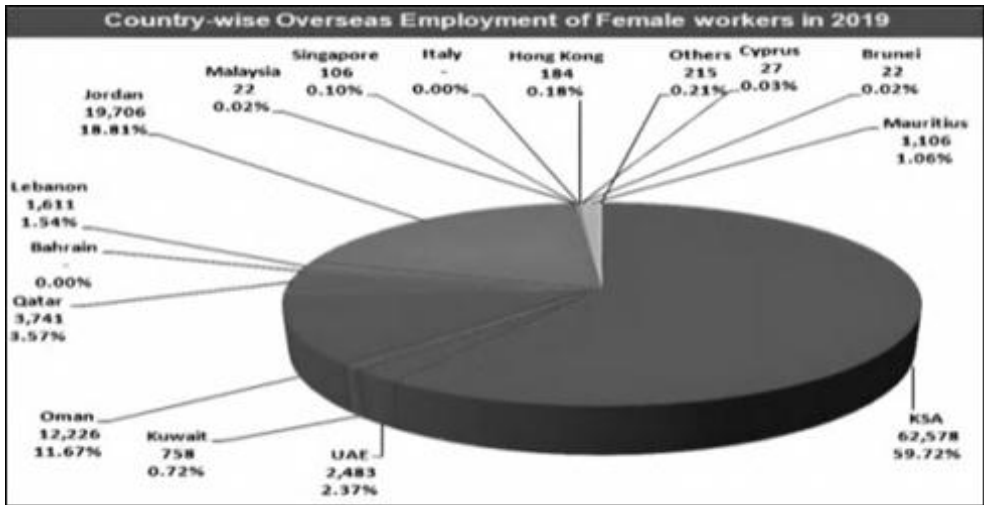


Figure 8: Country-wise Overseas Female Employment in 2019, Source: BMET

During COVID-19, like any other year, Saudi Arabia has been the major destination for female migrants. About 58% of the female (12,735) went to Saudi Arabia during this period, 3,661 females migrated to Jordan 3,358 females migrated to Oman (BMET, 2021). In 2020, some Bangladeshi women also went to take up employment in some new destination countries such as Uzbekistan and Albania (Ara, 2020).

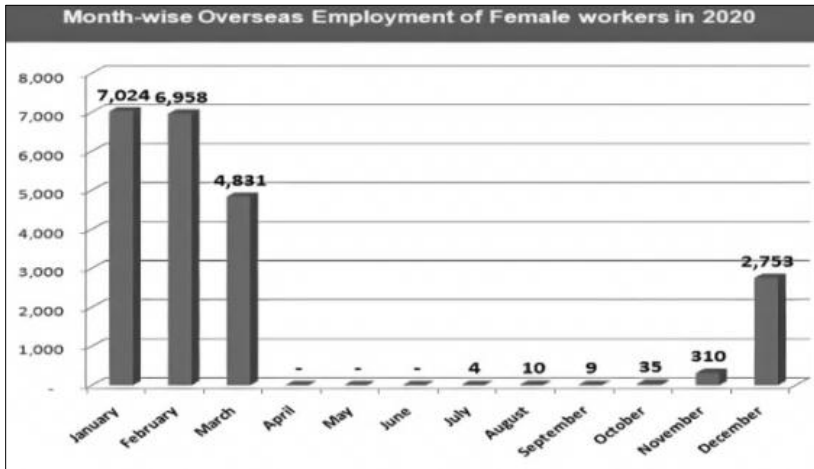


Figure 9: Month-wise Overseas Female Employment in 2020

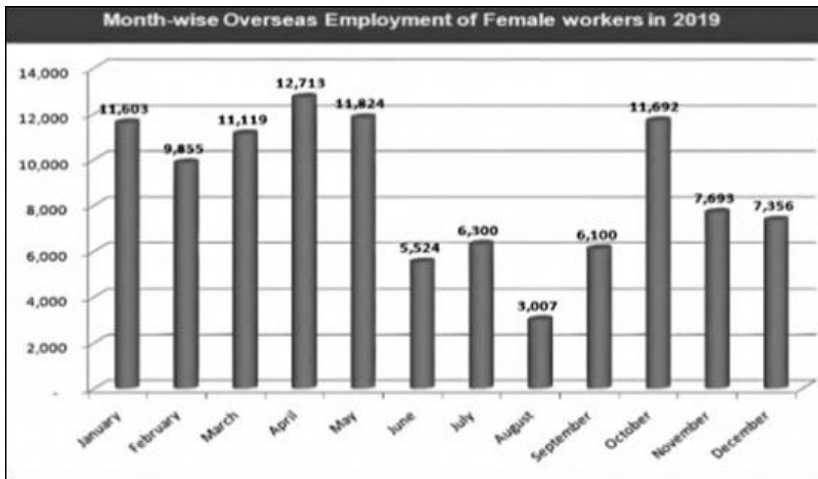


Figure 10: Month-wise Overseas Female Employment in 2019, Source: BMET

If the month-wise overseas employment of female workers is compared between the years 2020 and 2019 (reflected in Figure 9 and Figure 10), we see that female migration does not take place from April to June and from July to December only 3,121 female workers migrate in 2020. Whereas, in the year 2019 the trend witnesses some significant fluctuations in the middle of the year starting in June and ending in September. However, the number of female migrations started at 11,603 in January and ended at 7,356 by December a significant decline of 36%

4.1.3 Return Migration or Inward Flow to Bangladesh

In 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic harmed the flow of migration and the lives of migrant workers. The crisis led to a sharp decline in outbound migration from Bangladesh, and also resulted in a significant increase in return migration. On average, around 2,000 workers were returning to Bangladesh daily since the crisis began in March 2020. According to the Bangladesh Expatriate Welfare and Overseas Employment Ministry, 85,790 migrant workers returned from 26 countries due to job losses between April and August 2020. In total, 408,000 migrant workers returned to Bangladesh in 2020, which is eight times higher than the previous years. Migrants working in the tourism, services, and construction sectors in the Gulf countries were being deported due to a decline in oil prices and the Covid-19 situation. Additionally, around 200,000 Bangladeshi labour migrant workers did not return to work in their host countries despite having visas and work permits (UNDP, 2020). Furthermore, more than 46,000 female migrants returned from April to December 2020, with the majority returning from Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Qatar (Women in Migration Network Bangladesh, 2020). The pandemic not only hindered the flow of migrant workers but also reversed it, with many workers being forced to return home. Although some signs of recovery are visible, uncertainty still looms as the post-pandemic world will restructure global production mechanisms and labour practices.

4.2 Impact of Covid-19 on the Remittance Inflows

To assess the impact of Covid-19 on remittance inflows to Bangladesh, this section examines 30 years of inflow data starting from FY 1992-1993, along with 10 years of remittance-to-GDP ratios. The analysis reveals trends in inflows and the concentration of remittance sources. By comparing country-wise contributions and monthly inflows in 2020 to those of 2019 and 2021, the section evaluates the pandemic's impact on remittance earnings.

Year/Month	Remittances	
	In million (\$)	In billion (BDT)
2020-2021	24777.71	2101.31
2019-2020	18205.01	1543.52
2018-2019	16419.63	1380.07
2017-2018	14981.69	1231.56
2016-2017	12769.45	1010.99
2015-2016	14931.18	1168.57
2014-2015	15316.91	1189.93
2013-2014	14228.26	1105.84
2012-2013	14461.14	1156.47
2011-2012	12843.43	1018.82
2010-2011	11650.32	829.91
2009-2010	10987.40	760.11
2008-2009	9689.26	666.77
2007-2008	7914.78	542.96
2006-2007	5998.47	413.01
2005-2006	4802.41	322.76
2004-2005	3848.29	236.48
2003-2004	3371.97	198.70
2002-2003	3061.97	177.29
2001-2002	2501.13	143.77

2000-2001	1882.10	101.70
1999-2000	1949.32	98.07
1998-1999	1705.74	81.98
1997-1998	1525.43	69.35
1996-1997	1475.42	63.00
1995-1996	1217.06	49.70
1994-1995	1197.63	48.14
1993-1994	1088.72	43.55
1992-1993	944.57	36.97

Table 2: Yearly Data of Wage Earner's Remittance, Source: Bangladesh Bank

Data reveals a consistent rise with an average growth of 15-25% over the 29-year period, which is influenced by the increased number of outbound workers (shown in Table 2), Figure 2 supports this trend. World Bank data on remittance inflows to Bangladesh (Figure 11) shows slight differences from Bangladesh Bank data, but the difference is marginal.

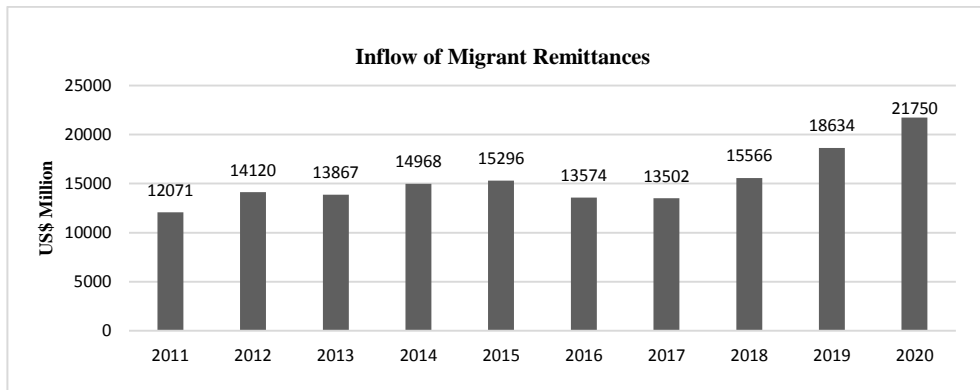


Figure 11: Inflow of Remittances (2011-2020), Source: Bangladesh Bank

It is evident that the remittance inflow has been consistently increasing over the years, except for a minor dip in 2016 and 2017. The year 2020 saw the highest inflow of remittance, amounting to \$21750 million. The overall trend in the data suggests that Bangladesh is receiving more remittances from abroad, which is the result of various factors such as increased migration, improved economic conditions and better transfer channels.

4.2.1 Impact of Covid-19 on Earning Remittances by Bangladesh

To assess the impact of Covid-19 on remittance earnings, this section compares wage earners' remittances, the country-wise share of remittance and month-wise remittance inflows for the years 2019, 2020 and 2021. In 2019, Bangladesh was the world's 6th largest labour migrant and 8th largest foreign remittance recipient country (World Bank, 2020). Comparing tables (Table 3 and Table 4) and diagrams (Figure 12 and Figure 13) of wage earners and country-wise remittance inflows for 2019 and 2020 shows that Bangladeshi migrants remitted US\$18.354 billion in 2019 and US\$21.74 billion in 2020, a rise of 18.60% (Bangladesh Bank, 2021). In 2019, the UAE contributed US\$2732.8 million (14.89% of total inflow), which decreased to US\$2507.64 million (11.53%) in 2020.

Kuwait sent US\$1575.57 million (8.58%) in 2019 and US\$1569.14 million (7.21%) in 2020. In 2019, Bangladesh received US\$18.33 billion in remittances.

Country	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	Total (USD)
Bahrain	42.5	32.71	38.32	46.37	40.91	33.97	40.5	40.07	36.92	31.43	28.87	43.08	455.65
Kuwait	148.87	119.7	133.88	145.47	164.3	116.77	144.57	118.63	116.6	121.37	110.84	134.57	1575.57
Oman	89.92	88.55	98.35	90.5	114.32	103.18	105.81	115.81	100.6	110.06	98.97	99.13	1215.2
Qatar	96.26	70.54	86.86	96.1	109.28	84.14	104.44	91.83	91.19	94.35	78.51	102.52	1106.02
K.S.A.	295.41	238.6	283.75	270.12	337.82	261.51	331.23	311.03	310.45	342.08	329.15	335.46	3646.61
U.A.E.	253.8	226.79	233.83	202.67	259.85	212.29	236.96	181.14	211.55	240.59	239.35	233.98	2732.8
Libya	0.41	0.28	0.35	0.2	0.66	0.31	0.47	0.32	0.49	0.48	0.51	0.6	5.08
Iran	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.07	0.01	0	0	0	0	0.08
Australia	5.16	4.53	5.21	4.93	7.44	4.65	6.14	4.98	4.43	5.2	5.15	6.4	64.22
Hongkong	1.58	1.15	2.18	1.9	1.81	1.87	1.73	1.51	1.42	1.27	1.28	1.71	19.41
Italy	82.57	53.86	59.5	62.15	65.95	59.74	63.56	62.96	68.09	69.62	70.21	82.73	800.94
Malaysia	107.2	96.57	101.34	105.64	119.81	103.03	114.77	106.56	99.7	98.67	111.99	113.29	1278.57
Singapore	35.85	27.69	31.63	33.93	37.06	37.04	35.56	36.75	35.75	40.98	39.56	44.4	436.2
U.K.	122.82	114.88	107.56	96.13	149.29	81.57	121.43	112.83	106.35	141.14	123.11	133.11	1410.22
U.S.A.	180.92	128.58	158.1	152.69	198.02	159	156	176.33	161.64	204.37	199.08	207.43	2082.16
Germany	6.44	5.69	6.14	5.9	6.65	4.75	4.97	4.37	4.36	4.14	4.96	5.53	63.9
Japan	4.5	10.06	3.62	3.39	5.45	3.61	4.86	5.68	3.77	3.56	3.27	5.53	57.3
S.Korea	11.84	11.19	9.95	10.37	10.54	11.12	13.38	12.78	12.09	20.74	16.09	21.12	161.21
Others	111.16	86.36	98.11	105.69	119	89.65	111.21	99.25	103.02	109.57	94.32	116.56	1243.8
Total=	1,597.21	1,317.73	1,458.68	1,434.05	1,748.16	1,368.20	1,597.66	1,482.84	1,468.42	1,639.62	1,555.22	1,687.15	18,354.94

Table 3: Remittance inflows to Bangladesh in 2019, Source: BMET

The top remittance-sending countries to Bangladesh in 2020 are Saudi Arabia, the United States, United Arab Emirates, Malaysia, the United Kingdom and Kuwait. Saudi Arabia is the largest source of remittances with 23.59% of the total inflow, followed by the United States with 13.56% and the United Arab Emirates with 11.53%. Malaysia, the United Kingdom, and Kuwait contributed 7.98%, 7.58%, and 7.20%, respectively.

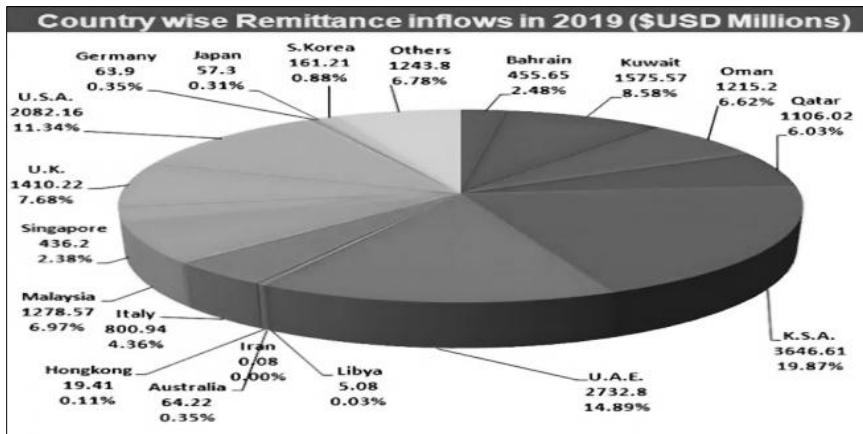


Figure 12: Country-wise Remittance Inflows in 2019, Source: BMET

Bangladeshi migrants remitted US\$21.74 billion in 2020 as shown in Table 4. Country-wise, migrants from Saudi Arabia, the USA, Malaysia, and the UK sent more remittances in 2020 than the previous year.

In 2020, remittances from Saudi Arabia increased to US\$5128.48 million (23.6% of total inflows) from US\$3646.61 million (19.87% of total) in 2019. From the USA, remittances increased to US\$2953 million (13.6% of total inflow) in 2020 from US\$2082.16 million (11.34% of total inflow) in 2019.

Wage Earners Remittance inflows:Country wise (Monthly) in 2020													
Country	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	Total (USD)
Bahrain	36.66	33.94	38.79	24.71	37.52	44.91	60.86	46.23	52.95	45.18	47.9	50.69	520.34
Kuwait	137.71	112.85	96.85	88.22	57.41	133.65	173.07	136.75	156.54	158.32	154.51	163.26	1569.14
Oman	91.13	95.61	82.73	71.98	136.29	135.49	198.34	134.57	153.25	156.21	128.08	99.51	1483.19
Qatar	94.09	84.03	70.77	34.1	67.94	107.41	127.67	102.04	116.81	102.82	112.5	112.4	1132.58
K.S.A.	321.24	308.55	286.62	278.08	380.01	486.23	632.6	450.58	530.93	500.21	470.99	482.44	5128.48
U.A.E.	212.86	191.73	159.33	159.58	196.16	213.26	285.3	235.63	231.54	215.98	211.16	195.11	2507.64
Libya	0.37	0.23	0.14	0.16	0.13	0.14	0.38	0.22	0.23	0.41	0.35	0.66	3.42
Iran	-	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.01	0	0	0	0.01
Australia	6.16	3.98	3.47	2.97	5.56	6.92	12.29	10.09	12.03	9.71	11.81	13.26	98.25
Hongkong	1.75	1.35	1.36	1	1.16	1.51	1.79	1.5	1.58	1.22	1.53	2.04	17.79
Italy	73.05	56.84	44.08	23.84	33.76	50.31	67.09	80.89	78.83	63.86	60.31	79.57	712.43
Malaysia	121.14	105.36	95.71	53.97	99.65	112.27	235.57	196.31	175.36	187.86	188.51	163.63	1735.34
Singapore	45.39	34.56	37.49	29.63	34.41	43.46	82.81	60.16	46.09	46.85	57.57	51.19	569.61
U.K.	140.00	111.49	81.51	81.01	100.87	114.22	184.01	147.06	185.07	171.9	178.8	153.13	1649.07
U.S.A.	223.18	207.69	179.34	171.37	266.93	253.12	343.55	219.72	251.94	280.29	273.5	282.35	2952.98
Germany	5.52	3.65	4.03	3.05	3.7	4.43	5.75	4.61	4.9	4.72	5.71	6.47	56.54
Japan	3.92	3.04	4.23	2.62	3.96	5.51	8.83	4.61	6.69	6.74	7.29	8.62	66.06
S.Korea	17.36	11.47	12.97	16.51	8.74	14.84	21.18	14.76	19.74	26.26	25.79	22.41	212.03
Others	107.00	85.83	76.84	50.16	70.4	104.95	158.47	116.92	126.56	133.9	142.43	163.91	1337.37
Total=	1,638.53	1,452.20	1,276.26	1,092.96	1,504.60	1,832.63	2,599.56	1,962.65	2,151.05	2,112.44	2,078.74	2,060.65	21,752.27

Table 4: Remittance inflows to Bangladesh in 2020, Source: BMET

The total remittance inflow for the year 2020 was 21752 million, which translates to an average monthly inflow of approximately 1813 million. The highest remittance inflow was in July, with 2599 million, while the lowest was in April, with 1092 million as seen in Table 4. This indicates that there were fluctuations in the monthly remittance inflow throughout the year. The table suggests that despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, remittance inflows to Bangladesh remained relatively stable in 2020, with no significant drops. This could be attributed to the resilience of the Bangladeshi diaspora and their continued support for their families and communities back home.

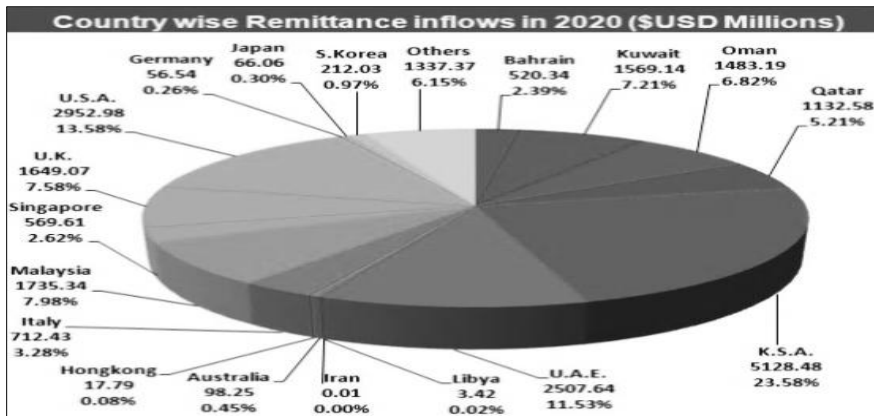


Figure 13: Country-wise Remittance Inflows

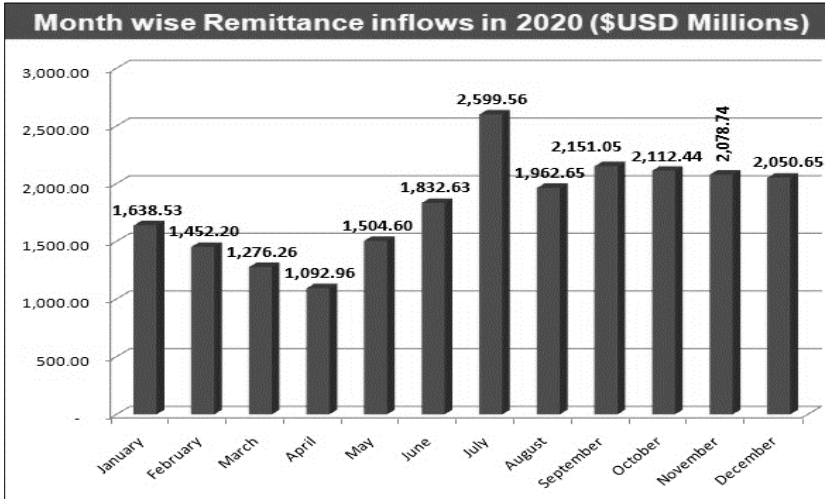


Figure 14: Month-wise Remittance Inflows in 2020, Source: BMET

In 2020, Bangladeshi migrants remitted US\$21.74 billion, with a higher amount coming from Saudi Arabia, the USA, Malaysia, and the UK compared to previous years. Despite the pandemic affecting outgoing migration, there was an 18.4% growth in remittances in 2020 compared to the previous year. The World Bank had forecasted a 25% decrease in remittances, but this did not happen and Bangladesh's foreign exchange reserve remained satisfactory. In 2020, the total reserve of Bangladesh Bank stood at US\$43.95 billion, which was US\$38.50 billion in 2019. The average monthly remittance received by Bangladesh from 2012 to 2020 was 1306.47 million USD, with the highest-ever remittance of 2598.21 million USD in July 2020 and the lowest recorded remittance of 856.87 million USD in September 2017 (Bangladesh Bank, 2021).

