

Cause and consequences of border killing between Bangladesh and India

By

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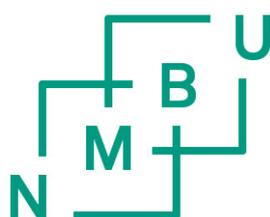
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Abstract

This paper first sheds light on the friendly role of India during the war of Independence in 1971 that led to the birth of Bangladesh. Secondly, the paper makes an attempt to analyze why Bangladesh-India border is violent. Thirdly, the paper looks into the whole issue from theoretical understanding, more precisely- Constructivism framework. Fourthly, the study also tries to make an argument through its different findings. The paper concludes with an observation that there are several way-outs to resolve border killing.

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Chapter One

1. Introduction:

Bangladesh and India are two of the most important states in South Asia. During the birth of Bangladesh the two states enjoyed unconditional friendship. India's support was crucial for Bangladesh in its war against Pakistan. India had trained the Bangladeshi 'Mukti bahini' (freedom fighters), it hosted the Bangladeshi government in exile and India also took care of more than 10 million refugees during the 9 month war of Independence.¹ Despite this, the cordial relations between these two countries did not continue for long. There are a few fundamental issues between India and Bangladesh, such as land and maritime boundary demarcations, the sharing of waters from 54 common rivers, informal trade, transnational crime, and interference in internal affairs that have adversely affected their relationship.² However none of these problems can overshadow the prevailing problem considering India-Bangladesh Border killings. Despite claiming to be a friendly neighbor, India has already fenced 2500 k.m of the total border of 4096 k.m³, an event which is not found in the borders of the most hostile of the neighbors.⁴ In India's part they argue that they fenced the borders only to prevent illegal migration. However the ever climbing numbers of people being killed in the borders tell another story. Over the past 10 years Indian security forces have killed almost 1,000 people, mostly Bangladeshis.⁵ The people of Bangladesh are surprised at the insensitivity of the Indian government the killings of Bangladesh nationals and as a result, the perception of people tends to be negative

¹ For more information about India's support in Bangladesh Liberation war please visit Bangladesh Genocide Archive at http://www.genocidebangladesh.org/?page_id=47

² Karim, M.A. (2009), "Bangladesh-India Relations: Some Recent Trends"(pdf) ,Working Paper No. 96, 12 November, Institute of South Asian Studies, National University of Singapore, available at <http://www.isn.ethz.ch/Digital-Library/Publications/Detail/?ots591=0c54e3b3-1e9c-be1e-2c24-a6a8c7060233&lng=en&id=109735>, accessed on 22-08-14.

³ Adams B.(2011) , "India's shoot-to-kill policy on the Bangladesh border", *The Guardian*, 23 January , available at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/libertycentral/2011/jan/23/india-bangladesh-border-shoot-to-kill-policy> , retrieved on 11-08-2014.

⁴ Building walls or fences are not uncommon in borders where there is huge number of illegal migration. Examples include Mexico-USA, Egypt-Israel, Saudi Arabia and Yemen.

⁵ ibid

toward India.⁶ Thus border killing has become a great obstacle in the way of India-Bangladesh Cooperation.

The Indian government has to deal with crossing-border smuggling, particularly cattle rustling. Low-key handlers, mostly living in border areas, carry out most of the transshipment of the cattle across the border.⁷ There are 68 smuggling corridors and 149 sensitive villages on the West Bengal border alone.⁸ Cattle smuggling is a highly profitable business for the people living in both side of the border. Cattle are reported to be sold at three or four times higher price in Bangladesh than in India.⁹ So, it is a very lucrative trade for both Bangladeshis and the Indians.¹⁰ But this substantial, informal and unrecorded trade, carried across the India-Bangladesh border, is more quasi legal in nature, and is often described as 'informal' rather than illegal, since there is wide participation of local people in the border areas.¹¹ Also, as soon as the cattle traders enter Bangladesh, they can pay the customs charges and the trade becomes legalized.¹²

India argues that the people are killed only for self-defense. 64 BSF personnel were injured in the incidents in 2010, while the number went as high-injured 150 in 2012.¹³ However the abusive methods used by the BSF are disproportionate to the problems that the Indian government faces on its eastern border.¹⁴ (India's eastern border is with Pakistan, which is noted as one

⁶ Rashid. H. "Border Killing and Cattle Trade", available at <http://archive.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=268088>, accessed on 22-08-214.

⁷Op.cit. Bhattacharjee, page 4.

⁸Misra M. (2008) "Illegal cattle funding terror", *Time of India*, October 3, available at <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Illegal-cattle-trade-funding-terror/articleshow/3554048.cms>, accessed on 21-08-14.

¹⁰ . see for details ; <http://www.dhakatribune.com/op-ed/2014/aug/20/beef-across-border> ; accessed on 04.12.14

¹¹ Dutta P. (2010), "India-Bangladesh relations", Special report for *Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies, September Issue*, New Delhi.

¹²Op.cit. Bhattacharjee. Page 6.

¹³Op.cit. Bhattacharjee, page 2

¹⁴Op.cit. "Trigger happy"

of the most hostile borders in the world. Also, Time and again India has claimed that Islamist terrorist infiltrated to India through that border). Neither Bangladesh nor India keeps any official records of the number of people killed in border, so there is no ways of telling how many people killed were actually smugglers or attackers. In saying this it can also be argued that even though the smugglers may deserve punishment they certainly do not deserve to be executed without trial. Sadly, Bangladeshi border officials have also suggested that such killings are acceptable if the victim was engaged in smuggling.¹⁵

India has land borders with Pakistan, China, and Nepal as well. But border forces there are not killing people like in the Bangladesh border.¹⁶So, in general view, it gives us the impression that the main reason for border killing is the negligence of Bangladeshi Government and its inability to make good negotiations with the Indian government. There have been some initiatives on by the two governments to manage these problems. In July 2011, both of the nations signed a coordinated border management plans to effectively control the cross border illegal activities.¹⁷It has been often argued by various scholars and diplomats that making cattle trading legalized in India will significantly reduce illegal trespassing in Indian border and would border killing as well.¹⁸ Bangladesh has a large market for beef products, which cannot be satisfied by domestic cattle alone. Legalizing the cattle trade will be beneficial for both of the nations. However this is a very critical issue for India as the trading of Cattle is highly related with the deep-rooted religious beliefs of the Hindu people who worship cows as Gods and consider cattle trading as sin. So, no Indian government is willing to take the step of legalizing cattle trade as it may cause them to lose public support.

¹⁵Op.cit. Adams.

¹⁶Bari, MH (2014), "The Killing Fields", *Dhaka Tribune*, 20 February, available at <http://www.dhakatribune.com/op-ed/2014/feb/20/killing-fields>, retrieved on 7-08-2014.

¹⁷ "India Bangladesh Relations: Towards Increased Partnership"(pdf) , a report of *Aspire Institute India*, available at https://www.google.com.bd/search?q=India+Bangladesh+Relations:+Towards+Increased+Partnership%E2%80%9D,&ie=utf-8&oe=utf-8&rls=org.mozilla:en-US:official&client=firefox-a&channel=fflb&gws_rd=cr&ei=Co33U-KEDYK9ugTN9YCADQ , accessed on 22-08-14.

¹⁸Op.cit. Rashid.

Thus the topic becomes very relevant and important in the present context. It needs to be more deeply analyzed so that the various factors related to the issue become clear and the solution can be found. For a methodical study on the issue I have developed one central research question with several supporting questions. They are:

1.2 Central Research Question:

- 1) What are the main reasons behind the continuous border killing by BSF in India-Bangladesh border?

1.3 Supporting Questions:

- a. What is the social impact of border killing on the people residing near the border?
- b. What is the impact of border killing on India-Bangladesh relations?
- c. Which policies would be adopted to mitigate this border killing?

Both qualitative and quantitative data will be collected from primary and secondary sources, which would be use to writing this paper. The study will collect secondary information from books, journal articles, government and civil society reports and newspapers. The study will rely heavily on print media to examine the issues concerned. At the same time it will also take into account the news reports on the issue done by various TV channels. The study area is spread with the neighboring people living in the border area. My thesis concerns two groups of people. One of them is general people whose lives in the border area and other one is whose family members killed by Indian border guard. Primary data was collected through a questionnaire survey conducted among 20 male and 20 female persons to know the cause and consequences of border killing. A number of key personalities i.e. scholars,

representatives of minority communities and government officials involved in this issue will also be interviewed formally and informally. In case of the scholars, the several professors of the department of International Relations of University of Dhaka and University of Chittagong and prominent researchers from Bangladeshi research organizations will be interviewed. For government officials, I will try to take interview of some high level officials of ministry of foreign Affairs and Border Guard Bangladesh. I will also try to contract officials form Indian high commission in Bangladesh, to ensure the incorporation of Indian point of view on the issue and to maintain balance in the research. (Please note that the issue is a very sensitive one, and it is very hard to find government officials willing to comment on it).

