

M.Phil Dissertation

Human Rights Practiced and Community Development Approaches for Stranded Biharis in Bangladesh: A Study in Dhaka City

This Dissertation is Presented to the Institute of Social Welfare and
Research, University of Dhaka as Fulfillment of the Requirement for the
Degree of Master of Philosophy (M. Phil)



**Institute of Social Welfare and Research
University of Dhaka
Dhaka-1205**

M.Phil. Dissertation

Human Rights Practiced and Community Development Approaches for Stranded Biharis in Bangladesh: A Study in Dhaka City

Researcher

Khandakar Nahid Hasano

Registration No: 249, Session: 2016-2017

Institute of Social Welfare and Research

University of Dhaka, Dhaka-1205

Supervisor

Dr. Sk. Tauhidul Islam

Professor

Institute of Social Welfare and Research

University of Dhaka, Dhaka-1205



Institute of Social Welfare and Research

University of Dhaka, Dhaka-1205

Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my beloved parents for their endless support and guidance, and to my children for their love and inspiration.

Declaration of Ownership

I hereby declare that this M.Phil. dissertation entitled “Human Rights Practiced and Community Development Approaches for Stranded Biharis in Bangladesh: A Study in Dhaka City” has been prepared for the degree of Master of Philosophy under the guidance and supervision of Dr. Sk. Tauhidul Islam, Professor, Institute of Social Welfare and Research, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh. This research has been conducted by me with my own effort, and all relevant information has been incorporated accordingly. I have consulted various academic sources and literature in the preparation of this dissertation, and proper references have been provided in all cases. I further declare that this dissertation has not been submitted, either in whole or in part, to any other institution or for any other degree or assessment. For the fulfillment of the requirements of the Master of Philosophy (M.Phil.) degree in Social Welfare, I am submitting this dissertation to the Institute of Social Welfare and Research, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Khandakar Nahid Hasano

M. Phil Researcher

Registration No: 249, Session: 2016-2017

Institute of Social Welfare and Research

University of Dhaka, Dhaka-1205

ড. শেখ তৌহীদুল ইসলাম

এম এস (গোথেনবার্গ, সুইডেন) পি এইচ ডি
অধ্যাপক
সমাজকল্যাণ ও গবেষণা ইনস্টিটিউট
ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়
ঢাকা-১২০৫, বাংলাদেশ
+৮৮ ০১৫২১৪৩৪৬৮৭



Dr. Sk. Tauhidul Islam

MS (Gothenburg, Sweden), Ph.D
Professor
Institute of Social Welfare & Research
University of Dhaka
Dhaka-1205
+88 01521434687 (cell)
E-Mail: sktauhidul@du.ac.bd

Certificate of Approval

This is to certify that Khandakar Nahid Hasano, an M.Phil. researcher of the Institute of Social Welfare and Research, University of Dhaka, has successfully completed her dissertation entitled “Human Rights Practiced and Community Development Approaches for Stranded Biharis in Bangladesh: A Study in Dhaka City” under my direct supervision. To the best of my knowledge, this is an original and authentic piece of research work.

I am pleased to recommend and forward this dissertation to the University of Dhaka, through the Institute of Social Welfare and Research, for necessary evaluation and fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Philosophy (M.Phil.) in Social Welfare.

(Prof. Dr. Sk. Tauhidul Islam)

Research Supervisor

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Almighty Allah for granting me the strength, patience, and opportunity to successfully complete this dissertation and my M.Phil. program.

I sincerely acknowledge the members of the stranded Bihari community in Dhaka who generously shared their time, experiences, and perspectives for this study. Their cooperation, openness, and resilience made this research meaningful and insightful.

I am profoundly grateful to my respected supervisor, Dr. Sk. Tauhidul Islam, Professor at the Institute of Social Welfare and Research, University of Dhaka, for his invaluable guidance, constructive suggestions, and continuous support throughout this research. His patience and encouragement have been instrumental in completing this study.

I would also like to extend my heartfelt thanks to my family, my parents and children for their unconditional love, encouragement, and constant inspiration. Their support has been a source of strength throughout my academic journey.

Finally, I express my sincere appreciation to my colleagues, well-wishers, and all the faculty members of the Institute of Social Welfare and Research, University of Dhaka, for their cooperation, guidance, and support in enriching my knowledge and facilitating the completion of this research.

With Regards-

Khandakar Nahid Hasano

M.Phil. Researcher

Registration No: 249, Session: 2016-2017

Institute of Social Welfare and Research

University of Dhaka, Dhaka-1205

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

HRP	Human Rights Practice
CDA	Community Development Approach
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
HRBA	Human Rights-Based Approach
SLF	Sustainable Livelihoods Framework
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
KIIs	Key Informant Interview(s)
BBS	Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
ID	Identification (e.g., National ID)
NID	National Identity Card (Bangladesh context)
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
CBO	Community-Based Organization
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
UN	United Nations

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Declaration of Ownership.....	I
Certificate of Approval	II
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	III
ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS.....	IV
TABLE OF CONTENTS	V
LIST OF TABLES	IX
LIST OF FIGURES	X
ABSTRACT	XI
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Introduction.....	2
1.2 Statement of the Problem.....	6
1.3 Significance of the Study.....	10
1.4 Research Objectives.....	12
1.4.1 General Objective	12
1.4.2 Specific Objectives	12
1.5 Research Questions.....	12
1.6 Operational Definition of the Key Concepts	13
1.6.1 Human Rights	13
1.6.2 Community Development.....	13
1.6.3 Stranded Bihari	14
1.6.4 Statelessness and Contested Citizenship	14
1.6.5 Forced Migration and Historical Displacement.....	14
1.6.6 Urban Marginalization and Camp-Based Settlement	15
1.6.7 Social Exclusion and Stigmatization	15
1.6.8 Legal Recognition and Judicial Intervention.....	15

1.7 Scope of the Study	16
1.8 Construction of the Thesis	18
1.9 Limitations of the Study	19
1.10 Area Profile	20
1.10.1 Bangladesh.....	20
1.10.2 Dhaka	24
1.10.3 Mohammadpur (Geneva Camp)	25
1.10.4 Mirpur (Kalshi Camp)	26
1.11 Conclusion	28
CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	29
2.1 Introduction.....	30
2.2 Historical Migration, Identity Formation and Political Roots	30
2.3 Statelessness, Citizenship Transition and Legal Recognition.....	33
2.4 Repatriation Process and International Political Dynamics.....	34
2.5 Socioeconomic Conditions, Livelihoods and Camp-Based Living Reality	36
2.6 Human Rights Violations and Political Exclusion.....	37
2.7 Conclusion	38
CHAPTER III: MODELS AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	39
3.1 Introduction.....	40
3.2 Relevant Models	40
3.2.1 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).....	40
3.2.2 Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA).....	41
3.2.3 Capability Approach	42
3.2.4 Participatory Development Model.....	42
3.2.5 Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLF).....	42
3.2.6 Right to the City Approach	43
3.2.7 Integrated Community Development Model	43

3.3 Theoretical Framework.....	43
3.3.1 Citizenship Theory.....	43
3.3.2 Structural Inequality Theory	44
3.3.3Community Development Theory	44
3.3.4 Social Identity Theory	45
3.3.5 Dependency Theory	45
3.3.6 Rights-Based Social Justice Theory	45
3.4 Conclusion	46
CHAPTER IV: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	47
4.1 Introduction.....	48
4.2 Methodology.....	48
4.3 Study Design.....	50
4.4 Study Site and Area	51
4.5 Study Period.....	52
4.6 Target Population and Sample Population.....	52
4.7 Selection of Study Participants.....	52
4.7.1 Inclusion Criteria	52
4.7.2 Exclusion Criteria	52
4.8 Sample Size	53
4.9 Sampling Technique	53
4.10 Quality Control and Quality Assurance	54
4.11 Data Management and Analysis	55
4.12 Ethical Considerations	56
4.13 Conclusion	56
CHAPTER V: FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS	57
5.1 Introduction.....	58
5.2 Socio-Demographic and Economic Conditions of Stranded Biharis	58

5.3 Existing Human Rights Conditions of Stranded Biharis	77
5.4 Major Human Rights Challenges Faced by the Bihari Community	100
5.5 Existing Community Development Initiatives	120
5.6 Policy Recommendations for Improving Human Rights Protection and Strengthening Community Development Strategies	143
5.7 Conclusion	169
CHAPTER VI: SUMMING UP THE RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	170
6.1 Introduction.....	171
6.2 Summing up the Results	171
6.3 Discussion.....	176
6.4 Conclusion	178
CHAPTER VII: RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION	179
7.1 Introduction.....	180
7.2 Recommendations.....	180
7.3 Suggestions for Future Research	182
7.4 Conclusion	184
REFERENCES	185
APPENDICES	194
Appendix01: Case Study Guideline.....	194
Appendix02: FGDs Guideline	198
Appendix03: KIIs Guideline.....	201
Appendix 04: The Informed Consent	204

LIST OF TABLES

Table No.	Title	Page No.
Table 01	Key Perspectives Highlighting the Significance of the Study	10
Table 02	Construction of the Thesis	18
Table 03	Description of Selected Study Sites in Dhaka City	52
Table 04	Distribution of Sample Size and Data Collection Methods	54

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure No.	Title	Page No.
Figure 01	Map of Bangladesh (Highlighting Divisions, Districts and Major Cities)	22
Figure 02	Map of Bangladesh (Highlighting Residence of Stranded Bihari Community in Bangladesh)	23
Figure 03	Map of Dhaka District (Highlighting Major Cities)	24
Figure 04	Map of Mohammadpur (Highlighting Geneva Camp)	26
Figure 05	Map of Mirpur (Highlighting Kalshi Camp)	27
Figure 06	Universal Declaration of Human Rights	42
Figure 07	Research Methodology	50
Figure 08	Classroom Learning Environment of Students in Geneva Camp	65
Figure 09	Dominant Occupational Patterns of Bihari Community	69
Figure 10	Housing Environment of Bihari Community at Geneva Camp	75
Figure 11	Availability and Accessibility of Healthcare Services among Bihari Community at Geneva Camp	86
Figure 12	Quality, Safety, and Structural Housing Condition of Bihari Community	90
Figure 13	Sources of Water of Bihari Community	139

ABSTRACT

THESIS TITLE:HUMAN RIGHTS PRACTICEDAND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT APPROACHES FOR STRANDED BIHARIS IN BANGLADESH: A STUDY IN DHAKA CITY

Author: Khandakar Nahid Hasano

Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Sk. Tauhidul Islam

Keywords:Stranded Biharis, Human Rights, Community Development, Urban Marginalization, Citizenship and Statelessness, Social Exclusion, Bangladesh

*(Background)*The Urdu-speaking Bihari community in Bangladesh emerged from forced migration during the 1947 Partition and subsequent displacement after the 1971 Liberation War. Although this is partly legalized, they still suffer socio-economic marginalization, stateless-like status, and restricted rights access, especially in the city of Dhaka in urban camp settlements.

(Objectives) This study aims to examine the status of human rights practices and evaluate the effectiveness of community development approaches among stranded Biharis in Dhaka. It examines the socio-economic conditions, presents the main human rights issues, evaluates the existence of already implemented interventions and suggests the policy recommendations to improve the outcomes of inclusion, guaranteeing of human rights and sustainable development.

(Methodology) The study adopts a qualitative exploratory case study design focusing on Geneva Camp and Kalshi Camp in Dhaka. Using purposive and snowball sampling, data were gathered via case studies (12), Focus Group Discussions (04) and Key Informant Interviews (06). NVivo was employed to analyze the data based on thematic analysis to document lived experiences and trends in issues related to rights and development.

*(Findings)*The findings reveal that the stranded Bihari community continues to face multidimensional deprivation shaped by historical marginalization and structural exclusion. In socio-demographic terms the population represents a gradual shift in generations with younger generations being more occupied in education and livelihoods but limited by poverty, early marriage, and high dependency rates. Livelihoods are still economically stable with livelihoods centering around low-paid livelihoods, which are informal and lack an upward mobility ladder. In terms of human rights, partial progress

is evident in citizenship recognition and access to identity documentation, especially among younger individuals. Nevertheless, there are still gaps in accessing education, medical care, shelter, and social protection services because of the monetary constraints, bureaucracy, and societal prejudices. Poor health and environmental risks are further enhanced by overpopulated dwellings, poor facilities and insecure tenure. The major problems involve low access to the formal jobs, the institutions which lack efficiency and effectiveness, social stigma and poor political representation. Community development programs such as skills training, microfinance, and education programs are not sufficiently effective because they lack coverage, poor coordination and structural constraints. Although there are improvements, especially in regards to awareness and access to services, these interventions have not produced sustainable and large-scale transformation in the community.

(Conclusion) The study concludes that despite incremental progress, significant gaps remain between legal recognition and actual rights realization for the Bihari community. To counter these issues, there is need to integrate the inclusive, rights-based policies, service delivery and coordination of development to achieve sustainable integration, social equity and the promotion of improved well-being among this poor urban group

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

1.2 Statement of the Problem

1.3 Significance of the Study

1.4 Research Objectives

1.5 Research Questions

1.6 Operational Definition of the Key Concepts

1.7 Scope of the Study

1.8 Construction of the Thesis

1.9 Limitations of the Study

1.10 Area Profile

1.11 Conclusion

1.1 Introduction

In the South Asian context, the term “Bihari” usually denotes Urdu-speaking Muslim migrants who migrated to the Indian state of Bihar and other neighboring states (Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and West Bengal) around the time of the Partition of British India in 1947 (Ghosh, 2007; Huque, 1990). In the past, Bihar was a state that was characterized by high levels of social-economic backwardness and frequent communal conflicts between Hindus and Muslims in the British colonial period (Azad, 1988; Hamid, 1967). The communal violence before the Partitions especially riots of 1946 led to mass displacement of Muslims who settled in Bihar and the nearby areas most of whom migrated to East Pakistan then to find protection and safeguarding of their religious beliefs (Weiner, 1996; Malik, 2000). It is estimated that almost a million Muslims migrated to East Pakistan and thousands died in communal violence during this time (Farzana, 2009; Sen, 2000).

Various of these migrants, who would come to be termed Muhajirs after the formation of Pakistan in 1947, arrived in East Pakistan and West Pakistan especially to the urban and industrial areas (Ahmed, 1988; Chowdhury, 1992). In East Pakistan, Biharis were frequently taken up in low-skilled and semi-skilled jobs like jute mills, railway and industrial work since their education was limited and their language was close to the Urdu language which was also advanced as a Pakistani state language (Huque, 1990; Lynch, 2005). At the time they were frequently viewed as loyalists of the West Pakistani ruling elite and the Muslim League further enhancing their uniqueness as a socio-political group in comparison with the Bengali speaking majority (Gorman, 2006; Rahman, 2003).

In 1971, however, there was a significant transformation of the socio-political situation during the Bangladesh Liberation War. The political affiliation of many Biharis to the Pakistani military made them seem to be collaborators of the military (Farzana, 2009; Van Schendel, 2009). Consequently, after the independence of Bangladesh unleashed violence and vengeance on the representatives of the Bihari, people killed, displaced, and seized their property (Sen, 2000; Kelley, 2010). It is estimated that 70, 000-100,000 Users of the Urdu language were killed during the violence in the post-war period, and thousands have been displaced to temporary camps under international humanitarian protection (Malik, 2000; Rahman, 2017).

The newly-independent state of Bangladesh did not consider Biharis to be citizens initially, and even Pakistan did not consider repatriation on a massive scale, which placed the group in a long-term condition of legal and political statelessness (Van Schendel, 2009; Farzana, 2009). This status is what Arendt (1958) termed as the right to have rights, in which citizenship is the main pillar of the right to access all other human rights. Without official status as citizens, many Biharis simply became stateless in practice, although it remained an issue of debate whether they were legally citizens or not (Blitz and Lynch, 2011; Zimmermann et al., 2011).

Temporary settlements of refugees eventually gave rise to permanent urban camps (especially in Dhaka where the biggest agglomeration of Bihari residents is currently situated) (Islam & Ahmed, 2023; Minority Rights Group International, 2018). Today, it is estimated that more than 100 Bihari camps in Bangladesh, about 45 of them in Dhaka, among them the famous Geneva Camp in Mohammadpur in Bangladesh with about 25,000 citizens (MRG, 2018). Such camps are described in the context of enormous population density, a lack of housing facilities, poor access to the basic means of living, including sanitation, clean water, and electricity (Islam and Ahmed, 2023; Ullah, 2026).

The fact that the living stigma of urban marginalization and structural exclusion exists is reflected by the living conditions of stranded Biharis. In most cases, families reside in single room shelters that are overcrowded and share few sanitation amenities (Rahman, 2017). They raise the susceptibility of communicable illnesses and overall health risks to the population, restrict privacy, dignity, and safety (Kumar, 2023). The lack of formal land tenure and legal status of the buildings that people live in also subjects them to eviction risks and underdevelopment (Farzana, 2009; Haider, 2016).

The Bihari community still faces great limitations in education and employment. There is a large disparity between the literacy rates of the Biharis and the rest of the nation considering that this group has been poorly integrated into the formal schooling systems and are also caught up in extreme poverty (Lynch, 2005; Rahman, 2003). As a result, an incredible number of people are forced to work in informal and low-paid jobs: rickshaw drivers, barbers, tailors, meat workers and carriers (Islam & Ahmed, 2023; Kumar, 2023). This labor marginalization is a continuation of poverty between generations and it restricts social mobility to the upper class.

Citizenship access has also been a thorn in the flesh as well as access to the state services. Despite a historic High Court decision in 2008 where a section of the population considered a Bihari community has obtained citizenship and the right to vote, especially those who were born after 1971, it has been inconsistently implemented (Rahman, 2017; Ullah, 2026). Even today, many Biharis continue to have problems with getting national identity cards, passports, and other legal documents to have access to formal employment and health and mobility rights (Farzana, 2009; Chhotray and McConnell, 2018). This is a case of suspended citizenship as scholars have noted that a formal legal status does not convert into any actual rights on the ground (Bosniak, 2007; Sen, 1999).

Socio-political stigma and historical memory are further problematic in human rights of stranded Biharis. People still perceive them to have been intertwined with the Pakistani regime during the Liberation War, which is carried in to public attitudes and institutional action against the community (Van Schendel, 2009; Khan, 2018). It is reported that there are cases of discrimination in access to healthcare, education, and government services, and social exclusion by the mainstream Bengali society (Islam & Ahmed, 2023; Minority Rights Group International, 2018). Such dynamics of exclusion lead to what Chatterji (2012) refers to as bare citizenship whereby people have legal status but are not actually enjoying rights.

Complexity and fragmentation also exist in internal processes taking place in the Bihari community. There exist split ups between those who argue that repatriation back to Pakistan should be considered, and the ones that want to be fully integrated in Bangladeshi society (Moonis, 2004; Ghosh, 2007). Whereas the older generations tend to support the process of repatriation of Pakistani laborers through the efforts of such a group as the Stranded Pakistani General Repatriation Committee, younger generations start to define Bangladesh as their native home and insist on equal citizenship rights (RMMRU, 1993; The Daily Manabjomin, 2000). Such internal disjunctions amplify the transforming nature of identity and belonging as well as political aspiration within the society.

Theoretically, people have ceased to perceive citizenship as legal status only and now view it as a multi-dimensional process comprising of civil, political, social, and psychological dimensions (Marshall, 1964; Carens, 2000; Bauboeck, 1994). Modern

researchers argue that effective citizenship is essential not only formally but also practically, that is, rights and services are provided to them (Shachar, 2009; Shaw, 1998). In this aspect, the Bihari case illustrates the disconnection between the legal citizenship and the lived citizenship in the postcolonial states (Chhotray & McConnell, 2018; Mitra, 2012).

Governmental and non-governmental agencies have initiated community development programs to help deal with the Bihari population socio-economic conditions. They are skill development projects, microfinance projects, and informal education projects to enhance livelihoods and integration into society (Kumar, 2023; Islam and Ahmed, 2023). Nevertheless, these interventions have not achieved much because of structural constraints, absence of steady funding, organization absence of centralization and structural social discrimination (Ullah, 2026; Rahman, 2003).

The case of stranded Biharis in Bangladesh is an intersectional issue of statelessness, poverty in urban Bangladesh context, and human rights deprivation. Although there is partial legal acceptance, a significant proportion of the members of the community still feel excluded in the access to basic rights and services, and this poses some critical questions on the effectiveness of the processes of formulating and executing the policies and governance in the establishment of equitable development (Farzana, 2009; Van Schendel, 2009). The existence of these issues reaffirms the rationale of an all-inclusive study of the current human rights practices and community development strategies to deal with the realities on the ground as experienced by the Bihari community in the city of Dhaka.

In this regard, this study aims at exploring the intersection of law recognition, service delivery and socio-economic development. It will examine the magnitude of realizing human rights in practice, assess effectiveness of intervention community development initiatives in use, and outline policy gaps within that still cripple comprehensive integration and empowerment of the Bihari community in Bangladesh.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Bangladesh is a South Asian nation with almost 170 million people, a long history of forced migration, displacement and inflows of refugees due to geopolitical conflict, partition and environmental vulnerability. Throughout the changing periods of history, various displaced peoples stayed in the country, such as Urdu speaking migrants following the Partition of British India in 1947, some ten million refugees in 1971 Liberation War, and the massive influx of Rohingya refugees, an ethnic community in Myanmar, in 2017. Furthermore, Bangladesh remains extremely vulnerable to climate-related catastrophes, and it is estimated that in 2050 the nation might absorb more than 13 million climate-induced internal migrants because of flooding, cyclones and river erosion (World Bank, 2021; UNHCR, 2020). The Bihari transnational community trapped midway in this larger migration and displacement scenario symbolizes one of the most longstanding and complicated instances of urban statelessness of citizenship in South Asia.

The Bihari people in Bangladesh (also known as stranded Pakistanis, Urdu violators or Far, 300,000-400,000 people) constitute approximately 500,000 Urdu-speaking residents of Bangladesh, who had mostly migrated during the Partition of 1947, to the developing state of Bangladesh, predominantly in the Indian states of B These migrants took residence in East Pakistan which was then, based on religious identity, believed to have economic opportunities and also based on allegiance towards the newly formed state of Pakistan (Farzana, 2009). Even though they shared the same religious identity with the Bengali Muslim majority, they were linguistically and culturally different since they spoke Urdu initially, which played a role in building the separations over the years of time (Kuczkiewicz-Fraś, 2019).

The Urdu-speaking Biharis were fairly assimilated into the administrative and political system of Pakistan especially during the pre-1971 period they were relatively in a better socio-political position than the people in parts of the Bengali population. This stance however changed drastically when the Liberation War of the 1971 happened. East Pakistan got its independence as Bangladesh in December, 1971 following a nine-month war with the Pakistan military. In this war, the Urdu-speaking community of Bihar was seen to support West Pakistan and a segment participated directly to support the Pakistan army. This saw their retaliatory violence against them, causing thousands of deaths and

destruction of property and displacement (Farzana, 2009). Numerous families were rendered homeless and jobless and displaced into makeshift settlements, in most cases with the help of humanitarian bodies like the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Social hostility and episodes of violence to the society persisted even after the war.

When the Bihari population was large, after independence, a good proportion of the citizens wanted to repatriate into Pakistan. Nevertheless, despite the fact that an estimated 170,000-178,000 people were sent back between 1973 and 1993, Pakistan finally ceased the process and now hundreds of thousands of people were left without a definite citizenship or a sense of belonging in Bangladesh (Rahman, 2017). This effectively left most of the community stateless in practice since they were neither of the two (Pakistan and Bangladesh) nor full members of each other (legal and administrative).

In the course of time, the war refugees-built refugee camps that over time evolved into permanent settlements. International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) became the first to set up Geneva Camp and the like in Dhaka that were subsequently handed over to the government. However, forty years on, the camps are highly populated urban enclaves as opposed to temporary housing. There are an estimated 400,000 Urdu speaking Bihari living in about 116 camps in Bangladesh today. Approximately 32 camps are in Dhaka alone, with large populations in Mohammadpur (Geneva Camp) and Mirpur. The biggest and most popular settlement closely situated in the middle of Mohammadpur is Geneva Camp, and the Mirpur camps are likely to have even worse conditions of living and less economic perspectives. Other settlements can be found in large urban areas like Chattogram, Khulna, Mymensingh, Rangpur and Saidpur.

Physical and social environments at these camps are very miserable. As an example, Geneva Camp takes up a total of less than three acres but accommodates over 20,000-25,000 people, which is extremely overcrowded. Lots of families reside in one room houses with sizes as small as 8x10 feet many times hosting several generations. The existing environment is already quite weakly, which is further deteriorated by narrow corridors, insufficient ventilation, and frequent occurrence of monsoon flooding. The use of common toilets is still a significant issue where hundreds of residents rely on few shared toilets that were built in 1971. The availability of safe drinking water is limited as

well and response involves use of shared pumps and tubewells (Islam & Ahmed, 2023; Kumar, 2023).

No matter how difficult it is, the life in the camp has slowly transformed into semi-urban economic areas. With time, the residents have developed multi-story structures and small-scale economic activities of food kiosk, barber shop, tailors and groceries inside the camps. Nevertheless, economic mobility is still very limited because of structural impediments in education, job, and legal documents. The affordability gap between-camp housing and the urban market-rental of small apartments causes many families to still stay in the camps across the generations in Dhaka.

Judicially and politically, the Bihari community has experienced a major change especially through the courts. A landmark case, the High Court in 2003 in the case of Abid Khan and others against Government of Bangladesh acknowledged that the Urdu speaking population who were born in Bangladesh or who were underage at the time of the 1971 Bangladesh Liberation war were citizens and could vote. It was further established 2008 in Md. Sadaqat Khan (Fakku) and others v. Chief Election Commissioner, the ruling of which required the Election Commission to add all qualified Urdu-speaking residents to the voters list, and give national identity cards (Rahman, 2017).

In 2008, the right of Bihari refugees to citizenship was to be recognized by the High Court of Bangladesh which ordered that their names should be registered in the voter list as citizens. The groundbreaking judgment, 37 years after the 1971 war, became a landmark in the defeat of the legal quagmire of stateless Urdu speaking linguistic minority residing in camps in Dhaka and other regions of the country. After this decision, the community ceased to be legally recognized as refugees and their citizenship rights were recognized. More importantly, these judicial successes were mostly made as a result of long-term community mobilization, the activism of young people and strategic litigation of the representatives of the Urdu speaking community, especially the younger generations of Geneva Camp, themselves. This change expresses the idea of legal recognition as not only a top-down policy change but as a product of grassroots organization and collective organizing.

With these historic rulings, there are still major gaps in implementation. A large portion of the population continues to struggle to get access to national identity cards, passport,

trade licenses, as well as quality access to formal job opportunities. Their comprehensive assimilation into the mainstream systems of administration is still constrained by bureaucracy and unofficial discrimination (Blitz and Lynch, 2011). Consequently, even though they are legally treated as citizens, their actual enjoyment of rights is inequitable.

Socially, the society still encounters the marginalization and stigma based on identity. Different names have been used to describe the group over time such as; stranded Pakistanis, non-Bengals, Urdu speakers and Biharis. Though the decision of 2003 and 2008 of the High Court formally acknowledged them as citizens and Urdu-speaking, Bangladeshi, the term of Bihari is more than commonly used in daily conversations, which further propagates detachment images of social division between them and the majority population, who speak Bengali. This continued labelling is a result of deeper historical recollections of the 1971 conflict through which the society was divided into parts that were linked to West Pakistan which were labeled and remained mistrustful and socially excluded.

Bangladesh government has made occasional announcements of its intention to rehabilitate the Bihari people especially by housing transfer schemes not within overcrowded camps. Nonetheless, these plans have either not been implemented or done on a small scale. This has led to a big number of families residing under insecure housing situations involved in neither land tenure nor housing welfare. Although it has been legally recognized, it still has not been integrated into the wider Bangladeshi society, and many still lack educational, employment, healthcare, and social system access.

The case on the Bihari points out how the reality of human rights falls short of the formal citizenship in respect of realization of rights. Whereas the international frameworks (like the 1954 Convention Relating to the Status of Stateless Persons) provide protections of stateless persons, Bangladesh is not a signatory to these and the experience of the Biharis is one of de facto statelessness where legal recognition does not necessarily lead to effective access to rights and services (UNHCR, 2020). This marginalization is further enhanced by the problem of urban governance in Dhaka, where the fast pace of urbanization, the growth of informal settlements, and lack of resources do not allow to provide equitable services.

Hence, the context of the present study lies between the historical displacement, disputed citizenship, urban marginalization, partial integration. It brings out the persistence of

multi-layered vulnerabilities among the stranded Bihari community in Dhaka even after legal acknowledgment and decades of policy focus. This research is therefore be placed in a position where it can explore the functionality of human rights practices and community development strategies in real life and how the same can be strengthened to lead to meaningful inclusion, dignity and socio-economic development of this population that has been long marginalized.

1.3 Significance of the Study

The research has great academic, policy and practical implications because it covers one of the most outlived and complicated problems of statelessness, social marginalization and marginalization in the city of Bangladesh. Although the status of Urdu-speaking Biharis as citizens was acknowledged by the landmark ruling of the judiciary specifically High Court decision of 2003 and 2008, their objective realities are still laced with entrenched structural inequalities, social discrimination, and insufficient access to basic rights. It is against this background that the research gives multidimensional meaning in form of academic, policy, human rights, development practice, and social inclusivity perspectives.

Table 01: Key Perspectives Highlighting the Significance of the Study

Perspective	Significance
Academic Perspective	Academic Perspective via the research contributes to the existing literature on forced displacement, statelessness, and minorities assimilation in the post-conflict societies. It gives a progressive and contextual examination of the socio-economic and the human rights situations of the marooning Bihari community within the Dhaka city. Although the displacement of people in the past and their legal battles have been studied elsewhere, not many have been used to address the character of human rights operations and community development interventions as they are occurring now. The gap that this research addresses is the integration of socio-demographic realities, rights-based analysis and development approaches within one framework. It also informs migration literature, literature of urban poverty, and literature of human rights, by providing

	empirical evidence on one of the most populated urban settlements, such as Geneva Camp, and other Bihari settlements in Dhaka.
Policy Perspective	The research is very applicable to the government agencies in Bangladesh, urban planners, and human rights institutions. Despite the constitution and legal provisions guaranteeing equality and rights to citizenship, the Bihari community still experiences limitations in receiving access to the services of a school system, access to medical care, jobs, shelter, and social security. The research results of this work can help the policymakers spot the gaps between policy making and implementation, especially regarding the urban marginalized majorities. It also gives evidence-based recommendations, which could contribute to the inclusion planning of development, better service provision and specific interventions to socially locked out groups.
Human Rights Perspective	The study points to the continued discriminatory practice, social exclusion, and low level of civic participation of Bihari community despite their formal recognition of citizenship rights. It highlights the necessity to go beyond a case of legal recognition to substantive equality in practice. The study will contribute to a larger discourse of human dignity, equality and social justice in Bangladesh by recording issues of rights-based limitations, including: access to identity documents, justice, proper housing and livelihood opportunities.
Development Practice Perspective	The research holds relevance to the NGOs, development organizations, and community-based actors operating in the urban informal settlements. It reviews the current community development programs and analyzes how effective it is in alleviating the status of stranded Biharis. By doing this, development practitioners are able to learn the kind of interventions that are more sustainable and context-specific, and areas of improvement in the program design and implementation.

Social Inclusion and Advocacy Perspective	The research provides a platform to a stigmatized and not recognized community in its historical context. The Bihari community, which has been branded and ostracized despite legal mandates, still experiences discrimination based on identity due to historical events that happened in the Liberation war in 1971. This study will raise awareness, empathy, and policy focus on their integration in to mainstream Bangladeshi society because it emphasizes the current challenges and desires, they have.
--	---

1.4 Research Objectives

1.4.1 General Objective

The general objective of the study is to examine the status of human rights practices and analyze the effectiveness of community development approaches among stranded Biharis in Dhaka city.

1.4.2 Specific Objectives

1. To explore the socio-demographic and economic condition of stranded Biharis in Dhaka city;
2. To assess the existing human rights conditions of stranded Biharis in Dhaka city;
3. To identify the major human right challenges faced by the Bihari community in social, economic, and political spheres;
4. To explore existing community development initiatives and evaluate their effectiveness;
5. To provide policy recommendations for improving human rights protection and strengthening community development strategies for stranded Biharis.

1.5 Research Questions

1. What is the current socio-demographic and economic conditions of the stranded Bihari community living in Dhaka city?
2. What is the present status of human rights conditions of stranded Biharis in Dhaka city?

3. What major human rights challenges do the Bihari community face in social, economic, and political spheres in Dhaka city?
4. What types of community development initiatives currently exist for stranded Biharis, and how effective are these interventions in improving their living conditions and rights situation?
5. What policy measures and strategic recommendations can be proposed to improve human rights protection and strengthen community development approaches for stranded Biharis in Dhaka city?

1.6 Operational Definition of the Key Concepts

1.6.1 Human Rights

Human rights are universally owned rights that all individuals are entitled to, by accident of being human. They consist of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to life, liberty, equality, education, medical care and dignity (United Nations, 1948; Donnelly, 2013). Human rights in this study are the extent to which the stranded Biharis are able to practice and access fundamental rights. This embraces access to documentation of citizenship, education, healthcare services, decent housing, and work, as well as involvement in social and political life. This research highlights how a discrepancy exists between these rights on paper and the practical fulfillment of the rights.

1.6.2 Community Development

Community development is a participatory process through which people and groups together advance their social, economic and environmental positions by increasing local capacities, empowerment, and institutional support (Ife, 2016; Phillips and Pittman, 2009). In this study, community development is defined as organized activities of governmental and non-governmental agencies to enhance the socio-economic status of displaced Biharis. These are the skills development programs, microfinance programs, livelihood assistance, informal education and awareness creation programs, which encourage social inclusion and self-reliance.

1.6.3 Stranded Bihari

A Stranded Bihari is also used as the term to describe the Urdu-speaking Muslim migrants and their descendants who migrated towards parts of India (especially Bihar and its environs) in the years 1947 and 1971 and later became politically and legally marginalized with the independence of Bangladesh in 1971 (Farzana, 2009). Stranded Biharis in this study refer to Urdu-speaking residents of the camp-based settlements who are socio- economically deprived and blocked in enjoying all the rights of citizenship, and restricted access to services. The research pays special attention to their lived lives of marginalization and social integration.

1.6.4 Statelessness and Contested Citizenship

Statelessness is a situation when a person is not recognized as a citizen of a state in its legal system (UNHCR, 2020). Contested citizenship is defined as a state of dispute, incompleteness or incomplete application of citizenship status (Blitz and Lynch, 2011). In this study, the term statelessness and contested citizenship is used to denote a situation in which the Biharis, although the state formally acknowledges them by judicial rulings, experience constant obstacles in seeking identity documents, as well as, in accessing the state services, along with, full enjoyment of the rights of citizens. It brings out the difference between legal citizenship and effective citizenship in practice.

1.6.5 Forced Migration and Historical Displacement

Forced migration is an involuntary movement of people, which is caused by conflict, violence, persecution, or political turmoil, and historical displacement is the long-term displacement of the population caused by some historical events (Castles et al., 2014). In this study, it is specifically the migration of Biharis in the 1947 partition and their following displacement in the 1971 liberation war and afterwards. These occurrences are considered as forming events in their present social-economic standing, identity and patterns of settlement.

1.6.6 Urban Marginalization and Camp-Based Settlement

Urban marginalization refers to the process of denying certain groups of people access to economic opportunities, access to basic services, and say in the overall decision making in an urban context. Camp-based settlement can mean the grouping of displaced populations in specific and frequently provisional settlements (UN-Habitat, 2020). In this study, it is defined as the long-term stay of the Bihari people who have been forced to reside in overcrowded camp conditions with inadequate housing, bad sanitation, lack of available infrastructure and limited access to urban amenities. These camps are areas of structural exclusion onto the wider urban context.

1.6.7 Social Exclusion and Stigmatization

Social exclusion is multidimensional as it is the subjective process according to which individuals or groups are deprived of resources, opportunities and participation in society in a systematic way. Stigmatization can be defined as negative labelling and stereotyping of persons on the basis of identity or perceived difference (Silver, 2015). Social exclusion and stigmatization in this study are the discrimination that stranded Biharis experience because of their language, historical affiliation, and minority. It involves impediments to access of education, employment, medical care and even social acceptance, and even being subjected to prejudices and marginalization in normal life.

1.6.8 Legal Recognition and Judicial Intervention

Legal recognition is the official recognition of rights and status by the state whereas judicial intervention deals with the judicial involvement in interpreting, enforcing or extending these rights (Dworkin, 1977). In this analysis legal recognition and judicial intervention will mean the court decisions in which the Bihari population has received the right of citizenship and its implications. It looks at the effect of these court rulings on access to identity documentation, voting rights, public services and other socio-economic inclusion.

1.7 Scope of the Study

This study is defined in terms of geographical scope, thematic interests, population of interest and dimensions of analysis in accordance with the mentioned research objectives.

- Mainly the study concerns itself with stranded Biharis who live in the selected camp-based settlements in the capital city of Bangladesh, Dhaka. Specific emphasis is placed on regions like Mohammadpur and Mirpur where in high population and resource limited areas, the stranded Bihari population resides. These sites have been chosen because they are representative of long historical settlements, which have been built across the camps, and as far as their applicability to the problem under study is concerned.
- On a thematic level, two great dimensions were the subject of the study: human rights practices and community development approaches. It focuses on the degree to which the basic human rights- access to education, healthcare, shelter, work, legal identity and civic rights are fulfilled in the stranded Biharis. Simultaneously, it examines the importance and efficiency of community development programs that are undertaken by the government agencies and non-governmental organizations, such as livelihood assistance programs, training on skills development, microfinance services, and informal education programs.
- In population scope, the study is specifically limited to the Urdu-speaking stranded Bihari population in the camp setting including various demographic profiles like men, women, youthful, and old citizens. This does enable a subtle indication of differences in experiences across gender, age and socio-economic status in the community.
- Analytically, the research enjoys various dimensions in line with the research objectives. It explores socio-demographic and economic factors of the stranded Bihari community, such as income, employment, education and household structures. It also determines the existing level of human rights of realization amidst stranded Biharis, which are critical issues in social, economic and political contexts. The research also investigates the development programs available in communities, specifically to the stranded Biharis, their level of accessibility and

relevance and the level to which they may help in uplifting their living standards and enable them to be socially integrated into the community.

