

Pauperization Process of Monga Community of Northern Bangladesh: A Historical Study and Trend Analysis

Dilara Zahid*

Abstract: Bangladesh is stigmatized as poverty prone country due to some pocket area where the growth of development is not similar to the rest of the country. Some districts under Rangpur division faces chronic poverty and hunger locally known as Monga from the time immemorial. This article tries to address the pauperization process of the community by compiling historical facts. Finally to discover how does a lagging community emerging herself through her own strength, policy makers` and different stakeholders` initiatives in this 21st century.

Key Words: Pauperization Process; Chronic Poverty; Monga; Marginalized People; Extreme Poor

Introduction

The Bengali word, 'Monga' was derived from Hindi language "Mehenga" meaning "expensive" which indicates higher price of food, poverty and hunger. In Bengali, *Monga* is an indicator of seasonal and chronic food shortage which prevails in some North-Western districts, particularly in Gaibanda, Rangpur, Kurigram, Lalmanirhat, and Nilphamari districts (major portion of Rangpur division). Some researchers address *Monga* as famine like condition (Nasreen and Kundu, 2008). PRSP¹ is the first government published document that declares *Monga* as a disaster. The mostly used definition of *Monga* was given by the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) which denotes *Monga* as the acute deprivation caused due to the erosion of purchasing power from lack of gainful employment opportunities (Shahjahan, M.2003). It has received further attention by Rahman (1991) who popularizes the term 'Mora Kartik' in his writings to identify the *Monga* prone districts. "Kartik is the Bengali month coinciding with October. Mora refers to hunger and deprivation. Mora Kartik is the bane of the rural poor, the reason of half-meals and debt-bondage" (Rahman, 1995:234). The *Monga* disaster typically results in joblessness for most of the agricultural labours who are landless, marginal farmers and disadvantaged population groups during the period of mid September to mid November (in Bengali months: *Awsin* and *Kartik*). This is just before the period of harvesting *Aman* paddy, which is their main agricultural crop. Mills and factories are very rare in the northern part of Bangladesh. The people in *Monga* prone districts lose purchasing power of daily essentials because of unemployment and lack of alternative income generating opportunities which eventually leads to food crisis.

* Dr. Dilara Zahid, Lecturer, Institute of Disaster Management and Vulnerability Studies, University of Dhaka.

¹ Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper

Monga stricken people in northern region represents 7.0 percent (9.6 million) of the country's total population. Among them 5.3 million live below the poverty line and occupies 11% land of Bangladesh (World bank report 2008 cited in Kabir, 2009; and The Daily Star, 2005 cited in Bithi, 2006). For ages the people of greater Rangpur region have been suffering from seasonal famine, famine like situation or chronic poverty. They have been suffering from malnutrition from generation to generation. Biologically they are inheriting less strength in the one hand, and psychologically they are inheriting a culture of poverty and a sense of helplessness on the other. The current study tries to endeavor the background of *Monga* by describing a historical chronology upto independence of Bangladesh as well as to justify the vulnerability and identify the changing scenario by trend analysis from independence to 2005, just before the development process starts in the area.

Methodology

Information for the present study have been collected using qualitative research method as well as content analysis tools under documentary analysis method. As a method of social research, content analysis aims at a quantitative and/or qualitative analysis of the content of texts, pictures, films and other forms of verbal, visual or written communication. In case of any socio-historical analysis thus the researcher needs to use this method. In this study especially those books and articles have been used where the deprivation scenario of *Monga* areas are depicted. The present study only covers the literature from pre British period to immediate independence of Bangladesh.

To support the documents KII (Key Informant Interview) of four persons and two FGDs (Focus group discussion) have been carried out in Jamdani village under Rahmatpur Union, Pirganj upazila in Rangpur district and in Raoti norail village under Gaibandha zila, Palashbari thana under Betkapa union in mid of 2012. On basis of those information a trend analysis has been prepared.

