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# EAST WEST UNIVERSITY JOURNAL

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# Actions towards implementing e-government in Bangladesh: Are the change agents ready?

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## Abstract:

E-government has been considered as an agenda for implementation by the government of many countries. The current research has attempted to assess current level of awareness about e-government initiatives among government employees in different departments of the Bangladesh government. This research is the result of a survey regarding the perception of a recent e-government initiative of the Bangladesh government named e-Citizens Service Application among government officials. This paper also tries to identify the agency which will be responsible for promoting e-government in Bangladesh. It outlines possible drivers who will take e-government implementation into a successful shape and also identifies possible barriers towards e-government implementation.

## Key words:

e-Government, developing country, digital divide, Bangladesh, e-citizens, public sector

## 1. Introduction

Both the public and private sectors have started to experience major changes in economies because of information and communication technologies since 1990 (Johnson, 2001). Use of electronic services like online-information procurement or

A previous version of this paper using partial data has appeared as Hossan, C.G., Habib, Kuschu, I. (2006). "Success and Failure Factors for e-Government projects implementation in developing countries: A study on the perception of government officials of Bangladesh" EURO mGOV 2006; Second European Conference on Mobile Government, September, Brighton, UK.

inquiry possibilities which are made available by administrative authorities and political institutions for citizens and businesses are some examples of changes. Those changes like development of e-Government can affect positively the relationship between an administration, citizens and business (Barns et al: 2002). The key players responsible for conceptualization of successful implementation of various e-government applications are government officials who are also termed as change agents (Metaxiotis & Psarras, 2004). This paper is based on a study conducted among government employees to find out the overall picture of their state of readiness towards e-government initiatives. The first step for any changes to take place is to understand how and to what extent the key players are all aware of e-government application trends in Bangladesh. This paper will look at government employees at the advocacy level who will continue to work with the electronic government implementing process. Technical aspects of the e-government project can easily be transferred from other countries and also with the help of local sources (Schedler and Scharf, 2001). However, government employees are the ones who will ultimately take e-government applications to the citizens and continue to work with them (Metaxiotis & Psarras, 2004; Schedler and Scharf, 2001).

In Bangladesh, the costs of accessing government services and even collecting information are very high. Corruption and inefficiency in bureaucratic system are common problems in Bangladesh (Jamil, 2002). This cost of accessing information includes cost of transportation and unofficial service costs. While most government forms are free, access to those forms is somewhat difficult since this require paying identified brokers waiting in front of the relevant offices issuing the forms. To address this issue, the government recently has taken several steps to introduce e-government services to facilitate easy access to government information and services (MOSICT, 2002). However, despite being technically sound, many eGovernment projects in developing countries have not been successful (Heeks, 2003). The indicators used for measuring success used in this research are awareness of the initiative and use of the initiative. The project used as an example in this study is the Bangladesh government e-Citizens Service Application (www.forms.gov.bd) portal. Many important government forms are downloadable from this portal. The current study has been conducted to assess readiness in terms of awareness about e-government among government officials of Bangladesh.

## 2. Origin and Background of the Study

Rigorous studies have been made in assessing the technological capacity of the government for implementing e-governance. Many government and non-government agencies have also conducted several project-based studies for

technical factor assessment (Taifur, 2003). Such studies are focused on educating staff of those agencies to new technologies related to e-government. However, the success of e-government largely depends on the government along with "e-tools". This overwhelming focus on e-government has provided the motivation to do research on the non-technical environment of Bangladesh in respect to e-government implementation. In fact, there is a real shortage of evaluation of non-technical factors that contribute in technology transfer. One case that has been presented by Heeks (2003) has to do with the national databank project in Bangladesh. The Planning Commission of Bangladesh has taken an initiative to make official statistics available to government ministries, NGOs, and general stakeholders for government and public use. The annual investment cost varies but for network infrastructure alone it spent US$440,000 during 1999/2000. However, this project was a total failure as it was unable to contribute to any development in communication between inter-ministries. LAN was utilized only within the Planning Commission and no statistical data was visible on its use (Heeks, 2003). Heeks identified lack of human resource practice, lack of leadership and poor government-supplier relations as major reasons of this failure. Improving the awareness of eGovernment among government employees will result in a greater investment of financial and human resources and may reduce the likelihood of eGovernment failure (MOSICT, 2002; Hossan & Sikder, 2006; Heeks, Mundy& Salazar, 1999). The experience of the Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) in implementing a National Portal for the Garments Industry (www.bangladeshgarments.info) is an example where despite having all the technical and financial capabilities the portals failed to achieve the desired success due to non-technical barriers among member companies. In fact, it is impractical to believe that unlike technology, management strategies of a country can be copied and directly transfered to another country. However, the technological requirement for implementing e-government is quite simple. Moreover, the investment requirement for e-government implementation is also affordable either through internal resources or from the support of international community or both. Despite enjoying those advantages, e-Government implementation in Bangladesh is yet to gain momentum (As_Saber, Srivastava, & Hossain, 2006). Issues like perception of both government officials and citizens towards e-government services have been ignored in any kind of study undertaken on the subject.

## 3. Objective of the study

The main objective of this study is to understand the extent of the basic level of awareness that exists among employees of the Bangladesh government. However,

on attempt has also taken to find out government employes's perception on how to progress in the way towards implementing e-government in Bangladesh.

## 4. Methodology

***Definition:*** Okot-Uma (2001) has defined e-government as "the processes and structures pertinent to the electronic delivery of government services to the public". Drucker (2001) has defined e-government as "the use of emerging information and communication technologies to facilitate the processes of government and public administration. In reality, though, e-government is really about choice. It is about providing citizens with the ability to choose the manner in which they wish to interact with governments. And it is about the choices governments make about how information communication technologies will be deployed to support citizen's choices." (Drucker, 2001). In this study, e-Government refers to the electronic delivery of government information and services to citizens.

***Selection of sample:*** Non-probabilistic judgmental sampling (Malhotra, 2004) was used to select population elements among government employees of Bangladesh. A total of 200 units of questionnaires were used targeting government officials. 105 questionnaires have been qualified and 100 have been selected for this study.

***Questionnaire Structure:*** There were 10 questions in the questionnaire. The first question asked was whether respondents had heard about e-government and the second question required them to mention name of any project if the answer of the first questions had been positive; otherwise, they were moved to the third question. The third question was about the procured benefits of e-government initiatives. The fourth and fifth questions were to find out the role of e-government in reducing corruption and increasing efficiency in government services. The sixth question was very specific: to identify the level of awareness that exists regarding e-citizens service application. This was followed by a question on the perceived benefits of that initiative. The eighth question was to identify the authority responsible to promote e-government initiatives in the view of government officials. The ninth question involved giving a list of factors considered significant for successful implementation of e-government. The tenth question involved working with a list of factors constraining implementation of e-government. Respondents were allowed to select multiple answers for the ninth and tenth questions.

***Collection of data:*** The primary data were collected using the survey method. Personal interviews were conducted to pretest the questionnaire. Formal face-to-face interviews were conducted through a semi-structured questionnaire. A five point Likert scale was used to measure perceptions. Respondents were from 45 different government agencies including Bangladesh Parliament, Bangladesh Railway, Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation, Central Bank of Bangladesh, Dhaka Electric Supply Authority, Dhaka Shishu Hospital, Dhaka University, Dhaka Wasa, Government Bank, Local Government Engineering Department, Local Government Rural Department, Ministry of Establishment. Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Communication, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Forest, Ministry of Gas, Mineral and Energy, Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Ministry of Information, Ministry of Jute and Textile, Ministry of Land, Ministry of Planning, Ministry of Science and Technology, Ministry of Social Welfare, National Board of Revenue, etc (Appendix Table 2). The maximum number of respondents from a single department was 10 and most departments had 1 to 3 respondents each.

***Processing and analysis of data:*** Data collected through the survey was coded by the researcher and analyzed using SPSS. Interpretation of SPSS results were carried out by the researcher.

## 5. Limitations of the study

The factors used in this study were identified and developed based on the factor model which has been developed in the broader global context. There is scope of further identification of factors specific to Bangladesh. Due to limited time and lack of availability, Focus Group Discussion (FGD) could not be conducted. There is a scope of FGD with government employees to cross-check the findings of this study. Other major constraint faced by this study was lack of resources. The nature of this study perhaps demanded more extensive investment in time and resources. Moreover, this study assumed all the respondents of the same cluster possessed the same level of technological background.

## 6. Analysis and discussion of survey findings

The analysis of the survey result begins by discussing the current state of awareness that exists among the government employees of Bangladesh about e-government. The second section focuses on how government employees perceive e-government initiatives. The contributions of e-government has been measured in four dimensions, including overall benefit of the ESA, contribution towards

increasing efficiency, and reducing corruption in delivering government services to the citizens. The third section of the analysis focuses on developing a model for promoting e-government in Bangladesh. The last two sections focus on the factors that are either important for successful e-government implementation or are working as barriers to e-government implementation. The sample e-government project used in this study is Bangladesh Government's recent e-government initiative, e-Citizen's Service Application Portal (ESA) (www.forms.gov.bd). Many important government forms are downloadable from this portal. This project is managed by the Prime Ministers office. At the beginning of the interview, respondents were asked about the project. If they were unaware about its workings, the investigator would show them the printout of the web portal and brief them about the project and general e-government concepts.

Professor Richard Heeks of Manchester University in his factor model has identified several factors for e-Government project successes and failures in developing countries (Heeks, 2003). In the questionnaire, factors for success and failure options were replicated from the Factor Model developed by Professor Richard Heeks. The definition of the factors as defined by Heeks is listed below (Heeks, 2003);

***Success Factors***

*Internal political desire* has been defined as the drive from key government officials, including relevant ministers, for reform and achievement of e-government goals.

*Overall vision and strategy* stand for the overall vision and master plan for good governance and for e-government, identifying the target, and viewing IT as a means and not the end, and integrating IT with broader reform objectives

*Dominance of politics/self-interest:* the change agents who will take the project forward may have self-interest and/or there may be politically dominant situations favorable to the project initiative.

*Strong change management* which includes but is not limited to leadership with a project champion, use of incentives to create commitments and ownership of e-government project, and stakeholder involvement to build support and to minimize resistance.

*Effective project management* includes defining clear responsibilities, having good planning and consideration of risk, putting in place good monitoring and control systems, ensuring good organization of resources, and managing

partnerships between public agencies, and undertaking public-private joint initiatives.

*Competencies among the officials involved with this project* raise the issue of the capacity and knowledge level among government officials about e-government concepts and practices.

*Adequate technological infrastructure* includes computerization system, telecom policies, ICT policies etc.

*Other factor,* being the last item, was given to list any factor that respondents believe important but had not been presented as an option.

***Failure factors***

Absences of success factors are presented as the reasons for failure of e-government projects in Bangladesh. For example, lack of internal political desire was the first option as the failure factor. Moreover, number and pattern of options specified as the failure factors were same as the success factor, including others as the last option.

## *6.1 State of Awareness about e-government and ESA*

The first issue was to identify the level of awareness among government officials about any e-government initiative of Bangladesh government and also about the e-Citizens Service Application portal (ESA).

| | | General Frequency | General Percent | ESA Frequency | ESA Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | Yes | 21 | 21.0 | 20.0 | 20.0 |
| | A little bit | 27 | 27.0 | 26.0 | 26.0 |
| | No | 51 | 51.0 | 51.0 | 51.0 |
| | Total | 99 | 99.0 | 97.0 | 97.0 |
| Missing | System | 1 | 1.0 | 3.0 | 3.0 |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

*Table 1: State of Awareness about e-government*

Table 1 reveals that majority of the respondents were unaware about any e-government initiatives including the e-Citizens Service Application portal and only around 20 percent respondents were aware of them. Of them a significant portion of the respondents had heard about this particular initiative but had

never visited this portal. In figure 1, the level of awareness about the general concept of e-government has been plotted with level of awareness about ESA for the sake of comparison. However, there was no significant difference among the awareness level of general e-government and ESA.

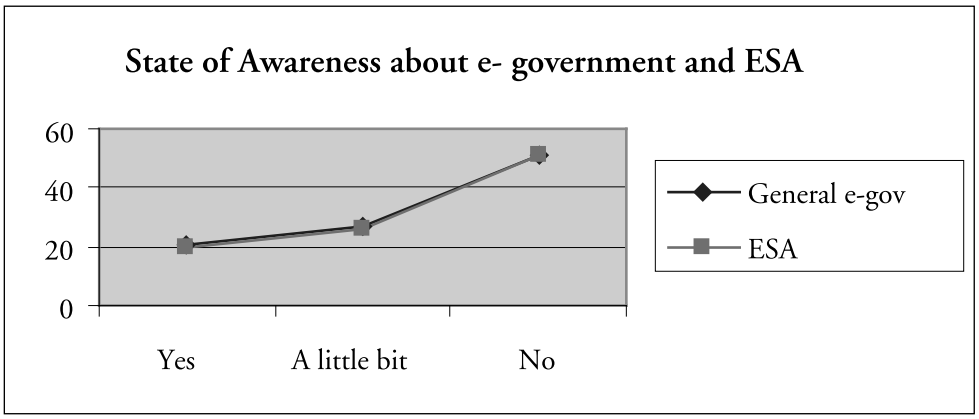



*Figure 1: Awareness about e-government initiative and e-Citizens Service Application Portal*

### *6.2 Perception about benefit of e-government and ESA*

The second issue was to understand the perceptions existing among government officials about the benefits of e-government initiative to the citizens. Benefits were categorized into four categories. The first one was overall benefits of e-government, the next one was specific to the example used in this research on e-Citizens Service Application (ESA). The other two dimensions were about contributions of e-government to reduce corruption and increase efficiency in delivering government services to citizens.

| | General Percent | ESA Percent | Reduce Corruption | Increase efficiency |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Disagree | 0 | 0 | 4.0 | 0 |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 6.0 | 6.0 | 11.0 | 1.0 |
| Agree 51.0 | 52.0 | 57.0 | 50.0 | |
| Strongly agree | 41.0 | 42.0 | 27.0 | 49.0 |
| Total | 98.0 | 100 | 99.0 | 100.0 |

*Table 2: benefits of e-government*

According to Table 2, it is clear that about 90 percent of respondents hold very positive views regarding the benefits of e-government. About 95 percent

respondents agree that citizens will be benefited by introducing e-government programs and ESA is also beneficial to citizens. On the contrary, only 6 percent of respondents were still undecided, i.e. neither agreed nor disagreed or adopted neutral positions regarding the benefits of e-government. More interestingly, no one among the respondents expressed negative perceptions about the benefits of e-government initiatives. However, on the question of reducing corruption, there was somewhat less expectations that e-government will help to reduce corruption compared to other areas of benefits. While 85 percent respondents believed that e-government would help reduce corruption, around 15 percent either disagreed or were unsure about its possibilities. On the issue of increasing efficiency in service delivery, 99 percent respondents believed that e-government would increase efficiency in delivering government services to citizens.

### *6.3 Responsibilities to promote e-government initiatives*

Development of e-government applications is only half of the work necessary for successful implementation of e-government in any country. The most important other half is the promotion of e-government applications to citizens and among government employees. Opinion was sought amongst government officials regarding the authority responsible for promoting e-government initiatives in Bangladesh. From Table 3, it is evident that 44% of the respondents thought that private-public partnership initiative was essential to promote e-government programs. About 40 percent of the respondents thought that the government should take the responsibility to promote this type of e-government initiative amongst citizens, including government employees. On the other hand, only 3 percent respondents thought that international development agencies should promote e-government initiatives in Bangladesh.

| Authority | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Government agencies | 40 | 40.0 |
| Private agencies | 10 | 10.0 |
| International development agencies | 3 | 3.0 |
| Private- public initiative | 44 | 44.0 |
| Others | 3 | 3.0 |
| Total | 100 | 100.0 |

*Table 3: Responsible authority for promoting e-government*

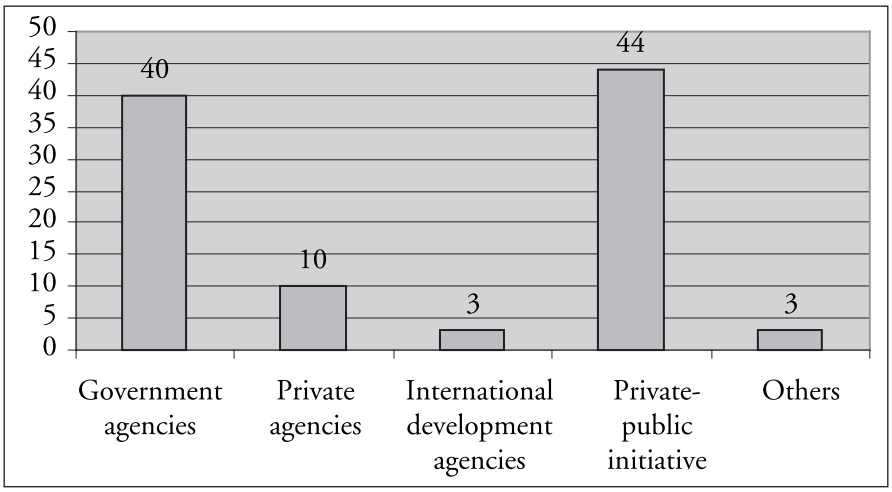



*Figure 2: Responsible Agency for e-government (Hossan et al, 2006)*

### *6.4 Factors for implementing e-government in Bangladesh*

The change agents were asked to rank the factors crucial for successful implementation of e-government in Bangladesh. There were 8 factors listed from Heek's factor model. Respondents could select more than one factor if they felt that they were important. According to Table 4, the most important factor for successful implementation of e-government were internal political desire; technological infrastructure secured the second place, lagging only 0.7 percent behind the top factor; and overall vision/strategy ranked third. On the other hand, less important factors, according to the opinion of respondents, are dominance of politics/self-interest, change management and competencies among officials.

| Factor Name | Count | % Responses | RANK |
|---|---|---|---|
| Internal political desire | 27 | 19.7 | 1 |
| Overall vision/ Strategy | 22 | 16.1 | 3 |
| Dominance of politics | 17 | 12.4 | 5 |
| Strong change management | 13 | 9.5 | 6 |
| Efficient project management | 18 | 13.1 | 4 |
| Competencies among officials | 13 | 9.5 | 6 |
| Adequate technological infrastructure | 26 | 19.0 | 2 |
| Others | 1 | 0.7 | 7 |
| Total responses | 137 | 100 | |

*Table 4: Success factors for implementing e-government in Bangladesh*

### *6.5 Failure factors in implementing e-government in Bangladesh*

To understand the factors that create barriers in the way of successful implementation of e-government in Bangladesh, eight factors were listed from Heek's model. The respondents could have picked more than one factor. According to Table 5, the most important reasons for the failure of e-government implementation are lack of internal political desire, inadequate technological infrastructure and lack of overall vision/strategy. On the other hand, less important barriers are dominance of politics/self interest, change management and poor project management.

| Factor Name | Count | % Responses | RANK |
|---|---|---|---|
| Lack of internal political desire | 31 | 21.4 | 1 |
| Lack of overall vision/ Strategy | 22 | 15.2 | 3 |
| Dominance of politics | 12 | 8.3 | 6 |
| Poor change management | 12 | 8.3 | 6 |
| Poor project management | 17 | 11.7 | 5 |
| Lack of competencies | 20 | 13.8 | 4 |
| Inadequate technological infrastructure | 29 | 20.0 | 2 |
| Others | 2 | 1.4 | 7 |
| Total responses | 145 | 100.0 | |

*Table 5: Failure factors in implementing e-government in Bangladesh*

### *6.6 Factor weights*

In this section, importance of each individual factors were assessed to identify their roles in the e-government implementation process. Figure 3 demonstrates how critical each factor was for both success and failure. On an average, 20% respondents considered internal political desire the most important factor for success and absence of strong political desire that makes a project unsuccessful. Almost similar weights were given to the importance of technological infrastructure for implementation of e-government processes. Change management ranked the lowest among all factors considered for both success and failure. Overall vision and strategy was placed as the third most important factor for e-government project implementation.