- The policy-oriented dimension integrated with the study as well to assist in revealing the shortcomings between the formal provisions of the law and their execution at the practice. It aims to suggest some practical and context-immersed policy-formulations that may reinforce human rights safeguarding and increase community development strategies to both the stranded Biharis.
- However, the research is only specific to stranded populations of Bihari in the camp setting located in Dhaka and does not substantially address the populations that evacuate to other areas of Bangladesh or even non-camp set-ups. Although historical background will be relevant in the context of understanding the current state of affairs, the major emphasis will be on the real state of affairs, challenges, and opportunities to develop in the stranded Bihari community.

Finally, the research has offered a specific and holistic examination of the congruence of human rights practices and community development strategies and complied with the lived experiences and structural factors of stranded Biharis in the urban setting of Bangladesh.

1.8 Construction of the Thesis

Table 02: Construction of the Thesis

Chapter	Description
Chapter I: Introduction	The chapter gives the background and context of the study that includes historical overview of the stranded Bihari community. It includes the statement of the problem, significance of the study, research objectives, research questions, operational definitions, scope, limitations, area profile and it concludes with a summary.
Chapter II: Literature Review	This chapter is an overview of pertinent national and international literature concerning human rights, statelessness, forced migration and community development. It critically discusses prior literature on Bihari community and defines research gaps that exist.
Chapter III: Models and Theoretical Framework	This chapter covers relevant theories on human rights, citizenship, social exclusion and community development as the theoretical and conceptual framework of the study. It also builds an ideological framework to help in research analysis.
Chapter IV: Methodology	This chapter provides the research design, study area, instrument of sample data including case study, focus group discussion and key informant interview as data collection methods. It also describes data analysis procedures, as well as validity, reliability and ethical issues.
Chapter V: Findings and Analysis	This chapter provides the findings of the research and analyze them. It explores socio-demographic and economic status, human rights actions, and hardships and community development activities among the stranded Biharis.
Chapter VI: Summing Up the Results and Discussion	This chapter summarizes and synthesizes the key findings, linking them with theoretical perspectives and existing literature. It provides in-depth discussion and interpretation of

	the results.
Chapter VII: Recommendations and Conclusion	This chapter presents recommendations on the policies to enhance the human rights protection and community development policies, which are based on the findings. It determines the study by concluding on important revelations and recommendations on future research.

1.9 Limitations of the Study

Though the researchers have adopted a holistic approach, the study has a few constraints that ought to be considered when making interpretation of the findings.

- The research is geographically limited to some informal settlements with selected camp-based settlements of stranded Biharis in Dhaka city, most notably Mohammadpur and Mirpur. That is why the results could be not quite indicative of the situation in Bihari inhabitants who do not reside in these camps but in other parts of Bangladesh.
- This research work is concerned mostly with the recent condition of the Bihari people, and there is not much concentration on the historic processes except related to the interpretation of the situation. Consequently, more profound historical changes and changes that take place over time might not be well-ratified.
- The study is very much based on qualitative data including the use of FGDs, KIIs, and case studies. Though these techniques are rich and in-depth in revealing lived experiences, they can be associated with subjective interpretations and may not be easily generalizable to a population.
- Access to respondents and information was occasionally limited because of the sensitive nature of topics like citizenship status, discrimination, and identity. This could have affected the receptiveness of the respondents and the information provided.
- This study relies heavily on self-reported data, which can be influenced by recalling bias, the subjective perceptions, and social desire bias.
- The research was not covered by time and funding, which meant having to visit study sites, participants, and investigating the field.

- Lastly, due to absence of comprehensive and updated secondary data on the stranded community of Bihari people presented a challenge in cross-verifying primary data and carrying out wider comparative analysis.

These restrictions, though, do not reduce the value of the study, but on the contrary, they show the points where the special focus should be taken and the directions that can be investigated by further research.

1.10 Area Profile

1.10.1 Bangladesh

Bangladesh is a South Asian country located between 20°34'-26°38' north latitude and 88°01'-92°41' east longitude. Administratively, the country is divided into eight divisions, 64 districts, and 495 upazilas, which serve as the main structure for governance and public administration. Based on the Population and Housing Census 2022 by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) it can be seen that the population of Bangladesh is 165,158,616. It is also one of the higher densely populated countries in the world with a sizeable population residing in the rural regions but there has been a noted rapid urbanization in this country particularly in the big cities like Dhaka.

Literacy in Bangladesh is an improved phenomenon over the last decades. According to the 2022 census, the national literacy rate of the population who are aged 7 years and above is about 74.8 percent, which shows a significant improvement in access to education as compared to the census periods in the past. Bangladesh has also witnessed significant improvements in terms of demographic and health indicators. Fertility has decreased to approximately 2.0-2.1 births per woman that reflects a change to replacement-level fertility. Equally so, infant mortality rate, currently stands at about 17 deaths per 1,000 live births and life expectancy has increased to about 74 or 75 years.

The pattern of residential distribution of the stranded Bihari community in Bangladesh is quite skewed to several urban centers with a high historical and socio-economic connection to other major urban centers. Its biggest mix is in the capital city of Dhaka where for many years the community has lived in already established camp-based settlements since the post-1971 era. The largest settlements found in Dhaka are Geneva Camp in Mohammadpur, Kalshi Camp in Mirpur, Kamrangirchar, and smaller scattered informal settlements found in various areas of the city. High population density, lack of

housing area, inflexible access to official land ownership property and access to urban facilities are usually a main feature of these settlements, and this measure of the socio-economic marginalization of the community has a long history.

The stranded Bihari population is present in smaller densities outside the capital in other major towns, such as Chattogram and Khulna, where family members live in mixed urban neighborhoods and informal settlements. Conversely, extremely small and dispersed groups of people occur in other places, like Rajshahi, and in some few towns of the districts. On the whole, the spatial distribution indicates clearly that it is the Bihari people that are mostly based in cities, with Dhaka being the main concentration site, and the other cities hosting smaller and less concentrated groups, presenting the trend of historical displacement, urban livelihood dependency and residential mobility.



Figure 01: Map of Bangladesh (Highlighting Divisions, Districts and Major Cities)

Source: Banglapedia, https://en.banglapedia.org/index.php/War_of_Liberation

Stranded Bihari Community in Bangladesh

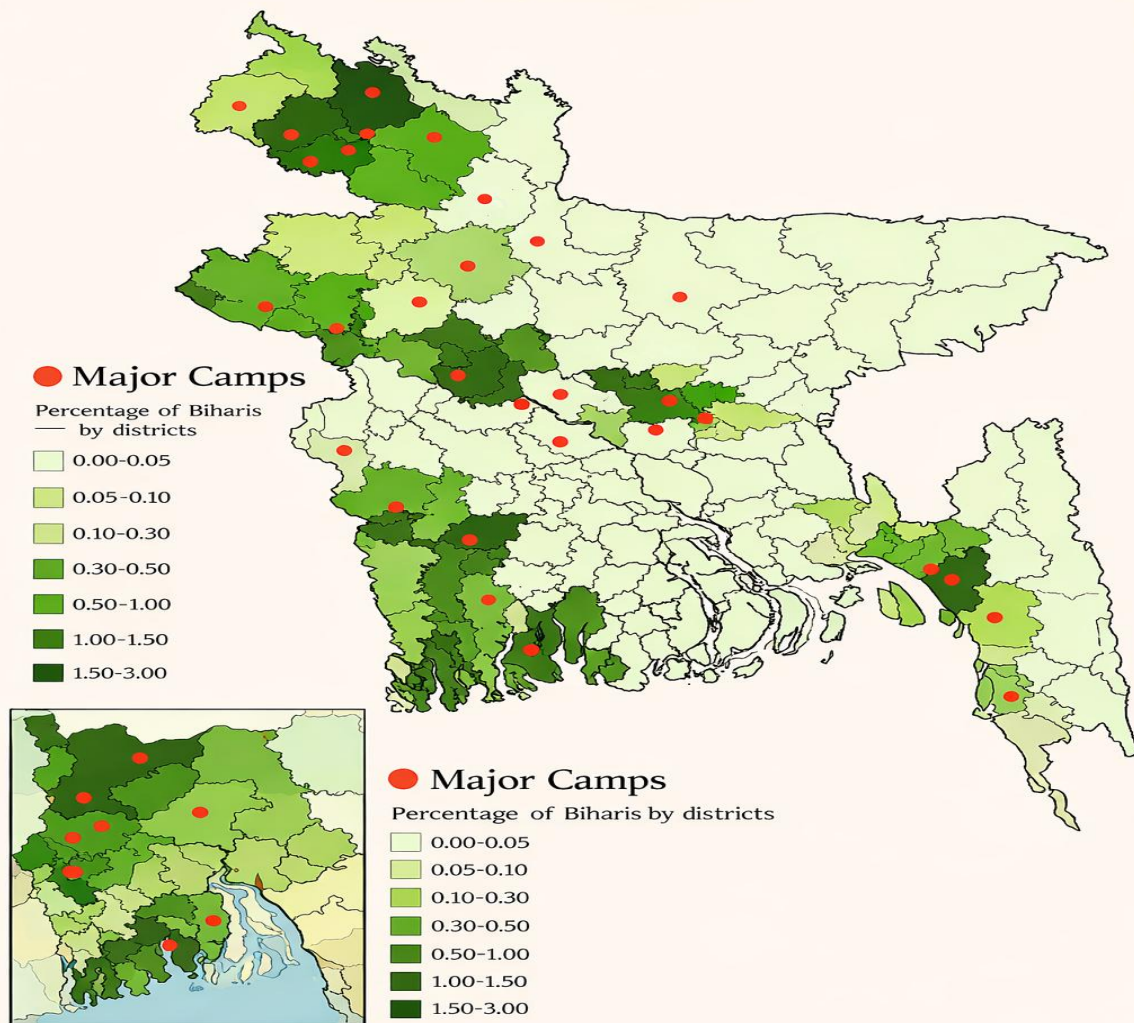


Figure 02: Map of Bangladesh (Highlighting Residence of Stranded Bihari Community in Bangladesh)

Source: Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Persecution_of_Biharis_in_Bangladesh

1.10.2 Dhaka



Figure 03: Map of Dhaka District (Highlighting Major Cities)

Source: The Bangladesh Network, <https://www.thebangladesh.net/dhaka-division/dhaka-district/dhaka-city/.html>

Dhaka Division is the most populous administrative division in Bangladesh, comprising a large share of the country's total population. This division has a hub of administrative,

economic, and political activities, Dhaka District, which serves as a center of all of them in the country. Through the Population and Housing Census of 2022, it is evidenced that Dhaka District alone has a population density of about 14.73 million residents and the population density is very high as it stands at more than 10,000 people per square kilometer. Most population is urban and the district has a high literacy rate of approximately 84.88 percent which is very high as compared to the national average.

The area of Dhaka District is highly urbanized, there is a constant migration of rural areas to urban ones, and a varied socio-economic fabric is present. It is also the main refuge to displaced and marginalized populations in that it concentrates economic opportunities, social services, and informal livelihoods. Consequently, this has made Dhaka one of the major centers of research on urban poverty, informal settlements and stateless or displaced groups of people like the stranded Biharis.

1.10.3 Mohammadpur (Geneva Camp)

Mohammadpur has been one of the key residential and administrative localities within Dhaka North City Corporation and a key place of settlement by the languishing Bihari community, especially in the Geneva Camp locality. The region is very urbanized and crowded with a combination of planned residential neighborhoods and informal residential structures of the informal settlements. The 2022 census-based estimates compiled that Mohammadpur has around 527,789 individuals.

The Geneva Camp in Mohammadpur has a historic value since a significant portion of the Urdu speaking stranded population have been residing there since the post-1971 era. The community still resides in overpopulated housing structures with limited access to some land rights, housing liberties, and some civic amenities, and should thus be considered a significant location to analyze the problems of human rights and urban marginalization.

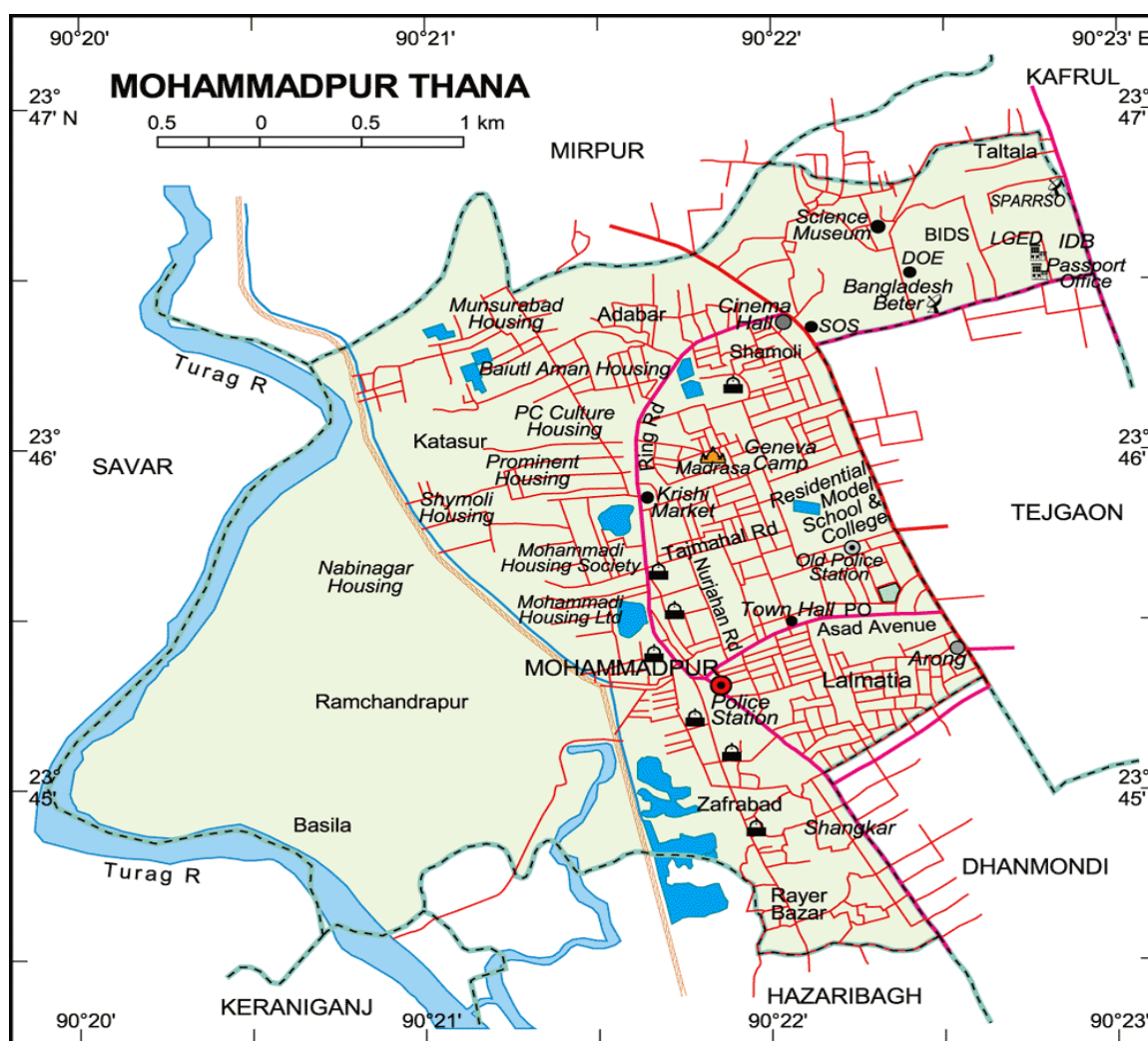


Figure 04: Map of Mohammadpur (Highlighting Geneva Camp)

Source: The Bangladesh Network, <https://www.thebangladesh.net/dhaka-division/dhaka-district/dhaka-city/mohammadpur-thana-dhaka.html>

1.10.4 Mirpur (Kalshi Camp)

Another big urban center in Dhaka North City Corporation, Mirpur, is another important settlement place of the oppressed Bihari community especially in Kalshi Camp and its adjacent informal settlements. It is densely populated economically active territory featuring a mix of residential, industrial, and commercial activities. Mirpur offers several low-income and informal sector workers with livelihood opportunities; one of them is the Bihari community. Displaced Urdu-speaking families have lived in the Kalshi Camp area for a long time, still struggling with issues of housing insecurity, difficulties accessing formal jobs as well as the ability to access full civic and legal rights. Nevertheless, the community has survived in the urban fabric of Dhaka by economically

Source: The Bangladesh Network, <https://www.thebangladesh.net/dhaka-division/dhaka-district/dhaka-city/mirpur-thana-dhaka.html>

1.11 Conclusion

The chapter has given a detailed background to the stranded community of Biharis in Bangladesh starting with the historical background of their settling in Britain Indian Partition in 1947 and their eventual dispensing during and after the Liberation War of 1971. It sheds some light on how these historical events contributed to lasting states of statelessness, legal ambiguity, and socio-economic marginalization. Though the judicial aspect of the citizenship rights has been partially given due consideration, certain groups in the community still struggle to acquire basic services, safe places to live, education, jobs and overall civic life. The chapter explains their dense study in urban centers in Dhaka, specifically Geneva Camp (Mohammadpur) and Kalshi Camp (Mirpur) where overcrowded living conditions, poor sanitation and infrastructural facilities, and low chances of livelihoods are still crucial issues. It even delineates how social stigma and structural exclusion have persisted such that they are not able to become part of mainstream society. Moreover, this chapter provides the research objectives, research questions, the significance, research scope, and operational definitions of the study, which gives a clear outline of the research. Geographically the study is also contextualized in the area profile of Bangladesh and Dhaka. In general, the chapter provides a base of the analysis of the work of human rights practices and community development approaches within stranded Biharis, which preconditions future theoretical, methodological, and empirical arguments.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

2.2 Historical Migration, Identity Formation and Political Roots

2.3 Statelessness, Citizenship Transition and Legal Recognition

2.4 Repatriation Process and International Political Dynamics

2.5 Socioeconomic Conditions, Livelihoods and Camp-Based Living Reality

2.6 Human Rights Violations and Political Exclusion

2.7 Conclusion

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the current literature on the Urdu-speaking Bihari community in Bangladesh with regard to their historical migration, identity, statelessness, legal recognition, their repatriation, their socioeconomic status, and human rights issues. The analyzed articles emphasize that the Bihari problem has deep foundations in the 1947 Indian Partition and is further complicated by the 1971 Liberation War of Bangladesh that resulted in many years of political marginalization and identity loss. In the literature, views on the marginalization of the community in comparison to historical events, political choices, and institutional ineffectiveness are varied. It also displays changing arguments in the area of citizenship, integration and international responsibility in the solution of statelessness. On the whole, this chapter is a synergy of important scholarly works that offer a unified insight into the multidimensional problems that affect the Biharis in Bangladesh and preconditions the continuation of the analysis in this study.

2.2 Historical Migration, Identity Formation and Political Roots

The article by Mantoo (2013) is a reflection on the long humanitarian crisis experienced by the Urdu-speaking Bihari community who have never left Bangladesh since the independence of the country in 1971. It contends that the Biharis are a special example of statelessness since they do not belong to either the family of refugees or that of citizens since neither can claim them completely. The study identifies that their identity crisis as Bangladeshis, Pakistanis or stateless minorities has left them deprived of basic human rights such as seeing citizenship, social services as well as political participation. Previously the Biharis emigrated to East Pakistan as part of the 1947 Partition to flee communal violence, however, when they sided with West Pakistan in the 1971 Liberation War, they were marginalized socially and politically in independent Bangladesh. After achieving independence, neither Bangladesh nor Pakistan had sufficiently addressed their position and though there was some partial repatriation between 1973 and the start of 1990s, there was a significant number residing in camps in poor living conditions. The article also elaborates how political uncertainty, lack of cooperation, and domestic limitations in the two nations have halted the repatriation process and left generations of Biharis without being sure on what is to come. Interpersonal rifts within the society also

continue with the older generations preferring that the people should be sent back to Pakistan and the younger generation slowly becoming Bangladeshi and asserting their right to citizenship. Even though several changes in the law have seen many Biharis acquiring citizenship (including the court decisions of 2003 and 2008), there are still major issues in getting the law to work. This study concludes that the government of the two countries combined with international aid is the answer to solving the crisis, dignity, integration and long-term socio-economic inclusion of the Bihari people (Mantoo, 2013).

The Bihari, Urdu-speaking, population of Bangladesh remains in a complicated game of identity, political and legal identity, which has remained since the Partition of 1947 and Liberation War of 1971. Originally, most of them migrated to East Pakistan with hopes of settling within a common national structure but the post-1971 reality turned their standings upside down when huge groups were suspected to be pro-Pakistan and therefore, they were expelled and locked up in temporary camps. Though the government of Bangladesh presented citizenship inputs according to the Presidential Order of 1972, and subsequent court intervention succession as affirmed by the 2008 Supreme Court, their integration at ground level has been rather unequal. The social debasement, historical resentment, and ineffective institutional integration still impede the total engagement in civic and financial existence. Repatriation efforts to Pakistan proved to be of little use and many families still languish in a state of uncertainty. Consequently, the community ends up being stuck between formal citizenship and life experiences of exclusion and marginalization and the challenges of identity reconstruction and state integration undertaken post-conflict persist (Rahaman, 2018).

The research adds that the Biharis of Bangladesh are a by-product of the 1947 Partition of India where the Urdu-speaking Muslims left in large numbers in East Pakistan in search of refuge and better lives. Their political affiliation with Pakistan since the pre-independence era created a historical tension with the Bengali people and their aberration subsequently when Bangladesh gained independence in 1971. This left a number of Biharis stateless, socially isolated and confined to camp-like living conditions. The study points out that their unique culture and political history were some of the factors that made them slow to assimilate into the mainstream society. Despite the overall lack of success in repatriation to Pakistan in 2008, there was a great legal change as the Bangladesh Supreme Court declared them citizens and they transitioned to statelessness

and formally became citizens, although they have difficulties social and economic integration (Haider, 2024).

The article describes how the Bihari people in Bangladesh came to be through migration in the 1947 Partition where the Urdu-speaking Muslims migrated to East Pakistan in order to avoid communal violence in India. With the independence of Bangladesh in 1971, most Biharis, based on financial dealings with Pakistan, became targets of violence, displacement, and property destruction which caused an extended period of statelessness. Despite the signing of repatriation agreements, there was not full implementation and most of the people remained in the camps lacking citizenship status. The research claims that the Biharis are neither conducive to a traditional understanding of a refugee, migrant, or minority because they are not only not incorporated into Pakistani citizenship, but they have also stood outside the nationalities of Pakistan and Bangladesh. Though like Bengals, they have the same religion, language, and culture, they are alienated socially and politically. Such a drinking walk causes the author to label them as an artificial minority, which emerged due to the historical, political and legal contradictions (Farzana, 2009).

The article by Jyoti Verma (2019) critically impacts the developing construction of Bihari identity by merging historical, sociopolitical, and psychological views of the identity over the course of over a century (19122012). The study reveals the historical radiation of the Bihar as one of the most ancient civilizations in the former times, colonial abandonment, political turmoil after independence which added to its economic backwardness and subdivided subnational identity. It brings to the fore of how migration, caste stratification, and political regimes especially in the 1990-2005 period further entrenched negative stereotyping of the Bihari as migrants, backward, or crime-prone despite their contribution to nationalist activities in India and their social aspects. Practical experience reveals that Biharis are externally seen to be diligent but illiterate, but internally thought of themselves as tolerant, modest, and man-oriented. Another focus in the chapter is identity transition in the context of development-oriented forms of governing, and branding activities, particularly after 2005 when efforts were undertaken to realign the image of Bihar to progress and governance revolution (Verma, 2019).

2.3 Statelessness, Citizenship Transition and Legal Recognition

The literature on the Urdu-speaking Bihari community in Bangladesh highlights a persistent crisis of citizenship, exclusion, and structural discrimination since the country's independence in 1971. Haider (2018) notes that even though laws and judicial decisions have repeatedly stated that Biharis are Bangladeshi nationals, in effect they remain limited to enjoying their basic rights, especially when it comes to documenting their identities, free movement, education, jobs and access to governmental services. According to the study, even with Judicial rulings like the rulings of the High Court in 2003 and 2008, public institutions have a tendency of persisting in treating Biharis as the stranded Pakistanis, which leads to systematic obstacles in receiving passports, driver licenses, and employment by the state sector. This circumstance is supported by the discriminatory administrative attitudes in the local levels, in which camp residence and Urdu speaking identity serve as the signs of exclusion. The article goes further to contend that this population is practically stateless though the law will have recognized the population as such, owing to the lack of strong enforcement of rights of citizenship and the lack of political will to enforce and enforce these rights. Basing his research on empirical fieldwork of the camps in both Dhaka and Rajshahi outlines that the largest of their sample does not have access to any passports and are rejected during police verification procedures severely curtailing their hopes of migrating to work overseas (Haider, 2018). The study also puts emphasis on widespread socio-economic deprivation, such as the lack of housing, sanitation, education and high levels of poverty in camps. Such conditions are attributed not only to historical grievances attributable to the period of 1971 Liberation War, but also to persistent institutional neglect and stigma. The study brings forward the conclusion that although the provisions of the constitution and the courts have suggested equality as a citizen, the practical sense of Biharis gives evidence of the existence of a contrast between law and practice where equal delivery of services still continues to typify discrimination and perpetuate marginalization. It also demands greater political commitment, reforming of the administration and inclusive policy that makes the community fully integrated and enjoy all the rights of being a proper citizen (Haider, 2018).

The case report shows how the Urdu-speaking Bihari community, which reside in refugee camps in Dhaka, especially in Geneva Camp, has been marginalized and

partially integrated into the law. After the Liberation War in 1971, hundreds of thousands of Biharis were displaced leaving them stateless over decades despite subsequent legal acknowledgment by the High Court of Bangladesh in 2003 and 2008 confirming their right to be citizens. Even though these judicial decisions allowed the access to national identity card and voter registration, almost complete social and economic assimilation has also been constrained. The society is still struggling with congested housing, sanitation, land insecurity and limited access to education and well-paying jobs. The exclusion is also enhanced due to discrimination following linguistic identity and perceived political affiliation during the wartime era. Although legal activism by youths was instrumental in acquiring citizenship rights, implementation loopholes and institutional limitations still exist. Consequently, a significant number of Biharis continue to be marginalized socially and economically as they are officially recognized to be citizens of Bangladesh (Hussain & Khan, 2023).

The article by Haider (2016) critically explores the history, legal and political marginalization of the Urdu-speaking Bihar community in Bangladesh. It claims that the Biharis had started migrating with the Partition in 1947 and became politically stigmatized during the Liberation War in 1971 because they were thought to be loyal to Pakistan. Despite repatriation agreements between Bangladesh and Pakistan which allowed partial migration back, there was still a substantial number of people trapped in camps. This creates a paradox on the legal side of the issue: under the laws of Bangladesh, Biharis are *de jure* citizens, and *de facto* stateless, because of the ineffective citizenship rights (Haider, 2016). Intergenerational poverty and marginalization are supported by the fact that, according to empirical research, there is extreme housing, educational, employment, and health service deficiency. This chapter assumes its closure, as the tools to change this community into active citizens and include them in the national development are political will and intervention (Haider, 2016).

2.4 Repatriation Process and International Political Dynamics

The literature indicates that Bihari community became one of the biggest political and humanitarian issues following the 1971 Liberation War of Bangladesh. Early literature has indicated that the challenge was initially given international concern but over time it has diminished, so that the community no longer exists and has been forgotten (Ilias, 2003). Bihari is the widely applied term in Bangladesh meaning Urdu-speaking people

without considering where they really belong, as an identity that is socially constructed (Nahar, 2000). Historically, the community has been characterized as a victim to rival nationalisms of both Pakistan prior to 1971 and marginalized in Bangladesh since then (Hashmi, 1998). Repatriation plans started in accordance with the Simla Agreement (1972) and Delhi Agreement (1974) that provided organized lists of people that should be relocated. The implementation was however limited because of administration complexities, political refusal and finances. Although international organizations, including the International Committee of the Red Cross and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees were involved, the process stopped in the long run. Repatriation officially stopped (though Pakistan had domestic opposition to repatriation) in the 1990s, leaving another large segment of the Bihari population stateless and with a question mark of what lay ahead of them (Ilias, 2003).

The Bihari community (Urdu speaking) in Bangladesh has been one of the most longstanding instances of statelessness since 1947 Partition and the Liberation War of 1971. A large number of Biharis also migrated to East Pakistan and thus assisted West Pakistan in the war which led to post-independence animosity, displacing people and putting them in camps; neither Bangladesh nor Pakistan appreciated them. Pakistan was not ready to carry out mass repatriation and Bangladesh refused to grant citizenship at first, and it left an estimated 250,000-300,000 in Pakistan in camp settlements. The camps are overcrowded with poor sanitation and health facilities, lack of education and limited livelihood chances leading to extreme socio-economic deprivation. Although subsequent legal changes take place, it is still true that most of the Biharis have been facing the challenge of identity uncertainties and being denied complete citizenship rights. It is indicative of larger problems of post-conflict formation of the state and the marginalization of minority groups and the international irresponsibility in the settlement of stateless groups (Bashar, 2006).

In the article, we are going to examine the historical genesis, process of repatriating the Bihari community, issues of identity, and the human rights situation of the Bihari community in Bangladesh. It outlines that some 1.3 million Urdu-speaking Muslims had left the country in 1947 as part of the Partition and that they had been left stateless in 1971 at the conclusion of the Liberation War because of the political orientation towards Pakistan. Despite gaining citizenship in Bangladesh in 2008, many Biharis are still discriminated upon in terms of education and employment, housing and social

integration. Literature demonstrates that Bangladeshi-Pakistani repatriation could not be successful because of the political differences and the shift in international participation. It also throws light on attaching and shifting patterns of identity as the younger generations are becoming more and more Bangladeshi. An overall conclusion of the study is that, in spite of an enormous body of scholarly literature, there is still a lack of economic, psychological, and policy-specific research on the problem of long-term integration (Du, 2024).

2.5 Socioeconomic Conditions, Livelihoods and Camp-Based Living Reality

The study highlights the extreme levels of socio-economic deprivation and marginalization of the Bihari community that reside in camps. This is supported by empirical work through surveys and focus group discussions showing that Biharis are some of the most disadvantaged in Bangladesh, who live in such poor and subordinate living conditions of poverty and landlessness, illiteracy, and social exclusion. The informal and low-income trade jobs like day labor, small trading, and even occupation-based jobs are mostly trapped in them with their lack of education and skills, as well as discrimination in the labor markets, leading to low income to satisfy the basic needs. Systemic discrimination and social exclusion are also the key discouraging factors to their integration that the study mentions, further limiting them to opportunities and involvement in decision-making. Poor living conditions can be described as congestion, lack of proper sanitation, and the lack of access to clean water, which predispose health issues and poor well-being in the camps. Access to education is also not full and this leads to intergenerational poverty and limited social mobility opportunities. Moreover, the authors discover that Bihari camp residents are worse off than neighboring Bengali slum residents, revealing more profound structural and social marginalization (Elahee, 2013).

The article sheds light on plight of Urdu speaking Bihari community in Bangladesh whose significant number resides in deplorable settlements like Mirpur in Dhaka in a very low standard of living. Despite a groundbreaking High Court ruling in 2008 asserting their right to the citizenship of Bangladesh, there has been partial implementation and social assimilation, thanks to political vacillation and social marginalization. After the 1971 Liberation War, the Biharis, more than 200,000 of them,

were displaced and they moved into camps all over the nation, which frequently occupied public land, poorly-constructed housing, sanitation, and services. In the past, during the war they were allied to West Pakistan, a factor that made them marginalized even after the war. Despite the legal status, they remain discriminated in education, employment, health care, and housing and have very low levels of literacy, compared to the national average (Swanson, 2009).

2.6 Human Rights Violations and Political Exclusion

Historically marginalized and long-historically marginalized, the Urdu-speaking Bihari community in Bangladesh has been victim to the 1947 Partition and the 1971 Liberation War. Although many Biharis started migrating into East Pakistan, they eventually joined West Pakistan in the war which would culminate into violent retaliation, forced displacement, and mass violation and abuse of human rights of all sides. Once Bangladesh got its independence, they were largely branded as collaborators and were deprived of property and citizenship and detained in overcrowded camps. Despite the fact that a certain legalization and citizenship were introduced in later years, big parts of the community were left stateless or without social prospects. The living situations in camps remain very deplorable, with poor housing, sanitation, education, and access to healthcare services. In spite of international frameworks on human rights, there are still loopholes in their enforcement, and the community still remains in the cycle of poverty, discrimination, and decreased political engagement (GHRD Team, 2024).

The article focuses on the analysis of the impact of the Bihari community in Bangladesh being politically distinct through many years of their exclusion of citizenship rights, political participation, and access to state services. According to fieldwork conducted in key camps in Dhaka, the researcher indicates that the Biharis are by default stateless and unable to vote, represent themselves in government, have passports, be banked, and access government services. This exclusion has a historical basis in the Partition of 1947 and the 1971 Liberation War, which made them to be marginalized as so-called stranded Pakistanis. The article elaborates on the application of theories of Park, Du Bois and Levitas by explaining that their consistent othering is caused by identity crisis, double consciousness and structural exclusion. The results point to residential segregation and identity-based discrimination as the forces that exacerbate their vulnerability thus

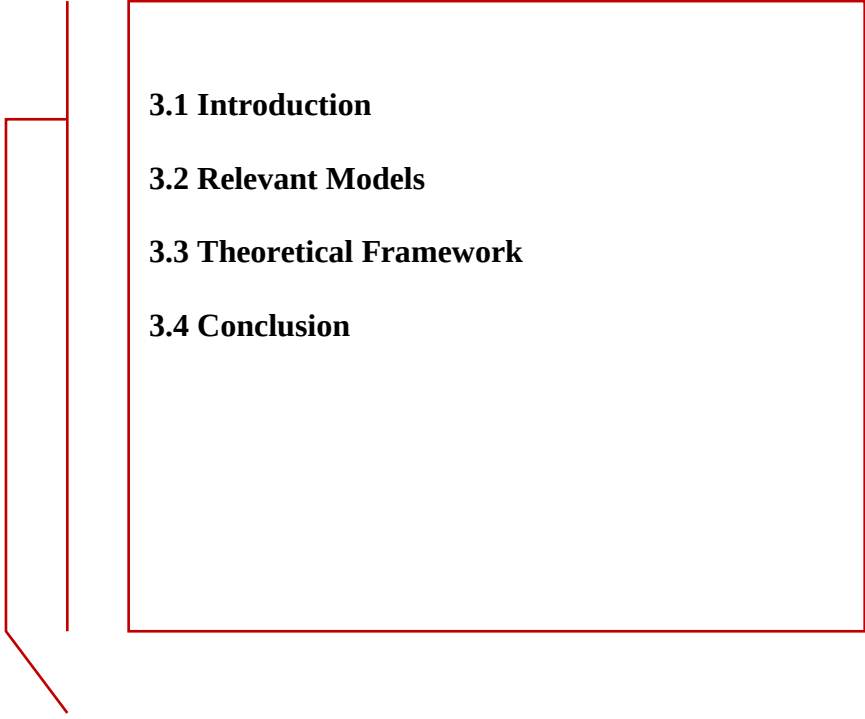
restricting social integration and the intergenerational marginality that characterizes urban Bangladesh (Bhattacharjee and Li, 2024).

The Bihari, the Urdu-speaking community in Bangladesh, has a history of displacement and lack of housing ever since the 1947 Partition, when most of them moved to East Pakistan and initially enjoyed the privilege of the Urdu language and administration. Nonetheless, vast majority of this population was branded collaborators, during the 1971 Liberation War, leading to seizure of property and rights of citizens, and deportation into temporary refugee camps, from humanitarian aid. Even though some repatriation deals were struck between Pakistan and Bangladesh, most of the residents were left in limbo with some 140,000 residents still living in the camps having not had their repatriation deals succeed. With time these camps slowly transformed into semi-permanent settlements with poor housing, lack of infrastructure and other basic amenities. Although the community has secured a landmark High Court decision permitting citizenship rights in 2008, severe housing insecurity and uncertain land tenure as most camp lands still exist under government or privatized ownership, perpetuate previously established legal and residential vulnerability factors (Sholder, 2011).

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter reviewed the existing literature on the Urdu-speaking Bihari community in Bangladesh, focusing on their historical migration, identity formation, statelessness, legal recognition, repatriation processes, socioeconomic conditions, and human rights challenges. The review demonstrates that the Bihari issue is deeply rooted in the 1947 Partition of India and further intensified by the 1971 Liberation War of Bangladesh, which resulted in long-term political exclusion and social marginalization. Across the literature, scholars consistently highlight the community's ambiguous legal and political status, where formal citizenship recognition has not fully translated into effective rights or social integration. The studies also reveal persistent failures in repatriation efforts, weak institutional implementation of court rulings, and continued discrimination in access to education, employment, housing, and public services. Despite gradual legal progress, particularly the 2008 citizenship ruling, many Biharis remain structurally disadvantaged and socially excluded.

CHAPTER III: MODELS AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK



3.1 Introduction

3.2 Relevant Models

3.3 Theoretical Framework

3.4 Conclusion

3.1 Introduction

This chapter aims at delivering the theoretical and conceptual background on the study of stranded Bihari communities in Dhaka City. As their predicament entails matters of deprivation of human rights, social exclusion, and low development chances, several models and theories are applied to explain their situation. The models of human rights and development which are utilized to evaluate the conditions of, and the needs, rights and livelihood are UDHR, HRBA, Capability Approach and the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework. Marginalization has theoretical perspectives including Citizenship Theory, Structural Inequality, and Social Identity Theory which are the problem behind the marginalization. Collectively, these frameworks can be used to offer an in-depth prism through which structural barriers and developmental gaps can be looked at with regards to the Bihari community.