The paper will be divided into six chapters, the introductory chapter will give an overview of the whole report, and the Second chapter focuses on the Literature Review. The Third chapter discusses on the Research methods; the Fourth makes an argument on theoretical framework. The fifth chapter analyzes the results of the whole paper. The report concludes with a with policy recommendations.

Chapter Two

2. Literature review:

Bangladesh and India share a 3,909-kilometer (2,429 miles) long international border, the fifth-longest land border in the world. 5 Indian states West Bengal, Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram, and Tripura, adjoin a total of 28 Bangladesh districts. The border between Bangladesh and India passes through flat and hilly terrain, rivers and jungles. In some parts, the border passes through heavily populated areas with cultivation extending to the very edge of the border and the Border pillars remain the only identification of the international boundary.¹⁹ Because there are many streams and rivulets across there, it is not easy to establish and maintain border pillars on these river islands. Further many of these islands, clearly visible during the dry seasons and disappear during the monsoon making it even harder to identify the border. Populations on both sides share cultural, linguistic, religious, economic, and, crucially, kinship ties. Local people for trade and commerce have long been crossed the border routinely. It is also crossed by relatives and friends separated by a line arbitrarily drawn by the British during partition in 1947. So crossing the border is a daily process for many people living in the border areas.

The NGOs who work with human rights from both Bangladesh and India has charged the BSF with several accusations of human rights violations. The international watchdog “Human Rights Watch” has accused BSF of killing and torturing innocent people. According to their report in many cases people have been tortured or killed only out suspicion of being a cattle smuggler.²⁰

The lack of accountability within BSF has been named as the main reason for such shocking act by the border guard force of India. It also argues that failure

¹⁹Bhattacharjee, P. (2013), “India-Bangladesh Border Management: The Challenge of Cattle Smuggling”, Special report for *Observer Research Foundation*, July, Issue no 1, available at www.orfonline.org/ July 2013 , retrieved on 20-08-2014

²⁰ Trigger Happy: Excessive Use of Force by Indian Troops at the Bangladesh Border”, report by *Human Rights Watch*, December 2010. Available at <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2010/12/09/trigger-happy>, accessed on 22-08-14.

by BSF personnel to respect rural habits and customs often causes grievances and arguments that can often have deadly results.²¹The report has also accused of both BSF and BDR and politicians of both sides to be involved in the smuggling business.

Since its independence India has proved itself to be the biggest power in the South Asian region. It is also often been accused by the other nations for acting like “big brother” to its neighbors. India may be called a geostrategic player while Bangladesh may be called a geostrategic pivot.²² As a geostrategic player, India always tries to influence the nations beyond its national boundaries. Because of the important geographic position of Bangladesh India always tries to keep Bangladesh under its firm influence. India has continued the border killing despite the soaring criticism by Bangladesh government, people and international human rights organizations.

However, despite having a government that has enjoyed fairly good relations with its Indian counterpart and shared same ethics and political ideal the Bangladesh was unable to make any effective measure to decrease border killing. The 2014 elections in India have brought in to power the ultra-Hindu BJP. During the election campaign, BJP made many anti-Muslim stances and even threaten to push back the Bangladeshi migrants in India. The new Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been accused of being involved in the Gujarat riots that claimed the lives of over a thousand Muslims. Although both Hindu and Muslim people are involved in cattle trade, it is the Muslims who are the traders (Hindu people are generally the handlers)²³ and gets killed while crossing the border. So, it is unlikely that reducing border killing will be a priority for the new government. The government in New Delhi has also

²¹ Ibid. page 19.

²² Idea from Zbigniew Brzezinski, former United States National Security Advisor, as cited by Karim, M.A, op.cit.page 2.

²³ “For a cow, it doesn't get much better than India”, available at <http://articles.latimes.com/2010/may/02/la-fg-india-cows-20100503> , retrieved at 21-08-2014

made itself very clear that that it is going to have a more assertive foreign policy than its predecessor. Based on that reality it's very normal to assume that the border killing is more likely to increase.

The guardian published a report titled *India's shoot to kill policy on the Bangladesh border* by Brad Adams sheds light on the issue of human rights. The report argues that the violence is routinely and arbitrary. The report shows that the border has become an emotive issue in Indian politics, as millions of Bangladeshis now live in India illegally. Because of that, many are exploited as cheap labor.²⁴ The report further emphasize that India has the right to impose border controls. But India does not have the right to use lethal force except where strictly necessary to protect life. The article also claims that despite of the mass violation of human rights by the BSF, there are lacks of attention of international media to this issue. The article also sites the statements of victims and victims' family members where it is clear that the BSF has used violence, even where it was completely unnecessary. The article also sites instances where BSF has shoot people strait in their foreheads.

The Economist published a report titled **Shootings on the India-Bangladesh border: Felani's last steps**, 3rd February 2011. In this report, citing Bangladeshi media claimed that In January 7th India's Border Security Force (BSF) shot dead Mr Nur Islam's 15-year-old. Felani, at an illegal crossing into Bangladesh from the Indian state of West Bengal. Felani's body hung from the barbed-wired fence for five hours. Then the Indians took her down, tied her hands and feet to a bamboo pole, and carried her away.

The Dhaka Tribune published an article titled *Responding to Border Killings* written by Md. Ariful Islam. In this writing the author speaks out for human rights. He further reiterates that both India and Bangladesh come forward to

²⁴ . See more at <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/libertycentral/2011/jan/23/india-bangladesh-border-shoot-to-kill-policy>; accessed on 11.12.14

showing respect for it. By quoting Human Rights Watch Report India's force has killed almost 1,000 Bangladeshis over the past 10 years. That implies a border killing every four days, in gross violation of human rights as well as international law. The article further focuses on the historical insight that the way the Bangladesh-India border was carved out in 1947 added to its complexity and increased the likelihood of border disputes. In some places, the border makes one part of a house or holding situated in Bangladesh and another in India. A substantial number of people have had to move between both countries without passports for various reasons.

“Stop border killings for better relations” an editorial by the Dhaka tribune published on May 20, 2014 says that border killing has continued in India-Bangladesh Borders despite concerns expressed by the Bangladeshi government. The newspaper called Indian response to the problem inadequate; stating that over 38 Bangladeshi citizens has been killed in the past year (2013). The article also claims that Indian lack of resolution and one-sided nature makes them of huge symbolic importance. It also says that it is well established that these murders have nothing to do with security issues but largely arise largely arise out of disputes over extortion. The newspaper called the Indian government to stop this killing, as it will be a great initiative for confidence building for both countries.

“BSF killings not helping” is another editorial by the Dhaka Tribune newspaper on the issue. The editorial was written as a response of a Bangladeshi “Mohammad sharif” was picked up the BSF and his body was later found with major marks of torture. The editorial voiced its concerns about the negative impact of these killings on the India-Bangladesh relations. And said that such a incidence just after the visit of Indian foreign minister to Bangladesh was unfortunate. The newspaper expressed its worry about the nonchalant behavior of the Indian government about the issue. And it asked the Indian government to take immediate actions to stop the murder of Bangladeshi people in the border.

“In Brief: Bangladesh border killings continue unabated” is an issue brief by the IRIN Asia. In the brief, citing Odhikar as a source it claimed that Since 2000, 945 Bangladeshis have been shot and killed by the BSF, while more than 700 have been injured. It also cited the Human rights watch as a source and claimed that Indian Border guards have been accused of excessive use of force, violence and torture at the almost 4000 km long border. The brief was published one day after the Bangladeshi government asked Indian authority to investigate an incidence of border killing.

“Actions that border on the barbaric” is a report by Indian National daily *The Hindu* 26 September, 2013. In the report, citing Human Rights Watch as a source it claimed that in between 2001-2010, India’s force has killed almost 1,000 people, both Indians and Bangladeshis. Further, the report documented the pervasive nature of harassment and torture in the daily lives of those who live in the densely populated borderland. While reportage in Bangladesh focuses on the implication of the BSF’s actions for Bangladeshi citizens, this report underlined that the Indian force is equally brutal to citizens of its own country, the very people whose interests it is ostensibly protecting.

Chapter Three

3. Research Method:

The choice of research method is of outmost importance for any research paper. It is also one of the most difficult choices that one researcher faces. Without a proper method, the study remains incomplete and often fails to provide necessary results.

To find the appropriate research method, I looked on the main research objective of the research paper. The paper has two broad objectives. One is to find out the causes and the impact of the of border killing in the India-Bangladesh border and the second one is to analyze the impacts of border killing in India Bangladesh relations and suggest policies to find a remedy. To attain both of these objectives, using primary data method was the best choice. On the other hand fieldwork alone cannot provide insights to the impact it's having on India-Bangladesh relations. Thus the research paper took the road of mixed method, where both quantitative and qualitative data was used. It also relied on both primary and secondary data collection methods.

Quantitative methodology mainly relies on charts, graphs and other numerical data to prove its hypothesis. In this research paper, the quantitative data was used to show the real picture of border killing in the Bangladesh –India border and its intensity. However the quantitative data cannot provide any Most of the data used in this method was collected by primary data collection method. Qualitative method relies on words that are not quantifiable and uses that explanation to support its argument. Most of the qualitative data used in the research paper are secondary ion nature; however, the experience of the victims of border violence, collected using primary data method was also very important for the research.