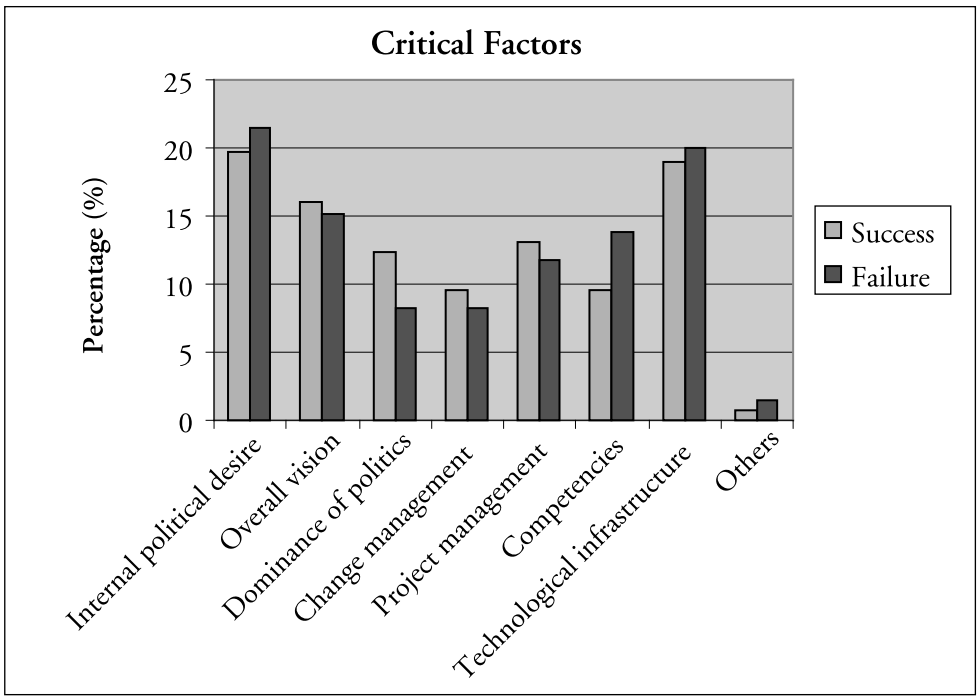



*Figure 3: Critical Factors*

## 7. Conclusion

The paper has tried to find significant information about the state of understanding that exists regarding e-government activities in Bangladesh among change agents. Awareness about e-government initiatives in Bangladesh is still far lower than is commendable among government employees. Half of the government officials covered under the current study is un-aware of any e-government initiative in Bangladesh while only around 20 percent of the respondents had understanding of e-government applications. Although level of awareness among government officials was very low, they held a very positive attitude about the consequence of e-government in delivering service to citizens. About 90 percent of the respondents believe e-government will bring benefits to citizens, help reduce corruption and increase efficiency in government services. From the study it is clear that the government in partnership with private organizations should play the role of a driver to promote e-government initiatives in Bangladesh. International development organizations can provide technical assistance in implementing e-government projects in Bangladesh but they have a limited role to play in the promotion of any e-government initiative within Bangladesh. The most important factors for successful implementation of e-government are internal political desire, technological infrastructure and overall

vision/strategy as perceived by the government officials of Bangladesh. According to the research, the most crucial factors causing the failure of e-government implementation are lack of internal political desire, inadequate technological infrastructure and lack of overall vision/strategy.

In conclusion, it can be said the government employees hold a very positive attitude towards e-government applications in Bangladesh. This indicates that they are ready to accept e-government. However, their level of awareness is low due to absence or improper awareness- building programs. Among the most important factors, technological infrastructure can be developed through technology transfer as this is already in place in many countries. The crucial factor that should be addressed immediately for effective implementation of e-government is creation of leadership. Building such leadership will formulate clear and sound policies and propel internal political forces towards implementing e-government in Bangladesh.

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# A New Load Balancing Method Based on Dynamic Cluster Construction for Solution-Adaptive Finite Element Graphs on Distributed Memory Multicomputers

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## Abstract

To solve the load imbalance problem of a solution-adaptive finite element application program on a distributed memory multicomputer, the load of a refined finite element graph can be redistributed, based on the current load of each processor. For this purpose a load-balancing algorithm can be applied to balance the computational load of each processor. In this paper, a distributed method for load balancing is proposed, which is based on the global load balancing information and current load distribution of the system. A simulation model has been developed to compare the performance of the proposed method with previously stated methods like Maximum Cost Spanning Tree Load-Balancing (MCSTLB) Method, Binary Tree Load Balancing (BTLB) Method and Condensed Binary Tree Load Balancing (CBTLB) Method. Two criteria, the execution time and the number of process migration required by different load balancing methods have been used for performance evaluation. The experimental result shows that the execution time and the number of process migration required by the proposed method is better than that of existing methods.

The finite element method is widely used for the structural modeling of physical systems. In the finite element model, an object can be viewed as a finite element graph, which is a connected and undirected graph that consists of a number of finite elements. Each finite element is composed of a number of nodes. Due to the properties of computation-intensiveness and computation-locality, to implement the finite element method on distributed memory multicomputers (Angus, Fox, Kim & Walker, 1990; Fox, Johnson, Lyzenga, Salman & Walker, 1988; Simon, 1991, p. 135; Williams, 1990; Williams, 1991, p. 457) appears as an attractive proposition.

In the context of parallelizing a finite element application program that uses iterative techniques to solve a system of equations (Aykanat, Doraivelu, Martin & Ozg†ner 1987, p. 662), a parallel program may be viewed as a collection of tasks represented by nodes of a finite element graph. Each node represents a particular amount of computation and can be executed independently. To efficiently execute a finite element application program on a distributed memory multicomputer, we need to map nodes of the corresponding finite element graph to processors of a distributed memory multicomputer in such a way that each processor has approximately the same amount of computational load and so that the communication among processors is minimized. Since this mapping problem is known to be NP-complete (Garey & Johnson, 1979), many heuristic methods have been proposed to find satisfactory suboptimal solutions (Barnard & Simon, 1994, p.101; Barnard & Simon, 1995, p. 627; Ercal, Ramanujam & Sadayappan, 1990, p.35; Fiduccia & Mattheyes, 1982, p.175; Gilbert & Zmijewski, 1987, p. 427; Gilbert, Miller & Teng, 1995, p. 418; Hendrickson & Leland, 1995, p.469; Hendrickson & Leland, 1995; Karypis & Kumar, 1995; Karypis & Kumar, 1995; Kernigham & Lin, 1970, p. 292; Simon, 1991, p.135; Williams, 1991, p. 457).

For a solution-adaptive finite element application program, the number of nodes increases discretely due to the refinement of some finite elements during the execution. This may result in load imbalance of processors. A node remapping or a load-balancing algorithm has to be performed many times in order to balance the computational load of processors while keeping the communication cost among processors as low as possible. For the load balancing approach, some load-balancing algorithms can be used to perform the load balancing process according to the current load of processors. Load-balancing algorithms are performed at run-time; their execution must be fast and efficient.

In this paper, a cluster based load-balancing method has been proposed to efficiently deal with the load imbalance problems of solution-adaptive finite element application programs on distributed memory multicomputers. When nodes of a solution-adaptive finite element graph were evenly distributed to processors by some mapping algorithms, according to the communication property of the finite element graph, we can get a processor graph from the partition. For example, Figure 1 shows a partition of a 21-node finite element graph on seven processors. The corresponding processor graph of Figure 1 is shown in Figure 2. In a processor graph, nodes represent the processors and edges represent the communication needed among processors. The weights associated with nodes and edges denote the computation and the communication costs (Chung & Liao, 1999, p.360). As all the nodes are homogeneous, they have the same finite computation cost, n, associated with them. The neighbor processors communicate with each other through message passing. The weighted edge linking the neighbor processors shows the normalized cost related with message passing.

When a finite element graph is refined during run-time, it will result in load imbalance of processors. To balance the computational load of processors, the Cluster method first builds up clusters of processors. Based on clusters, the global load balancing information is calculated by the tree walking algorithm (TWA) (Wu, 1997, p. 173). According to the global load balancing information and the current load distribution, a load transfer algorithm is performed to balance the computational load of processors and minimize the communication cost among processors.

This cluster based load balancing algorithm is considered to be run at application level which is independent of the lower layer protocols. As this load balancing process is platform independent, it can run on processors where the underlying network topology varies.

To evaluate the performance of the proposed method, it has been implemented along with three other tree- based parallel load balancing methods, the Maximum Cost Spanning Tree Load Balancing (MCSTLB) method (Chung & Liao, 1999, p.360), Binary Tree Load Balancing (BTLB) method (Chung & Liao, 1999, p.360) and Condensed Binary Tree Load Balancing (CBTLB) method (Chung & Liao, 1999, p.360). The experimental results show that the execution time and the number of process migration of an application program under a cluster- based load-balancing method is always shorter than those of the other methods.

## The Parallel Load Balancing Methods

### *The Maximum Cost Spanning Tree Load-Balancing (MCSTLB) Method*

The main idea of the MCSTLB method (Chung & Liao, 1999, p.360) is to find a maximum cost spanning tree from the processor graph that is obtained from the initial partitioned finite element graph. The MCSTLB method can be divided into the following four phases:

**Phase 1:** Obtain a processor graph G from the initial partition.

**Phase 2:** Use a similar Kruskal's (Kruskal,, 1956, p. 48) algorithm to find a maximum cost spanning tree T = (V, E) from G. There are many ways to determine the shape of T. In this method, the shape of T is constructed as follows:

1. The processor with the largest degree in V is selected as the root of T.

2. For each nonterminal processor v in T, if {u1 , …, um } are the m children of v and |u1 | ‹ |u2 | ‹… ‹ |um |, then u1 will be the leftmost child of v, u2 will be the second leftmost child of v, and so on, where |ui | is the degree of ui and i = 1, …, m. If the depth of T is greater than logM, where M is the number of processors, we will try to adjust the depth of T. The adjusted method is first to find the longest path (from a terminal processor to another terminal processor) of T. After the longest path is determined, the middle processor of the path is selected as the root of the tree and the tree is reconstructed according to the above construction process. If the depth of the reconstructed tree is less than that of T, the reconstructed tree is the desired tree. Otherwise, T is the desired tree. The purpose of the adjustment is to reduce the load balancing steps among processors.

**Phase 3:** Calculate the global load balancing information and schedule the load transfer sequence of processors by using the TWA (Wu, 1997, p. 173). Assume that there are M processors in a tree and N nodes in a refined finite element graph. We define N/M as the average weight of a processor. In the TWA method, the quota and the load of each processor in a tree are calculated, where the quota is the sum of the average weights of a processor and its children processors and the load is the sum of the weights of a processor and its children processors. The difference of the quota and the load of a processor is the number of nodes that a processor should send to or receive from its parent. If the difference is negative, a processor should send nodes to its parent. Otherwise, a processor should receive nodes from its parent. According to the global load balancing information, a schedule can be determined.

**Phase 4:** Perform load transfer (send/receive) based on the global load balancing information, the schedule, and T. Assume that processor Pi needs to send m nodes to processor Pj and let N denote the set of nodes in Pi that are adjacent to those of Pj. In order to keep the communication cost as low as possible, in the load transfer, nodes in N are transferred first. If |N| is less than m, then nodes adjacent to those in N are transferred. This process is continued until the number of nodes transferred to Pj is equal to m.

*The Binary Tree Load Balancing (BTLB) Method*

The BTLB method (Chung & Liao, 1999, p.360) is similar to the MCSTLB method (Chung & Liao, 1999, p.360). The only difference between these two methods is that the MCSTLB method is based on a maximum cost spanning tree to balance the computational load of processors while the BTLB method is based on a binary tree. The BTLB method can be divided into the following four phases:

**Phase 1:** Obtain a processor graph G from the initial partition.

**Phase 2:** Use a similar Kruskal's algorithm to find a binary tree T = (V, E) from G, where V and E denote the processors and edges of T, respectively. The method to determine the shape of a binary tree is the same as that of the MCSTLB method.

**Phase 3:** Calculate the global load balancing information and schedule the load transfer sequence of processors by using the TWA.

**Phase 4:** Perform load transfer (send/receive) based on the global load balancing information, the schedule, and T. The load transfer method is the same as that of the MCSTLB method.

*The Condensed Binary Tree Load Balancing (CBTLB) Method*

The main idea of the CBTLB method (Chung & Liao, 1999, p.360) is to group processors of the processor graph into metaprocessors. Each metaprocessor is a hypercube. The CBTLB method can be divided into the following five phases:

**Phase 1:** Obtain a processor graph G from the initial partition.

**Phase 2:** Group processors of G into metaprocessors to obtain a condensed processor graph Gc incrementally. The metaprocessors in Gc are constructed as follows: First, a processor Pi with the smallest degree in G and a processor Pj that is a neighbor processor of Pi and has the smallest degree among those neighbor processors of Pi are grouped into a metaprocessor. Then, the same construction is

applied to other ungrouped processors until there are no processors that can be grouped into a hypercube. Repeat the grouping process to each metaprocessor until there are no metaprocessors that can be grouped into a higher order hypercube.

**Phase 3:** Find a binary tree T = (V, E) from Gc , where V and E denote the metaprocessors and edges of T, respectively. The method of constructing a binary tree is the same as that of the BTLB method.

**Phase 4:** Based on T, calculate the global load balancing information and schedule the load transfer sequence by using a similar TWA method for metaprocessors. To obtain the global load balancing information, the quota and the load of each processor in a tree are calculated. The quota is defined as the sum of the average weights of processors in a metaprocessor Ci and processors in children processors of Ci. The load is defined as the sum of the weights of processors in a metaprocessor Ci and processors in children metaprocessors of Ci. The difference of the quota and the load of a metaprocessor is the number of nodes that a metaprocessor should send to or receive from its parent metaprocessor. After calculating the global load balancing information, the schedule is determined as follows. Assume that m is the number of nodes that a metaprocessor Ci needs to send to another metaprocessor Cj . We have the following two cases:

1. Case 1: If the weight of Ci is less than m, the schedule of these two metaprocessors is postponed until the weight of Ci is greater than or equal to m.
2. Case 2: If the weight of Ci is greater than or equal to m, a schedule can be made between processors of Ci and Cj . Assume that ADJ denotes the set of processors in Ci that are adjacent to those in Cj . If the sum of the weights of processors in ADJ is less than m, a schedule is made to transfer nodes of processors in Ci to processors in ADJ such that the weights of processors in ADJ is greater than or equal to m. If the sum of the weights of processors in ADJ is greater than or equal to m, a schedule is made to send m nodes from processors in ADJ to those in C.

**Phase 5:** Perform load transfer (send/receive) among metaprocessors based on the global load balancing information, the schedule, and T. The load transfer method is similar to that of the BTLB method. After performing the load transfer process among metaprocessors, a dimension exchange method (DEM) is performed to balance the computational load of processors in metaprocessors.

*Cluster-Based Load Balancing Method*

The main idea of the cluster-based method is to construct an arrangement of processors, where the processors are combined into clusters. After the construction of processor cluster, the load information for each processor is collected and the load balancing algorithm is performed in such a manner that the processor can balance their load by transferring minimum number of processes and the overall load balancing time is also improved.

**Phase 1:** Cluster construction.

- Step 1: Divide N number of processors into N/3 number of clusters. In a cluster there might be one or two or three processors. In each case the cluster might be constructed as following:

1. Case 1: If a cluster has three nodes, then one of them is called the parent node, and the other two are called the left and right child, respectively.
2. Case 2: If a cluster has two nodes, then one of them is called the parent node, and the other is called the left child.
3. Case 3: If a cluster has only one node, then it is called the parent node.

In each cluster the children nodes send their state information to the parent node when they try to balance the load.

If there is only one cluster, then go to Phase 3.

- Step 2: Rearrange three local clusters to form a large cluster. In this large cluster, one node acts as parent and other two as left and right child respectively.

This process of constructing a large cluster is continued until there is only one large cluster.

**Phase 2:** Load Estimation.

Each processor in the system has varying number of processes and each process has varying amount of load. To find the average weight or Quota of a processor we have to first calculate the sum of loads of all processors and then we must divide the total sum by the number of processors of the system. Thus we obtain the quota for each processor and from the quota we calculate the high threshold and low threshold value for each processor, where

High threshold= quota + x (where x = 5% of quota)

Low threshold= quota – x (where x = 5% of quota)

Now a processor's state is defined as follows:

1. Case 1: The processor is in a normal state if its load is greater than the low threshold and less than the high threshold.
2. Case 2: The processor is in underloaded state if its load is below the low threshold
3. Case 3: The processor is in overloaded state if its load is above the high threshold

**Phase 3:** Load distribution

- Step 1: In this level, for each cluster, the cluster load and the cluster quota are calculated. The cluster load is defined as the sum of loads of each processor in a cluster, which is not in normal state, and the cluster quota is defined as the sum of the quota for each processor in the cluster, which is not in normal state. From the cluster quota, the high threshold and low threshold is also calculated for the cluster. Now depending on the cluster load and threshold values of the cluster, the following two cases may occur:

1. Case 1: If the cluster load is greater than the low threshold and less than the high threshold, then it is possible to balance the load of the cluster internally. For each member node of the cluster, the difference of quota and load is the number of processes that a node should send or receive from other nodes. If the difference is negative, a node should transfer the load, otherwise it should receive loads.
2. Case 2: If the cluster load is greater than the high threshold value or less than the low threshold value, then load balancing is not possible within the cluster. In this case the parent will contain the cluster load information.

If the load of all clusters in this level is balanced, then the load distribution process will be terminated. Otherwise step 1 should be repeated until a higher level large cluster exists.

- Step 2: When the largest cluster has been reached, the cluster load should be distributed among the members of the cluster, which is not in the normal state. For each member node of the cluster, the difference of quota and load is the number of processes that a node should send or receive from other nodes. If the difference is negative, a node should transfer load; otherwise it should receive loads. Then, each cluster of the next lower level distributes the load among the processors of that cluster in the same way.

This process of load distribution is repeated until any lower level cluster exists.

## Experimental results

This section compares the performance of the load-balancing methods by implementing the algorithm with some simulation programs. The criteria used to evaluate the performance are execution time and the number of processes to be migrated to balance the system load.

### *Comparison of execution time of different load balancing methods*

The execution time of different load balancing methods, with 7, 15, 25, 30, and 40 processors are shown in Table-1. From Table-1, it is evident that among MCSTLB, BTLB and CBTLB method, the execution time of CBTLB method is better than the other two. This is because the CBTLB method can reduce the size of a tree with a large ratio so that the overheads to do the load transfer among the metaprocessors are less than those of the MCSTLB and BTLB method. Thus it can reduce the load transfer time efficiently. We also observe that the execution time for the Cluster method is less than that of the CBTLB method. This is because the CBTLB method does not try to balance the load within a metaprocessor after forming the cluster. As a result a metaprocessor, which can be balanced locally, is grouped into a higher level hypercube. This makes fruitless process transfer possible and thus it will take more time to balance the load. Though in the Cluster methods, grouping is performed in each refinement, it takes less time to balance the system load.

### *Comparison of the number of process migration of different methods*

The numbers of processes to be migrated in different load balancing methods, with 5, 7, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35, 40 and 45 processors are shown in Table 2.

## Conclusion

Different types of load-balancing algorithm for solution-adaptive finite element application program on distributed memory multicomputers were proposed. These are MCSTLB method, the BTLB method, the CBTLB method, and the Cluster method. In MCSTLB method, BTLB method, and CBTLB method, a logical tree (a maximum cost spanning tree for MCSTLB method, a binary tree for BTLB method, and a condensed binary tree for CBTLB method) is constructed from a processor graph. Based on the tree structure and the current load of the system, the existing method has been trying to balance the system load. But in those methods, the static nature of the logical tree makes a huge

number of process migrations which consume not only time but also the communication network bandwidth.

In this paper, a new, improved group based method has been proposed to balance the load among the sites of a distributed memory multicomputer system to overcome the problems associated with the previous methods. In this method, the processors have been grouped so that the members of a group can try to balance their load within the group without knowing the states of the other processors belonging to a different group. Otherwise, when balancing the load within the group is not possible, this group tries to balance the load in a large group. Thus, in this method a process is migrated only when it finds its suitable destination. If we consider load balancing without grouping the processors in a cluster, then a huge number of messages have to be transferred among all the processors to balance their loads, as every processor will try to balance its load with every other processor. If we consider clusters consisting of two processors other than considering three, again a huge number of message passing will be required to balance the system load. So the discussion concludes that the proposed method requires fewer process migrations and less execution time than the existing methods.

To evaluate the performance of the existing load balancing methods and the proposed one, the algorithms are implemented with some simulation programs. Two criteria to do so are (i) execution time and (ii) the number of process migration of different algorithms required for an application program is used for performance evaluation. The experiment result shows that the execution time and number of process to be migrated of the proposed method is better than that of the existing methods.