According to data from the Bangladesh Bank (2021), in January and February 2020, the country received US\$1638 million and US\$1452 million in remittances, respectively. However, due to strict lockdowns in many migrant destination countries, remittances started to decline in March, resulting in a 14% decrease compared to the same month in 2019. In April 2020, remittances fell by 32% to US\$1093 million, which was the lowest in recent history. Despite the pandemic, remittances increased during the festive season, with May 2020 seeing an increase to US\$1505 million and June reaching US\$1833 million to support families during the lockdown and the upcoming Eid-ul-Adha festival. In July 2020, there was a sudden surge in remittance income to US\$2598 million. Although remittances declined from February to April, they continued to rise throughout the rest of the year, remaining above US\$2000 million per month.

Comparison of Remittances Flows in 2019 and 2020			
2020-2021		2019-2020	
Year/Month	(\$ Million)	Year/Month	(\$ Million)
June	1940.81	June	1832.63
May	2171.03	May	1504.60
April	2067.64	April	1092.96
March	1910.98	March	1276.26
February	1780.59	February	1452.20

January	1961.91	January	1638.43
December	2050.65	December	1691.68
November	2078.74	November	1555.23
October	2102.16	October	1641.67
September	2151.05	September	1476.91
August	1963.94	August	1444.75
July	2598.21	July	1597.69

Table 5: Monthly Data of Wage Earner's Remittance, Source: Bangladesh Bank

A clear month-wise picture of the remittance inflow is provided in Table 5 which is aligned with the data in Figure 15 which gives the account of the month-wise remittance inflow in the year 2021 up to May.

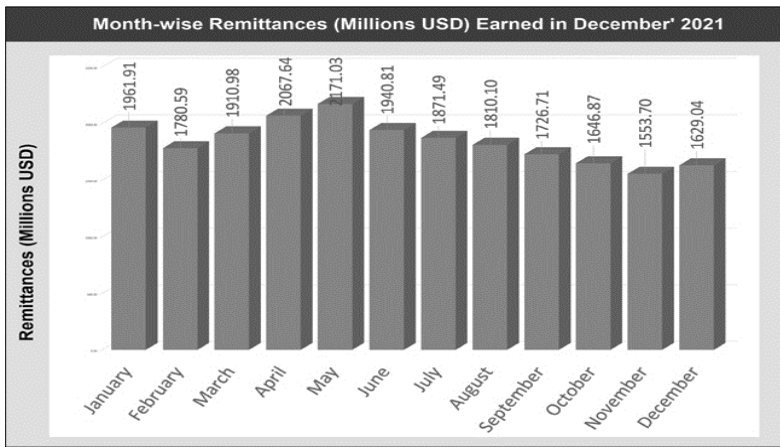


Figure 15: Month-wise Remittance Inflows in 2021, Source: BMET

Remittance inflow during the 2020-2021 fiscal year was higher and grew steadily compared to the previous year. In July 2021, there was a 62% growth in remittance flow compared to July 2019 (Table 5 and Figure 15). The growth rate for the remaining months of both fiscal years was: August (36%), September (31%), October (28%), November (33%), December (21%), January (19%), February (22%), March (39%), April (89%), May (44%), and June (6%). The highest growth was observed in July and April of the 2020-2021 fiscal year compared to the same months in the previous fiscal year.

FY	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Total
2021-22	1,871.49												1,871.49
2020-21	2,598.21	1,963.94	2,151.05	2,102.16	2,078.74	2,050.65	1,961.91	1,780.59	1,910.98	2,067.64	2,171.03	1,940.81	24,777.71
2019-20	1,597.69	1,444.75	1,476.91	1,641.67	1,555.23	1,691.68	1,638.43	1,452.20	1,276.26	1,092.96	1,504.60	1,832.63	18,205.01
2018-19	1,318.18	1,411.05	1,139.66	1,239.11	1,180.44	1,206.91	1,597.21	1,317.73	1,458.68	1,434.30	1,748.16	1,368.20	16,419.63
2017-18	1,115.57	1,418.58	856.87	1,162.77	1,214.75	1,163.82	1,379.79	1,149.08	1,299.77	1,331.33	1,504.98	1,384.38	14,981.69

Table 6: Monthly Data of Remittance Flow, Source: Bangladesh Bank

The monthly remittance flow substantiates the significant rise of remittance earnings during the pandemic years compared to that of the pre-pandemic fiscal years of 2017-18, 2018-19 and part of 2019-20 as seen in Table 6. According to Bangladesh Bank online report, the widespread Covid-19 effect declined the remittance inflow to the country and remittance in Bangladesh decreased to \$1940.81 million in June from \$2171.03 million in May of 2021.

Wage Earners Remittance inflows - Country wise (Monthly) in 2021																
Country	Month															USD in Millions
	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	Total(USD)			
Bahrain	47.11	40.5	44.69	45.32			46.26	45.71	43.51	40.59	43.97	46.66	399.63			
Kuwait	164.22	148.23	159.95	162.33			148.84	152.63	140.58	131.15	126.94	140.02	1474.89			
Oman	106.53	88.59	106.28	111.98			110.02	99.83	81.69	65.01	62.54	61.45	893.92			
Qatar	113.21	110.65	118.9	138.97			120.47	126.09	109.76	106.91	105.73	115.85	1166.54			
K.S.A.	464.08	399.78	426.68	438.05			462.38	432.28	409.47	395.68	365.23	368.44	4162.07			
U.A.E.	183.71	152.33	172.67	181.99			159.18	155.36	131.76	122.54	125.94	120.49	1505.97			
Libya	1.47	1.48	0.74	0.28			0.23	0.31	0.24	0.24	0.14	0.15	5.28			
Iran	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.1	-	-	-	-	-	0.1			
Australia	12.59	11.17	11.85	13.7			9.92	7.8	10.04	11.31	9	9.96	107.34			
Honkong	1.58	1.63	1.75	2.18			1.83	1.75	1.54	1.72	1.29	1.68	16.95			
Italy	62.05	52.47	56.53	61.42			77.22	90.91	89.97	83.96	73.66	90.6	738.79			
Malaysia	139.38	143.72	131.27	162.81			110.77	96.24	83.85	82.01	72.06	76.55	1098.66			
Singapore	50.74	43.46	43.23	46.37			37.87	37.7	36.06	32.07	26.64	30.46	384.6			
U.K.	153.87	161.19	181.32	183.58			159.38	145.85	146.78	143.34	138.64	146.45	1560.4			
U.S.A.	285.05	259.17	299.56	344.23			282.44	277.52	298.22	293.92	271.69	268.37	2880.17			
Germany	6.17	5.56	5.34	5.85			5.38	6.89	6.68	5.3	5.26	6.35	58.78			
Japan	7.2	5.18	5.51	6.13			6.05	6.16	5.93	5.06	4.79	6.39	58.4			
S.Korea	13.51	13.61	13.13	15.29			7.16	9.34	8.97	9.36	8.99	12.02	111.38			
Others	149.44	141.87	176.27	147.16			125.99	117.73	121.66	116.7	111.19	127.15	1335.16			
Total	1961.91	1780.59	1910.98	2067.64	2171.03	1940.81	1871.49	1810.10	1726.71	1646.87	1553.70	1629.04	17959.03			

Table 7: Wage Earners’ Remittance Inflows: Country and Month-wise in 2021, Source: BMET

The country received a sustained rise in wage earners' remittance inflow during the first four months of 2021, amounting to \$7727.42 million, a 41% growth compared to 2020s \$5459.95 million as presented in Table 7. Despite the negative impact of the pandemic on migration, remittance inflow has seen a significant rise during the pandemic months. The reasons for this phenomenon remain largely unexplored in academia, but the following section aims to identify the factors that drive this upward trend.

4.3 The Factors Behind the Sustained Growth of Remittances

During the Covid-19 pandemic, remittances have become vital for families of labour migrant workers. Remittances received in 2020 accounted for 6.6% of the GDP in Bangladesh (Bangladesh Bank, 2021). Technology has played a significant role in facilitating the flow of remittances to these families, with a growing volume being transferred through online and digital channels. In Bangladesh, wallet-based money transfer services such as bKash, MoneyGram, and Rocket have become increasingly popular. Since April 2020, the use of these channels has increased by over 150% on average compared to the first three months of the year (Takenaka et al., 2020).

Reasons for the increase in remittances during the pandemic are explored in this section. One explanation is that remittances are always cumulative (RMMRU, 2020). According to the RMMRU Migration Trends Report 2020, there are cumulative effects observed in remittance flows on a year-by-year basis. With positive growth in migration, remittances are expected to increase annually. Although migration flow was significantly less in 2020, Bangladesh received 18% more remittances than in 2019. Major factors behind this include

the use of online and digital channels and the reliance on remittances as a lifeline for families of labour migrant workers (Takenaka et al., 2020).

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Firstly, since July 2019, the government has offered a 2% incentive to encourage migrants to send remittances through formal channels. Migrants receive 2 takas against a 100-taka remittance, with 3,060 crore taka allocated for this purpose in the 2019-20 fiscal year budget. Some banks offer an additional 1% to attract remittances. In July 2020, Bangladesh Bank recorded the highest-ever inflow of remittances for a single month, amounting to US\$2598 million. Secondly, according to the RMMRU report, a large number of migrants returned to Bangladesh due to COVID-19, leading to a surge in remittances. Individuals who had returned to Bangladesh or were expected to return faced limitations on the amount of money they could carry with them, prompting them to send their savings back to the country through alternative means. Migrants who felt insecure also transferred their savings to Bangladesh due to uncertainty surrounding their employment and future situation caused by the pandemic (RMMRU, 2020). Thirdly, solidarity, brotherhood, and humanitarianism within the Bangladeshi migrant and diaspora community also contributed to the surge in remittances. Many migrants sent their earnings or savings back home to help their extended family members, neighbours and friends during the COVID-19 crisis. Even during challenging times abroad, they tried their best to support their families by sending small amounts. In 2020, Bangladesh faced a major cyclone event (Amphan) and severe floods, which influenced many Bangladeshi overseas migrants and diaspora communities to respond to humanitarian calls to support affected communities.

In 2020, remittances from developed countries, such as the USA, UK, Italy, Australia, Japan, and South Korea, to Bangladesh increased significantly compared to previous years. Specifically, remittances from the USA increased by almost 40%, from US\$2082.16 million in 2019 to US\$2953 million in 2020. However, this increase does not necessarily indicate that migrants are doing well. According to RMMRU, most of the remittances came through formal channels in 2020 due to various factors, including a lack of demand for currency by Hundi Operators in Bangladesh. For instance, the Bangladeshi recruiting agencies could not purchase visas from brokers or placement agencies located in the destination countries due to government regulations, which resulted in a decreased demand for foreign currency. As a result, around 400,000 visas were not purchased and a large number of foreign currencies were not required from the Hundi Operators. This highlights that an increase in remittances does not always reflect the well-being of migrants.

5. Discussion

This study examines the impact of Covid-19 on migration, remittance earnings and factors influencing remittance flow. Lee's (1966) Push and Pull theory is used to understand constraints affecting migration, while Covid-19 has altered the socio-economic conditions of origin and destination countries. The altruism approach explains why remittance flow increased despite pandemic constraints. Migrants send money to support their families and secure their future in case of unemployment. Altruism identifies the factors driving remittance flow during the pandemic.

In 2020, despite Covid-19 restrictions, approximately 217,669 Bangladeshi migrated to other countries (BMET, 2021). Most of these migrants (181,218) left Bangladesh between January and March 2020. After March 2020, migration dropped significantly due to Covid-19 related restrictions, which had a tremendous impact on remittance earnings. According

to the Ministry of Expatriate Welfare and Overseas Employment, the number of migrants may exceed 400,000 (Chowdhury & Chakraborty, 2021).

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However, despite the decrease in migration, Bangladesh received US\$21.74 billion in remittances in 2020, an increase of 18.60% from 2019. This was surprising, given the pandemic's impact on the sector. In 2019, remittances were US\$18.33 billion, indicating an additional 3.5 billion USD received in 2020. Covid-19 related lockdowns are expected to have negative impacts on overseas migration, as previous studies have shown that such shocks can affect migration and remittances. The effects of the lockdown on overseas migration in Pakistan have been severe, with only 179,487 emigrants recorded for January-September 2020 compared to 625,203 in 2019 (Mamun & Ullah, 2020). However, remittance income increased in both Bangladesh and Pakistan due to a variety of factors, including the diversified labour market and a large stock of migrants in many regions of the world. The Bangladeshi government also provided cash incentives for remitted amounts, which encouraged more migrants to send money through formal channels. Migrants' tendency to send savings back home before returning from their destination countries also contributed to the increase in remittances. The resilience and persistence of Bangladeshi migrants to cope with challenges also helped in the growth of remittances in 2020, as many continued to send money despite facing difficulties.

In 2020, Bangladesh saw significant remittance income despite the COVID-19 pandemic. However, many Bangladeshi workers lost their jobs and wages due to lockdown measures taken by destination countries, economic crises, and business closures. More than 400,000 Bangladeshis had to return home due to the crisis, the highest ever for a single year. Both returning migrants and those who stayed in destination countries are facing serious financial difficulties (Banerji, Devasia & Sharma, 2020). The government should build a database of returned workers to prioritize them for skilled foreign work opportunities. The returnee migrants should also have access to low-interest government loans to start small and medium-scale enterprises within the country.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

This research explores the impact of Covid-19 on the migration of overseas workers, remittance inflow and the factors behind the positive flows of remittance during the pandemic. The study uses a theoretical framework derived from the push and pull and altruism approach and collects secondary data from Bangladesh Bank, BMET, and World Bank websites. The findings show that Covid-19 cautionary measures have adversely affected migration, with a sharp drop in the second and third quarters of 2020. However, remittance inflow has not decreased and instead increased remarkably during the pandemic, which is an interesting finding to investigate through further studies.

The study found that there are several factors contributing to the positive flow of remittances to Bangladesh during the pandemic. These include the government providing incentives for remittances, migrants sending their savings due to anxiety over unemployment and income loss and the spirit of fraternity and humanitarianism among migrant workers. The study also found the applicability of findings by Sirkeci, Cohen and Ratha (2012) on remittance flow stability during the global financial crisis in understanding the impact of Covid-19. The diversified labour market and migrant groups in different parts

of the world helped to maintain the stability of remittance flows to Bangladesh despite some migrants facing distressing situations.

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The research found that remittance inflows increased despite a decline in migration due to the pandemic. The reasons behind the rise were the reactions of migrant workers to the crisis, which may not last long. However, the impact of the pandemic on overall overseas employment and the economy is still uncertain. Effective policy initiatives are still being researched to combat the impending economic crunch. The study will be useful for further research to provide decision-makers with evidence-based policy recommendations and identify structural issues related to vulnerabilities in migration. The study is also significant for policymakers to craft well-coordinated policies for supporting outbound workers and devising coping strategies to combat potential economic crises.

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Need of Effective Cross-Cultural Training (CCT) for the Civil Servants to Accomplish International Assignment as Expatriates

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Abstract

The expatriate's Cross-Cultural Training (CCT) is particularly important because s/he will be posted to a place where the culture is unfamiliar, the job is distinctive and noble and there is a lot of contact and rigour. On top of that, his/her spouse will go with him/her. As may be observed from a national comparison by Hofstede Insights, there are also significant cultural variations between the two nations. To give the expatriates the necessary training, the training scenario will be of the "A" category and will include didactic, experiential, interactional and linguistic training. The instruction will improve the learner's cognitive abilities and foster their ability to communicate and perceive, which will lessen the impact of culture shock on the expert's ability to acclimatize to the Host Country National (HCN). As a result, this study's goals are to determine whether or not the CCT is necessary for expatriates, determine the appropriate CCT content and suggest policy options. To accomplish the research goals, this study used a qualitative methodology. The conclusions were drawn after doing content and thematic analysis. The findings will therefore help the expatriate to ensure that s/he is ready so that s/he and his/her spouse can adjust to the host country, be successful in his/her assignment and fulfill the goals and objectives of the business.

Keywords: *Need Analysis, Cross-Cultural Training, Civil servants, International Assignment, Expatriate*

INTRODUCTION

Cross-Cultural Training (Hofstede, 2001) ought to be an essential aspect of human resource development (Tahir & Ertek, 2018) during the time of working in a foreign environment or pre-departure preparation for expats (Littrell & Salas, 2005). When Cross-Cultural Training is done well, it broadens trainees' knowledge, motivates them to see the benefits of cultural diversity and cross-cultural competence (Dowling, et al., 1994) for both them and their companies and enhances their ability and capacity to interact with diversity in the workplace. Cross-Cultural Training is an effective method for achieving organizational performance goals and multicultural policy objectives (Tahir & Ertek, 2018).

Presently, an important number of government servants are sent abroad each year as expatriates to work in foreign embassies, missions or specialized UN agencies like the World Bank, UNDP, UNESCO, and UNICEF, etc. in this globalized world (Okpara & Kabongo, 2011; Hosen, 2020).

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This kind of job necessitates strong negotiation skills and adaptability in the Host Country National (HCN), where the culture is different and the level of engagement and rigour is higher than that of the Parent Country National (PCN). As demonstrated by the country comparison in Hofstede's insights, the cultures of the two nations are invariably different (Hofstede, 2001). Additionally, the majority of assignees bring their families with them. The appointee and his family experience cultural shock when they enter a new and different culture. For them to complete their work in HCN successfully, they must learn to adapt to a new culture. As a result, under CCT, the allocated civil servants should receive the necessary training, such as didactic, interactive, experiential and linguistic training.

In addition, the training will improve the learner's cognitive abilities and foster their ability to communicate and perceive, which will lessen the impact of culture shock on the expat's ability to acclimatize to HCN. The expatriate's spouse will be benefitted much from the language and experiential training in particular as they adjust to HCN culture and provide the expatriate with their full support. Otherwise, the expat's personal and professional lives might have been impacted. Thus, the civil servant will be ready in a way that will enable him or her, along with the family, to settle in the new nation, succeed in the task at hand and achieve the government's aims and objectives.

Consequently, the goal of CCT is to improve performance, behavioral and cognitive competency (Briscoe & Schuler, 2004). Bean (2008) discovered that CCT promotes knowledge of organizational policies and concerns (up 21%), cross-cultural skill knowledge (up 25%) and knowledge of other cultures (up 26%) and aids in motivation and retention (Bean, 2008).

For Bangladeshi civil servants, Cross-Cultural Training is crucial since it enables them to complete their assignments and meet the goals outlined in their business strategy. The government wants its assignee to provide service in his HCN assignment successfully and efficiently and to create a competitive advantage in the worldwide market. The training does, however, have advantages for both the organization and the expatriate. In actuality, the expatriate will be exposed to knowledge and facts concerning civilizations, preconceptions, mentalities and worldviews. This will speed up the expatriate's resilience management (food, weather, recreation, etc.), relationship management with the people for business purposes, and perceptual management (understanding the world through other people's life). Additionally, the training presents an impartial viewpoint that aids in dispelling misconceptions and stereotypes regarding HCN culture and its inhabitants and fosters stronger trust.

The expatriate will gain the knowledge, attitude and abilities through this program that are essential for working in a new cultural setting. He'll also possess a broad outlook, leadership qualities and motivational abilities that will assist him to carry out his responsibilities and benefit the company. Additionally, he will get the ability to operate across cultural and business barriers. The leadership abilities he has developed via training will then enable him to lead and influence people inside his firm. Due to their motivational abilities, the foreigner will also be able to work with fresh passion and enthusiasm. He will be better able to deal with different partners in the organization's best interest if he learns conflict resolution techniques, social skills and negotiation tactics. Thus, the expatriate has a big impact on how the parent country is seen since he will represent PCN to the host country.

Problem Statement

The success rate of an expatriate assignment in HCN is not sufficient without CCT, as is clear from research and empirical observations. Before offering any training, Shell, USA's personnel dispatched to Saudi Arabia faced 60% early return rate. After 3 days of training, that number fell to 5%, and after 6 days of training, it fell to 1.5% (Briscoe et al, 2016). The government servants recruited have trouble adjusting and performing successfully at HCN because of cultural differences. Bangladeshi civil servants must, therefore, receive Cross-Cultural Training if they are to maintain a competitive advantage in the global workplace. The problems that the expat encounters with communication, various social and religious systems, various lifestyles and eating habits, etc. With the HCN stakeholders, it fails to foster a sense of mutual respect, trust, and confidence. The government's mission is not completed promptly and the expatriate return rate rises. The national reputation is put in jeopardy in addition to the massive financial waste. Generally speaking, a few Bangladeshi ministries, like the ministries of foreign affairs, home affairs, labour and employment or expatriates and abroad employment, provide brief orientation sessions for civil officials who are sent to work overseas.

This kind of program, though, is not very formalized. Institutionalizing it is necessary. However, the magnitude of the cultural shock cannot be adequately countered by just a lecture-based orientation program. Therefore, as part of a business strategy, the government must adopt a consistent approach to sending its effective civil administrators on international assignments, despite cultural and national differences. The training will equip the expatriate to deal with any threats or difficulties that may arise while performing his duties. The culture shock will ultimately dissipate and She/he and her/his spouse will eventually become proficient and settle into their new lives in HCN.

However, the most important thing is that the expatriate and his/her spouse will have the chance to gain knowledge, skills and attitudes from the training that will allow him to serve the public appropriately in a different culture. Internalization will improve the quality, standard, adaptability and efficiency of the expatriates. Besides they will be able to handle a foreign assignment successfully. In the end, PCN will benefit from this because it will reduce the officials' rate of return, which is good for them. Practical support plays a significant role in helping the expat and his or her family adjust to their new environment (Downling et al, 1994). Thus, this study will determine whether government officials who may serve in a variety of positions as expatriates abroad need Cross-Cultural Training. Additionally, this analysis will identify the areas of expertise and knowledge that need immediate attention to complete the course.