3.2 Relevant Models

3.2.1 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)

In 1948, the United Nations came up with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) as a platform or guideline to which all human beings with primordial rights and freedoms are entitled to. The UDHR focuses on the equality, dignity, non-discrimination, and the right to nationality, education, work and the rights to participate in the life of the state (United Nations, 1948). The model is quite pertinent to the current research since it offers a universal normative benchmark in relation to which the state of the Bihari community can be evaluated. Numerous issues affecting the Biharis including inability to access rights to citizenship, education, healthcare, housing and jobs are examples of lapses in the fulfillment of these fundamental human rights (United Nations, 1948). The UDHR framework provides an opportunity to critically explore the question of whether these rights are well implemented into practice in Bangladesh and provides grounds to argue that the Bihari issue is essentially a human rights issue, and not only a development problem.



Figure 06: Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Source: United Nations, <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>

3.2.2 Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA)

HRBA is an approach to development, which incorporates the international human rights norms, giving prominence to participation, accountability, non-discrimination, transparency, and empowerment. This approach assumes that people become the rights-holders and institutions the duty-bearers who must meet the rights (United Nations Development Programme, 2006). HRBA is specifically useful in terms of examining the discrepancy between formal citizenship and access to formal rights on the Bihari

community. Even with the legal guarantees, institutional discrimination and poor implementation of laws present a challenge to many Biharis as they struggle to access education, healthcare, housing and legal identity (United Nations Development Programme, 2006). This model assists in assessing the accountability machinery and the involvement of the state in the delivery of services fairly and the protection of rights.

3.2.3 Capability Approach

The Capability Approach is the approach created by Amartya Sen that emphasizes the broadening and enhancement of the freedom and capabilities of individuals to reach well-being as an alternative to purely quantifying the economic results (Sen, 1999). This will be very useful in explaining the plight of the Bihari community as their few services to education, employment and healthcare services as well as social mobility limit their abilities and life-related decisions (Sen, 1999). With the legal rights being available, the lack of real opportunities hinders the possibility of enhancing with meaningful improvements in their quality of life. By using this model, the study is able to evaluate the extent of structural constraints and how it fails to permit human development thus creating a cycle of intergenerational poverty in the Biharis.

3.2.4 Participatory Development Model

The Participatory Development Model focuses on the need to involve local communities in decision making processes on the grounds that development becomes more effective and sustainable as long as the people are involved in formulating interventions that transform their lives (Chambers, 1997). Considering this work, this model applies to this research as the Bihari like other historically marginalized societies have never been factored in governance and development planning. This has caused poor policies and endemic marginalization due to their low involvement (Chambers, 1997). Using the model, the research identifies the essentially vital role of community engagement, grassroots leadership, and participatory governance in ensuring inclusive development and such interventions by answering the actual needs of Bihari people.

3.2.5 Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLF)

The Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLF) looks at the utilization of various classes of assets-humans, social, financial, physical and natural by individuals to maintain their livelihoods in a certain vulnerability environment. This is especially applicable to the

Bihari people whose livelihoods are mostly unprotected and informal. Their accessibility to education, fund and social network is limited, thus limiting their capacity to become economically stable (Natarajan et al., 2022). SLF allows this study to examine the vulnerability of livelihoods, coping, and institutional factors, and opportunities to strengthen the resilience and economic inclusion.

3.2.6 Right to the City Approach

The idea of Right to the City underlines that all urban inhabitants must equally access to urban resources, services and decision making, as well as to foster spatial justice and inclusivity (Lefebvre, 1968). The model can be used most in the context of the Bihari community living in urban camps in Dhaka where the urban community has poor housing, sanitation, and access to urban services. They are not a part of the regular planning and administration of the urban areas despite their long-term living (Lefebvre, 1968). The model aids this research to analyze urban inequality and propose policies that encourage inclusion so that citizens can receive equitable access to city resources and infrastructures.

3.2.7 Integrated Community Development Model

The Integrated Community Development Model is based on a holistic concept with a focus that only a combination of several facets of poverty-economic, social, institutional, and infrastructural become the subject matter (World Bank, 2005). The model especially applies to Bihari where the issues of insecurity of law, housing, opportunities of livelihood and social discrimination are interrelated (World Bank, 2005). It upholds the necessity of integrative interventions that integrate legal reforms, service delivery, livelihood enhancement, and the social inclusion programs. The model also offers practical model that allows policymakers and development practitioners in developing coordinated strategies towards sustainable development initiatives of the community.

3.3 Theoretical Framework

3.3.1 Citizenship Theory

The Citizenship Theory is a theory of citizenship created by T. H. Marshall (1950) and considers citizenship as a status that comprises of civil, political and social rights. In the case of civil rights, it is legal equality and freedom, political rights are the right to

participate in the decision-making process, and social rights are access to welfare and education and other basic services (Marshall, 1950). This theory is very applicable as the Bihari community though legally recognized as citizens is still practically deprived of access to basic rights. They have a case of a clear disconnect between formal and substantive citizenship. By exploring the extent to which they have been marginalized in Dhaka, the theory aids in the study of how avoiding participation in the job market, schooling, health, and civic responsibilities continue to be legal despite the law, which explains their exclusion.

3.3.2 Structural Inequality Theory

Structural Inequality Theory elucidates the concept of how inequality becomes institutionalized in a social, political, and economic setting and is sustained in the long run by systemic organization (Giddens, 1984). It highlights the fact that such a position, of disadvantage, is not an accident but is systematically created by policies, institutions, and historical processes. It is possible to comprehend the situation of the Bihari community by historical structural inequalities that have become inherent in it as a result of past processes like Partition and the Liberation War of 1971. How they are detained in segregated camps, can only access formal jobs in a limited fashion and cannot interact with general society shows how institutional setting reproduces exclusion. This theory assists in understanding the fact that marginalization still occurs despite the change of legislations and policies.

3.3.3 Community Development Theory

Community Development Theory is concerned with the strength of communities via participation, collective action, and capacity-building (Ife, 2016). It highlights that sustainable development will be realized when the communities are actively involved in determining their needs and in the development of solutions. The theory is applicable in explaining how the Bihari community can enhance their socio-economic statuses using participatory development programs. The role of NGOs, community-based groups and informal leadership in camps is significant in meeting local needs. The theory is useful in the evaluation of whether current development interventions are facilitating empowerment or perpetuation and the level of community participation into the development processes of planning and implementation.

3.3.4 Social Identity Theory

Social Identity Theory is the concept on how people derive their identity through their group membership which subsequently affects intergroup relations, discrimination and social behavior (Giddens, 1984). The identity of the Bihari community as a community speaking Urdu and their historical status as being stranded Pakistanis have resulted in repeated social stigma and marginality. The theory can be applied in the analysis of how categorization based on identity results into discrimination in the area of housing, education, employment, and social interactions. It also details the psychological and social borders which restrict acculturation into mainstream Bangladeshi society.

3.3.5 Dependency Theory

Dependency Theory suggests that underdevelopment is caused by lack of equal proportion of historical and structural interrelations leading to the dependency of the dominant groups and the marginalized ones (Frank, 1967). It also emphasizes that the inequality between the economic and political power influences the poverty and marginalization in the long term. Dependency in the Bihari community is seen in the dependency on informal labor, lack of state support and the inability to access formal economic opportunities. Political choices and absence of integration policies that took place in the past have helped to perpetuate the dependency of socio-economic. This theory would assist in revealing how structural and historical circumstances remain disadvantageous to empower self-sufficiency and progress in the community.

3.3.6 Rights-Based Social Justice Theory

The theory of Rights-Based Social Justice dwells on fairness, equality and equitable sharing of rights and opportunities in the society (Rawls, 1971). It underlines the idea that the social institutions must be structured in such a way that they advantage the underprivileged groups. The importance of this theory when analyzing inequality and exclusion that the Bihari population undergoes in Dhaka is clear. Their restricted access to a home, an education, medical care and work is indicative of issues of distributive injustice. The theory justifies the point that it is important to provide equal rights and opportunities to reach social inclusion and eliminate the long-term differences that involved the populations who are marginalized.

3.4 Conclusion

In this chapter the major models and theories have been merged to form a single framework of core ideas used in the perception of the state of the Bihari community in Dhaka. It demonstrates that their struggles lie in the failure of rights enforcements along with profound structural inequalities. The framework will be used to analyze the influence of legal, social and economic factors on their marginalization and development requirements.

CHAPTER IV: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

4.2 Methodology

4.3 Study Design

4.4 Study Site and Area

4.5 Study Period

4.6 Target Population and Sample Population

4.7 Selection of Study Participants

4.8 Sample Size

4.9 Sampling Technique

4.10 Quality Control and Quality Assurance

4.11 Data Management and Analysis

4.12 Ethical Considerations

4.13 Conclusion

4.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the research methodology that was used to explore the human rights practices and community development strategies with regard to the Stranded Bihari community in Dhaka City. Using a strong methodology is critical in guaranteeing the validity and reliability of research findings in social science studies (Creswell and Poth, 2018). This section outlines the research method, study design, study sites, population, sampling methods, data collection methods, and analytical structure applied to make sense of the data. It also brings up the ethical issues and quality assurance practices incorporated in the process of research.

4.2 Methodology

Research Methodology can be defined as an analysis that is systematic as well as theoretical of the methods that are used in studying a given field of study. It consists of theoretical discourse of the body of methods and principles related to a body of knowledge (Library of Congress, 2023). Kothari (2004) defines research methodology as a means of arriving at the systematic solutions of the research problem; the science of finding out how research is conducted. It entails how researchers conduct their scientific work of describing, clarifying, and forecasting phenomena. Methodology in the realm of social sciences is the overall strategy of the research, including the theoretical framework and data gathering and analysis (Creswell & Poth, 2018). It is a kind of logic or guide line of the investigation, making sure that the pieces of evidence that will be collected allow the researcher to respond to the research questions in the most unambiguous manner (Yin, 2017). To conduct this study, the methodology offers an orderly system that is required to assess the practices and strategies of human rights as well as community-based development of the Urdu-speaking community in Dhaka.

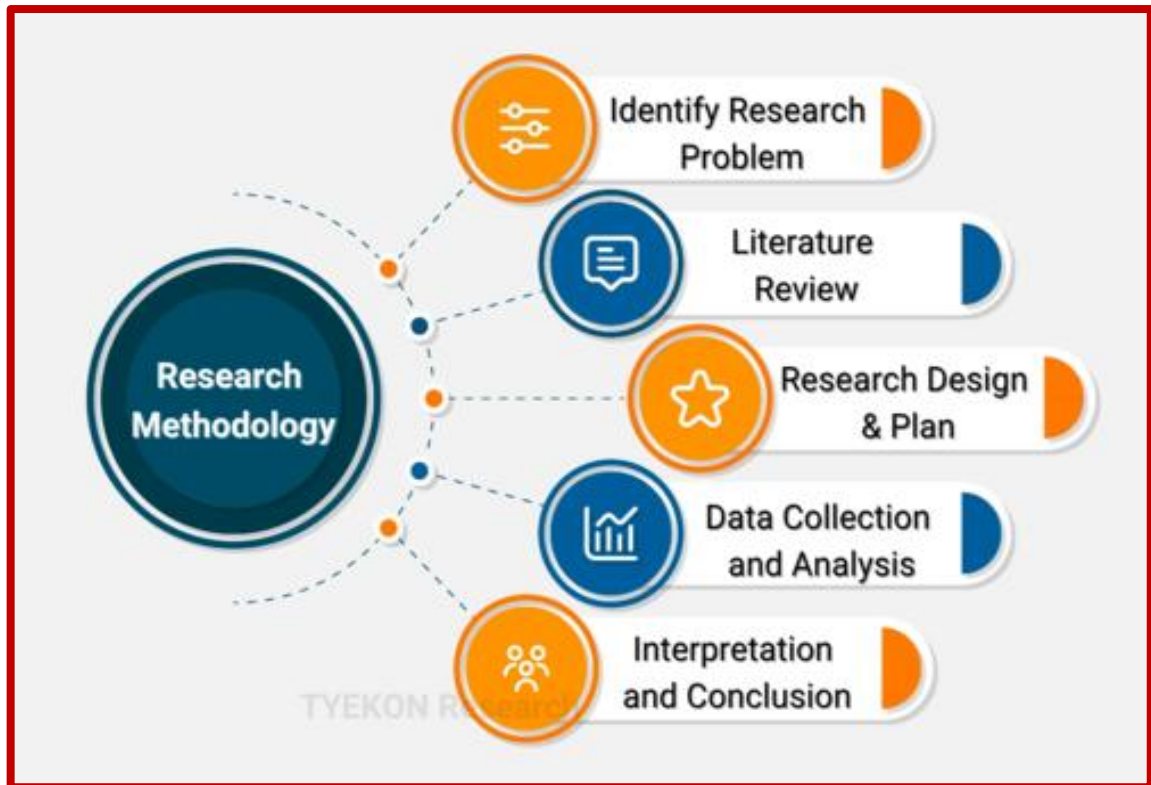


Figure-07: Research Methodology

Source: Tyekon Research,<https://tyekonresearch.com/phd-research-methodology.php>

Human rights and community development is a more intricate area of inquiry in which the study employed a Qualitative Research approach. Qualitative research can be characterized as a process of inquiry, a process of understanding aimed at a goal of studying a social or human issue, relying on such methods as phenomenology or case study approaches, which have particular methodological tenets (Creswell and Poth, 2018). In this strategy, the researcher develops a multi-faceted, holistic image, breaks down words and presents the elaborate images of the informants in their natural environment.

A qualitative framework was selected because of the special socio-historical location of the community of Stranded Bihari. Although quantitative data can may reflect the amount of people residing in a camp, it may not always express the lived experiences of people in that camp. In this instance, qualitative methodology is vital in revealing the mechanisms behind the social phenomenon, which in this case, has been the experience of socio-economic vulnerability that has persisted regardless of the citizenship decision made in 2008.

This methodology provided a platform for the community's narratives, allowing the researcher to:

- **Capture Nuance:** Discuss the nuances between legal citizenship (the presence of an NID) and substantive citizenship (recognition and access to rights).
- **Understand Context:** How does the physical setting of the camps (Geneva and Kalshi) affect the success of the community development effort?
- **Identify Barriers:** Open up the psychological and social stigma that are keeping the Urdu-speaking community out of the broader Bangladeshi social environment (Denzin and Lincoln, 2017).

4.3 Study Design

The study was Exploratory Case Study research. The case study is described as an empirical investigation that explores a contemporary phenomenon (the case) in detail and in the context of real-life particular cases when the line between the phenomenon and the context is not very obvious (Yin, 2017). This is a design that best suited such a study given the fact that human rights of the Stranded Bihari people are always tied to their socio-spatial context (with urban camp) where they live.

The restricted nature of the camp settings in Dhaka-Geneva Camp and Kalshi Camp made the study possible to undertake a focused and integrated analysis of how the macro-level changes like the 2008 citizenship decision can be converted into micro-level community facts (Stake, 1995). The open-ended design enabled the researcher to seek new knowledge, pose questions, and evaluate the community development practices in a new light to understand the approaches that could be used in community development, especially where the current literature might not have thoroughly encompassed the 2026 socio-economic scenario (Saunders et al., 2019).

As a way of providing a systematic and rigorous inquiry, the study adhered to a systematic research process. This course of action helped the findings to be based on the reality of the participants and therefore academic integrity.

The following steps were undertaken during the research process:

- **Formulating Research Questions:** Clarifying the main goals relating to human rights practices and methods of community development among the Bihari community.

- **Literature Review:** An in-depth examination of available articles and legal sources in the domain of literature to comprehend the historical and legal context of the Urdu-speaking community (Creswell & Poth, 2018).
- **Site Selection and Access:** Determination of Mohammadpur and Mirpur as the study sites and negotiating the access through the community leaders.
- **Data Collection:** Established the tools of primary research, such as Case Study, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs).
- **Data Preparation:** Recording audio tapes and translating them into English to analyze them and retain the original meaning of the stories.
- **Data Analysis (Thematic):** NVivo software will be used to code data and to identify common patterns and themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006).
- **Reporting Findings:** Generalizing the analyzed results into a consistent story, which could answer research questions (Geertz, 1973).

4.4 Study Site and Area

Two distinct urban settlement areas located in the city of Dhaka namely Mohammadpur (Geneva Camp) and Mirpur (Kalshi Camp) were taken as primary sources of data (Figure-04 & 05).

Table 03: Description of Selected Study Sites in Dhaka City

Area	Description
Geneva Camp	<i>It is the largest and predominantly populated settlement of Urdu-speaking population in Bangladesh, with profound knowledge of the severe spatial and socio-economic marginalization (Figure-04).</i>
Kalshi Camp	<i>Kalshi Camp in Mirpur is a large, but variously organized concentration of the community (Figure-05).</i>

By choosing the two sites, it was possible to make comparative conclusions about community development interventions as well as everyday human rights dilemmas in various geographies of cities.

4.5 Study Period

The research was carried out in the course of three months. This period included the time spent at the site, the process of rapport building, the actual collection of primary data, the process of transcription and the following thematic analysis of data obtained.

4.6 Target Population and Sample Population

Target Population was the entire members of the Urdu speaking Stranded Bihari community living in the urban camp settlements in Bangladesh.

The Sample Population was composed of the particular residents of the Geneva and Kalshi camps in Dhaka, along with other interested parties (NGO officials, community leaders, and legal professionals) engaged in community development and human rights advocacy to represent this population.

4.7 Selection of Study Participants

The selection criteria were that participants must be able to provide relevant rich information on the research questions. The establishment of trust was done by first seeking contact via community elders and local organizations.

4.7.1 Inclusion Criteria

- Self-identification (as a member of the Urdu-speaking/Bihari community).
- Current residency in either Geneva Camp (Mohammadpur) or Kalshi Camp (Mirpur).
- Age-18 years or older.
- Willingness to voluntarily participate and provide informed consent.

4.7.2 Exclusion Criteria

- People below 18 years.
- Individuals who are not living within the study zones.
- Person who cannot give informed consent because of barriers supported by cognitive or extreme health conditions.

4.8 Sample Size

The concept of data saturation is applied in qualitative research to determine the size of the sample; this is where additional data cannot introduce new themes and insights (Guest et al., 2006). The sample was randomly selected and then the last sample was distributed in two large urban campsites in order to gather a comparative picture of the lived realities in an administrative zone in the Dhaka City. A breakdown of the participants of the study is given in the following table:

- **Case Study:**12 (06 from Geneva Camp; 06 from Kalshi Camp).
- **Focus Group Discussions (FGDs):** 04 (02 in Geneva Camp; 02 in Kalshi Camp). Each group comprised 6 to 10 participants.
- **Key Informant Interviews (KIIs):**06 (NGO workers, legal advocates, and camp leaders).

Table 04: Distribution of Sample Size and Data Collection Methods

Data Collection Method	Mohammadpur (Geneva Camp)	Mirpur (Kalshi Camp)	Total
Case Study	06	06	12
Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)	02	02	04
Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)	-	-	06
Total	08	08	22

4.9 Sampling Technique

The study employed Purposive Sampling and Snowball Sampling. Purposive Sampling is a non-probability method in which the researcher uses their judgment of the most representative participants to include in research (Patton, 2015). This was applied to KIIs and to guarantee demographic diversity in IDIs.

The snowball method is a form of sampling in which the initial respondents recruit other potential respondents who fit the requirements of the study (Given, 2008). This played a critical role in accessing marginalized people in the thick camp set ups.

4.10 Quality Control and Quality Assurance

The evaluative criteria developed by Lincoln and Guba (1985) were also applied in order to establish the credibility and trust of the qualitative results. Qualitative inquiry, unlike quantitative research, focuses on the truth value and transferability of the information, rather than its reliability and validity. During the study, the following strategies were strictly followed:

- *Triangulation:* This involved the use of multiple data sources, specifically Case Study, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) to cross-verify findings. The idea of triangulation assists in creating a consistent argument in support of the revealed themes since it can be ensured that the voices of separate residents are reflected in groupings within the community and specialists, which minimizes the chances of researcher biasness (Creswell & Poth, 2018).
- *Member Checking:* This can be regarded as the most important method of attaining credibility. After quelling interviews or discussions, the researcher gave a summary of the interpretations to the participants. This not only gave the informants a chance to confirm that the researcher truly grasped the experiences that they went through and it also allowed the community voice to be truly heard (Patton, 2015).
- *Reflexivity:* It was noted that the researcher is the main tool of gathering data and a reflexive journal was kept. This journal was used to keep a record of personal biases, preconceptions and emotional reactions when the field visit was in Geneva and the Kalshi camps. Considering these aspects, the researcher would be able to minimize their impact on the stages of data collection and analysis (Denzin and Lincoln, 2017).
- *Audit Trail:* A transparent record of the research process, including raw data, field notes, and coding hierarchies in NVivo, was maintained to ensure the “dependability” of the results (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

4.11 Data Management and Analysis

The thematic Analysis was employed as the major analytic tool in the research with the help of NVivo. Thematic Analysis is a basic approach to recognizing, analyzing and describing patterns or themes of qualitative data, offering a powerful and descriptive but complicated explanation of qualitative data (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

Data management started by transcribing all the audio recordings verbatim. The transcripts were then entered into NVivo a Qualitative Data Analysis (QDA) software that enables efficient data organization, coding and visualization of the complex relationship between the themes. The evaluation was performed in accordance with the six-step systematic procedure suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006):

- *Familiarization with the Data:*Reading and re-reading of the transcripts of the IDIs, FGDs, and KIIs to familiarize the researcher with the content and mark down preliminary thoughts about opportunities and obstacles to human rights and development.
- *Generating Initial Codes:*Organizing interesting aspects of the data through systematic coding of data over the entire data set. This included the marking of parts of text with a certain issue such as such as sanitation challenges, NID access, or social stigma.
- *Searching for Themes:*Compiling codes into possible themes that are important patterns in the data. As an example, different codes associated with unemployment and poor wages were included under the theme of “Socio-economic Marginalization.
- *Reviewing Themes:*Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts and the entire data set. This helped in ensuring the themes were differentiated and the themes were true to the narratives of the participants.
- *Defining and Naming Themes:*Continued analysis to tone down the details of each theme. Themes were denoted to expressible communicate the essence of the findings (e.g., The Gap between Legal and Substantive Citizenship).
- *Producing the Final Report:*The next step was the choice of bright and interesting extracts and analysis of the selected extracts which was connected back to the research questions and the literature (Nowell et al., 2017).

4.12 Ethical Considerations

As this research involved a vulnerable population, the following ethical principles were strictly followed:

- *Informed Consent*: The purpose of the study was explained to the participants, and a verbal or written consent was obtained.
- *Anonymity and Confidentiality*: Pseudonyms were used to protect identities; all digital data was stored in password-protected files.
- *Right to Withdraw*: The participants were advised that they could avoid any question or excuse themselves out of the study at any time.
- *Non-maleficence*: Interviews were conducted with sensitivity to avoid re-traumatizing participants regarding their displaced status.

4.13 Conclusion

Above methodology presented a stringent framework to capture the multidimensional socio-legal context of the Stranded Bihari people. The combination of purposive sampling with thematic analysis using NVivo provided rich, convincing information about the discrepancy between legal human rights and reality in the development of the community.

CHAPTER V: FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

5.1 Introduction

5.2 Socio-Demographic and Economic Conditions of Stranded Biharis

5.3 Existing Human Rights Conditions of Stranded Biharis

5.4 Major Human Rights Challenges Faced by the Bihari Community

5.5 Existing Community Development Initiatives and Evaluation of Their Effectiveness

5.6 Policy Recommendations for Improving Human Rights Protection and Strengthening Community Development Strategies

5.7 Conclusion

5.1 Introduction

This chapter illustrates the main findings of this research that is based on the primary data obtained via case studies, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), as well as on the Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), which will be triangulated in order to gain a complete and sound comprehension of the research results. Direct quotes of respondents are also included to show their real-life experiences. The discussion addresses socio-economic status and human rights of the Bihari community in exile, with special emphasis on the aspects of community development. It includes socio- demographic features, education and human capital, economic states, housing and living standards, and access to basic services. It also focuses on the subjects of human rights practices involving citizenship and legal identity, education, health, housing, work and social protection as the wider context of community development practices.

5.2 Socio-Demographic and Economic Conditions of Stranded Biharis

5.2.1 Socio-demographic Profile of Stranded Biharis

The socio-demographic profile of Bihari community indicates a complex dynamic between historical dislocation, long-term marginalization and transformations in identity constructions of urban settlements in Bangladesh. The results of case studies, FGDs, and KIIs visually explain the ways in which age, gender, family structure, migration history, and cultural identity influence their daily life and possibilities.

Age and Gender Composition

This demographic data of the Bihari community proves that the population is relatively young and a substantial number of children and youth live in overcrowded camps. Nevertheless, the old people can also be seen, individuals that symbolize the first-generation migrants after the geopolitical transformation after 1971. These mature people also bear the recollections of displacement, statelessness and socio-political marginalization, which are in stark contrast of the dreams of younger generations who identify themselves more as citizens of Bangladesh. The gender balance is fairly even and is represented by male-female proportion, but the gender roles are traditionally organized. Women and especially the older generations are mostly restricted to house

chores and younger women are progressively involved in informal economic work and education. The difference in terms of generations is therefore observed not only in the subjective identity perceptions but also in the areas of educational and employment opportunities and the social mobility.

The case study participants reflect the generational divide and gender-based disparities in opportunities within the Bihari community, shaped by past experiences and evolving aspirations.

Case 03 noted that-

“My grandparents still talk about the time when they were waiting to go to Pakistan, but we have grown up here in Bangladesh. I am studying now and want a job, but my mother never had that chance, she spent her whole life inside the home.”

Similarly, the FGD participants highlight the coexistence of a young population with older generations alongside persistent gender norms influencing roles and expectations.

FGD Participants illustrated that-

“In our camp, you will see many children and young people, but also old people who still feel they don’t belong here. Boys are encouraged to work early, while girls are mostly expected to stay at home or marry young, although things are slowly changing for the younger generation.”

Furthermore, the KII participants emphasize the clear generational divide and the continuing influence of entrenched gender norms despite gradual social change.

KII Participants demonstrated that-

“There is a clear generational divide within the Bihari community-while the older generation remains shaped by memories of displacement and exclusion, the younger generation is more adaptive and aspirational. However, entrenched gender norms continue to limit women’s participation despite gradual progress.”

Analysis of Age and Gender Composition

The Bihari community exhibits a demographic profile with a young majority and an ageing population with a deep recollection of migration. Gender ratios are roughly equal, but gender roles restrict women's autonomy. The youth are more ambitious in their

educational and professional goals, while the elderly are socially limited by their marginalization. In conclusion, there is generational transition and change, but gender inequality remains.

Family Structure, Dependency Ratio, and Marital Patterns

Bihari family structures are based more on nuclear families but extended family systems are still practiced since space is a constraint and because of the need to provide economic support. Due to the high density of population in the camps, the large number of family units may be required to live within a given space in the camps, which aggravate social and economic stresses. The dependency ratio is very high with a significant number of children as well as non-earning people living depending on a very small number in the working population. This puts chronic economic pressure and constrains future savings and rose. Child marriage especially in girls is an aesthetic consequence due to the economic insecurity situation and social constructs. Although certain changes are taking place based on awareness and education, the traditional forms of marriage still play a role in the aspect of the household and decision-making.

The case study participants illustrate the severe economic strain caused by overcrowded living conditions and a high dependency ratio, which compels families to adopt coping strategies such as early marriage.

In this regard, Case 01 said that-

“We are six people living in one small room, and only my father and elder brother earn. It is very difficult to manage food, education, and medical costs. My sister was married early because my parents could not afford to keep her at home for long.”

Similarly, the FGD participants highlight how large family sizes and limited income intensify dependency burdens and encourage early marriage as a coping strategy.

FGD participants noted that-

“Most families here are large, but income is very limited. Many of us live together in shared spaces, and there are always more dependents than earners. Girls are often married at a young age because families feel it reduces their burden.”

Furthermore, the KII participants emphasize that overcrowding, high dependency ratios, and early marriage are interconnected outcomes of economic necessity and entrenched social norms.

In this regard, KII participants pointed out that-

“Household structures in the Bihari camps reflect economic compulsion rather than choice-overcrowded living, high dependency ratios, and early marriage practices are interconnected outcomes of poverty, limited space, and entrenched social norms.”

Analysis of Family Structure, Dependency Ratio, and Marital Patterns

The Bihari people have a strongly nuclear and economically interdependent household with a severe overcrowding. Large dependency ratios also create a lot of strain on a small earning population limiting stability and savings. Economic distress and lack of space affirm early marriage, especially in girls. Even though there are some gradual changes resulting because of education and awareness, household arrangements with poverty and conventional norms still play a significant role in laying down family choices and marital behavior.

Migration History, Settlement Patterns, and Length of Residence

The Bihari people have a rich history of migrations which began in the aftermath of the 1971 Liberation War when Urdu-speaking citizens got caught in Bangladesh. The families have been living more than 40 years in the camps, which has led to some kind of displacement protraction. Settlement patterns are highly segregated even though they are long term and they are clustered in certain camps or colonies. In many instances, these settlements are typified by congestion, lack of good infrastructure, and accessibility of basic amenities. The same-camp intergenerational dwelling has resulted in a feeling of permanency, but without complete social-economic assimilation. However, the younger generations are getting more and more opportunities beyond the camps, which shows a progressive change in settlement ambitions.

The case study participants highlight prolonged displacement and persistent overcrowded settlement conditions, alongside emerging aspirations among younger generations for improved living opportunities.

Case 12 elucidated that-

“My grandparents came here after the war and have lived in this camp ever since. Even after so many years, we are still living in the same crowded conditions. I was born here, but I want to move outside the camp and build a better life if I get the chance.”

Likewise, the FGD participants emphasize long-term residence in camps with minimal improvement in living conditions, while younger generations increasingly seek opportunities beyond these settlements.

FGD Participants expressed that-

“Most of our families have been living in these camps for more than 40 years. We have grown up here generation after generation, but the living conditions have not improved much. Young people now want to leave the camp and find better opportunities in other areas.”

In addition, the KII participants underline prolonged settlement without full integration, where infrastructural limitations and restricted access to services continue to hinder socio-economic mobility, particularly for youth.

KII Participants described that-

“The Bihari community reflects a situation of prolonged settlement without full integration while they have lived in these camps for decades, limitations in housing, infrastructure, and access to services continue to restrict their socio-economic mobility, especially for younger generations.”

Analysis of Migration History, Settlement Patterns, and Length of Residence

The Bihari community is a symptom of long-term displacement (beyond 1971), having spent upwards of forty years in segregated and overcrowded camps. Poor infrastructure and service deprivation have ensured that even with settlement that is long-term, it has never been completely integrated socio-economically. The same places exhibit intergenerational continuity resulting in a sense of non-inclusion permanence. Nevertheless, younger generations express more desires to shed off camps, as the changes in moves and settlement expectations are gradual.

Conclusion

In the case of the socio-demographic profile of stranded Biharis, there are intergenerational transitions with long-term marginalization, elevated dependency, and limited living conditions. Although some of the older generations are still trapped in the experiences of displacement, the younger generations express a desire to see mobility, education, and integration but the burdens of the structure, gender roles, and the financial strain still restrain overall socio-economic progress.

5.2.2 Education and Human Capital

Education and human capital among the Bihari community are showing a gradual but bumpy transition due to deep structural marginalization, enduring economic distress, and is shifting within and between generation aspirations. Despite increased access to education over the years, the gains in access appear clear in terms of literacy, attainment, continuity and quality of learning experiences.

School Enrollment, Attendance, and Dropout Trends

There has been a significant increase in school enrollment of children in the Bihari community in recent years, particularly in primary education. Nonetheless, frequent attendance is irregular because of economic setbacks, poor housing circumstances, and conflicting earning priorities. Income generating activities attract many children especially boys at a very tender age to maintain the families hence interfering with their continuation of education. The rate of dropouts is high in the secondary level where the direct and indirect costs of education are higher. In the case of girls, this is because early marriage and work in the house remain to be a big contributor to school discontinuation. Although there is a gradual change in the attitude of parents towards education in that

attitudes are now positive, structural obstacles still persist to curtail prolonged access to formal education.



Figure 08: Classroom Learning Environment of Students in Geneva Camp

Source: Human Rights Watch, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/07/18/bangladesh-submission-un-committee-rights-persons-disabilities>

The case study participants highlight increasing school enrollment alongside persistent economic barriers that force children into early workforce participation, disrupting education continuity.

Case 09 described that-

“My son was going to school regularly, but after some time I could not manage the expenses, so he had to start working with me. We wanted him to study more, but our financial situation did not allow it.”

On the other hand, the FGD participants note improved primary enrollment but irregular attendance and dropout driven by economic necessity, early marriage, and household responsibilities.

FGD Participants noted that-

“Children are getting enrolled in schools now, especially in primary classes, but many cannot attend regularly. Boys often leave to earn money, and girls drop out due to early marriage or family responsibilities.”

In the same vein, the KII participants emphasize that despite rising enrollment at the primary level, irregular attendance and high dropout rates at the secondary stage persist due to economic and social constraints.

KII Participants opined that-

“While enrollment at the primary level has increased within the Bihari community, irregular attendance and high dropout rates particularly at the secondary stage-remain significant concerns due to economic pressures and social factors affecting both boys and girls.”

Analysis of School Enrollment, Attendance, and Dropout Trends

The education access among the Bihari children has increased especially on primary level, a sign of improvement in school enrolment. Yet, poor attendance and large dropout rates remain as a result of economic demands, child labor and household duties. Direct and indirect costs directly and indirectly impact secondary education. There are gender trends, boys are going to work and girls are dropping out as a result of getting married off. The structural barriers still curtail the ability of sustained impacts on education.

Access to Formal, Non-formal, and Vocational Education Opportunities

There has been a significant increase in school enrollment of children in the Bihari community in recent years, particularly in primary education. The informal education programs, which are usually carried out by NGOs, serve the complementary role as rudimentary literacy and learning assistance, especially to the out of school children and adolescents. These initiatives have helped to close access disparities at first but tend to be small in size and duration. Vocational education and training opportunities are available but not fully accessible, or necessarily relevant to labor market needs. A large number of young people declare their innate interest in taking on the technical and analytical expertise; the reasons are more due to the economic constraints, absence of institutional contact, and unavailable specific programs. This leaves education to solid job shifts early in life uncertain and disjointed.

The case study participants highlight limited progression from basic learning to skill development due to financial and institutional barriers.

Case 08 mentioned that-

“I attended an NGO learning center for some time, which helped me learn basic reading and writing, but there was no opportunity to continue further or get any technical training. I want to learn a skill, but I cannot afford the cost.”

In contrast, the FGD participants describe partial support from NGO programs, while emphasizing unmet demand for vocational training among youth due to economic constraints.

FGD Participants described that-

“There are some NGO programs that help children who are out of school, but these are not enough for everyone. Many young people want vocational training, but they do not get the chance due to lack of money and limited opportunities.”

Meanwhile, the KII participants note that despite expanded formal and non-formal education access, vocational training remains inadequate and poorly aligned with labor market demands.

KII Participants noted that-

“Although both formal and non-formal education opportunities have expanded within the Bihari community, access to quality vocational and skill-based training remains limited and poorly aligned with market needs, which constrains effective transition into sustainable employment.”

5.2.3 Economic Conditions and Livelihood

The living economic condition of the stranded Bihari community in the city of Dhaka is an indication of a chronic struggle that has been influenced by the long-term marginalization, near accessibility to formal jobs and strong dependence of livelihood strategies on the informal and low-income economies. Although there are gradual developments noticed especially among the younger generations of seeking diversified sources of income-economic vulnerability is a trend which is apparent in the face of all households. Livelihoods are more or less survival-based, unstable, low-waged and low social protection.

Employment Status and Dominant Occupational Patterns

The jobs in the Bihari community are mainly located in the informal sector; majorities of the jobs are low-skilled and labor-intensive. The most typical types of jobs are the

rickshaw puller, small scale trade, tailoring, household, mechanic jobs and work in small workshop or local enterprises. The older generations are generally forced to stick to conventional jobs because of low level of education and skills whereas the youth seek to diversify their duties a little, taking the options of service industries like sales attendant or mobile maintenance. There is high rate of unemployment and underemployment especially among the youth and they are unable to secure stable jobs despite having basic education. The jobs are patchy, seasonal and subject to the availability of the day-to-day activities, thus a part of economic uncertainty. Lack of institutionalized structured employment opportunities and job support still limits upward mobility in the society.



Figure 09: Dominant Occupational Patterns of Bihari Community

Source: Power and Participation Research Centre, <https://www.pprc-bd.org/understanding-the-plight-of-day-laborers-in-dhaka/>

The case study participants expressed intergenerational occupational vulnerability, highlighting income instability, limited skills, and constrained opportunities that perpetuate poverty across generations.

Case 02 said that-

“I have been working as a rickshaw puller for many years, just like my father did before me. There is no fixed income in this work-some days I earn enough to manage food and rent, but on other days I hardly earn anything. We do not have other options because we lack education and skills. I have tried to find better work, but without connections or qualifications, it is very difficult to get a stable job. My children are growing up, and I worry that they might also end up in the same kind of uncertain work.”

Likewise, FGD participants reveal widespread informal employment, job insecurity, and skill constraints, limiting upward mobility and reinforcing persistent economic hardship within the community.

FGD Participants said that-

“In our community, most people are involved in informal jobs such as rickshaw pulling, small shops, tailoring, or daily labor. Very few people have permanent or secure employment. Even those who work in shops or workshops do not have fixed salaries or contracts. Young people try to find better opportunities, but due to lack of skills and discrimination, they often end up doing similar low-income work. This makes it very difficult for families to improve their economic condition over time.”

Furthermore, KII participants highlight structural employment barriers, pervasive informality, and skill deficits that constrain stable income generation and limit long-term economic advancement opportunities.

KII Participants illustrated that-

“The employment structure within the Bihari community is heavily dominated by informal and low-skilled occupations, with very limited access to formal sector jobs. A large proportion of individuals remain underemployed or engaged in irregular work, which leads to unstable income patterns and restricts long-term economic mobility. Despite some progress among younger individuals, structural barriers such as limited education, lack of marketable skills, and social marginalization continue to shape occupational outcomes.”