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**Table 1**

**The execution time in seconds of different load balancing methods with different number of processors.**

| | No. of processors | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Methods | 7 | 15 | 25 | 30 | 40 |
| MCSTLS | 1.500549 | 1.500549 | 1.500549 | 1.500549 | 1.554396 |
| BTLB | 1.500549 | 1.500549 | 1.500549 | 1.500549 | 1.500549 |
| CBTLB | 1.103846 | 1.10549 | 1.100000 | 1.154396 | 1.100000 |
| Cluster | 0.659340 | 0.692308 | 0.714286 | 0.714286 | 0.714286 |

**Table 2**

**Number of process migration of different load balancing method for different load samples with different number of processors.**

| | No. of processors | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Methods | 5 | 7 | 10 | 15 | 20 | 25 | 30 | 35 | 40 | 45 |
| MCSTLB | 278 | 440 | 719 | 1270 | 1841 | 2370 | 3113 | 3550 | 4135 | 4562 |
| BTLB | 301 | 509 | 824 | 1460 | 2156 | 2937 | 2156 | 4068 | 4810 | 4204 |
| CBTLB | 432 | 782 | 1389 | 2286 | 3509 | 4426 | 5556 | 6617 | 7355 | 8126 |
| Cluster | 112 | 166 | 277 | 312 | 464 | 494 | 577 | 601 | 720 | 1223 |

**Figure 1: A partition of 21-node finite element graph on 7 processors.**

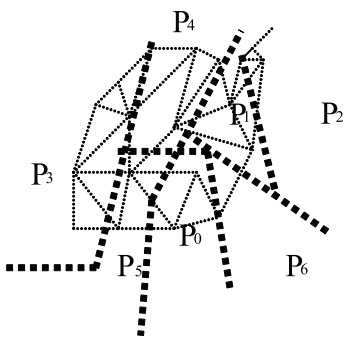
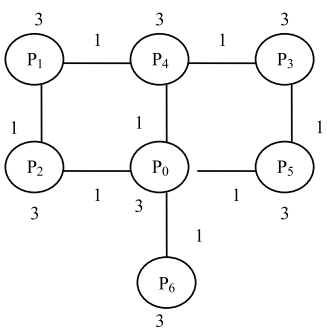



**Figure 2: The corresponding processor graph of Figure 1.**



# Framework for Synthesis of Universal Networking Language

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## Abstract

This paper presents the specifications of Universal Networking Language (UNL), a project undertaken under the auspices of the United Nations University (UNU) in Tokyo and for a framework for integration of Bangla language to UNL. The mission of the UNU project is to allow people across nations to access information on the Internet in their own languages—a step to help bridge the digital divide. The core of the project is UNL, a language independent specification for serving as a common medium for documents in different languages. Researchers involved in this project from different countries have been developing UNL systems for their respective native languages. The process basically involves i) building native language to UNL dictionary and ii) deriving language specific syntactic rules called analysis rules for parsing/ translating native language corpora to UNL and vice versa. In this paper we present parallel work for developing a framework for synthesizing Bangla to UNL that involves building a Bangla to UNL dictionary and parsing sentences to UNL. To the best of our knowledge, this is a pioneering work in Bangla.

## Keywords

Universal Networking Language, Bangla-UNL dictionary, morphological analysis, universal words, UNL document, parsing

## 1. Introduction

Although, there is an immense proliferation of information on the Internet, it is still not accessible to the vast multitude of people across nations as most of the resources are in English. To overcome this problem, United Nations has launched the Universal Networking Language project [1] under the auspices of United Nations University, Tokyo. The project team, after reviewing all such previous attempts has developed a universal networking language (UNL), a language neutral specification, and universal parser specification [4], which is considered to be a milestone in overcoming the language barrier for web publication. The goal is to eliminate the massive task of translation between two languages and reduce language-to-language translation to a one-time conversion to UNL. For example, Bangla corpora, once converted to UNL, can be translated to any other language given the UNL system built for that language. The strength of the UNL system lies in the fact that it emphasizes the semantics of a native language sentence, ignoring the complexities of natural languages. An enconverter converts each native language sentence to a UNL document and deconverter translates the UNL document to any native language. The UNL document is itself in English as it is known to linguistics. The development of the native language, specific components-dictionary and analysis rules-is carried out by researchers across the world.

The UNL project currently includes 16 official languages, including Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, Hindi but no work has yet done on Bangla. The infrastructure of UNL is presented in Fig. 1 which shows that UNL documents can be converted to any natural languages through language servers. On the contrary, existing web documents are in HTML and XML and present documents only in English.

In this paper we present a framework to integrate UNL system with Bangla. The main objectives of our research work is i) specification of Bangla-UNL dictionary; ii) development of analysis rules; and iii) translation scheme (parsing). In Sections 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 we describe the UNL system. In Sections 8 and 9, we present our main work.

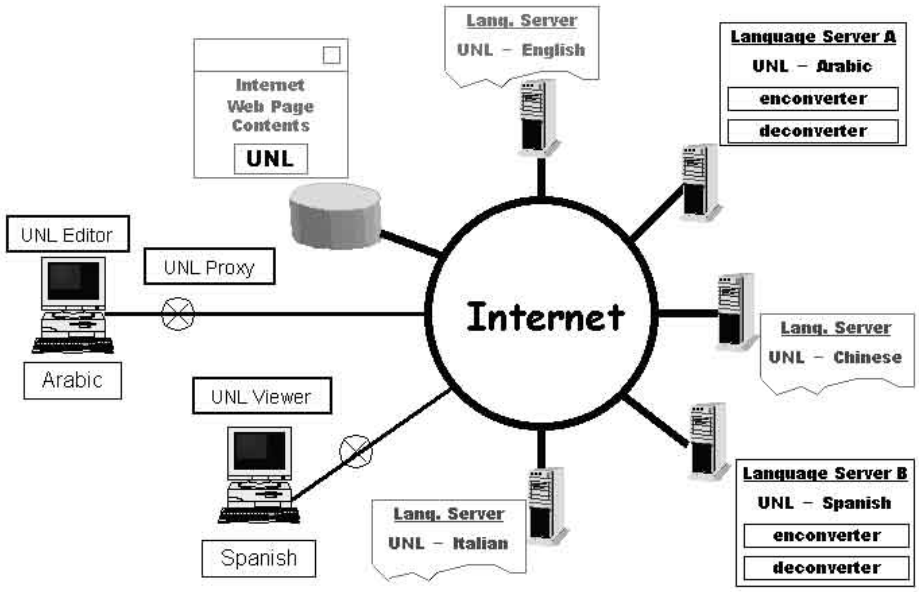



*Figure 1. The Infrastructure of the UNL System*

## 2. Universal Networking Language Specification

The UNL [1] has been introduced as a digital meta-language for describing, summarizing, refining, storing and disseminating information in a machine-independent and human language neutral form. This language intends to express meanings in standardized way. We think that a comprehensive description of UNL specification is necessary though it is available in the UNL website. The meaning of a native language sentence is expressed in UNL system as a hypergraph composed of nodes connected by semantic relations. Nodes or Universal Words (UWs) are words loaned from English and disambiguated by their positioning in a knowledge base (KB) of conceptual hierarchies. Function words, such as determiners and auxiliaries, are represented as attributes to UWs or nodes to provide additional information. The core structure of UNL is based on the following elements:

- Universal Words: Nodes that represent word meaning
- Attribute Labels: Additional information about the universal words
- Relation Labels: Tags that represent the relationship between Universal

Words i.e. between two nodes tags, are the arcs of the UNL hypergraph.

## *2.1 Universal words*

Universal words constitute the vocabulary of UNL and a basic element for constructing a UNL expression of a sentence or a compound concept. Such a UW is represented as a node in a hypergraph. There are two classes of UWs from this viewpoint in the composition:

- labels defined to express unit concepts and called "UWs" (Universal Words)
- a compound structure of a set of binary relations grouped together and called "Compound UWs".

A UW is a English-language word followed by a list of constraints. The following is the syntax of description of UWs in context-free grammar (CFG):

<UW> ::= <headword> [<constraint list>]
<headword> ::= <character>…
<constraint list> ::= "(" <constraint> [ "," <constraint>]… ")"
<constraint> ::= <relation label> { ">" | "<" } <UW> [<constraint list>] |
<relation label> { ">" | "<" } <UW> [<constraint list>]
[ { ">" | "<" } <UW> [<constraint list>] ] …
<relation label> ::= "agt" | euatation and" | "aoj" | "obj" | "icl" | ...

## *2.2 Headword*

The headword is an English word/compound word/phrase/sentence that is interpreted as a label for a set of concepts: the set is made up of all the concepts that may correspond to that in English. A basic UW (with no restrictions or constraint list) denotes this set. There are restricted UW's that are defined by a constraint list. Extra UWs denote new sets of concepts that do not have English-language labels.

## *2.3 Types of Universal Words*

A UW is an English language word with restrictions. UWs do not allow semantic ambiguity as a first principle. The reasons why English words are employed in UW construction are that (i) English is known by all UNL developers; (ii) and there are a lot of good bilingual dictionaries between a local language and English. A UW can express various levels of concepts depending on the restrictions and can be used to express a more specific or particular concept or an instance by giving attributes. The UWs are based on five concepts:

### *2.3.1 Basic UWs*

These are bare headwords with no constraint list.

### *2.3.2 Restricted UWs*

Restricted UW's are headwords with a constraint list. Examples are given below:
state(icl>express(agt>thing, gol>person, obj>thing))
state(icl>country)
state(icl>region)
state(icl>abstract thing)
state(icl>government)

### *2.3.3 Extra UWs*

These are special type of restricted UW; for example:
ikebana (icl>flower arrangement)

### *2.3.4 Temporary UWs*

Such concepts are not necessary to define. For example: http://www.undl.org/

### *2.3.5 Compound UW's*

These are a set of binary relations that are grouped together to express a compound concept. A sentence itself is considered as a compound UW. Compound UWs denote compound concepts that are to be interpreted/understood as a whole so that one can talk about their parts all at the same time. A compound UW is expressed by a scope in UNL expressions. In the example below, ":01" indicates all of the elements that are to be grouped together to define compound UW number 01. An example and translation to UNL is given below:

*Women who wear big hats in movie theaters should be asked [to leave].*

**The UNL translation is as follows:**

agt:01(wear(aoj>thing,obj>hat), woman(icl>person).@pl)
obj:01(wear(aoj>thing,obj>hat), hat(icl>wear))
aoj:01(big(aoj>thing), hat(icl>wear))
plc:01(wear(aoj>thing,obj>hat), theater(icl>facilities))
mod:01(theater(icl>facilities), movie(icl>art))
agt:01(leave(agt>thing,obj>place).@entry, woman(icl>person).@pl)

## 3. Attributes

The attributes represent the grammatical properties of the words. Attributes of UWs are used to describe subjectivity of sentences. They show what is said from the speaker's point of view: how the speaker views what is said. This includes phenomena technically called speech, acts, propositional attitudes, truth values, etc. Conceptual relations and UWs are used to describe objectivity of sentences. Attributes of UWs enrich this description with more information about how the speaker views these state-of-affairs and his attitudes toward them.

For example, the corresponding UW of play is "play (icl>do)". If the word "play" is in the past form in the sentence an attribute @past is tagged with "play (icl>do)". If it is the main word in the sentence then @entry will be tagged such as "play (icl>do), @entry, past".

## 4. Relational Labels

The relation between UWs is binary that have different labels according to the different roles they play. A relation label is represented as strings of three characters or less. There are many factors to be considered in choosing an inventory of relations. The following is an example of relation defined according to the above principles.

*Relation: agt (agent)*
Agt defines a thing that initiates an action.
agt (do, thing)
agt (action, thing )
Syntax:
agt[":"<CompoundUW-ID>]"("{<UW1>|":"<Compound UW-ID>} "," {<UW2>|":"<Compound UW-ID>} ")"
An agent is defined as the relation between
UW1 - do, and
UW2 - a thing
Here UW2 initiates UW1, or UW2 is thought of as having a direct role in making UW1 happen.

**Examples of "agt" relation:**

| | |
|---|---|
| John breaks … | agt(break(agt>thing,obj>thing), John(icl>person) |
| Mary broke the window | agt(break(icl>do).@entry.@past, Mary) |

**Some other relations in UNL are as follows:**

aoj (thing with attribute)
bas ( standard (basis) of comparison)
cag (co-agent)
con (condition)
dur (duration)
equ (equivalent)
gol (goal: final state)
iof (an instance of)
mod (modification)
plc (place)
pur (purpose or objective)
rsn (reason)
src (source: initial state)
tim (time)

## 5. Unl Expression

The UNL expresses information or knowledge in the form of semantic network. UNL semantic network is made up of a set of binary relations where each binary relation is composed of a relation and two UWs that hold the relation. A binary relation of UNL is expressed in the following format:

<relation> (<uw1>, <uw2>)

In <relation>, one of the relations defined in the UNL specifications is described. In <uw1> and <uw2> the two UWs that hold the relation given at <relation> are described.

## 6. Hypergraph

The UNL expression is a hyper-semantic network. That is, each node of the graph, <uw1> and <uw2> of a binary relation can be replaced with a semantic network. Such a node consists of a semantic network of a UNL expression and is called a "scope". A scope can be connected with other UWs or scopes. The UNL expressions in a scope can be distinguished from others by assigning an ID to the <relations> of the set of binary relations that belong to the scope. The general description format of binary relations for a hypernode of UNL is the following:

<relation> :< scope-id> (<node1>, <node2>)

Where,

- <scope-id> is the ID for distinguishing a scope. <scope-id> is not necessary to specify when a binary relation does not belong to any scope.
- <node1> and <node2> can be a UW or a <scope node>.
- A <scope node> is given in the format of ":< scope-id>".

**7. Knowledge Base**

The UNL Knowledge Base (KB) gives possible binary relations between UWs. The knowledge base is a set of knowledge-base entries. The format of knowledge-base entries is as follows.

<Knowledge Base entry>::= <Binary relations> "=" <degree of certainty><Binary Relation> ::= <Relation Label> "("<UW1>","<UW2>")"<degree of certainty> ::= "0" | "1" | ... | "255"

When the degree of certainty is "0", it means the relation between two UWs is false. When the degree of certainty is more than "1", it means the relation between two UWs is true, and the bigger the number is, the more the credible it is.

The UW system has been introduced to:

- generate a word when a concept is not included in a language and
- reduce the number of knowledge-base entries which can be deductively inferred.

For this purpose the "icl" relation was introduced so that it could inherit properties from upper UW's. Each UW is categorized according to the role of concept to other concepts. For example, a proposition such as "A dog can eat food." is expressed in the following manner:

icl(icl>animal), animal(icl>living thing))=1

agt (eat(icl>do(obj>thing), animal(icl>living thing))=1

obj(eat(icl>do(obj>thing), food(icl>functional thing))=1

## 8. Bangla-UNL Dictionary

We present below the framework of Bangla-UNL dictionary on the basis of morphological analysis, standard bi-lingual dictionaries, and the UNL specified knowledge base.

### *8.1 Morphological Analysis*

The first task is to analyze Bangla morphological structures. Morphological analysis results in lexical structure or hierarchy of the local vocabularies with the entries of the root word and morphemes [7,8]. Morphology is concerned with the ways in which words are formed from basic sequences of morphemes. It acts as the crossroads between phonology, lexicon, syntax, semantics, and context. Two types are distinguished:

- Inflectional Morphology
- Derivational Morphology

Inflectional Morphology defines possible variations on a root form. Inflectional morphology produces or derives words from another word form acquiring certain grammatical features but maintaining the same part of speech or category. Bangla has a very strong structural inflectional morphology for its verb forms. For example, there are nearly (10x5) forms for a certain verb-word in Bangla with 10 tenses and five persons and a root verb changes in form according to tense and person. For example roots such as "ja" or "kha" has such forms [7]

### *8.2 Morphological Analysis of Verbs*

Morphological analysis is applied to identify the actual meaning of the word by identifying the suffix or morpheme of that word. Every word is derived from a root word. A root word may have different transformations. This happens because of different morphemes which are added with it as suffixes. So the meaning of the word varies for its different transformations. For example, if we consider ‘kor’ as a root word then after adding ‘echilo’ we get the word ‘kor-echilo’ which means a work done in the past. Similarly after adding ‘be’, we get the word ‘kor-be’. Here, one word represents the past indefinite tense of the root word ‘kor’ and another represents the future indefinite tense. Therefore, by morphological analysis we get the grammatical attributes of the main word. For this reason we have applied morphological analysis to find out the actual meaning of the word.

Derivational morphology is simple and a word rarely uses the derivational rule in more than two or three steps. The first step forms nouns or adjectives from

verb roots. The next steps form new nouns and adjectives. We have examined derivational morphology for UNL-Bangla dictionary too. Examples of both forms are given for the root word "kar".

The UNL form:

kar]{} "do(icl>do)"(List of Semantic and Syntactic Attribute)<B,0,0>;

Inflectional Morphology:
[-ebe] "ebe" (VMORP, FUTURE),<B,0,0>

Derivation Morphology:
[a] "a" (NMORP),<B,0,0>

In the following we have given morphological analysis of a Bangla verb word. We can select the head words as the Longest Common Lexical Unit (LCLU) of all the possible transformations of the word. We can give the example of the Bangla word "ja" which means "to go". The corresponding UW in basic form is "go". The dictionary entry is [ja] { } "go (icl>do)" where 'ja' is the head word and (icl>do) is from the knowledge base. Some possible transformations of 'ja' in the Bangla to UNL dictionary are given as follows [3, 9]:

A snapshot of the Bangla to UNL dictionary can be seen in what follows:
[ja] { } "go (icl>do)" (V, 3P, @present) <B, 0, 0>
// root word is "ja". Other derivations follow:
[-i] { } "go (icl>do)" (V, 3P, present) <B, 0, 0>
[gelo] { } "go (icl>do)" (V, 3P, @past) <B, 0, 0>
[-be] { } "go (icl>do)" (V, 3P, @future) <B, 0, 0>
…

Such dictionary order with root word followed by derivations will help in any quick search to find UW and the attributes of a Bangla word.

### *8.3 Bangla-English Dictionary*

Bangla to English dictionary is the source of building a Bangla to UNL dictionary as universal words are English words mandated by UNL. Such dictionaries also provide all attributes along with the meaning of a word. Any entry in the dictionary is put in the following format:

[HW] {ID} "UW" (ATTRIBUTE1, ATTRIBUTE2 . . .) <FLG, FRE, PRI>

Here,

HW ← Head Word (Bangla word)
ID ← Identification of Head Word (omitable)
UW ← Universal Word
ATTRIBUTE ← Attribute of the HW
FLG ← Language Flag
FRE ← Frequency of Head Word
PRI ← Priority of Head Word

Some example entries of dictionary for Bangla are given below:
shohor {} "city(icl>region)" (N, PLACE) <B,0,0>
prochur {} "huge(icl>big)" (ADJ) <B,0,0>
Here the attributes,

N stands for Noun
PLACE stands for place
ADJ stands for Adjective
FLG field entry is B which stands for Bangla

A universal knowledge base is defined in UNL specification. This knowledge base is language independent and each native language word should be referenced to this knowledge base. The knowledge base of universal words is a hierarch of concepts.

## 9. Enconversion System

To translate Bangla sentences into UNL form, we have to use EnCo, a universal converter system [4] built by the UNL organization. The process model known as enconverter system is given in Fig. 2. It is a language independent parser which provides morphological and syntactic analysis synchronously.

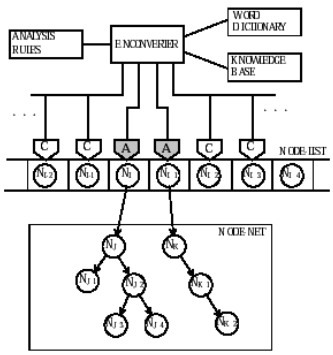



*Figure 2: Structure of Enconverter of UNL Project*

From Figure 2, it can be seen that analysis rules for parsing, Bangla to UNL dictionary and knowledge base of UNL are the components for converting Bangla to UNL. EnCo operates on the nodes of the node-list through its windows which are of two types, namely, analysis window (AW) and condition window (CW). The analysis windows are used to check two adjacent nodes in order to apply one of the analysis rules. If there is an applicable rule, EnCo adds lexical attributes to or deletes lexical attributes from these nodes, and/or creates a partial syntactic tree and/or UNL network according to the type of the rule.

### *9.1 Enconvertion of Bangla Expression to UNL*

We can use a language independent parser like EnCo for Bangla to UNL conversion. For that purpose, we have to provide the grammatical rules called analysis rules for Bangla. The universal parser [4] of the EnCo scans input Bangla sentences from left to right. In this parsing it will identify each word and find out its corresponding UW, attribute and morphemes. It will then form the relations between the UWs with the help of the given grammatical rules. An example of Bangla to UNL conversion is given below.

