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BRAC Research Report

December 2007

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**Living Like Prisoner: Documenting the Experiences of Crime
and Insecurity of *Bihari* Community in Bangladesh**

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December 2007

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The study is initiated by Research and Evaluation Division of BRAC with the generous support of Dr. Imran Matin, Deputy Executive Director, Africa programme. We are indebted to Dr. Mohammad Rafi, Research Coordinator, RED for incorporating his valuable comments in preparing the report. At the very beginning of our field work SPGRC (Stranded Pakistanis General Repatriation Committee) provided generous support in conducting field work. We also like to thank to all the members of SPGRC in this regard. We are grateful to our respectable and benevolent teacher Dr. HKS Arefeen of department of Anthropology, University of Dhaka, who encouraged and reviewed the paper. We are eagerly expressing our gratitude to Mahafuzul Islam for his unbound cooperation in the report drafting phase. We would also like to thank to Hasan Shareef Ahmed and Altamas Pasha who edited the paper cautiously. Finally, we would also like to extend our gratitude to the camp dwellers whose knowledge, amity and willingness to share their everyday lives with us made this paper possible.

The Research and Evaluation Division (RED) is supported by BRAC's core funds and funds from donor agencies, organizations and governments worldwide. Current donors of BRAC and RED include Aga Khan Foundation Canada, AusAID, Australian High Commission, Brigham Young University, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, BRAC University, NIKE Foundation, Campaign for Popular Education, Canadian International Development Agency, Charities Aid Foundation-America, Columbia University (USA), Conrad N Hilton Foundation, Danish International Development Agency, DEKA Emergence Energy (USA), Department for International Development (DFID) of UK, Embassy of Denmark, Embassy of Japan, European Commission, Fidelis France, GITAC Consult GmbH, The Global Fund, GTZ-Germany, Government of Bangladesh, The Hospital for Sick Children, ICDDR,B Centre for Health and Population Research, ICLARM/World Fish Centre, Institute of Development Studies (Sussex, UK), Inter-cooperation Bangladesh, International Committee of the Red Cross, Japan International Cooperation Agency, International Research and Exchange Board, The Johanriter, Land O Lakes (USA), Manusher Jonno Foundation, Micro-Nutrient Initiative, NORAD, NOVIB, OXFAM America, Plan Bangladesh, The Population Council (USA), RNE/DGIS, Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Royal Norwegian Embassy, Scojo Foundation Incorporation, SIDA, Sight Savers, Stanford Medical School, Swiss Development Cooperation, ULG Northumbria, UNICEF, United Way International, University of Calgary, University of Leeds, University of Manchester (UK), World Bank, World Food Programme, and World Health Organization.

RED received wide support and cooperation from all divisions of BRAC, particularly from the field staff and the people of Bangladesh without whose sincere support and patronage no field research could be conducted smoothly. RED also received useful comments, suggestions, and guidance from researchers, reviewers, and editors from within and outside the country, which helped improve the quality of research and research outputs. RED is indebted to BRAC management for its continued support.

ABSTRACT

The *Bihari* community in Bangladesh attracted much attention after the independence of Bangladesh and many scholars and development practitioners studied extensively on different aspects of the community. The present paper explored different camps and tried to document different forms of experience of crime and insecurity that they have encountered in the camp. The study also shows how feeling of fear appeared as vicious threats to their daily lives including violation of social rights and humanity, sexual harassment, denial of citizenship, and oppression by law enforcing agencies. Moreover, political and local influential leaders were the common sources of insecurity to their lives that exacerbated the poverty situation of the community. But for some strange reasons, they were excluded from mainstream society as well as from the most of the development initiatives, which led to a situation of human crisis.