Analysis of Employment Status and Dominant Occupational Patterns

The Bihari community is mainly engaged in informal, low and labor-intensive jobs like rickshaw pulling, minor trade, tailoring and daily wage jobs. The earnings are volatile and seasonal and there are chronic underemployment and economic insecurity. Insufficient education, incompetence, and social alienation impede opportunities to take and get professional employment and climb the ladder. Youth display certain occupational diversification, but it remains the case that structural constraints keep weakening most households to low-income livelihoods.

Sources of Income, Income Stability, and Livelihood Diversification

The Bihari people mainly earn household income in various forms of informal ways, which is a form of adaptation in order to deal with the problem of financial instability. A combination of the daily wage labor, small business operation, as well as the efforts made by several earning members of the household, is relied on by many families. Nevertheless, these attempts have still not resulted in a high level of income that can be characterized as very unstable where income may vary with market demand and supply of jobs, as well as external economic factors. There is livelihood diversification but not greatly developed. To cope with the risks of finances, some families resort to additional employment (home-based jobs), petty trade, or seasonal jobs. Nevertheless, the unavailability of credit, training, and market connections haggard the capacity to have a diversified or retained income bases. Consequently, most households are exposed to economic shocks and cannot save or invest towards improvement of their economy in the long run.

Notably, case study participants reveal that fragile income diversification persists, where multiple low-return activities fail to ensure stability, savings, or resilience against unexpected shocks.

Case 03 opined that-

“In our family, we try to manage expenses by depending on different sources of income. I run a small roadside business, my wife does sew work at home, and my son sometimes works as a helper in a nearby shop. Even with all these efforts, our income is not stable. Some months we can manage, but other times we struggle to pay for food, rent, and other basic needs. We cannot save money, and any unexpected expense creates serious problems for us.”

Similarly, FGD participants highlight that dependence on multiple earners continues, yet income remains unstable due to limited opportunities and weak support systems.

FGD Participants defined that-

“Most families in this community cannot depend on a single source of income. Usually, more than one family member has to work to survive. Even then, the income is not stable, because it depends on daily work opportunities. If someone falls sick or loses work even for a few days, the whole family suffers. There is very little opportunity to expand income sources due to lack of financial support and training.”

Furthermore, KII participants noted that structural constraints restrict effective income diversification, resulting in irregular earnings, low resilience, and sustained economic vulnerability.

KII Participants demonstrated that-

“Income patterns within the Bihari community are characterized by low earnings, irregularity, and limited diversification. While households attempt to engage in multiple livelihood activities as a coping mechanism, structural constraints such as lack of access to credit, inadequate skills, and weak market linkages hinder sustainable income generation. This results in continued vulnerability and limited capacity for economic resilience.”

Analysis of Sources of Income, Income Stability, and Livelihood Diversification

Informal and multi-activity income sources are the great means of surviving as the Bihari community depends on the informal sector, yet the income level is low and fluctuates significantly. Combined efforts by the family members are essential to the livelihood of the household, but lack of credit, skills and access to the market inhibits meaningful diversification. Consequently, this leads to income insecurity that renders the families susceptible to shocks and restrict saving and relying on sustainable economic growth.

Conclusion

The Bihari community is characterized by constant vulnerability through dependence on low-income, informal, and precarious livelihoods. Sustainable economic movement and long-term resilience at household levels in the face of structural barriers-limited access to formal jobs, skills, and lack of financial means-has still not been realized despite efforts to diversify income.

5.2.4 Household Assets and Living Standards

The socio-economic deprivation, spatial marginalizations, and limited availability to urban services manifest in the household asset base and living standard of the Bihari community stranded in Dhaka city. The physical and productive resources owned by most households are very meager and their livelihoods are even overcrowded with substandard infrastructure and also face numerous threats to their environment. Despite the fact that incremental gains can be observed in certain domains-accessibility to electricity or provision of ordinary consumer items, the quality of life is low and does not even spread over households.

Ownership of Household and Productive Assets

Household and productive property ownership by the Bihari community is minimal and most families own only the essentials to keep them alive. Simple furniture, mobile phones, fans and small electronic appliances have been added to common household assets, but the possession of more high-value assets such as refrigerators, televisions or durable goods is low and concentrated. Some households also have productive assets like tools, sewing machines, rickshaws or the small business equipment's which are usually small in scale and value. These resources can be invaluable livelihood resources, but because of their scarcity, their income-generating abilities can be limited. Many households do not even own any productive means, but instead, they depend on wage work or rented machinery. Asset accumulation and economic stability on a long-term basis are also discouraged by financial constraints, unavailability of credit and tenure insecurity.

Notably, case study participants reveal that minimal asset ownership and limited resource access restrict income growth and economic advancement opportunities.

Case 05 opined that-

“In our household, we only have the basic things needed for living, like a bed, a fan, and a mobile phone. We do not have any valuable assets. I do not own the rickshaw I drive-I have to rent it daily, which reduces my income. My wife has a sewing machine, but it is old and not enough to increase her work. We want to improve our situation, but without savings or access to loans, it is very difficult to buy assets that could help us earn more.”

In contrast, FGD participants highlight that widespread lack of productive assets reinforces dependency, insecurity, and persistent economic vulnerability among households.

FGD Participants illustrated that-

“Most families here do not have significant assets. Whatever they have is very basic and used for daily survival. Some people have small tools or equipment for their work, but many depend on renting or borrowing. Without assets, it is hard to improve income or face emergencies, and people remain stuck in the same economic condition.”

Moreover, KII participants noted that structural barriers to asset accumulation sustain poverty cycles through limited financial inclusion and constrained credit access.

KII Participants said that-

“Asset ownership within the Bihari community remains extremely limited, particularly in terms of productive assets that could enhance income generation. The lack of financial inclusion, credit access, and secure tenure significantly constrains the ability of households to accumulate assets, thereby reinforcing cycles of poverty and vulnerability.”

Analysis of Ownership of Household and Productive Assets

The Bihari community has minimal ownership of other assets except basic household needs with minimal families owning valuable or durable fruits. Small scale productive assets (such as tools or equipment) are not always of quality or secured by ownership and therefore many have to rent out. The lack of financial access, credit, and tenure security impedes the accumulation of assets, which supports economic vulnerability and prevents the enhancement of livelihoods over the long term.

Housing Conditions, Structure, and Level of Overcrowding

The living conditions of the Bihari settlements are typified by high population density, poor structures as well as extreme congestion. Majority of families own small, single room units with semi-permanent or temporary, construction materials consisting of thin sheets of tin or wood, or concrete partitions. In these homes, more than one resident of a family can be in these houses which means that they lack privacy and space. Overcrowding is also a significant issue whereby, a number of people-at times, whole families-use one room to sleep, cook and other day to day chores. An absence of sufficient ventilation, lighting and structural safety only further disenfranchise the quality of life. They are also insecure and have little chance of improvement or growth in that most housing arrangements are informal and are not legally recognized.



Figure 10: Housing Environment of Bihari Community at Geneva Camp

Source: DW.com, <https://www.dw.com/en/the-neglected-bihari-community-in-bangladesh/a-50824994>

Evidently, case study participants reveal that severe overcrowding and limited space significantly undermine household comfort, privacy, and overall well-being.

Case 06 said that-

“We live in a small single room where six members of our family stay together. There is no separate space for sleeping, cooking, or studying. The room becomes very hot in summer and uncomfortable during the rainy season. We cannot expand or improve the house because the space is limited and we do not have ownership rights. Living in such crowded conditions creates many problems, especially for children who need a better environment for their studies.”

Correspondingly, FGD participants highlight that widespread congestion and poor ventilation conditions adversely affect health, privacy, and daily living experiences.

FGD Participants expressed that-

“Overcrowding is a serious problem in our community. Many families live in one room, and there is very little space for daily activities. Houses are built very close to each other, and there is hardly any ventilation. This affects health, privacy, and overall living conditions.”

Additionally, KII participants noted that structural housing limitations and insecure tenure perpetuate overcrowding and hinder improvements in living conditions.

KII Participants described-

“Housing conditions in Bihari camps are marked by extreme density and inadequate infrastructure. Overcrowded living arrangements, poor structural quality, and lack of secure tenure contribute to a degraded living environment and limit opportunities for improving housing conditions.”

Analysis of Housing Conditions, Structure, and Level of Overcrowding

Housing conditions in the Bihari settlements are highly congested, with most families living in single-room, semi-permanent structures lacking adequate space, ventilation, and privacy. Overcrowding makes various daily practices the same limited space with negative implications on health and the education of children. The housing can be improved with poor structural quality, informal and insecure tenure which enhances long term weakness and narrows opportunities to safe and dignified living conditions.

Access to Basic Utilities (Water, Sanitation, Electricity, Energy)

The quality, reliability and sufficiency of access to basic utilities in the Bihari community has slightly improved but still there are huge disparities in quality, reliability and adequacy. Most households are able to have common water supply, common sanitation facilities and electrical connections but they cannot adequately cater to the requirements of heavily congested settlement. Most households usually share water supply among themselves, thus causing long queues occasionally shortages. Sanitation is normally communal and poorly maintained posing a question of hygiene and health risks. It is because electricity is available in most of the places though the supply is erratic and connection is as well unsafe. There is also still limited access to clean cooking energy source and most of the households use gas, kerosene or other sources of low-quality fuel.

Case study participants reveal that shared and inadequate services create daily hardships, affecting safety, health, and overall living conditions.

Case07 noted-

“We have access to water and electricity, but these are shared with many families. Sometimes we have to wait a long time to collect water, and the sanitation facilities are not clean or sufficient. Electricity is not always stable, and the connections are not safe. For cooking, we use gas when available, but sometimes we have to depend on other fuels. These problems make daily life very difficult.”

In contrast, FGD participants highlight that insufficient infrastructure and poorly maintained facilities increase health risks and community vulnerability significantly.

FGD Participants described that-

“Basic services are available, but they are not enough for the number of people living here. Water points and toilets are shared, and often not properly maintained. Electricity is available, but there are frequent problems. These conditions create health and safety risks for the community.”

Concurrently, KII participants noted that despite improved access, persistent quality gaps limit reliable and safe utility service delivery.

KII Participants described-

“Although access to basic utilities has improved in Bihari settlements, the quality and adequacy of these services remain major concerns. Shared facilities, poor maintenance, and infrastructure limitations contribute to ongoing challenges in ensuring safe and reliable access to water, sanitation, and energy.”

Analysis of Access to Basic Utilities (Water, Sanitation, Electricity, Energy)

The availability of basic utilities within the Bihari community has also increased marginally but in satisfactorily on account of overloaded shared facilities. Sanitation, electricity and water is also a basic need which is not well maintained, irregular, and inadequate to handle dense population. Sharing facilities result in scarcity, hygiene threat, and safety challenges, and people do not have enough clean cooking energy, which further worsens the situation. On the whole, infrastructural limitations so far impact the everyday life and quality of life.

Conclusion

Household assets and living standards among the Bihari community remain critically low, reflecting persistent poverty and structural exclusion. Lack of property ownership, insecure and overcrowded housing, and lack of access to basic services are all aspects that limit quality of life. Nevertheless, even minor improvements, these conditions contribute to vulnerability, limiting livelihood opportunities, and hindering sustainable socio-economic progress.

5.3 Existing Human Rights Conditions of Stranded Biharis

5.3.1 Citizenship and Legal Identity

The citizenship and legal status of the displaced Bihari community in Dhaka is a part of a historical tradition of historical displacement, delayed acknowledgment and administrative marginalization. Despite a considerable progress in formal citizenship policy in recent years, especially after the court decisions and policy changes, there are still loopholes in non-formal recognition of citizenship and the ability to fully exercise legal rights and obtain rights-based documentation. The issuance of National Identity (NID) cards and other documents to many people has made the process of acquiring legal identity, updating and enjoyment of legal identity rights still uneven. The same intergenerational disparities are also evident with the younger members having formal documentation in comparison to older generations that were excluded over a long time by the state apparatus. The practice of citizenship has continued to be limited due to bureaucratic hurdles, difficulties in verification, and lack of awareness even though the situation has improved.

Access to Citizenship Recognition and Legal Identity Documents

Citizenship recognition has become increasingly available than it was decades before, with the majority of probationers of the younger and the middle age generation having been officially recognized as citizens of Bangladesh. Other official documents (such as the National Identity Cards NIDs) are becoming more and more accessible, but the more aged citizens and some marginalized families continue to have problems in formal acceptance because of historical lapses in registration and lack of consistency of documents. Despite the legal recognition in principle, there is imbalance in access to services associated to citizenship-banking, formal employment, social protection is

among them. In other situations, there are reports of delays or repeat verification procedures when people want to access or make changes to official records which are still present and an indicator of administrative impediments.

Notably, case study participants reveal that obtaining identity documents remains complex, delaying access to essential services and opportunities.

Case 08 opined that-

“For many years, we lived without proper identity documents, and it created a lot of problems in accessing services. Later, we managed to get our National ID, but the process was very difficult and time-consuming. Even now, whenever we try to update or correct information, we have to visit offices many times and face long delays. Without proper documents, it is very hard to get jobs, open bank accounts, or access government services smoothly.”

Similarly, FGD participants highlight that despite improved recognition, procedural barriers and delays persist in documentation processes for many.

FGD Participants demonstrated-

“Earlier, many people in our community did not have proper recognition, but now most of us have National IDs. Still, getting and correcting documents is not easy. Sometimes we face repeated visits to offices and delays, especially for older people who do not understand the process well.”

Furthermore, KII participants noted that administrative inefficiencies continue restricting effective use of legal identity for accessing rights and services.

KII Participants expressed that-

“While formal citizenship recognition has improved for the Bihari community, administrative inefficiencies and documentation gaps continue to create barriers in fully translating legal identity into effective access to rights and services.”

Analysis of Access to Citizenship Recognition and Legal Identity Documents

The Bihari community has been able to gain citizenship recognition, with majority of the young and middle-aged people of the community possessing National ID cards. Nevertheless, despite improvements in the documentation, older and marginalized populations continue to have gaps in documentation as a result of historical registration. Legal identity notwithstanding, despite the administrative slowdown, redundant verifications, and the complexity of the procedures, the actual possibilities of realized citizenship rights are still constrained, reducing full adherence to them.

Possession of National ID, Birth Registration, and Voting Eligibility

Most of the members of the Bihari community who are eligible now have been issued with National Identity Cards, and the younger generations have shown a great improvement in birth registration coverage. This has made it more inclusive in the civic processes such as participation in voting. Nonetheless, these are missing in the case of the older persons who might not have full documentation or have record contradictions. There has been an increase in voting eligibility as visibly there are more people involved in the voting process (national and local). In spite of these developments, other people cite difficulties in terms of updating of registration, checking of addresses and administration mistakes, which at times limit full inclusion in civic activities. Children are now more likely registered and birth registration is widely practiced, but there is awareness and the timing of birth registration is not uniform across the households.

Evidently, case study participants reveal that documentation errors and delays still hinder smooth civic participation and official processes.

Case 07 said that-

“My children all have birth certificates and National IDs now, but for the older generation it was very difficult. Some of us only received proper documents later in life. Even when we have these documents, small errors in names or addresses create problems during voting or other official work, and correcting them takes a long time.”

Likewise, FGD participants highlight that despite wider access, inconsistencies in documents create ongoing difficulties for community members.

FGD Participants defined-

“Now most people in our community can vote because they have National ID cards. Earlier this was not possible for many. However, there are still problems with documents, especially when information does not match, and people have to struggle to fix it.”

Moreover, KII participants noted that improved registration increased inclusion, yet administrative issues continue limiting full civic engagement.

KII Participants illustrated-

“The expansion of National ID and birth registration coverage has significantly improved civic inclusion among the Bihari population, although inconsistencies in documentation and administrative delays still affect full electoral and civil participation.”

Analysis of Possession of National ID, Birth Registration, and Voting Eligibility

The coverage of the Bihari community of national ID and birth registration has significantly enhanced, particularly in the younger generations, allowing more people to be eligible to vote and participate in civic activities. Nevertheless, the documentation gaps and inconsistencies of older members continue to exist based on historical issues in registration. Errors in administration, discrepancy in records, and delays in corrections all persist in preventing complete integration into the electoral process and civic engagements in spite of the general advance in the legal acceptance of them.

Conclusion

The Bihari community has seen an improvement in citizenship recognition and legal identity; particularly in the younger generations whereby access to National ID card and birth registration is more accessible. Nevertheless, the administrative challenges, documentation mistakes, and delays in the verification still exist and do not allow full implementation of the legal rights. The disparity between generations is also noticeable with the older generation being more excluded. Thus, the formal citizenship-effective access to the services, civic participation, institutional inclusion translation is imperfect and incomplete.

5.3.2 Right to Education

Access to education among the languishing Bihari population in Dhaka has shifted positively in access, especially at the primary level, but still has a limitation in the areas

of inclusiveness, progressivity, and quality. Although informal and formal educational opportunities in the country have become increasingly familiar compared to the past, unequal educational outcomes remain constant with age, gender, and socio-economic groups due to structural disparities. Inclusion of the community has been a gradual process in the mainstream schooling systems, yet there remain the factors of affordability, discrimination, language barriers and lack of availability of higher education and skills training processes as yet limit this right to education to be enforced in practice to the fullest.

Accessibility and Inclusiveness of Formal and Non-Formal Education

Formal education has become increasingly more accessible and especially among young children who are now more students of government and non-government schools. Informal education programs whereby NGOs are usually involved, are also significant in accessing out-of-school kids and giving them a basic literacy training. These programs have enhanced accessing the primary and provided alternative learning opportunities to vulnerable pupils. In spite of this development, the inclusiveness is still skewed. Children in poorer families or those with congested conditions of living usually have difficulties attending school. Though enrollment has been increasing, attendance and completion on a sustained basis is still not consistent especially after the primary level.

Case study participants reveal that financial hardship and household responsibilities limit children's sustained participation in education.

Case 02 said that-

“In our area, children are now going to school more than before, and some NGO programs also help those who cannot attend regular schools. But even when children are enrolled, it is difficult for many families to keep them in school because of financial problems and household responsibilities. Sometimes children have to miss classes or drop out because the family cannot afford the daily costs or because they need to help at home.”

Similarly, FGD participants highlight that despite improved access, poverty continues to restrict equal educational opportunities for many children.

FGD Participants elucidated that-

“Education opportunities have improved compared to the past, especially for young children. Schools are more accessible now, and some NGOs are also working here. But not all children can benefit equally because many families still struggle with poverty and daily survival needs.”

Furthermore, KII participants noted that expanded education access still faces inclusiveness challenges due to socio-economic constraints and uneven participation.

KII Participants expressed-

“Access to both formal and non-formal education has expanded for the Bihari community; however, inclusiveness remains limited due to persistent socio-economic constraints and uneven participation across different segments of the population.”

Analysis of Accessibility and Inclusiveness of Formal and Non-Formal Education

There has been an increased accessibility of formal and non-formal education especially among young children in government schools and NGOs-sponsored learning initiatives. Nevertheless, inclusiveness has not been achieved due to poverty, congestion, and family commitments that make attainability difficult. Though there has been growth in enrollment, long-term retention has been on a downward trend beyond the primary level, indicating that equal access to education within the community persists to be restricted due to socio-economic factors.

Affordability and Quality of Educational Services

Despite the formal free nature of primary education in the public institutions, indirect costs like uniforms, books, transportation and tutoring impose financial burdens on most households. These expenses can be an impediment to further education especially when one has several children in the family. Between 1987 and 2002, there remained concerns about quality of education. An over-crowded classroom, insufficient attention by the teachers, and poor learning materials influence learning outcomes. Most of the students (those who are mostly marginalized in settlement) are provided with education that may not necessarily be conducive to skill development and long-term academic development. Notably, case study participants reveal that hidden educational costs and quality issues hinder sustained schooling for children.

Case 05 said that-

“Schooling is officially free, but in reality, there are many expenses like books, uniforms, and other materials. For a poor family like ours, it becomes very difficult to manage these costs for all children. Sometimes we have to choose which child can continue studying and which one has to stop. Even when children go to school, the quality of education is not always good, and they often do not get enough attention from teachers.”

Similarly, FGD participants highlight that indirect expenses continue to restrict poor families from maintaining children’s education consistently.

FGD Participants described-

“Even though schools do not charge tuition, there are still many hidden costs. Poor families struggle to afford books, clothes, and other expenses. Because of this, many children cannot continue their education properly.”

Furthermore, KII participants noted that affordability and quality constraints still undermine educational outcomes despite free formal access.

KII Participants expressed that-

“Affordability challenges and quality limitations continue to affect educational outcomes among the Bihari community, despite formal access to free primary education.”

Analysis of Affordability and Quality of Educational Services

School fees are free at primary level but indirect costs which include uniform, books and some transport present a high burden to the poor. Such affordability limitations can be used to make families choose or withdraw children into school. Concurrently, overpopulated learning institutions, lack of teacher-pupil focus, and poor curricula lower the quality of learning. All these factors interfere with learning efficiently and educational growth in the long term on a community basis.

Conclusion

Overall, the status of Bihari education in Dhaka has been enhanced with regard to both accessibility and availability whereby the primary education both in formal and informal schools and those education programs financed by the NGOs have contributed to better accessibility of education. Nevertheless, the inclusiveness is still unequal as there are still levels of perpetuation of poverty, language, and social marginalization. Other costs of education (indirect) and lack of quality teaching further restrict long-term participation and learning results. Because of this, equality and meaningful educational achievement continue not to be fully provided to all communities in spite of the expanded opportunities.

5.3.3 Right to Health

The right to health among the Bihar community in Dhaka city is a manifestation of partial access and constant structural obstacle in terms of costs of healthcare services quality, and equity. Although low-income earners have access to basic healthcare services including some of the public hospitals and the doctors and other health practitioners in their neighborhood, the efficiency of the services is still limited by the economic cost's inaccessibility, overcrowding in the medical facilities, and low health awareness. Poor living conditions, poor nutrition and environmental hazards in overcrowded settlements also contribute to increased health vulnerabilities.

Availability and Accessibility of Healthcare Services

Bihari settlements have fair access to healthcare services within reasonable distances, such as government hospitals and local clinics, as well as informal healthcare providers. Majority of the community members use a combination of community health center and private pharmacies in treatment. Nevertheless, in practice, access is often limited due to

the length of queues, public hospital overcrowding, and service capacities. People in most situations withhold finding treatment until situation gets extreme as they have no money or no time to visit a doctor as they work every day. There is also limited knowledge on preventative health care which influences the uptake of the services provided in a timely manner as well.



Figure 11: Availability and Accessibility of Healthcare Services among Bihari Community at Geneva Camp

Source: CHORUS, <https://chorusurbanhealth.org/blog-urban-dispensaries-and-primary-healthcare-in-dhaka/>

Notably, case study participants reveal that overcrowding and time constraints discourage timely use of formal healthcare services.

Case 09 mentioned that-

“When we get sick, we usually go to the nearby hospital or pharmacy, but getting proper treatment is not easy. There are always many patients, and we have to wait a long time. Sometimes we return home without seeing a doctor because it takes too much time, and we cannot afford to miss a day of work. Only when the condition becomes serious do we go again, even if it is very difficult for us.”

Similarly, FGD participants highlight that long queues and delays push people toward informal treatment.

FGD Participants expressed-

“Hospitals and clinics are available, but access is not smooth. We often face long queues and delays, so many people prefer local pharmacies first. Only when the situation becomes serious do they go to hospitals.”

Moreover, KII participants noted that despite physical availability, service inefficiencies and socio-economic barriers limit effective healthcare access.

From KII Participants said-

“Although healthcare facilities are geographically accessible to the Bihari community, actual access is limited by overcrowding, delayed service delivery, and socio-economic constraints that discourage timely utilization of formal healthcare.”

Analysis of Availability and Accessibility of Healthcare Services

The Bihari community has geographical access to healthcare facilities, but the practical access is limited. Overcrowding in public hospitals, long waiting times, and limited-service capacity often discourage timely treatment. The loss of income and the daily wage burden in many households result in depending on pharmacies or prompting deferred care. Limited knowledge of preventive care also lessens early service utilization, which leads to delayed care and deteriorated disease outcomes.

Access to Maternal, Child, and Reproductive Health Services

There has been an increase in access to maternal healthcare, childcare and reproductive health care services in recent years especially with government programs and increased NGO programs. There is growing access to antenatal care and primary maternal health services by pregnant women in the community, although this is not universal. However, there are still areas of concern in terms of awareness, continuity of care, and service quality. There are a lot of women that use the traditional methods or turn to the medics when the complications have taken place. There is increased coverage of child health services such as immunization, but the follow-up care and monitoring on nutrition remain irregular.

Consistently, case study participants reveal that irregular attendance and limited awareness reduce sustained use of maternal and child health services.

Case 11 cited that-

“During my pregnancy, I went to the local clinic for check-ups, but I did not go regularly because it was difficult to manage time and travel. Some services are available, but not all women in our area are fully aware of how important regular check-ups are. For children, we try to take them for vaccination, but after that, regular health check-ups are not always possible due to cost and other difficulties.”

In the same vein, FGD participants highlight that although services are available, awareness gaps and financial constraints limit regular utilization among many women.

FGD Participants said-

“Maternal and child health services are available now, and many women go for check-ups and vaccination. But not everyone can use these services regularly because of lack of awareness, time, and financial problems.”

Additionally, KII participants noted that improved service access is still constrained by socio-economic barriers and inconsistent health-seeking practices.

KII Participants described-

“Maternal and child health service utilization has improved among the Bihari community; however, irregular access, limited awareness, and socio-economic constraints continue to affect service continuity and outcomes.”

Analysis of Access to Maternal, Child, and Reproductive Health Services

Improved maternal and child health services through government and NGO interventions have resulted in improvement of maternal and child health in terms of the quality of antenatal care and immunization cover. Nonetheless, there are still uneven access to this because of lack of awareness, financial and time constraints. Most women are not regularly checked and only attend the services when they become complicated. Uneven follow-up and a low continuity of care still have an impact on the general maternal and child health outcomes.

Conclusion

Conclusively, the right to health in the Bihari community in Dhaka depicts a higher geographical accessibility of healthcare services, maternal and child health services, brought forth by the initiative of the public and Non-Governmental Organizations. Nevertheless, there is limited access due to overcrowding, indirect costs, lack of awareness, and delayed use of the services. The continuity of treatment and preventive care remain poor and tend to cause late health seeking behavior. As such, although more services are being offered, people are not enjoying equitable and timely healthcare services.

5.3.4 Right to Adequate Housing

The right to decent dwelling amidst the displaced Bihari group in Dhaka is typified by a structural form of restriction over a prolonged period comprising of informal settlements, restriction on housing areas, and the unremitting insecurity of tenure. The majority of families live in highly populated settlements, in which housing constructions can be either semi-permanent or temporary. Although we may've noticed gradual progress in certain areas, the general living conditions of the housing in respect to safety, privacy, sanitation, and environmental well-being are factors that are still below the mark. These difficulties are interrelated against low income, historical marginalization, and consequential inability to access formal housing markets.

Quality, Safety, and Structural Condition of Housing

Bihari settlement dwellings are usually made of cheap and semi-permanent materials, which include tin, wood and bamboo. Most of the houses are old, congested, and prone to domestic and environmental dangers like heavy rains, heat, and poor ventilation. The issue of structural safety remains in progress, particularly in crowded spaces, housing construction is in close proximity. Although there have been gradual improvements due to community efforts and the rainy dose of household investment, the general outcome of the housing conditions is less than acceptable in an urban setting with common problems concerning water seeping, dampness and absence of ventilation.



Figure 12: Quality, Safety, and Structural Housing Condition of Bihari Community

Source: Dhaka Tribune, <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/dhaka/188144/are-the-rohingyas-living-better-than-biharis-of>

Overall, case study participants reveal that poor housing conditions and financial constraints limit safe and adequate living environments.

Case 01 noted-

“We live in a small tin-shed house that was built many years ago. During the rainy season, water leaks from the roof, and during summer it becomes very hot inside. The rooms are very small, and there is not enough space for all family members to sleep properly. We try to repair it whenever possible, but due to financial limitations, we cannot rebuild or improve the structure in a proper way.”

Similarly, FGD participants highlight that deteriorated tin-shed houses and overcrowding make daily living uncomfortable and insecure.

FGD Participants expressed-

“Most houses in our area are made of tin and wood. They are very old and crowded. In the rainy season, water leaks, and in summer it becomes very uncomfortable to live inside.”

In the same vein, KII participants noted that structural marginalization and resource limitations sustain weak and overcrowded housing conditions.

KII Participants noted-

“The housing conditions of the Bihari settlements reflect long-term urban marginalization, were inadequate infrastructure and limited financial capacity result in structurally weak and overcrowded living environments.”

Analysis of Quality, Safety, and Structural Condition of Housing

The housing accommodation of the Bihari settlements is majorly made up of cheap, partial, semi-permanent construction that leads to structurally unsafe and overpopulated living conditions. Ineffective ventilation, water infiltration, and exposure to weather conditions vastly diminish safety and comfort. Lack of finances limits renovation or advancements of houses. All in all, long-term urban marginalization has contributed to poor housing conditions which do not reflect the minimum requirements of safe and human dignified living in the urban areas.

Sanitation, Drainage, and Environmental Health Conditions

The living conditions in Sanitation and drainage of Bihari settlements are however poor though there have been some interventions to improve the conditions with the help of the public and non-governmental organizations. Some families use common or shared toilets and these toilets are not adequately maintained. There is also a lack of drainage systems particularly during rainy seasons when it is waterlogged. Such environmental situations expose one to health hazards, such as water-borne diseases and that caused by poor hygiene. Another ongoing problem is waste management which goes to the overall degradation of the environment within the settlements.

Similarly, case study participants reveal that shared sanitation and poor drainage systems create recurring health and environmental problems.

Case 06 noted-

“We use shared toilets in our area, but they are not always clean or sufficient for all families. During the rainy season, water often accumulates in the drainage lines, and the surroundings become dirty and unhealthy. Sometimes children fall sick because of these conditions, but we have limited options to improve the situation ourselves.”

Likewise, FGD participants highlight that inadequate toilet facilities and waterlogging during rainy seasons negatively affect household health conditions.

FGD Participants added-

“Sanitation facilities are not enough for everyone. We share toilets, and drainage problems cause waterlogging during the rainy season, which creates health problems for our families.”

Correspondingly, KII participants noted that poor sanitation infrastructure in densely populated areas continues to generate significant public health risks.

KII Participants said that-

“Poor sanitation and inadequate drainage systems in Bihari settlements continue to pose significant public health risks, particularly in densely populated urban settings.”

Analysis of Sanitation, Drainage, and Environmental Health Conditions

The level of sanitation and drainage in Bihari settlements is still poor with some NGO and government intervention. Poor drainage systems also contribute to waterlogging because of shared poorly maintained toilets. Such circumstances expose people to water-borne illnesses and healthcare risks, associated with hygiene. Poor waste treatment also aggravates the environmental quality, rendering the overall standards of living unsafe and leading to chronic vulnerability to people with their health issues.

Conclusion

Adequate housing is a right that is limited by the informal settlement, overpopulation, and insecure tenure practices within Dhaka amongst the Bihari people. Majority of the houses are structurally low, constructed using temporary materials and are characterized by poor ventilation, leakages and inadequate safety. Negligent sanitation, common facilities, and lack of proper drainage also contribute to the enhancement of environmental and health hazards. Despite certain positive developments observable with the help of community and NGO, the overall housing situation stays in bad state, and the availability of safe, dignified, and sustainable housing is restricted.

5.3.5 Right to Work and Livelihood

This is demonstrating a tendency of structural disenfranchisement, reliance on informal employment, and constant socio-economic indebtedness as manifested in the right to work and livelihood among the stranded Bihari community. Despite the active involvement of community members in the labor markets within the City, especially in low-skilled and informal areas, the access to formal and decent jobs is scarce. Poverty, limited education, and barriers related to social identity are the major determinants of employment. Consequently, the majority of households are being dependent on informal, poorly paid, and unpredictable working conditions that cannot guarantee them a stable livelihood.

Availability of Employment Opportunities and Access to Jobs

Jobs among the Bihari community are mainly in informal sectors including garment factories, riding rickshaws, day labor, tiny selling and household help. Although employment opportunities exist in the cities, it is often mediated through social connections, referrals, and informal recruitment. With even active participation in the labor market, many of these people have problems of accessing better paid/or official sector work because of their lack of education, lack of professional skills and social exclusion. The young and women are getting increasingly involved in low-paid jobs especially those in garment factories, though again chances are limited in regard to promotion.

Case study participants reveal that limited education and weak networks confine individuals to low-income informal employment.

Case 07 opined that-

“In our community, most people work in low-income jobs like garment factories, rickshaw pulling, or day labor. We do not get opportunities in better or formal jobs because we do not have higher education or connections. Sometimes we try to find better work, but without recommendations or networks, it becomes very difficult. So, we take whatever work is available to survive.”

Similarly, FGD participants highlight that social identity and educational gaps restrict access to stable and formal job opportunities.

FGD Participants added-

“We have work opportunities, but mostly in low-paid informal jobs. It is very hard for us to enter good or permanent jobs because of our education level and social identity.”

In the same vein, KII participants noted that socio-economic marginalization keeps the community concentrated in informal labor markets.

KII Participants illustrated-

“Members of the Bihari community are largely concentrated in informal labor markets, where access to formal employment remains limited due to educational gaps and socio-economic marginalization.”

Analysis of Availability of Employment Opportunities and Access to Jobs

The Bihari community has employment that is strongly centralized and informal dominating low-paying jobs as rickshaw pulling, garment, day labor, and small-scale vending. The limited education, skills, and social exclusion restrict access to formal and high-paid jobs. The recruitment can be network-based and this reduces opportunities further. This has seen majority of workers in the precarious jobs with low growth opportunities or jobs incomes.

Job Security and Stability of Employment

Most Bihari community members do not have job security. Work is usually short term, seasonal or contractual especially in construction, garment manufacturing industries, and informal trade. This has led to a lot of unpredictability among the workers on whether they will be employed or not. Some people are laid off, unaware, and social protective mechanisms in place are scarce to assist the unemployed. This unpredictability adds instability to the household economic stability, as well as constrained long-term household planning in terms of education, residential housing, and savings.

Consistently, case study participants reveal that lack of contracts creates employment insecurity and unpredictable livelihood conditions.

Cases 08 said that-

“Our work is not permanent. Sometimes we get jobs for a few months, and then suddenly the work stops. We do not have any job security or contract. If the employer does not need us anymore, we lose the job without any notice. This makes our life very uncertain because we do not know what will happen next.”

Similarly, FGD participants highlight that temporary jobs without permanent agreements generate continuous fear of job loss.

FGD Participants described-

“Most of our jobs are temporary. We do not have permanent contracts, so we are always worried about losing our work at any time.”

Correspondingly, KII participants noted that widespread employment instability reflects limited access to formal protections and contracts.

KII Participants mentioned that-

“Employment among the Bihari population is characterized by high levels of instability, with limited access to formal contracts and employment protections.”

Analysis of Job Security and Stability of Employment

In the Bihari community, job security is mostly weak and unstable as the majority of workers have temporary, seasonal or even informal employment. The absence of official contracts and labor protection brings about unexpected job loss and loss of income. Long-term financial planning is not possible due to this instability, which impacts household choices of education, housing, and savings and adds to lifelong economic vulnerability and a lack of livelihood.

Conclusion

Informal and low paid jobs dominate the right to work and livelihood among the Bihari community in Dhaka with slight access to formal job markets through gaps in education, social exclusion, and without networks. The majority of workers are involved in unstable, seasonal, or temporary employment especially those of low-end which will result in widespread income insecurity. Lack of job contracts and security also adds to vulnerability. Consequently, the livelihoods are uncertain, limiting economic stability and upward mobility in the long-term within the community.

5.3.6 Social Protection and Public Services

The status of social protection and access to publicly funded services of the stranded Bihari population is one of partial inclusion in national welfare systems and structural exclusion. Whereas a few households can obtain some government safety net programs and minimal government services, the level of coverage is still very uneven and, in many cases, hampered by administrative obstructions, record keeping, and socio-economic marginalization. The community has remained dependent on a mix of informal coping and community support network schemes alongside selective NGO interventions to address basic needs. Although infrastructure and the availability of services are improving slowly, access variability, and quality difference can still be observed in dissimilar settlements.

Access to Government Safety Net Programs and Welfare Benefits

The availability of government social safety net programs like the elderly allowance, widow allowance and vulnerable family's allowance is available in the community, though not all are covered. Such programs are beneficial to some households especially well-documented ones with National ID cards; others are left out after failing to have formal identity recognition or because of administrative challenges. Eligibility awareness is also skewed and some individuals who are eligible fail to do so because of lack of information or because of special complexities in procedures. In other instances, aid is somewhat sporadic or inadequate to address household demands, though it has a significant auxiliary effect in alleviating extreme vulnerability.

Notably, case study participants reveal that documentation gaps and procedural barriers limit access to government safety net benefits.

Case 09 opined that-

“We have heard about government allowances for elderly and poor families, and some people in our area receive them. But not everyone can access these benefits. Those who have proper documents sometimes get support, but many of us still struggle because we do not have complete papers or do not know the full procedure. Even when someone gets support, it is very small compared to our needs, but still, it helps a little in managing daily expenses.”

In contrast, FGD participants highlight that lack of information and paper-related issues prevent many families from receiving allowances.

FGD Participants mentioned-

“Some families receive old age or widow allowances, but many others cannot get them because of document problems or lack of information about how to apply.”

Correspondingly, KII participants noted that administrative constraints continue to restrict equitable inclusion in national social protection programs.

KII Participants described that-

“The Bihari community has partial inclusion in national safety net programs; however, administrative constraints and documentation barriers significantly limit equitable access.”

Analysis of Access to Government Safety Net Programs and Welfare Benefits

The Bihari community has a partial access to government safety net programs, where only documented and informed households receive the benefits. Several qualified persons miss out because they do not have the correct identity documents, administrative obstacles, and little knowledge on how to apply. Though the help is sometimes minimal and inadequate, it is still a relief to the needy families to touch upon the significance and shortcomings of existing welfare coverage.