A simple Bangla expression is:
"oddhapok Ali gotokal shokal-e gram-er gorib-der ortho diechen"

According to [3], the corresponding UW and head word of each Bangla word is given below:

Gorib {} "poor (icl>group)"
Oddhapok {} "professor (icl>title)"
Die { } "give (icl>do)"
Gotokal {} "yesterday (icl>day")
Ortho {} "money (icl>thing)"
Shokal {} "morning (icl>heavenly phenomenon)"
Gram {} "village (icl>region)"
Ali {"Ali (icl>male)"

**The UNL relations among the UWs i.e. the final UNL expression, is as follows:**

aoj(professor(icl>title), Ali(icl>person))
mod(yesterday(icl>day),morning(icl>heavenly phenomenon))
tim(give(icl>do).@entry.@past, yesterday(icl>day))
to(money(icl>functional thing), poor(icl>group).@pl)
obj(give(icl>do).@entry.@past,money(functional thing))

plc(poor(icl>group).@pl, village(icl>region))
agt(give(icl>do).@entry.@past, Ali(icl>person))

**The hypergraph of the sentence is shown in Figure 3**

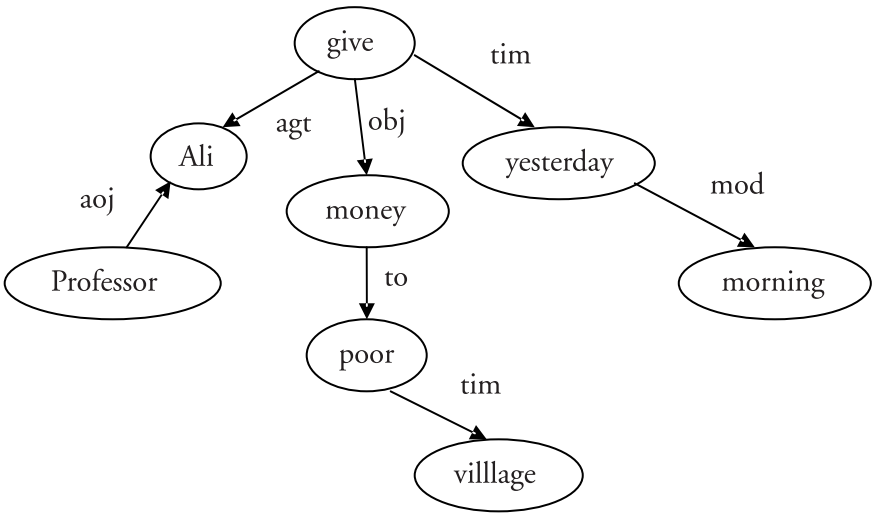



*Figure 3. The UNL Hypergraph*

### *9.2 The Encoding of a Bangla Conjunctive Sentence*

The encoding process will be performed by shift/reduce parsing [5]. We have observed that the Hindi language has syntactic similarities with Bangla and the Hindi to UNL [6] system developed at the Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay, can serve as a reference for us. Here is an example of encoding a simple Bangla sentence. We assume that analysis rules and the dictionary of Bangla to UNL are given to the analyzer system EnCo.

"Karim ebong Rahim school-e ja-be."

The node list is shown here within "<<"and ">>". The analysis window is within "["and "]". The nodes delimited by "/" are those explored and fixed by the system.
/<</[Rahim]/[ebong]/"Karim school-e ja-be"/>>/

The noun "Rahim" and the conjunction "ebong" will be combined and a "and" relation can be made between "Rahim" and other noun or pronoun.
/<</[Rahim ebong]/[Karim]/"school-e ja-be"/>>/

A "and" relation will be made between two nouns "Rahim" and "Karim" and then "ebong Karim" will be deleted/reduced. Current sentence in the analysis windows are as follows:
/<</[Rahim]/[school-e]/" ja-be"/>>/

"Rahim" cannot be resolved with "school" because there is no Bangla syntactic rule like noun followed by another noun except with a "," or conjunction like "ebong" in between. Therefore, the analyzer looks ahead further right (make right shift) to get a verb "ja". Since the noun "school" can be resolved with the verb "ja", a reduction in the action will take place because of the relation between the noun and verb.

/<</Rahim /[school-e]/[ja-be]/>>/

An "obj" relation is created between the noun "school-e" and the verb "ja-be" and "school-e" is deleted.

/<</ [Rahim]/[ja-be]/>>/

Here, "agt" relation is created between "Rahim" and the verb "ja-be".

/<</ jabe/ [>>]/

A right shift is performed and the right shift rule attaches an attribute @entry to the last word "ja-be" left in the node list. Bangla to UNL dictionary has been searched to replace "ja-be" by the UW "(go (icl>do).@future)". A verb is the main word of a sentence and most of the relations are created by the main word. The UNL output of the corresponding sentence is:

and (Karim(icl>male),Rahim(icl>male))
obj(go(icl>do).@entry.@future,school(icl>place))
agt(go(icl>do).@entry.@future, Rahim(icl>male))

We have also verified that some other type of sentences such as assertive and interrogative sentences can be translated similarly.

## 10. UNL Project For Bangla

The authors of this paper of the Computer Science and Engineering Department of East West University have undertaken the work of synthesizing Bangla to UNL [10] and are working on constructing a Bangla-UNL dictionary and analysis rules (Bangla to UNL translation rules). The first author has become a member of the

UNL Society of Universal Networking Digital Language (UNDL) Foundation which permits members to use the official resources. However, a UNDL Foundation recognized UNL Centre for Bangla is yet to be established.

## 11. Conclusion

Our preliminary work gives indication that Bangla-UNL system can be built like similar systems built for other official languages. The following conclusions can be arrived at:

- The UNL system is a step towards multilingual translation and the system is shown to be workable.
- Emphasis on semantics of natural languages is the most important attribute of UNL
- It is an instrument towards overcoming the digital divide.
- UNL has the potential to become a language of the web like HTML and XML. UNL document can be converted to any natural language for which the system is built but HTML and XML presents documents and data only in English.
- Our introductory work – UNL concept testing for Bangla – can serve as a basis for further research and development work.
- We have explained in brief how to build Bangla-UNL dictionary and all previous works on Bangla morphological analysis can be of help.
- We have given an example of how to discover rules for Bangla-UNL conversion which includes morpho-syntactic and semantic phenomena. The process can be automated.
- A UNL center can be established for Bangla like the sixteen other official of the UNL project languages to perform effective research and development and coordinate activities among researchers, developers, and the Universal Networking Digital Language (UNDL) Foundation.

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# An Analytical Study On Leadership Challenges for Human Service Administrators

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## Abstract:

The present study addresses itself to the challenges that human service administrators face in maintaining and moving their organizations forward. The study has identified twelve leadership challenge dimensions, explored variations in these challenges across agencies and administrators, and finally draws a concluding line and discusses policy implications based on the findings of the study for leadership development programs targeted at human service administrators.

## Key Words:

Leadership Challenges, Human Service Administrators, Social Responsibility and Non-Profit Agencies.

## Introduction and Problem Statement

Experience reveals that directors of human service agencies face challenges while they deal with day-to-day conflicts, multiple interest groups, and ambiguous situations. Ample anecdotal evidence supports this perception-stories of debates with boards over personnel issues, of frustration when clients' needs cannot be met, of conflicts with neighborhoods over the location of homeless shelters or

halfway houses. Yet, compared to research documenting the tasks of managers in for-profit organization (Mintzbreg, 1973; Tornow and Pinto, 1976), empirical work focused on the challenges faced by directors of human service agencies is scant. According to many, a human service agency usually means local nonprofit agencies that provides services aimed at meeting the social needs of a community, such as health, social services, arts, and recreation agencies.

Since the nonprofit sector has some unique characteristics, one cannot necessarily generalize on the basis of the results of research on business leaders in this sector. The missions of nonprofit agencies have a political and social emphasis and reflect values of altruism, philanthropy, social responsibility, equity, and fairness (Farrow, Valenzi, and Bass, 1980; Brown and Covey, 1987; Rubin, Adamski, and Block, 1989).

The nature of their missions leads to multiple service objectives and makes it difficult to measure their organizational performance (Newman and Wallender, 1978). Also, the nonprofit organization's governance structure, although typical of nonprofit organizations, establishes both lay volunteer (board) and professional (director) authority, each with its own statuses, roles, responsibilities, and values (Kramer, 1987). The success of an agency relies heavily on the effectiveness, involvement, and commitment of its board (Middleton, 1987; Independent Sector, 1989).

Another unique characteristic of nonprofit organizations is funding. They lack access to capital and depend on a broad mix of revenue sources, most of them non-market ones (Fottler, 1981; Young, 1987; O'Neill and Young, 1988). Finally, the reliance of nonprofit organizations on volunteers creates differences in the domains of recruitment, rewards, and employee-volunteer relations (Herman and Heimovics, 1989). Volunteers have a great deal of discretion in how and what they do (Young, 1987), and they often have changing expectations and motivations (Middleton, 1986), which can lead to turnover in membership.

In order to develop the leaders of human service agencies, one needs to understand the challenges they face in maintaining and moving their organizations forward. How should one define the core challenges faced by human service administrators that cut across individual situations? Do challenges differ by characteristics of the agency, such as size or age? Do they vary by background of the administrator? What types of training and development will help leaders to deal successfully with these challenges? This paper addresses the authors' research efforts

to answer these questions, which constitute the problem of the study.

## Past Research

Past research on nonprofit managers is scarce; the present authors have come across only two interesting studies which provide some insights into the leadership challenges experienced by human service administrators.

Herman and Heimovics (1989) asked chief executives regarded as highly effective and executives not considered to be as successful to describe critical incidents that had successful and unsuccessful outcomes. The researchers used these events to discover common issues in nonprofit management, examine the skills and abilities of the nonprofit leaders, and distinguish between the behaviors of the highly effective ones from the behaviors of those who are less highly regarded. They conclude that adjusting programs to changes in funding patterns, fund-raising, and board-executive relations are often considered major challenges for nonprofit managers.

The Independent Sector (1989) sponsored a four-year study on effective sector leadership and management. Its findings revealed common points from seven different projects that "identify factors that differentiated effective or excellent organizations from all others" (Independent Sector, 1989: 2). The three critical factors are a clear sense of mission, a leader who creates a culture that makes fulfillment of the mission possible, and an involved and committed board that maintains positive relations with the director and the larger community.

## Present Study

Given the limited amount of research about the critical demands as seen by leaders in the nonprofit sector, the current study has been conducted to determine what managers of human service agencies perceived to be their leadership challenges and which of these challenges are most pervasive. The authors' present study was also interested in whether certain characteristics of an agency or a manager are related to the kinds of challenges that managers experienced.

## Methodology

The present study is based on both secondary and primary information. The present researchers interviewed twenty-seven directors of human service agencies in Dhaka. The structured interviews consisted of a number of open-ended questions that focused on managing relationships, setting up agendas, and career issues. The majority of the interviewees managed private human service agencies;

four operated in public agencies. The agencies were diverse in terms of services provided and staff size. Males and females were equally represented in this group of administrators.

The interviews served as the basis for a more comprehensive survey sent to a larger sample of human service administrators. The major section of the survey contained sixty-eight leadership challenge items. For each item, the administrator used a five-point scale to indicate the degree to which he or she had experienced the challenges in his or her position. Each item represented a specific challenge that the authors of the paper had heard about in their interviews from two or more directors. These specific challenges included the lack of developmental opportunities for staff, conflict with the board over major decisions, getting staff to see the big picture, balancing work and personal life, and trying something new that the agency had never achieved.

The survey also sought information about characteristics of the administrator's agency, including number of years in existence, current annual budget, number of board members, public or private status, affiliation with national organizations, and the funding sources on which it relied (foundations; local, state, and/or government; community or civic groups; churches; fees for products or services; contributions from individuals).

The participants were asked to indicate the number of years they had been managers, the number of years they had been in their present position, whether they had ever worked outside the nonprofit sector, whether they had mentors in their careers, whether they still maintained a direct service role, and whether they served on the board of another agency.

The survey was sent to three hundred human service administrators. The sample was obtained from three different sources: participants in a workshop for hospice organizations in the northern part of Bangladesh, a representative selection of human service administrators in Metropolitan and non-Metropolitan Dhaka obtained from the mailing list of the Human Services Institute, and directors of agencies in Chittagong metropolitan area. Managers from university and hospital settings were also included.

A total of 161 managers submitted usable responses—a 54 percent return rate. Seventy-four percent of the organizations that they represented were private agencies; 40 percent were part of a national organization. Of the total, 134 respondents were executive directors and 27 were managers at other levels. Sixty-

three percent of the group were females. On the average, the managers had held their current position for five years; they had been a manager for eleven years; and had worked in the human service field for sixteen years. Counseling, education, and health care were the primary services most often mentioned.

## Analysis and Interpretation

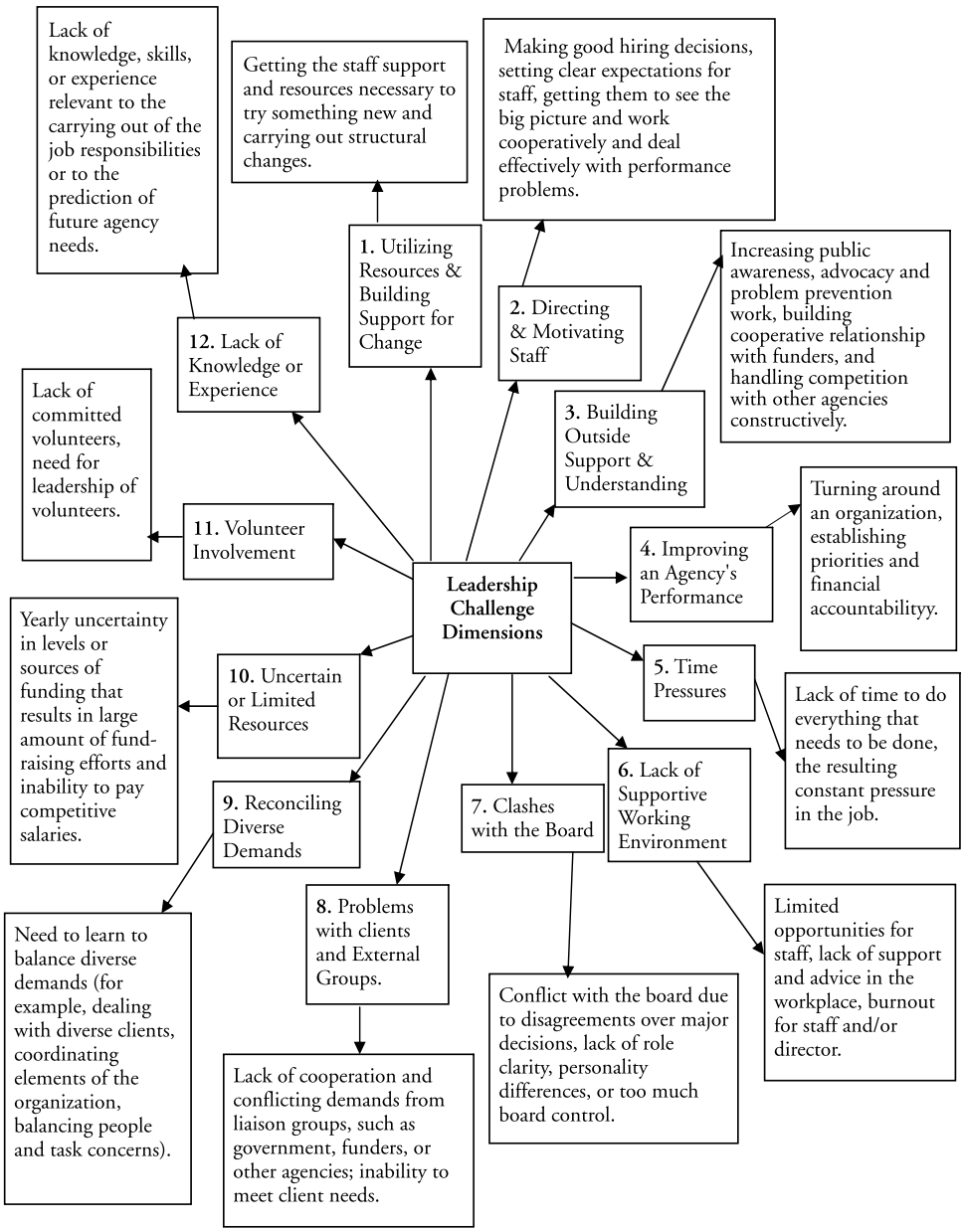
In order to define the core leadership challenges represented by the sixty-eight challenge items, the authors of this paper grouped challenge items that were highly related to one another statistically and looked for common themes within groups. The authors' assumption was that these homogeneous groups of items represented the underlying dimensions of leadership challenges. The authors used VARCLUS, a variable clustering technique (SAS Institute, 1985), to divide the sixty-eight leadership challenge items into groups that could be interpreted as primarily unidimensional. A twelve-cluster solution was chosen as the one most closely meeting statistical and interpretability criteria.

Ratings on the items that made up a cluster were averaged to obtain an overall score on the cluster. Thus, each participant in the survey received a score on each of twelve leadership challenge dimensions. Each dimension consisted of three to eleven challenge items. Figure#1 describes these dimensions. Table#1 shows the means and standard deviations for the dimension scores.

To detect patterns in the variability of challenges across agencies and individuals, the present authors correlated the leadership challenge dimension scores with the characteristics of the administrator's agency and the individual administrator. Table#2 shows a number of variables in these tables are dichotomous. In these cases, the presence of a state or condition (for example, agency is part of a national organization, administrator had a mentor etc.) was coded 1, and its absence was coded 0. For gender, females were coded 1, and males were coded 0. To compensate for a skewed budget distribution within the sample of the present study, the researchers (i.e. authors) collapsed the raw budget numbers into eight categories, with 1 representing the smallest budgets (less than Tk 10,000) and 8 representing the largest (greater than Tk 100 lakh). The number of funders variable was created by summing the number of responses checked on the funding source list.

*The following figure #1shows the Leadership Challenge dimensions:*

**Figure #1: Leadership Challenge Dimensions.**



## Discussion based on the above figure

The above figure shows that the twelve dimensions provide a framework for understanding core leadership challenges faced by human service administrators.

Four dimensions—"Utilizing Resources and Building Support for Change", "Directing and Motivating Staff", "Building Outside Support and Understanding", and "Improving an Agency's Performance"—relate to the task of keeping the organization working towards its mission. As mentioned earlier, a strong mission focus is one distinguishing characteristic of effective nonprofit organizations. To be responsive to the organization's mission, the administrator often has to focus on the overseas development of new programs or makes internal changes in how the agency operates. Some directors have the additional challenge of revitalizing an agency that has not been performing well.

Keeping the organization on track requires the director to translate the mission into clear goals, motivate and focus staff, and build supportive relationships with funders, other agencies, and the public. The mission of many agencies involves the director in attempts to bring about change in political processes or public attitudes; for example, by lobbying for rougher penalties in cases of family violence or changing attitudes about drinking and driving. For a service organization whose main assets are its people, one of the big challenges in creating change is building relationships and persuading others.

An administrator who rated "Time Pressure", "Lack of Supportive Working Environment", "Clashes with the Board", "Problems with Clients and External Groups", and "Reconciling Diverse Demands" high is facing challenges related to the handling of pressure and conflict. The fact that demand for services often exceeds the response that can be made with existing resources creates for the administrator a sense of always being behind and of needing to work just a little harder. This pressure, along with the serious nature of many clients' problems, creates a situation in which burnout is a real possibility. If the work environment does not provide peer support or developmental opportunities for staff, two important motivators in the nonprofit agency, burnout then becomes almost certain.