INTRODUCTION

The *Bihari* community attracted much attention of the researchers after the emergence of Bangladesh in 1971. Relatively a huge number of population who came from different parts of India mainly from Bihar after the partition of the sub-continent (Ahmed, 2003) in 1947 and settled in Bangladesh and opposed the liberation war of Bangladesh in 1971 are known as *Bihari* a stateless community, artificial minority, or stranded Pakistanis. (Farzana, 2008). The community was forced to leave India in the wake of communal riot, thereby giving priority to their 'Islamic way of life' (Haider 2003). Another author claimed that the Urdu speaking community migrated from India to Bangladesh due to employment opportunities created by the then British government in the railway department before the birth of Pakistan (ibid. 2003). False hope of going back to Pakistan gave birth to consternation among the members of the *Bihari* community, thereby affecting their daily lives and livelihood situation. The instances of criminal activities and the accompanying insecurity experienced by the community helped us understand its impact on their daily lives, who because of their collaboration with the Pakistan government during the liberation war of Bangladesh, the diplomatic scuffle¹ of the government of both the countries as well as for the lack of proper attention by different humanitarian organizations to ameliorate their condition the *Biharis* are leading a harrowing life since the independence of Bangladesh. At present, it is estimated that about 300,000 *Biharis* are in Bangladesh without clear identity, status or recognition (Human Rights Practices 2004).

Crime and violence affect human well-being and resources while jeopardizing human security by contrast safety appears to protecting against insecurity through formal and informal means (Hossain, 2007). Different minority or ethnic groups sporadically experienced insecurity and forms of crime through informal institutions like major political parties, village resolution or formal institution such as *union parishad*/council or law enforcing agencies (Rafi 2005).

The question of security means leading a safe and sound life in a society by which they will be able to manage their livelihood pattern and grow up, which is concerned with human life and their dignity. According to UNDP report, there are seven specific values of human security, such as economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community, and political security. Economic security refers to an individual's enjoyment of a basic income, either through gainful employment or from a social safety net. Food security refers to an individual's access to food via his or her assets, employment, or income. Health security refers to an individual's freedom from various diseases and debilitating illnesses and his or her access to health care. Environmental security refers to the integrity of land, air, and water, which make human habitation possible. Personal security refers to an individual's freedom from crime and violence, especially women and children who are more vulnerable. Community security refers to cultural dignity and to inter-community peace within which an individual lives and grows. Finally, political security refers to protection against human rights violations. The *Bihari* community in Bangladesh is deprived of all the above-mentioned seven specific values. They could hardly manage jobs for themselves, which reflected their economic insecurity and food insecurity as well. Inadequate medical facilities in the camps indicated their insecurity of health, thereby becoming vulnerable to various diseases and poor health with debilitating illness. Absence of ownership of land is a violation of human rights. Personal security gets

¹ Different periods mentioned from 1973 to January 1993, with the aid of different organization and diplomatic effort around 170,000 people were repatriated in 1973-1974, 4790 people were repatriated in 1977, 3rd phase of repatriation took place in 1979 for 2800 *Bihari* people, 4th phase of repatriation occurred in 1980 for 7000 *Bihari* people, 5th phase of repatriation took place in 1984 for 6000 *Bihari* people and last phase of repatriation till to date occurred in 1993 for 325 *Bihari* people.

hampered due to identity crisis of the *Bihari* people because they are not considered citizens of Bangladesh as well as they do not have any political rights to participate in party politics by which they could protect themselves from violation of human rights and other forms of criminal activities.

The phrase 'Fear of crime', as a phenomenon, is widespread in Great Britain and most western societies. Many people see crime as a major social issue and report feelings of being unsafe in the street, particularly in inner city and residence areas (Mawby & Walklate 1994). Recent crime surveys have shown that the highest levels of fear are present amongst low-income groups, paralleling their higher risk of being victim of crime (Kinsely et al 1996). Most of the *Biharis* are living under poverty line and job opportunities for them are limited due to their identity crisis or lack of citizenship status in Bangladesh. The fear of crime is a matter of concern in the society, which gained enormous attention over the past 20 to 30 years and researchers became interested in discovering the dark side of the society. The level of fear of crime depends on many factors including age, gender, ethnicity and past experience of the community (Albarta 1999). The *Biharis* are being deprived of facilities of meeting basic needs and subjected to crime in their neighborhoods by the political parties. The *Biharis* living in the camp as well as in different parts of the country do not come out of the camp at night because of the fear of being easy prey to crime. So, they avoid walking on the street at night because they might be victimized of crime and violence. The camps are safe place for the criminals and many of the poor *Biharis* are involved in various types of crimes to earn their living and 20,000 unmarried girls are at the risk of being trafficked and sold as prostitutes (ibid 2008). Our empirical data reveal that limited work opportunities compel them getting involved in unlawful activities.