Inclusion in NGO and Development Support Programs

Development agencies and non-governmental organizations are there to assist in increasing access to education, health, sanitation, and access to livelihood prospects in the Bihari community. Through NGO programs concerning health awareness, support of children in their education, vocational training, and promotion of hygiene, some households benefit. Nonetheless, only a limited number are covered and not every household is covered. The implementation of the program is usually based on the location of the project, availability of funds and areas where the organizations focus. This means that although NGO interventions are positive, they are not as effective as covering the magnitude of need in the community.

Notably, case study participants reveal that NGO support is helpful but limited in coverage and unable to meet widespread needs.

Case 10 said that-

“Some NGOs come to our area and provide support like education materials for children, health awareness, or training programs. A few people in our community have benefited from these programs, especially women and children. However, not everyone gets access because these programs are limited and do not cover all families. We appreciate the support, but the need is much larger than what is available.”

Similarly, FGD participants highlight that only a small portion of the community benefits from NGO education and health initiatives.

FGD Participants described-

“NGOs help us with education, health awareness, and sometimes training, but only a small number of people can benefit from these programs.”

Correspondingly, KII participants noted that although NGO interventions are valuable, restricted reach reduces their overall community-level impact.

KII Participants narrated-

“NGO interventions in Bihari settlements provide important supplementary support, but coverage limitations restrict their overall impact on community-wide social development.”

Analysis of Inclusion in NGO and Development Support Programs

The NGO and development programs offer valuable assistance in education, health, sanitation, and livelihoods to the Bihari people. Nevertheless, it is still insufficient because a limited percentage of households receive it because of project targeting, limitations on funding and coverage areas. Although these interventions help vulnerable groups positively, they do not reach the large-scale areas and population of the whole community, as well as their limited scope makes them unable to accommodate them.

Conclusion

The Bihari community in Dhaka includes and excludes in both the political systems of national welfare social protection and availability of social services to a large part of the population. Despite the positive effects on some households, the government safety net programs still fail to provide coverage to households as documentation barriers, lack of awareness and administrative constraints result in uneven coverage. The NGO interventions offer significant additional provision of education, health, and livelihoods but these are limited. In general, the level of access to social protection is unbalanced, and a large part of the community is not adequately covered by the formal support.

5.3.7 Justice, Equality, and Protection

The state of justice, equality, and protection of the stranded Bihari people is a flawed reality of laws being formally included, and under very real, social, and structural vulnerabilities. Although community members have a legal right to justice mechanisms and protection services, in reality their power to exercise these rights is defined by socio-economic factors, lack of awareness, and discrimination. Mediation through informal dispute resolution and community-based mediation are popular, particularly in mundane disputes. Simultaneously, the problems of stigma, unfair treatment, and their safety

remain factors that affect their contact with the further urban society and official organizations.

Access to Legal Services and Dispute Resolution Mechanisms

Many Bihari community members can hardly access the formal legal services due to their financial means, legal illiteracy, and the complexity of the procedures. The local courts are not utilized to solve most minor disputes which are handled informally by the local leader and social mediation structures within the community instead of formal courts. In more grave cases, people can turn to legal help, and it is usually viewed as a costly, time dependent and complex journey that cannot be gone through without the aid of an institution. Consequently, the use of informal justice systems is still high.

Consistently, case study participants reveal that economic and informational barriers limit access to formal legal services.

Case 12 illustrated-

“When any dispute happens in our area, most of the time we try to solve it within the community. We go to our elders or community leaders because going to court is very expensive and complicated for us. Many of us do not understand the legal process properly, and we cannot afford lawyers. Only in very serious cases do we think about going to formal legal services, but even then, it becomes very difficult to manage.”

Similarly, FGD participants highlight that community-based resolution is preferred due to cost and lack of legal awareness.

FGD Participants noted-

“We usually resolve problems through community discussions. Going to court is difficult because of cost and lack of knowledge about legal procedures.”

Correspondingly, KII participants noted that informal dispute mechanisms dominate because of restricted access to formal justice systems.

KII Participants expressed-

“The Bihari community largely depends on informal dispute resolution mechanisms, as access to formal legal services is constrained by economic and informational barriers.”

Analysis of Access to Legal Services and Dispute Resolution Mechanisms

Financial constraints, legal illiteracy and complexity of the process all limit access to formal legal services in the Bihari community. This has made it so that most disputes are resolved informally by the community through local leaders or the elders. In most cases, formal courts are not resorted to unless serious cases are involved. Such dependency on informal justice demonstrates accessibility hindrances as well as perceived heavy weight of formal legal procedures.

Conclusion

The gap between a form of justice and informal access is still an issue that still rings in terms of equality and protection of the Bihari community in Dhaka. Even though legal mechanisms are in place, the lack of legal awareness, legal limitations, and complexity of the procedures limit such applications. This has led to majority conflicts being settled by informal community-based mediation as opposed to the formal courts. This aspect of depending on informal systems and a sense of discrimination and vulnerability restrict complete access to justice, as well as undermining effective protection under a larger city legal system.

5.4 Major Human Rights Challenges Faced by the Bihari Community

5.4.1 Legal and Citizenship Challenges

The displaced Bihari community remains in a dire state of legal and citizenship related issues that have a direct impact on its accessibility to rights, services and other socio-economic opportunities. Despite legal frameworks that acknowledge the rights of citizenship, there is an unbalanced access to documentation and administrative facilities. It is a chronic problem of many people who cannot get or renew the necessary identity documents, which also limit their access to participating more completely in social protection systems, employment, and the rest of the public services. These challenges are deeply rooted in historical marginalization, bureaucratic complexity, and limited institutional responsiveness.

Limited Access to Citizenship Documentation and Legal Recognition

Access to formal citizenship documentation such as National Identity Cards and other legal identity papers is uneven across the community. The former has valid documentation but others still face obstacles with historical registration gaps, disjointed records or trouble verifying personal identity. This structural exclusion of many state services is caused by this absence of equal legal recognition. In most instances, undocumented people face challenges when it comes to obtaining education, healthcare, formal jobs, and social welfare programs. Consequently, legal identity emerges to be a prime determinant of social inclusion and exclusion.

Notably, case study participants reveal that incomplete documentation restricts access to essential services and formal opportunities.

Case 03 mentioned that-

“Some members of our family have National ID cards, but others still struggle to get proper documents. Without these papers, many doors remain closed for us. We cannot easily apply for government services, and sometimes even simple tasks like opening a bank account or accessing support programs become very difficult. We try again and again, but the process is not the same for everyone in our community, and many people remain excluded just because of missing or incomplete documents.”

Similarly, FGD participants highlight that lack of citizenship papers creates barriers in accessing services and social opportunities.

FGD Participants noted-

“Not everyone in our community has proper citizenship documents. Those without papers face many problems in accessing services and opportunities.”

Correspondingly, KII participants noted that uneven documentation remains a major structural obstacle to community inclusion in state systems.

KII Participants described that-

“Incomplete and uneven access to citizenship documentation continues to be a key structural barrier affecting the inclusion of the Bihari community in formal state systems.”

Analysis of Limited Access to Citizenship Documentation and Legal Recognition

The access to citizenship documentation within the Bihari community is not even with individuals having National ID cards and others being excluded because of the historical registration and verification process. Absence of legal identity means providing people with access to vital services: education, health, jobs, and social security. Therefore, nationality records are a decisive factor of being a social inclusion, which affirms structural inequality in the community.

Administrative Complexity and Delays in Legal Processes

Obtaining legal identity documents is usually discussed as a complicated, time-consuming, and administrative-producing process. Often, applicants are beset with repeated visits to the government offices, lack of proper procedures requirements, and long waiting lines to apply and get their verifications and approvals. Such delays are a deterrent to many people who aspire to seek formal documentation, particularly those that cannot spare time to engage on formalization rather than fulfill their daily wages. These challenges are enhanced by the absence of simplified procedures and supportive guidance.

Case study participants reveal that prolonged procedures and unclear instructions delay access to essential identity documentation.

Case 04 illustrated that-

“When we try to apply for or renew our documents, the process takes a very long time. We have to visit different offices many times, and sometimes we are not given clear instructions about what to do next. Because of our work, it becomes difficult to spend so much time in government offices. Even after waiting for months, there is no guarantee that the process will be completed quickly, so many people feel frustrated and give up trying.”

Similarly, FGD participants highlight that repeated visits and administrative delays discourage many from completing documentation processes.

FGD Participants expressed-

“The process of getting documents is very complicated and takes a long time. Many people lose interest because of repeated visits and delays.”

Correspondingly, KII participants noted that bureaucratic inefficiencies significantly obstruct timely issuance of legal identity documents for marginalized groups.

KII Participants opined-

“Administrative inefficiencies and procedural delays significantly hinder timely access to legal identity documentation among marginalized groups, including the Bihari community.”

Analysis of Administrative Complexity and Delays in Legal Processes

Acquisition of legal identity documents among Bihari community is impeded by complicated processes, frequent visits to offices, and long administrative waits. Absence of clarity and effective systems would dishearten applicants, more so daily wage earners who cannot risk the loss of time. All these procedural obstacles may result in frustration and dropouts in applications, which means that access to legal information will arrive in time and tighten the gates to formal state services.

Conclusion

Inequalities in access to identity papers and inefficiency of the administration are the primary factors leading to issues of legal and citizenship problems in the Bihari community in Dhaka. However, to some extent, there are people who have genuine legal documents, most people are excluded as a result of gaps and inadequate documentations in history, verification and also lack of proper documentation. The complicated, time-sensitive, and expensive administrative processes also deter the access to citizenship services in a timely manner. Consequently, insufficient legal recognition still serves as a barrier to accessing vital services, workplaces, and social integration in formal state systems.

5.4.2 Economic Challenges

The devastating economic condition of the stranded Bihari community manifests entrenched structural disadvantages, in which access to stable jobs, low-income livelihoods, and economic upward mobility are limited. The informal sector work relies on the informal sector and many usually lack social protection, it is poorly paid, and likely to be insecure. The low level of access to financial services, unsatisfactory training of skills and poor integration into formal labor markets further enhance economic vulnerability. All these together form a vicious circle of poverty and limit the socio-economic mobility of generations.

High Levels of Unemployment and Informal Employment

There are a chronic poverty and dependency in the community, especially among youth and women, in terms of unemployment and underemployment. Even though a large number of people have jobs, the most of them work in informal industries like garments factories, pulling rickshaws, day labor and small-scale vending. The presence of formal job opportunities is still low because of the low level of education and the absence of professional connections and structural exclusion. Work is, even in cases of work, often sporadic and not offering the stability that is long term. Due to this, there is a high turnover of joblessness and fluctuating involvement in earning activities by many households.

Notably, case study participants reveal that lack of formal employment opportunities results in persistent job insecurity and unstable income conditions.

Case 09 pointed out-

“In our family, almost everyone works in informal jobs because we do not get opportunities in formal employment. Some days there is work, and some days there is none. Young people try to find better jobs, but without higher education or connections, it is very difficult. Even when someone gets a job in a factory or as a day laborer, it is not permanent, so we always have uncertainty about income and employment.”

In contrast, FGD participants highlight that informal work dominates, with frequent unemployment and uncertainty among workers.

FGD Participants illustrated that-

“Most of us work in informal jobs. There is no guarantee of continuous work, and unemployment is common, especially among young people.”

Additionally, KII participants noted that structural constraints keep the community largely dependent on precarious informal employment with limited stability.

KII Participants defined-

“The Bihari community is largely concentrated in informal and precarious employment, with limited access to stable formal sector jobs.”

Analysis of High Levels of Unemployment and Informal Employment

Structural exclusion, weak networks and a lack of education make the Bihari community reliant mainly on informal, low-paid, and unstable jobs. Work is informal, unstable, and insecure, and brings habitual income insecurity, to young people and women in particular. This generalized informality inhibits promotion and solidifies chronic unemployment and underemployment, weakening economic stability and financial stability across the long term, and family well-being.

Low and Unstable Income with Limited Livelihood Options

The overall household incomes in the community are low and unsustainable and everyone struggles to afford basic needs like food, shelter, health and education. Income levels are largely dependent on the availability of labor and most households are dependent on wages earned on a daily basis. There is also lack of livelihood diversification which increases vulnerability. The majority of households are overly reliant on low-skill jobs thereby limiting monetary stability in the face of economic shocks or unemployment.

Notably, case study participants reveal that irregular income and limited livelihood options hinder financial stability and future planning.

Case 07 mentioned-

“Our income is very low and uncertain. Some days we earn enough to buy food, but on other days there is no work at all. We have very few options for earning money, so we depend on whatever job is available. Because of this instability, it is

very difficult to plan for the future or save money. Most of our earnings are spent immediately on daily needs, and we often struggle to manage even basic household expenses.”

Likewise, FGD participants highlight that dependence on daily wage work results in unstable earnings and difficulty meeting basic needs.

FGD Participants described-

“Our income is not stable. We depend on daily work, and sometimes we cannot earn enough to meet our basic needs.”

In the same vein, KII participants noted that low- and unstable-income patterns reflect dependence on informal labor and weak livelihood diversification.

KII Participants expressed that-

“Low- and unstable-income patterns among the Bihari community reflect limited livelihood diversification and dependence on informal labor markets.”

Analysis of Low and Unstable Income with Limited Livelihood Options

Bihari community household income is low, intermittent and reliant on daily wage labor. Diversification of livelihoods is low and dependence on informal employment generates continuous financial insecurity. Since income varies according to the availability of jobs, families face problems of making ends meet and lack of saving and long-term planning. This unstable aspect of the economy strengthens susceptibility to shocks and endures abject poverty.

Restricted Access to Financial Services and Credit Facilities

Many community members have limited access to formal financial services including bank loans, savings and credit facilities. Informal record keeping, poor low-income stability and absence of collaterals among many people hinder their participation in formal banking systems. This forces households to seek informal sources of loans such as money lenders or community-based lenders, which might come at heavy interest rates and repayment obligations. This further increases economic vulnerability.

In light of this, case study participants reveal that limited access to formal credit forces dependence on costly informal borrowing systems.

Case 08 cited that-

“We cannot easily get loans from banks because we do not have enough documents or stable income. Even when we need money for emergencies, we have to borrow from local lenders or people in our community. Sometimes the interest is very high, and it becomes difficult to repay. Because of this, we feel financially insecure and depend mostly on whatever small savings or informal help we can get.”

Similarly, FGD participants highlight that reliance on informal lenders creates financial strain and repayment difficulties for many households.

FGD Participants demonstrated that-

“We do not have easy access to bank loans. Most of us borrow money from informal sources, which can be very difficult to repay.”

Correspondingly, KII participants noted that restricted access to formal financial institutions constrains economic mobility and increases informal credit dependence.

KII Participants described that-

“Limited access to formal financial institutions significantly constrains economic mobility among the Bihari population, leading to reliance on informal credit systems.”

Analysis of Restricted Access to Financial Services and Credit Facilities

Formal financial services are under-utilized in the Bihari community because of the lack of documentation, stability of low income, and the availability of collateral. Consequently, households have to resort to lending schemes at high rates, which draws up the financial pressure and debt exposure. This reliance on informal credit limits economic mobility and perpetuates cycles of long-term vulnerability and poverty.

Conclusion

The following economic issues are found to be typical of the Bihari community in Dhaka; prevalence of informal work, low and unpredictable incomes, lack of livelihood diversification. The majority of families rely on daily wage jobs that are insecure, and they are out of financial standing and unable to save. Economic insecurity is further entrenched by the small access to formal financial services and reliance on informal

credit. In general, structural unemployment, inaccessibility to stable employment and financial systems, keeps the community in a circle of poverty and limited socio-economic mobility.

5.4.3 Social Challenges

The stranded Bihari community continues to experience deep-rooted social challenges that shape their everyday life and limit their integration into mainstream urban society. These burdens are mostly manifested in social ostracism, identity-based stigma and limited association with other communities. Despite some incremental gains in the education, job and mobility, structural marginalization and social distancing have been a constant since the younger generations started schooling. A combination of these factors has an impact on opportunities, quality of services, and general social well-being.

Social Exclusion and Marginalization from Mainstream Society

Social exclusion has also been a major problem to the Bihari community with most of them indicating that they are not widely accepted in the mainstream urban society. This exclusion is manifested through social entanglement, institutional treatment, and lessening involvement in community networks. Even after thousands of years living in urban centers, there are still many families that feel excluded by mainstream society. This has resulted in the development of a robust system of networks within the community, which supports yet also strengthens the social boundary.

Overall, case study participants reveal that persistent social exclusion limits integration into broader urban society and interactions.

Cases 01 said that-

“We have been living in this city for many years, but still we feel that we are not fully accepted by the wider society. In many places, people treat us differently, and we often feel excluded from social activities outside our community. Because of this, we mostly stay within our own areas and depend on each other for support. Even though we want to integrate more, the feeling of separation is still there in many aspects of life.”

Similarly, FGD participants highlight that unequal treatment reinforces intra-community interaction and weak external social engagement.

FGD Participants mentioned-

“We still feel socially excluded in many places. People outside our community do not always treat us equally, so we mostly interact within our own group.”

Correspondingly, KII participants noted that continued social marginalization restricts full integration into mainstream urban social structures.

KII Participants added-

“The Bihari community continues to experience social marginalization, which limits their full integration into mainstream urban social structures.”

Analysis of Social Exclusion and Marginalization from Mainstream Society

The Bihari community faces old-time social exclusion even after several years of living in urban locations. Low recognition by the mainstream society decreases their involvement in the broader social interaction and supports inter-community reliance. This exclusion is echoed in disproportionate treatment and social exclusion that ultimately limits integration and maintains a process of marginalization in the city in social formations.

Identity-Based Stigma and Language Barriers

The issue of identity-based stigma is still very important and relates to the perceptions and treatment of the people in learning institutions, employment and even in society at large. Feelings of exclusion and diminishing confidence are other effects of stereotyping and social labeling, especially among youth. There are also language barriers among certain people in the society with some particularly the older people who may not be well versed in the prevailing local language. Even though the more integrated younger generations are, differences in dialect and communication styles also contribute to social distancing.

Similarly, case study participants reveal that identity-based stigma and language barriers reduce confidence and social participation in public spaces.

Case 12 said that-

“Sometimes we feel that people judge us because of our identity and background. Even when we work or study like others, there is still a sense that we are seen differently. For some older people in our family, language is also a barrier, which

makes communication outside our community more difficult. Because of these issues, we sometimes feel less confident in public places, even though we are trying to improve our situation.”

Likewise, FGD participants highlight that discrimination and communication difficulties hinder interaction beyond the community boundary.

FGD Participants added-

“We face stigma because of our identity, and sometimes language differences also make it difficult for older people to communicate outside the community.”

Correspondingly, KII participants noted that combined effects of stigma and language differences continue to limit urban social inclusion.

KII Participants described-

“Identity-based stigma combined with linguistic differences continues to affect the social inclusion of the Bihari community in urban settings.”

Analysis of Identity-Based Stigma and Language Barriers

The identity-based stigma remains a source of exclusionary tendencies in relation to the Bihari population in the field of education, employment, and socializing, with its effect on confidence and marginalization underpinning the development of marginalization. Any language and dialect variations especially among the elder members, further restrict the communication and interaction outside the community. All these categories limit social inclusion and perpetuate the daily obstacles to complete participation in urban society.

Limited Interaction and Integration with Other Communities

There is still very little interaction between the Bihari community and the other urban populations. The social networks are heavily focused in the community, as compared to cross-community ties in education, work, and the social life. The result of this low interaction is affected by historical marginalization, mutual mistrust in certain instances and absence of common social spaces. Consequently, social integration is never complete, even though greater mobility and exposure to cities are being experienced by younger generations.

Overall, case study participants reveal that social interaction remains largely confined within the community, limiting broader integration.

Cases 02 said that-

“Most of our social life is within our own community. We rarely have close relationships with people outside our area. In schools or workplaces, we interact with others, but strong social bonds are mostly missing. This is partly because of long-standing separation and partly because we feel more comfortable staying within our own group. As a result, integration with other communities remains limited.”

Similarly, FGD participants highlight that social relations with outside groups are minimal and largely restricted.

FGD Participants mentioned-

“We mostly interact within our own community. Social interaction with people from other groups is limited.”

Correspondingly, KII participants noted that historical and structural factors continue to constrain inter-community social integration.

KII Participants added-

“Social integration between the Bihari community and other urban groups remains limited due to historical and structural factors.”

Analysis of Limited Interaction and Integration with Other Communities

The Bihari community and other urban groups interact little, and social networks are mainly internal to the community. It is influenced by historical marginalization, distrust between each other and absence of collective social space. Despite the few contacts brought about by education and work, there are not many strong cross-community relationships which lead to incomplete social integration with the young generation that is becoming more exposed to the city.

Conclusion

The absence of inclusion, stigma, and poor integration to mainstream urban society are key determinants of social challenges among the Bihari community in Dhaka. Although they have long-term residence in the city, numerous residents still reside in the city

where they face social distancing and do not receive equal treatment. The existence of identity-based stigma and language barriers also act as limiting factors to confidence and engagement in the larger social worlds. Relatives contact with other communities is minimal with most social networks being within the community. All in all, these contribute to the process of marginalization and do not allow complete social inclusion and cohesion.

5.4.4 Housing and Environmental Challenges

The displaced Bihari people still experience serious housing and environmental issues which directly impact their quality of life, health and wellbeing. These predicaments are embedded in historic dilemmas of informal settlement patterns, lack of access to formal rights in housing, urban marginalization. Majority of families reside in overpopulated areas where houses are overcrowded, poorly constructed, and without good facilities. Health risks and lowered quality of life are further augmented through poor sanitation, drainage and exposure to environmental hazards. Although there has been a gradual improvement in some of the settlements, the general state of housing and environmental standards is still below the required urban standards.

Insecure Land Tenure and Lack of Formal Housing Rights

One of the most significant problems that the community has is that they lacked safe land tenure and formal housing rights. Over the decades, many families have resided in identical settlements but are neither legally owners nor holders of the land or the houses. This insecurity breeds sustained insecurity on whether they may evict and curbs long term investment in housing enhancement. Due to this insecurity of tenure, households do not undertake major improve their homes even in instances where they want to. This scenario is causing chronic housing insecurity and mental instability.

Notably, case study participants reveal that lack of legal land ownership creates insecurity and discourages long-term housing investment.

Case 11 pointed out-

“We have been living in this settlement for a very long time, but we still do not have legal ownership of the land or house. Everything here feels uncertain because we never know if we will be asked to leave in the future. Even though we want to rebuild or improve our house, we hesitate to invest because there is no

guarantee that we will be allowed to stay permanently. This insecurity affects our planning for the future and makes our life unstable.”

Nonetheless, FGD participants highlight that fear of eviction prevents families from improving or upgrading their living conditions.

FGD Participants illustrated-

“We live here for many years, but we do not have legal ownership. Because of this, we always worry about eviction and cannot invest in proper housing.”

Correspondingly, KII participants noted that absence of tenure security remains a major structural barrier to housing stability and development.

KII Participants described-

“The absence of formal tenure security remains a critical structural issue, limiting housing improvement and long-term stability among the Bihari settlements.”

Analysis of Insecure Land Tenure and Lack of Formal Housing Rights

The Bihari people are also experiencing a continual state of insecurity because of absence of formal land tenure and right to reside in settlements despite settlements inhabited over a long period. This insecurity deters investment in housing facilities enhancement and puts one in fear of eviction. Consequently, families live in precarious conditions, further supporting chronic housing insecurity and reducing socio-economic long-term stability and planning.

Overcrowded Living Conditions and Inadequate Housing Quality

The common problem is overcrowding, where several family members reside in small and shared housing units. Space insufficiency results in less privacy, inconvenience, and struggles to uphold a living standard. Semi-permanent Housing structures are constructed using low-cost materials and are susceptible to weather conditions. Poor housing conditions along with the insufficient space impact the daily life of people in terms of sleeping pattern, studying conditions of children and overall welfare of the family.

Notably, case study participants reveal that overcrowding and poor housing conditions significantly reduce privacy and household comfort.

Case 03 said that-

“In our house, many family members live together in a very small space. We often have to adjust sleeping arrangements because there is not enough room for everyone. Children do not have separate space to study, and adults also struggle to get privacy or rest properly. The house itself is not very strong, and during extreme weather it becomes uncomfortable. Even though we try to manage everything, the limited space and poor housing condition make daily life very difficult.”

Similarly, FGD participants highlight that limited space and inadequate housing quality affect daily living standards.

FGD Participants mentioned-

“Our houses are very small compared to the number of people living in them. There is no privacy, and housing quality is not good.”

Correspondingly, KII participants noted that persistent overcrowding continues to undermine overall well-being and housing conditions.

KII Participants expressed-

“Overcrowding and poor housing quality remain persistent issues in Bihari settlements, directly affecting household well-being and living standards.”

Analysis of Overcrowded Living Conditions and Inadequate Housing Quality

Overpopulation has always been a problem in Bihari colonies with several members of the family getting cramped and semi-permanent housing units. Space restriction impairs privacy, interferes with a normal lifestyle and has an adverse impact on the study environment and general well-being of children. Low living standards and weakened quality of living are aggravated further by poor housing materials that expose the households to the weather and make them dependent on weather.

Poor Sanitation and Insufficient Infrastructure Services

Most settlements lack adequate sanitation and infrastructure facilities. A lot of households use common toilets and scarce drainage systems, which are frequently not well maintained. The waste disposal systems are rendered inadequate and this results to unhygienic environment. The infrastructure of water supply and sanitation is not always adequate to sustain highly populated regions, creating hygiene problems and

predisposing to illness. Although there have been some improvements, they are not enough to deal with aggregate demand.

Similarly, case study participants reveal that inadequate sanitation and drainage systems create persistent environmental and health challenges.

Case 10 noted that-

“We use shared toilets in our area, but they are not enough for all families and are not always clean. During the rainy season, drainage problems become serious, and water often accumulates around our houses. Waste is not always properly managed, which makes the environment unhealthy. We try to keep our surroundings clean, but because of limited facilities and overcrowding, it is very difficult to maintain proper sanitation.”

Likewise, FGD participants highlight that shared facilities and poor waste management worsen overall living conditions.

FGD Participants described-

“Sanitation facilities are shared and often insufficient. Drainage and waste management problems create unhealthy living conditions.”

Correspondingly, KII participants noted that insufficient infrastructure continues to generate significant public health risks in densely populated settlements.

KII Participants illustrated-

“Poor sanitation and inadequate infrastructure services continue to pose significant public health risks in densely populated Bihari settlements.”

Analysis of Poor Sanitation and Insufficient Infrastructure Services

Sanitation and hygiene facilities in Bihari settlements are substandard and there are those toilets that are shared and in poor conditions, lack of drainage systems and proper waste disposal. The congestion also creates strain in the current facilities creating poor and unsanitary conditions and creating more health hazards. Despite small progress made, they are not enough to address the demands causing chronic health and environmental predicaments experienced by the population.

Conclusion

Secure tenure, overpopulations, insufficient infrastructure continue to typify housing and environmental conditions within the Bihari community of Dhaka. Absence of formal land- and housing-rights is a disincentive to longer-term investment and continues uncertainty. Poor quality structure of densely populated housing decreases privacy, living standards on a daily basis and lack of sanitation, drainage, and garbage disposal services stand as a constant health threat. Despite some improvements made, housing and environmental conditions do not appear to be above acceptable urban levels, which limit the community with vulnerability.

5.4.5 Political Challenges

The Bihari community still faces a collection of political issues that limit their successful involvement in civic and governance activities. Even though the citizenship paperwork has been advanced to enable the active participation of some members, practical engagement in politics has not been done well. Numerous people experience obstacles to participatory politics in terms of elections, local decision-making processes, and community meetings. This leads to underrepresentation of their voices in local governance and relative lack of acknowledgment of their unique needs and issues in development planning. The lack of civic awareness and years-old social exclusion contributes to further decreasing their participation in political and institutional dynamics.

Limited Political Participation and Voter Engagement

Political engagement in the community is also limited as it lacks the political participation of the past because of exclusion by historical methods and challenges of documents as well as lack of attentiveness towards electoral processes. Not everybody is a registered voter but the result is the low turnout in political activities and the electoral system. Numerous individuals living in various communities complain that they do not feel part of the mainstream political activities; hence, they have a low urge to participate in voting or political debate. This reduced participation undermines their joint power in the making of local and national decisions.

Notably, case study participants reveal that formal voting rights do not translate into meaningful political engagement or trust.

Case 04 said that-

“We are registered as voters, but in reality, our participation in political activities is very limited. Many people in our community do not feel fully connected to the political system because for a long time we were excluded from many civic processes. Even now, when elections come, some people participate, but there is still a sense of distance and hesitation. We often feel that our participation does not bring significant change in our lives, so many community members remain less active in political engagement.”

Similarly, FGD participants highlight that despite voting eligibility, long-term exclusion limits active political participation and involvement.

FGD Participants elucidated-

“We can vote, but many people in our area do not actively participate in political discussions or activities due to long-term exclusion and lack of trust.”

Correspondingly, KII participants noted that political participation remains largely formal with weak substantive engagement due to historical marginalization.

KII Participants defined-

“Political participation among the Bihari community exists in a formal sense, but meaningful engagement remains limited due to historical marginalization and weak institutional trust.”

Analysis of Limited Political Participation and Voter Engagement

Greater participation in politics by the Bihari community is poor despite the official voter registration. The past exclusion, lack of trust in political procedures, and the low civic participation make active participation of elections and political discourse lower. Voting takes place, but some do not feel a part of the decision-making processes, which undermines their collective strength in local and national politics and hinders any substantial participation in democracy.

Weak Representation in Local Governance Structures

The Bihari community is still poorly represented in the local institutions of governance. The community hardly has any representatives in any decision-making process including local councils or development committees. This under-representation restricts their

possibility to promote needs in communities. This ends up in development priorities not necessarily representing the realities of their settlements. Lack of good representation leads to further neglect in terms of infrastructure development, service delivery, and inclusion of policies.

In light of this, case study participants reveal that weak representation in local governance limits inclusion of community concerns in decision-making processes.

Case09 noted that-

“In our area, we rarely see people from our community in local government positions or decision-making bodies. Because of this, many of our problems are not properly communicated to authorities. We feel that if someone from our own community were part of these institutions, our issues would be better understood and addressed. At present, we depend on others to speak for us, but our concerns are often not prioritized in local development planning.”

In a similar vein, FGD participants highlight that low representation results in inadequate attention to community problems in governance structures.

FGD Participants said that-

“We have very little representation in local government bodies, so our problems are not properly addressed in decision-making processes.”

At the institutional level, KII participants noted that limited representation continues to restrict access to decision-making and resource allocation mechanisms.

KII Participants narrated-

“Weak representation of the Bihari community in local governance structures continues to limit their access to decision-making and resource allocation processes.”

Analysis of Weak Representation in Local Governance Structures

The Bihari community is also still underrepresented in the institutions of local government restricting its representation in the decision-making process. This poor representation lowers their effectiveness in representing the needs of the community and they lack effective attention to their development priorities. This has resulted in

loopholes in infrastructure, services and policy incorporations, which have strengthened systemic negligence and constrained fair engagement in local governance.

Lack of Voice in Decision-Making Processes

There is little involvement of the community in both formal and informal decision-making processes that impact on their lives in the community. Major decisions concerning housing, infrastructure, education as well as welfare services are made without the substance consultation of the community members. This silence supports the sense of alienation and decreases confidence in the systems of institutions. Most of the community members believe that their interests do not receive proper attention in the decision making in policy or development.

Consistently, case study participants reveal that exclusion from decision-making limits community voice and participatory influence in local governance.

Case 05 said that-

“When decisions are made about our area, we are usually not included in the discussions. Whether it is related to housing, infrastructure, or services, most of the time decisions are taken without asking for our opinion. This makes us feel excluded from the process. We believe that if our voices were heard, many of the problems we face could be better addressed. However, in most cases, we are only informed after decisions are already made, which limits our ability to influence outcomes.”

Likewise, FGD participants highlight that most decisions are taken without community input, reinforcing feelings of exclusion.

FGD Participants narrated-

“We are rarely included in decision-making processes, and most decisions affecting our community are taken without our input.”

At the structural level, KII participants noted that absence of community voice reflects broader exclusion and weak participatory governance systems.

KII Participants mentioned-

“The absence of community voice in decision-making processes reflects structural exclusion and limits participatory governance in these settlements.”

Analysis of Lack of Voice in Decision-Making Processes

Bihari people have little input in decision making related to housing, infrastructure and services. Decisions of important nature are usually made without consulting them, and this instills a sense of marginality and low institutional confidence. Such a voice deficit undermines participatory governance and constrains the capacity of the population to shape in a government-level policies that have a direct impact on their living standards and developmental outcomes.

Conclusion

The political problems within the Bihari community of Dhaka manifest in a low level of meaningful participation, a lack of representation and lack of control over the process of decision making. Regardless of formal voter registration, there is low participation in political activities because of historically marginalized and low levels of institutional trust. The community is also underrepresented in the local governance formations leading to poor representation of the community need in development planning. On the whole, the limited civic engagement still diminishes their voice, power, and integration in the process of governing.

5.5 Existing Community Development Initiatives

5.5.1 Economic Empowerment Initiatives

Economic empowerment initiatives among the stranded Bihari community in Bangladesh are implemented through a combination of NGO-led programs, microfinance services, and small-scale enterprise development. One of the outstanding projects is Bunon that involves women in the process of making crochet and handcrafted goods, a means of generating income at home and enhancing financial self-sufficiency. International NGOs like Islamic Relief Bangladesh use livelihood and governance initiatives which involve vocational training, skills development, and income generation, especially on the youth and helpless households. In the same manner, BRAC helps marginalized groups with its financial inclusion and asset transfer programs along with its graduation and skills training programs. Urban-poverty oriented programs organized by UNDP, like the Urban Partnerships of Poverty Reduction (UPPR), encourage community savings, flourishing

small business growth, and livelihoods, indirectly helping Bihari settlements. Also, organizations such as Al-Falah Bangladesh and OBAT Helpers offer vocational training, livelihood support eligibility based on education as well as small business support in the camps. Financial services are provided by microfinance institutions, despite which there is uneven access, such as ASA Bangladesh and Grameen Bank. On the whole, these initiatives help to improve livelihood, yet the impact is still minimal because of structural and institutional limitations.

Access to Skill Development and Vocational Training Programs

The development of skills and vocational training is available partially, but access is rather limited and skewed. Lack of awareness of these programs or barriers include selection bias, lack of information, and the marginalized settlements lack outreach by many members of the community. Although people are involved, quality and length of training is quite an inadequate measure to guarantee high-level employability results.

Notably, case study participants reveal that limited access and weak outreach reduce the effectiveness of vocational training programs.

Case 12 noted that-

“In our experience, skill development and vocational training opportunities exist, but access is limited and not evenly distributed across the community. Many people are not properly informed about available programs, and selection processes often exclude a large number of eligible individuals. Even when training is received, it is usually short-term and does not always provide the level of practical skills needed to secure stable employment. As a result, only a small portion of participants are able to translate training into meaningful income opportunities.”

Similarly, FGD participants highlight that inadequate information and exclusion restrict equitable access to training opportunities.

FGD Participants described-

“Vocational training programs are available but not easily accessible for everyone, and a large number of eligible individuals remain excluded due to inadequate information and limited outreach efforts.”

Correspondingly, KII participants noted that skill development initiatives reach only a small portion of the community, limiting overall impact.

KII Participants demonstrated-

“Skill development initiatives cover only a small portion of Bihari settlements and often fail to effectively reach the most vulnerable groups within the community.”

Analysis of Access to Skill Development and Vocational Training Programs

There is limited and unequal access to vocational training within the Bihari community. Awareness, poor outreach and exclusion during the selection process limit the participation. Training can also be episodic, and inadequate when not long-term to enhance employability. This means that a very small proportion is benefited, with most vulnerable groups left out in accessing fruitful opportunities in terms of development of skills.

Availability of Microfinance and Income-Generating Support

Microfinance and income-generating support programs exist, but their coverage and impact are limited by entry requirements, repayment demands, and low financial literacy of beneficiaries. Even though there are other households that have been applying small loans in the petty trade or informal businesses some have been able to enjoy them in a repayment and surviving the business.

In the case study, participants reveal that limited loan size and repayment pressure reduce the effectiveness of microfinance programs.

Case 01 said that-

“Some households in our community have access to microfinance and small income-generating support, but these facilities are not sufficient to meet the broader demand. Many families receive small loans that are not enough to start or expand sustainable businesses. In addition, repayment pressure and lack of proper financial guidance create difficulties for borrowers, leading some to use loans for immediate consumption needs rather than productive investment. This reduces the long-term impact of microfinance on improving livelihoods.”

Nonetheless, FGD participants highlight that small loans and difficult repayment conditions hinder sustainable income generation.

FGD Participants illustrated that-

“Microfinance support exists within the community; however, the loan amounts are small and repayment conditions are challenging, limiting their effectiveness for sustainable income generation.”

At the same time, KII participants noted that limited financial literacy and weak business sustainability reduce the overall impact of microfinance support.

KII Participants added-

“The overall impact of microfinance remains limited, as beneficiaries often lack sufficient financial literacy and struggle to maintain business sustainability over time.”

Analysis of Availability of Microfinance and Income-Generating Support

Micro-finance and income-generating programs exist yet barely prove effective because of small loan amounts, re-payment terms, and low levels of financial literacy. Most beneficiaries find it hard to utilize loans in a productive manner and they end-up ignoring long term productive investments and invest it into their immediate needs. Consequently, it limits the potential of microfinance in terms of increasing the livelihoods and economic stability in the long term.

Support for Small Businesses and Entrepreneurship

There is limited support of small businesses and entrepreneurship which is commonly based on informal support, small grants or livelihood projects funded by non-governmental organizations. Yet, structural barriers include capital shortage, access to the market, and social discrimination that hinders the growth and sustainability of businesses owned by the community.

Notably, case study participants reveal that limited capital and market access constrain sustainable growth of small businesses.