**Table #1: Means and Standard Deviations for Leadership Challenge Dimensions and Correlations with Agency Characteristics**

| *Dimension* | *Mean* | *Standard Deviation* | *Private Agency* | *National Affiliate* | *Years in Existence* | *Size of Budget* | *Diversity in Funding* | *Size of Board* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Utilizing Resources and Building Support for Change | 2.43 | 0.83 | 0.12 | 0.02 | 0.07 | 0.18* | 0.11 | -0.07 |
| Directing and Motivating Staff | 2.35 | .76 | .07 | .08 | .01 | .17* | .23** | -.09 |
| Building Outside Support and Understanding | 2.64 | 0.68 | -0.01 | -0.01 | -0.02 | 0.04 | 0.03 | -0.16* |
| Improving an Agency's Performance | 2.28 | 0.96 | 0.09 | -0.13 | 0.11 | -0.03 | 0.09 | -0.11 |
| Time Pressures | 3.29 | 0.89 | 0.08 | 0.01 | -0.08 | -0.04 | 0.02 | -0.20** |
| Lack of Supportive Work Environment | 2.65 | 0.78 | -0.07 | 0.03 | -0.07 | 0.05 | -0.02 | -0.11 |
| Clashes with the Board | 1.73 | 0.69 | -0.05 | -0.04 | -0.01 | -0.09 | 0.07 | -0.09 |
| Problems with Clients and External Groups | 2.44 | 0.66 | -0.02 | 0.10 | 0.05 | 0.26** | 0.22** | -0.11 |
| Reconciling Diverse Demands | 2.66 | 0.81 | 0.05 | 0.09 | -0.05 | 0.01 | 0.10 | 0.01 |
| Uncertain or Limited Resources | 3.23 | 0.93 | 0.13 | 0.10 | -0.16* | -0.11 | 0.10 | -0.13 |
| Volunteer Involvement | 2.44 | 0.95 | -0.15* | -0.02 | -0.16* | -0.27** | -0.11 | -0.07 |
| Lack of Knowledge or Experience | 2.14 | 0.71 | 0.02 | 0.03 | -0.06 | -0.14 | -0.07 | -0.12 |

*p<.05
**p<.01

**Table #2: Correlations of Leadership Challenge Dimensions and Administrator Characteristics**

| *Dimension* | *Age* | *Gender* | *Educational Level* | *Years as Manager* | *Years in Position* | *Experience in Other Sectors* | *Mentor in Past* | *Direct Service Role* | *Board of Another Agency* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Utilizing Resources and Building Support for Change | -0.21** | -0.09 | 0.02 | 0.09 | -0.14 | -0.22** | 0.13 | -0.08 | 0.03 |
| Directing and Motivating Staff | -0.16* | -0.10 | -0.02 | 0.14 | -0.02 | -0.23** | 0.13 | -0.07 | 0.07 |
| Building Outside Support and Understanding | -0.06 | -0.09 | -0.03 | 0.07 | 0.06 | -0.21** | 0.09 | 0.09 | 0.05 |
| Improving an Agency's Performance | -0.16* | -0.09 | 0.10 | -0.02 | -0.17* | -0.08 | 0.05 | -0.04 | -0.18* |
| Time Pressures | -0.14 | 0.10 | -0.18* | -0.08 | -0.05 | -0.06 | 0.18* | 0.12 | 0.06 |
| Lack of Supportive Working Environment | -0.28** | 0.07 | -0.17* | -0.11 | -0.11 | -0.10 | 0.11 | 0.02 | -0.02 |
| Clashes with the Board | -0.12 | -0.05 | -0.03 | -0.09 | -0.12 | 0.02 | 0.17* | 0.00 | -0.19* |
| Problems with Clients and External Groups | -0.12 | -0.13 | -0.05 | 0.18* | 0.16 | -0.28** | 0.06 | -0.10 | 0.00 |
| Reconciling Diverse Demands | -0.11 | 0.01 | -0.18* | 0.01 | -0.04 | -0.20** | 0.09 | 0.14 | -0.05 |
| Uncertain or Limited Resources | 0.01 | 0.10 | -0.07 | -0.08 | -0.12 | -0.06 | 0.06 | 0.18* | 0.05 |
| Volunteer Involvement | 0.27** | 0.16* | -0.18* | -0.31** | -0.11 | 0.07 | 0.04 | 0.19* | -0.11 |
| Lack of Knowledge or Experience | -0.28** | 0.09 | -0.18* | -0.23** | -0.14 | -0.03 | 0.06 | 0.19* | -0.04* |

*p<.05
**p<.01

Another potential source of conflict for human service administrators is the diverse relationships that they manage with stakeholders—board members who are too controlling, bureaucratic government regulatory agencies, unrealistic clients, funders with conflicting wishes, and other agencies who might fight over turf. The multiplicity of goals in a nonprofit organization can also lead to value-laden conflicts within the agency over the activities that are appropriate for the agency to be involved in. The administrator may also experience internal conflict when trying to reconcile people and task concerns or when coordinating different parts of the organization.

The final dimensions—"Uncertain or Limited Resources", "Volunteer Involvement", and "Lack of Knowledge or Experience"—relate to management of uncertainty and ambiguity. Since most financial resources in human service agencies are not obtained from the individuals who receive service, there is no clear link between the quality of the service that the agency provides and its revenues. The third-party funding process is much more tenuous, and the director faces a constant need to renew sources of funding. Volunteers are another source of uncertainty. What will motivate them? Will they have the skills needed? Can they be counted on? Finally, many leaders of human service agencies have backgrounds in helping professions and little preparation for management. Many of the management decisions that they have to make may seem ambiguous simply because they have not yet had opportunities to develop the tacit knowledge that would guide them in running the organization.

This study's sample of human service administrators viewed "Time Pressure" and "Uncertain or Limited Resources" as by far the strongest challenges that they faced. These challenges are more likely to be constant parts of the human service world than the lowest-rated challenges: "Lack of Knowledge" or "Experience and Clashes with the Board". These two are more specific, and they may occur for most administrators at some point, but are not as likely to be ongoing.

Human service administrators appear to share a number of challenges with their counterparts in other sectors. These shared challenges include time pressures, directing and motivating staff, lack of knowledge, and improving an organization's performance. However, it was hypothesized that some of the challenges might appear to stem from the unique features of the nonprofit sector. Table#3 summarizes these links.

## Variations Across Agencies

The strength that a particular challenge has for an administrator depends in part on characteristics of his or her agency. Those in public agencies are challenged by volunteer involvement, which is not surprising, since volunteers are less likely to be attracted to these agencies, and their boards are generally appointed by the government rather than being made up of recruited volunteers. Younger agencies experience more resource challenges, both in funding and in volunteers, than do more established agencies. This finding, too, is not surprising, since older agencies are more likely to have developed relationships with volunteers and funders, built up a revenue base, and established a committed board that takes on major fund-raising responsibilities.

**Table #3**

**Links Between Features of Nonprofit Organizations and Leader's Challenges**

| *Feature* | *Conditions Created* | *Leader's Challenges* |
|---|---|---|
| *Mission* | *Broad range of constituents; multiple objectives; value-laden conflicts; client needs that outstrip resources* | *Building outside support and understanding; resolving problems with clients and external groups; creating a supportive working environment* |
| *Governance* | *Board role ambiguity; lay-professional value differences; importance to agency of board's support* | *Establishing clear expectations; creating positive relations with board; facilitating solutions to conflicts* |
| *Funding* | *Lack of access to capital; dependence on mixture of non-market sources of funds; funders with differing values and goals* | *Working with limited and uncertain resources; resolving problems with resource contributors; reconciling diverse demands* |
| *Volunteers* | *Major contributors who control own terms of work; reliance on non-monetary rewards; flux in organizational membership* | *Recruiting, motivating, and retaining volunteers* |

Although the directors of larger agencies have fewer problems with volunteer involvement than the directors of smaller agencies, they are more challenged by the need to build support for change, the task of leading their staff,

and problems with stakeholders. Larger organizations lose some of their flexibility and the number of staff members and other stakeholders requires increased resourcefulness. Large organizations are also more visible, which may cause conflict with outside groups. Agencies that have a more varied mix of funding sources also tend to have more problems with external groups.

Interestingly, having larger boards is associated with less challenge from the need to build support outside the agency and from time pressures. It is likely that a reciprocal effect is taking place: More board members can create larger support in the community, and well-supported agencies find it easier to attract more board members. More active board members may also ease an agency director's work load and decrease the pressures of time constraints by fund-raising, representing the agency at special functions, making presentations, and raising public awareness.

Some challenges appear to be more independent of the organizational characteristics examined. "Lack of Supportive Work Environment" and "Clashes with the Board" in particular were not related to agency characteristics. These challenges are perhaps as likely to occur in one type of agency as they are in another.

## Variations Across Leaders

The administrator's individual characteristics are also related to the degree of challenge experienced. In general, perceptions of challenge decrease with age and level of education. Male-female differences were found in only one challenge: volunteer involvement. It is likely that this is due to the tendency of women to manage smaller agencies, which are more apt to report problems attracting committed volunteers. Smaller organizations are also more likely to be managed by less experienced managers, which may help in explaining why managers with fewer years of experience report less conflict with outside groups and more problems with volunteer involvement—the same pattern of challenges associated with smaller agencies.

Interestingly, administrators who have had work experience outside the nonprofit sector report fewer challenges, particularly on the dimensions related to moving their organizations forward and to problems with clients and external groups. Diverse experiences may give these administrators more opportunities to learn how to handle these challenges. Also, administrators who serve on the board of another agency experience less conflict with their own board. Experience in the

other role may help them to develop an understanding of how to handle the board effectively. Why administrators who have had mentors would be more challenged by time pressures and clashed with the board is not clear.

## Conclusion and Policy implications

It may be concluded on the basis of the foregoing discussion that developing leaders who can meet the challenges inherent in the human service administrator's job is an important endeavor. Developing economies like Bangladesh have become increasingly dependent on the nonprofit sector to fulfill important social functions (Desruisseaux, 1985). Nonprofit organizations serve developing nations' [including Bangladesh] education system, social services, health care, public advocacy, art, and cultural needs (Firstenberg, 1986). Moreover, human service leaders need to be prepared so that their agencies may thrive during the tougher times that they are now facing: diminished government funding, cutbacks in government-sponsored social programs, and private donations that have not been able to make up for the discrepancy. Given these conditions and considering the rapid growth rate of human service agencies, effective leadership is essential for the efficiency and success of these agencies.

Looking at the leadership challenges of human service administrators, directors would hopefully gain insights into the kinds of leadership development programs that are needed. There may be at least five areas that leadership development programs for these directors could usefully address:

1. ***Moving an organization forward in its mission.*** The broad, value-laden missions of most human service agencies quickly lead to a multiplicity of goals and cause internal conflicts about goal priorities. To keep the organization focused, a director needs to learn how to develop systems for the monitoring of client needs and opportunities for new programs, how to evaluate the contribution that goals can make to the overall mission of the organization, how to work with staff and board to decide which goals to pursue, and how to articulate those goals to individuals and groups outside the agency. The directors could also put to use models and frameworks for analyzing their organization—its strengths, needs, performance, and culture. The results of these analyses would often suggest needed changes in structure, processes, or direction. The directors thus need to learn how to instigate and facilitate change in the organization.

2. ***Building relationships that will foster support for the organization.*** The directors are often the linchpin that holds together the various groups that contribute to the agency. The board, volunteers, employed staff, clients, external groups, community leaders, and the public represent distinct challenges. Good interpersonal skills are not the only factors in the development of productive relations with this wide variety of stakeholders. Awareness of the varying needs and concerns of these stakeholder groups and knowledge of how to best persuade and gain their confidence are important. The confidence that staff have in a director may be built on his or her style of delegating service delivery decisions to the professional staff, while the confidence of a board may be based on the director's expertise and history of keeping the agency in good financial shape. A government regulatory agency may be most impressed by close attention to detail, while a foundation needs to see innovative new ideas for attacking social problems.

3. ***Gaining and using resources in creative and innovative ways.*** The limited access to capital is one constraint of the nonprofit sector. The human service administrator must find creative ways of working within these constraints. Certainly, fund-raising strategies and techniques can be taught. But a leader in this sector needs to know how to unleash the creative potential of the staff and volunteers and how to use people constructively in solving resource issues.

4. ***Coping with stress and conflict.*** Time pressures, unmet client needs, disagreements with the board, funders with incompatible requests—these aspects of managing a human service agency are not likely to disappear. To prevent personal burnout, the administrator will have to develop strategies for coping with these pressures. Special emphasis might be placed on conflict resolution strategies, on sources of peer support, and on learning how to depersonalize problems.

5. ***Seeking out learning opportunities.*** The human service directors whom the researchers interviewed did not seem to spend much time in planning their personal or professional development, and a number of those whom they surveyed said that this was an area in which they were in much need of help. Coursework is, of course, one option, but human service administrators need to explore other learning strategies as well. Structured ways of obtaining feedback about strengths and weaknesses as a leader and manager from staff and board members are powerful means of learning

about one's impact on others. Experiences, such as serving on the board of another agency or working for some time in another sector, may provide learning opportunities that help administrators to broaden their knowledge and perspectives. Peer advisers and coaches from other agencies could also be used for developmental purposes. Training programs for human service administrators need to indicate how coursework can be complemented and reinforced by naturally occurring learning events.

These five areas—moving the organization forward in its mission, building relationships that foster support for the organization, gaining and using resources in creative and innovative ways, coping with stress and conflict, and seeking out learning opportunities—are not unique to human service administrators. How, then, to develop a special program for these administrators? The present researchers do not feel that it is absolutely necessary to tailor a program for them; a program that addresses these areas in relatively general terms could be useful. However, one may argue, as others (Rawls, Ullrich, and Nelson, 1975; Newman and Wallender, 1978; Heimovics and Herman, 1989) have, that a special program could have more impact because it would explore these topics in the context of the special values and constraints that are found in the nonprofit sector and because it would foster the linking of classroom learning with real issues in the agency.

For example, coursework in a tailored program focused on the development of organizational goals should recognize the value-laden missions of human service organizations that lead to tough choices about programs in which to invest. There are always more worthy causes than there are resources. The need to have wide participation, both inside and outside the organization, in the setting of goals, the need to think simultaneously about what benefits clients can get and what can be sold to funders, and the lack of bottom-line measures of progress on many goals are constraints that models of goal setting could incorporate when these models are applied to nonprofit organizations.

Another example can be seen in training aimed at building productive relationships. Such training for human service administrators should recognize the importance of the board-director relationship. The special problems of leading a group of loosely linked individuals to whom one reports are likely to have more interest and importance for nonprofit managers than they will have for those in other settings.

**A final note about leadership development for nonprofit agencies.** This research study shows that not all human service administrators are alike. They may vary a great deal in their primary leadership challenges. So even when programs have been tailored for them, human service administrators do not all confront the same issues and problems. Every attempt is required to be made to get them to think about links between the models, concepts, and ideas presented and the situation back home. Encouraging participants in such training to verbalize their major challenges early in the program and giving them tools that will stimulate their thinking about how to apply what they have learned are starting points. Matching directors with similar challenges to share learnings during the programs and having them use their real-life problems in exercises and cases would also be valuable. Although people often make generalizations about the characteristics of human service agencies, they should realize how diverse the agencies and their administrators can be.

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# "Change Agents" – Their Roles and Influences in Organizations.

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## Introduction

The role and significance of "change agents" in organizations has become a subject of interest over the last decades. During the 1980s, the "change master" and "transformational leadership" literature presented leaders as charismatic heroes of radical corporate transformation that required destroying rigid and inflexible structures (Kanter 1983; Devanna and Tichy 1986; Bass 1990). Various extraordinary qualities, traits and attributes were associated with these change champions, including risk taking, and openness to new ideas. Unfortunately, this positive assertion of leadership was often conceived alongside the negative counter-image of traditional managerial roles (Caldwell 2003) played by them. This paper is going to focus on the role of the change agents and the influence they have over the people and organizations.

## Change Leader or Change Manager or Change Agent?

Caldwell (2003) in his 'Change Leader and Change Manager' tried to distinguish between the roles of a change agent as a leader and manager. He defined change leaders as executives or senior managers at the top of the organization, who envision, initiate or sponsor strategic change of transformational nature and change managers as middle-level managers and/or functional specialists who carry forward and build support for change within business units and key functions. In this regard Kirton (1980) and Kanter (1989) argued that if leadership is essential to commence

innovation it is likewise clear that managers increasingly play a vital role in implementing change. Finally, managers perform the role of facilitators encouraging commitment and empowering employees to be approachable to change and technological innovation. In this literature, they will all be termed as 'Change Agents'.

## Roles 'Change Agent' Plays in Organizations

Managing change in the organization means either depending on managers who are scattered throughout the organization having a shared awareness of how the various parts need to interact and work for the miracle to happen (desired change) or having a 'Change Agent'. It is not a new layer of bureaucracy or a permanent job for the fading executive or a steering committee but a body that convenes periodically to guide those who are actually doing the work of the organization (Duck 1998).

Duck stated that a change agent oversees the corporate change effort, making sure that all change initiatives fit together. Sometimes it is made up of highly talented leaders who commit all their time making the transition a reality and accepted by the power structure of the organization. They have the proven talent and credibility, understand the long term vision of the company, and possess a complete knowledge of the business along with the confidence and support of the CEO. They have eight primary responsibilities; however, these activities or responsibilities are not solely accountable for fulfilling the desired change in the organization. These are as follows:

*Establish Context for Change and Provide Guidance:* The change agent makes sure that everyone in the organization shares a common understanding of that vision and understands the company's competitive situation by organizing discussions throughout the organization so that individuals and teams can accurately align their activities with the new overall direction (Duck 1998).

*Stimulate Conversations:* Companies have formalized their operations in functional isolation so much that conversation across levels rarely take place and presentations are followed by inquisitions. Moreover, conversations are often considered as a luxury when resources are scare and time pressures are severe. Most change efforts are fundamentally about moving information across boundaries and organizing early conversations is a critical task for the agent (Duck 1998).

*Provide Appropriate Resources:* The change agent has two significant powers: the power to allocate resources to make things happen and the power to kill projects that are no longer needed or those that no longer have a high priority. A lot of projects are deader than alive, distracting people and using resources. The

agent needs to be a tough-minded terminator of these projects (Duck 1998).

*Coordinate and Align Projects:* As organizations, shift into fast-paced change programs, task forces, teams and projects proliferate and confusions are created as these activities don't seem to fit together. The change-agent has two tasks: coordinating and aligning the projects into building blocks that fit together and communicating to the whole organization how these pieces align, so that all can see the big coherent picture (Duck 1998).

*Ensure Congruence of Messages, Activities, Policies and Behaviours:* One major complaints of the employees in organizations undergoing transformation is management doesn't "walk the talk" and do not bother to listen to them. The agent's job is to understand the inconsistencies undermining the credibility of the change effort, measure behaviours and match the reward assured by management (Duck 1998).

*Provide Opportunities for Joint Creation:* Most change programs embrace the concept of empowerment – ensuring that all employees, whether director, manager or technical worker, have the information they need to make correct decisions and take appropriate actions. Obviously, the agent cannot do all the communicating and teaching but can support the process of learning and creation (Duck 1998).

*Anticipate, Identify and Address People Problems:* People issues are at the heart of change. Communications and human resources (HR) are critical to success, but there should not be shortage of talents and there most be diversity of perspective, resources, and think-tanks for anticipating the problems in the organizations. Agent along with the cross-functional teams in communication and HR represents an opportunity to gather and disseminate information horizontally and vertically (Duck 1998).

*Prepare the Critical Mass:* It is important to design the change layout, resources and strategy from the very beginning for replication and transfer of learning. Most teams need guidance on how to do this and to ascertain whether these are aligned with the other activities. The agent manages the content process and the congruence of operation and emotion thus providing a powerful leverage for change (Duck 1998).

The real contribution of leadership in a time of change lies in managing the dynamics, not the pieces. The fundamental job of leadership is to deal with the dynamics of change and the convergence and congruence of the forces that change unleashes, so that the company is better prepared to compete (Duck 1998).

Buchanan and Boddy (1992) came up with a model for the core competencies of change-agents in different areas to influence the organization and people that is placed in Table 1.1.

| Table #1.1<br>Change Agents' Competencies (adopted from Buchanan and Boddy 1992) |
|---|
| *Change Agent Competencies* |
| **Goals** |
| Sensitivity to changes in key personnel, top-management perceptions and market conditions and to the way in which these impact on the goals of a project. |
| Clarity in specifying goals and defining the achievable. |
| Flexibility in responding to changes outside the control of the project manager, perhaps requiring major shifts in project goals and management style and risk taking. |
| **Roles** |
| Team-building activities, to bring together key stakeholders and establish effective working groups and clearly define and delegate respective responsibilities. |
| Networking skills in establishing and maintaining appropriate contacts within and outside the organization. |
| Tolerance of ambiguity, to be able to function comfortably, patiently and effectively in an uncertain environment. |
| **Communication** |
| Communication skills to transmit effectively to colleagues and subordinates the need for changes in project goals and in individual tasks and responsibilities |
| Interpersonal skills, across the range, including selection, listening, collecting appropriate information, identifying the concerns of others and managing meetings. |
| Personal enthusiasm, in expressing plans and ideas<br>Stimulating motivation and commitment in others involved. |
| **Negotiation** |
| Selling plans and ideas to others, by creating a desirable and challenging vision of the future.<br>Negotiating with key players for resources or for changes in procedures and to resolve conflict. |
| **Managing up** |
| Political awareness in identifying potential coalitions and in balancing conflicting goals and perceptions |
| Influencing skills, to gain commitment to project plans and ideas from potential skeptics and resisters. |
| Helicopter perspective to stand back from the immediate project and take a broader view of priorities. |

Additionally, Keep (2001) in his 'The Change Practitioner' came up with some core competencies for 'agents' in different areas of business as in Table 1.2.