REDEFINING OF BIHARI COMMUNITY

The *Bihari* community primarily focuses on a geographical location of Indian state of Bihar. "*Bihari*" originally a Hindi word, literary means a person from Bihar. In Bangladesh, the term also recognize them as non-local and Urdu speaking people (Ilias 2003). The "*Bihari*" community is also referred to as *Muhajirs* (defined by the Census of Pakistan, 1951, 'a person who has moved into Pakistan as a result of partition or fear of disturbances connected therewith'), Indian-Bangladeshi, non-locals, non-Bangladeshi, stranded Pakistanis or Urdu speaking people. The International Convention on *Biharis* held in Geneva in 1982 referred to them as non-Bangladeshi or stranded Pakistanis (Chowdhury 1992). The "*Bihari*" are such people who opposed the independence of Bangladesh, wanted to go to Pakistan but could not do so due to complication in the repatriation process. (Farzana, 2008). Now an operational definition of "*Bihari*" might be constructed for this paper is who are non-local, Urdu speaking, non – Bengali, migrated, opposed to the emergence of Bangladesh, now stranded, usually have been living in refugee camps and wanted to be repatriated to Pakistan.

OBJECTIVES

After the emergency of Bangladesh, the *Bihari* community recognized new identity that developed insecurity of their lives and livelihoods. The objective of this study is to document the experiences of crime and insecurity of the *Bihari* community in Bangladesh. The paper also shows the experiences of crime and insecurity of *Bihari* people in Bangladesh, encompasses the socioeconomic and sociopolitical impact, and tries to analyze how experiences produce the feeling of being victims of criminal activities in their daily life. On the other hand, absence of citizen of camp dwellers added a degree of vulnerability in context of social and economic life.

METHODS

THE STUDY AREA

The fieldwork was carried out in different parts of Bangladesh, where *Bihari* camps were set up after the independence of Bangladesh in both rural and urban areas (Dhaka, Syadpur, Khulna, Rangpur).

USE OF QUALITATIVE APPROACH

The ethnographic research techniques were used in building rapport with the members of the community during the fieldwork from May to September 2007. The formal and informal interview techniques, revisiting, observation, and brief conversations with the community members were administered. The long-term fieldwork helped elicit vivid experiences of crime and insecurity of the community. Advantages of qualitative approach enabled greater understandings to document the experiences of the community. Limitation of the qualitative approach is that, it is difficult to generalize the research data. But, close reading of the research paper can stimulate policy makers to think further regarding the issue.

FINDINGS

LIVING IN THE CAMPS

The poor standard of living of the *Biharis* consists of wage labour, Rickshaw pulling, small business enterprise, unemployment, lack of amenities of citizenship, absence of ownership of land and limited access to education. The *Bihari* camps are located in different parts of Bangladesh, to wit in 21 districts and the size of the population is about 300,000 (Farzana, 2008). The condition of dwelling was unhygienic due to dirt, inadequate sources of drinking water and poor sanitary system, which caused contagious and water borne diseases. Living in the camps made the residents vulnerable and fragile group since there was no security. For the fear of crime, many younger *Bihari* boys were reluctant to live in the camps. On the other hand, instances of mugging and hijacking that took place outside the camp were blamed to be the acts of the inhabitants of the camp, who were assumed to be involved in such unlawful activities. Because of their *Bihari* identity they have limited access to education. Moreover, they can hardly manage any job or any other means of living. Therefore, a few of the *Biharis* managed to achieve secondary or degree certificates by concealing their original identity. The camp children faced enormous discrimination from their schools when their identity got disclosed. Lack of sufficient livelihood options forced them to do menial jobs like, masonry, rickshaw pulling, working as day laborer, sweeper, barber, begging and some of them were involved in drug business in association with the local influential political leaders. Frustration and feeling of insecurity became part of their daily life. Sometimes, local *mastan*² and other influential leaders intruded the camp's land to begin drug business, in place of their many small businesses. Even, the children of the camps had to endure various types of comments like Pakistani *dadal*(Collaborators) or agents in the play ground by other children who did not want to play with them. So, access to playground of the local area for the *Bihari* children is limited. As a result, poverty and frustration become a part of their life.