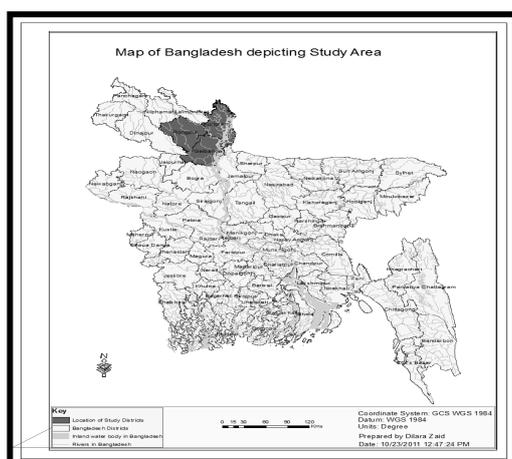


Figure 1

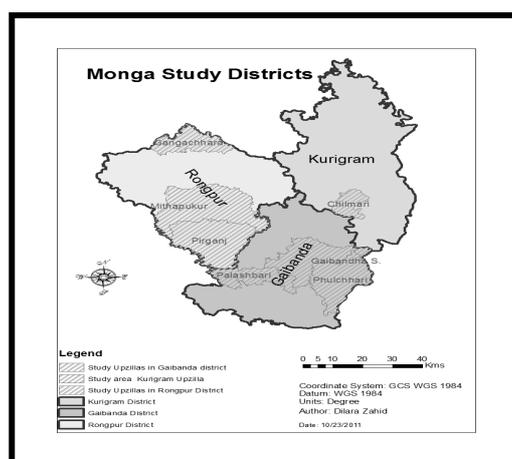


Figure 2



Map 3



Map 4

Map1: Study area within the country map, prepared by author using GIS, Map2: Study districts, prepared by author using GIS

Map3: Study area, source: Banglapedia, Map4: Study area, source: Banglapedia

Objective

The broad objective of the present study is to provide a historical background of the pauperization process of *Monga* in the Northern region of Bangladesh.

Historical Background of *Monga*: Reflecting on the pauperization process

In British period, ‘Rangpur Collectorate’ was established with the total area of 7400 sqm². A large portion of the then Mymensingh district, the western Garo hilly area of the eastern side of the river Shongkosh and Brahmaputra and the large char land of those rivers were under this collectorate. In the course of time gradually the land area of Rangpur reduced and in 1872 it was found 3788 sqm. After that for a long period of 112 years there was no administrative change until 1947 when Patgram thana was included within it, which was earlier the part of Jalpaiguri. In 1984, Rangpur was divided into five districts: Gaibangha, Kurigram, Nilphamari, Lalmonirhat and Rangpur (Maniruzzaman, M. 2000). In January 25th, 2010, Rangpur Division is proclaimed as Bangladesh's seventh division. It is created with greater Rangpur and Dinajpur regions consisting a total of eight districts which are Rangpur, Lalmonirhat, Kurigram, Gaibandha, Nilphamari, Dinajpur, Panchagarh and Thakurgaon with a population of 13 million and 874 thousands (The Financial Express, 2010).

In broad canvas, historical background of *Monga* situation can be classified in four time frame: pre British period, British period, Pakistan period and post Independence Bangladesh period.

² One mile= 1.6 Kilometre

Pre British Period

It is obvious that some sort of hardship was found in the *Monga* prone area from the time immemorial when Shamsuddin (2011) contents the stone scribe of 2nd Century BC, has been discovered in Mahastangar of Bogra. The written notes on it provides some clues of famine like situation as follows: “From the crop storage crops and from the bank hard cash must be supplied for facing famine situation to the tenant which they will return when the ill days is over”. Consistent with this, Arefeen (2011) states, that “in the British period the Kustho³ hospitals were found in *Monga* area which is the symbol of poverty because Kustho disease is related to poverty even in Europe and in this sub continent”.