**Table #1.2**
**Change Agents' Competencies in different areas of Business (adopted from Keep 2001).**

| Cluster | Skill/Competence |
|---|---|
| Project management | Planning, resource allocation, etc. |
| Contracting (with 'clients') | Defining the task, establishing relationships |
| Team building | Such as defining roles, maintaining good working relationships |
| Analysis and diagnosis | Data collection and problem solving |
| Data utilization | Qualitative and quantitative data, paper-based review, or survey techniques |
| Interpersonal skills | Communication, time management |
| Communication skills | Listening, written presentations |
| Political awareness | Sensitivity, influencing |
| Intervention implementation | Participation, involvement |
| Monitoring and evaluation | Criteria setting and reviewing, measuring effectiveness |
| Technical skills | Financial interpretation, psychometrics |
| Process skills | Facilitation, systems thinking |
| Self-awareness and insight | Reflection, critical thinking, intuition |

## Influence of 'Change Agent' on Organizations

Leaders need vision, energy, authority and strategic direction but to be inspirational they need other qualities and these qualities can be honed by anyone willing to dig deeply into their true selves (Goffee and Jones 2000). For all levels of change the change-agent is a helper who "intervenes as a facilitator" (Schein 1987: 9) and inspires the transformation process. There are certain characteristics of these agents that influence the thoughts and actions of others. Different academics had come up with different models and theories to bring this to light and this section will cover some of their ideas.

Goffee and Jones (2000) stated that inspirational leaders share **four** unexpected qualities other than the customary ones. **Leaders selectively show**

**their weakness.** By revealing some vulnerability, they divulge their approachability and humanity. Exposing weakness establishes trust and thus helps others to follow their command thinking as human beings. If they communicate that they are perfect at everything, there will be no need for anyone to help them with anything. Beyond creating trust and a collaborative atmosphere, communicating a weakness builds solidarity between followers and leaders. But the golden rule is never to expose a weakness that will be seen as a fatal flaw and jeopardize the central aspect of the professional role.

Leaders are good "**Situational Sensors**". They can collect and interpret soft data and sniff out the signals in the environment and sense what is going on without anything spelled out for them. They easily gauge unexpressed feelings and can judge whether a relationship is working or not. They develop this ability based on many years of working, interacting with different personalities and judging environments. But there are risk associated with sensing and making fine judgements about how far they can go. Leaders sometimes put themselves in the risk of loosing their followers. In addition, sensing a situation involves projection – of the state of one's mind, attributes, ideas to other people and this may interfere with the truth (Goffee and Jones 2000).

Real leaders manage through a unique approach that has been called "**Tough Empathy**". Tough empathy means giving people what they need and not what they want. They empathize fiercely with the people they lead. Tough empathy also has the benefit of inspiring leaders to take risks (Goffee and Jones 2000). Furnham (2003) argued that one of the key qualities of successful leaders is "Courage to Fail" – enabling leaders to try something new, to experiment, to buck the trend and innovate process or even man-management.

Finally, another quality of inspirational leaders is that they capitalize on what is **unique** about them. Often, leaders will show their differences by having a distinctly different dress style or physical appearance, but typically they distinguish them selves through qualities like imagination, loyalty, expertise or even a handshake. "Anything can be different, but it is important to communicate it" (Goffee and Jones 2000).

The late David McClelland, a noted Harvard University psychologist, found that leaders with strength in six or more emotional intelligence, were far more effective than peers who lacked such strengths. Goleman (2000) in this regard argued that leadership with the best results do not rely on only one leadership style but on most of them seamlessly and in different

measures, depending on the business situation. These six leadership styles are as follows.

"**The Coercive Style**" should be used only with extreme caution and in few situations when it is absolutely imperative, such as during a turnaround or when a hostile takeover is looming. The coercive style can break failed business habits and shock people into new ways of working. But it has a damaging effect on the reward system as high-performing workers are motivated by a satisfaction of work well done, rather than money. The coercive style erodes such pride and undermines motivation. Change-agent uses this style at the beginning of the process (Goleman 2000).

"**The Authoritative Style**" works well in almost any business situation but is particularly effective when the business is adrift. An authoritative leader charts a new course and sets these new courses on the basis of a fresh long term vision. An authoritative leader is visionary and motivates people for the bigger picture. This style would fail when a leader is working with a team of experts or peers who are more experienced than he/she is (Goleman 2000). Change-agent uses this style the most after the *"Coercive Style"*.

**The Affiliative Style** revolves around the people and its proponents value individual and their emotions more than task goals. An affiliative leader strives to keep employees happy and to create harmony among them by building strong emotional bonds and reaping the main benefit of such an approach – fierce loyalty. It also increases flexibility in the workplace. Despite these benefits, the affiliative style should not be used alone as it allows the poor performer to go uncorrected (Goleman 2000).

**The Democratic Style** is ideal when the leader is uncertain about the best direction to take and needs ideas and guidance from able employees. And even if the leader has a strong vision, this style works well to generate fresh ideas for executing the vision. As leaders spend time getting people's thoughts and ideas, a leader builds trust, respect and commitment. The democratic leader drives up flexibility and responsibility but this style makes less sense when employees are not competent or informed enough to offer sound advice and also during crisis (Goleman 2000). Change-agents prefer this role when the transformation process takes off.

**The Pacesetting Style** is like the coercive style and should be used sparingly. In this style the leader sets extremely high performance standards and

exemplifies them himself/herself and is obsessed about doing things better and faster. The guidelines for working may be clear in the leader's head but he/she does not state them clearly and expects people to know what to do. As for reward, the pacesetters either give no feedback or jumps in to take over when he/she thinks the followers are lagging (Goleman 2000). This role is useful for the change agent either at the beginning or when there is a threat of deviation from the original set path.

Finally, **The Coaching Style** is not used by most leaders but is very effective in terms of personal development of the employees and long term objectives but not for immediate work-related tasks. It is perhaps most effective when people on the receiving end are "up for it". The major role played by the change-agent is coaching, mentoring, guiding and focusing on the big picture.

Buckingham (2005) discussed what average managers, great managers and great leaders do to make things successful. He declares "Average managers play checkers, while great managers play chess". As in checkers all the pieces are the same but in chess each has distinct characteristics and methods to move and play. The ability to keep tweaking roles to capitalize on the uniqueness of each person is the essence of great management. The change agents need to tweak into the key role player in the organization to influence and make the change a successful one.

Change agents need the skill to deal with particular psychological challenges that arise during different stages of the transformation process. Initially they face anxiety, shock and defensiveness and then ambiguity, hopelessness and at some later stage they have contend with conflicts or deal with forces pushing individual and groups in different directions Finally, their encouragement enable participants to adopt a new approach (Chapman 2002).

## Conclusion

"Change processes and change projects have become major milestones in many organizations' history. Due to the dynamics in the external environment, many organizations find themselves in nearly continuous change" (Recklies 2001). Unfortunately, not all the change initiatives lead to the expected results for the organization and for the change agents. Change agents have to keep this in their minds to be ready about the changes in the external environment, a lack of his/her commitment in the implementation stages, resistance of people in the organization, or lack of resources and should try to overcome these barriers. When the change initiative fails, people involved in the change process may

become dissatisfied with their own performance or with the lack of support they received. In addition to that, people affected by the (failed) change effort will develop growing skepticism and might perceive future change projects as "another fancy idea from management". In this regard Buckingham (2005) concluded that leaders must bring insight into their actions and interactions. Great managing is about release, not transformation and it is about tweaking the environment so that the unique contribution, the unique needs, and the unique style of each employee can be given free rein. Success as a manager will depend on the ability to do this effectively.

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# Foucault on Resistance: Some Clarifications

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## Abstract

Edward Said's reading of Foucault essentializes the Frenchman's notion of resistance to a kind of fatalism that Foucault's writings cannot be reduced to. In two famous essays – "Traveling Theory" and "Foucault and the Imagination of Power" – Said criticizes Foucault's analysis of power relations conceptualized in the 1970s. According to Said, when Foucault says power is omnipresent he actually means that power is omnipotent; that is to say, almost impossible to oppose. Foucault's notion of resistance, according to Said, is too docile and incapable of altering the "unequal" interlocution between power and resistance. The Arab-American intellectual even argues that Foucault did not take resistance seriously and made it appear as a dependent function of power. However, this paper intends to offer a substantively different interpretation of Foucault's power/resistance theory. This paper argues that as a thinker who opposed domination and authority, Foucault has no reason to perceive power to be all conquering. He has pointed at the vulnerability of power, indexing how resistance movements force power to change. To accuse that Foucault was reluctant to take resistance seriously is surely to essentialize the author's work. It is important to note the gradual transformation and the paradoxical nature of Foucault's works when one sets to critique his idices.

## Edward Said and Michael Foucault

Some of the flagrant misunderstandings in the domain of cultural theory in the '80s have occurred out of the conviction that a postmodern or a post-structuralist kind of intervention has little to offer in terms of ethically construed dissidence, that the works of Foucault, Derrida and Lyotard invariably succumb to fatalism or irrationalism and can do little to address the real political problems of our time. Before focusing on the tendency that can be called postcolonial excess, let us remember an anecdote associated with Foucault. In fall 1977, a small group of demonstrators positioned near the Santé prison were suddenly approached by some forty policemen. The group was really small, containing twenty or so people trying to form a human chain to protest the extradition of a German lawyer who had sought asylum in France. The group of demonstrators, which included Foucault and his companion Défert, was manhandled and mercilessly beaten up by the charging policemen. It left many injured. Foucault too, like others, was a victim of this excessive force. Despite his stubborn refusal to see a physician, Foucault was ultimately persuaded by Défert to consult a doctor who found out that he had a broken rib. Nevertheless, only a day after this incident, he was on the barricades again, demonstrating and chanting slogans, risking further injury. In the life of this dissident intellectual, these are just two of the many incidents which kept bringing him into confrontations with police and authority[1].

Despite his involvement in street protests, Foucault, however, remained unusually reticent in expressing his view about dissidence and opposition in his writings. For him, "constraint" and "discipline" in scholarly endeavors were ways of cleansing the "transcendental narcissism" within academic practices (Posnock 1989, p. 147). Surprisingly, his austerity in expressing dissidence[2] through writings induced many counter-Foucauldian readings in the early 80s – Edward Said was preeminent among those who critiqued him – and led many critics to assume that Foucault was a fatalist who never took resistance seriously. This intellectual backlash in the 80s[3], symptomized by Said, Couzens Hoy and Habermas, also contributed significantly to the belief that the Foucauldian position is "largely with, rather than against, power" (Said 2004, p. 53). Such critiques, however, blanket the fact that Foucault can also be read and understood in terms of dissidence and resistance to authority/power. This paper intends to offer a substantively different reading of Foucault's theory of power-relations from the ones discussed above and disputes their claims about Foucault. Placing Said's (mis)reading of Foucault's resistance at the center, this paper contends that Said's reading of Foucault is a reductive one as he evaluates Foucault's works in isolation, ignoring a substantial part of the Foucault corpus. Foucault, this paper

argues, can neither be read as a hermenute of power nor can his opposition to systemic violence and totalitarian authority be reduced to the "quietism" (Said 2004, p. 53) Said has accused Foucault of.

When Said published "Foucault and the Imagination of Power"[4] in a critical anthology on the French intellectual in 1986, Foucault was already dead but his influence in the US was growing. Said's departure from Foucault in this volume, no doubt, is an interesting story in itself. The Edward Said of *Orientalism,* who gratefully acknowledged his debt to Foucault in the first chapter of the book, perhaps signaled his move away from the French intellectual in the last chapter when he tried to talk about a "a non-coercive, non-manipulative view of society"[5]. But it was not until the early 80s that Said started critiquing Foucault frontally on the ground that the Frenchman's analysis of power and resistance was inadequate. As a result, Said's second major work, *The World, the Text and the Critic,* published in 1983, marked, quite unexpectedly, a major turn away from Foucault. In this book, Said proclaims in his characteristically eloquent manner that Foucault lacks real political urgency and points out with a certain degree of authority that it is difficult to expect a rigorous political intervention from him because he "believed that ultimately little resistance was possible to the controls of a disciplinary or carceral society" (Said 2004, p. 53). Two famous essays by Said – "Traveling Theory" and "Foucault and the Imagination of Power" – offer analytical discussions on the inadequacy of Foucault's theory of power relations. In these essays, Said concludes that despite his repeated emphasis on the role of resistance in the power game, the French mandarin was, indeed, a "scribe or power" (Said 2004, p. 53).

Said's brilliant essay "Traveling Theory" first came out in *Raritan Quarterly* (1982) and was later included in The *World, the Text and the Critic* (1983). Said's study in "Traveling Theory" zeroes in on Lukács theory of reification and Foucault occupies very little space in this long essay. Nevertheless, Said introduces Foucault's power-relations theory in his discussion, arguing that the Frenchman's move from specific to general analysis of power has impelled him to adopt a deterministic "Spinozist" conception of power. His other essay on power-relations, "Foucault and the Imagination of Power" is perhaps a more powerful assertion against the French mandarin's pessimistic analysis of the pervasiveness of power. According to Said, Foucault's analysis of power stems from an over vaporization of power's capability to pervade the society. If power is omnipresent, argues Said, it is also omnipotent. In that case, any social change taking place in that condition must be a result of two colluding powers where none is morally

superior. Thus, Said concludes in this essay that, instead of theorizing how power can be resisted, Foucault becomes obsessed with detailing how power can be attained and optimized. According to Said, Foucault rationalizes power by deciding to remain silent about its illegitimate use. Said then reminds Foucault about the danger of obliterating the role of resistance by suggesting that: "history does not get made without work, intention, resistance, effort, or conflict, and that none of these things is silently absorbable into micronetworks of power" (Said 2000, p. 215). Foucault failed to understand the success and importance of unified resistances, Said implie in this essay, because he could not bring himself to conceptualize power relations from the perspective of resistance.

Let us first look at the arguments Said put together in "Traveling Theory". While discussing the phenomenon of the peregrination of theory, Said writes that as theories travel, they ossify and lose some of their revolutionary forces because of commodification, integration and resistance. Citing the example of the Hungarian Marxist George Lukács' theory of "reification", Said argues that the revolutionary force of Lukács's theory was lost because of the systemic and cultural degradation in new historical and social conditions. Since theories emerge as responses to specific social or historical needs, deterritorialized theories end up being domesticated and institutionalized; they lose the capability to emit the same force or energy they once imparted. This essay, which Said revised two years later, also includes comments on Foucault's theory of power relations. Criticizing Foucault's move from a specific to a general philosophy of power, Said argues that such a shift weakened his earlier position and allowed him to get trapped in "generalization". When Foucault claims "power is everywhere" he actually dismisses the possibility that there are things that are not absorbable in the networks of power. Hence, Foucault exaggerates the dominance of power; it is as though everything is absorbed in the micronetworks of power and situations that produce condition of dominance remain unaltered. Thus, according to Said, Foucault's theory of power becomes ridden with a "theoretical overtotalization (that is) superficially more difficult to resist" (Said 2000, p. 216).

Said expresses his admiration for Foucault's earlier works but gives vent to his displeasure at Foucault's efforts to theorize resistance in his later works. According to Said, Foucault gives only nominal importance to resistance in *History of Sexuality;* resistance's inability to exist as a separate entity in Foucault theorization turns it into only a "rebound", only "a dependant function of power". Said blames Foucault for imprisoning "himself and others" in a "Spinozist conception" (Said 1986, p. 151) of power and reminds readers that

history does not get made without unified resistances. According to the Arab-American intellectual, the weight of revolutions and resistance movements on history is immense, and the force of this weight compels a change in society. In other words, resistance is the key element in the game of historical progress as it is not only capable of escaping the potent grip of power but also able to get rid of the omnipotent authority which controls it. Said writes:

> Gramsci…would certainly appreciate the fineness of Foucault's archaeologies, but would find it odd that they make not even a nominal allowance for the emergent movements, and none for revolutions, counter hegemony, or historical blocks. In human history there is always something beyond the reach of dominating systems, no matter how deeply they saturate society, and this is obviously what makes change possible, limits power in Foucault's sense, and hobbles the theory of that power. (2000, p. 215)

## Foucault and power/resistance

Said's repudiation, it seems, comes as a reaction to Foucault's hypothesis of "the omnipresence of power". In *History of Sexuality Volume 1* Foucault gave, in a series of negative descriptions, a general definition of power relations by noting the following:

> By power I do not mean "Power" as a group of institutions and mechanisms that ensure the subservience of the citizens of a given state. By power, I do not mean, either, a mode of subjugation which, in contrast to violence, has the form of the rule…it seems to me that power must be understood…as the multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate. (1984, p. 92)

Power relations, Foucault thinks, are the results of inequalities, which constantly engender states of power. And if power is everywhere, it is because there is inequality everywhere. He mentions in the same book that:

> [There is an] omnipresence of power: not because it has privilege of consolidating everything under its invincible unity, but because it is produced from one moment to the next, at every point, or rather in every relation from one point to another. Power is everywhere, not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere. (1984, p. 93)

Foucault's power relations are both "intentional and nonsubjective". There is no power that is exercised without a series of aims or objectives. But this

exercise of power is not a result of individual choice:

> Power relations are both intentional and nonsubjective. If in fact they are intelligible, this is not because they are the effect of another instance that 'explains' them, but rather because they are imbued, through and through, with calculation: there is no power that is exercised without a series of aims and objectives. But this does not mean that it results from the choice or the decision of an individual subject. (1984, p. 95)

After discussing what he claims to be power relations, Foucault proposes to analyze resistance, the other part of his power/resistance dichotomy. "Wherever there is power" says Foucault, "there is resistance" (1984, p. 95). Power and resistance, he maintains, are never in a position of exteriority and, thus, points of resistance are present everywhere in the power network. But what has to be stressed here is that Foucault does not seem to believe that there can be any general principle of resistance. He uses the word in plural because like relations of power, resistances are many and can be as dispersed/diverse as power relations usually are. He writes:

> These points of resistance are present everywhere in the power network. Hence there is no single locus of great Refusal, no soul of revolt, source of all rebellions, or pure law of the revolutionary. Instead there is a plurality of resistances, each of them a special case….by definition they can only exist in the strategic field of power relations. (1984, pp. 95-96)

Though resistance certainly emerges as the less powerful "other" in the power/resistance binary, one should not assume that resistance always ends up, as Said thinks Foucault has suggested, being defeated or absorbed into the micronetworks of power. As Foucault maintains: "this does not mean that they are only a reaction or rebound, forming with respect to the basic domination an underside that is in the end always passive, doomed to perpetual defeat" (1984, p. 96).

For Foucault, resistances are not moribund; they are mobile and transitory, capable of producing dynamic cleavages in a society. This dynamic mobility enables resistances to form a dense and interwoven network, equally potent and delocalized as power networks, and provide them with the force and dynamism necessary for revolutions:

> Just as the network of power relations ends by forming a dense web that passes through apparatuses and institutions, without being exactly localized in

> them, so too the swarm of points of resistance traverses social stratifications and individual unities. And it is doubtless that strategic codification of these points of resistance that makes a revolution possible (1984, p. 96).

The substantive logic of Foucault's analysis of power, it needs to be pointed out, developed gradually as a result of his long term research on how modern technocratic society accumulates power from its discourse. From the outset, Foucault was aware that modern power is not unidirectional and his analysis of power in *History of Sexuality* made it obvious to him that, as modern power has the unique capability of creating details and producing knowledge about its object, it cannot be adequately theorized if one seeks to perceive it only as a negative force.

## The imagination of power and resistance

It will be interesting to consider, once again, some of Said's arguments in "Foucault and the Imagination of Power", his brief but powerful critique of Foucault's analysis of power. In this insightful study of Foucault's theory of power, Said locates the core weakness of the French intellectual's hermeneutics of power relations and argues that the imagination of power has been weakened due to his apparent failure to theorize resistance and mass revolts. Said begins his essay by appreciating the fineness of Foucault's earlier works where his "admirably un-nostalgic view of history" allowed the French intellectual to keep a balance between "rhetoric" and "civil politics". He then draws a comparison between Foucault and Ibn Khaldun. Both, he contends, are "worldly historians who understand …the dynamics of secular events, their restless pressure, their ceaseless movement…which does not permit the luxury of easy moral classification" (Said 1986, p. 150). After expressing admiration for Foucault's archeology so candidly, Said then criticizes Foucault's theory of power on four basic grounds: (1) it is "undifferentiated" and thus not ascribable to modern society; (2) it is "profoundly pessimistic" since Foucault failed to take the success of active resistance movements into consideration; (3) it is all pervasive and thus seem "irresistible and unopposable"; (4) Foucault was thinking about power from the "standpoint of its actual realization"; consequently his "imagination of power is largely with rather than against it" (Said 1986, pp. 151-152).