Objectives

- a) To determine the need for Cross-Cultural Training for public servants to succeed in their duties and protect the reputation and standing of PCN, which is dedicated to gaining an advantage in the highly competitive global market.
- b) To determine the regions and needs that must be taken into account to offer CCT to civil personnel.

Significance of the Study

To achieve the strategic aims and objectives of the Bangladeshi government, Cross-Cultural Training for civil officials is crucial. Bangladesh has taken various strategies and initiatives to become a developed nation by 2041 (GED, 2020).

Bangladesh has already attained the rank of a middle-income country. Furthermore, the nation has established the goal of completing the Delta Plan by 2100. Therefore, from a strategic standpoint, the government is dedicated to ensure that civil servants are effective both at home and abroad. As a result, when expatriates complete various government assignments, it greatly enhances the country's reputation. The training that is in line with the expat's needs, contentment and motivation will aid in their easy integration into the HCN job and culture and foster a favourable environment for progress in a delegation working on the government's behalf. "Cross-cultural preparation helps to alleviate two concerns of the expatriate; the culture shock that a new country can produce and unsuccessful communication on the job. The CCT is an advantage to become familiar with the host country's history, customs, and etiquette" (Adekola & Sergi, 2007). Since Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre (BPATC) or Bangladesh Civil Service Administration Academy (BCSAA) are assigned to train Bangladeshi cadre officials, they might arrange CCT to prepare them for fruitful and worthwhile international exposure. The civil servants will be able to adapt to the changing environment and take on challenges after receiving CCT. By doing so, they can effectively complete their work while upholding the reputation of PCN on a global scale. Thus, the study addresses the issue of whether CCT is necessary for civil officials who are charged with carrying out the government's objective in the HCN.

Scope of the Study

In terms of the international human resource landscape, the concept of CCT is utterly new in Bangladesh. Therefore, it is impossible to ignore the fact that this area needs to be improved to truly make civil servants' overseas assignments worthwhile and successful. The expatriate and her/his family will receive CCT to assist them in overcoming culture shock to enable them to effectively complete their assignment in HCN by adjusting to their new surroundings due to the glaring cultural contrasts between HCN and PCN. Integration of interactions and abilities provides a comprehensive approach to adjustment leading to the expatriate's successful assignment in the host nation (Okpara & Kabongo, 2011). The population of this study, however, consists of prospective employees of the Bangladesh Civil Service who plan to work abroad or who will be hired in that capacity. Therefore, CCT is important for expatriates to strengthen their networking and cross-cultural competencies. As a result, this paper has added to the discipline from new and unique perspectives.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Latin term "cultura" or "cultus", which means "to care for or cultivate", is thought to have given rise to the English word "culture" (Nanjira, 2010). Subjective culture, which highlights how a civilization's people see the world and objective culture, which relates to the organizational perspective, are the two categories into which culture has been separated (Bennett & Bennett, 2004). Besides, Cowen mentioned that "culture refers to art products and activities as well as other creative products that stimulate and entertain individuals such as music, literature, visual arts and cinema" (Cowen, 2002). Thus, culture is defined as the social norms and behaviors of human communities, including their arts, beliefs, habits, understanding, customs, laws and traditions in a specific location and period. On the other side, organizational culture serves as a sort of general makeup that supports an organization's reputation and brand (Chancy, 2017).

Again, training is very much essential for the development of human resources. The measurement of profits from the training is not possible as calculation varies from one circumstance to another. Hence, it can only measure performance or productivity, which alternatively reduces the manufacturing value and intensification in production (Robinson & Robinson, 1989).

The study of cultural variations and how they affect Cross-Cultural communication is known as Cross-Cultural Training (CCT). This form of training begins with acknowledging a person's unique cultural set of values, attitudes, perceptions and thinking patterns as well as communication and behavior patterns in diverse contexts. The trainee has more negotiating power as a result of CCT's ability to give him the self-assurance he needs to meet obstacles head-on. And this promotes trust between the HCN and the PCN and helps to break down boundaries. This fosters understanding between parties and opens the door to more effective collaboration and successful solutions.

The fundamental goal of localized Cross-Cultural Training is to improve the expatriate's a) Cognitive competency b) Behavioural competency and c) Performance competency (Briscoe & Schuler, 2004). These skills allow the expat to learn cultural information and facts, communicate well across cultural barriers and perform well in the assigned company.

According to Ko & Yang (2011), expatriate managers face a variety of difficulties that they can successfully overcome if they receive effective cross-cultural training (Ko & Yang, 2011). They listed several techniques that were being applied, including language instruction, experiential learning, cognitive learning and emotional learning. However, their research was unable to address the necessity for the expatriate to receive effective CCT.

Caligiuri, et al. (2005) said that cross-cultural training aims to make employees feel at home and productive in a host country, which enhances their cross-cultural adjustment and strengthens their ability to understand and value different cultural ideas (Caligiuri, et al., 2005). The expatriate and his family will receive CCT to aid in overcoming culture shock due to the stark cultural differences between HCN and PCN, which will enable them to finish their assignment effectively in HCN by adjusting to their new surroundings. Cross-cultural competence is developed faster and cross-cultural adaptability is improved through CCT (Black & Mendenhall, 1990).

The Model on Expatriate Outcome should be significant for the expatriate and his family to adjust and for the CCT to be successful (Hechanova, et al., 2003). The spouse's emotions are important since they have an impact on the expat's personal and professional life. His partner will take part in the training session to help with better communication and adjustment. The integration of interactions and abilities enables the efficient assignment of the expat in the host country and offers a comprehensive approach to adjustment. Qin & Baruch (2010) described that if cross-cultural training is thought to be significant, how professional perspectives on it affect expat career choices in China and the results of providing such cross-cultural training (Qin & Baruch, 2010).

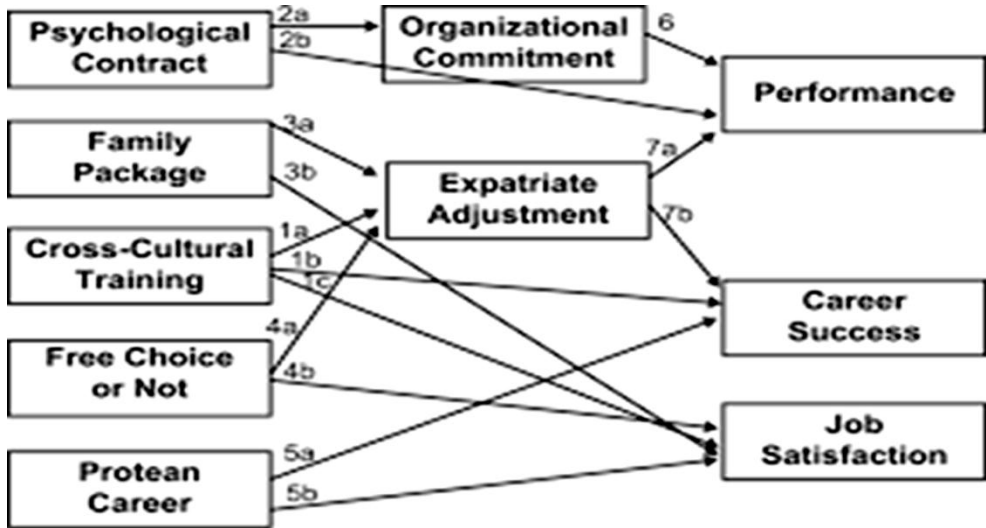


Figure 1: Expatriate Outcome Model (Qin & Baruch, 2010)

Study (Qin & Baruch, 2010) identified that psychological contracts, family package, cross-cultural training, free choice and protean career are essential for organizational commitment and expatriate adjustment to enhance performance, career success and job satisfaction. According to the novelty of the job, the novelty of the culture and the level of interaction, Black and Mendenhall (1990) divided training scenarios into three categories. Comparing his job at PCN to his position in HCN, the expat's job is new (Black & Mendenhall, 1990). HCN has a distinctive culture. The interaction between the expatriate will be very high. He will complete a lot of work each day due to his employment. He will also bring his family with him to his mission. As a result, the model predicts that the expatriate will receive cross-cultural training in scenario "A". The Decision Tree Method for choosing the best training method is presented below.

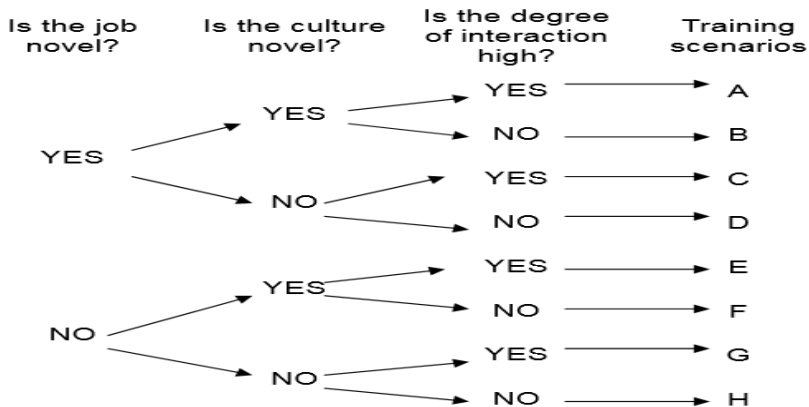


Figure 2: The Decision Tree Approach (Mendenhall, et al., 1995)

Expatriate cross-cultural training has a standard training method thanks to Mendenhall et al. (1995). The expatriate and his spouse will receive the appropriate training because "the varying degrees of culture novelty, engagement with host nationals, and job novelty demand different rigorous cross-cultural training" (Mendenhall, et al., 1995). Following is a representation of the training scenario.

	Level of Rigor	Duration	Approach	Training Content
A	High	60-180 hours	lecture, factual briefing, books, role plays, cases, field experiences, culture assimilator, simulations	equal emphasis on job demands and culture (include: economic, political, historical, and religious topics)
B	Moderate	20-60 hours	lecture, film, books, culture assimilator, cases	equal emphasis on job and culture
C	Moderate	20-60 hours	lecture, film, books, cases, role plays, simulations	strong emphasis on job demands, less on culture
D	Low to moderate	20-40 hours	lecture, factual briefing, cases	strong emphasis on job demands, little on culture
E	Moderate	40-80 hours	lecture, film, books, culture assimilator, cases, role plays, simulation	little emphasis on job demands, most on culture (economic, political, historical, and religious topics)
F	Low to moderate	20-60 hours	lecture, film, books, cases	little emphasis on job demands, more emphasis on culture
G	Low to moderate	30-60 hours	lecture, film, books, cases, role plays	little emphasis on job demands, more emphasis on culture
H	Low	4-8 hours	lecture, film, books	little emphasis on either job or culture

Figure 3: Training Scenario (Mendenhall, et al., 1995)

Basic information on the assignee's host country, including its history, major faiths, governmental structure and current events modifying one's conduct to fit the way a new culture responds to circumstances Communication techniques and business protocol in your area education on cultural preconceptions, disparities, and profiles for the worker and their family, simulated games and role-playing are used as customized teaching. From different studies (Adekola & Sergi, 2007; Bean, 2008; Cerimagic & Smith, 2011), it can be stated that there are several benefits of cross-cultural training as follows.

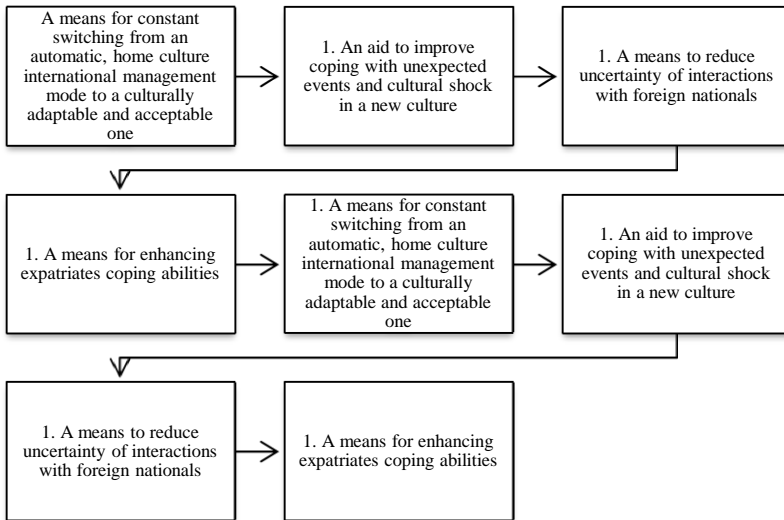


Figure 4: Benefits of Cross-cultural training

Therefore, Cross-Cultural Training may be seen as a technique for improving company culture and practices by constantly learning via the integration of foreign people into the businesses. Cross-cultural training will also help to lessen the culture shock and psychological stress that frequently led to failure among expatriates.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

This qualitative study is mainly based on secondary literature. However, few interviews have been conducted for primary data with civil officials who got the opportunity to work abroad as expatriates to fulfill the government's goal and vision. The majority of the secondary data was gathered from government websites, journals, books, articles, magazines and newspapers.

In addition, three Bangladesh Civil Servants to the rank of Joint Secretary, Deputy Secretary and Senior Assistant Secretary have been interviewed about CCT, who have been on foreign assignment as Minister, Commercial Counselor and first secretary in Bangladesh High Commission or embassy abroad. These respondents were purposively selected for obtaining relevant information regarding the CCT. Then, interviews are transcript accordingly to make thematic and content analysis.

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The increasing degree of global competition will necessitate future advances in employee benefits and training. During multinational work, cross-border job swaps and temporary assignments will surely happen more frequently (Patel, et al., 2022). Recent studies have shown that employees' propensity to accept abroad assignments is already being impacted by the challenges dual-career couples, families and the educational needs of children face. More employees will be able to work intermittently in different areas for a company's worldwide operations without having to uproot their families.

Although there is a lot of anecdotal evidence from airlines that this is happening, very little research has been done on this subject (Brewster, 1995).

Need For Cross-Cultural Training

The CCT can be suggested for several factors to change and enhance the capacity and skills of an expatriate to be working in a foreign country.

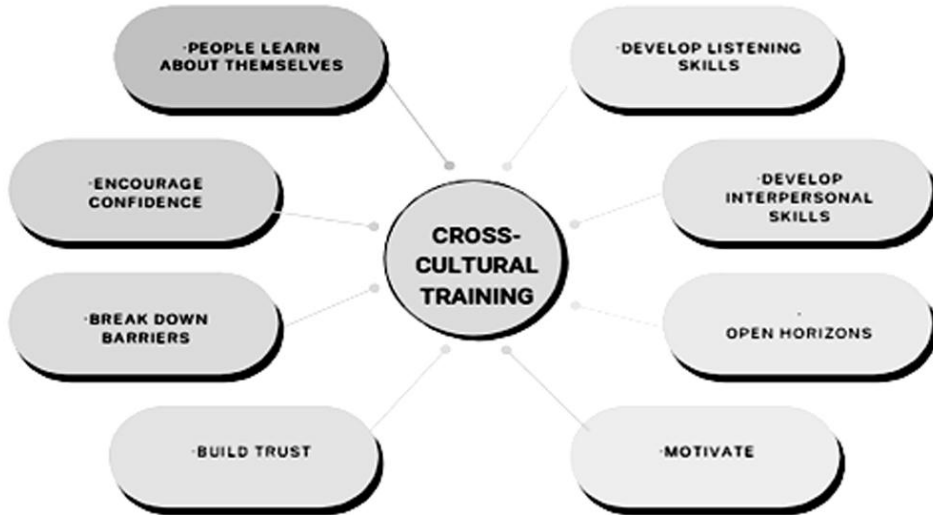


Figure 5: Need of CCT

Figure 5 identifies the need for CCT for expatriates. Expatriates are required to execute the same set of activities in a completely new environment, which can be quite stressful for the individual. Numerous work-related habits will be greatly impacted by cultural pressure. Most expat failures result from a failure to adjust to a new culture. Therefore, when assessing the competencies of expatriates, human resource specialists must assess employees' soft skills, such as tolerance for cultural diversity, the ability to adapt to new cultures and interpersonal interactions. According to Hofstede (2001), the following cross-cultural competencies are necessary for successful expatriate assignments:

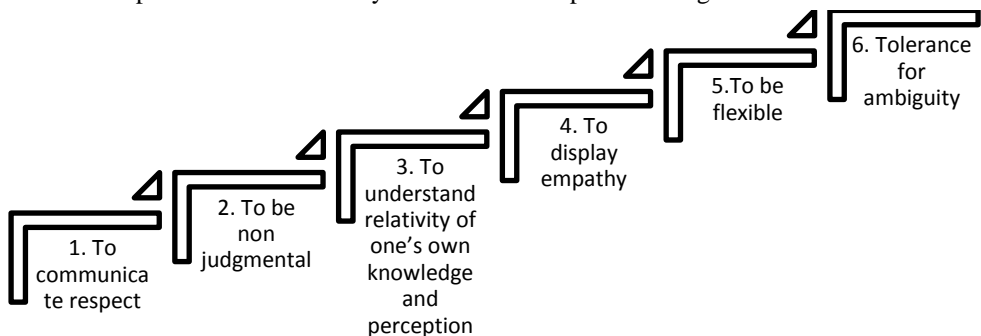


Figure 6: cross-cultural skills required for a successful expatriate assignment

Thus, an expatriate requires cross-cultural training for proper communication, understanding relativity, showing empathy, ensuring flexibility and showcasing tolerance for ambiguity (Hofstede, 2001).

Training Techniques of CCT

Scholars (Bhawuk & Brislin, 2000) identified the various cross-cultural training techniques.

The cultural assimilator, for starters, is a tool that offers several real-life examples of puzzling cross-cultural interactions and expectations. The incidents described here might be viewed as crucial examples of contact between outsiders and natives that involve cultural misunderstandings (Bhawuk & Brislin, 2000). Second, the Contrast American technique entails modeling actions that are totally at odds with what is observed in the contemporary cultural setting. Stewart utilized this to instruct Americans travelling abroad, which is why it was given the moniker comparison American (Bhawuk & Brislin, 2000). Thirdly, the simulation is simulating real-world situations where people from different cultures interact (Bhawuk & Brislin, 2000). This can be accomplished by having actors engage with the learner under a script. Last but not least, the cultural awareness approach makes use of role-playing videos with themes. The individual will be better able to handle the differences that emerge in encounters with individuals in real life if they can understand how their culture differs from others (Bhawuk & Brislin, 2000).

Different Training for Expatriates

Several scholars suggested different types of training procedures for expatriates to enhance their negotiation skills and communication networking. The following trainings are significantly important for the expatriate.

Didactic Training

One objective of the didactic training will be to lessen the drawbacks of the HCN system over the PCN system, such as high power distance, collectivism, and high uncertainty avoidance. His ability to think critically will improve as a result, helping him comprehend HCN culture. By enhancing cognitive abilities, didactic training aims to “allow the expatriate to grasp the host culture and to possess a framework for judging scenarios that would be faced” (Littrell & Salas, 2005). The expat will therefore adjust to the HCN's short power distance, individuality and low uncertainty avoidance mechanism. His propensity to believe in power equality, engage in individual initiative, pursue creativity and invention would eventually emerge from the hierarchical structure and autocratic tendency. Most intriguingly, he will take the chance to effect beneficial changes within the company.

Experiential Training

The expatriate and her/his spouse will take part in experiential training after arriving, to learn HCN that is pertinent to their new culture. Specialized instruction will be provided to the expatriate and his family. Experiential learning is best characterized by the adage "learn by doing" (Littrell & Salas, 2005, p. 312). Intercultural seminars, look-and-tell excursions, role-playing, simulations and other major tactics are used in experiential learning (Littrell & Salas, 2005). The expatriate and his family will gain a realistic awareness of the typical HCN situations as a result. Their false perceptions of societal institutions will be dispelled by the trips.

His wife needs this training more than anybody else because it will speed up her adjustment and ensure the assignment's great success by assisting her in understanding the physical environment of the host nation. Look-see trips will be very helpful to the expat and his spouse because they will provide them with an overview of the amenities, such as entertainment, dining, lodging, shopping, public transportation, and medical services. These outings will therefore give them first-hand knowledge, a chance to socialize and a chance to form an opinion on the new setting and workplace of HCN, all of which will increase the expatriate's confidence.

Interaction Training

It is a type of on-the-job training and development that emphasizes learning from early expatriates about specific cultural practices. The training will boost the expatriate's comfort and confidence in doing his job and provide him with the chance to learn from what previous foreigners have discovered in overcoming challenges and integrating into HCN culture. Interaction learning states that trainees "should feel more at ease with the host nationals and understand information about life in the host country" (Eschbach, et al., 2001).

Sequential Training

Sequential training highlights the synergies from integrated training in the overall or particular cultures of HCN. The times for training are both after arrival and after the return. Receiving structured instruction in the host country inspires the expat. The Living Well with Back Pain Course will teach the assignee how to live well with back pain in the first place. Second, he will learn how to improve his fortitude, interpersonal interactions, assertive influence, leadership and public speaking abilities through the professional confidence-building course. Last but not least, Repatriation will talk about the MOPA of PCN appraisal of the expatriate's assignment in HCN.

Language Training

Language instruction ought to be a part of every training program that gets expatriates ready for a protracted stay overseas, according to Dowling et al. (1994). Because English is taught as a second language in Bangladesh, the expat and his spouse are fairly familiar with it. They will receive language instruction for their job because the cultural divide will make it difficult for them to communicate successfully. Ashamalla (1998) argues that foreign language teaching and CCT should be coupled because learning the local language is crucial for prospering while dwelling and working there (Ashamalla, 1998). The training will also help them build relationships through good communication. Learning the language of the host nation can help ease some of the concerns about the possible partnership.

Cross-Cultural Training and Thoughts of Expatriates (Interviewees)

To get an in-depth understanding the following questions were asked to the three interviewees. The expatriates have shared their views on CCT in the following manner.

Q1: Have you got any formal training or CCT before you went to the mission?

All three expatriates replied that they had not given any formal CCT. However, they got some reference books and articles from the senior ones to have some information and knowledge about HCN. Sometimes, they came across some post-joining reports of the previous expatriates conveying some obstacles they faced.

Q2: What type of problems have you and your family faced in the host country?

The First expatriate working in a first-world country got a cultural shock as there was a huge difference between the culture of HCN and PCN. As a result, he suffered a lot to adjust himself in HCN along with his family and his job arena also. He also faced a language barrier. The whole family had good knowledge of English, however, they had little knowledge of how to use situational and everyday language. Thus, they suffered tremendously whenever they were in the marketplace or at a social gathering.