The research is mainly based on the interview of the people who live close to the India Bangladesh border. The attempt was to take a pragmatic approach and to see the

problem from the point of view of people who really suffer from the border killing 1st hand. It is also an attempt to see the ideas about each other's have created identity, and assumptions of constructivism in play. Data collected primarily was the base of all evidence used in proving the argument of the research paper. Thus, I was extremely cautious about choosing the location of the study and the participants themselves. I have tries to ensure that the participant is not biased and that they provide a clear point of view on the border-killing situation.

Study area:

The study was conducted in the Phulbari upzilla of Kurigram district. It has an area of 163.63 km². Phulbari 28 km northwest of Kurigram town and is one of the upzilla's which has border with India. The study was conducted in two bordering village situated in the upzilla. One is the near Ballerhat border and another near Anantapur border. The choice of the villages was based on its proximity to the India-Bangladesh Border, and because my sources confirmed that there is huge number of people who travelled to India regularly. Anantapur is also home to Felani Khatun²⁵, who is by far the most famous victim of Border killing in India-Bangladesh Border. Another reason for choosing this village's is that I had person who worked as a link between the participants and me. He had introduced me to the villagers and ensured my access to the otherwise close society. The village is not very developed village, but the villagers have their share of technology like electricity, TVs and mobile phones.

²⁵ Felani khatun is a 15 years old girl who was shot at India-Bangladesh border on 7 January 2011, her dead body remained hanging at the fence, and later BSF tied her body to bamboo to carry her dead body to India. Picture of this incidents was widely published in international media and raised concern. for more information on Felani khatuns case please visit <http://www.felanicamp.com/>



Figure 1: location of PhulbariUpzilla in Bangladesh's Map

3.1 Primary data:

Participants:

Both Male and female participants were chosen for interview in this fieldwork. My informer had introduced me to people in those villages. Then I chose participants in a manner that, they would represent a verity of social class. I maintained a balance between male and female participants. The method used was open-ended survey interview, which left room for the participants to include their opinion. Participants came from all occupations, from farmer to female member of the union council.

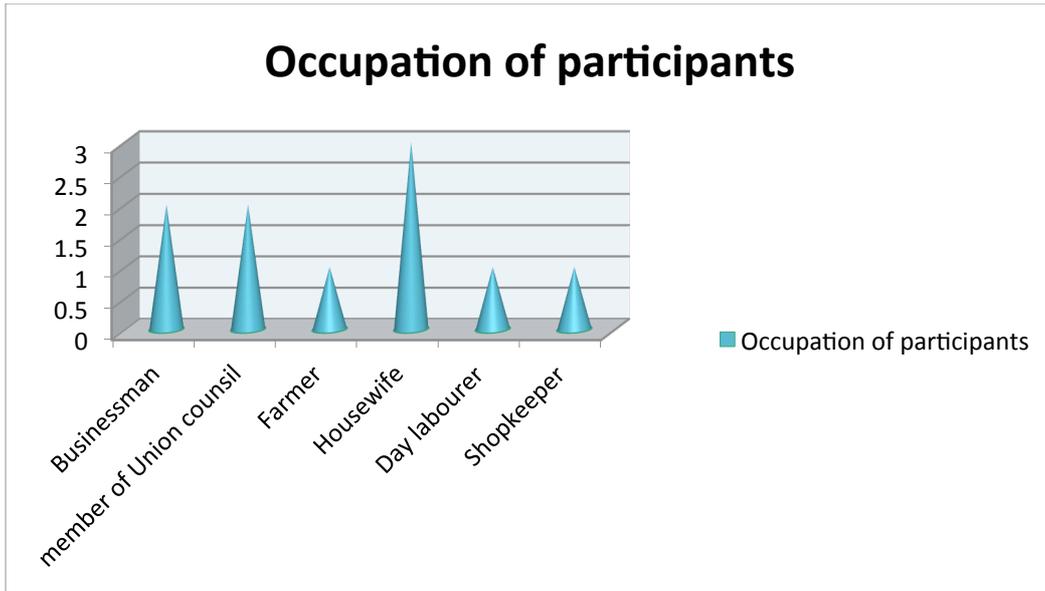


Figure 2: Occupation of the participants.

The participants came from a vibrant age group too. But mostly people were aged more than 30 year old. The average age of the participants were 40+, this ensured that they had long time exercise about border and border related violence.

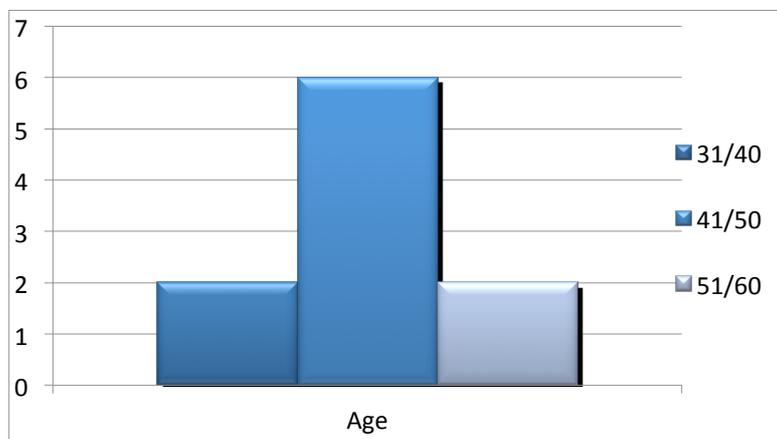


Figure 3: Age of the participants

Most of the participant lives very close to the border, and so they are very much aware about the border related security measures that are taken at border, also they can see the day to day task that happen at the border.

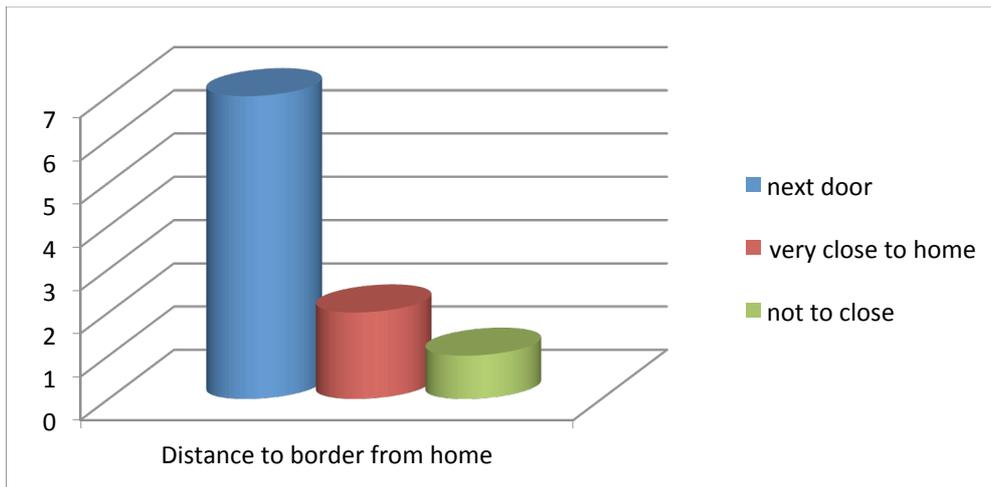


Figure 4: distance from border from home

Another thing that I tried to ensure is that the participants were both those who had visited India and those who had not. I ensured that the survey was not biased and I had the point of view of those who visited vi-a-vi those who did not. While those who have visited India had practical experience in crossing border. Those who did not are not completely ignorant about the issue. Many of the participants who did not visit India have family members who are victims of Border violence. Including them as participants ensured the representation of experience of people who did not have to resort to visit to India for their livelihood. Their point of view provided important input into what should be done to make sure there was less illegal border crossing. My survey showed that most of the participants had visited India, either regularly or many times. None of these people actually had any kind of passport of visa which means they did pass into India illegally.

3.2 Secondary data:

Books, newspaper articles and Webpages were the source of secondary data in this research. The use of Webpages was prominent because it provided access to the newspaper articles and views of experts in India. This was important to keep a balanced view of the paper. For the theory part, various books and journal articles were used. I also used the documents and survey reports published by various Bangladeshi NGOs, who work on the issue. Odhikar and Ain O Shalish Kendra are most prominent of them. These articles have focused on various sides of the issue, many of them showed this issue as a part of the major India-Bangladesh nexus. On the other hand some focused on the issue itself. The India's point of view on the issue was also reflected in those articles. A major weakness of secondary articles is that there is serious lack of scholarly article on the issue. The articles by Bangladeshi NGOs takes an advocacy perspective, and more focused on the victims experience and the brutality of BSF. While the articles Written by most Indian writers seem to justify the BSF's action. There is serious lack of literature that views the issue in a non-biased way. I also reviewed article titled

Chapter Four

4. Concepts and Theoretical framework

4.1 Bangladesh India border and border issues:

Bangladesh and India share a very long border of 3,909 kilometer. Currently, it is the 5th largest border in the world. Geographically Bangladesh is surrounded by India on three sides. The west, north and most of the east side of Bangladesh are surrounded by India. Bangladesh and India also share a very long maritime boundary.