Case 11 opined-

“Some individuals in our community attempt to run small businesses such as vending, tailoring, or small shops with limited external support. However, they

face major challenges including lack of start-up capital, insufficient access to markets, and social barriers that restrict business expansion. Even when small-scale support is provided, it is often not enough to ensure long-term sustainability. As a result, most entrepreneurial activities remain informal and unstable, with limited opportunities for growth.”

Similarly, FGD participants highlight that inadequate support and financial barriers hinder entrepreneurial development in the community.

FGD Participants noticed-

“Support for small businesses is inadequate, and many entrepreneurs face persistent challenges due to insufficient capital and restricted access to markets.”

Correspondingly, KII participants noted that fragmented support systems restrict the establishment of stable and sustainable livelihood opportunities.

KII Participants mentioned-

“Entrepreneurship support initiatives are fragmented and insufficient, making it difficult to establish stable and sustainable livelihood opportunities for marginalized populations.”

Analysis of Support for Small Businesses and Entrepreneurship

Small business development among the Bihari community is largely informal and non-existent, and mostly dependent on projects organized by NGOs. The lack of capital, poor access to the markets and social discrimination are the persistent barriers that entrepreneurs have to face. These limitations inhibit growth and sustainability of business leading to small scale and unstable economic operations with low growth or livelihood stability.

Conclusion

Vocational training, microfinance and small enterprise services to the Bihari community of Dhaka under the economic empowerment programs offer significant but marginal livelihood opportunities. The access to skill development programs is not even and, in most cases, does not guarantee sustainable employability. Small size of loans, pressure to repay them, financial illiteracy and market barriers restrain microfinance services and entrepreneurial assistance. To a large extent, though these efforts do produce their

income, their effectiveness is limited by structural weaknesses and ineffective coverage of the vulnerable populations.

5.5.2 Education and Capacity Building

Education and capacity-building programs among the abandoned Urdu-speaking Bihari population in Bangladesh are predominantly delivered through NGOs, community organizations and religious missions but with minimal governmental participation. Perhaps the oldest is the Green Herald Evening Charity School, operated by the Congregation of Our Lady of the Missions Sisters, which offers free education, uniforms, and meals to Geneva Camp children. Another important institution that provides both primary and secondary education is the Al-Falah School situated in the camp. Urdu-speaking population is also represented in the Non-Local Junior High School which was founded in 1974. Activities like the Urdu Bashi Jubo ChattroSangthan facilitated by communities promote education and the growth of young people. Moreover, there is the Social and Economic Enhancement Program that offers educational and learning support, free primary education. Numerous other NGOs are running informal learning centers and camps in schools too. All these efforts are meant to eliminate illiteracy, language barriers, and social inclusion despite a lack of educational access by the state.

Availability of Community-Based Education Programs

In a few settlements, there are community-based education programs, usually backed up by NGOs or local activities. These programs aid in the offering of basic learning opportunity especially to the children who have access barriers to mainstream schools. But it is covered little, and it is regularly removed with the help of external funding and implementing it as a project.

In the case study, participants reveal that community-based education programs are helpful but remain limited and unsustainable.

Case 07 noted-

“In our community, some education programs are available within the settlement, mainly supported by NGOs or local initiatives. These programs provide basic learning opportunities for children who are unable to fully access mainstream schools. However, the coverage is limited, and not all children can benefit from these facilities. In many cases, the continuation of such programs depends on

external support, and when projects end, learning opportunities become uncertain. As a result, community-based education remains helpful but not consistently available for all learners.”

Likewise, FGD participants highlight that such programs provide basic learning yet depend on short-term funding and limited coverage.

FGD Participants described-

“Community-based education programs are present in certain areas and provide basic learning support, especially for children who cannot fully access formal schooling. However, these programs are limited in coverage and often depend on short-term project funding, which makes their continuity uncertain.”

At the same time, KII participants noted that while these initiatives improve access, their scale and sustainability remain significantly constrained.

KII Participants expressed-

“Community-based education initiatives contribute to improving access to basic education in marginalized settlements, but their scale, consistency, and long-term sustainability remain constrained.”

Analysis of Availability of Community-Based Education Programs

Basic learning Community-based education programs allow children with obstacles to formal education to access basic learning opportunities. They are however limited and based on short-term funding by NGO or projects. This generates volatility in sustainability and lowers sustainability. Consequently, as beneficial as they are, such initiatives are not always available to every learner in the community.

Scholarship and Financial Support for Students

There are scholarship and financial support programs that can be made available to students although there are disproportionate awareness and access. Although a small proportion of students are privileged by the stipends or NGO scholarships, proportion of students who are eligible are locked out because of lack of information, documentation problems or institutional restrictions.

Within the case study, participants reveal that limited awareness and procedural barriers restrict equal access to educational financial support.

Case 03 said that-

“Some students in our community receive scholarships or financial support, which helps reduce the burden of education expenses. However, access to these benefits is not equal for all. Many families are not fully aware of available scholarship opportunities, and some students face difficulties in completing required documentation. In addition, the support provided is often limited and does not fully cover educational costs. As a result, financial assistance helps in some cases but is not sufficient to ensure uninterrupted education for all students.”

In a similar vein, FGD participants highlight that many eligible students cannot benefit due to lack of information and administrative difficulties.

FGD Participants opined-

“Scholarship and financial support opportunities exist and are helpful for some students, but a large number of eligible learners remain unaware of these programs or face challenges in accessing them due to procedural complexities and lack of information.”

From an institutional perspective, KII participants noted that limited coverage and funding constraints reduce the effectiveness of student financial assistance programs.

KII Participants expressed-

“Financial assistance programs for students provide important support, yet their limited coverage, administrative barriers, and insufficient funding reduce their overall effectiveness in ensuring uninterrupted education.”

Analysis of Scholarship and Financial Support for Students

Scholarship and financial support programs provide partial relief for students, but access remains uneven. A number of qualified learners are locked out as a result of insufficient awareness, documentation, and bureaucracy. Even on receiving assistance is most of the times not adequate to support complete learning fees. These programs therefore only favor few students and fail to guarantee continuity in education.

Conclusion

The NGOs, community organizations and little institutional involvement largely provide education and capacity-building activities among the Bihari community in Dhaka. Such programs also aid in the fundamental schooling, skill building, and declining illiteracy rates, albeit at an unequal rate and usually supported by temporary funding. There are opportunities of scholarship and funding, which is not fairly availed because of lack of awareness and procedures. All in all, this is a good idea of educational empowerment but the scope of this process is limited and inconsistent as well as non-representative.

5.5.3 Health and Sanitation Interventions

Interventions on health and sanitation of the stranded Bihari community in Bangladesh are provided with the help of a complex of government health services, NGO outreach programs and community-based programs. The primary healthcare is at times administered at government urban clinics in the Directorate General of Health Services, although this access is patchy in camp areas. NGOs like BRAC are able to carry various vital health related programs such as mobile clinics, maternal and child health, vaccination assistance and health awareness creation programs in the marginalized settlements. Moreover, there are Dhaka Ahsania Mission and Marie Stopes Bangladesh where they offer reproductive health services, maternal care and family planning. Organizations like UNICEF Bangladesh support water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) interventions, whereby they work towards ensuring access to safe water and hygiene awareness and sanitation enhancements in low-income urban settlements. Unfortunately, despite these efforts, work continues to be disjointed because of congestion, inadequate infrastructure and ineffective coordination. Because of this, a significant portion of households continue to struggle in terms of access to quality healthcare and adopting proper sanitation practices.

Availability of Community Health Services and Outreach Programs

There exists community health services and outreach programs, but these are inconsistent and unevenly spreading. Depending on the Bihari settlements in some places, mobile clinics, NGO health camps, and government health workers may offer services, but the regularity of access remains a primary problem faced by a significant population of local residents.

Notably, case study participants reveal that irregular health outreach services limit timely access to essential healthcare.

Case 06 said that-

“In our community, some health services are provided through outreach programs and mobile health camps, but these services are not regular or consistently available. Many families depend on occasional visits from health workers or NGOs, and there is no fixed or continuous health service presence in the settlement. As a result, people often face difficulties in accessing timely treatment, and minor health issues sometimes become more serious due to delays in care. The irregular nature of outreach services limits their overall effectiveness.”

Similarly, FGD participants highlight that non-regular service delivery creates difficulties in obtaining prompt medical treatment.

FGD Participants described-

“Health outreach services are available at times through camps and visits, but these services are not regular or reliable, making it difficult for community members to access timely medical care when needed.”

Correspondingly, KII participants noted that limited coverage and irregular outreach reduce timely access to primary healthcare services.

KII Participants mentioned-

“Community health outreach services play a supportive role, but their irregular nature and limited coverage significantly reduce timely access to primary healthcare in marginalized areas.”

Analysis of Availability of Community Health Services and Outreach Programs

There are community health outreach services but they are irregular and not regularly offered across Bihari settlements. Infrequent care is given with mobile clinics, NGO or government visits, but continuity prevents access to timely care. This leads to a consequence of most residents getting treated late thus letting minor health problems escalate which makes the effectiveness of such services very low.

Nutrition and Maternal-Child Health Support

Government and NGO programs to some extent provide nutrition and maternal-child health support services. Supplements and check-ups are offered to pregnant women and children, although coverage is not yet comprehensive and uniform.

In the case study, participants reveal that inconsistent coverage and limited awareness weaken maternal and child health service effectiveness.

Case 09 noted that-

“Some nutrition and maternal-child health support services are available in our community, particularly for pregnant women and young children. These include health check-ups, nutritional supplements, and occasional counseling services. However, these supports are not consistently available for all families, and many women do not receive regular monitoring during pregnancy. In addition, awareness about nutrition is still limited in many households. As a result, maternal and child health outcomes remain vulnerable despite some ongoing interventions.”

Similarly, FGD participants highlight that irregular service delivery excludes many families from essential nutrition and health support.

FGD Participants described-

“Nutrition and maternal-child health support services are beneficial for those who receive them, particularly for pregnant women and young children, but many families are still left out due to limited coverage and irregular service delivery.”

From a broader perspective, KII participants noted that gaps in continuity, coverage, and awareness reduce the overall impact of these interventions.

KII Participants expressed-

“Maternal and child health interventions are in place, but gaps in coverage, continuity, and awareness continue to affect their overall impact on community health outcomes.”

Analysis of Nutrition and Maternal-Child Health Support

There is access to nutrition and maternal-child health services but non-consistently and incomprehensively provided. Intermittent supplements and checkups are provided to pregnant women and children, but there are rates of coverage gaps and poor awareness of its effectiveness. Unsystematic supervision and unequal access lead to diminished impact, exposing many families to vulnerability and ensuring continued gains have not been made in maternal and child health results.

Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) Interventions

Some areas have implemented WASH initiatives like better water supply, sanitation facilities and hygiene awareness programs. Infrastructure gaps, overcrowding and poor upkeep however, remains a limiting factor on their effectiveness.

In the case study, participants reveal that WASH interventions improve conditions but remain constrained by infrastructure and maintenance gaps.

Case 08 noted that-

“Some water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) interventions have been introduced in our community, including access to tube wells, shared toilets, and hygiene awareness programs. These efforts have helped improve basic sanitation conditions in certain areas. However, facilities are often insufficient for the large population, and overcrowding leads to shared and poorly maintained infrastructure. In addition, irregular water supply and inadequate waste management continue to create health risks. As a result, WASH improvements are partial and not fully sustainable.”

Likewise, FGD participants highlight that overcrowding and poor maintenance reduce the effectiveness of sanitation and hygiene programs.

FGD Participants illustrated-

“Sanitation facilities and hygiene programs have been introduced in some areas, but overcrowding, poor maintenance, and insufficient infrastructure limit their effectiveness in improving overall environmental conditions.”

From an institutional perspective, KII participants noted that structural limitations continue to hinder WASH interventions from addressing wider public health challenges.

KII Participants expressed-

“WASH interventions have contributed to some improvements; however, infrastructure limitations and maintenance challenges continue to hinder their ability to address broader public health concerns.”

Analysis of Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) Interventions

In Bihari settlements, WASH interventions have led to an increase in basic water and sanitation access, although with little effect. Poor maintenance, poor infrastructure, and overcrowding lead to low standards in effectiveness and sustainability. Water supply and the poor waste management remain irregular and endangers health. Consequently, the gains are unsustainable and not adequate to guarantee environmentally healthy and hygienic standards of long-term results.

Conclusion

The Bihari community in Dhaka receives health and sanitation interventions that are supported by government services, NGOs, and community-based interventions, especially in the primary healthcare, maternal-child health, and WASH. These will help in enhanced awareness and coverage of services to a certain degree. Nevertheless, access is inadequate, uneven, and unequal because of overcrowding, lack of proper infrastructure and limited coordination. Consequently, timely access to healthcare and proper sanitation continues to be a challenge to many households, which restricts the overall success of such interventions.

5.5.4 Housing and Infrastructure Development

Government urban development projects, NGO intervention projects as well as community-based projects have been offered as the means of carrying out housing and infrastructure development initiatives on the stranded Bihari community within Bangladesh. The Local Government Engineering Department has also helped to enhance urban facilities like drainage layouts, road connectivity and rudimentary service delivery in low-income settlements but is not extensive in Bihari camps. Non-Governmental Organizations like BRAC have aided in the urban poverty alleviation efforts which entail shelter betterment, WASH amenities and development of infrastructure within the informal settlements. Likewise, UNDP Bangladesh has been putting in place urban

development programs that emphasize on community infrastructure and livelihoods and settlement upgrading as part of initiatives such as Urban Partnerships for Poverty Reduction (UPPR). Besides this, other organizations like Concern Worldwide have also helped in the enhancement of water, sanitation and housing conditions of the vulnerable urban communities. Nevertheless, overcrowding, insecure tenure and poor maintenance still constrain total development and many of the households are still in poor living conditions where they have limited access to the basic urban amenities.

Programs for Housing Improvement and Settlement Upgrading

Some areas have had their housing improvement and settlement upgrading programs, which however are limited in coverage. The informal or semi-permanent structures in which many households still reside have tenure insecurity. The process of upgrading is rather slow, and not all parts of the settlement are covered to the same extent.

In the case study, participants reveal that housing improvement efforts remain limited and fail to ensure secure and stable living conditions.

Case 09 noted that-

“In our community, some housing improvement and settlement upgrading initiatives have been introduced, but their reach is limited and uneven. A portion of households have benefited from partial upgrading of shelters, yet many families continue to live in informal or poorly constructed housing. In addition, insecurity regarding land tenure remains a major concern, as residents do not have clear ownership or long-term protection. As a result, housing conditions remain unstable for a large part of the community despite some improvement efforts.”

Similarly, FGD participants highlight that partial program coverage leaves many families in poor and insecure housing situations.

FGD Participants noted-

“Housing improvement initiatives have been introduced in certain parts of the community, but many families still live in overcrowded, poorly constructed, and insecure housing conditions due to limited program coverage.”

From a broader perspective, KII participants noted that fragmented upgrading initiatives are insufficient to achieve equitable and comprehensive housing improvements.

KII Participants mentioned-

“Settlement upgrading efforts have brought partial improvements, yet they remain fragmented and insufficient to ensure comprehensive and equitable housing conditions across the community.”

Analysis of Programs for Housing Improvement and Settlement Upgrading

Limited and inconsistent progress has been created through housing improvement and settlement upgrading programs. Although there are improvements in some of the households, a large number continue to occupy informal, insecure and poorly built houses. Insecurity of land tenure and limited coverage by programs are other limitations to effectiveness. In general, the current interventions are still piecemeal and do not strike a balance towards providing holistic, fair and sustainable housing conditions within the community.

Development of Basic Infrastructure (Roads, Drainage, Utilities)

The rudimentary infrastructure like roads, drainage facilities, utility services to name a few have also improved in certain areas, but a lot still needs to be filled. Inadequate drainage, lack of proper road connectivity, and inconsistent utility provision still impact on living standards.

Within the case study, participants reveal that infrastructure improvements remain partial and uneven across the settlement.

Case 06 said that-

“Some basic infrastructure development has taken place in our settlement, including partial improvement of roads and limited drainage facilities. However, these developments are not sufficient to meet the needs of the growing population. Many internal pathways remain narrow and poorly maintained, and drainage systems are often blocked or absent. Utility services such as electricity and waste management are also inconsistent in some areas. As a result, infrastructure development remains incomplete and uneven across the community.”

Likewise, FGD participants highlight that despite some progress, key infrastructure problems persist in many areas.

FGD Participants demonstrated-

“Some improvements in roads and basic infrastructure are visible, but many areas still face problems such as poor drainage, narrow pathways, and inconsistent access to essential utility services.”

At the institutional level, KII participants noted that infrastructure development remains fragmented and insufficiently integrated with broader urban systems.

KII Participants expressed-

“Infrastructure development in marginalized settlements has progressed in certain aspects, but it remains partial and lacks integration with broader urban planning and service delivery systems.”

Analysis of Development of Basic Infrastructure (Roads, Drainage, Utilities)

There is an improvement in basic infrastructure, especially in Bihari settlements, but development is inconsistent and partial. There are very poor roads, drainage systems, and utility services in most cases or lack of maintenance. Numerous internal corridors lack good connectivity and drainage and waste challenges continue. Such gaps constrain quality of life and are manifested by incomplete incorporation into the planning of urban infrastructure.

Access to Safe Water and Sanitation Facilities

Safe water and sanitation facilities are no longer a significant issue in certain areas of the community, although a lack of water and overcrowding remain significant problems. There is a commonality of shared facilities and the facilities frequently become more unusable due to maintenance.



Figure 13: Sources of Water of Bihari Community

Source: DW.com, <https://www.dw.com/en/the-neglected-bihari-community-in-bangladesh/a-50824994>

Consistently, case study participants reveal that shared and insufficient water and sanitation facilities reduce service quality and reliability.

Case 04 noted that-

“Some households in our community have access to tube wells and shared sanitation facilities, which have improved basic living conditions to some extent. However, these facilities are not sufficient for the entire population, and many households must share limited resources. In addition, maintenance problems and overcrowding often reduce the quality and usability of these services. As a result, access to safe water and sanitation remains inconsistent and inadequate in many parts of the settlement.”

Similarly, FGD participants highlight that overcrowding and shared usage limit the effectiveness of available water and sanitation services.

FGD Participants described-

“Access to water and sanitation facilities has improved in some locations, but these resources are often shared among many households, leading to overcrowding and maintenance issues that reduce their usability.”

Correspondingly, KII participants noted that existing improvements remain inadequate to sustainably meet the needs of the entire community.

KII Participants added-

“Although there has been some progress in providing water and sanitation facilities, existing services are still insufficient to meet the needs of the entire community in a sustainable manner.”

Analysis of Access to Safe Water and Sanitation Facilities

Safe water and sanitation are currently more accessible in certain Bihari settlements, but still inconsistent and inadequate. Facilities are mostly overcrowded and in poor conditions lowering their quality and usability. Consequently, there are still numerous families struggling to appreciate basic hygiene making the provision of the services currently to be considered insufficient and unsustainable in the population.

Conclusion

The development initiatives by the Bihari community in the housing and infrastructure development within the Dhaka population have partially led to the improvements through the intervention of the government, NGO and communal approach. Housing upgrades, road connection, drainage and water and sanitation services are some of the areas that have been improved. Nevertheless, coverage has been poor and temporary, accompanied by long-standing problems of over-crowding, weak tenure security, and poor maintenance. Consequently, infrastructure development remains incomplete and inadequate to provide safe, sustainable and equitable living standards among all the people throughout the community.

5.5.5 Legal Aid and Rights-Based Programs

Government institutions, legal aid organizations, and NGO led awareness programs are used to implement the legal aid and rights-based programs to the stranded Bihari community in Bangladesh with an aim of enhancing access to justice and legal identity. Formal legal aid is also delivered through the National Legal Aid Services Organization that offers aid in civil and criminal cases to the needy groups in camp areas, but there are little awareness and access. NGOs like BRAC run human rights and legal empowerment initiatives that emphasize on legal awareness, dispute resolution as well as access to documentation services to the marginalized groups. Besides this, ASK is very much involved in human rights advocacy, provision of legal assistance and monitoring of rights abuse perpetrated against the vulnerable communities. Awareness campaigning in the community and regular legal clinics is also arranged to enhance information on citizenship right, identity paperwork, and the civic duty. Nonetheless, structural impediments, inadequate awareness, and complexity of procedures still prevent the effective access to legal services and many members of the community remain under-protected and unassisted by the court of law.

Availability of Legal Aid and Advisory Services

The access to legal aid and advisory services is formally governed by the means of government and institutions, yet it is still quite poor in terms of accessibility by the community population. Many of the residents do not know about these services or file them inadequate knowledge about how they can navigate the legal processes. Most of the time, despite awareness, there are other barriers, like procedural complexity, institutional distance, and a lack of constant support to effective use. This has led to the fact that many minor disputes and issues regarding rights are not addressed since the legal aid services are usually sought only in emergencies as opposed to being used as a support system.

Notably, case study participants reveal that limited awareness and complex procedures restrict effective use of legal aid services.

Case 02 said that-

“Legal aid and advisory services exist within the system, but in practice access is limited for many of us. Most people do not clearly know where to go or how to apply for legal assistance, and the procedures are often too complicated for ordinary community members. Because of this, legal help is usually sought only when problems become serious. Smaller disputes or rights violations often remain unresolved or are settled informally within the community, as people feel discouraged by the formal process and lack continuous legal guidance.”

Similarly, FGD participants highlight that lack of knowledge and procedural difficulties discourage community members from seeking legal support.

FGD Participants described-

“Legal aid services are available within the system, but many community members lack clear knowledge about how to access them, and complicated procedures often discourage people from seeking legal support.”

Correspondingly, KII participants noted that low awareness and limited outreach continue to hinder utilization of legal aid mechanisms.

KII Participants added-

“Legal aid mechanisms exist, but low awareness, procedural complexity, and limited outreach continue to restrict their effective utilization at the community level.”

Analysis of Availability of Legal Aid and Advisory Services

There are legal assistance services which are, however, largely inaccessible by the Bihari community as the information about the services, their complexity, and the lack of outreach is low. Most locals are not familiar with procedures of applications and thus they use unofficial dispute resolution method of fixing conflicts. This leads to formal legal aid being employed largely in an emergency situation and routine problems with rights may go unchallenged.

Support for Obtaining Citizenship and Identity Documents

Availability of citizenship and identity registration continues to be a big problem to most members of the communities. Even though there are formal procedures in place to issue national identity cards and other legal documents, one is often faced with a hurdle on the side of the administration, documentation loopholes, and checking problems. Poverty, inadequate historical records and repetitive procedures tend to exacerbate these challenges. Therefore, the exclusion of the part of the community to become a full-fledged legal entity still persists, and it restricts access to governmental services, social protection opportunities and the rights to civic privileges.

In the case study, participants reveal that documentation barriers and administrative complexity hinder access to legal identity and services.

Case 04 noted that-

“Obtaining citizenship-related documents such as national identity cards is a major challenge for many of us. Although the system exists, the process is often complicated and time-consuming. Many people lack older documents or proper records, which makes verification difficult. Repeated visits to government offices are required, which is costly and difficult for low-income families. Because of these barriers, some members of our community still remain without proper legal identity, which limits their access to many public services and government benefits.”

In a similar vein, FGD participants highlight that missing records and repeated procedures make obtaining identity documents highly challenging.

FGD Participants pointed out-

“Obtaining citizenship and identity documents is a challenging process for many people due to missing records, repeated administrative requirements, and the need for multiple visits to government offices.”

From an institutional standpoint, KII participants noted that documentation constraints continue to limit full legal recognition and access to public services.

KII Participants expressed-

“Documentation barriers remain a significant issue, preventing a portion of the community from achieving full legal recognition and accessing essential public services and entitlements.”

Analysis of Support for Obtaining Citizenship and Identity Documents

Administrative complexity, the lack of historical documentation, and the necessity to undergo the verification processes again and again continue to create restrictions to grant citizenship and identity documents. Such obstacles proportional affect low-income households, which cannot be legally full recognized. This combines to limit access to public services, social protection, and civic rights by many people, which solidifies structural exclusion among the Bihari community.

Conclusion

The settlement programs of law and rights among the Bihari community in Dhaka are present both through government and non-governmental programs but have lesser impacts due to poor awareness, most procedural complication, and poor reach. A large number of people cannot enter into a legal service or solve the problems in a formal way; they use informal ones. Equally, there are serious challenges in acquiring the citizenship and identity documentations because of administrative obstacles and the absence of records. Currently, these limitations still limit the complete legalization, protection, and access to rights-based services.

5.5.6 Social Inclusion and Community Development

Social inclusion and community development programs among the displaced Bihari community in Bangladesh are achieved through NGO-initiated programs and local community groups and through few government-sponsored programs to minimize social exclusion and improve intergroup relations. Other groups like BRAC have been able to play their role in terms of community development initiatives, awareness initiatives and social cohesion efforts aimed at keeping down the stigma and adopting inclusive involvement in urban development practices. On the same note, UNDP Bangladesh has helped in urban poverty reduction projects and community empowerment projects that promote social integration, participatory planning, and group action among the marginalized groups. Concern Worldwide and other NGOs carry out community

engagement initiatives that include inclusion and resilience building and enhanced access to availability of facilities in vulnerable settlements. Moreover, local community-based organizations and camp leadership systems are involved in problem solving, conflict resolution and cooperation enhancement in settlements. All these attempts notwithstanding, there are still considerable obstacles to the overall effectiveness of inclusion efforts due to social stigma, discrimination, ineffective institutional coordination, which makes social integration a gradual and incomplete process.

Programs Promoting Social Integration and Cohesion

Social integration and cohesion are promoted through programs that include community dialogues, common activities, and community engagement programs that involve NGOs. The reasons behind these initiatives are the creation of trust and better relations with the Bihari community and other peoples. Nonetheless, frequent involvement is not a common occurrence and this kind of programs is not consistently maintained, which minimizes their effects in the long run.

In the case study, participants reveal that irregular and limited integration efforts only partially improve social cohesion within the community.

Case 08 noted that-

“Some initiatives have been introduced in our area to promote social integration and harmony between different communities. These include occasional meetings, awareness sessions, and community activities organized by NGOs or local groups. These efforts help create some level of interaction, but they are not regular or widespread. Many people still have limited opportunities for meaningful engagement with other communities, and social separation remains visible in daily life. As a result, social cohesion improves slightly in some cases but is not fully achieved.”

Similarly, FGD participants highlight that occasional programs have limited reach and fail to build strong social relationships.

FGD Participants mentioned-

“Social integration programs and community activities are organized occasionally, but they are not regular and do not engage all members, limiting their overall impact on building strong social relationships.”

At the structural level, KII participants noted that lack of continuity and inclusiveness constrains the long-term impact of social cohesion initiatives.

KII Participants opined-

“Efforts to promote social cohesion are present but lack continuity, scale, and inclusive participation, which constrains their ability to bring about lasting social integration.”

Analysis of Programs Promoting Social Integration and Cohesion

There are social integration strategies like dialogues and community activities organized by the NGOs that are sporadic and small. Their effectiveness can be diminished due to low participation and a lack of continuity to build long-term trust between communities. Consequently, social cohesion is enhanced to a limited extent, and a long-term segregation and poor intergroup relations are sustained to a high degree in the daily activity.

Conclusion

The NGO-led activities, community-based organizations and the meager government initiatives integrated in the social inclusion and community development efforts among the Bihari community in Dhaka have been effective in reducing stigma and enhancing social cohesion. Such efforts encourage dialogue, participation, and transportive activities but, they are not constant, small, and inclusive in nature. Inadequate social stigma and poor institutional coordination continue to put a limit on their effectiveness. Consequently, social integration is insecure, incremental and not secure enough to accommodate lasting and significant inclusion.

5.6 Policy Recommendations for Improving Human Rights Protection and Strengthening Community Development Strategies

The study results suggest that there are long-term structural disparities, a lack of access to services, and low institutional responsiveness to the Bihari community. Here, policy reform is needed to enhance protection by law, increase the access of citizenship, and equal rights to services offered by the state. The aim of effective interventions is to streamline administrative procedures, increased institutional responsibility, and introduced legal consciousness on a community level. An inclusive and rights-based

policy approach should be adopted in a bid to lessen the historical preclusion and demand even developmental results.

5.6.1 Legal and Citizenship Reforms

Citizenship and legal reforms are essential towards comprehensively engaging the Bihari community in national development processes. The complexities of the procedure and administrative hurdles continue to hamper the ability of many people to seek identity documents, access to legal services and exercise their fundamental rights. Enhancing legal institutions, and streamlining institutional procedures thus play a crucial role in enhancing equal citizenry rights and access to communal services.

Simplification and Accessibility of Identity Documentation Processes

Acquisition of citizenship and identity documents should be simplified and made more accessible to minimize administrative delays and bureaucratic hurdles. A lot of individuals in the community experience difficulties when they are subjected to complicated verification, repetitive documentation and absence of guidance. These processes could be simplified and made more user-friendly in line with service mechanisms, which would make access to legal identity much easier.

Consistently, case study participants reveal that simplifying documentation procedures would reduce delays and improve access to legal identity services.

Case 05 noted that-

“The process of obtaining identity documents should be made simpler and more accessible, as many people face repeated difficulties due to complex procedures, lack of proper documentation history, and frequent administrative requirements. If the system is more flexible and guided support is provided, it would reduce delays and help more people obtain legal identity without unnecessary hardship.”

Similarly, FGD participants highlight that streamlined processes can help reduce administrative burden and repeated office visits.

FGD Participants described-

“Documentation procedures need to be simplified so that people can complete the process more easily without facing repeated administrative hurdles,

unnecessary delays, and multiple visits to government offices, which are often costly and time-consuming.”

Correspondingly, KII participants noted that simplified registration systems would enhance inclusion for marginalized populations facing procedural barriers.

KII Participants noted-

“Simplifying identity registration processes and improving service accessibility would significantly enhance inclusion, particularly for marginalized populations who struggle with complex procedures and limited institutional support.”

Analysis of Simplification and Accessibility of Identity Documentation Processes

Simplification of identity documentation procedures is considered essential to reduce administrative delays and repeated verification burdens. The marginalized households are disproportionately impacted by complex processes, lack of guidance, and multiple visits to offices. Better availability of services and convenient systems would lead to better access to legal identity in time and greater incorporation into formal state services and social protection systems.

Strengthening Legal Frameworks to Ensure Equal Rights

Legal frameworks need to be reinforced to afford equality in rights and protection to all the citizens including the marginalized communities. Despite legal provisions, the implementation is still not being enforced properly. Enhancing enforcement systems and making law enforcement not discriminatory in the application would enhance justice and equality.

Notably, case study participants reveal that stronger legal enforcement is needed to ensure equal rights and reduce discrimination.

Case 06 said that-

“Legal frameworks should be strengthened to ensure equal rights for all communities, as many people still experience inequality in access to services and justice. Stronger enforcement of existing laws and more effective protection mechanisms are needed to ensure that no group is excluded or discriminated against in practice.”

Similarly, FGD participants highlight that effective implementation of laws is essential for fair treatment and protection of all communities.

FGD Participants described-

“Existing laws should not only remain in place but also be implemented more effectively to ensure that all communities receive equal treatment and protection in practice, without discrimination or exclusion.”

Correspondingly, KII participants noted that strengthened enforcement mechanisms are necessary to ensure consistent application of legal protections.

KII Participants added-

“Strengthening enforcement mechanisms is necessary to ensure that legal protections are applied consistently, reducing inequality and safeguarding the rights of marginalized groups.”

Analysis of Strengthening Legal Frameworks to Ensure Equal Rights

It is important to fortify the legal systems and assure proper enforcement to minimize inequality and discrimination. Despite the presence of legal provisions, ineffective implementation restricts access to equal justice and services by the marginalized groups. Regular enforcement of the law and non-discriminatory practices would help to increase protection, fairness, and allow all communities to enjoy constitutional rights in practice.

Improving Institutional Accountability in Service Provision

The lack of transparency, responsiveness and trust in the delivery of the services in the various institutions is a problem that needs to be addressed by improving institutional accountability. Poor grievance structures and lack of good monitoring systems are likely to diminish the efficiency of service delivery. Improved institutional performance and responsiveness would be achieved through strengthening accountability structures and providing routine checks.

In light of governance dynamics, case study participants reveal that weak accountability reduces transparency and responsiveness in service delivery systems.

Case 06 noted that-

“Institutional accountability in service delivery should be improved so that public services become more transparent and responsive. Many people feel that

complaints are not properly addressed, and service providers do not always follow up on issues. Strengthening monitoring systems and ensuring accountability would improve trust and service effectiveness.”

Similarly, FGD participants highlight that responsive grievance mechanisms are essential for addressing community concerns effectively.

FGD Participants noticed-

“Complaint and grievance mechanisms should be more responsive, transparent, and accessible so that people can raise their concerns confidently and receive timely and fair solutions to their problems.”

In the same way, KII participants noted that stronger accountability systems enhance trust, transparency, and overall service effectiveness within the community.

KII Participants expressed-

“Improving institutional accountability systems would enhance transparency and responsiveness, ultimately strengthening trust between service providers and the community.”

Analysis of Improving Institutional Accountability in Service Provision

Low institutional accountability, inadequate grievance response, and ineffective monitoring undermine trust and efficiency in the delivery of services. Enhancing transparency, system of complaints and frequent checks and balances would enhance responsiveness and fairness. To restore the confidence of the population and provide more efficient, faster, and more user-friendly service delivery to marginalized population groups, more effective accountability systems are needed.

Conclusion

Reforms in the laws and citizenship are necessary to enhance inclusion of Bihari community in Bangladesh through simplification of identity documentation procedures, fortification of laws, and institutional responsibility. The administrative barriers to acquiring legal identity can be minimized by streamlined processes and improved directions. Enhanced implementation of non-discriminatory practices and equality would enhance justice and protection. Moreover, we need to enhance transparency and

responsive grievance mechanisms to gain trust in the institutions of the population and provide more effective and equitable service delivery.

5.6.2 Social Service Improvement

One of the central policy areas to improve the well-being and inclusion of the Bihari community is the improvement of social services. The study results reveal that there have been unrelenting gaps in access to quality education and healthcare and financial barriers, structural, and institutional barriers which restrict access to services. Notwithstanding the fact that there are certain interventions, they are not evenly covered and effective especially in marginalized settlements. As such, service delivery systems must be empowered through an inclusive, equitable and rights-based approach in order to make basic services accessible to all community members free of discrimination or struggle.

Expanding Access to Quality Education and Healthcare

There is need to increase the use of quality education and healthcare to mitigate historical inequities than the community encounters. Though there are certain schools and health facilities there are irregularities in the accessibility as there are geographical, economic, and social barriers. To enhance the general access to and quality of services, infrastructure must be enhanced, institutional presence elevated and consistent outreach ensured.

In addition, case study participants reveal that limited access and poor service availability hinder equal benefits in education and healthcare.

Case 04 said that-

“Access to quality education and healthcare should be expanded so that all members of the community can benefit equally. At present, many families face difficulties in reaching schools and health facilities due to distance, cost, and limited-service availability. If services are made more accessible and inclusive, it would significantly improve living standards and human development outcomes.”

Nonetheless, FGD participants highlight that both quality and accessibility must be improved to ensure equal opportunities for all community members.

FGD Participants illustrated-

“Education and healthcare services should be expanded not only in terms of number but also in quality and accessibility, so that all members of the community, regardless of their economic or social background, can benefit equally.”

Furthermore, KII participants noted that strengthening service coverage and quality is essential for achieving equitable access in marginalized settlements.

KII Participants expressed-

“Strengthening service coverage and improving the quality of education and healthcare facilities are necessary to ensure equitable access, especially in underserved and marginalized settlements.”

Analysis of Expanding Access to Quality Education and Healthcare

There is a need to expand equitable access to quality education and healthcare to deal with long-term socio-economic inequalities. The existing obstacles like cost, distance and limited-service provision limit the use among the marginalized groups. Better infrastructure, service delivery and outreach system would make it more inclusive, minimize disparities, and be part of improved human development and community well-being.

Reducing Financial and Structural Barriers to Services

The lack of finances and structural conditions still does not allow people to access core services. Education, health, transportation and documentation expenses present enormous burdens to low-income families. Also, complex processes and service points in institutions make accessibility even less, which contribute to institutional barriers. To make the most out of these barriers, policy interventions can be aimed at their minimize.

Overall, case study participants reveal that financial and structural barriers significantly restrict equitable access to essential public services.

Case 01 noted that-

“Many people in our community are unable to fully access services due to financial difficulties and structural barriers. Costs of education, healthcare, and transportation make it difficult for poor families to utilize available services. In addition, complicated procedures and limited-service centers create additional

challenges. Reducing these barriers would help ensure more equal access to essential services.”

Similarly, FGD participants highlight that multiple cost-related and procedural obstacles hinder regular service utilization among households.

FGD Participants described-

“Financial costs, transportation expenses, and complicated administrative procedures together create significant obstacles, preventing many households from accessing essential services regularly and without hardship.”

In the same way, KII participants noted that addressing these barriers is necessary to ensure consistent and fair access for marginalized populations.

KII Participants expressed-

“Addressing financial and structural barriers is critical to ensuring that low-income and marginalized populations can access public services in a more equitable and consistent manner.”

Analysis of Reducing Financial and Structural Barriers to Services

Strategic inefficiencies and financial constraints create a great limitation to access to basic services like education, healthcare and documentation. The expensive prices, transportation issues, and complicated processes are disproportionately applied to low-income families. These economic and institutional obstacles need to be cut down to facilitate fair access, enhance service use, and provide more consistent and inclusive delivery of public services to marginalized communities.

Ensuring Inclusive and Non-Discriminatory Service Delivery

Non-discriminatory service is also necessary and inclusive in order to treat the community members equally. Though access to services is still exposed to cases of social exclusion and discrimination in spite of their formal promises of equality. Contributing to the increase in institutional protection and inclusive practice will enhance increased equity and confidence in the systems of public services.

Collectively, case study participants reveal that discriminatory practices in service delivery undermine fairness and institutional trust.

Case 01 said that-

“Service delivery should be inclusive and free from discrimination so that all people receive equal treatment. In practice, some individuals still feel excluded or treated differently when accessing services. Ensuring fairness and equal treatment would help build trust in public institutions and improve service satisfaction.”