The second expatriate working as a commercial counselor in a third-world country faced language differences severely along with the family. Their situation worsened when they failed to convey their message to the native ones and had to wait for someone good in English to translate the language into English. His other family members especially his children were in big trouble to mix with the natives. They even failed to take basic services like medical facilities. Moreover, the host country has a very conservative society. For all these reasons, this expatriate eventually had to come back after some eight months of leaving the mission.

The third expatriate, a first secretary working in a second-world country faced a cultural shock as the society is much difference between the parent and host countries. The host country inherits tradition, indulgence and power distance is less and the natives follow fewer instructions from the authority than the parent country people. The language created a vital problem. The expatriate and the family went through hardship to adjust to the hostile society. Their time in South Africa was never enjoyable.

Q3: Do you think that CCT can solve the problems they faced in adjusting to the host country?

All of the expatriates agreed that CCT can capable them to adjust to a new country and make the expatriates' life and job smooth in the host country. If they previously knew about the culture, the people, the language and the necessary places to go in the host country through some specific training patterns, CCT, they could have a successful journey in the host country. The training can make the expatriates confident to deal with the knowledge and experience. Their awareness of the new culture beforehand, can make a different positive scenario in the workplace in the host country. Their knowledge of the beliefs and values, achieved through CCT, can make them understand the host country's culture perfectly. The training can break down the barriers and build trust between the expatriate and the natives, develop the interpersonal skills of the expatriates, encourage confidence and motivate them to learn what they need to improve. This will ultimately lead to the successful completion of assigned jobs reducing the turnover rate. The family will experience a nice time with the expatriates. CCT can give cognitive behavioural and performance competency to the expatriates to compete for the assignment abroad. CCT can reduce the cultural and job dissimilarities between expatriates and natives. They all agreed that CCT can reduce the retention rate significantly, which has a positive on the international assignment and reputation of the PCN.

Q4: What type of training must be included in CCT?

In response to this question, different expatriates recommended different kinds of programmes but the most common was language training. They suggest didactic training that will make them more informative about the culture of the HCN.

They desire to arrange the look-see trip training to get first-hand experience to deal with various situations with the appropriate response to the culture of HCN. Moreover, the interviewees also feel the desire of arranging experiential, cultural awareness, interaction and attribution training under CCT to make the international assignment successful. They suggested that these sorts of training can be delivered before going to the assignment, during the assignment and even after coming back from the assignment to get better results.

Significance of Cross-Cultural Training

Cross-cultural training is essential for MOPA, Bangladesh in attaining its business plan and objectives since it enables the Ministry to finish a task successfully. The Ministry wants its assignee to deliver services in HCN successfully and effectively to gain a competitive edge in the global market. However, the training benefits both the company and the foreign employee. It is a fact that the expat will be exposed to information about different worldviews, mentalities and civilizations. It will also accelerate the expatriate's perceptual management (understanding the world through the lives of others), relationship management with the locals for business goals and resilience management (food, weather, recreation, etc).

Along with developing more trust and assisting in better understanding expatriates' responsibilities within the firm, the training also offers an objective point of view that helps debunk preconceptions and stereotypes regarding HCN culture and its people. An expatriate begins to recognize areas where he needs to improve through self-evaluation, which motivates him to grow and advance. The expatriate will gain the knowledge, attitude and abilities necessary to succeed at work in a different cultural setting through this program. The expatriate will also possess a broad outlook, leadership qualities and motivational abilities that will aid in the execution of his duties and the achievement of advantages for the firm. Moreover, he will get the skills to deal with professional problems and work across cultural boundaries. The leadership skills he has gained via training will then allow him to influence and guide the employees in his organization.

Additionally, the expatriate will work with renewed devotion and excitement thanks to their motivational skills. The ability to negotiate with various partners in the organization's best interests is made possible in large part by the fact that he will master the art of negotiation, conflict resolution strategies and interpersonal interactions (Cerimagic & Smith, 2011). From Bangladesh's (PCN) standpoint, cross-cultural training is equally crucial. The truth is that while the expatriate will represent PCN to the host country, the image of the parent country depends in great part on him. Keeping a positive relationship with HCN in trade, commerce, the economy and politics is therefore vital for Bangladesh. As a result, Bangladesh is quite interested in a successful assignment.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, it can be said that appropriate cross-cultural training will be necessary for the assignee and his/her spouse to fulfill the goals and objectives of the Ministry of Public Administration and other concerned ministries. Firstly, the training program will help the expatriate and her/his spouse quickly adapt to the work environment and culture of HCN because it was developed with care for the needs, desires and motivation of the expatriate.

Secondly, the expatriate will finally succeed in his duty and maintain PCN's stature and reputation, which is committed to competing successfully in the international market. Thirdly, the training will equip the expatriate to deal with any threats or difficulties that may arise while performing his duties. Again, the most important thing is that he and his spouse will have the chance to gain knowledge, skills and attitudes from the training that will allow him to serve the public appropriately in a different culture. Additionally, this analysis will identify the areas of expertise and knowledge that need immediate attention to complete the course. The training that is in line with the expat's needs, contentment and motivation will aid in their easy integration into the HCN job and culture and foster a favourable environment for progress in a delegation working on the government's behalf. The civil servants will be able to adapt to the changing environment and take on challenges after receiving CCT. By doing so, they can effectively complete their work while upholding the reputation of PCN on a global scale.

However, the study finds that expatriates require formal training, expatriates face language barriers and language differences severely along with families, have big trouble mixing with the natives, fail to take basic services like medical facilities, the conservative society of the host country and have the hardship to adjust to the hostile society. Thus, the study addresses the issue of CCT is necessary for civil officials who are charged with carrying out the government's objective in the HCN.

Policy Implications

It goes without saying how important emotional intelligence and soft skills are. Working overseas requires individuals to be stable and mature enough to understand and accept cultural differences. One must understand the context of various circumstances and occurrences to assess a situation objectively and without injecting one's prejudices and ideas. The CCT is very significant for the expatriate before leaving his country to serve in a foreign country which will uphold the prestige, skills and networking for bringing benefits to the country. Awareness of the new culture beforehand can make a different positive scenario in the workplace in the host country. Thus, it is necessary to arrange language training, arrange the look-see trip training to get first-hand experience and ensure CCT with the best content for the expatriate before they join the foreign posting or duties.

Future Research Direction

It keeps space for future research to be undertaken by engaging expatriates, immigrants, migrants, foreign delegates and civil society of the country and host country. The fundamental cultural dimension theory of G. Hofstede can be focused to have a different perspective on Cross-Cultural Training effects. Both qualitative and quantitative methods can be followed in further studies.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There is no conflict of interest to disseminate or publish this research. The study has followed all ethical standards.

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Social Safety Net Programmes: A Case study of Success or Failure for Poverty Reduction in Bangladesh

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Abstract

This research article discusses the existing poverty and social safety net paradigms in Bangladesh and provides a comprehensive analysis of significant cash and food transfer-driven Social Safety Net Programs (SSNPs) in Bangladesh to determine their impact on poverty reduction. It is worthwhile to mention that article 15(d) of the fundamental principles of state policy of the Constitution of Bangladesh guarantees social security (that is, Social Safety Net Programme or Social Protection) as a "right" to its citizens. Moreover, SSNP is one of the ten special initiatives of honourable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to achieve Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 1 (End poverty in all its forms everywhere) by 2030 and turn Bangladesh into a developed country by 2041. The article discusses a few remarkable cash and food-based global programmes which reflect the positive impact on poverty reduction. Therefore, social protection is one of the most constantly applied methods in poverty reduction. It is also recognized as the tested method for poverty alleviation. Universal extracts of SSNPs undergo a comparative analysis with the specific findings of the perspective of Bangladesh. This study finds that local SSNPs are generally on the right track to alleviating poverty. Moreover, the timely steps against urban poverty, climate shock, and targeting or coverage inefficiency will facilitate the achievement of SDG 1 by 2030. This article ends with a few recommendations, such as taking suitable action for capacity building of the lead ministries and implementing agencies for proper execution and supervision of the performance of the SSNPs and making necessary budgetary allocations to social protection.

Keywords: *Social Safety Net Programme, Social Security, Social Protection, Poverty Reduction, Sustainable Development Goal 1, Bangladesh*

1.1 Introduction

This research article focuses on different Social Safety Net programmes (SSNPs) to determine their efficacy in reducing poverty in Bangladesh. The state adopted 115-130 programmes between the fiscal year 2017 and 2019 (GED, 2020b, p. 714) for the graduation of estimated 20.5% poor and 10.5% ultra-poor people from poverty (GED, 2020a, pp.51-52). Bangladesh holds a positive approach to increasing the allocation and household beneficiaries under social protection. The budget allocation of the current fiscal year (2022-23) reflects that approach. Here cash and food-driven SSNPs are allocated with BDT 41821.30 crore (418.213 billion) and BDT 15407.71 crore (154.0771 billion). The BDT 5904 crore is more allocated for cash transfer whereas the BDT 359.19 crore is lesser provided for food transfer than the previous fiscal year revised budget. The net increase of 5544.19 crores BDT for the allocation of SSNP in FY 2022-23 visibly manifests the government's positive intent in poverty alleviation.

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On the contrary, the percentage allocation of SSNPs drops to 16.75% from 18.78% and 2.55% of GDP from 2.80% in the purview of the total budget and GDP budget in 2021-22 FY revised budget (Social Security Programs: FY 2022-23, no date). As cash and food are the most common disbursement method, this study cash and food led several SSNPs to evaluate the impact of poverty reduction in Bangladesh.

1.2 Background and rationale

Taking cognizance of the 56.7% national poverty rate recorded in 1991-1992 (GED, 2016, p. 20), it is evident that Bangladesh has successfully reduced poverty to almost one-third (20.5%) with the execution of Social Safety Net Programmes. Therefore, the state of poverty visibly reduces due to SSNPs. Subsequently, the government embraced an inclusive life cycle-centric National Social Security Strategy (NSSS) in 2015 after considering its impact factor (GED, 2015). In the purview of NSSS, these programmes have become more fortified and functional to combat poverty. With the leadership of the Cabinet Division, NSSS Action Plan Phase II (2021-2026) is underway under Social Security Policy Support Programme (SSPS) (Social Security Policy Support Programme, no date). The government thus practically demonstrates its constitutional obligation to defend citizens' right to social security embedded in article 15(d) of the constitution of Bangladesh (The Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, 1972). In other words, NSSS is the constitutional manifestation of social protection for all citizens of Bangladesh. Therefore, this case study highlights NSSS under which SSNPs have become multi-dimensional, and these not only focus on the reduction of superficial poverty and inequality but also employment generation, economic growth and human development (GED, 2015, p. xxi).

1.3 Significance and scope of the case study

As a member of the United Nations Organizations, Bangladesh is committed to attaining the relevant goal 1 of the Sustainable Development Goal, which elucidates ending poverty in all its form everywhere and target 1.3, which talks about the adoption of a national social protection system (target 1.1, 1.3 and indicators 1.1.1, 1.3.1) by 2030 (SDG 1, no date). Therefore, social protection and poverty reduction are nationally and globally significant. Moreover, an assessment of the impact of the social safety net is necessary to achieve the goal 1 in due time by Bangladesh. The government of Bangladesh realizes the significance of SSNPs in poverty reduction. The Cabinet Division (CD) acts as the lead agency on behalf of the government to approve the life cycle-centric NSSS (GED, 2015) under the SSPS programme for the nation-wide implementation with the support of the Co-lead agency General Economic Division (GED) (GED, 2022). The prospect of NSSS gains momentum with the eighth initiative- 'social security' of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. The NSSS and the special initiatives of the PM jointly work to achieve the related SDG Goals and targets/indicators in SSNPs. The impact is visible in the extension of the household/beneficiary coverage of SSNPs. The beneficiaries rose to 27.8 % in 2016 from 24.6% in 2010, and the poverty went down to 21.8% (GED, 2018, p. 36). The nexus is transparent in the latest Sustainable Development Report 2022 (Sachs et al., 2022, pp. 110-111) that details Bangladesh maintains a steady path as the green upward arrow trend in SDG dashboards indicates Bangladesh is to fulfill the SDG Goal 1 with a performance score of nearly 75 out of 100 against the average score of 64.2 out of 100 in all 17 goals.

The scope of the case study is enormous because of the prevalence of multi-dimensional poverty in different stages of life. Hence, the life-cycle based poverty alleviation is adopted universally to reach poor people at any stage of life. The scope of the study presented here is limited as it is thoroughly a desk-based assessment to identify the nexus of poverty reduction and social protection. The impact of SSNPs on poverty alleviation is visible through local and international literature reviews. Therefore the article is not a fundamental type of research in this sector. Indeed, it is a modest effort to investigate the existing literature on SSNPs and poverty reduction from a contemporary perspective.

1.4 Research objectives

The main objective of this article is to get a larger perspective of local SSNPs to define their contribution to poverty reduction in Bangladesh. Besides this, this study goes through global literature on SSNPs for a comparative analysis of poverty alleviation in Bangladesh and how it makes progress to obtain the target of sustainable development goal 1. That's why cash and food transfers based few SSNPs being considered as test cases to prove the logical link between SSNPs and poverty alleviation. Hence, this study will be focused on prevalent government/private cash and food-driven local programmes to delineate their impact on poverty reduction. Global SSNPs and poverty reduction, SDG 1 and its relevant target/indicator need to review against the scenario of Bangladesh for a more realistic and holistic view.

1.5 Research questions:

The objectives of this article will justify the following research questions that are put here for quick perusal.

- (1) How SSNPs are related to poverty reduction in Bangladesh?
- (2) To what extent cash and food-led local SSNPs are pivotal for poverty reduction?
- (3) Why cash and food-driven domestic SSNPs promote success or failure in reducing poverty?

At the beginning of analysis, the equation between social protection and poverty reduction will be established in the perspective of Bangladesh. Later, the essentiality of social protection particularly cash/food led SSNPs contribution to poverty reduction will be analyzed. Finally, the possible reasons of success or failure will be examined for local SSNPs and their impact on poverty reduction is congruous with fulfilling SDG 1 will also be proved.

2.1 Literature review

The literature review provides an exhaustive definition of SSNP and underlines its various features. It also appraises the existing literature on research questions. A thorough investigation into universal SSNPs finds their logical collaboration with poverty reduction and their limitations to reach a conclusion, which discusses elaborately in the analysis and findings.

2.2 Definition of Social Safety Net:

Considering Social Safety Net as a mainstay of social security policy support, United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) defines Social Safety Net as a social policy-“concerned with preventing, managing and overcoming situations that adversely affect people’s well-being”(UNRISD, 2010, p. 135).

UNRISD (2010, p. 135) opines that social protection is the safeguard of quality lifestyle in various predicaments, including all sorts of diseases, unemployment, recession, maternity, disability, old age, and natural disasters. Indeed, the definition perceptively shields the core elements of SSNP particularly the concept of social welfare. On the other hand, International Labour Organization (ILO) embeds tri-dimensional aspects of SSNP-an entry to essential goods and services, the prevention, protection and promotion of all potentialities and opportunities (Garcia and Gurat, 2003, p.26). In other words, SSNPs offer a sustainable living standard in a cyclic life scheme.

However, the scope of SSNPs is to eradicate poverty and vulnerability in developing countries but it differs in developed countries to incorporate broader social insurance like assistance in unemployment, ailment, old age and maternity (Barrientos, 2010, p. 2). Hence, Social protection in the perspective of Bangladesh is generally “public actions taken in response to levels of vulnerability, risk and deprivation which are deemed socially unacceptable within a given polity or society” (Conway, Haan and Norton, 2000, p. 5). The limited view of addressing the poor and vulnerable in SSNPs is also applicable for the World Bank as well (Holzmann and Jørgensen, 2001, p. 530). According to Khatun and Saadat (2018, p.2), the World Bank assumes SSNP for a humanitarian intervention concerning the selected poor and vulnerable but International Labour Organization considers it a life cycle centric holistic approach for a globally guaranteed social welfare.

However, the SSNP viewpoint of ILO resonates with SDG 1 and target 1.3 as they envelop the whole range of population including disabled, child, newborn, jobless, work-injured persons along with poor and vulnerable by 2030 (SDG 1, no date). That means the coverage of SSNPs need to be more extensive by means of which they will prioritize poor and vulnerable. As a middle income country, Bangladesh follows the path which ILO and UNO advocates for SSNPs. That’s why Bangladesh launched the nationwide NSSS implementation in 2015 to reach the target- SDG 1 (GED, 2015).

2.3 Global cash and food transfer programmes:

According to Mathers and Slater (2014, p. 10), the modus operandi of cash and driven SSNPs is visible in three layers-micro (individual or household level), meso (community or regional level) and macro-level (national level). The reduction of poverty and development of human resources obtained at the micro-level via cash/food transfer consequently disseminate the success at the meso and macro levels. Thereupon, within the limited scope of this study, individual/household or micro-level poverty reduction is broadly discussed. The short-term poverty reduction is quick result oriented which assures food consumption or food security, whereas long-term poverty reduction guarantees a more sustainable impact like human capital development. Unlike the Latin American social protection system, African programmes propagate short-term poverty reduction (Schubert and Slater, 2006, pp. 571-572). One of those African SSNPs as Ethiopian Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) increases the mean month of food security and livestock (Berhane et al., 2014). A neutral survey reveals that nearly 60% of PSNP beneficiaries were able to expand properties instead of selling livestock for food. (Devereux et al., 2005 and Berhane et al., 2011, cited in Mathers and Slater, 2014, p.10).

Indeed, PSNP reduces poverty via food security and asset accumulation. But the poverty reduction is seen to be limited to highlands only (Berhane et al. 2014, p. 5 and p.11), whereas lowlands like Afar and Somali still submerged in poverty because of poor targeting and resource constraints (Lind et al., 2018). PSNP specifically suffers from financial, spatial and preferential limitations for poverty reduction in Ethiopia. Despite the decent barriers, the Ethiopian government outlines the investment of 500 million USD in PSNP's fourth phase (PSNP, Phase IV, 2014, pp. 26-28) under the National Social Safety Net Policy (Lavers, 2016, pp. 18-19). PSNP thus becomes financially more fortified to break the spatial and preferential loophole of poverty. But PSNP is devoid of long-term human capital development like the promotion of education which is worth breaking the evil circle of intergenerational poverty. Several other African SSNPs like conditional cash transfer based Youth Opportunities Program (YOP) of Uganda escalates the incomes, consumption and assets by 38%, 10% and 57% respectively during four years among the beneficiaries (Blatman, Fiala and Martinez, 2014, p. 697). On the contrary, Blatman *et al.* (2019) claim that beneficiaries (treatment group) and non-beneficiaries (control group) equally merge into same point in an assessment done after eight years of implementation of YOP. That evidently shows the long term impact of poverty reduction is less sustainable in YOP. On the other hand, after three years of operation, it is seen that unconditional cash transfer based Child Grant Programme (CGP) and Multiple Category Targeted Programme (MCP) of Zambia have a positive footprint on consumption, food security and other productive outcomes in selective rural areas (Handa *et al.*, 2018). Again the same outcome of simplified poverty reduction in stipulated time frame is observed but long term sustainability is hardly found out. Another unconditional cash transfer based Give Directly (GD) programme of Kenya also augments short term based food intake and economic outcomes among the beneficiaries (Haushofer and Shapiro, 2016).

Handa *et al.* (2018) argue that negative propensity is still high regarding the impact of cash transfer-based SSNPs in Africa. There are eight Sub-Saharan African (SSA) programmes (SCTTP of Ethiopia, LEAP of Ghana, CT-OVC of Kenya, CGP of Lesotho, SCTP of Malawi, CGP of Zambia, MCTG of Zambia, HSTC of Zimbabwe) those not only accelerate investment, productivity and community-level economic impacts but also minimize dependency along with the core task of poverty reduction. Therefore, the contribution of SSNPs of Sub-Saharan African (SSA) programmes to poverty reduction is enormous. Thome *et al.* (2016) showcase a positive spillover impact of the economic value of the above seven SSA programmes (except MCTG of Zambia) on non-beneficiaries as well. In other words, beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries groups are benefitted economically via the SSNPs and poverty reduction is duly done.

On the other hand, conditional cash-led American programme such as Prospera (formerly termed Oportunidades and Progresa) of Mexico pinpoints long-term human capital development using educational facilitation with the capacity, claimed by Nino-Zarazua (2017) of relieving mass people of intergenerational poverty. Despite reduction of headcount poverty by 10% (Skoufias, 2005, pp. 36-37), a study by Villa and Nino-Zarazua (2018, p. 219) lets out the number of ultimate graduation from poverty which is just one-third of total SSNPs beneficiaries during 2002-2012. In other words, unless sustainable human capital development happens, mere poverty reduction at the headcount level hardly brings any positive impact that might come back at any stage of life.

Human capital development is measured by increasing institutional enrollment and decreasing drop-out students (Molyneux, 2007, p.26). A long seventeen years (1998-2015) survey is the realistic embodiment of human capital development using which a higher propensity of ending secondary and starting tertiary education and creating mass employment for the beneficiaries are observed (Kuglar and Rojas, 2018, pp. 23-26). Bolsa Familia Programme (BFP) of Brazil emphasizes more on human capital development by increasing academic enrollment and decreasing the drop-out rate (Craveiro and Ximenes, 2014, pp. 23-24) than headcount poverty (Higgins, 2012, p. 103). In brief, unlike cash/food-driven PSNP, CCT-based Prospera and BFP hugely promote institutional education for a compact reduction of poverty.

However, Prospera and BFP ensure less quality and a scrutiny of Bruns et al., (2012, pp. 18-20) over nine years (2000-2009) on Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) of OECD signals that Brazilian students are poor-performed especially in mathematics. Indeed, the PISA is the triennial survey of 15 year student's ability on mathematics, science and reading. However, the PISA results of 2012, 2015 and 2018 (OECD Brazil, 2018, p.4) outline a tiny improvement in mean performance of mathematics, science and reading. That's why Jones (2016) endeavours to argue that BFP lacks the capacity of comprehensive human capital development. In spite of being better performer than Brazil (OECD Mexico, 2015), Mexico is still behind the OECD average in PISA. Minutely speaking, Brazil and Mexico are both rightly focused on life centric human capital development for SSNPs though it is more quantitative than qualitative. Therefore, those respective SSNPs might be the best tool for sustainable poverty reduction if quality dominates over quantity.