Historically the border was arbitrarily drawn by the British government when the Indian subcontinent was divided into two sovereign countries- India and Pakistan. The current land of Bangladesh was called east Bengal/ East Pakistan. During the period of 1947-71 the East Pakistan was in constant fear of being conquered by India due to the hostile relation between Pakistan and India. However, the Indian side proved to be very friendly towards Bangladesh and those fears were never realized. Although the two states were constantly fighting in the Kashmir frontier, the border of East Pakistan stayed peaceful and quite. During the 9 month long civil war between the East Pakistan and West Pakistan in 1971, more than 1 million people crossed the borders and took refuge in the Indian state of west Bengal in fear of persecution. India had opened the borders and provided the much-needed refuge to east Pakistani refugees. After the end of war and the birth of Bangladesh, India and Bangladesh begin a fresh start with vows of friendship.

There are several issues that came forward while discussing the India- Bangladesh border. Some of the most prominent of them are border demarcation, exchange of enclaves; maritime boundary etc. again being situated in middle of south Asia and south East Asia, Bangladesh is also a very lucrative location for smugglers. The

Bangladesh India border is very common route for drug smuggling, human trafficking, gold smuggling and cattle smuggling. The Indian authority often also has accused that terrorist has used the land to Bangladesh to attack on India. On the other hand, there are also the issue illegal Bangladeshi migrants (alleged). Both the BSF and the Border guards of Bangladesh try to control these crimes and take various measures. Sometimes the two forces undertake joint operation in order to control them. These issues are not easy to solve. The human traffickers, drug dealers and gold smugglers usually work in large cartels and do not get caught. There are also allegations of the high ranked officers and politicians being involved with those crimes resulting very inactivity of crime control. The terrain of India Bangladesh is also highly versatile, ranging from hilly areas in the northeast to plain terrains in west. There is also a large number of rivers and riverbeds, also in the southeast remains the largest mangrove jungle in the world, sunder bans. So, guarding the border is not easy. Also the people living in the border area are very poor and are very easily persuaded to traffic anything for a little amount of money. That makes it even easier for the smugglers to recruit people without getting caught themselves.

4.2 Border violence:

There is no universally agreed definition of border violence. Border violence refers to any type of violence on the international border between the two countries. This term is used loosely in many newspaper articles and TV reports and refers to exchange of fire between the two border guarding forces, the detention and torture of a personal from one country by the other country's border guards. On the extreme case, this can refer to shooting and killing by the border guards. Border violence is not a very uncommon concept. In the borders of hostile neighbors, border violence becomes a very regular occurrence. Mexico-U.S.A border, India-Bangladesh border and borders of the various African nations are well known for their border violence. On the other hand, "border spillover violence" is referred as "deliberate, planned attacks by the cartels on US assets, including civilian, military, or law enforcement officials, innocent US citizens, or physical institutions such as government buildings, consulates, or businesses. This definition does not include trafficker on trafficker

violence, whether perpetrated in Mexico or the US.”²⁶ Controlling the border spillover violence has been long used by border guarding agency as logic for border violence. Apart from that the main causes behind border violence are identified as illegal migration, drug trafficking, smuggling etc. On the other hand the reluctance of border guards to abide by the laws and lack of accountability and negligence of the political government has also been identified as some serious cause of border violence. For example, according to Human Rights Watch, India’s BSF have long been implicated in numerous cases of indiscriminate use of force, arbitrary detention, torture, and killings near the 4,000km border, without adequate investigation or punishment.²⁷ On the other hand in the case on U.S.A- Mexico border, Al- Jazeera argues that “None of these cases have led to any known disciplinary action or criminal charges against the border police, and US courts have rejected claims made by victims’ families, asserting that Mexican citizens do not have the same constitutional protections as US citizens - effectively giving the agents carte blanche to act with impunity”²⁸

4.3 Cattle trade:

Cattle trade or smuggling is one of the most important factors in border killing at India Bangladesh border. Between Bangladesh and India, cattle trade turns into cattle smugglings as trading cattle is illegal in India. In the Bangladesh India border region there is a huge market of cattle. Bangladesh has \$500 million market for cattle, which cannot be served by the domestic supply alone. Moreover during the holy occasion of Eid-ul-Azha the demand of cattle increases many folds. The majority of the populations in Bangladesh are Muslims and they are required to sacrifice cattle in

²⁶Kevin L. Perkins and Anthony P. Placido, U.S. Senate Caucus on International Narcotics Control, Washington, DC, May 5, 2010, accessed on 25-08-2014, <http://www.fbi.gov/news/testimony/drug-trafficking-violence-in-mexico-im...>

²⁷<http://www.hrw.org/news/2012/01/30/india-prosecute-security-forces-torture>, accessed on 28-08-2014.

²⁸<http://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/faultlines/2013/09/20139692857643914.html> accessed on 20-08-2014.

name of the almighty. Due to that a large number of cattle are slaughtered on the occasion. This demand is fulfilled by the Indian cattle supplies. This makes the cattle trading a lucrative job for Indians cattle farmers and Bangladeshi cattle traders. An estimated 1.5 million cows are moved across the border each year.²⁹

4.4 Theoretical understanding:

The concept of indiscriminate border killing is a very rare incident in the modern history. Thus there are limited numbers of scholarly articles that look at it from theoretical perspective. My observation is that high number of articles is focused on individual incidents. To account for this lack of literature, I have looked on the articles about border militarization. Combining the knowledge of those literatures with the news reports I concluded that border killing could be described from constructivist point of View. For Wendt, Constructivism is a structural theory of the international system that makes the following core claims: (1) states are the principal units of analysis for international political theory; (2) the key structures in the states system are intersubjective rather than material; and (3) state identities and interests are in important part constructed by these social structures, rather than given exogenously to the system by human nature [as neorealist maintain] or domestic politics [as neoliberals favor].³⁰ Realism is a theory that solely focuses on the nature of state as an actor and as result loses sight of individual sufferings and actions which is of paramount importance in my research. Moreover, traditional realist tools of analysis like state interest, balance of power and hegemony cannot explain the increased number of border violence in Bangladesh-India border when compared to that of India-Pakistan and India –Nepal.

²⁹ Bhowmick N.(2012). "Border Violence Tests Fragile Peace on India-Bangladesh Frontier", *Time*, available at [Border Violence Tests Fragile Peace on India-Bangladesh Frontier _ TIME.com.htm](#), accessed on 20-08-2014

³⁰ . Alexander Wendt, "Collective Identity Formation and the International State," *American Political Science Review* 88 (1994): 385; Also for a critical explanation of Neoliberals' emphasis on domestic politics in theorizing state interests, see Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 35.

Constructivism has returned international scholars to the foundational questions, including the nature of state and the concepts of sovereignty and citizenship. The major theoretical proposition that all constructivists subscribe to is that state behaviors shaped by elite beliefs, identities, and social norms.³¹ Other than Realism, Constructivist eschews structure. One of the most well-known constructivist theorists, Alexander Wendt, argues that political structure, whether of anarchy or material capabilities, explains nothing.³² It tells us little about state behavior. 'It does not predict whether two states will be friends and foes, will recognize each other's sovereignty, will have dynastic ties, will have revisionist or status quo powers, and so on.'³³ What we need to know is identity, and identities change by engaging in cooperative behavior and learning. Whether the system is anarchic depends on the distribution of identities, not the distribution of military capabilities, as the realist would have us believe. If the state identifies with itself, then the system may be anarchic. If the state identifies with others, then there is no anarchy.

In the light of Constructivism, Bangladesh-India relations are analyzed as conflict between two identities. Strong India in one hand and the state sovereignty on the other. Strong India identity has been forged historically by numerous bilateral contacts between Bangladesh and India. In most of the treaty, India dictates because Bangladesh is decidedly inferior to India in most categories of power.

Constructivism is a broad approach that encompasses "Weberian interpretative sociology, Symbolic Interactionism, variants of Marxism, Weberian institutionalism, post-structuralism(s) and hermeneutics."³⁴ Despite its vast nature, constructivism has been highly popular as an IR theory. Constructivism emerged as a result of the reconfiguration of the study of international relations at the end of 1st world war. Constructivism critic the traditional rational theories as they take state and society as for granted. Constructivists try to go beyond description to an understanding of

³¹ .Karen A. Mingst "Essentials of International Relations " (Second Edition), university of Kentucky;p-76

³² .ibid

³³ . Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy is What States Make of It: the Social Construction of Power Politics" in International Organization (46:2, Spring 1992), p.396. For a more complete analysis, see Alexander Wendt, Social Theory of International Politics. (Cambridge, Eng: Cambridge University Press,1999)

³⁴ Ronen Palan, 'A world of their making: an evaluation of the constructivist critique in International Relations', Review of International Studies, Vol. 26, No. 4, 2000, pp. 575-598, p. 576. Available at <http://sro.sussex.ac.uk/12407/1/S0260210500005751a.pdf> retrived on 26-09-14

constitution of things in order to explain how they behave and what causes political outcomes.³⁵ It emphasizes on empirical analysis. Although there are many variants of constructivism there are three core arguments of constructivism. They are,

1. Constructivists hold that normative or ideational structures are just as important as material structures.
2. Identities is important because identities inform interests and, in turn, actions.
3. Constructivists contend that agents and structures are mutually constituted.³⁶

The major advantage of this constructivist approach is that it helps us to grasp the constantly changing interplay between territorial, functional, and symbolic borders with a single, internally consistent theoretical framework.³⁷ This nature is highly significant for my research as I attempt to look at how states (India and Bangladesh) conceive border and how the local people conceive them. And I believe that it is the difference between these perceived concepts that creates the problem of border violence in Bangladesh-India border. The people living in the border areas of Bangladesh do not conceive the territorial border between them as functional ones. On the other hand for the border security guards, who believe that territorial borders should be the functional ones, anyone who crosses the border is doing an offense and thus can be punished.