A number of non-governmental organizations (NGO) are working in the camp providing micro-credit but there are limited numbers of income generating activities available for the *Bihari* through which they could return loans of the NGOs. One of the respondents expressed his discontent about the nature of development work that increased vulnerability and tension among them instead of making them self-reliant. Many of them had lots of expectations from the development agencies through which their lives could have changed but in reality everything appeared to be false promises. Most of the families were not solvent to pay the dowry and consequently the girls remained unmarried, thereby increasing the vulnerability and possibilities of trafficking of these girls. On the other hand, many families of *Bihari* community have given up their handloom business or weaving Benarasi sari³ in which women played a significant role for their households. But, intimidation by the local *mastan* and activists of different political parties discouraged continuing their traditional business and moreover, they did not get equitable price due to aggression of businessmen of mainstream culture. Most of the businessmen expressed with deep concern that the industry of handloom or Benarasi sari was becoming extinct completely under such circumstances. Thus, the insecurity pushed them to be involved in unfair economic activities. Dwelling in 8 feet square households described their life pattern elaborately. It was observed that in camps two meals became difficult to manage for them.

² Local hoodlum who tried to control resources by muscle

³ A kind of handloom sari, this industry was dominated sectors of income generating of the community

Case 1. Police, local *mastans* getting bribe and extortion

We are helpless. We can not protect ourselves, our sons, daughters, brothers and sisters. Most of the time our lives are made insecure by the *mastans*, drug addicts, elected political leaders, and even by the police. We are being threatened to be evicted from the camp at any time. We have to pay extortion on different national days of Bangladesh (16 December, 21 February, and 26 March) as well as bribe to the *mastans* and police. *Mastans* are backed by the political leaders and police. So, they are not worried about going to the jail. Besides, some of the camp residents, having economic hardship, fall into different traps. We have formed a committee to protect ourselves but we could not function being intimidated by the *mastans*, police and some of our people. We always are blamed by the Bangalis for whatever happens outside the camp. We do not get protection from police or others. We have to pay monthly extortion or bribe (TK 500-1,000) to the police. Harassment is increased by the police if we do not pay the extortion timely. Police will either arrest us or beat us severely because they always treat us as miscreants or terrorists in the city. Everyone of the camp has had experiences of paying bribe to the police without any reason. Therefore, women remain worried about their young boys and husbands. Even rich *Biharis* do not help us in times of need. In 2004-2005 *mastans* and local political leaders committed high rates of illegal incidents. They started drug business in the main path of the Camp. They tease, use abusive language and pull our sisters' scurf. Our young boys also became interested in getting involved in drug business and using Drug. Incidents of mugging also increased outside the camp area. The *mastans* demanded extortion money from their shop and weaving house. As a consequence, we formed a committee to protect us from the dangerous effect of such activities in the camp. Main purpose of the committee was to protect the young generation from the business of drugs and becoming addicts. We also arranged meeting with the Officer Thana in-charge of the police station a year back to mitigate terrorism and drug selling in the camp. We went to the police station but the police were reluctant to pay heed to our complaints against them, rather they filed a false theft case against us using back dates as a result of which 5 people were arrested. Moreover, police threatened us to file more cases if we tried to protest against the drug business. Moreover, their rate of extortion increased compared to the past; and they even pressure us to go to their meeting and procession. They threaten us to beat physically and even intimidate to send us to jail if we do not join. When we protested they locked our business store, filed cases against two of our leading protestors which were backed by the police and local political leaders. Because of the constant fear of being harassed they went away from the camp.