On the other hand, FGD participants highlight that inclusive service delivery is necessary to ensure equal treatment for all individuals.

FGD Participants described-

“Public service delivery should be inclusive and fair, ensuring that no individual or group faces discrimination or unequal treatment when trying to access basic services.”

Likewise, KII participants noted that non-discriminatory practices strengthen trust, fairness, and social inclusion in public institutions.

KII Participants expressed-

“Promoting non-discriminatory service delivery is essential for building trust, ensuring fairness, and strengthening social inclusion within public institutions.”

Analysis of Ensuring Inclusive and Non-Discriminatory Service Delivery

Non-discriminatory and inclusive service delivery is essential to treat people equally and to minimize the perceived exclusion in public services. Although they have formal equality provisions, equality in practice continues to be compromised by incidences of unequal treatment, which erodes trust in institutions. By enhancing fairness, accountability, and inclusive practices, faith in service systems would be enhanced and more social inclusion and equity would take place among marginalized communities.

Conclusion

To enhance the social services of the Bihari community in Dhaka, it is necessary to increase the equitable access to quality education and healthcare, and any financial and structural obstacles limiting the access to the services have to be addressed. To improve accessibility, infrastructure must be strengthened, costs minimized and procedures simplified. Meanwhile, non-discriminatory and inclusive service delivery is crucial in gaining trust in the institutions of the state. Comprehensively, rights-based and inclusive

service system is necessary in enhancing well-being and facilitating social inclusion into the community.

5.6.3 Economic Empowerment Strategies

The aspect of economic empowerment becomes a central policy to enhance the overall welfare and social inclusion of the Bihari people. The results of the research show that the lack of opportunity to get hired, insufficient development of skill set, poor credit access, and inadequate support for entrepreneurs remains a limiting factor to sustainable livelihoods. Even though there are people who are involved in informal income earning ventures, they are usually uneven and cannot be reliable in providing them with economic security. Thus, the policy that is holistic, aimed at job creation, skill development, financial inclusion, and development of entrepreneurship is required to enhance household resilience and economic mobility in the long term.

Promoting Employment and Income-Generating Opportunities

Creation of more job opportunities is crucial in eliminating economic vulnerability and enhancing living quality. Most of the community has a reliance on non-formal, poorly remunerated, irregular employment because of the lack of opportunities in formal work. Inclusion of employment opportunities and reinforcement of connections on labor markets has the potential to increase income and economic inclusion.

Taken together, case study participants reveal that limited and unstable employment opportunities significantly constrain household economic security.

Case 08 noted that-

“Employment opportunities within and outside the community are very limited. Most people depend on irregular and low-income work, which is not sufficient to support household needs. If more stable job opportunities were created and access to formal employment was increased, it would significantly improve economic conditions and reduce poverty.”

Similarly, FGD participants highlight that reliance on irregular, low-income work creates persistent financial vulnerability.

FGD Participants described-

“The lack of stable and formal employment opportunities remains a major concern, as many people depend on irregular and low-income work that does not provide sufficient financial security.”

Correspondingly, KII participants noted that expanding formal employment opportunities is essential for improving economic participation and reducing poverty.

KII Participants noted-

“Expanding employment opportunities and strengthening integration into formal labor markets would significantly enhance economic participation and reduce vulnerability.”

Analysis of Promoting Employment and Income-Generating Opportunities

Low access to formal and stable jobs compels the society to low-paid and irregular jobs, which perpetuate economic vulnerability. The creation of more jobs and increased access to formal labor market is crucial to the improvement of income security, poverty alleviation and sustainable livelihoods. This kind of intervention would enhance the economic inclusion of them and the general living conditions of the marginalized groups.

Expanding Vocational and Skill Development Programs

Vocational and skill development schemes are vital as far as improving employability and economic autonomy is concerned. Yet, such training is not widely available and many lack the abilities which could render them suitable in a formal or semi-formal job. The increased targeted training will enhance job preparedness, as well as diversify income streams.

Moreover, in terms of human capital development, case study participants reveal that limited access to vocational training restricts employability and income opportunities.

Case 08 said that-

“Many people do not have access to vocational training or skill development programs, which limits their ability to find better jobs. Expanding training opportunities in areas such as technical skills, trades, and entrepreneurship would help improve employability and income potential.”

In addition, FGD participants highlight the urgent need to expand skill development programs for youth and unemployed individuals.

FGD Participants noted that-

“There is a strong need to expand vocational and skill development programs, particularly for youth and unemployed individuals, so they can acquire practical skills and improve their chances of securing better employment.”

Furthermore, KII participants noted that vocational training is essential for improving employability and economic independence, requiring broader coverage and better targeting.

KII Participants expressed-

“Vocational training plays a vital role in enhancing employability and economic independence, and therefore requires expansion and better targeting.”

Analysis of Expanding Vocational and Skill Development Programs

Poor access to vocational training limits the acquisition of skills among the community members especially youth and decreases their employability. Increased and more precise skill development programs would help to increase job readiness, diversify income, and increase economic independence. Enhanced work opportunities are crucial in closing the employment gaps and facilitating sustainable livelihood advancements among marginalized groups.

Facilitating Access to Financial Services and Credit

Many community members, especially those involved in informal economic activities, do not have access to financial services, such as credit services and savings facilities. The inability to use collateral, documentation hurdles and institutional marginalization make people unable to avail themselves of formal financial systems. Inclusive financial services need to be increased so that it facilitates economic stability and has the ability to invest.

Overall, case study participants reveal that limited financial inclusion restricts economic opportunities and livelihood improvement in the community.

Case 09 said that-

“Access to financial services is very limited in the community, especially for poor households. Many people cannot access loans or banking services due to lack of

documents or collateral. If financial institutions provided more inclusive services, it would help people start small businesses and improve their livelihoods.”

Similarly, FGD participants highlight that flexible access to credit is essential for supporting small businesses and financial stability.

FGD Participants described-

“Access to credit and banking services should be made more flexible and accessible so that low-income households can invest in small businesses and improve their long-term financial stability.”

On the other hand, KII participants noted that expanding financial inclusion would enhance income-generating activities among marginalized populations.

KII Participants added-

“Expanding financial inclusion and simplifying access to credit facilities would enable marginalized communities to engage more actively in income-generating activities.”

Analysis of Facilitating Access to Financial Services and Credit

Low-income households have limited access to formal financial services, limiting their savings, credit, and investment opportunities. Hurdles like insufficiency of collateral, documentation and institutional exclusion drive the reliance on informal borrowing. Increasing financial inclusion and streamlining credit access would bolster economic engagement, enhance small business, and enhance long-term livelihood security within marginalized groups.

Supporting Entrepreneurship and Small Enterprises

One of the effective ways of encouraging sustainable economic growth in the community is to support the entrepreneurship and small businesses. There are a lot of people with small-scale business opportunities, but they need financial funds, training, and assistance of institutions. The local economic growth and self-employment can be strengthened with the help of the entrepreneurship development programs.

In terms of livelihood development, case study participants reveal that lack of financial and technical support limits entrepreneurship opportunities.

Case 01 noted that-

“Many people have ideas and willingness to start small businesses, but they lack financial support and guidance. If entrepreneurship programs and small business support systems were available, it would help them become economically self-reliant and improve community livelihoods.”

Similarly, FGD participants highlight the need for integrated assistance to build sustainable small businesses and reduce economic vulnerability.

FGD Participants described-

“Entrepreneurship and small business support should be strengthened through financial assistance, training, and guidance so that individuals can develop sustainable livelihoods and reduce dependency on unstable work.”

In addition, KII participants noted that combining financial and technical support is essential for strengthening community-based entrepreneurship and economic development.

KII Participants expressed-

“Providing integrated financial and technical support is essential to promote entrepreneurship and strengthen small-scale economic development within the community.”

Analysis of Supporting Entrepreneurship and Small Enterprises

The small businesses in the community are limited by lack of financial assistance, training and institutional guidance. Though people are ready to participate in entrepreneurship, there is a lack of resources that prevent business continuation. Enhancing the integrated support would boost self-employment, local economic growth, and diminish reliance on unstable informal markets.

Conclusion

The economic empowerment of the Bihari community in Dhaka focuses on increasing the number of jobs, enhancing vocational training, enhancing financial inclusion, and entrepreneurship. Sustainable livelihoods are still limited to access to formal employment, insufficient skills formation, and access to credit. Income security and economic mobility can be increased by enhancing job creation, practical skills training,

and available financial services. Comprehensively, economic empowerment should be a comprehensive and inclusive process to minimize poverty and enhance household resilience in the long term.

5.6.4 Housing and Urban Development

Housing and urban living conditions are a priority policy area of paying attention to its dignity, security, and long-term sustainability of the Bihari community. The results suggest that there are still a significant number of households who live in poor housing conditions (overcrowding, low dwelling structure, and accessibility to the utilities in the city) and reside close to the areas inhabited by impoverished and indigent communities. Moreover, the problem of insecurity in tenure of land and imperfect integration into official urban organization also makes vulnerability and exclusion even greater. Thorough urban development program is thus needed to enhance the housing standards, make it legally recognized and more thorough in terms of increasing infrastructure in a more inclusive way.

Improving Housing Quality and Living Conditions

Housing Conditions also need to be improved to guarantee safe and dignified living conditions. Most of the families live in overpopulated settlements with poor ventilation, poor housing structures, and poor sanitation facilities. Such conditions have negative impacts on health and well-being, which is why it is necessary to organize housing improvement programs.

In terms of living conditions, case study participants reveal that overcrowded and unsafe housing undermines health and dignity.

Case 10 said that-

“Housing conditions are generally very poor, with many families living in overcrowded and unsafe structures. Basic facilities are insufficient, and there is a strong need for housing improvement to ensure a healthier and more dignified living environment.”

Similarly, FGD participants highlight that inadequate facilities and overcrowding create urgent needs for housing improvement.

FGD Participants mentioned-

“Housing conditions are highly challenging, with overcrowding and inadequate facilities affecting daily life, and there is an urgent need for improvement to ensure safe and dignified living environments.”

In addition, KII participants noted that poor housing quality requires long-term, systematic interventions for sustainable improvement in marginalized settlements.

KII Participants expressed-

“Housing quality in marginalized settlements remains a significant concern and requires systematic, long-term interventions to ensure sustainable improvement.”

Analysis of Improving Housing Quality and Living Conditions

Housing conditions that are characterized by overcrowding, frail structures and poor facilities greatly compromise health and dignity. These circumstances indicate years of infrastructural disregard and need to be systematically enhanced. Structured housing development programs should be used to provide safe, sustainable, and habitable environment where the overall well-being and quality of life in marginalized settlements can be improved.

Ensuring Land Tenure Security and Legal Recognition

Stable tenure of land is a decisive point in stability and sustainable development. A lot of the households do not have ownership by way of land or legal status of their settlement locations and this leaves them insecure and unable to invest in housing refurbishment. Tenure security should be enhanced to prevent vulnerability and facilitate sustainable growth of settlements.

With regard to housing security, case study participants reveal that lack of legal ownership creates persistent uncertainty and limits improvement.

Case 01 noted that-

“Many families do not have secure ownership of their land or housing, which creates uncertainty and limits their ability to improve their living conditions. Legal recognition is necessary to ensure stability and security.”

On the other hand, FGD participants highlight that tenure insecurity prevents families from investing in better housing conditions.

FGD Participants described-

“The absence of secure land ownership and legal recognition creates continuous uncertainty, making it difficult for families to invest in improving their housing and living conditions.”

In addition, KII participants noted that formal legal protection is essential for ensuring stable and sustainable settlement development.

KII Participants expressed-

“Addressing tenure insecurity through formal recognition and legal protection is essential for ensuring stability and promoting sustainable settlement development.”

Analysis of Ensuring Land Tenure Security and Legal Recognition

The absence of secure land tenure and legal status breeds a continual sense of uncertainty that is deterring to investment in housing upgrading and in long-term settlement development. Households are not safe as they lack formal ownership rights. To ensure stability, housing investment, and sustainable enhancement of living conditions in marginalized communities, it is critical to strengthen tenure security by granting it legal status.

Conclusion

Urban development and housing among the Bihari community in Dhaka is urgently needed to enhance living standards, guarantee tenure security and legalize settlements. Health and dignity are still affected by overcrowding, low housing standards, and lack of basic facilities. The poor tenure security also deters investment in housing upgrades and perpetuates long term fragility. A thorough and all-inclusive urban development policy is required to improve the housing conditions, legal safeguards, and upgrade settlements sustainably.

5.6.5 Social Protection and Inclusion

Enhancing social protection and integration is a crucial policy line towards dealing with the vulnerability and inequality in the Bihari population. The results indicate that even though there are certain households that are assisted by the social safety net programs, the extent of coverage is insufficient, and uneven. Inadequate information, barriers to documentation and administration still disqualify a large number of vulnerable people. Concerns of equity, openness, and targeting also have effect on the welfare distribution performance. As such, enhanced social security and less deprivation, as well as improved access to social protection systems, and inclusive delivery mechanisms should be improved.

Expanding Coverage of Social Safety Net Programs

The research results show that social safety nets are not well covered in comparison to what the community requires. Quite a number of households especially the most impoverished do not receive the support through schemes in place. The coverage should be extended to make sure that the vulnerable groups would be provided with the necessary help to secure the ability to cover the basic needs and decrease the amount of economic deprivation.

In relation to social protection, case study participants reveal that limited program coverage excludes many vulnerable households from essential support.

Case 05 noted that-

“Social safety net support is available only for a limited number of households, while many vulnerable families remain outside the coverage. Expanding these programs is necessary to ensure that more people can benefit and reduce their financial hardship.”

Similarly, FGD participants highlight that a large number of needy families remain outside safety net benefits despite similar needs.

FGD Participants described-

“Only a limited number of households currently benefit from social safety net programs, while many other vulnerable families remain excluded despite facing similar or greater levels of need.”

In addition, KII participants noted that expanding social protection coverage is necessary to ensure broader inclusion of vulnerable populations.

KII Participants added-

“Expanding the coverage of social protection programs is necessary to ensure that a larger proportion of vulnerable populations receive adequate support.”

Analysis of Expanding Coverage of Social Safety Net Programs

The lack of reporting social safety net programs means that there are numerous vulnerable households who lack access to much-needed support. The inclusion of programs should be expanded to lessen the impact of economic hardship and enhance basic living security. Extensive and more fair coverage would enhance social protection mechanisms and make sure the support is provided to all the eligible and disadvantaged groups.

Ensuring Fair and Transparent Benefit Distribution

Distributing benefits with fairness and transparency is relevant to achieve trust and effectiveness of social protection systems. Its results indicate that discrepancies in the selection procedures and absence of appropriate communication occasionally leads to feelings of outsiders or unequal treatment. It is thus important to enhance transparency and accountability systems.

Regarding social benefit distribution, case study participants reveal that lack of transparency undermines fairness and inclusion.

Case 07 said that-

“There are concerns regarding fairness and transparency in the distribution of social benefits. Some people feel that selection processes are not always clear, and deserving households may be left out. A more transparent system would improve trust and fairness.”

Similarly, FGD participants highlight that unclear selection processes may exclude deserving households from social safety net programs.

FGD Participants described-

“There are ongoing concerns about fairness and transparency in benefit distribution, and clearer selection criteria along with proper communication are needed to ensure that deserving households are not excluded.”

In addition, KII participants noted that strengthening accountability mechanisms is essential for ensuring equitable and transparent distribution of benefits.

KII Participants expressed-

“Strengthening transparency and accountability mechanisms is important to ensure fair and equitable distribution of social safety net benefits.”

Analysis of Ensuring Fair and Transparent Benefit Distribution

Uncertainty in the selection mechanisms and the lack of consistency in communication decrease the confidence in social protection systems. The feeling of injustice can result in the marginalization of deserving households. Intensifying transparency, clarity of eligibility, and accountability measures are necessary to make sure that benefits are distributed in an equitable manner, increase institutional credibility and increase the confidence in social safety net programs among the vulnerable communities.

Conclusion

The Bihari community in Dhaka needs better safety net programs coverage and fairness to achieve social protection and inclusion. Outreach and lack of documentation and administration exclude many vulnerable households. Moreover, the fear of transparency and unequal distribution of benefits undermines trust in current systems. Social protection needs to be more inclusive, effective and responsive to the needs of marginalized households by strengthening coverage, enhancing equitable targeting and increasing transparency and accountability.

5.6.6 Political Participation and Governance

Another key aspect of achieving inclusion, empowerment, and equal citizenship rights is political participation and effective governance. As shown in the research, the Bihari people still enjoy insufficient participation in formal politics processes, which can be

explained by the marginalization of the community in the past, the lack of civic awareness, and the existence of the structural factors. Low political inclusion and poor representation and access to decision-making platforms often limits participation in elections and local governance. Enhancing civic awareness, inclusive participation, better representation as well as accountability in the governance structures are thus critical in enhancing democratic inclusion and empowerment of communities.

Enhancing Awareness of Civic and Political Rights

The results indicate that not all people in the society understand the civic and political rights. Many people lack a complete understanding of their voting rights, civic duties or existing avenues within which they can engage in governance. Strengthening informed participation requires the intensification of awareness with the help of education and community outreach.

Concerning civic participation, case study participants reveal that limited awareness of rights restricts meaningful engagement in democratic processes.

Case 01 said that-

“Many people in the community are not fully aware of their civic and political rights, including voting procedures and participation in local governance. Lack of awareness limits their ability to engage meaningfully in democratic processes. Regular awareness initiatives are needed to improve understanding and participation.”

Similarly, FGD participants highlight that lack of civic knowledge reduces confidence and active participation in governance activities.

FGD Participants described-

“Many individuals lack sufficient awareness of their civic and political rights, which limits their ability to participate actively and confidently in governance and decision-making processes.”

In addition, KII participants noted that continuous awareness programs are essential for strengthening civic understanding and political engagement.

KII Participants expressed-

“Continuous awareness and education initiatives are necessary to improve understanding of civic rights and encourage meaningful political engagement.”

Analysis of Enhancing Awareness of Civic and Political Rights

The lack of knowledge about civic and political rights limits the effective involvement in the processes of democracy and governance. Most people are not aware about the voting process and the possibility to be involved. Enhancing the level of awareness via education and community outreach is vital to gain empowerment and facilitate informed participation and active participation in civic and political decision-making.

Promoting Participation in Elections and Governance

The engagement in the voting and governance activities is still poor because of the social, structural, and historical hurdles. Although there are those who engage in voting, there is still limited participation in the political discourse and politics. It is advisable to promote the inclusion of democracy through active participation.

Regarding political participation, case study participants reveal that voting exists but broader engagement in governance remains limited due to structural barriers.

Case 04 noted that-

“Although some members of the community participate in voting, overall engagement in electoral and governance processes remains limited. Barriers such as social exclusion and lack of political access reduce meaningful participation. Encouraging broader involvement is necessary for inclusion.”

Similarly, FGD participants highlight that social exclusion restricts meaningful involvement beyond basic electoral participation.

FGD Participants described-

“While participation in voting exists, broader engagement in political discussions and governance activities remains limited due to social barriers and lack of access to decision-making platforms.”

Correspondingly, KII participants noted that promoting inclusive democratic participation is essential for overcoming barriers and strengthening political inclusion.

KII Participants noticed-

“Promoting inclusive participation in democratic processes is important to overcome structural barriers and strengthen political inclusion.”

Analysis of Promoting Participation in Elections and Governance

There is a low-depth participation in electioneering that is hindered by historical exclusion, social, and poor access to the governance spaces. Most of the people vote yet they do not participate in wider political discussion or decision making. Inclusive participation should be encouraged in order to enhance democratic inclusion, minimize structural barriers, and increase meaningful involvement in the process of governance.

Increasing Representation in Local Decision-Making Bodies

Another issue that should be considered in making sure that needs of the locals are translated into development plans is representation in local decision-making bodies. According to the findings, Bihari community representation in local governance structures is low and this has an impact on their power to shape decisions that impact their lives.

Concerning local governance, case study participants reveal that limited representation reduces community influence in decision-making processes.

Case 12 said that-

“The community has very limited representation in local decision-making bodies, which reduces their influence in development and governance processes. Greater inclusion in these structures is necessary to ensure that their needs and concerns are addressed.”

On the other hand, FGD participants highlight that weak representation restricts their ability to advocate for needs and priorities.

FGD Participants said that-

“The community has limited representation in local government institutions, which restricts their ability to influence decisions and advocate for their needs and priorities.”

Likewise, KII participants noted that increasing representation in governance bodies is essential for ensuring inclusive decision-making.

KII Participants added-

“Increasing representation in local governance bodies is essential to ensure that marginalized communities have a voice in decision-making processes.”

Analysis of Increasing Representation in Local Decision-Making Bodies

Minority representation in the local governance results into the community being less able to influence their development priorities and have their needs addressed. This marginalization makes them less heard in the process of planning and making decisions. The representation at local institutions should be improved, so that inclusive governance, more responsive to the needs of the community, and equitable development outcomes of the marginalized groups can be achieved.

Conclusion

Bihari community in Dhaka has limited political participation and governance due to low electoral turnout, low civic awareness and insufficient representation in decision making processes. Not all the community members are well informed about their political rights and this limits them to significant involvement in the democratic processes. In spite of some participation in the voting, there is little participation in governance. To have effective political inclusion and empowerment, it is necessary to strengthen awareness, promote inclusive participation, and representation in local institutions.

5.6.7 Institutional Strengthening and Coordination

Ensure development interventions are implemented effectively in the Bihari community, institutional strengthening and better coordination is needed. The analysis shows that the community has several agencies involved in service provision such as governmental bodies and other non-governmental organizations, but they lack co-ordination. This causes frequent service delivery fragmentation, overlaps in service provision and coverage gaps. Moreover, the lack of accountability and evidence-based planning is also caused by ineffective monitoring and evaluation systems. More institutional coordination, enhanced efficiency of the services and increased community involvement in the development planning is then required to ensure the realization of sustainable and inclusive development outcomes.

Enhancing Coordination among Government and NGOs

The results indicate that, even though the government and NGO players are very active in delivering services, the coordination between them is not well organized. This

discrepancy tends to compromise the stability of development programs and their extent. Better coordination systems can promote the use of resources and help in delivering the services better.

Concerning program coordination, case study participants reveal that weak collaboration among service providers leads to inefficiencies and service gaps.

Case 09 noted that-

“Different government and NGO programs operate in the community, but coordination among them is limited. This sometimes leads to overlapping activities and gaps in service delivery. Better coordination would improve efficiency and ensure that support reaches more people effectively.”

Similarly, FGD participants highlight that stronger coordination is needed to avoid duplication and improve resource utilization.

FGD Participants defined-

“Stronger coordination between government agencies and NGOs is needed to avoid duplication of efforts, reduce gaps in service delivery, and ensure that resources are used more effectively.”

Likewise, KII participants noted that improved coordination mechanisms enhance efficiency and ensure more effective development interventions.

KII Participants pointed out-

“Improved coordination mechanisms among service providers would enhance efficiency and lead to more structured and impactful development interventions.”

Analysis of Enhancing Coordination among Government and NGOs

Lack of coordination between NGO and government programs results to service duplication, gaps and wasted resources. Such poor congruency undermines the effectiveness of development interventions in the community. There is the need to enhance the coordination mechanisms to enhance efficiency of service delivery, coverage and maximization of the effects of the development available programs.

Strengthening Monitoring and Evaluation Systems

Every development program is constrained by ineffective monitoring and evaluation systems and low accountability. The results show that the mechanism of follow-up and

assessment is not always sufficient, and the implementation gaps and quality of services arise. With regard to program governance, case study participants reveal that weak monitoring reduces service quality and implementation effectiveness.

Case 06 said that-

“Monitoring and evaluation of development programs is often weak, which affects the quality and consistency of services. Stronger monitoring systems are needed to ensure that programs are implemented effectively and achieve their intended outcomes.”

On the other hand, FGD participants highlight that stronger monitoring and evaluation are necessary to ensure accountability and better outcomes.

FGD Participants described-

“Monitoring and evaluation of development programs should be strengthened to ensure accountability, improve service quality, and ensure that initiatives achieve their intended outcomes.”

In addition, KII participants noted that systematic monitoring and evaluation are essential for improving effectiveness and supporting evidence-based planning.

KII Participants cited that-

“Regular and systematic monitoring and evaluation systems are essential for improving program effectiveness, ensuring accountability, and supporting evidence-based planning.”

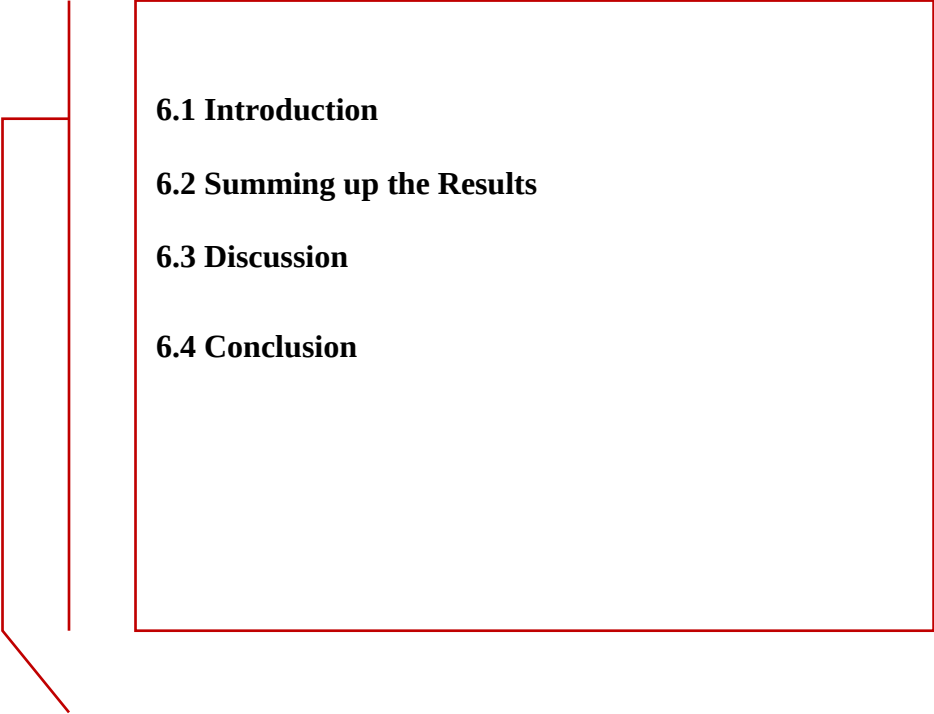
Analysis of Strengthening Monitoring and Evaluation Systems

Poor monitoring and evaluation systems decrease accountability and influence the quality and reliability of development programs. The lack of follow-up leads to the gaps in implementation and constrained positive results. To achieve transparency, better service delivery, accountability, and evidence-based planning of more effective and sustainable development interventions, it is imperative to strengthen M&E mechanisms.

5.7 Conclusion

The results suggest that despite some progressive changes in terms of education services, legal status registration, and fundamental services provision, the displaced Bihari community in Dhaka remains to endure socio-economic denial and human rights issues. The challenges include unreliable livelihoods, substandard housing, poor education levels and health services and incomplete access to social protection services. In general, this research reveals that, despite some partial gains made by human rights practices and community development approaches, there are still structural weak points. This study highlights the importance of more inclusive, rights-based and community-based development interventions in order to guarantee their complete socialization and well-being.

CHAPTER VI: SUMMING UP THE RESULTS AND DISCUSSION



6.1 Introduction

6.2 Summing up the Results

6.3 Discussion

6.4 Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

This chapter summarizes all the findings of the study and critically discusses it in comparison to the available literature in the country and internationally. It begins by summarizing the essential findings regarding the socio-demographic and economic status, human rights of the community, significant issues and the success of current community development efforts within the stranded Bihari population in Bangladesh. These findings are then placed in the context of more wide-scale empirical evidence in the discussion section by relying on both quantitative and qualitative research to find points of intersections and divergences. Lastly, the chapter gives a summative reflection of the overall implications of the findings to both policy and practice, especially in reference to empowering human rights protection and inclusive development of the community.

6.2 Summing up the Results

Socio-Demographic and Economic Conditions of Stranded Biharis

- The social-demographic and economic factors of the displaced Bihari people in Bangladesh can be viewed as a result of long-term marginalization, with historical displacement, structural exclusion and access to opportunities playing a major role in shaping the socio-demographic and economic status, and intergenerational change in Bangladesh is a gradual process. It is also a relatively youthful population, living together with older first-generation population that received displacement and was subjected to long periods of uncertainty. Although, the older generations still remember a life of exclusion, younger generation are more so identified with Bangladesh and more involved in education and income earning practices. Traditional gender roles continue to be very strong, albeit women and young people are slowly increasing their roles in education and livelihoods.
- The family set-ups are predominantly nuclear but are being significantly challenged by congested living situations and the economic affluence. The high dependency ratios and continued early marriages especially of the girls, keep on limiting the development of the human capital and the continued cycle of poverty. Settlement arrangements are still isolated in congested camps and generate some

form of permanence but minimally integrated in the mainstream urban society in socio-economic terms.

- There is some improvement in education and human capital, particularly among younger population, and more of them are getting access to education and the need to invest in it. The education in the lower level is, however, curtailed by financial limitations, low attendance and high dropout rates. Despite the presence of non-formal education opportunities, as well as vocational education, there are still not enough in numbers, and they are not responding to the needs of the labor market.
- The community relies on informal, low-skilled and unstable livelihoods, which have a high economic reliance. The nature of employment is underemployment, unstable income, and absence of diversification. As households use more than one income policy, institutional support and availability of credit, as well as skill accumulation, limit upward mobility. The role of women and youth in the household income is growing, but limited by the socio-cultural factors.

Existing Human Rights Conditions of Stranded Biharis

- The general human rights conditions of the stranded Bihari community suggest an absence of historical exclusion and a partial inclusion, but with considerable gaps in the practical implementation of rights. The most tangible progress is observed in the field of citizenship and legal identity as it was a significant percentage of the community members, especially younger generations that now own the National Identity Cards and are included in civic activities. Nonetheless, some older people still have some documentation problems and administration obstacles still hinder access to all the services related to citizenship.
- The education right has seen an increase in accessibility in the primary level and more people are currently enrolled in primary institutions, both formal and non-formal. Nevertheless, access and quality of education are still disproportionate and disparate based on financial aspects, indirect costs, language barriers, and occurrence of social exclusion. These are some of the reasons why there are higher dropout rates and low levels of educational achievement especially among disadvantaged classes of people.
- Regarding health, despite the geographical availability of basic healthcare facilities, affordability and the quality of services are significant factors to

consider. Many individuals rely on informal providers or delay treatment due to financial hardship. There is an improvement in the maternal and child health services but the general services from the health sector are still inconsistent.

- The housing situation remains poor as there is overcrowding, low infrastructure, and a lack of security in tenure. These circumstances put residents in danger of the environment and health and deter long-term enhancement. Likewise, jobs are mostly restricted to informal, poorly paid and unstable jobs, which restricts economic security and promotion.
- The social protection and government services are only partially available with judging coverage and administrative blocks restricting benefits to many deserving households. Moreover, it is associated with some discrimination and social stigma, and insufficient access to formal justice, impacting equality and protection.

Major Human Rights Challenges Faced by the Bihari Community

- The historical marginalization, socio-economic vulnerability, and lack of institutional responsiveness are underlying structural inequalities that cause the major human rights problems of the stranded Bihari community. Despite the gains in some places via citizenship recognition and access to basic services, there exist several interrelated obstacles, which act to delay a complete fulfillment of rights.
- The matters associated with legal and citizenship will continue to be one of the primary issues. The disparities in access to documentation, bureaucratic delays, and the complexities of procedures do not allow many people to enjoy their rights, as well as make use of the services provided by the state. Additional concerns and obstacles are commonly perceived institutional bias, which enhances the exclusion and restricts confidence in formal systems.
- Issues of economics are also important and there is high rate of unemployment, reliance on informal employment and high, unpredictable earnings. Lack of access to financial services and credit also inhibits diversification of livelihoods and economic development. Consequently, there are a lot of households that are stuck in poverty-induced activities with little chances of growth to higher levels.
- Social issues such as exclusion, identity stigma, and language barriers are still involved in the lack of integration into the mainstream society. Although there

have been gradual changes among the younger generations, the lack of interactions with other communities, as well as strong stereotypes, keeps marginalizing and disadvantaging them in accessing opportunities.

- There are poor housing and environmental conditions, which is being overcrowded, poor infrastructure and low land tenure. Not only do these factors lead to a decrease in the quality of life but they also subject residents to health- and environmental-related dangers and discourage long-term investment in improving housing.
- Political issues can be seen in the low engagement, ineffective representation, and political inaction in decision making. This underrepresentation limits the community to have any say about policies and development programs that will have impact on their lives.
- Lastly, institutional and service obstacles such as limited outreach, service delivery gaps and lack of specific policies further contribute to deepening exclusion. All in all, these interrelated issues make it clear that interventions should be inclusive, responsive, and community-centered.

Existing Community Development Initiatives and Evaluation of Their Effectiveness

- When the development of current community development activities in the Bihari community is measured, it can be said that it is a picture landscape of partial intervention and limited impact as different programs are available but have yet to bring broad based or sustainable transformation. In the areas of economic empowerment, education, health, housing, legal assistance and social inclusion programs exist, both governmental, and non-governmental, but their implementation in relation to coverage, coordination and structural constraints in the community is still limited.
- Skill development, microfinance and livelihood support economic empowerment programs have empowered few members of the population. However, a lack of access, the low quality of training, as well as their low connection to the job opportunities, have lowered their general efficiency. Equally, access to learning especially to children has been enhanced by education and capacity-building programs because of poverty, poor awareness, and poor institutional evaluations together. Adult literacy and scholarship programs have weak outreach problems as well as solvency issues.

- To some extent, health and sanitation interventions have resulted in improvements in awareness and availability of services especially in WASH practices and maternal and child health. Nevertheless, inconsistent service provision, infrastructural constraints and a lack of follow-up decrease their effectiveness in the long run. There is a partial progress in housing and infrastructure development projects with some developments and advancements in roads and utility and settlement conditions but crowding, poor tenure security and poor maintenance remain to affect the overall standards of living.
- Law, and rights-based services are poorly used because of the lack of awareness of the services, perplexity of the procedures, and poor accessibility. Efforts to provide support mechanisms of legal identity and justice support are not enough to guarantee complete realization of rights. Similarly, social inclusion programs that cut off stigma and integrate them have been shown to have slower, yet, limited results because social attitudes and the tendency to discontinue the programs entrenches their effects.

Policy Recommendations for Improving Human Rights Protection and Strengthening Community Development Strategies

- The policy recommendations indicate the necessity of the inclusion and the rights-based approach (comprehensive and inclusive) to the gap-the persistent issue concerning the Bihari community. The results underline that, although there is certain improvement, the structural inequalities, inaccessibility of limited services and the institutional responsiveness are still impediments to the full realization of human rights and sustainable development. That is why, the policy changes in the fields of law, social, economic, and institutional aspects should be coordinated.
- The key to full inclusiveness is legal and citizenship reform which should be based on streamlining documentation procedures, reinforcing legal mechanisms and enhancing the degree of institutional accountability. Good availability and transparent systems can go a long way to empower the community to exercise their rights to citizenship and to access government services.
- The social services such as education and healthcare need to be improved to narrow down the long-running disparities. The equitable provision of the service coverage by minimizing financial and structural obstacles and the absence of

discriminatory provision can be promoted to advance equitable access and enhance overall well-being.

- The strategies aimed to empower the economies through enhancing sustainable employment opportunities, vocation training, enhancing financial services and entrepreneurship. These steps are able to improve the income stability, alleviate poverty and build the long-term economic sustainability.
- Housing and urban development policy must be focused on how to enhance the living conditions, provide land tenure security and how to incorporate settlement into formal urban planning systems. These interventions play a role in ensuring safety, dignity, and stability over the long run.
- The social protection systems should be reinforced by expanding coverage, making benefits distribution transparent, and providing vulnerable populations with direct benefits to minimize inequality and protect vulnerable groups.
- Strengthening political involvement and politics is also a consideration, because more civic awareness, more active elections and better representation allow the community to be empowered, and have their voices heard in the decision-making processes.
- Lastly, there should be institutional reinforcement, and enhanced coordination of government and non-government actors in ensuring effective implementation. Follow-up, responsibility and effective mechanisms of service delivery can make the development interventions more responsive, inclusive, and sustainable.

6.3 Discussion

This study provides an extensive interpretation of the socio-demographic realities, and human rights realities as well as development challenges of the stranded Bihari community in Bangladesh. In comparison with available literature, both quantitative and qualitative data can demonstrate a strong convergence but also bring out the gradual change in the community. The socio-demographic and economic results align with the previous research findings of the Bihari community as a discriminated urban community struggling with poverty, overcrowding, and having no access to formal employment (Redclift, 2013; Rahman, 2017). These patterns are backed by quantitative evidence. Indicatively, Siddiqui (2016) indicates that approximately 68 percent of Bihari families are occupied with informal jobs whereas it is only about 12 percent that hold regular or

formal jobs, which supports the insecurity in employment in this study. Likewise, dependency loads are not quite low, with likewise deprived urban studies showing that over 55 percent of the household group is financial reliant (Siddiqui, 2016). Qualitative results also support that there are strong intergenerational differences in terms of identity and integration with younger cohort identifying more and more as Bangladeshi and older generations still have feelings of being excluded (Sen, 2018).

Concerning the issues of human rights conditions the results are similar to the studies, which demonstrated the inclusion to a certain extent following the legal recognition. Rahman and Yusuf (2019) estimate that only around three-quarters of younger Biharis have the National Identity Cards, which are below 40% of older generations, indicating continuous generation divides. Nevertheless, this development has not been evenly spread in term of access to services. Evidence provided through surveys indicates that approximately 60 percent of marginalized families indicate that they are financially barred to access healthcare services, and more than 50 percent have an interrupted education past primary school (Siddiqui, 2016). These numerical trends are solid evidence of the current research as affordability limitations and exclusion of services.