Much of the constructivist work is based on how identities are created conceived. The concept of “self” and “Other” is also very important. States base their own identity on basis of the concept of “others”. For Wendt, interests and identities of actors emerge only in an interactive process and the nature of the system- Hobbesian, Lockean or Kantian- is determined by a history of interaction.³⁸

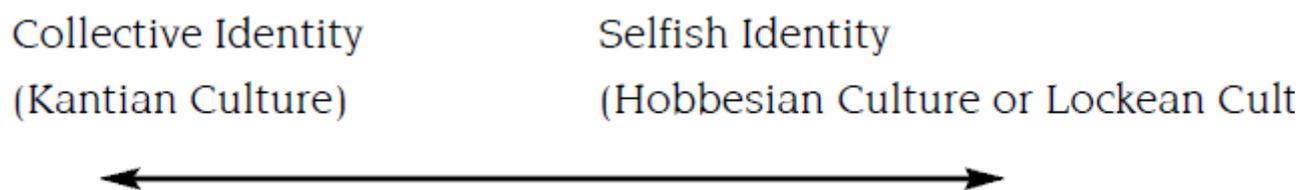
³⁵ Earl Conteh-Morgan,(2004) “ Peace-building and Human Security: A Constructivist Perspective”, *Conflict and Human Security: A Search for New Approaches of Peace-building*, available at http://ir.lib.hiroshima-u.ac.jp/metadb/up/kiyo/ipshu_en/ipshu_en_19.pdf, retrieved on 29-09-2014

³⁶ Scott Burchill, Andrew Linklater, Richard Devetak, Jack Donnelly, Matthew Paterson, Christian Reus-Smit and Jacqui True,(2005) “*Theories of International Relations*” PALGRAVE MACMILLAN , new York , pp. 196-197 .

³⁷Bastian Sendhardt, (2013) “A Theoretical Approach to the EU/Polish-Ukrainian Border as a Multi-dimensional Phenomenon” Arnaud Lechevalier, Jan Wielgohs (eds.) “Borders and Border Regions in Europe: Changes, Challenges and Chances” available at <http://www.transcript-verlag.de/media/pdf/5c131c53481654209683011561d2f361.pdf>. retrieved on 04-10-2014

³⁸Yücel BOZDA/LIO/LU, (2007), “Constructivism and Identity Formation: An Interactive Approach”, *Uluslararası Hukuk ve Politika*, available at <http://www.usak.org.tr/dosyalar/dergi/3abv06hKYpVj1fK71jEi4AP2g6ctBc.pdf>, retrieved at 29-09-14.

Figure I: Identity Continuum



(Source: Constructivism and Identity Formation: An Interactive Approach)

As Figure shows, Hobbesian culture occurs when states compose “Other” as enemy and does not recognize its right to exist and will not willingly limit their violence toward other.³⁹ The Lockean culture, rivals are expected to respect to each other’s sovereignty and their right to exist.⁴⁰ Finally, in the Kantian culture, states identify with each other positively and non-violence and team play are the norm.⁴¹

To apply this to my research, I go back to the history of Indian subcontinent. Bangladesh was historically a part of Indian subcontinent. The whole Bengal, Orissa and Bihar were under one province of British India. For executive purposes the British tried to divide the province in 1905 to make ruling easier for them. While Muslims supported this action, the Kolkata’s elite Hindu society did not support it, due to the fear of losing dominant position in this region. This is known as the “Bengal partisan movement” in the history of subcontinent. Due to the severe opposition of the Kolkata elite and congress support to the movement, the British government had to unify Bengal again it 1911. But this movement made clear that the Hindus and Muslims of the region had different interests and started the negative interaction between the two communities. In 1947, when two states emerged independent based on their religious identity, the difference of the two communities was more emphasized and it further intensified the negative interaction. Today, Bangladesh represents the Muslim identity, which is considered as the “others” by Indians. The national interest of the two nations is still shaped by their “Hindu” or

³⁹ ibid

⁴⁰ ibid

⁴¹ ibid

“Muslim” identity. As the historical interaction confirms a “Hobbesian culture” in this region and thus the border violence can be explained.

4.5 Constructivism and Securitization:

As a theoretical framework, constructivism generally depicts how state relationships are socially constructed. While doing so, constructivists emphasize both ideational and discursive factors such as ideas, norms, and identities and how they impact upon decision-making. In other words, the rules of International society develop from ideas that members, i.e., States have about each other and how they think it should be. It is their ideas that shape and determine their interests. Therefore, when a discourse is created as a ‘perceived’ threat to security. It might stay as so at the ideational level. A real occurrence might justify the idea as a reality by making a causal connection between the ‘idea’ and the ‘real’ (i.e. material) incident to securitize it as a ‘real’ issue. In other words, securitization takes place by making a synthesis between intangible and tangible elements.

The concept of securitization, i.e.-providing an intersubjective understanding of ‘what is or what is not’ an existential threat by its utterance, was first formulated by Ole Weaver and later supplemented by Barry Buzan.⁴² This school of scholarship is usually known as the Copenhagen School. The basic concept concerns how an issue is constructed as an existential threat by attaching a certain political connotation to it. In the words of securitization experts, ‘In security discourse, an issue is dramatized and presented as an issue of supreme priority; thus, by labeling it as security, an agent claims a need for and a right to treat it by extraordinary means.’⁴³ An imagined threat arising from Border-Crossing was ideationally created over time. This can be regarded as a classic case of securitization as it was created by both speech acts (gestures) and real posture. It must be added here that this construction was and is still enhanced by *illegal border crossing people* who specifically identified as the ‘intruders’ as enemy.

⁴² .Barry Buzan, Ole Weaver, Jaap de Wilde, Security : A New Framework for Analysis, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998,p-26

⁴³ .Barry Buzan, ole Waever, Jaap de Wilde, security : A New Framework for Analysis, Lynne Rienner Publishers,1998,p-26

4.6 Issues of Prestige and Honor:

Constructivism allows for the way changes in the perception and outlook of a state also affect its identity and consequently its interests as well. Thus identity stands as a source of interests, and these interests relate to either the promotion of a newfound identity or the preservation and reinforcement of an existing identity. In particular, a state that wishes to assume a new identity will focus its interests on gaining acceptance and recognition because recognition by its fellow sovereign begins to confirm its identity. Ringmar's 'recognition game' is therefore the basic game for a state because it is fundamentally tied to the survival of the state.

Nothing is more unacceptable than being denied recognition or being non-recognized and/or misrecognized by one's peers. Honneth has argued that misrecognition and/or non-recognition at the level of the self can lead to social conflict. He insists that "the 'political representatives' of a country have a moral obligation to 'respect and honor' other nations according to their own self-image."⁴⁴

Constructivist theorists like Wendt and Ringmar take this argument to the level of interpreting state actions and behaviors. They argue that the desire for recognition is basic to the 'nature' of the state and thus, identity needs lead to the formation of interests in the first place. This is because an opponent is not necessarily viewed in negative terms when first encountered. Rather, interaction determines what kind of opponent is created. Wendt argues that the meeting of 'alter' and 'ego' need not lead towards anarchy when both are unknown to each other. Mercer, however, although he agrees that cognitions and desire always drive towards achieving a *positive social identity*; considers that this drive might generate competition in the social sphere even on first encounters.⁴⁵ This competition will manifest according to which aspects of

⁴⁴ . Volker Heins, "The Global politics of Recognition" in Shane O'Neil and Nicholas H. Smith (eds.) *Recognition Theory as Social Research: Investigating the Dynamics of Social Conflict*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2012, p-223

⁴⁵ .Jonathan Mercer, "Anarchy and identity", *International Organization*, Vol.49, Issue 2, Spring 1995, p-247

identity are considered under threat. Thus a state's struggle for recognition may manifest as centered around religion, ethnicity or language, but will in essence be a struggle to establish a unique and coherent identity, just as it is for persons or social groups. States trying to establish their own uniqueness will consciously attempt to project an identity that manifests a clear difference from other states in their respective struggles for recognition.