ACCESS TO RIGHTS

In social life, everyone has right to get justice as member of the society. Sometimes, the situation worsened if quarrels took place between the camp dwellers and people living outside the camp. Local elite and local government bodies provoked Bangalis to attack the *Biharis* rather than trying to resolve the conflict through *Salish*⁴. On the other hand, social position and identity endangered their lives when the question of franchise and citizenship came up. The data also revealed that the forms of insecurity developed by the same group or inter-community who were financially solvent, which enabled them to live outside the camps with the mainstream society. Even, the rich *Bihari*, who were not residing in the camp and built good terms with the mainstream culture through business, abstained from resisting such ruthless attack on the poor *Biharis*. On the other hand, the poor *Biharis* were reluctant to go to law enforcing agencies or other local bodies because of previous bitter experiences. Under these circumstances, the poor *Biharis* of the camps had to endure much discrimination through rich *Biharis* and local people because their identity did not allow them to raise voice against such type of violence and crime. The miscreants and perpetrators wandered in and around the camp after attacking or assaulting the camps dwellers without any hesitation. These perpetrators

⁴ Informal justice system took place in the village level to resolute the conflict among the villagers.

attacked these poor *Biharis* under the political clout of the influential leaders. The data reveal that the perpetrators of rape case did not get punishment yet. In the rape case the local people reconciled the perpetrators of the crime and the victim rather than sending the case to Police station or court. Even, the perpetrators escaped from punishment doing many other criminal activities like beating the poor *Biharis* encroaching on the land of the camp, conducting drug business with the aid of influential political activists of the area. Deprivation in getting medical facilities was common form of insecurity by which they hardly received proper treatment by using the camp's address. Internal political life was also got exacerbated because of the influence of local leader. The informal justice system of the camps also got interfered by the *Biharis* people, who had affiliation with other social or political bigwigs⁵ exploited the network to get favours from these political leaders as well as from local *mastans*.

Case 3. Obstacles in getting social rights

Akmal, Jabber, Ismail, Khalil and Sharif all were 16 years of age. Despite their age three of them studied at class four and two at class six, because of poverty, disinterest, insult and lack of government support. They talked about their experiences as *Bihari* and violation of rights because of their identities.

'In our camp we can afford educational expenses up to a limited class (up to three) because of our economic hardship. Those who completed class five could not continue further because of their *Bihari* identity. Those who dare to continue are frequently insulted for their failure to use Bangali language properly and teachers do not give much attention to them. Therefore, a good number of camp students stopped going to school. We are not allowed to play at the local playground. Even when we founded a cricket club some of the Bangalis tore it down. They threatened us not to do such things again; and labeled us as *dalals* of Pakistan (Stooges of Pakistan). Where shall we go? We do not get work, cannot go to school. Bangali leader compelled us to sell drug, to attend and partake in party meetings and processions. We are bound to go there otherwise they beat us up, threaten to send us to jail. We do not get justice from anywhere, only because we are *Bihari*. Our Ward commissioner does not like to come to us and solve our crisis; police also can pick up anyone of us anytime. They do not judge who are criminals and who are not. Moreover, we do not get proper medical treatment. During the flood we get very little relief. In camp we are facing the never-ending trouble of sanitation and water facilities. We are suffering from various diseases (diarrhoea, jaundice), but we do not have much money to visit doctor. When we board on the public bus and speak in our language, other passengers scold us. We are living within a very narrow space and we are not permitted to live outside the camp.'