Like other CCT programmes, Colombian Más Familias en Acción has promoted human capital (objective indicators) particularly pedagogy and the subjective awareness of food insecurity and poverty (Martinez and Maia, 2018). That means CCT based SSNPs can encourage personal wellbeing leading to better poverty reduction. Again, CCT-based Universal Child Allowance for Social Safety Net (AUH) of Argentina grows 50% of household income and endorses human capital development via the highest school attendance and the lowest drop-out rates (Edo and Marchionni, 2018). Like Prospera or BFP, AUH prioritizes quantity over quality in human capital development. A research of Amarante and Brun (2018) is in sheer claim that despite raising the life standard and downsizing the poverty CCT based SSNPs in eight Latin American countries (Bolivia, Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay) neither lessened poverty nor enhanced beneficiary coverage due to budget constraints. Moreover, another study of Robles et al., (2017) on Latin and Caribbean CCT and Non-contributory Pension (NCP) schemes that cover only 50.5% and 50.9% beneficiaries. Therefore, almost half of eligible beneficiaries are outside of the orbit of SSNPs.

Furthermore, one of the Asian SSNPs as cash driven National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) of India is to expedite the household savings (Ravi and Engler, 2015), household expenditure, asset/income aggregation (Bose, 2017), and primary school enrollment (Islam and Sivasankaran, 2014) although its operational process is afflicted with weak execution (Narayan et al., 2016). It is clearly evident that despite poverty reduction, NREGS is not free from implementation errors.

On the contrary, unconditional cash operated Dibao, a rural programme of China introduced in 2007, has a minimal penetration into poverty reduction (Golan et al., 2017) due to exclusion error (about 87%) and inclusion error (about 82%) (Kakwani et al., 2019). Hence, both NREGS and Dibao are full of implementation errors that curtail the success of poverty reduction. In Nepal, despite the lacking of academic excellence & little productivity, cash driven SSNPs ensure mass inclusion in several areas of Nepal (Drucza, 2016). So, SSNPs in Nepal have increased the beneficiary coverage with scanty production and less educational value or human capital development. An in-depth analysis of ultra-poor graduation programme of six countries (Ethiopia, Ghana, Honduras, India, Pakistan and Peru) accentuates skill based training (multifaceted approach) with cash transfer to speed up the poverty reduction (Banerjee *et al.*, 2015). In short, the combined impact of cash incentive & skill training will surely boost up the life cycle centric poverty reduction.

2.4 General findings of global cash and food transfer programmes:

One of the central excerpts is that SSNPs are the most prominent tools for the alleviation/reduction of poverty in poor/developing countries. Cash/food transfer is the common ingredient in SSNPs though cash is gaining the upper hand due to its super-fast mobility in recent times. African SSNPs are unconditional cash/food transfers, where instant poverty reduction is the focal point. On the contrary, North/Latin American or Caribbean programmes are conditional and advocate human capital development via pedagogic facilitation to break up vicious or intergenerational poverty. Here, conditional SSNPs are more effective in reducing poverty which North/Latin American or Caribbean countries follow. Another extract is the implementation error consisting of both inclusion and exclusion errors in SSNPs, and it poses an enormous threat to successful poverty reduction. Implementation error generally happens due to unfair selection criteria/methods, budget constraints, and political influences.

Furthermore, another snippet is that rural poverty being high in quantity is more addressed than urban ones in SSNPs. Urban poverty gets momentum with the nominal allocation of the budget. Therefore, urban poverty needs more attention in social protection for a comprehensive alleviation of poverty. The SSNPs tend to be short-term and devoid of life cycle-centric skill training and follow-up mechanism of graduation to break the intergenerational circle of poverty. Moreover, CCT-based SSNPs signify quantity than quality in promoting human capital development and devalue the sustainability of poverty reduction. So, it is not an exaggeration to claim that the conventional approach to poverty reduction delimits the repercussions of SSNPs in multifarious ways except the linear poverty reduction least expected in obtaining SDG 1.

2.5 Conclusion:

In conclusion, the functionality of SSNPs is three dimensional- cash/food security, employment opportunity and human capital development for the underprivileged section of society. The best practice for sustainable poverty reduction could be the monumental patronization of qualitative human capital development via academic excellence, skill training or technical education instead of mere conditional/unconditional cash/food transfer or temporary job placement. But the long-lasting qualitative human capital advancement is barely carried out in SSNPs to sever the shackle of vicious or intergenerational poverty. Global SSNPs thus play a questionable role in reducing poverty. That means SSNPs are permeated with success and failure while addressing poverty.

The universal SSNPs will reflect the extracts in the analysis and findings part of this research article.

3. Methodology

This research article is desk-based and deeply rooted in local and global publications on SSNPs. Indeed, the secondary literature on SSNPs and poverty reduction are the keystone of this study. Hence a fundamental research task is unclaimed on the role-play of SSNPs in reducing poverty in Bangladesh.

Therefore, massive Data Analysis on available literature on SSNPs and poverty reduction is done in the findings and analysis part to address the research questions. The core databases as government surveys and reports like Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES). It is conducted every five years for the impact assessment of SSNPs on household poverty. This study centers upon the last edition of the HIES survey of 2016 done by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statics (BBS). Another document-the 8th five-year plan (2021-25) of Bangladesh is also critically analyzed. This study assumes the NSSS as the nucleus in dealing with the government's stance on SSNPs and poverty reduction in Bangladesh. Official Data of SSNPs from home and overseas journals minutely scrutinize to decide their success or failure in poverty reduction. Along with government-run schemes, few non-governmental SSNPs have also taken into cognizance at the end to get a comparative snapshot of the poverty reduction.

4.1 Analysis and findings

The inevitability of SSNPs is visible in reducing poverty in Bangladesh. This part is thus fully beset with meticulous data analysis of various SSNPs to provide an unequivocal impression of the article title: *The impact of Social Safety Net Programmes to make Bangladesh poverty-free by 2030*

The excerpt of overseas SSNPs discussed in the literature review is minutely reviewed and juxtaposed with the local SSNPs in this part. Here the analysis is profoundly done to explore the plausibility between poverty reduction and social protection for unfolding the first research question- *How SSNPs are related to poverty reduction in Bangladesh?* In addition to bare relation, the potentiality of SSNPs in eliminating poverty discusses here, and thus the response to the second query - *To what extent cash and food-led local SSNPs are pivotal for poverty reduction?*-is provided. Finally, analysis and findings are done for causative factors to deduce the final research question- *Why cash and food-driven domestic SSNPs promote success\or failure in reducing poverty?* The gist of the local and global SSNPs is finally examined to penetrate the research topics in conclusion and recommendations.

4.2 Poverty reduction and social protection

Bangladesh adopts the cyclic framework of SSNPs for poverty reduction due to its durability and sustainability (Figure: 1) (Kidd and Khondker, 2013), which with the necessary endorsement of the United Nations, is formally validated by the National Social Security Strategy of Bangladesh (GED, 2015).

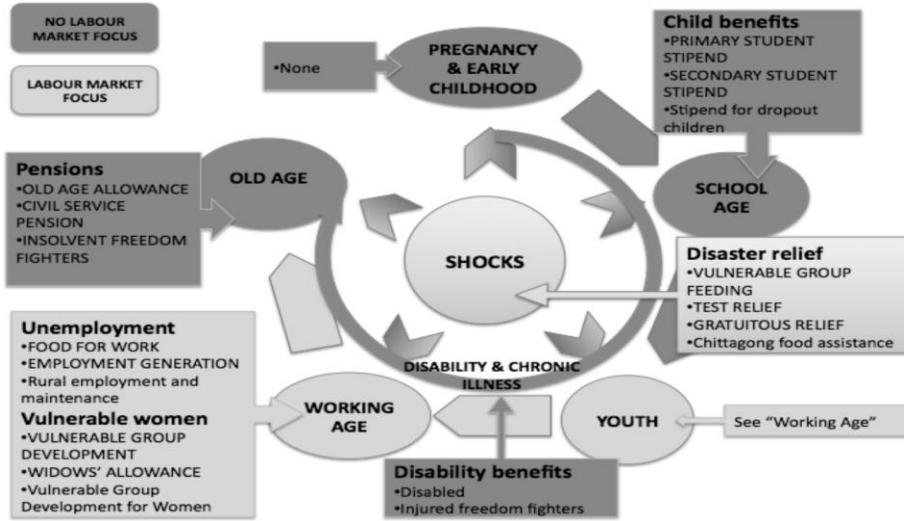


Figure 1: Major Social Safety Net schemes in Bangladesh mapped against the lifecycle
 Source: Kidd and Khondker (2013, p. 11)

Figure 1 illustrates the life cycle-centric target groups (child to old age), who are blessed with several cash/transfer-led SSNPs to decrease the cyclic risks, vulnerabilities and shocks of earthly life.

Like other countries, Bangladesh prioritizes cash/food transfer using which beneficiary coverage is visibly incremental in the following table 1

Table 1: Distribution (Percent) of Households Receiving Benefits from SSNPs

Year	National	Rural	Urban
2016	28.7	35.7	10.9
2010	24.57	30.12	9.42
2005	13.06	15.64	5.42

Source: Compiled from BBS (2010, p. 129)

Table 1 encapsulates that SSNPs almost doubled the number of beneficiaries in 2010 though the next five years showed a much slower advancement in beneficiary coverage.

Speedy and growing beneficiary coverage is one of the bottom lines of SSNPs reaching the doorsteps of the underprivileged though they often underperform because of inclusion or exclusion errors. The errors are somehow systematically embedded in household income eligibility-based Proxy Means Test (PMT) –a benchmark of beneficiary selection and downsizing the income range will automatically uplift the coverage (GED, 2015, p. XXIII), which stems from the following table 2

Table 2: Performance of Programs in Targeting Poor Households

Programme	Lowest Quintile	Second Quintile	Third Quintile	Fourth Quintile	Top Quintile
VGD	31.7	29.1	19.4	14.3	5.5
TR	38.9	22.2	18.9	13.3	6.7
VGF	36.1	25.0	20.7	13.0	5.2
Old Age Pension	31.9	20.0	21.1	20.5	6.5
Total (targeted)	34.2	24.6	20.0	15.3	6.0
Total (non-targeted)	30.9	23.8	21.6	16.2	7.5

Source: Household Income and Expenditure Survey, 2005, cited in Ahmed, 2007, p. 11

Table 2 is the genuine portrayal of the superiority of the two bottom quintiles, which contain more than 50% of beneficiaries of VGD (Vulnerable Group Development), TR (Test Relief), VGF (Vulnerable Group Feeding) and the old age pension. In other words, the lower the household income ranges, the higher the beneficiary coverage in PMT.

A similar proposition by Sharif (2012, p. 21) exemplifies that under coverage (error of exclusion) and leakage (error of inclusion) might be cut back with the upgrade of threshold or cut-off line (criteria of beneficiary selection). He further argues that the under coverage and leakage is 75% and 42% in Dhaka Division at the 20th percentile cut-off while it falls to 62% and 33% with usage of a higher threshold of the 30th percentile. Sharif (2012, p. 9) opines that under-coverage and leakage need to restrict to reduce poverty and properly utilize budget allocation.

The budgetary allocation is essential for SSNPs as Barrientos (2010, p. 248) argues that if government increase the budget for SSNPs for an extensive time, then the functionality of poverty alleviation will accelerate. That means the budget expedites poverty reduction. This presumption leads Pradhan et al., (2013, pp. 142-143) to inspect on SSNPs expenditure in Bangladesh regarding GDP percentage from 1996-1997 to 2010-2011fiscal year in the following figure 2.

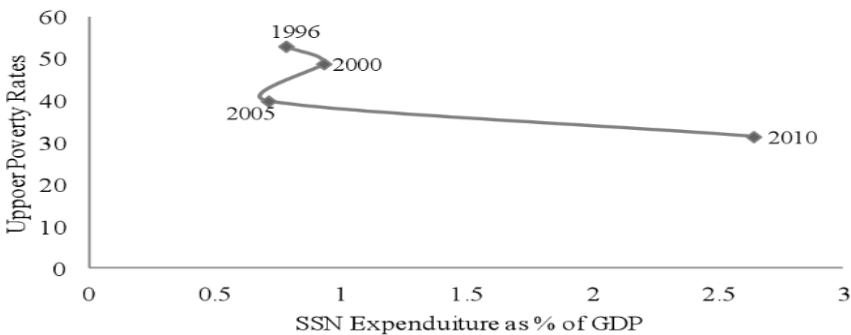


Figure 2: Relationship between upper poverty rates and SSN expenditure as percentage of GDP

Source: Taken from Pradhan et al., 2013, p. 143

Figure 2 composes a vertical axis (expenditure) and a horizontal axis (poverty rate). The graph shows that as long as the expenditure percentage is incremental in the vertical axis from 1996-2010, upper poverty is decreasing in the horizontal axis. For example, upper poverty was above 50% for nearly 0.8% of GDP expenditure on SSNPs in 1996, but it went down to around 31%, while SSN spending rose to approximately 2.7% in 2010. This disproportionate relationship between budget and poverty discerned earlier from Barrientos’ (2010, p.248) assumption is also similarly proved in domestic SSNPs.

In brief, local SSNPs are NSSS-formulated lifecycle-based government crash and prioritized programmes with growing budget allocation for swift and sustainable poverty reduction.

4.3 Capacity of cash/food led SSNPs for poverty reduction

For the limited scope of research article, few prominent cash and food transfer based local SSNPs are placed in Table 3 for a quick overview

Table 3: Major safety net programmes in Bangladesh

Genre	Programmes
Unconditional Cash transfers	Old Age Allowance Widowed and Distressed Women Allowance, Disabled Allowance
Conditional cash transfers	Primary Education Stipend Program (formerly Food-for-Education) Stipends for Female Secondary Students
Public works or training based cash or in-kind transfer	Rural Maintenance Program Food-for-Work Vulnerable Group Development (VGD) Employment Generation Programme (EGP)
Emergency or Seasonal Relief	Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF) Gratuitous Relief (GR) Test Relief (TR) Open Market Sale (OMS)

Source: Adapted from Raihan, 2013, cited in Ferdous, 2014, pp. 652-653

VGD is here prominently discussed for being a unique fusion of cash and food, and Ahmed (2018, p. 1) ventures that it is the largest feminine SSN in Bangladesh. VGD is of mainly two types-IGVGD (Income Generating) and FSVGD (Food Security) (Ahmed *et al.*, 2007, p. ix). IGVGD is based on food transfer, whereas FSVGD comprises cash and food transfer (Marston and Grady, 2014, p. 13). Ahmed *et al.*, (2007) undertake HIES 2005 and IFPRI household survey data 2006 for Propensity Score Matching (PSM) to highlight the poverty reduction of treatment group in following table 4. PSM defines beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries as the treatment and control group (Ahmed *et al.*, 2009, p. 88)

Table 4: PSM impact estimates for extreme poverty reduction

Programme	Treatment	Control	Difference
IGVGD	59.8	79.5	-19.7
FSVGD	50.6	80.4	-29.8

Source: Modified from Ahmed *et al.*, 2007, p. 75

Table 4 outlines the positive impact of VGDs in treatment (beneficiary) group and highlights how control group (non-beneficiary) is more poverty stricken than its counterpart. Ahmed *et al.*, (2007, p. 74) and Ahmed *et al.*, (2009, p. xxii), explain that graduation from extreme poverty of IGVGD and FSVGD treatment group is about 20% (19.7%) and 30% (29.8%).

The government piloted a reformed version called investment component (IC) VGD in 8 sub districts in 2015-18. Later, 64 sub districts are brought under IGVGD-2nd phase covering 100000 (one hundred thousand) ultra-poor women in 2018-22 with providing one-time cash grant of BDT 15,000 and 30.3 kg fortified rice per month to transform the VGD and other feminine SSNPs into NSSF guided Vulnerable Women Benefit (VWB) (MoWCA, 2020).

Local PESP initiated its nationwide operation in 2003 to achieve the human capital development through imparting quality education to ultra-poor students, which Prospera and Bolsa Familia did in Mexico and Brazil. The intervention of the PESP is for enhancement of attendance, enrolment and academic completion rate and decrement of dropout rate (Younus and Shahana, 2018, p. 34). Younus and Shahana (2018) surveyed PESP and non-PESP groups of 125 schools and 2500 households to find the impact at school, student and household level. Here OLS and PSM estimate based student level outcomes for PESP and non-PESP students are illustrated in following table 5.

Table 5: Student level outcomes through cash transfer

Student level outcomes	Ordinary Least Squares estimates	Propensity Score Matching estimates	
	Difference between PESP and non-PESP students	PESP students	Difference between PESP and non-PESP students
Number of days attended School	6.760*** (0.745)	204.172	11.764*** (1.147)
Number of hours studied out of school	0.019 (0.036)	3.135	0.042 (0.052)
Scores obtained in final Examination (%)	11.315*** (1.240)	59.471	8.447*** (1.196)

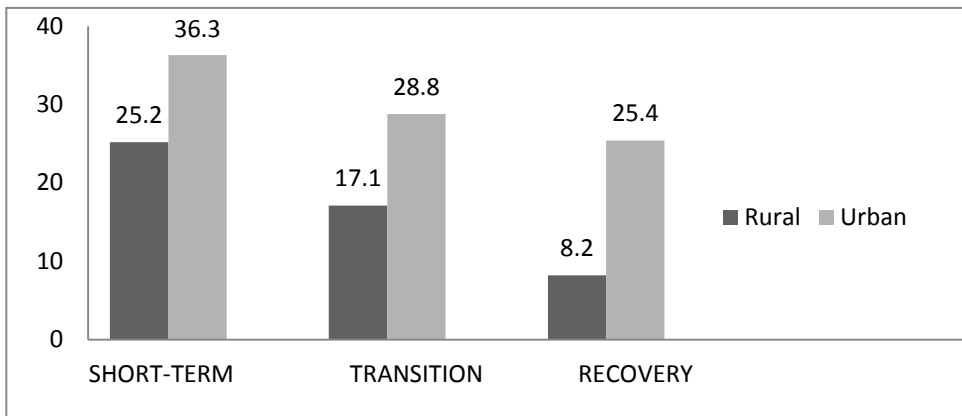
Source: Modified from Younus and Shahana (2018, p. 43)

Table 5 underlines the disparity in academic performance for PESP and non-PESP students in OLS, and PSM estimates where beneficiaries school attendance are about 7 (6.760) or 12 (11.764) days more and scores are 11% or 8% higher than non-beneficiaries respectively. Earlier, Ahmed and Kuenning (2006) mention that PESP student tend to have a better test score than its counterpart. That means human capital patronization via pedagogic participation of ultra-poor pupils is rightly served, and poverty addresses life cycle centric alleviation model.

Unconditional SSNPs like Old Age Allowances (OAA) and Allowances for the Widowed, Deserted, and Destitute (AWDD) have a milder effect on poverty reduction because the functionality is more on food consumption than income generation or asset building. Rahman (2020) underwent a survey on 20 beneficiaries of OAA and AWDD of Roumari and Rajibpur sub-districts under Kurigram district, which showed the fulfillment of food security, children education or small scale medical spending. Despite income generating activities like cattle raising, handicraft business or small industries like asset building is left out due to the meager monthly allowance of only BDT 500 in each SSNP. Unlike PESP, these SSNPs are not promoting human capital and job. They provide a much needed basic food security to socially marginalized and impoverished group, and are not well targeted for successful graduation of poverty.

The role play of traditional SSNPs changes hugely during Covid-19 pandemic, which eventually take an adaptive or shock responsive lead to continue their vitality in poverty reduction. Hebbar *et al.*, (2021) underscores a projection of increasing poverty due to the pandemic in the following figure 3

Figure 3: Percentage Point increase in headcount poverty at upper national poverty line



Source: Taken and modified from Hebbar *et al.*, (2021, p. 8)

Figure 3 demonstrates the predicted percentage point (PP) increase of rural and urban headcount poverty due to the COVID-19 pandemic in immediate effect (short term), in transition or adaptive period and post-COVID scenario, whereas estimated 2020 national baseline poverty rate is just 19.3%. In other words, shock-responsive SSNPs need to undergo an extensive modus operandi to minimize the aftermath of the pandemic and maintain the roadmap of attaining SDG1. Therefore, at the beginning the quantity of pandemic-hit individuals in number needs to be projected to extend the SSNPs support to the concerned households, and Mansur *et al.*, (2020) compile this estimated database based on several reports of PPRC/BIGD, CPD and PRI in the following table 6

Table 6: Estimated poor/vulnerable households in need of support

Source	Pandemic hit individuals (in million)	Households support (in million)
PPRC/BIGD	70	17.5
PRI	58	14.5
CPD	56	14.0
Interviews/discussions with industry insiders	50	12.5

Source: Taken and modified from Mansur *et al.*, (2020, p. 5)

Despite the diverse projection, the vulnerable households discerned from table 6 are about 14.6 million on average, and they are in severe need of the enormous assistance of SSNPs to lift them from poverty. Calculating 2016/2017 HIES data with updated population growth, proposed horizontal expansion of four SSNPs-OAA, WA/AWDD, DA (Allowances for the Financially Insolvent Disabled) and remarkably cash support scheme of Prime Minister, Hebbbar *et al.*, (2021) picks out the coverage of pandemic hit beneficiaries in following table 7.