However, constructivism also opens the possibility that changes in the social relations among states could transform the anarchical system into something that is not anarchic (Wendt 1999, 307-8). The key concept here is authority. Authority refers to a relation of legitimated power (Ruggie, 65; Barnett and Finnemore 2004, chapter 1; Hurd 2007b). It creates a social hierarchy within which subordinates feel an obligation to follow the directives of the authoritative actor. To a somewhat, India is trying to establish itself as authoritative actor in South Asian context; whereas Bangladesh feels subordinate towards India.

Chapter Five

5.Results and Analysis

5.1 Looking deeper into illegal intrusion in India and Border killing:

The results of the fieldwork are truly eye opening. It has been able to indicate too many factors that were not previously noted in the conventional literature. The results have also shown that neither the claims of the Bangladeshi official, nor those of the Indian officials are completely true. There are aspects of the issue that simply cannot be explained by the newspaper reports; rather there are realities that are far more vivid than imaginable from outside.

The reason that compels Bangladeshi people to visit to India is not one-dimensional as it looks from the newspaper articles. One of the main reasons of visiting India, particularly for females is to work in India as housemaids. This reason has never been included in the traditional literatures about Bangladesh-India border. The participants have also have responded truthfully in saying that they went to India for smuggling “saris”(a type of Bangladeshi attire) or worked for smuggling cattle. This result has also confirmed that there are indeed incidents of illegal trade and smuggling going in the border areas and the people from bordering villages are who are involved in them.

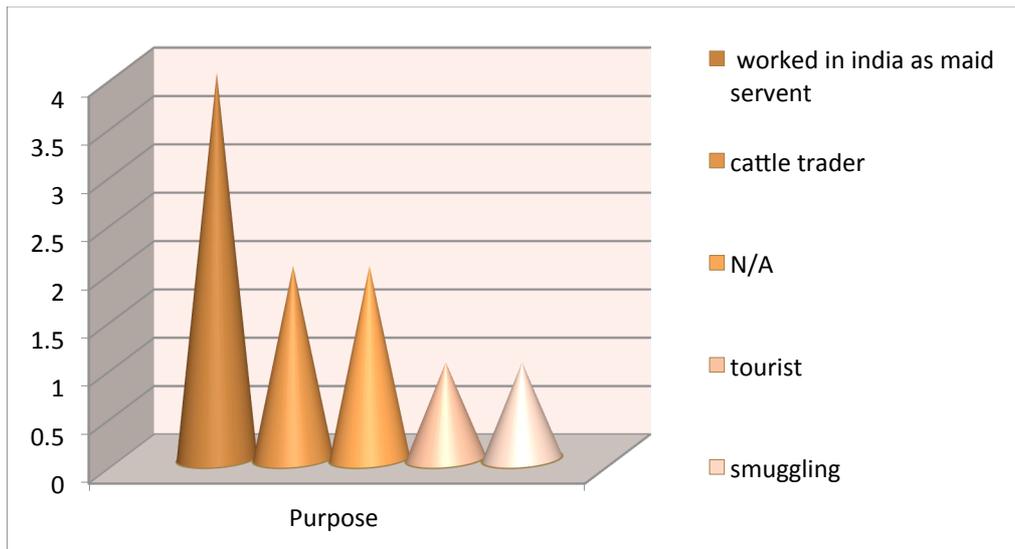


Figure 6: Participants purpose of visiting India

This part of result and analysis focuses on how people get inside the India, and how BSF handles the situation, and other main issue relating to border conflict. In has provided some real insight about what goes on in the border area, the dynamics between the two border guarding forces, and the role that Government and NGO play in such cases. In many aspects the results have been shocking but in other instances, they have actually confirmed our speculations.

5.2 BSF and Bangladeshis: - A twisted relationship:

The first question I asked the participants is that if they have had any problems with the BSF and if they had how they handled it. A major part of the participants have actually faced problems from BSF. Some participants have said that they were “picked up” by BSF because he was a cattle smuggling across while another said BSF beat up him because he could not provide enough bribe. A majority of the participants have also admitted that they have bribed BSF to safely get inside India. Some of the participants have said that “managed” both border patrolling forces. While another part of participants said they could cross border without getting noticed by either BSF or Bangladeshi border patrols. This result provided an important insight about the reasons of continuous border killing. Bribery becomes a major reason form

Border torture, and this finding supports the idea proposed by Bangladeshi NGOs that BSF is indeed corrupt in many cases and does torture people when they do not get enough bribe.

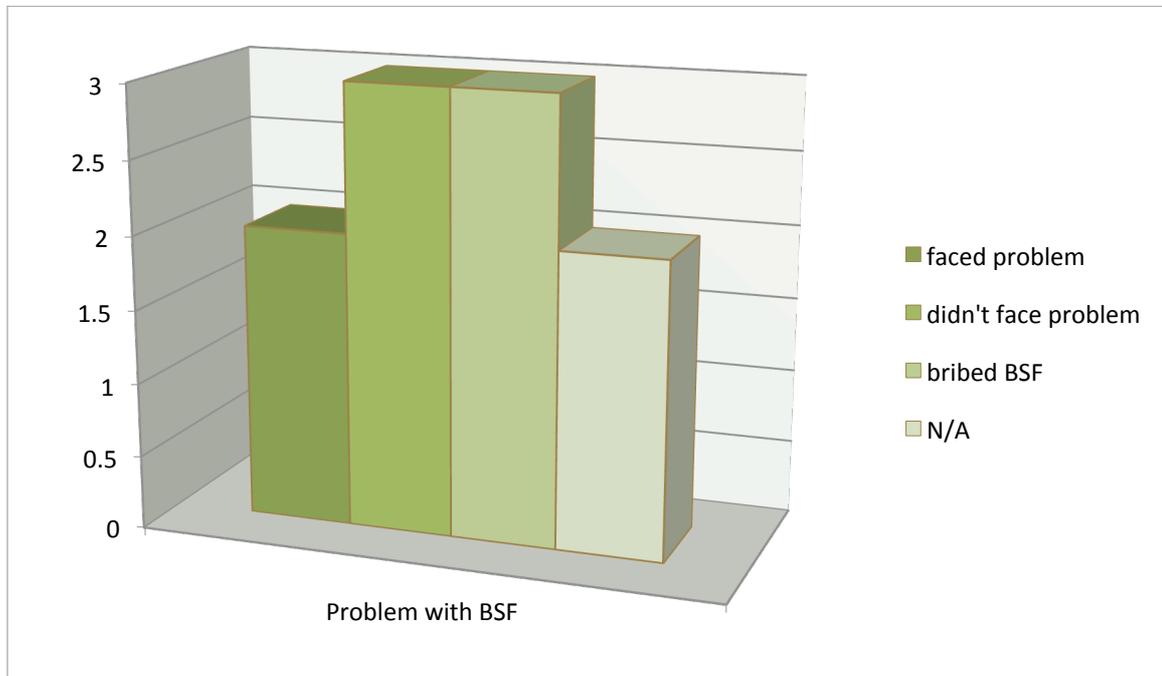


Figure 7: participant's experience with BSF.

Case study:

Masum(not real name) was a Bangladeshi boy living near the ballarhat border in Phulbariupzilla. He belonged to poor family and made his by illegally intruding in India a helping in cattle smuggling. He never was in charge of the trade; he was simply the handler, who would bring the cattle from India to Bangladesh. Upon such a trip, he got shot by the BSF and was killed on the spot. Her aunt admitted that what he did is illegal, but also said that he had no other means to survive and earn his livelihood. While asked that what the reaction of the Bangladeshi border patrol was, she said that they merely held a flag meeting with the BSF. Moreover, no other NGO or government took any measure to help the family get any justice or financial help.

Case study : Felani khatun



Picture : Felani's body hanging from fence in India-Bangladesh Border

(source: bdnews24.com)

Felani Khatun, a 15 year old [Bangladeshi](#) girl, was shot and killed by India's [Border Security Force](#) (BSF) on 7 January 2011, at [India-Bangladesh](#) border. She used to be a housemaid in India, and she was returning to Bangladesh because her father had arranged her marriage. On the way of returning to Bangladesh, she was shot by BSF. The BSF men handed over the body of Felani on January 8. After investigation, the BSF submitted the charge sheet against its constable Amiya Ghosh who shot the girl. On August 19, 2013, the special court constituted by the BSF had acquitted Amiya Ghosh from the charge. On September 22, the case was reopened due to huge criticism by the media and NGO. Felani is the only victim of Border violence in India-Bangladesh border, for whom BSF has opened a case.

widespread border violence to prove India's supremacy over Bangladesh.

Then I simply asked the participants that if innocent people, people who are merely crossing the border without smuggling or are not really crossing border at all. Half of the participants said that they have actually known incidents where innocent people, are often “picked up” by the BSF and get tortured, beaten up. Another significant percentage accused BSF of wrongly killing people. Only 20% said that they have never heard of any one innocent getting tortured by BSF. The important point here is “guilty” detonates people who were involved in Cattle or other goods smuggling. These people have never been faced any legal procedure, all they get is some sort of execution style “vigilante” justice from the BSF.



Figure 8: BSF attack on innocent people

This has actually provided us ground evidence that indeed Bangladeshi people have a certain “image” of India in their minds, where the Indian “others” are seen as a dominant hegemonic power, which is forcefully inserting its dominance over Bangladesh. Another interesting point is that many of the participants have identified inability of proving enough bribes (to BSF) as a reason for BSF’s violence.

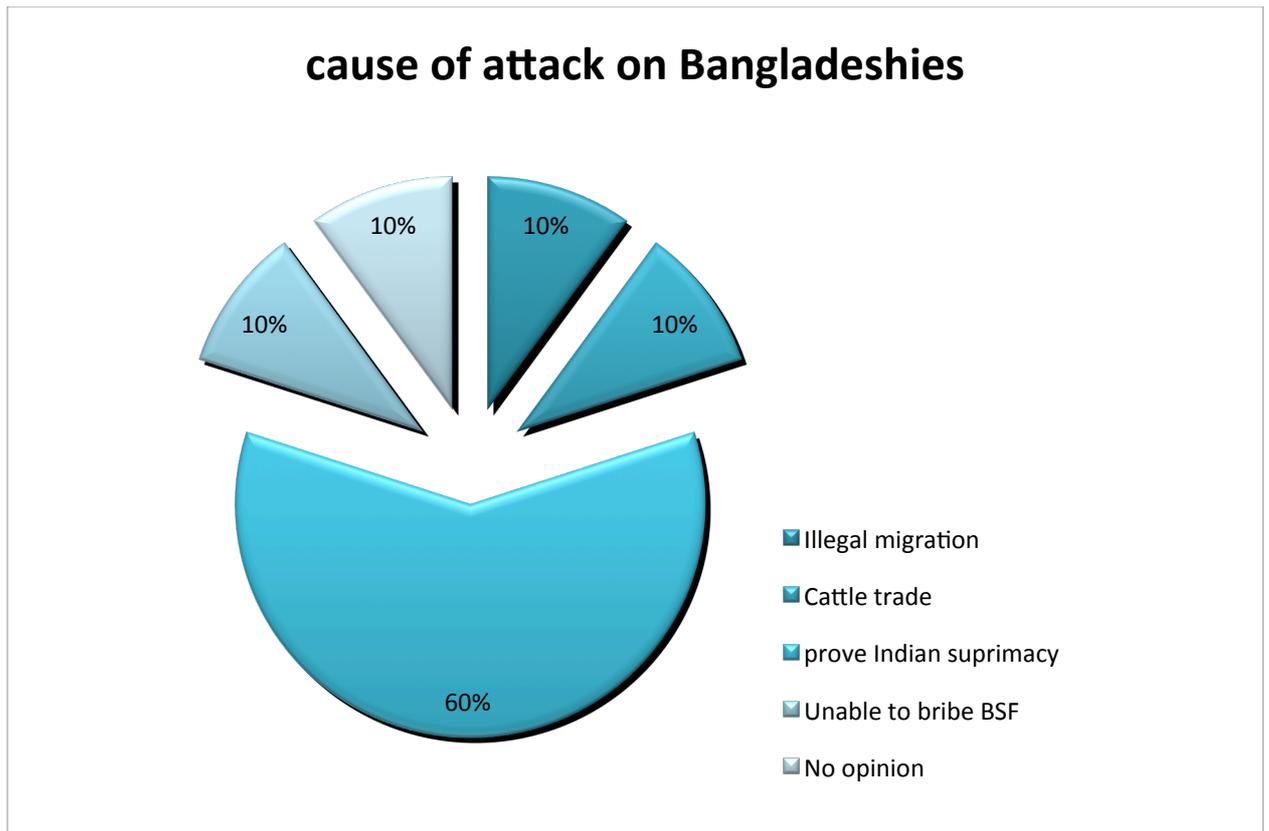


Figure 9: Cause of Border violence.

5.3 Bangladeshi Border Guards: silent observers?

I asked the participants about the role that the Bangladeshi border patrol played in the cases of border violence. Most dominant of the responses was that they simply overlook the crime. While another significant percentage said Bangladeshi border guards actually took, bribe and help in the smuggling. Another 29% said that they had actually took some actions, but in most cases these were when any Bangladeshi citizen was shot dead, and the action was simply to hold a flag meeting with the BSF, other than that they failed to help Bangladeshi citizens. These results have shown that there are indeed corruption inside the force and has reflected the inability on Bangladeshi part to take ineffective actions. This is also part of search for answer about what caused the continuous border killing. The Bangladeshi border guards are supposed to protect its people and stop illegal affairs. However, in reality it has failed to do both. Rather, it has become corrupted and a facilitator of illegal trade, which is causing serious image crisis for Bangladesh.

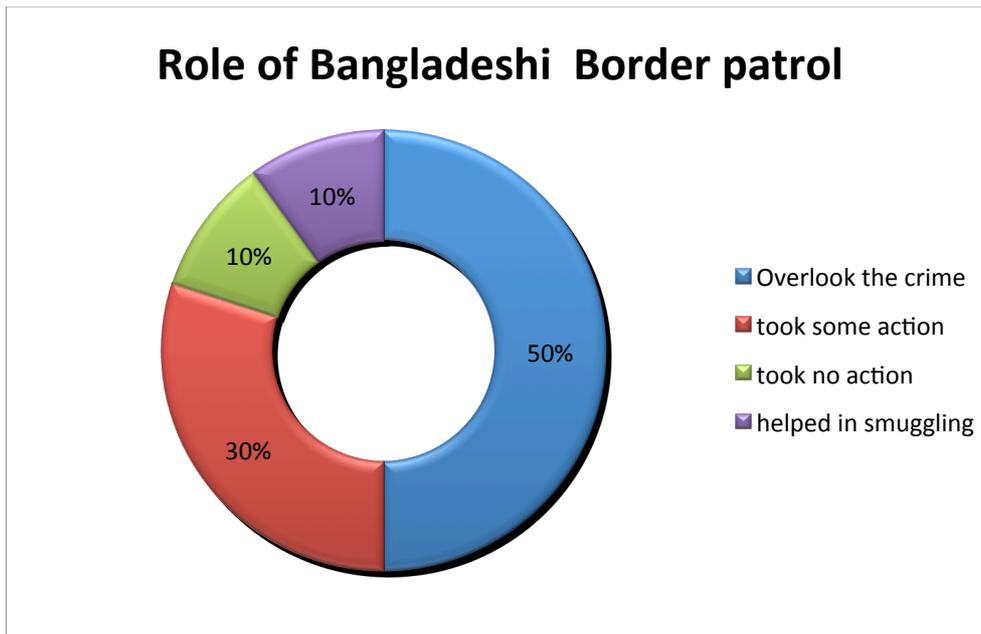


Figure 10: role of Bangladeshi Border patrol in border violence.

5.4 NGOs on ground: not so active:

The websites of Bangladeshi NGOs are full of statistics and articles on Border killing. They work as the main voice against these tortures and play important role in constituting the image of India and BSF. However, their role in the ground is not that active. Participants were also asked if they had got any help from government of NGOs after falling victim to border violence. Most of the participants said that they had not gotten from government and NGO. Some participants said that NGO member have only interviewed them, but did not provide any help. One of the victim's father (who was killed, and trial is ongoing) said that many of the NGO's helped him initially to set up the trail, but now he had only few supporters. This shows that although NGOs claim to work at the issue, most of their efforts do not focus on what the needs of the victims. Rather much of their work is only limited to advocacy, which does not bring in any immediate change to the lives of the victims, much to their dismay. Although NGOs have a big role in keeping the border killing issue in lime light and contracting an image of BSF in national and International area, few are actually focusing on the victims and their needs. The poor people of the bordering village remain as neglected as ever, leaving them no opportunity as to cross the border again.

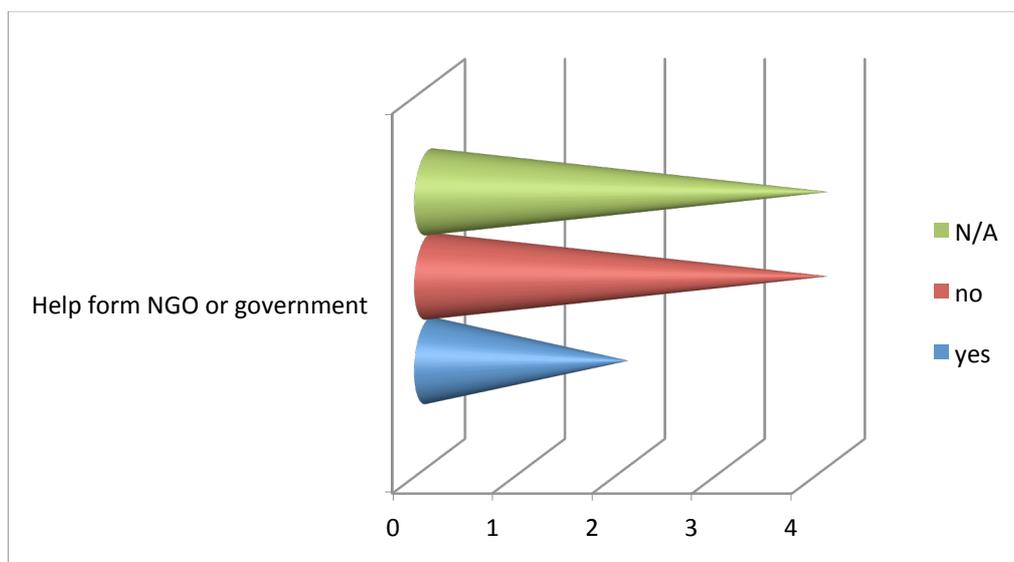


Figure 11: help from NGO or government agencies

5.5 Impact on Bangladesh-India Relations:

Bangladesh and India, being neighbors have a huge array of disputes. From water to border, from building floodgates to Islands, there is vast number of issues that the two countries do not agree on. The border is one of the main issues of dispute. There are several issues regarding border, demarcation, the change of enclaves, maritime boundary and last but not least border killing. The issue of border killing was not a man problem historically, a people have been crossing border ford decades. And also contrary to popular belief, cattle trading is not the only reason people cross border. So, why has border killing increased in past few years? The question can be answered if we look in to Bangladesh-India relations on a whole. The border killing has increased as the bilateral relation between the two countries hut heard roles. On the other hand, border killing has definitely made India Bangladesh relations source. If we look in to the newspaper reports, we see that the issue of border killing only came into the limelight after 2011, before that the number of border killing was regular, but it has increased in the past few years.

5.6 Possible way out:

When I asked the participants what could be a way out of this situation, most of the participants said that bilateral talks at high position of the both governments should be the answer. Other solutions included taking legal actions against BSF (by Indian Government) and legalize border trade. The solutions that were prescribed show variety of solution. Although most of the participants thought that high-level talks could stop border killing, it is the other suggested measures that seemed more legit to me. Legalized border trade can surly do more to solve the problem of border killing. This way it will also be easier for BSF to focus on smugglers, and it will save lives of many innocent Bangladeshi cattle handlers who cross the border only to search a good income.

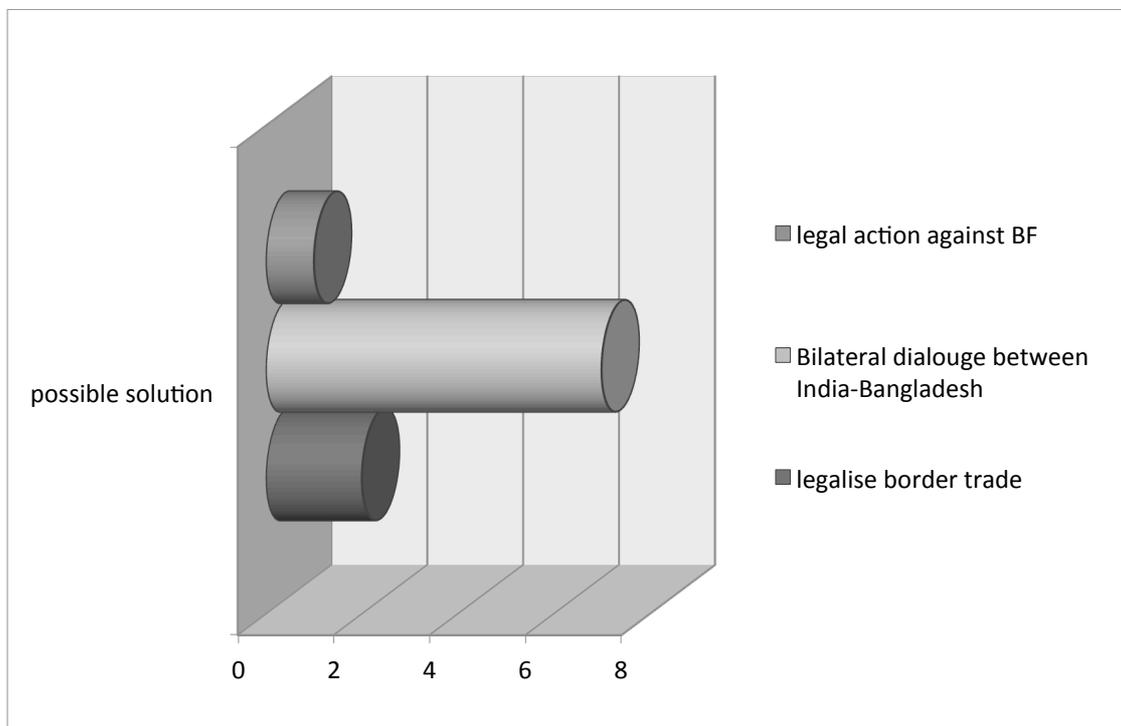


Figure 12: possible solution to border violence

5.7 Recommendations:

- Investigate and prosecute all allegations of grave human rights violations by the Border security Force (BSF) and Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) through an independent body under the auspices of United Nations.
- The global body United Nations may send strong signal to strong message to the Border Security Force (BSF) that the perpetrators of grave human rights violations will be held to account and that all members of the security forces must fully cooperate with investigations. Those who fail to do so should face appropriate sanctions such as suspension or dismissal.
- Publicly order the BSF and other security forces to abide by the United Nations Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials. This requires officials to apply, as far as possible, non-violent means before resorting to the use of force and firearms. Even in self-defense, intentional lethal use of firearms may only be made when strictly unavoidable in order to protect life. International law also requires security forces to give a clear warning of their intent to use firearms, and sufficient time to surrender. (Adapted from bangladesh_hr_2010_trigger_happy.pdf)
- Indian Police must register complaints against the BSF in cases of abuses against Bangladeshi nationals. It is the responsibility of the BSF internal courts to deal with abuses by the BSF that the Indian police should not refuse on the grounds.
- BSF must adhere to guidelines that are down by the National Human Rights Commission to investigate all cases of deaths during security operations.
- Finally Establishing an independent and impartial commission of inquiry into serious violations of international human rights law is a must need. This inquiry should invite both Indian and Bangladeshi nationals to submit evidence and bring complaints. The inquiry should be time bound and transparent, and should have the ability to provide protection to witnesses.

Chapter Six

6. Concluding remarks:

Border killing has become a very large problem for Bangladesh. The newspaper reports show that over 100 people have been shot at the India Bangladesh Border since 2000. Despite of the continuous concerns voiced by Bangladesh and the international human rights groups; Indian government has done little to solve the issue. The issue also has very little coverage in the Indian media, so there isn't much chance of a growing public support in India to stop this problem.

On the other hand, the Bangladeshi media has taken the issue with high priority. This has caused a mass awareness about the brutal behavior of the Indian border guards, and thus has created a sense of hatred in Bangladesh people against India. In the modern days, the diplomacy is not confined within the high-leveled officials of the governments. People to people contact are also very important. But the behavior of the BSF and the seeming disregard of the Indian officials to the issue make it very hard to believe that India has the best concerns of Bangladesh in mind. This has created an immense pressure on the Bangladeshi government to do something about the issue.

Strong and consistent protest from the Bangladesh side is essential. In this regard, print and electronic media can play a very positive role. Our politicians and policy makers should take individual responsibility for people being killed or injured and use the media to protest so that India gets the real message. Bangladesh can seek judicial action and argue to the International Criminal Court by showing that systematic killing in the border area is a crime against humanity as it is a. We have to take this issue in the international forums so that world can understand what is actually happening here.

Without a doubt, the India-Bangladesh border killing is one of the most prominent bilateral issues for both countries. In this region, without the help of its neighbor's country can prosper economically. On the other hand, in this era of free trade and borderless world, killing people simply for crossing the borders are definitely an out-

of date policy. However, the situation in the India-Bangladesh border is much more complex that it can be predicted from the surface. Cattle trading is not simply the only reason people cross borders nor is killing Bangladeshi people an answer to stopping illegal intrusion. The phenomenon is not simply the rivalry between two nations, thousands of people and their psyche has a lot to do with it too. For hundreds of years Bangladesh and India was part of the same political unit, it is only natural that it will not be changed in some decades. At the same time, it is also true that people around the world are now taking harsher opinion towards migrants, mainly due to the radicalism and economic realities. Many observers feared that in the era of Narendra Modi, Hindu nationalism will raise and the situation in border will be further worsened.

However, we have seen that Modi has actually extended his hand for regional cooperation. This can be a good opportunity for Bangladesh to resolve this issue. Without solving sensitive issues like border killing, no future cooperation can take place. The Bangladesh government should take appropriate measure to make sure that Border killing will not be tolerated. India needs to ensure its border guards transparency too. On the other hand, both governments should also focus on the underlying causes of illegal border intrusion. Trade between the two countries can grow tremendously, only if the government makes the trade easier to conduct. Initiatives like “border Hut” can help. On the other hand, VISA processing should be easier and accessible for all. Only by ensuring such measure can we expect to have better condition in India-Bangladesh border.

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