Surely, however, Said's verdict on Foucault is not the last word that can be uttered about the work of the French intellectual. Any final view on Foucault's works needs to be laid down carefully, not because he is beyond criticism but certainly because there has been a gradual transformation in his work. As a result,

he has become capable of overcoming many of the theoretical limitations he had been accused of[6]. To be specific, even before Said went on to accuse him of obliterating the role of the individuals from modern history, Foucault had already shifted his attention from the hermeneutics of power to the study of self-governance. He had begun to note how individual subjects acquire freedom through a self-conscious transformation of knowledge. Foucault's initial emphasis on "technologies of domination" where he had been particularly interested in analyzing how institutional power takes control and deploys itself almost everywhere in what he calls "disciplinary society" thus made way for a more intensive understanding of "self-governance" where knowing subjects transform themselves by means of "technologies of the self" (Best and Kellner 1991, p. 55). In writings and interviews in the early 80s, at the last phase of his short life, Foucault clarified his positions not only about the confusion regarding the role of the individual but also about resistance, freedom of subjects and the omnipresence of power.

Foucault's power relations theory, therefore, must be analyzed in greater detail, along with the essential paradox that surrounds it. Even when Foucault is saying that power is everywhere, he is not arguing that power is unopposable. Though Said has pointed that the omnipresence of Foucault's power – that it is everywhere and surrounds everything – makes it appear as though it is omnipotent, Foucault himself contends that power is as vulnerable as the force that it is contending with. The vulnerability of power becomes apparent when Foucault discloses that in power relations the roles can be reversed. Thus, as Foucault sees it, power stands out only as a participant in a strategic struggle where it has gained temporary dominance. "Sometimes", says Foucault, "the scene begins with the master and slave, and at the end the slave has become the master" (1997, p. 169). Power, as we see in this case, is not an omnipresent, omnipotent god; it is a vulnerable struggler who can be defeated at any historical moment if resistance attains enough force to topple it. As long as the master can be defeated and power relations can be altered, there is no reason to believe that the oversaturation of power will make resistance impossible.

Where Said has categorically dismissed any claims to Foucault's opposition to power and has emphasized that Foucault's resistance only forms the underside of his power/resistance binary, the French philosopher himself – contrary to what Said has claimed – has gone on to argue that resistance is the dominant contributor in the power/resistance dichotomy. "In power relations", declared Foucault in a 1984 interview, not long before his death, "there is necessarily the possibility of resistance

because if there were no possibility of resistance … there would be no power at all" (1997, p. 292). The underlying paradox of the power relations theory is that, it can be interpreted from any subjective perspective. But Foucault, it needs to be emphasized, has chosen to align himself with resistance. He says:

> If there was no resistance, there would be no power relations. Because it would only be a matter of obedience … So resistance comes first, and resistance remains superior to the forces of the process; power relations are obliged to change with resistance. So I think that resistance is the main word, the key word in this dynamic (1997, p.169).

Thus for Foucault resistance emerges as an equally potent challenger to power as well as an ethically superior force. It is quite amazing to note – considering the unidirectional generalizations in *History of Sexuality* – how dexterously Foucault has repositioned the major weaknesses of his earlier works to impeccable equilibrium in his later writings and interviews.

## Resistance, subjectivity, revolution

Since Foucault repeatedly refrained from presenting a persuasive roadmap for successful resistance, his critics attended to interpret his restraint on the issue as his incapacity to comprehend the world beyond power. If Foucault was so sure about resistance's capability to limit power, they have asked, why did he not come up with specific strategies of opposition? Foucault's disinclination for celebrating all mass revolts as successful resistance, surely, has its root in the failure of the resistance movements he was associated with. In 1979 Foucault was in Iran to observe, in his words, the victory of "collective will". He interpreted it as "a demand for a new subjectivity" (1997, p.xxiii). The failure of the Iranian revolution, which ousted one oppressive system to see it followed by an even more repressive one, made Foucault rethink the way subjects form effective resistances. For Foucault, the course of the Iranian revolution was proof that even the success of organized resistance may, paradoxically, lead to a tightening of the power grip. Foucault interpreted this event as a failure of governmentality and concluded that we need to think about reconstructing ourselves and forming a new subjectivity (1997, p. xxiii).

The need to search for a new identity means resistance to power, refashioning of subjectivity and "care of the self". "Care of the self", Foucault explains, "is a way of limiting and controlling power" (1997, p.288). A person, Foucault believes, who knows how to govern himself and is careful about his

relationships with others is less likely to exercise domination over others. In other words, self-governance allows subjects to acquire freedom for themselves, even from society. In this context, it will be interesting to note Foucault's opinion about the connection between care of the self and the exercise of power. In an interview published in 1984, just before his death, Foucault suggests that the chance of exercising tyrannical power over others increases when the subject fails to govern himself properly. He says:

> The risk of dominating others and exercising a tyrannical power over them arises precisely … when one has not taken care of the self and has become the slave of one's desires. But if you take proper care of yourself, that is, if you know ontologically what you are, if you know what you are capable of, if you know what it means for you to be a citizen of a city, to be the master of a household … if you know what things you should and should not fear, if you know what you can reasonably hope for and, on the other hand, what things should not matter to you, if you know, finally, that you should be afraid of death – if you know all this, you cannot abuse your power over others (1997, p.288).

Thus, according to Foucault, love for the self and renunciation of certain desires may lead to a love for others. However, Foucault's analysis of care of the self is exclusivist in the sense that it accommodates only the ontological as self forming activity. The role of the epistemological has remained under explored.

Foucault's retreat into the self-knowledge of ancient Greeks and Romans can also be interpreted as a further decenterization of collective resistance. But it is important to note that, his apparent undermining of mass revolts as effective challenge to power needs to be seen from a broader perspective. Foucault has expressed his optimism about the effectiveness of mass disobedience in his earlier writings on the Iranian revolution. In them, he expressed the idea that "revolts belong to history" and are "irreducible" (Foucault 2002, p. 449); if societies persist it is because people are still capable of revolting and of crippling the possibility of power becoming "utterly absolute". Though Foucault's later writings privilege individual resistance over mass revolt, Said's insistence that the French intellectual does not make "even a nominal allowance for emergent movements" can be interpreted as his unwillingness to go over the later writings of Foucault. To conclude that Foucault's analysis of power is "remarkably pessimistic" is to essentialize an intellectual who has declared that he will disagree with anyone who says "it is useless … to revolt; it is going to be the same thing" (2002, p.452).

Said can thus be criticized for going too far in his opposition to Foucault and his power relations theory. At least in some cases his opposition seems too reductive. Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to suggest that Said was entirely incorrect in his judgment about Foucault. One must admire the subtlety of Said's argument, especially when he writes:

> The work of Fanon himself, Syed Alatas, Abdullah Laroui, Panikkar, Shariati, Mazouri, novelist like Ngugi and Rushdie – all these as well as the enormously powerful adversarial works of feminists and minority cultures in the West and the Third World, amply recorded the continuing attraction to libertarian struggles … I must mention that to describe these counter-discursive efforts simply as non-systemic in Wallerstein's phrase is … to negate precisely the force in them that I am certain Foucault would have understood, the organized and rationalized basis of their protest (1986, p. 153-154).

Said, then, wants Foucault to reveal a specific strategy of resistance and not get mired in an objective analysis of power because he believes that the role of the intellectual "is to be embarrassing, contrary, even unpleasant". Like Marx and Fanon, he also believes that the critic must not merely "interpret the world, but … change it" (Bayoumi & Rubin 2000, p. xii). His life as a Palestinian exile has helped him fashion an "oppositional" and secular form of criticism whose root, on the very essence of their substance, is in the counter discourse of Palestinian *Intifada.* Said's lack of interest in Foucault's later writings, specifically on power and self-governance, is deeply entrenched in the Frenchman's reluctance to oppose power understood only as a system of dominance. In Foucault, Said notices a lack of "political commitment" because the French mandarin "takes a curiously passive view not so much of the uses of power, but how and why power is gained, used and held onto" (Said 2004, p.53). Said has thus repeatedly stressed Foucault's lack of interest in resistance and counter discursive attempts. The Palestinian-American scholar has found Foucault's notion of power relations unacceptable particularly because, for Foucault, everything, even resistance and struggle, takes place within a historically determined condition. Said, who believes that the role of the intellectual is to fight determinism of all kinds, has certainly failed to appreciate what has led Foucault to conclude that power is everywhere in the modern world and has saturated all corners of our lives. Foucault's interventionist reading of modern power and disciplinary society appeals to Said only as far as it is capable of offering an oppositional stance against the state and authority by turning discursive fields into political sites. Foucault's general theory of power, according to Said, has little to offer him because it has failed to demonstrate a will to read power appositionally. Said contends that:

> Foucault's trajectory as a scholar and researcher noted for his interest in sites of political intensity … moved from what appeared to be insurrectionary scholarship to a kind of scholarship that confronted the power from the position of someone who believed that ultimately little resistance was possible to the controls of disciplinary or carceral society. There is a kind of quietism that emerges at various points of Foucault's career: the sense that everything is historically determined, that ideas of justice, of good and evil, and so forth have no innate significance, because they are constituted by whoever is using them (2004, 53).

Said thus accuses Foucault for succumbing to determinism and for emptying his resistance theory of truly oppositional and emergent qualities. Foucault's initial efforts to remonstrate against the confining and policing elements of modern European societies, complains Said, gets submerged in a more pessimistic view of an all-pervasive, omnipotent power. Said accuses Foucault of withdrawing himself from the study of social injustice and of wiping out the difference between good and bad, ethical and unethical. In other words, Said accuses Foucault of being irrationalist.

## Essentializing Foucault

Recently, a few intellectuals from around the world have attempted to defend Foucault from essentialized readings. For example, Robert C. Holub (1985), in his essay "Remembering Foucault", contends that Foucault's works are paradoxical in nature. To simply suggest that Foucault was a champion of anti-humanistic thinking and did not take the sufferings of people into consideration is to overlook the underlying intentions of his works. According to Holub, it will be reductive to consider Foucault as a creator of any sort of system. Foucault's works are fragmentary as well as paradoxical and, thus, are in their very form pitted against totalization (pp. 241-244).

Mario Mossa and Ron Scapp also oppose the idea that Foucault's works are complicit with power. In their essay "The Practical Theorizing of Michael Foucault: Politics and Counter Discourse", Mossa and Scapp contend that "Foucault can serve to encourage radical agency". According to them, Foucault's work "aims at clearing a space in which the formerly voiceless might begin to articulate their desires – to counter the domain of prevailing authoritative discourse" (Mossa & Scapp 1996, p. 88). John Rajchman, on the other hand, claims that Foucault belongs to "the modern ethical tradition initiated by Sartre … [because his] way of questioning "anthropologism" has led him to a kind of

practical or ethical category whose fundamental category was the category of freedom" (Rajchman 1986, p.88). The contentions of these intellectuals certainly run counter to Said's claim that Foucault was an "irrationalist" and that he was incapable of talking ethics. According to these critics, Foucault is not only oppositional but also radically ethical. No matter how unfashionable, Foucault's ethics is essentially European in tradition and has the ability to make us lean towards a different, and probably slightly utopian, idea of freedom.

These recent defenses of Foucault certainly allow for a better understanding of Foucault's position. That Foucault does not distinguish between good and evil, that he is incapable of talking ethically, can hardly be conceded anymore. Said surely does not see beyond what he has chosen to see. Despite his unperturbed attachment to anticolonial and anti-authoritarian intellectuals like Fanon, C. L. R. James, Gramsci, and Lukács, Said probably forgot that theories are hardly dissociable from life. If throughout his life Foucault remained vocal about the peripherals and marginalized of the society, his writings about these peoples cannot simply be reduced into the textual austerity he had chosen to exhibit. No doubt, in his strict disciplinary austerity Foucault probably seemed to be reticent – amidst the call for political activism – but he was never afraid of taking sides when it was necessary to do so. According to Rajcman, this is what separates Foucault from other intellectuals who find it easy to talk about opposition but choose to remain in the protected domain of the university when it becomes necessary to hit the road. He says: "Foucault was opposite of those who find it natural to talk ethics but difficult to take sides. He was someone who supported many struggles and yet found it next to impossible to speak the language of morality" (Rajchman 1986, p.88). Thus, Foucault's ostracization must not be attributed to an irrational postmodernism but must be viewed as an outcome of a radical essentialization of Foucault, led by critics who demanded an ideological explanation of the things he was describing.

Indeed, Foucault's development as an intellectual, like that of Said's, can hardly be charted by any normative yardstick which fails to delve deep into the oppositional nature of his work. To conclude that Foucault is too coy to voice his opposition against power is to overlook his underlying ethical concern and not to notice that his work is pitted firmly against the totalizing will of the power he described with such preciseness.

Foucault's failure, to conclude, does not lie in his reluctance to map out what constitute effective resistance. Nor does it entirely dwell, as Said has suggested, in his unwillingness to admit the success of "counter-discursive

attempts". His support for revolts and mass movements is adequately documented in the pages of his biographies. In 1979, a year after the Iranian Revolution, Foucault published a statement in *Le Monde* in which he asked [is it] "Useless to Revolt?" Revolts, he tells his readers, belong to history because "the impulse by which a single individual, a group, a minority or an entire people says, "I will no longer obey" and throws the risk of their life in the face of an authority … seems … something irreducible" (2002, p. 449). However, the core weakness of Foucault's power relations theory lies, as Lukes has suggested, in his failure to acknowledge that like all other historico-cultural phenomena, power is also value dependant (Cited in Hoy 1986, p.124). The kind of power that Foucault chose to analyze may as well fall short of precisely pointing out that the exercise of power vary from one historico-cultural condition to another, even within Europe, and strategic resistance to this power may not be the same everywhere.

A discussion on Foucault and Said must not, however, end without emphasizing that both were extraordinary thinkers whose contributions go far beyond what one usually associates them with. It is easier to put ourselves in solidarity with Edward Said not only because as a "cultural critic" he has always attempted to oppose and contend hegemony of western epistemic hierarchy, but also for the fact that as a Palestinian he has decided to confront, even at the cost of his personal security, the dogma and scathing politics of "imperial America" and its ally Israel. To talk about Said's limitations without acknowledging his enormous contribution to the field of critical thinking as well as of active resistance will be reductive. However, it would be equally reductive to dismiss Foucault's claims to oppositional intellectualism just because he has proposed to provide a general analysis of power. Intellectuals of our time must understand that there is an unassailable isolation in intellectual distance, in accepting that philosophy remains in a vacuum and in isolation from the people it talks about. Both Foucault and Said have adequately exhibited their passion for oppositional thinking. To deny any of them the spirit of this great oppositional tradition is to lead ourselves towards a derelict and slavish radicalization of theory.

## Notes

[1]Participating in demonstrations and street protests was a regular affair in the life of the "Professor Militant". Growing up in the post world war era, Foucault and many other intellectuals found it obligatory to make their voices heard, sometimes through violence, in the increasingly politicized post '68 France. See Macey 1994, pp. 394-396.

[2]Foucault has always expressed his dislike for any authoritative intervention, even from an intellectual. In his opinion, "people should build their own ethics" and intellectuals should not "provide ethical principles or practical advice at the same moment, in the same book and the same analysis". Though many people have interpreted his position an anti-intellectual one, it is important to note that he is not against intellectual intervention altogether. He is against mixing up theory with personal interpretation of events. See Foucault 1997, p. 132.

[3]*Foucault: A Critical Reader,* where Said, Couzens Hoy, and Habermas contributed polemical essays on Foucault, was written out of the need to "confront the issues provoked by the work of Michael Foucault". The aim of this book, according to its editor, is to combat "misunderstanding of Foucault's sometimes difficult texts" and to ask "questions about the validity of his ideas and the coherence of his position". See Hoy 1986, p. 1.

[4]"Foucault and the Imagination of Power" was first published in *Foucault: A Critical Reader;* however, it was later included in *Reflections on Exile,* a collection of Said's essays published in 2001.

[5]Said himself has talked about his move from pessimism to optimism in an interview taken in 1985. He says, "Orientalism is in some ways a negative book, but at the end I do try to talk about a non-coercive, non-manipulative view of the society". From his emphasis it becomes clear that Said counter-balances his pessimistic Foucauldian Power/knowledge nexus by introducing the Gramscian quasi-Marxist proposition of hegemony and resistance.

[6]In an interview taken in 1982 by Stephen Riggins, Foucault elaborates the idea that it is important to renew one's ideas. He mentioned that he works because he wants to see himself transformed. See Foucault 1997, p 131.

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# Flory: a Pariah among the Anglo - Indians in *Burmese Days*

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**Abstract:**

This article attempts to explore the plight of the protagonist of George Orwell's *Burmese Days.* He is an Englishman feeling ill-at-ease in a Burmese outpost named Kyauktada during the Raj. Revolted by British racism and imperialism, disgusted by a native's knavery, disappointed in love, shunned by his countrymen, unable to come to terms with his lack of moral courage, and blemished by his birthmark, he inches towards his own doom. He becomes estranged from his surroundings until he is at the end of his tether. The drastic decision to end his own life appears a cowardly and an escapist act on his part but, at the same time, can be construed as his definitive protest against the wrongs committed by the people around him. The influence of autobiographical elements of the author on the protagonist's character should be taken into account as should be other characters in some of the famous works in the novel's genre in establishing him as an outcast among his compatriots.

Although a seminal work, *Burmese Days* heralds George Orwell's advent as a committed, conscientious and anti-imperialist author. Drawing on his experience in Burma where he served in the Indian Imperial Police, the novelist interweaves a story fraught with racial tension between the British and the natives, a native's depravity, and a Briton's antagonism towards racism and depravity. The protagonist — John Flory — is caught up in the vicious circle of love, intrigue, disillusionment and defamation until his back is to the wall, and he is unable to extract himself from it. He finds himself in a foreign country where

his countrymen have all but ostracized him for siding with a native regarding his inclusion into the Club and also for his firm stand against British imperialism. Flory's personality sets him apart from his smug compatriots and earns him the reader's respect. However, his anti-imperialistic views, birthmark, respect for Burmese indigenous culture, sincere love for Elizabeth, and loathing for the Burmese judge U Po Kyin nudge him – albeit ironically— towards his ultimate undoing.

Flory is an anti-imperialist. He sees through the inane British Empire that claims to have brought "progress" to the far reaches of the world, including the Raj in the Indian sub-continent. His anti-imperialistic thoughts gush out in his conversations with Dr. Veraswami – a champion of the Raj. In the face of Dr. Veraswami's support for British rule in India he says: "We're not civililizing them (the natives), we're only rubbing our dirt on to them.Where's it going to lead, this uprush of modern progress as you call it (1975)"?

In another place in the novel we come to see his realization of the true colours and the ulterior motives of the British in India ; he says: "I'm here to make money, like everyone else. All I object to is the slimy white man's burden humbug. The pukka sahib pose. It's so boring". The narrator gives us more insight into his psyche in the following lines: " He had grasped the truth about the English and the Empire. The Indian Empire is a despotism – benevolent, no doubt. But still a despotism with theft as its final object. And as to the English of the East, the Sahiblog, Flory had come so to hate them from living in their society, that he was quite incapable of being fair to them". He finds the imposition of British law on the Indian people a repressive measure on the part of the British. He tells the Doctor – whose zealous adherence to the Empire makes him a foil to Flory in their conversations : " Pax Britannica is its proper name. And in any case, who is the pax for? The money-lender and the lawyer. Of course we keep peace in India, in our own interest, but what does all this law and order business boil down to? More banks and more prisons – that's all it means". He foresees the imminent doom of the Raj even though he is a mere timber-merchant in Burma. He stands firm as the only conscientious person among the British populace in the small Burmese town who wanted the imperialistic yoke off India's neck. In this regard, Flory's antagonism to Kiplingesque notions of British rule is quite discernible here as Kipling strived to glorify the Raj. In the novel, we see Flory finds it boring to "sit in Kipling-haunted little clubs". Flory's strong and left-leaning "Bolshie" thoughts alienate him from the likes of Mrs. Lackersteen, Ellis and Westfield. In effect, Flory's ideology is in direct conflict

with the so-called 'five beatitudes of the *pukka sahib*' in the small Burmese town Kyauktada:

"Keeping up our prestige,
The firm hand (without the velvet glove),
We white men must hang together,
Give them an inch and they'll take an ell, and
*Esprit de Corps"* (181)

His aversion to these abominable precepts pave the way for his segregation from the other English people.

In some ways Flory's condition reminds one of Franz Fanon's insight into the colonial condition. In his first book *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952) Fanon explores the effect of colonial rule on the psyche of the colonized; the author also feels rejected by his French peers in spite of having French education because of his skin clolour. Both Flory and Fanon are locked in a repressive colonial situation and are opposed to the draconian measures meted out to the subjugated natives. However, Flory's skin colour is not the mark of his segregation from his peers as was the case with Fanon -- it is his beliefs and ideology. He is up against his own countrymen because, unlike them, he believes in the rights of the Burmese masses. His anti-imperialistic creed makes him stand out of his bigoted compatriots.