The key human rights issues outlined are economic vulnerability, social exclusion, and lack of sufficient housing, which have a common advocacy in the urban poverty literature. According to UN-Habitat (2020), over 70% of slum residents in developing cities live in overcrowded space and nearly 65 percent of those have no or insufficient sanitation facilities, which proves the findings of this research on poor living conditions. On the same note, the level of youth unemployment in marginalized city regions has been estimated to be 30-35 percent, as it is indicative of the long-standing labor market marginalization (World Bank, 2021). Regarding development initiatives, Kabeer (2012) observes that microfinance beneficiaries only have increased sustainability income growth of between 25 and 30 percent, thus not very effective in the long-term. The findings of this study on educational discontinuity are also supported by BRAC (2018), which indicates secondary school dropout rates in vulnerable communities over 40%. Weak coordination and failure to reach out development programs is further confirmed by qualitative evidence.

6.4 Conclusion

The findings of this research reveal that the dispossessed Bihari community still suffers the multidimensional deprivation due to the historical exclusion, structural inequalities and less than ideal institutional responsiveness. Though there were significant gains in some sectors like citizenship recognition, access to education, inclusion in some social services, this has not been even across all and is not adequate to warrant total realization of human rights. The continuous struggles in their jobs, homes, medical care, and social security makes further mobility upwards and strengthens poverty and marginalization loops. The discussion also points out that current development efforts have only yielded small and piecemeal results owing to poor coordination, poor coverage and structural constraints. Given these results, it is important to note that the study highlights that policy interventions that are based on the integration of rights-based approaches, as well as the inclusion of various stakeholders in policy formulation, would be necessary to not only close the current service gaps, but also the long-standing structural limitations as well. Legal enforcement, increased socio-economic opportunities, and institutional responsibility are the keys to sustainable enhancement of the lives and rights of the abandoned Bihari community.

CHAPTER VII: RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

7.1 Introduction

7.2 Recommendations

7.3 Suggestions for Future Research

7.4 Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

Based on the in-depth analysis of the socio-demographic, human rights situation and development issues of the stranded Bihari people in Bangladesh this chapter summarizes the findings with the major recommendations and the concluding themes of the study. It converts the overall results into feasible policy guidelines that can be used to foster inclusion, minimize structural disparities and enhance responsiveness among the institutions. The chapter also mentions the future research areas to fill the knowledge gaps and to have more evidence-based and sustainable interventions.

7.2 Recommendations

Based on the comprehensive findings of this study, a set of integrated and long-term recommendations is proposed to improve the human rights conditions and overall development of the stranded Bihari community in Bangladesh. These guidelines are rights-based, inclusive and participatory.

Legal Identity and Citizenship Inclusion

The gender equality of citizenship is a pillar needed in enhancing the general state of the Bihari community. Regulations relating to the issuance and renewal of identity documents should be streamlined, open, and reachable and especially by older and marginalized people. Bureaucratic barriers can be greatly reduced through decentralized service delivery, registration units (via mobile-based) and greater accountability within institutions. New action is needed to enforce provisions of the law to ensure the rights of all citizens are exercised without any discrimination.

Education and Human Capital Development

Increasing access to equitable and quality education is crucial towards social transformation in the long-term. Policy directions such as cutting down on the indirect education expenses, enhancing scholarship initiatives, and ongoing school attendance are relevant. Resolving language barriers by encouraging supportive learning processes and encouraging vocational and technical education in line with the demands of the labor markets can develop the skills, productivity, and employment opportunities, particularly among the youths and females.

Healthcare Access and Public Health Improvement

The issue of health vulnerabilities needs to be solved by providing access to affordable and quality healthcare services. Enhancing the provision of health services, especially maternal and child healthcare, maximizing community-based healthcare provision, and providing affordable medicines can improve health. The primary consideration should be the promotion of early intervention and minimization of long-term health risk through preventive healthcare awareness and nutrition programs and regular outreach services.

Economic Empowerment and Livelihood Development

Sustainable livelihood opportunities should be encouraged in order to minimize poverty and increase economic resiliency. Improving opportunities to access formal and informal jobs, increasing skill development programs, and enhancing the connection between training and employment opportunities are priorities. Improving access to financial services, such as credit and savings systems, will be useful to small businesses and entrepreneurship, especially by women and youth.

Housing and Urban Infrastructure Development

Enhancement of housing and basic urban amenities is essential in enshrining dignity and security. Upgrading of settlements, sanitation, supply of safe water and efficient drainage systems, should be increased. Land tenure security and adoption of marginalized settlements through the formal urban planning systems can foster both long-term stability and household investment in housing upgrades.

Social Protection and Welfare Inclusion

The vulnerability and inequality have to be mitigated by strengthening the social protection systems. Increasing safety net program coverage, clarifying and consistent beneficiary-selection, and enhancing program awareness on what services are available can increase effectiveness. Particular consideration should be paid to vulnerable categories like elderly, widowed women, and persons with disabilities.

Social Inclusion and Reduction of Discrimination

The concern of social exclusion and stigma should be addressed to achieve equitable development. Discrimination can be minimized by incorporating community-initiated awareness efforts, engaging activities involving different communities, and integrative

actions concerning policy. Interaction between communities and building mutual understanding can help to do gradual integration into the mainstream society.

Political Participation and Representation

Political inclusion should be influenced in a bid to make sure their voices, those of the Bihari community are heard in the processes of governance. Democratic participation and community empowerment can be enhanced by increasing civic rights awareness and voter turnout in elections, and involvement in local decision-making units.

Institutional Strengthening and Coordination

Development initiatives need a high level of institutional coordination and accountability to be carried out effectively. There must be a boost in collaboration within the government agencies, non-government organizations and citizens holding a stake within the community in delivering services effectively. Subsequently, more responsive and sustainable results can be achieved through strengthening monitoring and evaluation systems, enhancing transparency, and increasing community involvement in development planning.

7.3 Suggestions for Future Research

- Future studies of the stranded Bihari community must seek to address the shortcomings of the current research by attempting to promote both the geographical coverage and level of analysis. As the present research was limited to the few settlements of the camps in Dhaka, additional research is required to cover Bihari populations in the regions that are not camp-based as well as not located in Bangladesh. Comparisons between rural, semi-urban, and urban settings would offer a more reflected interpretations of differences in socio-economic status, access to human rights, and integratory efforts.
- Since few historical dynamics are being paid much attention to, future research ought to be more longitudinal and historical in nature to best engage long-term changes in identity, citizenship status, and socio-economic mobility. The intergenerational studies would help to understand the changing status of marginalization and inclusion experiences in detail.
- To minimize weaknesses associated with the methodology, future studies need to use more statistical representative samples and incorporate qualitative techniques.

Enhancements of mixed method design (in terms of surveys and panel data, and sophisticated statistical analysis) would enhance internal validity by providing a better generalization and enable more strict analysis of the relationship between significant variables. Meanwhile, participatory methods of research could be incorporated to minimize subjectivity and to increase the authenticity and community view.

- With the sensitivity of the questions of citizenship, discrimination, and identity, the future study needs to incorporate techniques of trust-building, ethical considerations, and new methods of data collection to guarantee increased transparency and reliability of the responses. There must also be an attempt to differentiate data sources to reduce the risks of biases relating to self-reported data such as the recall bias and the social desirability bias.
- Time and resource limitations in the actual research restricted the level and range of field exploration; hence, subsequent research need to provide sufficient time and resources so that the study areas covered would be wider and the data gathered more in-depth. Lastly, there is an urgent need to implement and use updated and trustworthy secondary sources of data. The creation of systematic databases and incorporating administrative data would aid in smarter cross-verification and comparison analysis, which would eventually lead to creating evidence-based policies.

7.4 Conclusion

The research finds that the marginalized Bihari population remains facing multidimensional problems based on the historical injustice, socio-economic vulnerability, and scarce availability of rights and services. Even though significant gains have been realized on issues like recognition of citizenship, access to education and access to basic services, they have been unbalanced and inadequate to guarantee total social and economic integration. Unrelenting obstacles in employment, living conditions, or health, and social security still limit social and general upward mobility. Simultaneously, the study also signals promising developments especially in younger generations, who are also more engaged in education, livelihoods, and civic identity. But unless policies are seriously interfered with and development plans are included these benefits do not necessarily lead to the long-term change.

Therefore, a comprehensive, rights-based, and participatory approach is necessary to address the interconnected challenges faced by the community. The key to equitable measures of development is strengthening legal inclusion, the spread of access to quality services, economic opportunities, and the use of institutions as an increase in accountability. It also will require concrete long-term dedication of government, non-government organizations, and community stakeholders to create dignity, inclusion, and resilience within the Bihari community.

REFERENCES

- Abdullah, M. (2020). Coronavirus: Dhaka's Bihari camps at risk? Dhaka Tribune. 11 Apr. <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/health/206480/coronavirus-dhaka%E2%80%99s-bihari-camps-at-risk>
- Al Amin, M. (2019). The politics of power in Dhaka's Bihari Camp. Dhaka Tribune. 12 Oct. <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/dhaka/190036/the-politics-of-power-in-dhaka%E2%80%99s-bihari-camp>
- Al Jazeera (2014). Clashes at Bangladesh refugee camp kill nine. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/asia/2014/06/clashes-atbangladesh-refugee-camp-kill-nine-20146149134880409.html>
- Banks, N., Hulme, D., & Edwards, M. (2015). NGOs, states, and donors revisited: Still too close for comfort? *World Development*, 66, 707–718. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2014.10.006>
- Bashar, I. (2006). Unresolved statelessness: The case of Biharis in Bangladesh. *Journal of International Affairs*, 10(1–2), 1–3.
- Bearak, B. (2000). Stranded Pakistanis Dreaming of Deliverance. *The New York Times*. [online] 13 May. <https://www.nytimes.com/2000/05/13/world/stranded-pakistanis-dreaming-of-deliverance.html>
- Bhattacharjee, M., & Li, J. (2024). Political otherness of the Bihari community in Bangladesh. *Asian Institute of Research Journal of Social and Political Sciences*, 7(2), 17–21.
- Biju, M.R. (2010). *Developmental issues in contemporary India*. New Delhi: Concept Pub. Co.
- Blitz, B. K., & Lynch, M. (2011). *Statelessness and citizenship: A comparative study on the benefits of nationality*. Edward Elgar.
- Bose, S. (2011). *Dead reckoning: memories of the 1971 Bangladesh War*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- BRAC. (2018). *Annual report 2018*. BRAC. <https://www.brac.net>

- Bradley, M. (2013). Beyond repair? Grappling with hard cases. In *Refugee Repatriation: Justice, Responsibility and Redress*, pp.191-247. Cambridge University Press.
Available at: <https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/abs/refugee-repatriation/beyond-repair-grappling-with-hard-cases/4CD860D16A38058329C751325CBE51DC>.
- Brass, P.R. (2005). *Language, religion and politics in North India*. Lincoln, Ne: Iuniverse.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101.
<https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Castles, S., de Haas, H., & Miller, M. J. (2014). *The age of migration* (5th ed.). Guilford Press.
- Cecconi, G. (2019). Stranded in Geneva Camp. [online]
<https://www.himalmag.com/geneva-camp-bihari-bangladesh-gabriele-cecconi-2019/>
- Chambers, R. (1997). *Whose reality counts? Putting the first last*. Intermediate Technology Publications.
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Crock, M. (2015a). *Refugees and Rights*. [online] CRC Press.
[https://www.routledge.com/Refugees-and Rights/Crock/p/book/9781472455796](https://www.routledge.com/Refugees-and-Rights/Crock/p/book/9781472455796)
- D’costa, B (2013). *Nation building, gender and war crimes in South Asia*. London: Routledge.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2017). *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (5th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Dey, S.K. (2019) The neglected ‘Bihari’ community in Bangladesh. [www.dw.com/en/the-neglected-bihari-community-in bangladesh/a-50824994](http://www.dw.com/en/the-neglected-bihari-community-in-bangladesh/a-50824994)
- Dhaka, R. (2008). Bangladesh court rules that young Biharis are Bangladesh citizens. Reuters. [online] 19 May. <https://www.reuters.com/article/idINIndia-33642420080519>

- Donnelly, J. (2013). *Universal human rights in theory and practice* (3rd ed.). Cornell University Press.
- Du, Y. (2024). Literature review of research on Biharis issue. *Advances in Politics and Economics*, 7(2), 194–201. <https://doi.org/10.22158/ape.v7n2p194>
- Dworkin, R. (1977). *Taking rights seriously*. Harvard University Press.
- Elahee, S. M. A. (n.d.). *The livelihood pattern and plight of Bihari people: A study on Bihari camp at Khalishpur in Khulna City, Bangladesh*. Khulna University.
- Farzana, K. F. (2009). An artificial minority: The stateless Biharis in Bangladesh. *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, 29(2), 223–235. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13602000902943682>
- Frank, A. G. (1967). *Capitalism and underdevelopment in Latin America*. Monthly Review Press.
- Geertz, C. (1973). *The interpretation of cultures: Selected essays*. Basic Books.
- Gerlach, C. (2010). *Extremely violent societies: mass violence in the twentieth-century world*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ghazali, A.S. (2013). Four decades of sufferings of the stranded Pakistanis in Bangladesh. [online] [http://www.milligazette.com/news/5953 four-decades-of-sufferings-of-the-stranded-pakistanis-in bangladesh](http://www.milligazette.com/news/5953-four-decades-of-sufferings-of-the-stranded-pakistanis-in-bangladesh)
- Ghosh, P. (2007). The Changing Discourse of the Muhajirs. *India International Centre Quarterly*, 28(3), 57–68.
- GHRD Team. (2024, December 12). *The Biharis in Bangladesh: A reflection on violence, victimhood, and conflict*. Global Human Rights Defense. <https://www.ghrd.org/the-biharis-in-bangladesh-a-reflection-on-violence-victimhood-and-conflict/>
- Giddens, A. (1984). *The constitution of society: Outline of the theory of structuration*. University of California Press.
- Given, L. M. (2008). *The SAGE encyclopedia of qualitative research methods*. SAGE Publications. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412963909>
- Guest, G., Bunce, A., & Johnson, L. (2006). How many interviews are enough? An experiment with data saturation and variability. *Field Methods*, 18(1), 59–82. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1525822X05279903>

- Haider, Z. (2016). Rejected people in Bangladesh: If the Biharis were counted. *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, 36(3), 427–443.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13602004.2016.1212496>
- Haider, Z. (2018). Biharis in Bangladesh and their restricted access to citizenship rights. *South Asia Research*, 38(3S), 25S–42S. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0262728018791695>
- Haider, Z. (2024). Biharis in Bangladesh: Transition from statelessness to citizenship. In Z. Haider, Springer Nature. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-46129-3>
- Hammadi, S. (2008). Bangladeshi at last. *Himal Southasian*. Available at:
<https://www.himalmag.com/bangladeshi-at-last/>.
- Hashmi, T. U. I. (1998). The ‘Bihari’ minorities in Bangladesh: Victims of nationalisms. In M. Hasan (Ed.), *Islam, communities and the nations: Muslim identities in South Asia and beyond*. Oxford University Press.
- Hofmann, R., & Caruso, U. (Eds.). (2011). *Minority Rights in South Asia*. Bern: Peter Lang.
- Hossain, N. (2010). School exclusion as social exclusion: The practices and effects of a conditional cash transfer programme for the poor in Bangladesh. *Journal of Development Studies*, 46(7), 1264–1282.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00220381003623845>
- Hussain, K. (2009) The end of Bihari statelessness. *Forced Migration Review*, 32. Available at: <https://www.fmreview.org/statelessness/hussain>.
- Hussain, K., & Khan, M. (2023, March 16). From refugees to citizens: A report on integration from refugees in towns, Dhaka, Bangladesh. *Refugees in Towns*.
<https://refugeesintowns.net/all-reports/dhaka>
- ICRC. (2012). Bangladesh: ICRC honored for helping victims’ of 1971 conflict - ICRC. [online]
<https://www.icrc.org/en/doc/resources/documents/feature/2012/bangladesh-feature-2012-04-19.htm>
- Ife, J. (2016). *Community development in an uncertain world: Vision, analysis and practice* (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press.

- Ilias, A. (2003). *Biharis: The Indian émigrés in Bangladesh—An objective analysis*. Syedpur, Bangladesh.
- Kabeer, N. (2012). *Women's economic empowerment and inclusive growth: Labour markets and enterprise development*. International Development Research Centre. <https://www.idrc.ca/en/book/womens-economic-empowerment-and-inclusive-growth>
- Kothari, C. R. (2004). *Research methodology: Methods and techniques*. New Age International.
- Kuczkiewicz-Fraś, A. (2019). 'Stranded Pakistanis' in Bangladesh— victims of political divisions of 70 years ago. *SprawyNarodowościowe*, 2019(51), 1-10. <https://doi.org/10.11649/sn.1912>
- Lefebvre, H. (1968). *Le droit à la ville*. Anthropos.
- Library of Congress. (2023). *Research guides: Research methodology*. <https://guides.loc.gov/research-methodology>
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. SAGE Publications.
- Mahmud, A.H. (2013). Bihari camps vulnerable to collapse. *Dhaka Tribune*. 15 May.
- Malik, H. (2015). Stranded Pakistanis in Bangladesh not Pakistan's responsibility, FO tells SC. *The Express Tribune*, from <https://tribune.com.pk/story/861364/stranded-pakistanis-in-bangladesh-not-pakistans-responsibility-fotells-sc/>
- Marshall, T. H. (1950). *Citizenship and social class*. Cambridge University Press.
- Minority Rights Group. (2018). *Biharis*. [online] <https://minorityrights.org/minorities/biharis/>
- Nahar, S. (2000). *Biharis in Bangladesh: Present status, legal impediments and solutions*. In C. R. Abrar (Ed.), *On the margin: Refugees, migrants and minorities*. Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMRU).
- Nair, S. (2019). *Shimla Agreement: What is Shimla agreement and how is it relevant to Trump's Jagranjosh.com*. Kashmir mediation claim? [online] <https://www.jagranjosh.com/current-affairs/shimla-agreement-what-is-shimla-agreement-how-is-irrelevant-to-trumps-kashmir-mediation-claim-1563882580>

- Natarajan, N., Newsham, A., Rigg, J., & Suhardiman, D. (2022). A sustainable livelihoods framework for the 21st century. *World Development*, 155, 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2022.105898>
- Nowell, L. S., Norris, J. M., White, D. E., & Moules, N. J. (2017). Thematic analysis: Striving to meet the trustworthiness criteria. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 16(1). <https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406917733847>
- Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods: Integrating theory and practice* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Phillips, R., & Pittman, R. (2009). *An introduction to community development*. Routledge.
- Rafe, R. (2019). The neglected “Bihari” community in Bangladesh. [online] DW.COM. <https://www.dw.com/en/the-neglected-bihari-community-in-bangladesh/a-50824994>
- Rahaman, A. (2018). *Status of Bihari communities in Bangladesh: A study on two selective Bihari camps*. University of Dhaka.
- Rahman, M. (2017). Statelessness and citizenship: The case of Biharis in Bangladesh. *Asian Journal of Social Science*, 45(6), 689–712. <https://doi.org/10.1163/15685314-04506005>
- Rahman, M., & Yusuf, A. (2019). Legal identity and access to rights: Evidence from Urdu-speaking communities in Bangladesh. *Journal of Human Rights Practice*, 11(3), 567–585. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jhuman/huz028>
- Rahman, O. (2019). The cost of citizenship. *The Daily Star*. Available at: <https://www.thedailystar.net/star-weekend/city/news/the-cost-citizenship-1818025>.
- Rahman, W. (2003). Vote for “stranded Pakistanis.” *news.bbc.co.uk*. [online] 6 May. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/3003949.stm
- Rashid, H. U. (2000) *Refugee Law*, Dhaka: Anupam Gyan Bhandar.
- Rawls, J. (1971). *A theory of justice*. Harvard University Press.
- Redclift, V. (2013). Abject or agents? Camps, contests and citizenship of Biharis in Bangladesh. *Political Geography*, 32, 63–71. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2012.10.003>

- Refrowld (2010). Bangladesh: Bringing education to the Bihari minority. [online] Refworld. <https://www.refworld.org/docid/4c7cbb2dc.html>
- Rizvi, H.A., (2014). Pakistan and the geostrategic environment: a study of foreign policy. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Saunders, M., Lewis, P., & Thornhill, A. (2019). Research methods for business students (8th ed.). Pearson Education.
- Schlein, L. (2017). Rohingya Refugees in Bangladesh at Risk as Diarrheal Diseases Spread | Voice of America - English. [online] www.voanews.com
<https://www.voanews.com/east-asia-pacific/rohingya-refugees-bangladesh-risk-diarrheal-diseases-spread>.
- Schönbauer, R. and Shadman, O. (2015). How a Bangladesh court ruling changed the lives of more than 300,000 stateless people. UNHCR. Available at: <https://www.unhcr.org/54ec22869.html>.
- Sen, A. (1999). Development as freedom. Oxford University Press.
- Sen, B. (2018). Dynamics of poverty and inequality in Bangladesh. Bangladesh Development Studies, 41(1–2), 1–34.
<https://bids.org.bd/uploads/publication/BDStudies>
- Sholder, H. (2011). Housing and land rights: The camp-dwelling Urdu-speaking community in Bangladesh. Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMRU).
- Siddiqui, K. (2016). Urban poverty in Bangladesh: Slum communities and their livelihoods. University Press Limited.
- Silver, H. (2015). The contexts of social inclusion. United Nations DESA Working Paper.
- Stake, R. E. (1995). The art of case study research. SAGE Publications.
- Sterba, J. (1972). 2 Months After Simla. The New York Times. [online] 4 Sep.
<https://www.nytimes.com/1972/09/04/archives/2-months-after-simla-china-and-bangladesh-seen-deflating-peace.html> .
- Sun, Y. (2022). Climate Migration Pushes Bangladesh's Megacity to the Brink. Bloomberg. Available at: <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2022-06-28/bangladesh-flooding-fuels-climate-migration-to-dhaka>.

- Swanson, D. (2009, July 27). Biharis fight for their rights. *The New Humanitarian*.
<https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/report/85447/bangladesh-biharis-fight-their-rights>
- Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (1979). An integrative theory of intergroup conflict. In W. G. Austin & S. Worchel (Eds.), *The social psychology of intergroup relations* (pp. 33–47). Brooks/Cole.
- Tempest, R. (1986). 250,000 Stranded in Bangladesh: Biharis Long for Pakistan, a Country That Left Them. [online] *Los Angeles Times*.
https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1986-05-19-mn-5908_story.html.
- UN-Habitat. (2020). *World cities report 2020: The value of sustainable urbanization*.
<https://unhabitat.org/wcr/>
- UNHCR. (2020). *UNHCR Emergency Handbook*.
<https://emergency.unhcr.org/entry/55600/unhcrs-mandate-for-refugees-stateless-persons-and-idps>.
- United Nations Development Programme. (2006). *Applying a human rights-based approach to development cooperation and programming*. UNDP.
- United Nations. (1948). *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. United Nations.
- Van Schendel, W. (2020). *A history of Bangladesh*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Verma, J. (2019). Bihari identity: An uncharted question. *Psychology and Developing Societies*, 31(1–2), 1–28. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0971333619863237>
- Whitaker, B. (1982). *The Biharis in Bangladesh*. Minority Rights Group No.11 (fourth edition).
- Wikipedia. (2019). Religion in Bihar. [online] Wikipedia.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religion_in_Bihar#Islam
- Wikipedia. (2020). Persecution of Biharis in Bangladesh. [online] Wikipedia.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Persecution_of_Biharis_in_Bangladesh#Citizenship_and_reconciliation_efforts

World Bank. (2005). Empowerment and poverty reduction: A sourcebook. World Bank.

World Bank. (2021). Bangladesh development update: Moving forward in uncertain times. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/bangladesh/publication/bangladesh-development-update>

Yin, R. K. (2017). Case study research and applications: Design and methods (6th ed.). SAGE Publications.

APPENDICES

Appendix01: Case Study Guideline

HUMAN RIGHTS PRACTICED AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT APPROACHES FOR STRANDED BIHARIS IN BANGLADESH: A STUDY IN DHAKA CITY

Case Study Guideline

[This M. Phil study, conducted under the Institute of Social Welfare and Research, University of Dhaka, explores human rights practices and community development approaches among stranded Biharis in Dhaka city. It aims to understand their lived experiences, socio-economic conditions, and access to services. All information will be used only for research purposes, ensuring full confidentiality and voluntary participation.]

Section-A: Socio-Demographic and Economic Conditions of Stranded Biharis

- A1. How would you explain your household's age and gender composition, family structure, dependency situation, marital patterns, length of stay in this settlement, and the role of language, ethnicity, and culture in daily life?
- A2. What is the education status of household members, including literacy level, school enrollment, attendance, dropout situation, access to formal or non-formal education, and skills or digital literacy?
- A3. How do you describe your household's economic condition, including main occupations, income sources, employment status, involvement of women and youth in earning, and job stability?
- A4. What are your living conditions like in terms of housing type, overcrowding, access to water, sanitation, electricity, basic services, and environmental risks?

Section-B: Existing Human Rights Conditions of Stranded Biharis

- B1. What is the situation of citizenship and legal identity in your household, including access to National ID, birth registration, voting rights, challenges in obtaining documents, and awareness of citizenship rights?
- B2. How is the right to education experienced by your family members in terms of access, affordability, quality, language or discrimination issues, and opportunities for higher education or technical training?

B3. What is the health-related conditions of your household, including access to healthcare services, affordability and quality of treatment, maternal and child health services, and nutrition and health awareness?

B4. How would you describe your housing conditions, including safety and quality of structure, security of tenure or risk of eviction, living space and privacy, and sanitation and environmental conditions?

B5. What are your experiences with employment, including job access, wage fairness, job security, working conditions, and discrimination or exploitation at work?

B6. How do you access social protection and public services, including government safety nets, utilities (water, sanitation, electricity), NGO support, and barriers in accessing these services?

B7. What are your experiences regarding justice and personal safety, including access to legal support, dispute resolution, freedom of movement, personal security, and issues of discrimination, exclusion, or violence?

Section-C: Major Human Rights Challenges Faced by the Bihari Community

C1. What are the main challenges in obtaining citizenship documents and legal recognition, including administrative delays, institutional discrimination, and awareness of legal rights and procedures?

C2. What key economic difficulties does your household face, including unemployment or informal jobs, income instability, limited access to credit, and lack of relevant skills training?

C3. What social challenges do you experience in daily life, including exclusion, stigma, language barriers, interaction with other communities, and access to education and healthcare?

C4. What housing and environmental problems do you face, including land insecurity, overcrowding, poor housing conditions, lack of sanitation, and exposure to environmental risks?

C5. How do you experience political participation and civic engagement, including voting rights, representation in local governance, decision-making involvement, and civic awareness?

C6. What specific challenges do women and children face in your community, including gender inequality, early marriage, child labor, school dropout, and lack of protection services?

C7. What difficulties exist in accessing public and institutional services, including government and NGO support, service gaps, lack of targeted programs, and weak grievance or accountability systems?

Section-D: Existing Community Development Initiatives and Evaluate Their Effectiveness

D1. What types of economic empowerment support are you receiving, such as skill training, vocational programs, microfinance, or small business support, and how effective are these in improving employment and income?

D2. What educational or capacity-building initiatives are available, including community education, adult literacy, scholarships, or skill development programs, and how useful are they?

D3. What health and sanitation services or programs do you receive, such as community healthcare, awareness activities, maternal and child health support, or WASH interventions, and how effective are they?

D4. What housing and infrastructure support have you received, including housing improvement, roads, drainage, water, and sanitation facilities, and how have these affected your living conditions?

D5. What legal aid or rights-based support do you receive, such as help with citizenship documents, legal advice, or human rights awareness programs, and how helpful are they?

D6. What initiatives promote social inclusion and reduce discrimination in your community, and how effective are they in improving social cohesion?

D7. What programs are available for women and youth, including empowerment, livelihood support, or youth engagement activities, and how effective are they in bringing positive change?

Section-E: Policy Recommendations for Improving Human Rights Protection and Strengthening Community Development Strategies

- E1. What policy measures are needed to improve access to legal identity and citizenship services, including simplification of documentation, stronger legal frameworks, institutional accountability, and legal awareness?
- E2. What policy reforms are required to improve access to education and healthcare, including reducing barriers, ensuring non-discrimination, improving service quality, and strengthening inclusiveness?
- E3. What policy actions are needed to improve economic opportunities, including employment creation, vocational training, access to credit, and support for small enterprises?
- E4. What policy recommendations are needed to improve housing and urban conditions, including land tenure security, settlement upgrading, urban integration, and infrastructure development?
- E5. What policy measures are needed to strengthen social safety net programs, including wider coverage, fair distribution, targeting vulnerable groups, and better inclusion in welfare systems?
- E6. What policy reforms are needed to increase civic and political participation, including awareness of rights, participation in governance, representation, and accountability mechanisms?
- E7. What policy interventions are required to protect women and children, including legal protection, prevention of child labor, access to education, gender equality, and support services?
- E8. What strategies are needed to strengthen institutions and coordination, including better government–NGO collaboration, monitoring systems, service efficiency, and community participation?

Appendix02: FGDs Guideline

HUMAN RIGHTS PRACTICED AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT APPROACHES FOR STRANDED BIHARIS IN BANGLADESH: A STUDY IN DHAKA CITY

FGDs Guideline

[This M.Phil study, conducted under the Institute of Social Welfare and Research, University of Dhaka, explores human rights practices and community development approaches among stranded Biharis in Dhaka city. It aims to understand their lived experiences, socio-economic conditions, and access to services. All information will be used only for research purposes, ensuring full confidentiality and voluntary participation.]

Section-A: Socio-Demographic and Economic Conditions of Stranded Biharis

- A1. How would you describe the general household structure, age and gender composition, and length of residence of the Bihari community in this settlement? How do language, ethnicity, and culture shape daily life in the Bihari community?
- A2. What is the overall education situation in the Bihari community, including school enrollment, dropout patterns, literacy level, and access to formal or informal education and skills training?
- A3. What are the main sources of income and employment in the Bihari community? How stable are these income opportunities, and how do women and youth participate in earning activities?
- A4. How would you describe the overall living conditions of the Bihari community in this settlement, including housing, overcrowding, access to water, sanitation, electricity, and environmental risks?

Section-B: Existing Human Rights Conditions of Stranded Biharis

- B1. What is the general situation regarding citizenship and legal identity in the Bihari community, including access to National ID, birth registration, voting rights, and related challenges?
- B2. How is the right to education experienced in the Bihari community in terms of access, affordability, quality, and barriers such as language or discrimination?
- B3. What are the main health conditions in the Bihari community, including access to healthcare services, maternal and child health, nutrition, and affordability of treatment?
- B4. How would you describe housing security, living space, safety, and access to sanitation and environmental health in the Bihari community?

B5. What are the common employment conditions in the Bihari community, including job access, wages, job security, working conditions, and discrimination?

B6. How does the Bihari community access social protection and public services such as safety nets, utilities, and NGO support? What barriers exist?

B7. What are the common issues related to justice, personal safety, discrimination, and access to legal support in the Bihari community?

Section-C: Major Human Rights Challenges Faced by the Bihari Community

C1. What are the major challenges in obtaining citizenship documents and legal recognition in the Bihari community, including administrative barriers and discrimination?

C2. What are the key economic challenges faced by the Bihari community such as unemployment, low income, lack of credit, and limited skills training?

C3. What social challenges are commonly faced in the Bihari community, including stigma, exclusion, language barriers, and limited access to services?

C4. What housing and environmental problems are most common in the Bihari community, including overcrowding and poor infrastructure?

C5. How much does the Bihari community participate in political and civic activities such as voting and local decision-making?

C6. What are the major issues affecting women and children in the Bihari community, including early marriage, child labor, education dropout, and protection concerns?

C7. What difficulties exist in the Bihari community in accessing government and NGO services, including gaps in support and accountability issues?

Section-D: Existing Community Development Initiatives and Evaluate Their Effectiveness

D1. What economic empowerment programs (training, microfinance, small business support) are available in the Bihari community, and how effective are they?

D2. What education and capacity-building programs exist in the Bihari community, and how useful are they?

D3. What health and sanitation services or programs are available in the Bihari community, and how effective are they in meeting needs?

D4. What housing and infrastructure improvement programs exist in the Bihari community, and how have they affected living conditions?

D5. What legal aid or rights-based support services are available to the Bihari community, and how helpful are they?

D6. What initiatives promote social inclusion and reduce discrimination in the Bihari community, and how effective are they?

D7. What programs exist for women and youth in the Bihari community, and how effective are they in improving livelihoods and empowerment?

Section-E: Policy Recommendations for Improving Human Rights Protection and Strengthening Community Development Strategies

E1. What changes are needed to improve access to legal identity and citizenship services for the Bihari community?

E2. What reforms are needed to improve access to education and healthcare for the Bihari community?

E3. What actions are needed to improve employment opportunities and economic conditions in the Bihari community?

E4. What policies are needed to improve housing, settlement conditions, and urban infrastructure in the Bihari community?

E5. What improvements are needed in social safety net programs for the Bihari community?

E6. What steps are needed to increase political participation and civic engagement of the Bihari community?

E7. What measures are needed to better protect women and children in the Bihari community and promote gender equality?

E8. What improvements are needed in coordination between government, NGOs, and the Bihari community organizations?

Appendix03: KIIs Guideline

HUMAN RIGHTS PRACTICED AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT APPROACHES FOR STRANDED BIHARIS IN BANGLADESH: A STUDY IN DHAKA CITY

KIIs Guideline

[This M.Phil study, conducted under the Institute of Social Welfare and Research, University of Dhaka, explores human rights practices and community development approaches among stranded Biharis in Dhaka city. It aims to understand their lived experiences, socio-economic conditions, and access to services. All information will be used only for research purposes, ensuring full confidentiality and voluntary participation.]

Section-A: Socio-Demographic and Economic Conditions of Stranded Biharis

- A1. How would you describe the socio-demographic profile and living conditions of the stranded Bihari community in this area, including household structure, migration history, and cultural identity?
- A2. What is your assessment of the education situation of the Bihari community, including enrollment, dropout, literacy levels, and access to formal and non-formal education?
- A3. How do you evaluate the economic conditions of the Bihari community, including employment patterns, income sources, job stability, and participation of women and youth?
- A4. How would you describe the housing and environmental conditions of the Bihari community, including overcrowding, infrastructure, and access to basic services?

Section-B: Existing Human Rights Conditions of Stranded Biharis

- B1. What is the current situation of citizenship and legal identity among the Bihari community, including access to National ID, birth registration, and voting rights?
- B2. How do you assess the realization of the right to education for the Bihari community, including access, affordability, quality, and discrimination issues?
- B3. What is the overall health situation of the Bihari community, including access to healthcare services, maternal and child health, and nutrition?
- B4. How would you assess housing security and environmental health conditions in Bihari settlements?
- B5. What are the employment conditions of the Bihari community, including wage levels, job security, and workplace discrimination?

B6. How effective is the access of the Bihari community to social protection programs and public services?

B7. What are the key issues related to justice, protection, and human rights violations faced by the Bihari community?

Section-C: Major Human Rights Challenges Faced by the Bihari Community

C1. What are the major institutional and administrative challenges in ensuring citizenship and legal recognition for the Bihari community?

C2. What are the key structural economic challenges affecting the livelihood of the Bihari community?

C3. What forms of social exclusion, stigma, or discrimination does the Bihari community face in urban settings?

C4. What is the main housing, infrastructure, and environmental vulnerabilities in Bihari settlements?

C5. How would you assess the level of political participation and civic engagement among the Bihari community?

C6. What are the major protection concerns affecting women and children in the Bihari community?

C7. What are the main gaps in government and NGO service delivery for the Bihari community?

Section-D: Existing Community Development Initiatives and Evaluate Their Effectiveness

D1. What economic empowerment initiatives (training, microfinance, entrepreneurship support) are currently implemented for the Bihari community, and how effective are they?

D2. What education and capacity-building programs are available, and how effective are they in improving human capital?

D3. What health and sanitation interventions are being implemented, and how effective are they in improving health outcomes?

D4. What housing and infrastructure development programs exist, and how do they impact living conditions?

D5. What legal aid and rights-based interventions are available, and how effective are they in addressing legal identity and rights issues?

D6. What social inclusion initiatives exist, and how effective are they in reducing discrimination and improving cohesion?

D7. What gender and youth-focused programs are available, and how effective are they in empowerment and livelihood improvement?

Section-E: Policy Recommendations for Improving Human Rights Protection and Strengthening Community Development Strategies

E1. What policy reforms are needed to improve citizenship and legal identity services for the Bihari community?

E2. What policy interventions are required to improve access to education and healthcare services?

E3. What policy actions are needed to enhance economic opportunities and employment?

E4. What urban and housing policy reforms are needed for improving Bihari settlements?

E5. What improvements are needed in social safety net and welfare programs for the Bihari community?

E6. What measures are needed to enhance political participation and civic inclusion?

E7. What policy actions are required to better protect women and children in the Bihari community?

E8. What institutional reforms are needed to improve coordination between government, NGOs, and other stakeholders?

Appendix 04: The Informed Consent

To Whom It May Concern

It is my pleasure to certify that Khandakar Nahid Hasano, a student of the M.Phil. Program (Registration No: 249, Session: 2016–2017) at the Institute of Social Welfare and Research, University of Dhaka, is conducting his M. Phil thesis entitled “Human Rights Practiced and Community Development Approaches for Stranded Biharis in Bangladesh: A Study in Dhaka City” under my supervision and guidance. This study is an essential academic requirement in the field of social welfare and development.

For the successful completion of his research work, the researcher will need to collect relevant information, literature, and data from concerned individuals, communities, institutions, and organizations. In this regard, your kind cooperation and support in providing necessary information and facilitating access to relevant sources will be highly appreciated. Please be assured that all information collected will be used strictly for academic and research purposes only. The confidentiality and anonymity of respondents and institutions will be fully maintained, and no data will be disclosed beyond the scope of this dissertation.

I therefore kindly request your cooperation and assistance to enable the researcher to complete his thesis successfully and contribute meaningfully to the field of social welfare and community development.

Thanking you in anticipation,

Dr. Sk. Tauhidul Islam

Professor

Institute of Social Welfare and Research

University of Dhaka, Dhaka-1205