THE INCIDENCE OF CRIME OUTSIDE THE CAMP

Sources and forms of insecurity resulted from various forms of criminal activities such as mugging, robbery, stealing outside the camp at night or evening. Consequently, physical attack or assaults came down on the camp residents, especially; young boys were more vulnerable and were frequently victimized under these circumstances. Feeling of fear intensified at night and liked to confine themselves to their camps until the darkness fell. On the other hand, there was negative attitude prevalent in the area that all miscreants live in the camps who were lawbreakers of the area. There was limited scope to manage a job, because of their being the resident of the camp. To some extent, they were branded as perpetrators without doing any kind of criminal activities in the area and paid a huge compensation either physically or economically. Local *mastans* demanded a portion of the relief that was donated by foreign or

⁵ Political leader who were supposed to bring ill luck to the fate of the *Bihari* community

Islamic NGOs to the poor *Biharis*. It was reported that chaotic situation emerged during the distribution period of relief in the camp between the *Bihari* and local *mastan*. A good number of committees were formed in different times to resist such types of conspiracy against the camps with the effort of SPGRC⁶ (Stranded Pakistani General Repatriation Committee), but the committee hardly operated due to the increasing pressure of the major political parties' leaders. They rarely found trusted friends from the mainstream society, who could extend their helping hands in times of need of the community.

DRUG BUSINESS, POLITICAL LEADER AND LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICES

'Even dogs lead more peaceful lives than us and able to bark here and there, but we could do nothing as well as our voices do not reach outside the camp because we are Bihari.'

The camps dwellers observed many awful incidences in their daily life that came down to their fates with various forms through the musclemen, miscreants and perpetrators of the evildoers. Sometimes, many criminal activities took place in the camp with the collaboration of law enforcement agencies that increased the threats of life and livelihood of the camp dwellers. So, sources of insecurity were numerous that made instability and vulnerability to the camp dwellers who hardly got escape from vicious circle due to having camp identity in Bangladesh.

The drug business endangered the lives of the camp dwellers and it was considered that every household was involved in the same occupation. The drug peddlers used the camp as the safest place to run their business because the poor *Bihari* could not protest against the drug peddlers who were affiliated either with the political parties or local influential persons and got immense support from them. Most of the respondents claimed that local political leaders introduced drug business to the camps because it was a unique strategy by which they tried to control the resource of the camp. However, the poor *Bihari* who could not manage any work got involved as retailers or users of drugs. In consequences, the camp was divided into two groups, drug seller backed by drug peddler and rest of the poor *Bihari* who had little power to ban drug business in the camp. As a result, their young generation was becoming addicted to drug. Protesting and resistance against drug business brought ill luck to the camp dwellers because leaders of major political parties or local influential persons in association with law enforcing agencies took advantage from the drug peddlers. Many of the camp dwellers were victimized and tortured because of raising voice against these drug peddlers. Sometimes, the drug peddlers forcefully tried to engage the *Biharis* in drug dealing and threatened to torture them. The law enforcing agencies raided the camp frequently during the deterioration of law and order situation of the state, assuming that the criminals had been living there and arrested the camp dwellers without any reason.

GENDERED VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Women generally worried more than men about all offences, with rape causing the greatest concern and have much greater levels of worry about walking in the streets at night (Mireless-Black *et al* 1997). The women of the camp believe in leading an Islamic way of life but feeling of insecurity intensified when strangers intruded their residential areas without prior permission, which tarnished their *Purdha*.⁷ Most of them expressed the nature of vulnerability with deep concern that anonymous persons entered into their camps and took photographs of their lives, which also violated their privacy and *purdha* as well as aroused fear of unexpected incidents. Women could hardly come out of their respective households at night in the fear of

⁶ Mr. Alhaj M. Nasim Khan founded and lead the committee in 1977 with the aim of being repatriated to Pakistan.

⁷ Veil system of Islamic life, being the members of Muslim community tried to maintain veiling system in their daily life.

being physically assaulted or victimized by the outsiders or drug users. Poor and inadequate sanitary system, located at the edge of the camp increased their vulnerability and fear of sexual harassment, especially at night. Teasing and sexual harassment were found to be common forms of insecurity experienced by women of the camp. In many cases, they therefore confined themselves to their households instead of going to school or getting involved in some occupations outside the camp for the fear of being victimized or assaulted further by the outsiders either verbally or physically. However, parents of school-going girls could not protest against the perpetrators in the fear of being assaulted. Thus, these types of insecurity kept them away from income generating activities, thereby intensifying their poverty as well as increasing chances of trafficking or prostitution. Poor infrastructure and inadequate protection system of camps helped the perpetrators to have easy access to the camp, which aroused feelings of vulnerability and insecurity in their daily lives. Many women of *Bihari* camps working as housemaids expressed their apprehension of being sexually harassed by the household heads. On the other hand, all families were not involved in the same type of occupation like weaving *benarasi* sari or related activities. Thus, economic insecurity pushed them to be involved in many degrading activities like trafficking or prostitution. They shared their experiences related to crime and violence in different situation and occasion, which intensified their feeling of insecurity and fear of further attack.

Case-3 Sexual harassment

Surayia is a 34 years old woman who works as a weaver stated her story. “There is no security system in our camp. There is no boundary or protection wall or gate in our camp. Everyone easily enters our camp at any time and even without prior permission. Teasing and sexual harassment takes place regularly against the camp's girls both in the work place and in the street. We feel the highest amount of insecurity using the toilet path since toilets are considerably far away from our residence. We have few toilets (5 toilets: 2 for women and 3 for men, for 500 residents of the camp this number is really inadequate) and their conditions are very poor. Women feel insecure to go to the toilet alone. Bangali and *Bihari* young people tease and harass the girls pulling the edge of the scarf, even they touch our bodies while we are going or returning from bathroom/toilet or elsewhere at night which had happened several times. Also we are assaulted with slang language. Due to my elder son's fever, my sister went to toilet at night alone. One hour passed but she didn't come back. I was anxious. I saw a large gathering of people on the ground. I came down from 3rd floor. And I heard a voice of crying. I tried to understand what had happened and found her crying. I was informed that two boys hid themselves behind the toilet. When my sister entered the toilet they locked the door silently. Ruhela having failed to open the door several times started shouting and then the boys opened the door and one of them took off her scurf and another one hugged her forcefully. Suddenly when another woman approached towards the toilet boys went away. Women called the community members and Ruhella felt ashamed when the members asked why she did go to the toilet alone. And in the following week she had to leave the camp because of the humiliation of the community members. Suraiya also claimed that few of the young girls who used to go to school were bound to stop their education and going to the school because of regular teasing. In this context when my son protested the unlawful activities, some Bangali boys beat him up severely and shaved off his head.

POLITICS OF VOTE AND VOTE BANK

The *Bihari* communities are not considered citizens of Bangladesh and they are not allowed to cast vote in national elections⁸. But major political parties demanded their allegiance and encouraged them to cast fake votes and pressed to attend party processions and programmes

⁸ Local government is consisted of four tiers and required to holding election to control local administrative unit.

held frequently on the eve of upcoming election. Sometimes, local political leaders showed their respective party's popularity before the mass people by rounding up the *Biharis* at the meeting place. The political leaders and local influential leaders forced the camp dwellers to participate in the political party's campaign. The camps got priority when election drew near and some political leaders forcibly employed the poor *Biharis* for attacking their rival supporters or leaders giving an amount of money. Consequently, all the dwellers of the camps had to put up with untold torture and attack since the main perpetrators of that incidence remained unidentified. The camp dwellers sarcastically called the camp 'vote pocket of political leaders'. Certain amount TK.50 to 70 was supposed to be paid per person if fake voters went to the booth for casting false vote during election. Development works like constructing roads or drainage system rarely took place through local government in the camp. Absence of government facilities like VGD⁹, Vulnerable group food, and old age allowance worsened their situation. Thus, the camp life was beleaguered with different nuisances like unclean drainage system, malnutrition of the children, unemployment, and so on.