However, Flory's anti-imperialistic zeal is not quite beyond criticism: when Flory thinks that the Indian Empire is a "benevolent" despotism, he is contradicting himself: benevolence and despotism cannot go hand in hand and, moreover, if "theft is its final object", then the polity of the Empire can be seen as a malevolent force — not as a "benevolent" one. Here Flory seems to be torn between two contradictory factors : the remnants of his love of the Empire and his hate for it. Raymond Williams' comments about the author reflects Flory's dilemma about the Empire:

> "he had come to understand and reject the imperialism he was serving. Imperialism, he wrote, at the end of his change, was an evil thing, and the sooner he chucked his job and got out of it the better. Yet within its service his response was more complicated. He was stuck, as he later saw it, between hatred of the Empire he was serving and rage against the native people who opposed it and made his immediate job difficult. Theoretically, he says, he was all for the Burmese and all against their oppressors. Practically he was at

once opposed to the dirty work of imperialism and involved in it" (8-9).

Reverberations of Williams' words can also be detected in what the post-colonial critic Elleke Boehner has to say regarding Orwell's divided view on imperialism. She thinks that Orwell could not fully grow out of his colonialist mindset. She says:

> "Orwell's self-declared purpose in *Burmese Days* as in his subsequent work was to expose the hypocrisy of the British Establishment. The novel is repeatedly interrupted by anti-imperial invective. Yet if the work condemns, cursing 'Pox Britannica', it also holds back from a full assault…in *Burmese Days*, though he is outspoken and deliberately oppositional, his sympathies remain divided "(160-1).

This "divided" mindset is quite evident in the author's celebrated essay "Shooting an Elephant". Notwithstanding his strong invective and some very powerful and pregnant passages in it against British colonialism in Burma, Orwell does not miss the chance to criticize the natives e.g. he writes about some Burmese young men " the sneering yellow faces of young men"(91). Referring to members of a particular race by their skin-colour can be considered severely and unpardonably prejudiced and racist.

In this regard, Edward Said's critique of orientalism becomes relevant. If seen through Saidian eyes, Flory as a westerner is just 'romanticizing' the very idea of the East and its people; when he is considering the natives defenceless beings against their colonial rulers, he is merely depecting them as weak, irrational and the feminized "other", and in doing this, conversely, he is elevating the colonizers i.e. the West to a strong, rational and masculine stature. In his book *Oriantalism* (1978) Said posits that no westerner has been able to appreciate the spirit of the Orient reductively and shows that a long tradition of false and romanticized stereotyping of Asia has been prevalent in the Occident which served as fodder for American and British imperial machinations. Flory can be said to be an agent of this. Even if he is not conscious of it, subconsciously it must have its effect on him. At the surface level, he is all for the natives' rights but at a deeper level he is perhaps biased against them. At the least, one can say there is an ambivalence in him.

Flory's birthmark represents much more than meets the eye. It can be interpreted in many ways: it can represent the mark of shame for his inability to face his countrymen's imperialistic exploitation of the natives. In this connection Jeffrey Meyers writes:

> "Flory, of course, is ashamed, but his failure to come to terms with the intolerable colonial situation is symbolized by his hideous birthmark – as much a sign of guilt, a mark of Cain, as an indication and isolation and alienation. He is unable to mediate between the three worlds of Burma: The English, the "native" and the natural world of the jungle"(69-70).

Malcolm Muggeridge, who knew the author personally, detects an autobiographical strain in Flory's birthmark: "As one can see very clearly in his writings about himself, and in his self-impersonations in his fiction, he was obsessed with the notion that he was physically unattractive. There is, for instance, the ugly birthmark which always shows up with particular vividness on the face of Flory, the hero of *Burmese Days,* in moments of stress and passion." (Muggeridge, online source, retrieved January 16, 2005). The mark also poses a threat to his love-life; when Elizabeth finally turns down his romantic advances, she feels disgusted by his "hideous birthmark". It appears as if but for the birthmark they would live happily ever after. After Flory has committed suicide, the birthmark fades away: " with death, the birthmark had faded immediately, so that it was no more than a faint grey stain". The birthmark, then, is not only a physical blemish but also a psychological one.

And as it disappears "immediately", the psychological trait of it becomes all the more clear ; as long as he is alive, it pains and shames him but with death that comes to an end and that is why it becomes "a faint grey stain". When we see him in the company of his countrymen in the Club, we discover that in reaction to Ellis's racist comments his birthmark twitches and so do his facial features but he cannot pluck up the courage to stand up to him and vent his anger: "Flory sat nursing Flo's head in his lap, unable to meet Ellis's eyes. At the best of times his birthmark made it difficult for him to look people in the face . And when he made ready to speak, he could feel his voice trembling – for it had a way of trembling when it should have been firm; his features, too, sometimes twitched uncontrollably". The birthmark here pulls him back from reacting to the injustice perpetrated by his fellow Englishmen and, thus, comes to represent the lack of moral courage. It is an externalization of the faults and foibles of his persona. But at the same time, it also stands for the laudable attributes of his character. The birthmark could be a manifestation of his difference – his 'otherness'. It made him see Burma's forests and trees, like its people. This 'otherness', ironically, manifests the humane qualities—namely opposition towards racism of his compatriots – in him. "May be without it he may have been one of the English expatriates" (online discussion posting). Its very presence makes him stand out

among the English in that small British outpost. But for it he would be – in the author's language -- one of the "petty sahiblog" .This physical deformity in Flory has a parallel in Somerset Maugham's *Of Human Bondage*. The hero Philips's deformed foot in that novel, like Flory's birthmark, is a mark of debility that clings to him all the time. "The birthmark is similar to Maugham's hero in *Of Human Bondage*. It probably indicates an indelible perceived deficit the person is stuck with and forever feels at a disadvantage" (online discussion posting). Like Flory's birthmark, Philip also feels ashamed of his club foot and his amorous advances get spurned by the mean and callous Mildred just as Flory's get rejected by Dorothy. However, the settings of the two novels are different i.e. *Burmese Days* takes place in a remote colonial small town of the Raj but the plot of *Of Human Bondage* is set entirely in Europe. Also, Philip, at the end of the novel, marries and settles down and immerses himself in the arts temporarily but Flory neither marries nor dabbles in the arts; his life ends in a tragic suicide and he remains a timber-merchant until his death. Flory's ending is tragic, Philip's is not.

Flory is a typical Orwellian protagonist. He shares the middle-class background of Comstock of *Keep the Aspidistra Flying* and Bowling of *Coming Up for Air*. All of them are misfits in the surroundings they live. While Flory is detached from his countrymen in Burma, Bowling is stuck in a static English society with World War II looming large, and Comstock struggles not to conform to the norms of a decadent middle-class milieu. Even though Comstock does not commit suicide like Flory, he gives in to the typical money-driven values of the English bourgeoisie to which he was entirely opposed previously. This surrender to the so-called "aspidistra values" is tantamount to Flory's committing suicide. An undercurrent of pessimistic strain can be detected in the Orwellian hero. Orwell biographer George Bowker writes:

> "Flory's situation had become evermore oppressive . Alienated from Anglo-Indian society, and always in danger of discovery, he had kept his own counsel – the silent heretic taking refuge in his secret inner world …but he found such a silence corrupting, and such a life sterile and increasingly intolerable. His mind was enslaved by a repressive system. The theme would come to dominate his (Orwell's) life and work. Flory was the forefather, to some degree, of all Orwellian protagonists, most notably Winston Smith (*Nineteen Eighty-Four*)" (93).

Critic Raymond Williams says regarding *Burmese Days*: "We can now recognize… the deep Orwell pattern: the man who tries to break from the standards of his group but who is drawn back into it and, in this case, destroyed".

The protagonists also share the stamp of Orwell's own childhood and life experiences. Comstock's discomfiture amid the richer boys as well as Flory's humiliation at school are redolent of Orwell's own experience at Eton. The apocalyptic doom envisaged by Bowling reminds the reader of young Orwell's sense of insecurity. As Jeffrey Meyers writes, "The overwhelming doom that threatens the young Orwell also threatens Bowling in *Coming Up For Air*"(28).

On the other hand, Flory can also be seen vis-a-vis other literary characters of contemporary English literature. Fielding in *A Passage to India* is also caught up in a similar situation in which he tries to strike a balance between his love of Indians and his loyalty to the British. But unlike Flory, Fielding redeems himself in not committing suicide and trying to bridge the gap between Indians and the British. Jeffrey Meyers comments: " *Burmese Days* is a far more pessimistic book than *A Passage to India*, because official failures are not redeemed by successful personal relations. There are no characters, like Fielding and Mrs Moore, who are able to prevail against the overwhelming cruelty of the English and maintain a civilized standard of behaviour". Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* has two characters worthy of being compared with Flory. Marlow is hurt seeing the miserable plight of the natives in the Congo at the hands of their colonial masters and Kurtz. Here Marlow's journey has more of a metaphysical character whereas Flory's is very empirical and political in nature. Kurtz's apparent sympathy for the natives ends up in a nightmarish episode when he dies shouting "the horror! the horror!" Flory's characteristics are thus diametrically opposite to Kurtz's as the former is out to emancipate the colonized but the latter not only subjugates them but also manipulates them to be worshipped like a god-like figure. Whereas Flory exemplifies the political principle expounded by Montesqieu, in *The Spirit of the Laws* (1748): "If a democratic republic subdues a nation in order to govern them as subjects, it exposes its own liberty", Kurtz is the last person to adopt them. According to Montesquieu, in order for a government to form, a division of power or "separation of powers" is needed among three branches or agents with equal but different powers; but Kurtz assumes the stature of God among natives and holds them under his sway. Fowler, in Graham Greene's *The Quiet American,* is marooned in a similar paradoxical situation. He lives in a political world he rejects morally and inwardly. But Greene endorses a positive note, using Fowler's character to reflect the inanity of values and precepts which his adversary Pyle stands for. Another Greene character of the same mould is Scobie in *The Heart of the Matter*. Perhaps Scobie resembles Flory more than Fowler . Both Flory and Scobie are stationed in a colonial set-up and are in favour of the natives' emancipation from their rulers. But there is a basic difference between them in

that Flory is a secular, left-leaning and idealistic character whereas Scobie's conception of life is existentially religious; his activities emanate from his basic Christian beliefs.

Flory's respect for indigenous Burmese culture and also nature is quite apparent in this novel. During the first stage of his courtship of Elizabeth, he attempts to interest her in the native people and culture only to encounter vehement opposition from her. He takes her to witness a pwe-dance[1] rendition but she leaves the place sulkily, thinking that it was beneath her status as a white woman to be sitting among 'the black people' and watching that 'hideous and savage spectacle'. She fails to grasp the nature of his admiration for the country and the culture. The book details the situation thus:

> "She perceived that Flory, when he spoke of the 'natives', spoke nearly always *in favour* of them. He was forever praising Burmese customs and Burmese character, he even went so far as to contrast them favourably with the English….After all natives are natives – interesting, no doubt, but finally only a 'subject' people, an inferior people with black faces….He so wanted to love Burma …He had forgotten that most people can be at ease in a foreign country only when they are disparaging the inhabitants ".

On another occasion, Flory takes Elizabeth to a Chinese-owned shop and, seeing the Chinese women's diminutive feet, she exclaims: "These people must be absolutely savages!" Flory takes up the side of the Chinese and says: "Oh no! They're highly civilized; more civilized than we are, in my opinion". Not only does he have regard for the Burmese he also has regard for all the cultures of the world and this puts him at odds with his countrymen . Before Elizabeth's arrival, we find him retreating into the forest appreciating its sylvan ambience and birds. When he plans to propose Dr. Veraswami's name to be included in the Club he is derided by Ellis. Ellis uses racially provocative language to abuse the Doctor and also terms Flory as "the nigger's Nancy Boy". Verrall's arrogance and overweening attitude creates a sharp contrast between him and Flory. Verrall calls natives "black beggars" and his arrival on the scene fills Flory with fear and insecurity – not on account of his love for Elizabeth only but also for Verrall's rudeness and surly disregard for native culture.

Flory has, to a large extent, been modelled on Orwell himself. Like Flory, Orwell also stayed in Burma while serving in the Indian Imperial Police. There,

[1].Traditional Burmese musical play. The word literally means 'performances.' It involves dancing and acting with music.

the "devious machinations" of the Empire dawned on him and he gave up his position in the Police. As the end of five years he wrote: "I hated the imperialism I was serving with a bitterness which I probably cannot make clear…it is not a possible to be a part of such a system without recognizing it as an unjustifiable tyranny…I was conscious of an immense weight of guilt that I had got to expiate" (192). Flory's abhorrence towards imperialism is echoed in these quoted words. Even the birthmark has some autobiographical bearing. Jeffrey Meyers says: "The facial deformity of Flory in *Burmese Days* is the symbolic equivalent of Orwell feeling that he was an ugly failure, and Flory also suffers agonies of humiliation at school"(28). Flory's distaste for the Kipilingesque view of the Empire is also reflected in Orwell's comments: "Kipling is a jingo imperialist, he is morally insensitive and aesthetically disgusting"(192). Raymond Williams is of the opinion that Orwell's early novels' central characters are extensions of his own. He says: "All of Orwell's writing until 1937 is… a series of works and experiments around a common problem. Instead of dividing them into 'fiction' and 'documentaries' we should see them as sketches towards the creation of his most successful character, 'Orwell'…Flory, and Dorothy (*A Clergyman's Daughter*) and Comstock, or the later Bowling, are aspects of this character…"(52). George Woodcock likens Flory's inability to protest against the wrongs he witnessed around him to Orwell's: "Flory…not only projects Orwell's antagonism to imperialism; but also lives through Orwell's own fascination with the Burmese and his failure to stand out firmly against the injustices he saw around him while he was still a police officer" 937-8 (1979) .

Even in his love-life, Flory is treated like an outcast. From the very beginning, Elizabeth treats him with certain reserve and contempt. His heartfelt enthusiasm for her is reciprocated by an equal amount of disregard. Theirs is a relationship that is meant for doom from day one. Their diametrically opposite characteristics make them an odd couple. In fact, Elizabeth strings Flory along while she is searching for a moneyed husband. His amorous leanings towards her sees a momentary gleam of hope in the hunting expedition when he teaches her to hunt. But even that episode has a symbolic connotation that reveals her disaffection towards him: she shoots down the very jade pigeons which Flory appreciated on an earlier occasion while he retreated into the jungle for peace of mind. The gift of the leopard skin Flory killed and the birthmark are also symbols that signal their ultimate dissociation. The shrivelled and dilapidated leopard skin and the birthmark are symbols of her distaste for him. Jeffrey Meyers says: " When Flory shoots a male leopard, his gift of the skin silently seals their troth. Later on, the ruined leopard skin, like Flory's facial skin, is both a cause and a

symbol of Elizabeth's disaffection"(70). Verrall's arrival on the scene further complicates things between them. About Verrall the author writes: "Up and down India, wherever he was stationed, he left behind him a trail of insulted people, neglected duties and unpaid bills"(192). Verrall's youth and job rank put him head and shoulders above Flory and Elizabeth snaps up, as it were, the younger and moneyed man. She cuts off her ties with Flory in favour of Verrall. Verrall's contempt as well as Elizabeth's neglect make Flory *a bete noire* to both of them. The digging up of English flowers by the gardener and replacing them with balsams, cockcombs and zinnias immediately after Elizabeth and Verrall's horse-ride together symbolize the eviction of Flory from her life and the initiation of Verrall in his place. However, Verrall's abrupt disappearance inclines Elizabeth towards Flory but only to break off for good later. She flatly denies having any weakness for him ever. Her final rejection of his advances comes at an opportune moment when Flory's former mistress Ma Hla May creates a scene in public asking money from him. She refuses to accept a piano from Flory saying: "I don't play the piano". This definitive retort from her seals their parting. All his desperate pleas fall on deaf ears. At last we see that she marries the much older Deputy Commissioner MacGregor and becomes a "*burra memsahib*". His failure – in spite of his sincerity — in love adds to his already wretched existence which propels him towards suicide.

Flory is often seen as a coward. It seems that being mired in the upheavals of his miserable predicament, he takes a drastic decision to terminate his life. Rejected by his lover, discredited by the knavish U Po Kyin, forsaken by his compatriots, and unable to stand up to the wrongs perpetrated by the English, it appears, he commits suicide. But the question is: is he a coward or a hero in committing suicide? In the conventional sense we can interpret it as a cravenly act on his part. However, the suicide can be seen as a protest against the wrongs – the barbarity of the 'intolerable colonial situation' – he could not put right and also his own faults. Also, it has a self-deprecating side to it : he kills himself to put an eternal end to the lack of his own moral shortcomings. The symbolic fading of the birthmark bears testimony to that. Jeffrey Meyers writes : " His suicide, a violent yet appropriate gesture of physical courage and moral cowardice, is his terrible protest against … failures"(70).

Flory falls prey to the circumstances around him. His well-meaning, humanistic tenets earn him the the opprobrium of the Anglo-Indian society and not its approval, His love gets spurned by Elizabeth despite its intensity. It appears that he is destined to be a pariah amid the Britons in that up-country Burmese town. He enacts the part of the underdog, as it were, in this *mise en scene*. His goodness of heart becomes his worst enemy. His character also epitomizes the author's own life experiences and the typical Orwellian protagonist. However, his cowardly persona is externalized by his birthmark. It disfigures him physically as well as psychologically. His suicide brings down the curtain on his excruciating experience i.e. life. It gives him, seemingly, release from the pettiness of his situation. But it is a pusillanimous act on his part all the same; he succumbs silently to the blows dealt to him without hitting back. Also, he can be criticized for merely patronizing the natives and of paying lip-service to the idea of their emancipation from the Raj. All in all, his virtues and vices constitute him as a human being – a good human being largely – but also a very complex person who at least endeavoured to live up to the expectations of a better creature than his compatriots but, in doing so, unfortunately, was treated like an outcast.

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# Shifting Identity of a Diasporic Subject: Jhumpa Lahiri's Lilia

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## Abstract

The paper attempts an intensive reading of Jhumpa Lahiri's story, "When Mr. Pirzada came to Dine" with a view to placing its central character, Lilia, against the two forms of 'mottled background', not in a 'harmonizing' relation, but in a process of 'becoming mottled'. It seeks to unearth the unstable nature of Lilia's diasporic identity that characterizes, albeit differently, her parents as well. The essence of her identity is shattered by her shifting between the two forms or identities that coalesce in her without any balancing oppositions. The first refers to India which emerged as an independent nation along with Pakistan following the 1947 Partition of the sub-continent by the Raj. The second involves the United States where she is physically, culturally, linguistically and economically set. The unstable nature is sought not in the subject's different positionalities in terms of race, gender and class but in the single sphere of race in order to show how the idea of the true or real identity of the diasporic subject keeps shifting in that single sphere, unsettling the basis of her identity.

The persistent urge of the diasporic self to connect itself with its homeland is a feature of diasporic writing. But, with concepts like globalization, hybridity, and multi-ethnicity holding the centre stage in our 'postcolonial neocolonized world' previous ideas of nation/nationhood/homeland are being constantly challenged and redefined. This further unsettles the already vulnerable and problematic status of the diasporic subject (DS) that Jhumpa Lahiri (1999) textualizes in her story "When Mr. Pirzada Came to Dine". Collected in *Interpreter of Maladies,* the story presents Lilia, whose diasporic consciousness makes her feel at one with her 'Indian Man', Pirzada in the United States in his days of utter worry and

frustration because he, like her parents, "speak(s) the same language, laughed at the same jokes, looked more or less the same" (p. 25)

**1**

Set against the backdrop of the liberation war of Bangladesh in 1971, "When Mr. Pirzada Came to Dine" begins in the US with the adult Lilia's introduction of Mr Pirzada who assumes that one of his qualities was that he was not there to pursue the much vaunted 'American Dream' but "to study the foliage of New England" for which he had received a research grant "from the government of Pakistan". (p. 24) The adult narrator details precisely Pirzada's vulnerable state of mind while his family was living a nightmarish life in East Pakistan in face of (West) Pakistan's military violence in the Eastern part of the country, "where Dacca was located". (p. 23) The narration of the adult Lilia is hyphenated by her use of a flashback in a matter-of-fact manner when young Lilia intervenes first in the third paragraph: "at first I knew nothing of the reasons for his visits. I was ten years old". (p. 24) This is how the 'looking glass', as Spivak (1992) would call it, of the ten-year old Lilia is initiated. The two voices overlap in narration so often that at times they become hardly separable. