

Problems of ethnic Paharia people in Bangladesh

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Abstract: The purpose of this paper is to depict the scenario of Paharia people problem and to find out the causes behind Paharia people problem. The research is based on some primary data, which are collected from a structured questionnaire survey, interview, observation and focus group discussion and also on some secondary data which are collected from different sources. Land problem, education, language and Paharia women problem are more frequent. 37% of lands of Paharia people are grabbing by local people. 75% respondent said that education and language has too much impact on Paharia people problem. Three-fourth of the Paharia women faced safety problem. Physical characteristics indigenesness, minority, culture difference and poverty are the main causes toward Paharia people problem. Culture difference and indigenesness have too much impact for creating Paharia people problem. 80 % respondent said that culture difference causes too much impact. If we did not take necessary step the ethnic people will lose their culture and identity.

Keywords: Problems, ethnicity, Paharia people, culture.

I. Introduction

Paharia is one of the most important ethnic community who live in the Northern part of Bangladesh. There are three sub races of Paharia people [1]. Those are Suria, Kumbarbagh and Mal. In Bengali hill means PAHAR. That's why often in Bangladesh people misunderstood 'Paharia' with the people of hilly region [2]. They have their own history, tradition and culture. For long time they've lived separately. They practiced their own custom, belief, language, festival etc. which brings them difference. They are different from Bengali people [3].

Modern age influence them and change their culture, region and even daily domestic practice [4]. In the world's indigenous people have a serious human right problem: The nations of the world refuse to recognize that indigenous peoples have human rights [5].

Language problem is one of the most problem faced by indigenous people when they communicate with local people. That's why they face different problems. Around the world there are more than 5,000 different Indigenous people, speaking more than 4,000 languages. Paharia people face such kind of problem similar to other ethnic communities [6]. Marginalized people such as ethnic people those have unique culture always experience discrimination [7]. Ethnic groups were generally similar in their ideal body image traits but some differences occurred for the valuing of skin color [8]. Physical appearance have relation with group belonging [9]. That's why they face different problems.

Everywhere in the world land right problem is one of the major problem for indigenous people. Similar picture found in case of Paharia peoples land right problem. UN have declared right of indigenous peoples in 2007 [10].

Paharia ethnic people always discriminated by the local people for different physical appearance. Women are always facing difficult situation in society. Even in US there has serious crime against ethnic people [11].

The study tries to know the problem of ethnic Paharia people. The purpose of the paper is to find out the problem of Paharia people most often face, to reveal the factors and causes behind the problem

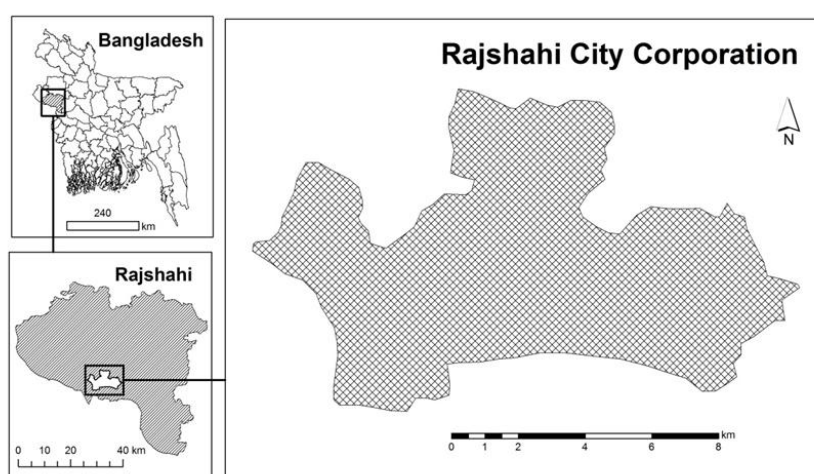
II. Methodology

The study is explorative and to some extent descriptive in nature that enforces to adopt mixed with qualitative and quantitative data as well as secondary and primary data. The primary data were collected from a structured questionnaires, interviews, focus group discussion and observation. The secondary data were collected from different sources. The questionnaire survey was conducted based on purposive sampling which includes 100 respondents. The primary data were analyzed using various statistical software, such as, SPSS, MS Excel. We use spatial software ARCGIS to produce map.

2.1. Study area

Rajshahi city, located in the North-west of the country, is one of the oldest and historically important areas of Bangladesh. An estimated population of 853,000 people [12] with total area of 96.69 km²(37.33 sq. miles) lying beside Northern banks of the river Padma. Researchers conducted their study in the three Paharia village in Santoshpur Union. Those are Sanospur, Birostol and Dighipara.

Study Area



III. Result and Discussion

3.1. Land right and problem

The tribal people dependent on their agricultural land. Agriculture activities are the central thing in their life. Day by day they become landless. Land problem is one of the most important issue in their community. Dominant community or Bengali people are taking the land from them for different causes.

1938 Bengali republic law and in 1950 SAT give the right over the land of the aborigine people [13,14]. Only those land traditionally owned by the aborigine people have right over the land. When the aborigine people want to deliberate their land, always has to face administrative permission.

1947 divided of country is one of the most important cause for loss their land [16,17]. From that time a lots of refugee came in the country and they settled in aborigine people land. Those refugee used the aborigine people's land. Because of revolution in Pakistan period Paharia people lost their land, house and properly. It happened during 1964-66. The communal fight, freedom fight is one of the most important causes for lost their and in the 1971 they move away from the country. When they came back they lost their ownership in their land.

One of the respondents Rabon Singh said that his father Bejoy Singh and his father already died. They had been lived in Shantospur the Paharia village. Rabon, aged 30, married person have two children and one wife. He works in the other field ground. They have two rooms built with soil, fence, bamboo and Tin sheet. They are not educated. After his father had died he was unable to go to the school. He stopped going to school for poverty. He have own house which he got by the rule patrilineal system or successor.

Rabon's father had 80-90 Bigha (local indicator to measure land) of land but in the present time Rabon has no land of his own. His father got those land from his grandfather. His father sold some land and local people grab some land forcefully by making wrong documents. The local people using their land. His father lost all the land after freedom fight because they went to Rajmahal and came back eight year later.

Rabon said the most of land grasping by the Shita Mondal who is the Father of recent commissioner. Commissioner want to buy some of the land and a pond for local missionary father. Father bought half of land and half of the pond was not sell because the commissioner has no documents for all the land. Father bought only those lands which have legal documents. Rabon said that the actual owner of that land is Rabon's father. Rabon never said against the commissioner because Rabon have no money, no power and they are aborigine people.

3.2. Different type of ownership by Paharia

Paharia people face different kind of land related problem in recent time. From our study we found different kinds of ownership patterns. Those are inheritance, bought by himself and sometime they build house or use demesne land.

Table 1 Pattern of land ownership

Ownership of land	Percentage (%)
Once own actual Inherited	56
Buying by own	11
Buying by father	0
By the government land	0
No land	33

Table 1 shows, 56% people inherit their land from their forefather. 11% people buy land from others and remaining 33% people live landless.

3.3. Causes of land loss of Paharia people

Some of the respondent said, local people regularly grabbing their land because they are powerless and minor community. Local people always harass them and pressurize them to sell land properties. Occasionally, they sold their land to fulfill their economic needs.

Table 2 Causes of land loss

Causes	Percentage (%)
Economic reason	32
Unlawfully grabbing	37
Sold under pressure	6
No answer	25

Table 2 shows, 32% people sold land for economic reason. 37% people loss land due to unlawfully grabbing. 6% people said they forced to sell under pressure.

Those land problem created by local people they are always busy of grasping Paharia people's land. Local people grasp those land because they aren't educated, they are simple and they are aborigine people. It is so easy to make wrong statement with them. Local people are doing so because they have no power and no money. By this process local people are getting the Paharia people land

3.4. Discrimination by land officer

Paharia people said when they went to land office for their land related problem first time they didn't like to talk with them or help them. Because, they are different from them. Often they help after taking some bribe. Interestingly, Some of the respondents said that, they didn't like to go to land office due to hindrance.

Table 3 Behavior of land officer

Behaviors	Percentage (%)
Giving help	43
Taking bribe	50
Never gone	7

According to the Table 3, 50% land officers taking bribe and 43% land officer help them. Those person went to land officer never get information because they are unable to give money.

3.5. Education and language problem

Education is the back bone of the nation. No nation cannot develop without education. No community cannot develop without education. For general life education is necessary. Paharia people is not educated. Those who migrated and took Christian religious get a change to become educated. Because is another important thing to communicate with others. The Paharia people cannot speak in Bengali well and face problem with communicate with other as well as receive education from the Bengali school.

One of the respondents said that his son didn't like to go school in the primary level because he didn't understand the language delivered by Bengali teacher he also said that most of the indigenous paharia people experienced language problem in the earlier stage. A lot of child avoid school or didn't able to complete primary school for language barrier. Because, Paharia people have their own different language.

3.5.1. Educational problem

The main problem for education is poverty. For poverty the children cannot able to continue their educational life. The parents have no capacity to give the expense of education. Another important problem in the paharia community is that the parents are wordless. That's why the parent can not able to teach their children.

Every child fight for their life and food for this reason they cannot able to continue their education.

3.5.2. Language and education

Language is one of the main cultural elements for human being. When the children born in the community they learn Paharia language naturally. For their education they must need to learn Bengali language. When they learning Bengali Language they lost some year. Then, they went to school that always create problem for their education.

Table 4 Problem due to education and language difference

Degree of problem [17]	Factors		
	Education	Language	Education and Language
Too much	41	32	75
Much	34	31	23
A little	15	30	1
Very little	3	2	1
No comment	7	6	0

Table 4 shows, 41% people said education factors are too much influential where 15% people said education factors are a little influential for causing discrimination. 32% people blame language difference is responsible and 75% people think both educational and language factors are too much influential for causing disparity.

3.6. Social discrimination toward Paharia

The social discrimination between Aborigine and Bengali people is one of the most important problem in the Paharia community. The aborigine people face more discrimination than Bengali poor people. The sucked up both economically and sociologically [18]. There are many example of the social discrimination and oppression in the Paharia community.

Once we were sitting in a restaurant, one of the Paharia people shouting with a young boy. He is asking to the boy why he dragged his son into water. He could have died from drowning. Later we asked the man and he informed us, "my child was just playing with local Bengalis people. That was his fault."

Another respondent inform us about a tragic story. One Paharia couple was living a happy life with one child. One local Bengalis people set an electric trap in his agricultural field to get protection from intruders. But, one Paharia man went to that field in night in response of natural call and died from that electric trap. The Paharia people make a case to local police station informing that incident. But local Bengalis people was furious and wanted to destroy their house. They even wanted to kill the brother of the dead person. Later with the pressure of local people Paharia people withdraw the case and mutual the dispute by a small portion of land.

3.6.1. Causes of discrimination

Paharia people is always discriminated by the local people. Some of the respondents said that, social discrimination ignorance and negligence of local people created disparities.

Table 5 Factors behind discrimination

Degree of impact	Factor		
	Social discrimination	Ignorance	Negligence of Local people
Too much	54	45	87
Much	34	41	11
A little	8	14	0
Very little	2	0	0
No comment	2	0	2

According to table 5, 54% respondent think social discrimination has too much impact on discrimination. 45% people think ignorance has too much impact behind the disparities. 87% of people think it the negligence is highly responsible for discriminating towards Paharia people.

One of the respondents Kislu Singh said few days ago, he went to in a local hotel for having Singara (local food). Then the waiter provide singara wrapped in a paper not in a plate. The hotel owner asked him that why he enter his hotel. Also few other Bangali customer shouted to him.

3.7. The Paharia women and their problem

The Paharia people face various kind of oppression, as a female, ethnic people andas a day labor in the study area.In our country Bengali women have a lot of problem. Similarly, The Paharia women have a lot of problem. They are always treat as anoutsider. Similarly in industrial country still now women are treated racial biasedly [19].They are good worker but not getting the equal wageand faces problem as women and as aborigine people. They are punished by the own society and also they treat by the local society people. They are working in the field but not getting the proper wage for labor. Sometime, they are tortured by their husband and at a times tortured by the local boys.

One respondent Komola Rani (34) and his husband Ojit Singh(41) have been live in the Santoshpur Paharia community. They have one boy and one girl. One is ten years old and another is eight years old when we talking with Komola,we saw that she just wore some pitch of cloth in his finger.

We asked what happed with your finger. Komola said that his husband throw a still mug in his hand and the finger cut by the mug. He given a mug of water lately. That’s why he throw the glass.

3.7.1. Womenearn money but husbandsdecideexpenses

The Paharia women working in the field and they are getting the wage of labor. They expense that money for their family. We asked all female respondents that why they working the field. They said that their husband economic condition is good enough. It is impossible to carry the family expense with her husband income. That why they are working in the field, they mentally think that husband is the respected person and husband will take all the decision. The benefit of household depends on their husband and they never raise their voice against their husband. Another important thing is that the property is not owned by the women.Females are earning money but they are not dominant in the society; they are submissive because social setting is in the favor of male.

3.7.2. The social problem of Paharia women

Paharia women face multi-dimensional problems. Such as, safety issues, unemployment problem, harassment in workplace etc. Paharia women face those problem most often because they are women and also they are from minor indigenous group.

Table 6 Problem of Paharia community women

Problem type	Percentage
Safety	14%
Not finding work	65%
Harassment in workplace	16%
Others	5%
Total	100%

From the table 6 we found that the most important problem for the Paharia women that they are not getting work, 65% respondent said that the Paharia women is not getting work. Other important problem is safety, 14% respondent said that they are not secure and 5% said aboutother problem.

3.7.3. Aborigine women get wage of labor lower than male

Paharia women do not get equal wage for same kind of jobs. They also claim that they work more than male worker. They are having less wage for more labor.

Table 7 Wage difference between male and female

Get lower price than male	Percentage
Yes	86%
No	14%
Total	100%

Table 7 shows, 86% respondents said that they are getting lowerwage than male.Other said they separate planning and agriculture work. 14% said that they have equalwage.

3.8. Major factor behind Paharia ethnic people's problem

There are many factors responsible for the discrimination towards indigenous people in the world. Similarly, in our study area we found some major factors those are highly correlated with discrimination. Such as, physical characteristics, indigenouness, minority, cultural difference and poverty.

Table 8 Major factors behind discrimination

Degree of impact on discrimination	Factors				
	Physical characteristic	Indigenouness	Minority	Culture	Poverty
Too much	61	75	55	80	65
Much	31	18	25	10	17
A little	6	2	15	6	15
Little	1	0	3	1	3
No comment	1	5	2	3	0

Table 8 shows, 61% respondents said physical characteristics, 75% said indigenouness, 55% said minority, 80% said cultural difference and 65% people said that poverty are the main factors which has too much influence behind discrimination.

IV. Conclusion

Indigenous Paharia people live with a lot of problems. Those problems are increasing gradually with time. They are continuing their life with these problems. Physical characteristics, indigenouness, minority, culture difference and poverty are the main causes toward Paharia people problem. They face that problem because they are aborigine people. Their language and culture is different. They are physically different from majority people and they are so poor.

From hundred years ago the indigenous people live in the land and they have no statement in their hand. They have no knowledge about land-law, land tax and they are not educated for the reason they loss their land. For their ignorance local people taking their land and they lost their resident place and local people make wrong statement. Paharia people are frightened by the local people. Those thing influence the land problem.

The Paharia male and Female depend on day labor. They work 10 hours but they are not getting the right wage. Sometimes they work free because they are staying on the other land. Women are harassed by the local people and they are not getting the real price of their labor. They are sometime tortured by the local people. Day by day the Paharia women's problems is increasing.

That entire problems facing the indigenous people are create by the main steam population. If government do not take any step for thewell-being of the Paharia peoples they will destroy within short time.

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