FEAR OF ATTACK

Tension and anxiety prevail in the mind of *Biharis* when the country observes different national days.¹⁰ Even school-going children who were not in anyway involved in the treacherous events of 1971 remain fearful of being victimized. Then, they avoided coming out of their house because of being embarrassed on the ground of their anti-Bangladeshi stance by the political activists or *mastan*. Even, they hardly found trusted friends who could support them and protest against the attack on the community. The young generation of *Bihari* population reported humiliating attitude of the local people that hindered their healthy mental growth and obstructed them from coping with the Bangalis. As a result, children lost interest in education and became child labourers in local industries or factories, but different forms of discrimination in the work place engendered much frustration in their mind. Generation gap was also found in their discussion, young generation claimed their citizenship in Bangladesh because they were born on the independent soil of Bangladesh while the older generation preferred to be repatriated to Pakistan. The young generation did not want to be blamed for what happened in 1971. They argued in favour of obtaining citizenship status in Bangladesh on the ground of birth as per the constitution.¹¹ Many young *Biharis* expressed deep concern of not getting any fair opportunity to work or even gaining minority status like Hindu, Buddha and Christian community. A group of four women and six men made a petition to Bangladesh High Court, demanding citizenship in August 2003. The High Court declared their citizenship status and voting right considering their birth status in Bangladesh. But Bangladesh government hardly pays any heed to the verdict of the High Court (ibid 2008). Thus, the population of the camp is divided into two groups, one believed in having better opportunity in Bangladesh and the other wanted to be repatriated to Pakistan. Several types of internal committees have been formed namely Stranded Pakistanis General Repatriation Committee (SPGRC), 'the Committee for Rehabilitation of Non-Bangali,' and Stranded Pakistanis Youth Repatriation Movement (SPYRM) with different objectives. Local *mastan* and wings of different political parties claimed to be paying certain amount of money as subscription *chanda* (extortion) on the eve of the observance of country's national days (ibid). Even, they pressurized the camp dwellers if they delayed to pay their demand. Most of the camp dwellers reported that insecurity and tension emerged acutely when the national days appeared and they feared to be attacked on ground of being *razakar* in 1971.¹² The younger generation wanted to escape from such humiliating or deplorable status. Refugee and Migratory Movement Research Unit (RMMRU)

⁹ Vulnerable group development

¹⁰ 21 February for language day, 26 March for independence day, 16 December for victory day of Bangladesh

¹¹ Claiming citizenship by the virtue of birth status of Bangladesh

¹² During the war of 1971, People who were against the Bangladesh and supported the Pakistan.

conducted a survey in Dhaka in 1993, which reveals that significant *Bihari* people identified themselves as Bangladeshi and wanted to get the citizenship of Bangladesh and 35% wanted to repatriate.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

We captured different dimensions through which the community experienced a lot of criminal activities in different times. Living in the camp labeled the community beyond the mainstream culture. They experienced how they became vulnerable. Their social and economic life has become worsen further of Crisis of identity and diplomatic scuffle between the two countries. The forms of insecurity and discrimination were observed in every sphere of their life including the violation of human rights and access to justice, and denial of basic rights. Their feeling of fear intensified at different times while the mainstream population celebrated different national days. The generation gap between young and older brought another debate claiming the Bangladeshi citizenship. The younger generation wanted Bangladeshi citizenship while the old generation was ready to repatriate. Voting politics during national election pushed them further to vulnerability because different political parties pressed them to cast false vote. The unhygienic environment of the camp and limited space of work pushed the women in degrading arena where they could hardly maintain their 'Islamic way of life'. The anxiety and tension of being victim demoralized to come forward.

Social and economic life became difficult due to vacillating hope and desire to repatriate to Pakistan. On the other hand, securing job with their *Bihari* status was difficult. Lack of working opportunity induced them to involve in criminal activities that were mainstay of unemployed generation. Deprivations in getting basic rights address the camps as poverty stricken community and lack of identity widened their experiences regarding crime and insecurity. The conditions of the camps are deplorable because reconstruction or repair did not take place by government or any other humanitarian organization after the inception of the camps in 1971. The camp would be formed as museum of stateless community if the different humanitarian organization does not pay attention for its practical solution. The overwhelming experiences of crime and insecurity discouraged them to undertake any social and economic activities, which evolved further tension of becoming victim of crime or depriving basic rights.

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Figure 1. Sources of insecurity