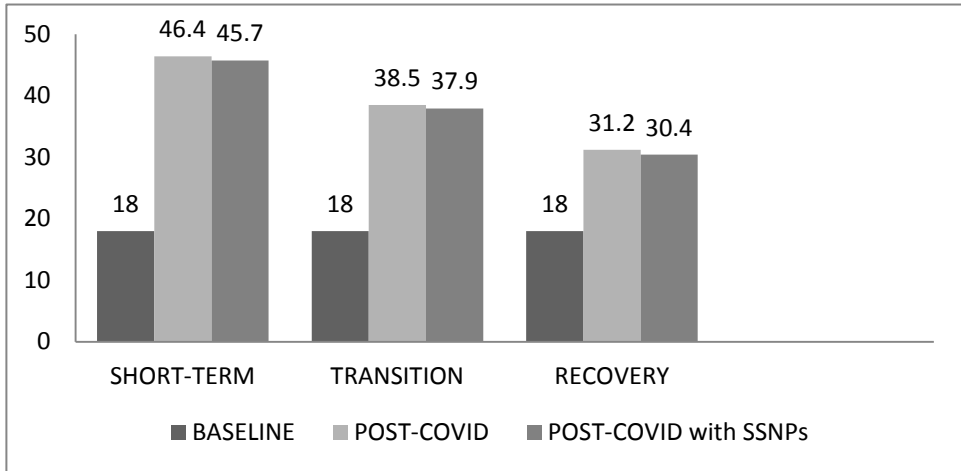
Table 7: Proposed caseload and estimated coverage of eligible population

Programmes	Caseload (individuals)	Coverage
OAA	500,000	16%
WA	350,000	17%
DA	255,000	5%
PM's cash support scheme	5,000,000	35%

Source: Taken and modified from Hebbbar *et al.*, (2021, p. 33)

From table 7, despite the quick response to the pandemic, a substantial gap is prevalent in this quartet SSNP coverage, particularly huge in the DA scheme safeguarding only 5% of its eligible vulnerable. Given the pandemic emergency, the horizontal intervention of the SSNP might not be up to the mark, but the government's utmost endeavour to combat poverty is remarkable. Hence, the marginal combined impact of the pre-mentioned SSNPs on poverty reduction counts in the following figure 4 because of the unprecedented havoc of COVID-19.

Figure 4: Headcount poverty at upper national poverty line (% of population) at baseline and post-COVID (with and without SSNPs interventions)



Source: Taken and modified from Hebbar et al., (2021, p. 36)

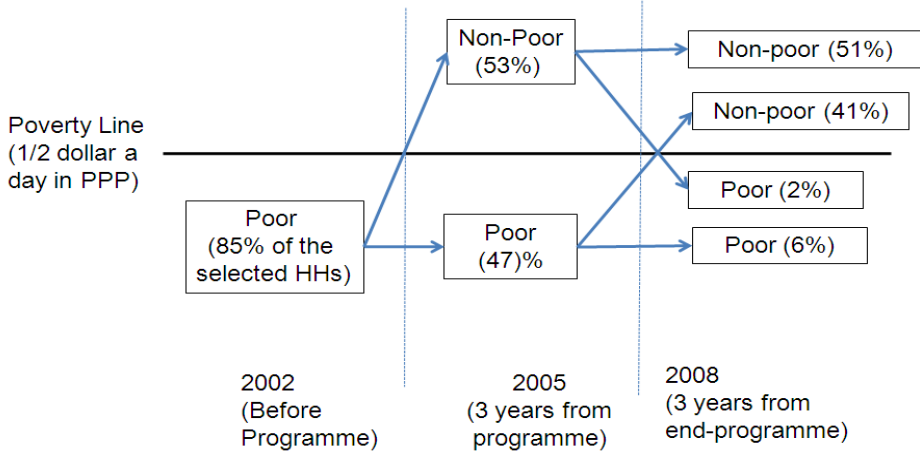
Figure 4 delineates the minimal effect of those four SSNPs (less than 1%) in each stage of immediate (short-term), intermediate (transition) and long-term (recovery) poverty alleviation. However, many survival incidences from vulnerabilities happen during the pandemic with this paltry albeit timely intervention of SSNPs.

In brief, conditional cash-led SSNPs (ICVGD/VWB/PESP) are pragmatic, result-oriented and well-targeted. Their long-lasting impacts are human capital development, job placement and capacity building other than ensuring mere food security, which is one of the prime targets of unconditional OAA, AWDD/WA, DA and PM’s special cash grant. The potential of SSNPs for poverty reduction is minutely contested in pre and post-COVID scenarios, although the slight impact prevails in the latter stage, which does not belittle their significance.

4.4 Success or failure of cash/food transfer based domestic SSNPs

Success or failure is an integral part of SSNPs. Parameters of graduation from poverty are of various kinds as fulfilling the necessities, but capacity building via education, skill training, and productive or earning engagement are recognized pathways of successful graduation. Capacity building led to Targeting the Ultra-Poor (TUP) with its two approaches- grant/asset-based Specially Targeted Ultra Poor (STUP), and credit-driven Other Targeted Ultra Poor (OTUP) of BRAC (BRAC, no date) is a case study of assessing success or failure derived from SSNPs. Sulaiman (2009) examines the Challenging Frontiers of Poverty Reduction (CFPR)/TUP Model of BRAC from 2002-2008 in the following figure 5 to show the graduation mapping.

Figure 5: Poverty dynamics of TUP

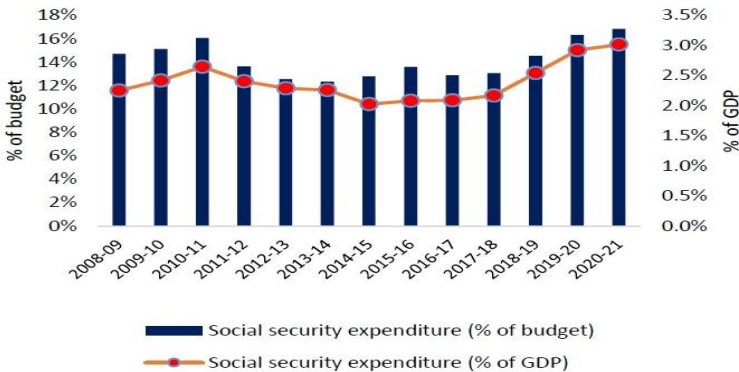


Source: Taken and modified from Sulaiman (2009, p. 15)

Figure 5 highlights the poverty dynamics and beneficiaries' graduation from TUP during 2002-2008. Here baseline poverty is the earnings of only 50 cents in a day for beneficiary selection that takes the Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) as its basis. The first three years resulted in 53% graduating while 47% remained in poverty, and the last three years lifted 41% out of the remaining 47% ultra-poor. But 6% of people never got rid of it while 2% graduated got back a gross 8% population in extreme poverty while 100% - 8% = 92% graduated from it in 2008. So, 92% of households graduated from chronic poverty, while 8% persisted for six years. Hence, despite the success with capacity expansion, TUP proves to be a failure for a few beneficiaries.

If capacity expansion or human capital development is of the leading factors behind the success of local SSNPs, then a few burning issues like budget constraints, urban poverty, climate vulnerability, and inclusion/exclusion error need to be urgently addressed. Firstly, budgetary allocation in terms of totality and GDP shows in figure 6.

Figure 6: Social Security Expenditures of Bangladesh

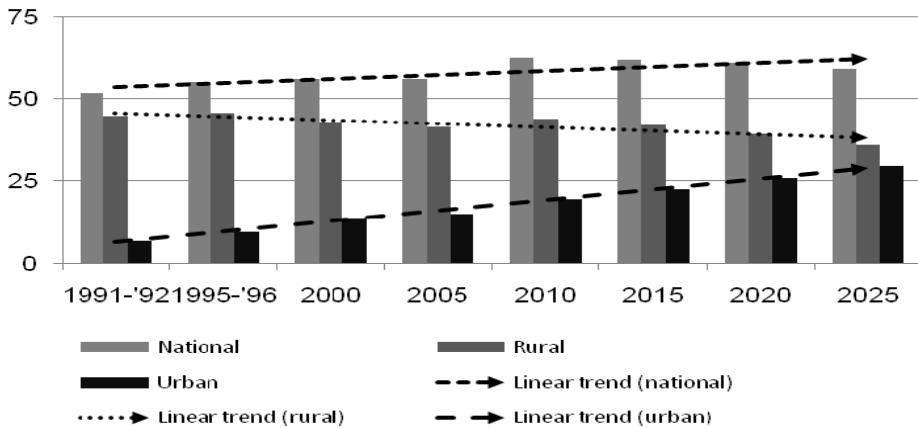


Source: Taken from Cabinet Division (2022, p. 11)

Figure 6 spells out the government’s aggregate budget on SSNPs, which roughly hovers around 10-16% providing only 2-3% of the GDP in the last 12 fiscal years. The allocations are not decent considering about 125 SSNPs, out of which honorarium for valiant freedom fighters and retired pension scheme solely cover 35%. That means a large portion of SSNPs expenditure is for two sectors where beneficiary selection does not center upon poverty. The largest six SSNPs hold 50%, whereas the largest ten and fifty contain 60% and 75% of the total SSNP budget. In other words, the combined share of the smallest 50 SSNPs budget is below 2% (CD, GED and BPC, 2022). Therefore, the optimum success of SSNPs is heftily dependent upon their budget proliferation.

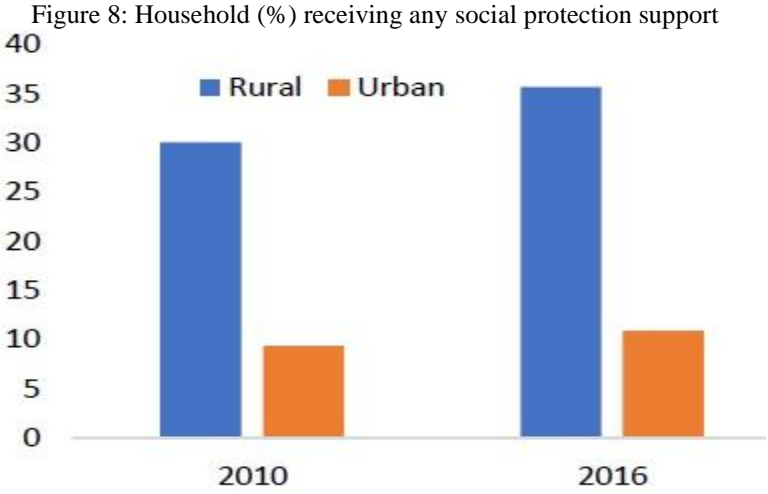
Urban poverty-a relatively new challenge in the domain of SSNPs -is silently burgeoning and posing a substantial threat to successful graduation from poverty. The paradigm of urban poverty presents in figure 7

Figure 7: Bangladesh’s rural and urban populations below the poverty line 1991-2025 (DCI method, absolute number in millions).



Source: Eusuf 2010, cited in Banks et al., 2011, p. 5

From figure 7, urban poverty is in a constant upward trend due to rapid urbanization and is highly to reach the proximity to rural poverty in 2025. Rural poverty is contrary down trended. Despite the regular rise of poverty, induction of urban households in SSNPs is low compared with their counterparts that are manifested in the following figure 8.



Source: Based on HIES 2016 BBS and taken from Cabinet Division (2022, p. 10)

Figure 8 portrays the huge induction gap between rural and urban households in SSNPs, where around 22% (30-8=22%) participation gap in 2010 increased to about 25% (36-11=25%), which is quite contrary to the regular rise of urban poverty already outlined in figure 7. Hence, beneficiary coverage of urban households needs to be proportionate with its counterpart for inclusive graduation from poverty.

Inclusion and exclusion error-induced SSNPs can fail the graduation process. The inclusion error indicates an ineligible population attaining the benefits of SSNPs, whereas eligible poor people are outside of SSNPs in the latter error (Murgai and Zaidi, 2005, p. 127). The following table 8 highlights the targeting errors of beneficiaries.

Table 8: Errors in targeting beneficiaries

Eligible	Non-eligible		Total
Covered in SSNPs	E_C	NE_C (inclusion error)	C
Not covered in SSNPs	E_{NC} (exclusion error)	NE_{NC}	NC
	E	NE	N

Source: Taken and modified from Razzaque et al., (2019, p. 42)

In table 8, the total population (N) divides into eligible (E) and non-eligible (NE) in the criteria of SSNP and N is also disintegrated into covered (C) and not covered (NC) by SSNPs. Indeed, if non-eligible populations are covered (NEC), then inclusion error happens, and if eligible population are not covered (ENC) in SSNPs, then exclusion error occurs (Razzaque et al., 2019). Razzaque et al., (2019, pp. 44-45) overviewed 6435 households embedded in the Bangladesh Integrated Household Survey (BIHS) data of 2015 and considered the eligibility based on per capita income below the upper poverty line (UPL) (\$1.90 per day) and vulnerability (1.25* of UPL) and come up with the aftermaths outlined in table 9.

Table 9: Identification errors by eligibility

	Ultra poor + poor	Ultra poor + poor + vulnerable
Coverage inefficiency (exclusion error)	53.78% (1088/2023*100)	54.43% (1665/3059*100)
Targeting inefficiency (inclusion error)	65.50% (1775/2710*100)	48.56% (1316/2710*100)

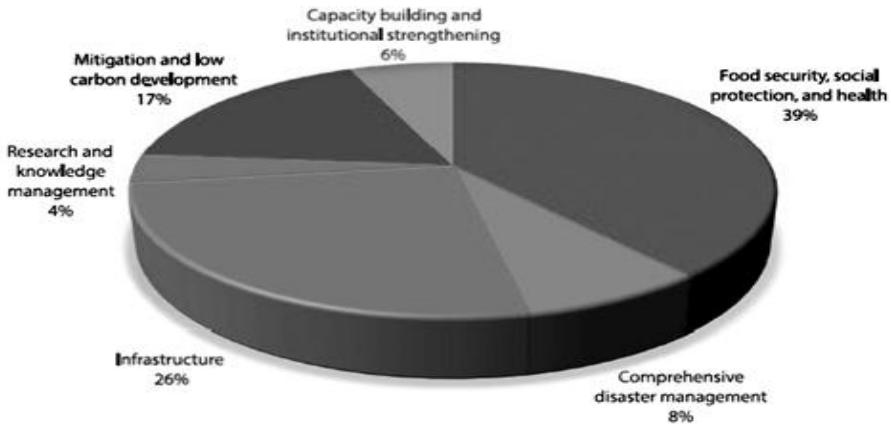
Source: Taken and modified from Razzaque et al., (2019, p. 45)

From table 9, exclusion error is proportionate with vulnerability as the total number of the eligible population and uncovered beneficiaries simultaneously increase. But inclusion error drops with vulnerability using which ineligible covered population minimizes with the total recipients (here 2710 households).

The bottom line of this survey outlines that more than half of eligible beneficiaries (53.78%) are outside of the benefits of SSNPs, and nearly two-thirds (65.50%) population ineligibly induces the privilege. In other words, budget constraints of domestic SSNPs become more aggravated due to inclusion errors, and beneficiary coverage becomes seriously restricted because of exclusion errors. Therefore, inclusion and exclusion errors need to minimize for successful graduation.

Domestic SSNPs usually have less potential to attenuate the artificial or natural shocks or covariate risks recently reflected in tackling the COVID-19 pandemic. One of the reasons could be the inadequacy of the budget for SSNPs, which makes them less fortified against the onslaught of any disaster. Only BDT 111467 crore was allocated (18.78%) for SSNPs out of BDT 593501 crore budget (Social security programs: The fiscal year 2022-23) in the FY 2021-22 revised budget. On the other side, 25112.96 crores (7.26% of the total budget) allocation for climate resilience from the SSNPs budget of BDT 111467 crore across 25 ministries/divisions in six categories with food security, SSNPs and health, which got the maximum 38.97% (nearly 39%) share of BDT 25112.96 crore (MoF, 2021) demonstrated in figure 9.

Figure 9: Climate relevant allocation (%) across BCCSAP thematic areas in FY 2021-22



Source: MoF (2021, p. 13)

Figure 9 illustrates around 39% and equivalent to about BDT 9794 crore allocation in SSNPs as a part of the Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy Action Plan (BCCSAP) to address the pandemic hit newly poor and vulnerable population in 2021-2022 FY.

Climate financing needs to augment for SSNPs as Bangladesh is a disaster-prone country and suffers from the onslaught of super cyclones, and floods, which make people poor again. In this way, the graduation process is delayed. Therefore, issues like capacity building, budget expansion, error minimization, and adequate climate fund allocation and management of urban poverty could be the determinants of the success or failure of domestic SSNPs in poverty reduction.

5.1 Recommendations and way forward:

As the research is purely desk-based, local SSNPs undergo a scrutiny to address the existing problems for a better poverty reduction. Therefore, following recommendations can be implemented:-

i. As the government forms the NSSS and imposes the enforcement of the SDG 1, the fastest monitoring mechanism thereupon needs to launch under the ministry of social affairs. There are about 145 social protection programmes under different ministries with inter-ministerial gap. Therefore, single monitoring window can be a better option or ministry of social affairs can act as a focal point for coordinated monitoring and supervision so that graduation from poverty would be effective with proper implementation of the SSNPs.

ii. Social protection system often suffers from targeting errors (inclusion/exclusion error). Therefore, digital database of potential beneficiaries and graduated poor people has to maintain to stop multiple or repetitive entries and increase the coverage.

iii. Because of highly prioritized programmes, SSNPs are generally provided with budget allocation, which is around 2-3% of the GDP of Bangladesh. That's the fair provision, but the government can revise it due to ongoing inflation. On the contrary, budget allocation has to enhance up to minimum 5% of GDP considering the bulk amount of SSNPs and acceleration of the attainment of SDG 1.

iv. Being a disaster prone country, Bangladesh should adopt climate change adaptive social protection programmes to maximize their impact for a sustainable poverty reduction.

v. As urban property is constantly on rise, it needs to sensitize more and programmes with beneficiaries' coverage need to expand in slum areas of the cities.

5.2 Conclusion:

Following the analysis and literature review, it can be said that local SSNPs with the inspiration of constitutional fundamental policy, the prescription of NSSS and motivation of PM's special initiative follow the motto of life cycle framework so that poverty or vulnerability is addressed in every stage of life. A social registry or database regarding poverty dynamics need to be regularly updated to implement this national policy across the country. No alternative is seen to be preferred to SSNP as it is globally proved to be the best available pathway to wipe out or reduce poverty and to meet the sustainable development goal 1 by 2030. Bangladesh could not but rely on the horizontal expansion of SSNPs to mitigate the onslaught of pandemic COVID-19 and experienced the much needed impact of them in emergencies. Therefore, no question can be raised on the success of domestic SSNPs on poverty reduction except few shortcomings like less sensitization of human capital development or capacity building, low budget allocation, climate risk and urban poverty underestimation, target or beneficiary inefficiency, overlapping and overall incoordination among the stakeholders. These loopholes are being addressed by the Cabinet Division under Social Security Policy Support Programme (SSPS) of NSSS Action Plan Phase II (2021-26) so that local SSNPs become more supportive and accessible to the intended beneficiaries and poverty reduction thus become stimulated. Bangladesh is already graduated into middle-income country and SSNPs have a major role play behind this graduation. No exaggeration is needed to claim that Bangladesh is on the right track to be a country free of poverty by 2030 and a developed nation by 2041.

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How far Governance of PPP can Explain its Delivery Performance? Najmus Sayadat, PhD¹

Abstract:

Public-Private Partnership (PPP) as a mode of investment in infrastructure and service delivery has been successful in bringing attention to the policy makers, public sector officials, professionals and society at large. Therefore, importance of investment through PPP has been reflected in the 7th Five Year Plan (2016-2020), 8th Five Year Plan (2020-2025), Perspective Plan (2021-2041) and Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100. However, since 2012, from a pipeline of 77 PPP projects, only 14 projects have been delivered to the private investors following current regulatory framework. This performance broadly indicates that PPP delivery scenario is far behind the expectations. Against this backdrop, this study aims to see the governance employed at each stage of PPP life cycle and how far it explains current PPP delivery performance? To address the question, qualitative research approach with content analysis is adopted. The study finds: a) absence of pre-partnership collaboration with the private investors; b) displacement of PPP ownership; c) deficiency in developing bankable PPP structure; d) perceived lack of transparency and accountability; and e) weak commitment among the actors are the major factors, which largely affect PPP delivery and these factors are related to the current regulatory framework. Findings of the study confirm that for successful PPP delivery there is a necessity of employing network as a mode of governance in all life cycle phases of PPP. Findings are expected to be useful in accelerating PPP delivery in Bangladesh.

Keywords: PPP delivery, PPP structuring, life cycle phases of PPP, governance, market, network and regulatory framework.

I. INTRODUCTION

Bangladesh targets to elevate her status to an upper middle-income country by 2031 and developed country by 2041. Perspective Plan of Bangladesh 2021-2041, in this regard, in its short to medium-term up to 2031 and in its longer-term beyond 2031 put enormous importance on encouraging Public-Private-Partnership (PPP) as a strategy for infrastructure development in all probable promising sectors. Considering resource constraints and high investment costs, the 8th Five Year Plan has given strong focus on PPP. Whereas Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100, in its Baseline Study 26: Private Sector Engagement in Deltas has detailed out private sector engagement particularly PPP in the Delta Plan implementation. These indicates, PPP as a mode of investment in infrastructure and service delivery has received tremendous attention from the policy makers.

In line with this policy focus, Public Private Partnership Authority (PPP Authority), a centralized facilitating body for PPP, was established in 2012 under the Prime Minister's Office that has created a pipeline of PPP projects. Considering life cycle of PPP, a total of 77 projects are identified. Among these, 14 projects are delivered to the private partners through signing PPP contract with an average investment of 454 million US dollar per year. Another 25 projects are in transaction phase or in preparation phase.

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The rest 38 projects are either in stalled state or in cancelation/withdrawn state, few of them have already been cancelled/withdrawn from the list. This current PPP delivery trend indicates that it is far behind than the expectations made in the above-mentioned Plan documents. Against this backdrop, the study explores governance performance in different phases of PPP life cycle (i.e., identification, preparation, transaction, implementation and transfer phase) and tries to link it with current delivery scenario.

Governance is a social process through which actors act to shape their reality (Lowndes and Skelcher, 1998). In present society, three types of governance are prevalent, i.e., hierarchy, market and network. In traditional public administration, government itself carries out all public tasks employing hierarchical mode of governance. New Public Management (NPM) approach arose during 1980s which revolves around contractual relationships, price mechanisms, justice system and it employs market mode of governance. Later on, during 1990s and onward New Public Governance (NPG) emerges to solve 'wicked problems' in society, which requires public agencies to work with a wide range of other organizations in the public, private and voluntary sectors employing network mode of governance. For successful PPP delivery and its implementation, scholars argue with a mix of governance, in which hierarchy dominates during identification & preparation stage and market dominates during private partner selection process, and finally, network dominates the periods when the private actors come into play (Bovaird, 2004; Lienhard, 2006; Lowndes and Skelcher, 1998; and Appuhami, Perera, and Perera, 2011). Now it is important to identify deviations from theoretical spirit and its consequence, which may offer insight about the factors affecting delivery.

In Bangladesh, at the initial stage of partnership when there were no regulatory framework or guidelines, network mode of governance and collaboration with the private sector were prevalent in delivering few projects. Later based on Private Sector Power Generation Policy (PSPGP) 1996, around 70 power projects are delivered. Based on Private Sector Infrastructure Guidelines (PSIG) 2004 around 14 projects in transport and telecommunication sector were delivered. During PSPGP and PSIG policy regime market mechanism mostly prevails in project delivery. To accelerate the drive, Policy and Strategy for PPP (PSPPP), 2010 was issued which highlighted mix of governance mechanisms in different phases of PPP. No PPP project was taken under PSPPP 2010. Later PSPPP 2010 was considered insufficient to meet the demand and new regulatory frameworks are developed such as Public-Private Partnership Act 2015 and Guidelines for PPP Projects 2016/2018. In this new policy regime, central coordination along with market got importance and fourteen projects are delivered by 2022. Therefore, *how far governance of PPP under current policy regime explains PPP delivery performance*, requires attention to be of a research question.

The paper is organized in following ways. Section II explains framework of analysis. Section III discusses the methodology. Section IV presents changes in governance dimension in different policy regimes and presents PPP delivery performance under current policy regime. Finally, section V concludes the paper with some policy recommendations.

II. FRAMEWORK OF ANALYSIS

Public-Private Partnership (PPP) is a self-explanatory word but this seemingly a naïve word indicates policy, governance, organization and project and it evolves differently in different social and cultural context (Hodge and Greve, 2011). Capturing all these dimensions in PPP definition is not realistic and therefore, it is useful to adopt fragmented views, which gives focus on particular dimension. Van Ham and Koppenjan (2001) define PPP as ‘*co-operation of some durability between public and private actors in which they jointly develop products and services and share risks, costs and resources which are connected with these products or services*’. Van Ham and Koppenjan (2001) disregarded principal-agent relationship, which is ‘fixed objective’ and ‘efficiency’ oriented, as PPP. According to them, PPP is more suitable for complex project with so many actors, interests and evolving goal oriented, in which, no single partner decides and acts unilaterally. Therefore, organization of PPP is ‘collaborative’, which is based on social value system and trust without having any legal underpinning.

Whereas Bovaird (2004) defines PPP as ‘*a working arrangement based on a mutual commitment (over and above that implied in any contract) between a public sector organization with any organization outside of the public sector*’. Here, Bovaird (2004) accepts those as PPP, which are backed by contracts but where partners display levels of commitment to each other. Bovaird (2004) also excludes those relationships which are simply based on the traditional contracting principles of management, whose monitoring and enforcement of a detailed specification contained within a legally binding agreement as PPP. In similar manner, Lienhard (2006) argued that PPP requires a culture of trust, mutual understanding, learning from each other, aimed towards a common goal, public welfare orientation and proper contract structuring for being success. According to Lienhard (2006), PPPs are connected with market and contractual form, (i.e., characterized with formal arrangement, centralized project management style, market testing and such) as well as connected with collaborative form (i.e., characterized with long-term large and complex infrastructure development, open contract type, risk and benefits sharing, frequent interaction, joint decision making and trust building).

Besides, Lowndes and Skelcher (1998) argue with a complete mix of governance in PPP and mention that different modes of governance are predominant at different stages of PPP. Based on studies of UK urban regeneration partnerships, Lowndes and Skelcher (1998) finds that *pre-partnership collaboration* is characterized by a network mode of governance based upon informality, trust and a sense of common purpose, *partnership creation and consolidation* are characterized by hierarchy based upon an assertion of status and authority differentials and the formalization of procedures, *partnership program delivery* is characterized by market (or quasi-market) mechanisms of tendering and contract, with low levels of cooperation between providers and finally, *partnership succession or termination* is characterized by a re-assertion of a network governance mode as a means to maintain agency commitment, community involvement and staff employment. These arguments are supported by Appuhami, Perera and Perera (2011), which indicate that it is better to mix appropriate governance mechanism in different phases of a PPP project based on contingency factors and risk. In sum, PPP is a hybrid form organization, which relates to different modes of governance at different stages of PPP life cycle (Figure-1).

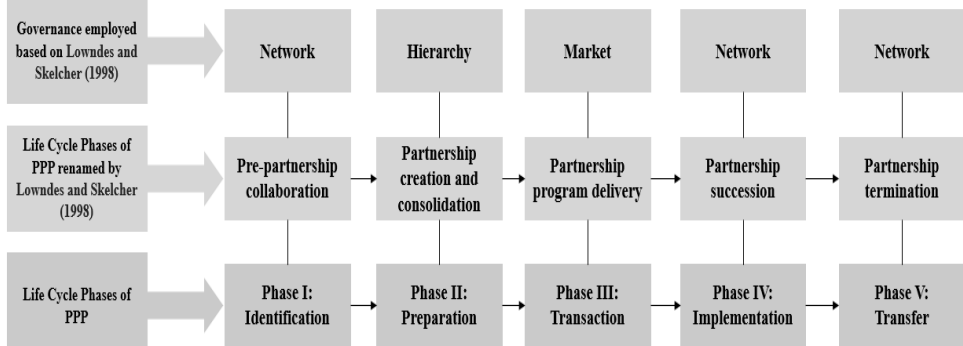


Figure-1: Framework of Analysis

Source: Author’s own construction based on literature

In this study, it is also argued that PPP delivery is dependent on collaboration among variety of actors engaged in all different life cycle phases of PPP. Therefore, higher employment of network as mode of governance shall lead to higher policy performance which will be reflected in higher number of PPP projects delivered to the private sector. Therefore, relevant hypothesis is:

H1: Among the actors, higher employment of network as a mode of governance in all phases of PPP will lead to higher policy performance reflected in higher number of PPP delivery.

III. METHODS EMPLOYED

This study employs qualitative research approach in which, content analysis is undertaken as a method of analysis. Content analysis is the systematic analysis of the content of a text in a quantitative or qualitative manner. Here, content analysis is done on relevant policies, guidelines, rules, acts and relevant documents. From these sources, texts those are more pertinent content have been chosen selectively. Secondly, unitizing has been done by separating major themes, which consists of units of analysis. These themes are *relationship status, risk allocation, activities of the agency, core terminologies, model selection* (e.g., user pay, government pay, mix pay) and such. Finally, the data have been analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively to determine the frequency and relationship with each other. A short summary of the published and unpublished documents is presented in Table-1.

Table-1: PPP related documents

Periods	Prior to 1995	1996-2004	2004-2012	2012-2018
Documents	1. Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)	2. Private Sector Power Generation Policy, 1996	3. Private Sector infrastructure Guidelines, 2004 4. Concession Agreements 5. Policy and Strategies for PPP, 2010 Special Power Act, 2010	6. PPP Act 2015 7. Procurement Guidelines for PPP projects, 2016/2018 8. G2G Partnership Policy 2017 9. PPP Technical Assistance Financing & Viability Gap financing Guideline 2012/ Rules 2018 10. Rules for National Priority Projects 2018 11. PPP Contracts /Transaction Advisory contracts

To minimize the biases and errors during the research process and to enhance internal consistency of the research, ‘triangulation approach’ is employed. To ensure objectivity of operational measures, triangulation is done with diverse sources as and when necessary, with other documentary evidence (published/unpublished documents). Moreover, subjective reflection, normative analysis and argumentation have been used in explaining the issues in the contents.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

A. Governance of PPP in Bangladesh

After 1980s, Bangladesh experiences privatization of state-owned enterprise and this trend continues along with some outsourcing and public administration reform initiatives in line with the New Public Management (NPM). Until 1995, there were some partnerships developed on an individual need basis between government and private sectors but there were no specific direction, policy or oversight body. Such as Bangladesh Institute of Research and Rehabilitation for Diabetes, Endocrine and Metabolic Disorders (BIRDEM), National Institute of Textile Engineering and Research (NITER). In this partnership, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was sufficient to hand over the asset and completing committed development. Considering the relationship status, it was principal-principal relation based on mutual trust and confidence. Therefore, PPP organization was mostly ‘collaborative’ and this period may be termed as first generation of PPP in Bangladesh.

In 1996, the World Bank encouraged the Government to think about private sector participation particularly in the power sector. Private Sector Power Generation Policy, 1996 assisted to roll out successful power sector PPP and Bangladesh enters in the second generation of PPP. The success in power sector induced thinking about far more incorporation of private initiatives in infrastructure and service delivery. Therefore, the Government introduced the Private Sector Infrastructure Guidelines (PSIG) in 2004. Later, PSIG was found not sufficient to cater to the requirements and potential of the country. Consequently, there was a need for revising the guidelines and the Government issued the Policy and Strategy for Public-Private Partnerships (PSPPP) in 2010.

Both PSIG and PSPPP gave importance on development of interaction and cooperation with the private sectors and adopted the theoretical spirit of ‘hybrid’ form. In PSPPP 2010, ‘PPP is a win-win relationship between the government and various private sector players for the purpose of delivering a service by sharing the risks and rewards of the venture under a contractual obligation’. Risk sharing, principal-principal relationship, building trust and confidence among partners were received importance along with legal enforcement. PPP projects were anchored at implementing agency and implementing agencies were required to arrange investors conference, conduct feasibility study, prepare relevant document such as bidding documents, agreement with the assistance of national level consultants.

Besides, in PSPPP 2010, government gives importance on creating necessary institutions e.g., PPP Office under Prime Minister's Office, PPP unit under Finance Division and offers financial support in three forms: (i) PPP Technical Assistance Financing (PPPTAF) for meeting the cost of project preparation; (ii) Viability Gap Funding (VGF) to make the project commercially viable for the private investors; and (iii) long-term financing to the PPP project company using project finance technique through the Bangladesh Infrastructure Finance Fund Limited (BIFFL). However, implementing agencies were able to deliver PPPs in power, road, port and telecommunication sector following PSIG but could not deliver any PPP under PSPPP.

Later, PSPPP 2010 was replaced by the Public-Private Partnership Act, 2015. In PPP Act 2015, PPP is defined as 'a PPP contractual arrangement between the contracting authority and any private partner pursuant to which the private partner assumes the obligation/responsibility for carrying out any public work or providing any service on behalf of the contracting authority... and accepts the risks arising from carrying out the work'. PPP office is changed to PPP Authority and PPP Authority initiates appointing international consultancy firms such as Feedback Infra, PwC, Ernst & Yong, MMM Group, KPMG, Deloitte, Mott McDonalds as transaction advisor to conduct detail feasibility study, prepare tender document and PPP contract on behalf of the project implementing agencies. PPP Authority also appoints Infrastructure Investment Facilitation Company (IIFC), a national consultancy firm, International Finance Corporation (IFC) of the World Bank Group and the Office of PPP of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) for few transactions.

Since 2015, PPP is articulated as 'contractual' form. Therefore, the term 'agreement' is replaced by 'contract', 'implementing agencies' is renamed as 'contracting authority', principal-agent relationship is emphasized by overlooking win-win relationship, risk on private sector is reflected rather risk sharing, higher legal enforcement mechanism is put on both the government and private partners instead of devising mechanism for enhancing confidence and trust. PPP project delivery of the contracting authority is mostly anchored at PPP Authority. Moreover, in devising regulatory framework, much importance is given on top-down approach. Besides, awareness raising workshop gets priority as capacity building of the officials. This period can be termed as the third generation of PPP.

In sum, organizational form of PPP transforms from 'hybrid' to 'contractual', in which government is the central actor and relationship between the government and private partner becomes closer to the principal-agent type. Document preparation and bidding are considered as key to success. Therefore, importance is put on transaction advisory services instead of guiding the concerned authority towards a mix of governance mode in PPP policy implementation. These are deviations from the core theoretical perspective of PPP. Table-3 shows evolution of PPP landscape in Bangladesh and PPP delivery scenario.

Table-3: Evolution of PPP Landscape in Bangladesh

Period	Up to 1995	1996-2004	2005-2012	2012- On going
Generatio*	First generation PPP	Second generation PPP		Third generation PPP
Focus	Project Based Initiative	Sector Initiative	Program Initiative	Centrally Integrated Program Initiative
Governance	Network	Hierarchy, market and network		Hierarchy and market
Projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fertilizer JV (e.g., KAFCO) • Health (e.g., BIRDEM, National heart Foundation) • Education (e.g., NITER) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 40 Power Projects (e.g., Hariapur 360 MW, Meghnaghat 450 MW power Plants, REB power project, three barge mounted power projects) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 Power Projects • 6 Land port projects (e.g., Teknaf Land Port) • 2 PGCB optical fibre projects • 5 Telecommunication sector projects • 1 Road Projects (e.g., Hanif Flyover) • Dhaka elevated expressway (Concession Agreement signed in 2013) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 14 Multi-sectoral Projects (e.g. Transport, Port, Health, Economic Zones, Civil Accommodation, Housing) • Health sector projects (e.g., Development of Dialysis Centre through PPP) • Development of two jetties at Mongla Port

* Generation terms are used in Islam (2014)

Source: Author’s compilation based on review of documents

Indeed, different countries have different approaches to document legal framework for PPP. Common law countries often use policy documents, guidelines or manuals, to establish PPP framework. These guidelines or manuals are considered as binding on the public officials and PPP practitioners. Historically UK and its former colonies including Bangladesh, Australia, New Zealand, Canada are common law countries. However, sometimes common law jurisdictions such as India and Kenya do create PPP laws for putting the framework into a statute to provide greater force, stability, transparency, accountability and a signal to investors and funding agencies. Secondly, PPP experience and use in common law countries are mostly new and largely government funding based. On the other hand, civil law jurisdictions generally embody their PPP framework in laws and spell it out in detailed rules and regulations with legal force. France and Spain are countries of civil law jurisdictions. Civil law countries have a long tradition of user-funding based concession type contract for the private provision of public services.

Bangladesh is a common law country and initially established PPP framework following policies and guidelines. Later, considering the view of investors and financing agencies, who perceive a law as a stronger instrument than a policy statement, PPP Act, 2015 is enacted. However, the Act could not capture the benefits of previous PPP experience of Bangladesh, therefore,

- a) all types and sizes of projects require in-principle approval and final approval from CCEA,
- b) PPP project identification is mentioned as within or outside the Annual Development Program without indicating firm basis for selection e.g., commercial viability, Value for Money (VfM) analysis or affordability analysis,
- c) there is no specific protection clause for the private investors within the law,
- d) seems the law gives more focus on the role of PPP Authority in PPP delivery,

- e) though the purview of the law is very wide, it is largely applicable for infrastructure PPP,
 f) PPP delivery is the end point of the law, and the law could not embody the relationship required between public and private partner after the contract sign. This is also true for the Procurement Guidelines for PPP Projects, 2018. Therefore, there is no indication of how interaction among the partners shall take place during the implementation period of the project.

In sum, at early stage, network was dominant in partnership development when there were no policy, guidelines or direction. Later, in 1990's Bangladesh started power generation through private investment using market mode of governance and government-pays type contract. To capture this success in other sectors, Bangladesh started concession for infrastructure and service delivery, in which hybrid mode of governance and user-pays type contract received importance. However, after introducing the Act, both user-pay and government-pay model are applied in infrastructure and service delivery, but focus is shifted towards centralization and market mode of governance. Therefore, it is presumed that current legal framework of PPP is not incrementally developed over previous experience.

B. PPP Delivery Performance in Bangladesh

1. Identification of PPP project and Pre-partnership collaboration

The contracting authority identifies a project that is to be delivered on a PPP basis from the list of projects set out in the Government's Annual Development Program (ADP) or may identify a project that is not listed in the ADP. After selecting a project, contracting authority submits the PPP project proposal for endorsement by their applicable line ministry. After endorsing, Ministry sends the proposal to the PPP Authority for screening. PPP Authority screens the project through a Project Screening Committee and sends recommendation to the line ministry for submitting the project to the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA). When the project gets in-Principle approval from the CCEA, project is identified and PPP Authority shows the project in the list of PPP pipeline. Table 3.1 shows status of the PPP pipeline projects.

Table - 3.1: Status of PPP pipeline projects

Status of the project	No. of Projects	Approximate Value in Million USD
1. Operation stage	1	3
2. Construction stage	9	4194
3. Conditions Precedence stage for completing necessary task prior to start construction, such as financial close	4	347
4. Transaction/bidding stage for private partner selection	6	1000
5. Preparation stage for competing detail feasibility study and producing procurement document & contract document	7	11860
6. TA appointment stage	12	10794
7. Stalled state in which no action is taken for long time due to different reasons	22	8892
8. Cancelled/failed state for which the project is required to be withdrawn from the pipeline	16	4282
TOTAL	77	41372

Source: Review of PPP pipeline projects from www.pppo.gov.bd

These projects can be categorized in 10 sectors. Sector wise distribution of PPP pipeline projects is presented in Table-3.2.

Table-3.2: Sector wise distribution of PPP pipeline projects

Sectors	No. of Projects
1. Health	9
2. Transport (Rail, Road, Ports, Flyover)	28
3. Industry (Textile) and Economic Zone	17
4. Tourism	6
5. Urban and Civil Accommodation	7
6. Education	1
7. IT	2
8. Power and Energy	2
9. Agriculture	1
10. Water and Sanitation	4
Total	77

Source: Review of PPP pipeline projects from www.pppo.gov.bd

It is important to note that since 2012, this pipeline has been gradually developed and till now there are 77 projects with estimated investment amount is around 41.37 billion USD. However, in this list, there are projects which have already been cancelled out and some are stalled for long time for various reasons whose fate in terms of delivery is uncertain. Therefore, there is need to review the pipeline for including active and ongoing projects in the list. A rudimentary assessment shows that there are 39 projects with an estimated value of 28.18 billion USD, which are active and ongoing.

A pre-feasibility study with particular focus on commercial viability, Value for Money (VfM) and affordability analysis is required to be carried out by the contracting authority during this identification phase. This is not usually done for every project. Secondly, market testing through seeking Expression of Interest (EoI) or communication with the relevant private players in the market generally show the indication of market appetite for the project. These activities create a situation of pre-partnership collaboration. In current practice, to enhance such collaboration with the private sector partner through market testing happens rarely. As a result, project delivery failure occurs, and it is manifested in the bidding phase when there is no bid or single bid is found. Since 2015, during bidding, four projects of Bangladesh Parjaton Corporation (BPC), two projects of Bangladesh Railway (BR), 4 projects of Bangladesh Textile Mills Corporation (BTMC) did not get any bidder at the first-time bid. In second time bid, two BTMC projects and one BPC project got bidder. However, BTMC projects were delivered to the preferred bidders. But BPC project failed to get final approval from the CCEA and so, was not delivered.

2. Preparation for Partnership Creation and Consolidation

Preparation phase of PPP project starts after obtaining in-principle approval from the CCEA. In this phase, detail feasibility study is conducted. If it is found in the study that PPP procurement offers better Value for Money (VfM), then bid documents and PPP contract are drafted. These are usually done by hiring consultancy firm which is commonly known as Transaction Advisory (TA) firm.

Contracting authority may appoint TA firm from their own fund or may request to PPP Authority to use PPP Technical Assistance Financing (PPPTAF) fund for hiring. Most of the cases contracting authority likes to use PPPTAF and appoints TA firm through PPP Authority. Appointment of TA firm at PPP Authority takes several routes, e.g., direct engagement (in case of Development Partner like ADB or IFC), engagement of international consultancy firms through competitive bidding, engagement of international consultancy firms through panel (in which firms were shortlisted earlier through competitive bidding) and single source selection (applicable for few specified public institutions such as BUET and IIFC).

TA firms conduct detail feasibility study. Following Procurement Guidelines for PPP projects 2018, this detail feasibility study report is submitted to the contracting authority. After reviewing, contracting authority sends those documents to PPP Authority for a scrutiny through a Project Assessment Committee (PAC). PPP Authority sends comments to both contracting authority and TA firm. TA firm incorporates the comments and submits final version to the contracting authority for approval. When detail feasibility study report is approved, TA firm prepares bid and PPP contract document, which are then approved in the same way as detail feasibility study report was approved. After approval of the bid documents and PPP contract by the contracting authority, bidding phase starts.

Among 77 projects in the pipeline, PPP Authority appointed TA firm for 39 projects, contracting authorities appointed TA firm in 7 projects. Among 39 projects in which TA firms were appointed by the PPP Authority, 10 projects are delivered to the private partners through signing PPP contract, 9 projects are in preparation phase or in bidding phase, 20 projects are stalled for different reasons and can be considered as failed due to insufficient market interest, litigation, and take back decisions of the contracting authority (Table-4.1). Whereas contracting authority appointed TA firms for 7 projects with their own fund and among these projects, 4 projects are delivered to the private partner through signing PPP contract, whereas rest 3 projects (2nd Meghna Bridge, Khan Jahan Ali Airport and CETP project) are in preparation and transaction phase.

Table-4.1: Performance of TA firms in PPP delivery

PPP Delivery Status	TA appointed by PPPA	TA appointed by CA	Total
Contract signed	10 (26%)	4 (57%)	14 (30.5%)
Ongoing	9 (23%)	3 (43%)	12 (26%)
Stalled/ Failed	20 (51%)	0 (0%)	20(43.5%)
TOTAL	39	7	46

Source: Review of PPP Pipeline Projects from www.pppo.gov.bd

It is important to highlight that Development Partners (such as ADB and IFC) were transaction advisor for 8 projects. Among these eight, 5 projects are delivered to the private partner through signing PPP contract. National level consultancy firms were engaged as transaction advisory firm for 22 projects. Among these 22 projects, 4 projects are delivered to the private partner, 8 projects are in ongoing state, but 10 projects are stalled or failed. Transaction for 14 projects were initiated through hiring international consultancy firm through competitive bidding process. Among these projects, 3 projects are delivered to the private partner, 2 projects are in ongoing state and the rest 9 projects are stalled or failed to be delivered.

Finally, a consortium of national and international firm was appointed for one project (i.e., Dhaka Elevated Expressway) and the project is delivered to the private investor. In another project (i.e., Payra Port Dredging), international consultancy firm and national level individual consultant were engaged (Table-4.2).

Table-4.2: Performance of TA firms in PPP delivery

PPP Delivery Status	IFC/ADB	National	Renowned Int'l	Int'l + National	Total
Contract signed	5 (62.5%)	4 (18%)	3 (21%)	2 (100%)	14 (30.5%)
Ongoing	2 (25%)	8 (36%)	2 (14%)	0 (0%)	12 (26%)
Stalled/ Failed/Cancelled	1 (12.5%)	10 (46%)	9 (65%)	0 (0%)	20 (43.5%)
TOTAL	8	22	14	2	46

Source: Review of PPP pipeline projects from www.pppo.gov.bd

Considering transaction performance in terms of signing PPP contract with private partner, IFC and ADB have shown success followed by national level TA firm, such as IIFC and BUET. Whereas performance of the international firms lies below the performance of the national level TA firm. In contrast to above finding, it is also fact that development partner like ADB or IFC engage these same international firms to assist their transaction. In such scenario, their performance is better. Seems who engage TA firms and based on which Terms of Reference (ToR) matter. Moreover, repetitive engagement of the same TA firms without considering their previous performance can be viewed as another reason for their underperformance.

Among many reasons, quality of feasibility study, PPP structure and stakeholder consultations are important for successful transaction. Bankability, Value for Money (VfM) and affordability analysis for each project should have been part of the job of the TA firm during feasibility study which are broadly missing in those study. Moreover, PPP structure deviates from theoretical basics in some cases (e.g., Jhilmil Housing Project). Market sounding during detail feasibility study is considered an important task for the TA firm. Though the report submitted by the TA firms shows that they performed this task. Based on low bid submission it is presumed that stakeholder consultations were not done properly during preparation stage. Moreover, investors conference with the Project Information Memorandum (PIM) with the potential bidders is not visible except few projects.

Moreover, TA firms usually take longer time, but it could not result in preparing PPP structure which is bankable. Therefore, even after successful bidding, preferred bidders struggle to find financing for the project. Narayanganj Occupational Disease Hospital, Tongi Textile Mill, Demra Textile Mill, Oboshor project, Jhilmil Housing Project could not manage financing yet. Besides, when the project is failed, TA firms do not take any responsibility. Successful delivery of the project should have been their responsibility and this accountability mechanism is missing in the Terms of Reference (ToR) based on which the firms were appointed.

2. Transaction and Partnership program delivery through Market

In transaction phase of PPP life cycle, contracting authority starts bidding process and selects private partner through a competitive bidding. Upon completion of the bidding process and successful negotiation with the preferred bidder, the contracting authority sends the PPP contract to the line ministry. The ministry submits the legally vetted PPP contract to the CCEA for its final approval. The legal vetting is carried out by the Legislative and Parliamentary Affairs Division of the Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs. Upon receipt of the final approval from the CCEA, the contracting authority issues the Letter of Award (LoA) to the preferred bidder and formally sign the PPP contract with the preferred bidder. Transaction is completed through signing the PPP contract by both the partners and PPP is termed as delivered. The following Table-5.1 and 5.2 shows the list of projects those have already been delivered.

Table-5.1: PPP project delivered in which TA firms were engaged by the PPP Authority

Project Name (Enlistment Year)	Contracting Authority	PPP Model	Project Cost M\$	Private Partner (Delivery Year)
1. Hemodialysis Centre at National Institute of Kidney Diseases and Urology (NIKDU) and Chittagong Medical College Hospital (2012).	DGHS	Mix pays	3	Sandor Dialysis Services Bangladesh Pvt. Ltd. (International) (2015)
2. Upgrading of Dhaka Bypass to 4 Lane (Madanpur-Debogram-Bhulta-Joydebpur) (2012).	Roads and Highways Department	Mix pays	439	Sichuan Road and Bridge Group Consortium (International) (2018)
3. Installation of Water Supply, Sewerage, Drainage System & Solid Waste Management System in Purbachal New Town (2014).	Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha (RAJUK)	Govt-pays	80	delcot bangladesh (2019)
4. Oboshor: Senior Citizen Health Care and Hospitality Complex at Sreemangal, Sylhet Division (2012)	Department of Social Services	User pays	10	Universal Medical College and Hospital Limited (Local)(2017)
5. Construction of Satellite Township with Multi-storied Flat Building at Section 9, Mirpur, Dhaka (2012)	National Housing Authority	User pays	44	Tropical Homes Ltd. (Local) (2018)
6. Development of Textile Mill at Demra, Dhaka (2017)	BTMC	User pays	40	Consortium of Tanjina Fashion (2019)
7. Development of Textile Mill at Tongi, Gazipur (2017)	BTMC	User pays	50	Consortium of Orion (2019)
8. Medical College and Modernization of Railway Hospital at CRB in Chittagong (2012)	Bangladesh Railway	User pays	47	United Group (2020)

9. Upgrading Rampura-Amulia-Demra road into 4 lane expressway (2015)	Roads and Highways Department	Govt-pays	246	Consortium of CCCCL and CRBC (2022)
10. Development of Shopping Mall with Hotel-cum-Guest House at Bangladesh Railway Land near Chittagong Railway Station, Chittagong (2014)	Bangladesh Railway	User pays	6	Epic Group (2022)
Total Investment			965	

Source: Review of pipeline PPP projects from www.pppo.gov.bd

Table-5.2: PPP project delivered in which TA firms were engaged by the contracting authority

Project Name (Enlistment Year)	Contracting Authority	PPP Model	Project Cost M\$	Private Partner (Delivery Year)
1. Dhaka-Elevated Expressway (2010)	Bangladesh Bridge Authority	Mix Pays	1,243	Italian-Thai Development Company Ltd (International) (2013)
2. Construction of High-rise Residential Apartment Building for Low and Middle Income Group of People at Jhilmil Residential Project Dhaka* (2015)	Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha (RAJUK)	Govt-pays	1,174	BNG Global Holdings SDN BHD (International) (2017)
3. Payra Port Dredging* (2013)	Payra Port Authority	Govt-pays	950	Jan De Nul Group (International) (2019)
4. Development of 2 Jetties at Mongla Port through PPP (2011)	Mongla Port Authority	User pays	212	Powerpac Ports Limited (Local) (2015)
Total Investment			3,579	
Grand Total			4,544	

* PPP Authority engaged individual consultants.

Source: Review of PPP pipeline projects from www.pppo.gov.bd

Currently, Dialysis PPP project is now at operation stage, 10 projects are in construction stage and four projects (Oboshor, Jhilmil Housing, Tongi Textile Mill and Demra Textile Mill) are in conditions precedence state for which investment was not made yet by the private investors due to non-fulfilment of the requirements of the condition's precedence, financial close is one of them. These four projects could not secure financing from the lenders yet. Another project, i.e., Narayanganj Occupational Disease Hospital, which was delivered to the private investor, is now at termination stage due to not securing financing within extended time. However, considering 14 projects are delivered, PPP delivery scenario over the years shows an average investment of 454 million USD per year. This trend does not show sign of meeting investment target of mid-term and long-term plan periods.

Moreover, current PPP delivery trend shows enhancement of government's fiscal commitment in both the form of direct and contingent liability. Direct liabilities include viability gap funding, availability payments, shadow tolls or output-based payments. Contingent liabilities include minimum revenue guarantee, commitment to compensate the private party for damage or loss due to uncertain, unspecified, uninsurable force majeure events, termination payment commitments and debt guarantees or other credit enhancement. In user-pay PPP, public sector plan and offer approval of the project but there is no financial engagement of the government. This type of PPP may usually create contingent liability based on accounting standards a country follows. In government-pay PPP, government pays fee, tariff or periodical charges to the private partner and thus creates both direct liability and contingent liability for the government. In mix-pay PPP, there is user charges along with payment made by the public partner through viability gap funding, annuity payment or minimum revenue guarantee payment. Mix-pay PPP creates both direct and contingent liability but to a lesser extent than that of government pays PPP.

Interestingly, PPP Authority devises another two mechanisms for PPP delivery, which follows dialogue and negotiation in partner selection instead of following a competitive bidding process. First one is National Priority Project Rules, 2018. There are two projects under the National Priority Projects route: Payra Port Dredging, which is delivered and Infosarker Phase 3, which is under preparation phase. Though the process is highly centralized, but it signifies a situation in which contracting authority can engage a private partner through dialogue and negotiation.

Second one is the Policy for Implementing PPP Projects through Government to Government (G2G) Partnership, 2017. G2G partnership program is dialogue based negotiated process in which there are lot of interactions among the partners at the partnership creation and expected to remain it throughout the life cycle of the project. At present, ten projects are being considered as G2G Partnership projects with investors from Japan, Korea and Singapore. As the initiative is just started, no PPP under G2G partnership is delivered yet. This policy implementation indicates about requirement of sufficient time for partnership program delivery. However, there are also requirement of being more cautious as this investment may entail different types of payments and guarantees. Moreover, PPP delivery under G2G Partnership signifies a theoretical mix, i.e., intergovernmental relation and public-private partnership. Therefore, when PPP delivery fails for some reasons, it may have substantial impact on the intergovernmental relationship. Besides, what will be the required level of interaction with the foreign investors during implementation phase is another concern.

1. PPP Project Implementation and Partnership Succession

After receiving Letter of Award (LoA) and signing the PPP contract, PPP project enters into implementation phase and the private partner starts activities for construction and operation. This phase of PPP life cycle is mainly procedural, sometime legal and it is the functions of both partners. Contracting authority in partnership with private partners implements the contract through employing both contract administration and relationship management strategies. In this phase, contracting authority oversees the contract management issues and takes decisions on important issues jointly. Now the question is to what extent both the partners are committed to each other after signing the contract. To understand the extent the following examples might be of use.

First, as a condition's precedence, selected private partners are supposed to get debt from financial institutions. Among signed 14 contracts, financial closure is completed for 7 projects, expected to be completed soon for 3 projects (i.e., Rampura-Amulia-Demra Expressway project, Chattogram Commercial Complex and Chattogram Railway Hospital project) and 4 projects are struggling for financial close. To overcome these financing constraints, PPP Authority signs Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with 14 banking and non-banking financial institutions in 2016 and later in 2021. Aims were to communicate the documents with the financial institutions and obtain financing for the PPP projects. The question is why PPP Authority comes forward. Because, contracting authority holds less information about their partners financial capacity, contracting authority had weakness in creating PPP structure which are bankable and because there are gaps in information sharing & cooperation among partners.

Second, for encouraging private investment, Government of Bangladesh offers different incentives through Internal Resource Division (IRD) and National Board of Revenue (NBR). In 2017, IRD issued three notifications (SRO-208, 209, 210) for offering incentives mainly to the project company of transport sector and elderly care home. NBR also offered Value Added Tax (VAT) exemptions against some specific codes. Besides these incentive packages, private partners apply to the PPP Authority for securing some other types of incentive, such as import duty exemption from NBR. So far, PPP Authority received application from the private investors of Dialysis PPP, Payra Port Dredging PPP, and Jhilmil Residential PPP. PPP Authority usually forward these applications to the NBR for consideration through the Prime Minister's Office. Based on recommendations from the Prime Minister's Office, NBR takes decision. These applications are supposed to be channelized through the line ministry of the contracting authority. Therefore, the process of securing additional incentive indicates lack of interactive communication, trust and confidence among the contracting authority and private partners during implementation and partnership succession period.

Third, 'Unsolicited Proposal' means a written proposal for the implementation of a PPP Project submitted unilaterally by an original proponent on its own initiative and not in response to any formal government request. It passes two times of screening (initial concept paper screening and then detail proposal screening) at PPP Authority before going to CCEA for in-principal approval. All the other processes are same i.e., document preparation through TA firm, bidding, negotiation and final approval. But at bid evaluation stage, the original proponent is entitled to get a bonus point equivalent to 7% of the evaluation score. Among five unsolicited proposals, one PPP project is delivered to the private partner (i.e., Jhilmil Housing Project), the rest proposals are either at stalled or failed situation (No-view Guesthouse, Integrated Tourism & Entertainment Village at Cox's Bazar, Comprehensive Non-Intrusive Inspection (NII) Project, Tangail Cotton Mills Project). Therefore, delivery status of unsolicited proposal is not encouraging in Bangladesh context. Along with some external legitimacy problem there are internal legitimacy issues. For example, due to change of relevant actors at the contracting authority and at the line ministry, interest on unsolicited proposal change, therefore required progress is not made. It also means that proponents of unsolicited proposal could not institutionalize collaboration with the contracting authority.

Fourth, communication gap among the partners is observed in a project which is under operation, i.e., Dialysis PPP project. It was found that the contracting authority does not have any official who can monitor and supervise the PPP contract. In case of Oboshor project, contracting authority officials are almost unaware of existence of this project in their organization. In case of Bangladesh Railway projects, private partner faced significant delay from the public partner in completing conditions precedent. Besides, the project which is under termination by the contracting authority (i.e., Occupational Disease Hospital, Narayanganj), contracting authority wants to know from the PPP Authority, why the private partner could not start the project through completing financial close.

These instances mentioned above clearly indicate, partnership succession is a long way to go for the contracting authorities. However, there are some contracting authorities, for whom these gaps are not visible at mentionable extent, such as Roads and Highways Department, Bridge Authority, Mongla Port Authority. As PPP contract management requires relentless interaction and cooperation among the partners, the contracting authorities of Bangladesh are not adapted with it. Consequently, there is deficiency of interaction and cooperation among the partners during the project implementation and partnership succession phase.

C. Discussions Following the Framework of Analysis

First, identification of PPP projects in Bangladesh is largely based on hierarchy. Pre-partnership collaboration at this phase is nearly absent. Having no bid or single bid during transaction is the outcome of absence of pre-partnership collaboration. Therefore, during identification phase, it is required to look for presence of suitable private partners in the market, who are engaged with similar infrastructure and service delivery and are interested in the project. Besides, discussion with the private investors and assessment of market may assist public partners in finding out trusted partners who are interested to serve public interest. This strategy may also assist in identifying a commercially viable project. Seeking an expression of interest or activating Registration of Interest (ROI) during identification phase might be useful for starting pre-partnership collaboration.

Second, PPP Authority is engaged in giving concurrence on the PPP project proposal, TA firm appointment, approval of feasibility study, bid document and PPP contract, putting members in the evaluation committee and in dealing with post contract signing matters. This engagement of PPP Authority has created a situation of centralized PPP implementation. Immediate results of this centralized approach are:

- a) Project is not very much attached with the contracting authority. PPP project related task is considered as additional task of an officer, who considers this task as extra burden and PPP project faces an ownership crisis.
- b) When the project moves through persuasion from the PPP authority, literally, project becomes the project of the PPP authority and PPP authority must answer why bidding failed or why bidder is not able to do financial closing.
- c) Contracting authority usually claims that due to taking the PPP route, the project implementation has been delayed.

Based on framework of analysis, contracting authority is supposed to be responsible for hiring TA firms and reviewing documents. In such scenario, ownership status would have remained at the contracting authority level.

Therefore, instead of centralized approach, more focus is required to form a dedicated PPP cell at each contracting authority taking at least seven officials. PPP Cell should monitor, supervise, interact and collaborate with the private partner following PPP contract management manual with funds obtained from contracting authority's own budget. Organogram of the Cell may cover Head of the PPP Cell, Procurement Manager, PPP Analyst, Communication & Public Relations Officer, Relationship Manager, Contract Administrator, Knowledge Management, Training & Dissemination officer. It is also important to develop capacity of the Cell and ensure Cell's engagement with the whole life of the project. A revision of PPPTAF rules might be useful for appointing TA firm by the Cell using this fund.

Third, under performance of international level TA firm is evident. International firms are unable to understand the local context, face difficulty in communicating with the stakeholders and therefore, devise PPP structure, which are not attractive to the market. National level consultancy firm's performance is comparatively well. National level firms are kept away with the consideration of lack of PPP transaction expertise. Whereas more engagement of national level firms is required for in-country capacity development in PPP transaction. Besides, due to engagement of international level TA firms, the transaction cost has been raised significantly. When this high cost is considered as 'project development fee' to be recouped by the successful bidder, it increases the up-front cost for the investors. Therefore, considering performance of national level TA firms, they need to be appointed in more projects.

Fourth, appointment of TA firms takes several routes following Public Procurement Act 2006 and Public Procurement Rules 2008. Still there is perceived lack of transparency and accountability in the 'selection of the method' as well in 'selection of TA firms'. Due to not having a cumulative performance record of the firms during their selection, sometime transparency is compromised. Therefore, it is required to develop a cumulative performance record book and use it during appointment. In terms of accountability issues, it is also observed that TA firms are not found accountable in making a delivery successful. This accountability mechanisms can be introduced through putting a provision in the Terms of Reference (ToR) of the TA firms.

Fifth, legal framework of PPP includes Acts, Rules, Policies and Guidelines. There are different routes for private partner selection, which are complex, incomplete and centralized. Most importantly, theoretical footing of partnership is missing here. Procurement Guidelines for PPP projects, 2016/2018 and Guidelines for Unsolicited Projects, 2016/2018 created a route for private partner selection through the market. National Priority Project Rules, 2018 and G2G Partnership policy, 2017 advocate another route which is thought to be of collaborative. Moreover, all these legal frameworks could not establish the fact that partnership flourish with an environment of trust and cooperation among the parties engaged. Therefore, legal framework requires revision to make it theoretically grounded.

Sixth, partnership succession is not established due to having little room in the legal framework and current governance practices. Therefore, legal framework needs to be revised with clear focus on enhancing mutual commitment among the core partners.

Besides, there are several projects, which are at stalled situation due to having external and internal legitimacy issues. These issues need to be solved through intensive inter-organization collaboration. To activate collaboration, stakeholders' consultation needs to be considered as mandatory requirement.

Based on empirical evidence obtained in the study, it can be highlighted that pre-partnership collaboration is missing at the identification stage, stakeholder consultations are not robust during the preparation stage, and there is lack of commitment among the partners during partnership succession stage. However, there are mandatory pre-bid meeting with the bidders and presence of small room for negotiation (especially when it does not relate to any material deviation) with the preferred bidder at the partnership program delivery stage. These clearly indicate of having a gap in the regulatory framework, and application of network as a mode of governance cannot be termed as high. This has been reflected in delivery performance at each stage of PPP life cycle. Therefore, lower level of PPP delivery performance can be attributed to the lower level of application of network as a mode of governance during all life cycle phases of PPP.

However, this study also reveals some other factors, such contracting authorities interest deficiency in managing the project, not attractive PPP structure for the private investors and under performance of the TA firms, these are mainly derived due to having gap in the regulatory framework. Therefore, centralized regulatory framework can be considered as antecedent factors and other factors can be termed as posterior factors those affects PPP delivery. Combination of the factors can be expressed in the following Figure-2. This framework constitutes major findings of the study.

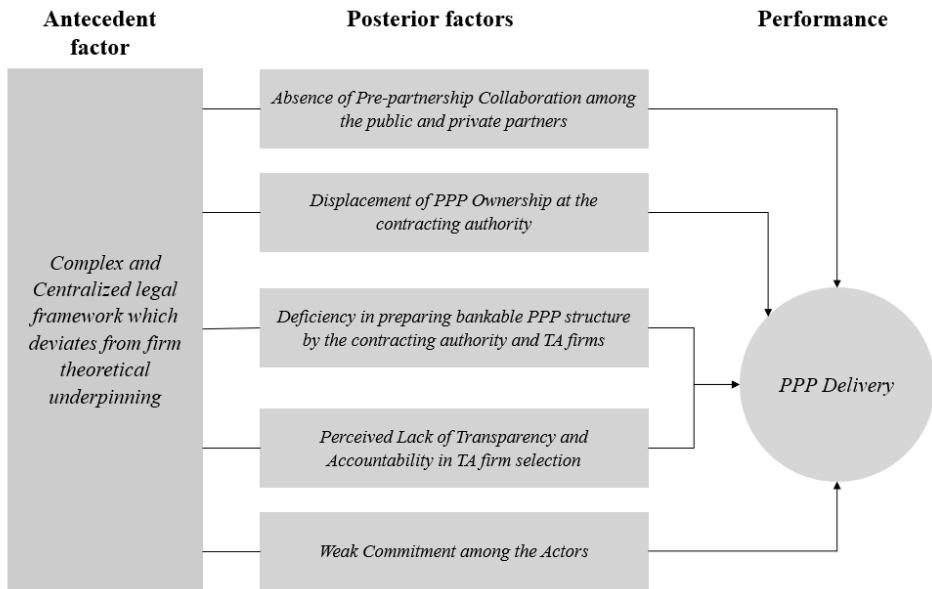


Figure-2: Factors Affecting PPP Delivery
Source: Author's own construction

V. CONCLUSION AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

PPP relates to different modes of governance at different stages of its life cycle. The study aims to explore governance employed at these stages to link it with PPP delivery performance and adopts qualitative research approach. The study finds that absence of pre-partnership collaboration, ownership crisis at the contracting authority, project structuring which are not commercially viable and bankable, underperformance of TA firms and lack of commitment among the partners are some of the major factors those affect PPP delivery performance. Moreover, the centralized and contractual approach of the legal framework act as antecedent of these factors which hinder employment of network as mode of governance in the life cycle phases. Therefore, the study proposes following policy recommendations to accelerate PPP delivery performance:

1. Identification of the PPP project needs to be based on pre-feasibility study and based on pre-partnership engagement with the private investors. Pre-feasibility study needs to highlight commercial viability analysis, Value for Money (VfM) analysis and affordability analysis. Moreover, stakeholder consultations should be considered as mandatory requirement while developing the project documents.
2. Legal framework requires necessary revision through incorporating provisions of continued cooperation among the partners during all phases of PPP life cycle to establish PPP on a firm theoretical footing. Rules for PPP Technical Assistance Financing may be reviewed to authorize utilization of the fund by the contracting authority in PPP delivery.
3. International level transaction advisory firms may be engaged based on the requirement but solely depending on international firm may not be the right choice. Consortium with national level TA firms needs to be encouraged.
4. More focus required on selecting those transaction advisory firms whose performance is good in Bangladesh context and there should have accountability clause in the Terms of Reference (ToR) to ensure successful PPP delivery.
5. Contracting authorities need to be well capacitated and need to perform their role in conducting pre-feasibility study, engaging transaction advisor, reviewing documents and implementing the project. These can easily be done through creating a dedicated PPP cell in each contracting authority.
6. Public partner should cooperate with the private partner during implementation phase in such a way that resembled contracting authority is implementing a project by themselves.

Findings demonstrate that to expedite PPP delivery and to take this delivery rate at a certain level requires theoretically grounded mechanism. However, this study is mostly based on governance perspective and its application in each phase of PPP life cycle. Therefore, future studies on PPP delivery can be conducted with public value perspective focusing on structure and agency, as well as principal-agent perspective focusing on private investor selection and transaction issues. Moreover, a quantitative study can be conducted with the framework developed in this study.

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