According to historian Sharat Mitra, the term ‘Rangpur’ was first used in the history book “Riza-us-salatin”. He has set some different views to discover the history behind the the name of Rangpur. One of the opinions is the ancient king Bhagabat established his *Rangmahal* (Place of entertainment) here. Another opinion is more close to the truth. Since ages this area was famous for dying industries. It is found that the area was called as ‘Rang-rej-pur’ which is a *Parshi* term. In Mughal period, before the British came, *Parshi* language was popular and largely used in this area. There are some debates about the history of the name but no doubt that Rangpur was established as a locality in Muslim Era. Prehistorically, Rangpur was known as ‘Rangapur’ as an appendix of ‘Kamrup kingdom’. Beside the ancient river Korotoya and Brahmaputra, many rivers such as Tista, Dharala, Ghagot, Manash, Bangali, Shangkosh, dudhkumar, Fulkumar, Saniazan were flown through Rangpur and made the land fertile. According to historian Firishta, after conquering Bengal by the first Muslim Bengali *Sultan* (king) Ikhtiar Uddin Mohammad Bohktiar Khilji, Rangpur was the first capital during his regime and was known as ‘Darul-Ul-Mulk’. In Mughal period, Rangpur government was consisted with a little portion of Kuchbihar in which total area was 2500 square miles. The char land of the rivers was included in Rangpur, and in British era, its area increased upto 7400 square miles. Again in the course of time the areas were decreasing gradually and in 1872 it was 3788 square miles. In that place, *Shikka* coin of Mughal period, Silver coin of French and the metal coins of Kuchbihar district were available which were also rare in other parts of the country (Maniruzzaman, M. 2000).

In ancient times, the state of India claimed a share of produce from the land from cultivators. The ‘laws of Manu’ mention one sixth of the gross produce at the legitimate share for the King. During the war and other emergencies, it was increased to one fourth. In connection with this, Marx mentions that “the basic form of all phenomenon in the east...is to be found in the fact that no private property in land existed” (A letter from Karl Marx to Fredarik Engles 1853, 2 June, cited in Binoy Ghosh, 1993:5). In India, the land system was run in a traditional way. Her king never enjoyed the ownership of land, and the subordinate feudal lords could not do so. King only gave them the responsibility of revenue collection and to supervise the administrative work. “The king could not

³ kusto is widely used as a skin diseases especially caused for lack of nutrition.

transfer the land, because he was not the owner of land” (Jymini, purbo mimangsha, cited in Binoy Ghosh, 1993:6)... “The duty of king was to punish the perpetrator as well as to protect the people. The king was not the owner of land, rather who cultivate the lands were the owner of land...” (Shayan Acharjo, cited in Binoy Ghosh, 1993:6). The most famous settlement was made under Akbar by his prominent Finance Minister, Todarmal. While fixing the revenue, scientific investigation was made in detail to assess the taxable capacity of different soils. Land was carefully measured and divided into four classes representing different grades of fertility. The Government’s share was fixed as one-third of the gross production. Thus, Mughals did not introduce any fundamental changes in the ancient revenue system but put a coherent system in place of customary and unwritten usages of the Hindu administration.

In the declining days of Mughal Empire, the control over the revenue officials became weak. The flow of income started declining. So, the system called ‘revenue farming’ was introduced in Bengal in the reign of Farukhsiyer (1713-19). Under this system, the revenue farmer paid the government nine-tenth of the whole collection and kept the rest as his collection charges. However, in the later period, the right of collecting land revenue for a pargana or a district was sold by public auction to the highest bidders. Due to this, the exploitation of the cultivators started. The revenue farmers became more dominant. This revenue farming system which started during the Mughal rule in Bengal was soon extended to other parts of the country (Ray, 1975 cited in Khan, 2003). From 2000 B.C (Baiddha era) to until the arrival of British (end of Mughal Period), there were no mentionable change happened in Indian village community (Ghosh 1979).

British Period

After the ‘Polashi war in 1757’, Nawab Mirzafor was bound to collect huge amount of revenue to please the East India Company. He appointed Horeram Sing, the most brutal Clerk to collect revenue from Rangpur, and Debi Singh was appointed by Mr. Goodluck as the contractual revenue collector instead of traditional Zaminder for Rangpur, Dinajpur region. The peasant pauperization process through brutal practice started since then and side by side the ‘Peasant Rebellion’ began under the auspicious of the traditional Zaminder such as Raja Shib Chandra Roy, Joy Durga Debi Chowdhurani (Haque, 2000). After getting the Dewani right of Bengal immediately Lord Clive came to realize that it is very difficult to run the administration, so in 1769 he appointed an English supervisor, John Gross for collecting the revenue of Bengal. “The period between 1765 and 1772 was marked by the notorious Dual administration in which the EIC conducted the revenue administration and the Nawab had to shoulder the responsibility to run the general administration and maintain law and order. The result was disastrous. Inefficiency, corruption, high landlessness in collecting revenue, and fiction between the two authorities created an intolerable situation which culminated in the Great Famine of 1769-70 that whipped out one third of the country’s population and pull down the whole economy” (Maniruzzaman, 2011:25). In the tenure of Lord Warren Hestings ‘Dual Governance System (*Doito Shashon*)’ was abolished (1772-85) and instead of yearly

revenue system 'or 'Five years revenue collection system (Patch Shala Bondobosto) was oriented. After abolishing the Dual Government in 1772 a 'European collector' was appointed in each district as its administrative head (Maniruzzaman, 2011). Instead of supervisor, the revenue collector post was created and Mr. Parling was appointed as collector in 1773. This time revenue collection system was handed over from the traditional Landlord (Zamindar) to Contractual Revenue Collector (Ijaradar) and tenant oppression started by that because the traditional 'Zamindar-Tenant relationship' was some sort of personal and that could not be so much cruel or inhuman. The company then appointed Devi Singh as the Ijaradar who would collect revenue first from the Zamindars and in case of Zamindars not being able to collect the revenue from the raiyats he would collect it directly from the latter (Maniruzzaman, 2011). In 1780, Mr. Goodluck was appointed as judge as well as collector and his tenure was the mostly disastrous and inhuman period in the history of Rangpur region and due to cruel process of revenue collection the 'Peasant Movement' was first started that time. Rangpur collectorate was commenced officially in 1781 and apart of his salary (1500 TK) and other facilities (house rent, conveyance) the collector got 1% commission on collected revenue. So the collector earned minimum 8000 TK as commission in every year (Glazier, cited in Maniruzzaman, 2000). "Devi Shing's legions created havoc in the region inflicting untold misery on the people and the zamindars alike. In reaction formidable rebellion in which both peasants and Zamindars took part rocked the north for over a decade in the seventies and eighties of the eighteenth century. This was collaborated by another rebellion of sannyasis [Hindu ascetics] and fakirs [muslim sufi mendicants] at the same time" (Maniruzzaman, 2011: 26).

In 1770 (Bengali 1176), a remarkable famine held in Bengal and 1/3 of the people of the area died due to hunger. The British Writer William Hunter wrote, the unfed peasant tenant had to sell their household belongings, live stocks and even their children. The people were bound to take grass, leaves even flesh of their dead brothers (W.W. Hunter, cited in Haque, 2000:178). But in the year of this great famine, the revenue was collected more than the previous year (Rahim, cited in Haque, 2000). The stock business flourished so largely that, one of the stock business men sent 150000 TK in England in that year. The famine and continuous oppression bound peasant tenant to join in rebellion and it is known as 'Rangpur Peasant Rebellion'. The English researcher Mr. Piterson was responsible to investigate the reason of peasant revolution and he wrote, "if the peasant did not do revolt against the administration, I had been surprised. Debi Shingh and others did not collect revenue rather did oppression and coercion against the peasant tenant. They were the subject of physical torture regularly and so they were bound to revolt. Debi Shingh collected more than 70 lac⁴ tk by oppression." The peasant movement moved towards the liberation movement against British in following time (Haque, 2000).

In 1943 (Bengali 1350) this subcontinent faced another famine which is called 'The Great Bengal Famine' (Ponchasher Mononter). The main reason was 2nd world war and

⁴ 1 lac=100000

imperialism attitude of the British. The rice, salt, pulse and kerosin were vanished from market and were stocked by government, stock businessman and black marketers. In this famine, 350000 people were died only in Nilphamari. Amartya Sen describes the reason of the great Bengal famine “In 1942 the autumn crop was a little less than normal (97 percent of the preceding four years), and the winter crop quite a bit less (83 percent of the preceding four year). This was largely the result of cyclone in October, followed by territorial rain in some parts of Bengal and a subsequent fungus disease. Further the Japanese occupation of Barma in 1942- Rangoon fell on 10 March 1942-cut off rice imports from there, which affected the supply of Bengal....The wholesale price of rice, which had been between Rs.13 and Rs. 14 per mound (about 82.3 lbs.) on 11 December 1942, rose to Rs. 21 by March 1943 and to above Rs. 30 by 21 May; by 20 August it had risen to Rs.37....but there are non- official reports of further rises, especially in retail markets such as in October that rice was being sold in Chittagong at Rs. 80 per maund 5 November 1943; and in Dacca at Rs. 105 per maund)...There was a abnormally higher withholding of rice stock by farmers and traders from the winter harvest of 1942-3; the normal release following the harvest did not take place”(Bhatia, 1967, Ghosh, 1944 , cited in Sen, 1986:52-55 & 76).

This revenue system accounted for 57 percent of cultivated area in the country. The Flood commission, inquiring the reasons of the Great Bengal Famine in 1943, recommended the abolition of intermediaries on land interest to the British Government. Hossain [cited in Elahi and Ara, (2008)] placed a table of deaths in Great Bengal Famine in districts of greater Rangpur, 1943. The percentage of death was chronologically Rangpur 6.41%, Kurigram 5.15%, Nilphamari 7.32%, Lalmonirhat 6.00% and Gaibandha 6.45%.

Pakistan Period

In 1946-47 the ‘Three Share Movement’ popularly known as ‘*Tey vaga Andolon*’ was formed by peasant, where the share cropper of the area demanded, the peasant would get 2/3 share and landlord would get 1/3 share of the crops. The slogan was “who belongs the plough, bull and farming materials should be considered as peasant tenant administratively and 2/3 crops must be given to them.” This proposal was also sent to land commission (Haque, 2000).

In 1954 after the partition of India and Pakistan ‘Permanent Settlement’ was abolished and arrangement was directly made with tenant or people. The mentionable side of this amendment was to demolition of Zamindar class and middlemen rather to bring peasant class directly under the state administration. It was a populist step of the then governing Muslim League Party (K. Ali, 1996). The maximum limit of land ownership was determined to 100 *bighas* for per family and 10 *bighas* for each family member. Sublet cultivation or to give other people to cultivate land was prohibited but share cropping or land cultivation with wage labours was allowed. For this reason the town dweller land owners used to start share cropping as it was difficult for them to supervise the cultivation

process. In agrarian structure the absentee landlordism existed as before. In 1958 under the military rule the maximum limit of land ownership was fixed at 350 *bighas* for per family. It was done to introduce capitalistic production in agro farming. After independence of Bangladesh the first initiative towards land reform was taken in 1972. The notable aspects of the proposed reform were the highest land ownership ceiling was fixed to 33 acres or 100 *bighas* per family, (13.50 ha) in 1972, later increased to 125 acres (50.59 ha) and then tured to 33 acres and distributing *khas* land among the landless poor etc. (Rahman, 1991).

Bangladesh Period

Just after the independence of Bangladesh in 1974, floods caused severe damage in Northern part of Bangladesh because normally Brahmaputra encroaches on its western bank by 30 to maximum 60 meter during peak floods but in 1974 over a distance of 100 km, it flooded land on a strip 300 meter wide in areas and 24,000 people suffered heavily (Gilbert, cited in Sen, 1986). The price of rice was raised during and immediately after the flood, suppose the price of rice in Rangpur fluctuated from 100 to 185 during July to November in 1974. The government of Bangladesh declared famine officially in September 1974. Huge number of gruel kitchen (*langarkhana*), such as about 6000 gruel kitchen was opened to feed the destitute people. Rangpur was the mostly affected area in Bangladesh where the highest number of people had been to there (17.18%) and daily 935,6000 persons were fed daily (Sen, 1986). Sen states, "...in Rangpur district alone 80 to 100 thousand persons died of starvation and malnutrition in 2-3 months"(Haque et al ,1975 , cited in Sen , 1986).

In 1979' the famine situation again appeared in Kurigram, Nilphamari and Rangpur sadar due to massive looter, deprivation, stock of daily commodities famine took place, and unfortunately the big businessman, money lenders (*mahajans*) and even the bureaucrats were concerned with the process. As a result, the small farmers were forced to sell their products in a very cheap rate even sometimes in below rate than their production cost. Moreover, that year the area was highly affected by river bank erosion of Bhramaputra, Tista, Dharala, Dudhkumar and Fulkumar. Due to continuous unfed most people died in diarrhea, Pneumonia, Cholera. Some people suffered by taking stale food and unusual food. Some sorts of unusual diseases suppose, Abdominal distension (*Pet fula*), Leg edema (*Pa fula*) and diarrhea appeared and took peoples life cause they had took boiled wheat (*atta*) suddenly after long starvation. The episode did not end here. Government opened relief centres, ration shops and food for work programme which was not only very inadequate but also failed to provide services due to endless corruption. In different unions at Rangpur, people had to join in procession against the massive corruption (Muhammad, 2004).

Trend Analysis of Monga: Depicting the outcome of long term deprivation

A trend analysis is present below reflecting the real scenario of *Monga* vulnerability which is the outcome of long term deprivation and ignorance of the policy makers. The

informations are collected about the field from local community as well as national personality to cover the socioeconomic condition from 1970 to 2005. We ends here because from 2005 full swing development process starts in this region.

1970s

During 1970s the people used to wear *lengti* like tribal people. Home were built in mud and many women used to wear a *petticoat and blouse* not could manage *shari*. In 5 villages, one pair of shoe was not found. One Panjabi was shared in any occasion. When any occasion like marriage ceremony occurred it was rented. No tin shaded houses were found rather all houses were made by thatches (*choner ghar*) or made of mud. People were not able to arrange meal for two times. Very little rice was produced. Only some sweet potato and china nut grew. People were in very hardship, took *shak alu*, wheat as meal. Food for work of WFP⁵ by the then Pakistan government was the only means to survive. Some fish was found during rainy season and people used to preserve dry fish. Water and sanitation situation was very bad in Char. People used to defecate in open field, bush or in Jungle. They would mostly use water for drinking and other purposes from open water body like *beel*, pond and canal. But the people were very polite in nature.

The scientists says In this area people were accustomed to mono crop- rice, rice and rice. This was the main reason of *Monga*. As Monga area is a char land and sandy, so rice production was less. They never thought about alternative crops instead of rice production which could be grown in sandy lands.

1980s

Wage rate of the labour was extremely low, 15-20 BDT⁶ daily. Labour used to work household activities against one time meal. Rice production was very low, 2/3 mound in one *bigha* while now is growing 20-25 mound. Boro production was not high due to lack of irrigation. Education rate was very low, no children went to school. Population growth was very high. Due to lack of health and hygiene facility people used to suffer from different diarrheal diseases like diarrhea, cholera and dysentery. People used to take rice every after 3 days. Wheat bread was eaten because wheat was cheap and produced higher than rice. People used to take sweet potato. *Aush* paddy used to dry up in drought and *Aman* became flooded. *Dhaner khud*, *GomerVushi*, *Buttar vushi*, *Vater fan*, *roots*, *kolar mogoj*, *thor* all unusual food were taken. People took three times wheat; it was very painful to them. Women stayed at home, so ½ of the population remained inactive. Normally the char people do not care for any types of agro-based production and livestock resources due to floods. When flood came, they did not get enough time to rescue themselves and it lead them not to think about livestock rearing or agriculture production. They lost a lot in the past.

⁵ World Food Programme

⁶ Bangladeshi currency

The agro scientists say, in the late 1980s HYV wheat production innovated in this country including northern part of Bangladesh. At that time everyone was reluctant to take wheat but they were bound to take wheat due to lack of poverty.

1990s

Irrigation started but water scarcity was high. Different types of local politics and unethical activities were held to control the small scale irrigation programmes. At this period people used to start consuming more rice than earlier. Wheat bread was rejected. With banana *mogoj*, chili, salt, *kaun* mixed hotch potch. Area people says, “*sudhu kola shiddo kheyechi, sudhu shobji shiddo kheyechi, karon tokhon kamlar dam khub kom chilo, 30-40 taka din.*” Labour wage was very low, hardly 40 to 50 BDT per day. Because supply of labor was higher in compare to supply of work. Char land was infertile and sandy. EPI Vaccine was not common; children suffered from polio and others diseases. No latrine, no hygiene sense, no nutrition knowledge was there. Rate of early marriage was very high.

The KII Record supplies more interesting information on food consumption that depicts *Monga* scenario historically. Taking interview from one of the greatest and renowned journalist it is found that, before 90s *Monga* of North Bengal was not a matter of discussion in the realm of media. In 1991, the journalists first came to know that *Monga* appeared and famine took place in Rangpur. News was published in national news papers. One of the KII participants visited the place and provided information on the basis of his visit. Government provided relief immediately and the distribution was done by armed forces. The news of *Monga* and famine started to spread. The then GOC of Rangpur cantonment monitored the relief distribution process.

In Gangachara in November, 1991 a long que of people were seen with tokens which were distributed last night. However, they have-not received relief when needed as the communication system was not so good.

He interviewed an old woman and could recall the conversation,

“*Journalist: what do you take as meal?*”

Old lady: Something like kochu ghechu.

- *I understand kochu but what is ghechu?*

- *Oh ghechu is the root of kochu.*

- *oh I see, what else?*

- *Pata puta.*

- *what is that*

- *some are edible shaks and some are unusual and inedible.*”

It has been learnt that a woman was seen taking saline and she had a child miscarriage two days earlier as severe diarrhea attacked for eating inedible items. She was about to die and did not know whether she would survive or not. In another place, a small boy was taking a little amount of small fishes. The journalist asked him “*will you cook it after*

reaching home". The boy answered "no I will sell it and will buy half kg rice, then will make the rice gruel (*jao*) with salts and chili so that the whole family can eat together". The situation reflects the overall *Monga* vulnerabilities and especially vulnerabilities of women, children and elderly (KII by author from Journalist, Former, BBC Correspondent of Bangladesh).

2000s

During 2001-02, death of people in *Monga* prone areas was very common. Some news can be shared here, such as 'In Shaghata and Fulchari of Gaibandha many people died due to starvation.' or 'In Chilmari where ever we went we found groups of people were sitting idle. For passing time idle the only reason is lack of work in locality. In crop field seedlings of Aman paddy is sewing, which will be growing in Agrahayan. Before that there is no work.' The core hardship was found even upto 2005-06 until the government and NGOs came forward (KII and FGD by author).

Changes starts from this period. Char land is started to become fertile due to cumulating of silt. Winter vegetable cultivation stars in *Monga* time and potato grows in *Monga* time, work became available in that season. From every house people started going to take job in garment industry. Bangabandhu Stetu on Jamuna bridge played a great role in this regard. Corn cultivation emerged in Char. Boro farming starts in full swing.

In this period a popular variety of crop that means corn production started. The scientists discovered the soil of char is appropriate for corn (*Vutta*) cultivation, mix of sand and silt which we get after flood when water go away. In 1956 the scientists thought about introducing corn in the then Pakistan and they established a corn institute in Panjab, Lahore (RAFAN CORN INSTITUTE). In mid 1980s a pilot scale field based production started in Bangladesh, especially in northern Char areas. During 2000s farmers started corn cultivation and in first stages people were suggested to mix wheat powder and corn powder together to consume. (*gomer* atta 50% and *vuttar* atta 50%) (KII by author from Emirates scientist, Founder Chairman, Bangladesh Agriculture Research Institute).

2005 and later

From the FGD session it has been learnt that, demand of labour and labour wage started to increased around 2005. Seasonal migration became very popular and during lean season male members migrated as rickshaw puller in large cities. They said, "*Earlier labour was available in locality and the permanent labour used to live in large farmers` house. Now male labours have become almost unavailable as they move to Dinajpur to work contact basis and to get more wage during harvest period. A few female labour who are available at the time of crop harvest. Their minimum wage becomes 350 BDT daily.*" In this area women labour also work at present. People reported that, "*earlier women used to work for meal but currently they receive 1 mound paddy and 1000 BDT as wage, 1 shari, soap etc and daily meal for 3 days a work*".

Taking loan from NGO, livestock rearing has been started in this period. From 2004-05 NGOs started to work in this area in full form which helped women to make aware and raise their voices. Violence against women is contemporarily less than past. Education became popular; at least all are getting primary education. HYV⁷ rice is being emerged and huge rice is growing. Two or three crops are growing in one field including *Robi* crops and different vegetables. Large scale corn cultivation in char lands take place commercially especially for poultry fodder. Early marriage and *hilla*⁸ marriage is reduced.

Conclusion

It is evident from the discussion that people in *Monga* area had been suffering from chronic poverty since time immemorial. However very recently ameliorative development measures have been taken to reduce poverty. Due to lack of political commitment and good governance people in this region had to suffer from seasonal food shortage and the famine situation for long. At the same time occurrence of frequent disasters pull the region towards chronic poverty. From the trend analysis it has been learnt that till the 20th century the *Monga* community have not received any special attention. Since 2000 *Monga* vulnerability has widely been discussed and has drawn attention at policy makers, NGOs, International NGOs media and other stakeholders. This begins a new era for the community through introducing *Monga* adaptation strategies.

References

1. Ali. K “Bangladesh- o - Pak Bharoter Itihash”, Ali publication, Dhaka 1996
2. Arefeen, H. K. S.(2011)Unpublished Seminar paper on Monga organized by Bangladesh Freedom, Foundation.
3. Bithi , M. K. (2006). Monga In North Bengle: Causes And Remedies A Secondary Source Based Report: RDRS Bangladesh
4. Elahi, K. M. a. A., Iffat (2008). “*Understanding the Monga in Northern Bangladesh*” Dhaka: Academic Press and Publishers Library.
5. Ghosh, Binoy.(1979) *Banglar Nobo Jagreeti* Orient Longman, Kolkata
6. Haque, Md. Mozammel (2000). *Krishok Bidroho o British Birodhi Andolon History of Rangpur District* in History of Rangpur District, : District Administration Rangpur, Bangladesh
7. Khan, M. I. (2003). *Bangladesher krishok shomaj* , Dibbo Publishers, Dhaka
8. Maniruzzaman, M. (2000). “*Prachin theke Adhunik*” in *History of Rangpur District*
9. District Administration , (Ed,) Rangpur, Bangladesh.

⁷ High Yielding Variety

⁸ A temporary marriage with another person before coming back to a husband who has divorced the wife uttering the word ‘*talak*’ (three times)

10. Maniruzzaman, M. (2011). *ZAMINDARS OF BENGAL :CASE STUDY OF SELECTED RANGPUR ZAMINDARS 1793-1950*. Dhaka, Bangladesh: Gatidhara.
11. Nasreen, M., & Kundu, D. K. (2008a). *The Sociology of Monga: Some Illustrations from Northern Bangladesh, Social Science Review The Dhaka University Studies, Part-D, Vol.25, No.2 December*.
12. Rahman, H. Z., Sen, B., Hossain, M, Chowdhury, K.Rasida, etc. (12.07.12). as Discussant: *Oti daridro niroshon: shamajic nirapotta karjocrome shocchita o jobabdihi*'. Report published on the Prothom Alo Round table Talk.
13. Rahman, H. Z. (1991). Mora Kartiker Alekho : Moushumi Ghathti –O- Grameen Doridrer Bignonota *Bangladesh Unnayan Shamikha, 9th edition annual publication 1398(Bengali)*.
14. Rahman Hossain Zillur (1995) *Mora Kartik: Seasonal Deficits and the Vulnerability of the Rural Poor* Rahman, H. Z., & Hossain, M.(Ed.) 1995 in *Rethinking Rural Poverty* Dhaka: University Press Limited.
15. Shamsuddin , Dara .(2011) Unpublished Seminar paper on Monga organized by Bangladesh Freedom, Foundation.
16. Sen, A. (1986). *Poverty and Famine: An Essay on Entitlement and Deprivation*. Delhi: Oxford University Press Ltd.
17. Sen , A. (2012 (Sixteenth impression). *“Development as Freedom”*: Oxford University Press.
18. Shahjahan, M. M. (2003). *Monga in the Northern Districts of Bangladesh*: CPD.
19. The Financial Express news (2010) *Rangpur Declared as Division*. <http://www.thefinancialexpressbd.com>