

## *Bangladesh e-Journal of Sociology*

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### **Note from the Editor**

We are really sorry that it took a few extra weeks to take out the second issue of the Journal. A number of factors conspired against our good intentions. Some were lapses on our part but the others, more debilitating ones, were beyond our control. Bangladesh is prone to natural disasters as well as plagued with man-made crises. We in Bangladesh have become used to such calamities as floods, cyclones and have come to terms with political turmoil. But as the saying goes, it never rains it pours in Bangladesh. For the past couple of months we have been inundated by flood, with Dhaka city going under water, lashed by cyclone, with waist deep water on city streets of Dhaka again and, amidst all these, political crises that have practically closed down the University of Dhaka for over two months now. And as I write these words, the students of the university are still on strike, with no end in sight.

Notwithstanding such catastrophes, life goes on in this unfortunate land and the tenacity of the Bangladeshis are such that we tend to perform better during such emergencies, as is evident from the articles that we are presenting in this issue. Keeping in line with our problems Mahbuba Nasreen presents a study of disasters in Bangladesh, advocating for a sociological approach. She also presents the findings of some disaster studies done previously and argues for a gender-based analysis of disasters focusing on the coping mechanism. She also refers to some of her previous studies and shows how women, more than men, become the saviors of the family in times of crisis.

It is also very encouraging to report that S.Aminul Islam and Mahbub Uddin Ahmed have come up with two penetrating analyses of poverty in Bangladesh. Bangladesh and poverty have become synonymous today but most studies of poverty have ended up as mere headcounts of poor people. Islam and Ahmed have defied these 'run of the mill' investigations of poverty looking primarily at income data and poverty lines and have gone a step beyond to propose sociological studies *with* sociological variables. Ahmed proposes a whole range of sociological and demographic variables and correlates these to offers a far greater insight into poverty than are available at present. Islam on the other hand challenges the very methodology of poverty studies, particularly the surveys, and seeks to understand poverty through qualitative analysis. Thus he succeeds in focusing on areas of poverty not addressed before. I am also happy to note that our next issue will be devoted entirely to exploring the sociological perspective on poverty.

Concerned as we are with our poverty and disasters, we also seek to understand what is going on in sociology elsewhere. Habibul Haque Khondker, a professor at the National University of Singapore, looks at the process of globalization and finds that "glocalization" may better explain the process of globalization as it unfolds in many parts of the world today. He traces the origin of the term "glocalization" to a Japanese concept and shows how it can be applied to specific cases like Singapore.

Nazrul Islam, on the other hand looks at the future of sociology as a discipline. He argues that Sociology, as an American discipline, is facing a dead end. The problem with the discipline is rooted in the very cultural setting of the US society, which remains isolated from other societies in time and space. As a result the sociology that developed in the US, different from the classical European sociology, fails to look at history and to other societies. Islam argues that sociology, to be a "science of society", must deal with *societies* in time and space. Sociology, in its American version, has failed completely in this regard. Added to this are the inherent problems of administrative and organizational weaknesses of the discipline

that have brought sociology, particularly its theory building process, to a standstill. Nor does the future, he argues, look any brighter.

We are also happy to note that we have received three books dealing with current research going on in Bangladesh.. The first is by Kamal Siddiqui et al on *Mega City Governance in South Asia* and is reviewed here by S. Aminul Islam. The second is on *Women Gender and Discrimination* and presents a set of eleven papers read at two different seminars, "Women and Development" and "Gender Discrimination" held at Rajshahi and Dhaka respectively. The third, *Does Approach Matter in Poverty Reduction? - An Empirical Study on Micro-Credit, Food Assistance and Employment Programmes in Rural Bangladesh* focuses on three programmes on "micro-credit", "food assistance" and "employment to the women" commissioned by NGOs like ASA, CARE and BRAC along with government assistance for the last two. An evaluation of these programmes with data from Mymensingh, Rangpur, Noakhali and Barisal is presented along with an extensive review of theoretical literature on the subjects.

We are very proud to report that we have been able to setup an Editorial Advisory Board comprising of eminent scholars from home and abroad. The Board includes a Professor Emeritus from Syracuse University (USA), the Vice Chancellor of the Independent University of Bangladesh, a senior professor from Marburg University (Germany), and senior professors from India and Bangladesh. All great sociologists in their own rights. With such a team we hope to offer you the quality Journal that we are striving to build.

From this issue onwards, we shall be circulating a hard copy of the journal to interested readers. If you wish to receive a copy please contact [bejs@bangladeshsociology.org](mailto:bejs@bangladeshsociology.org)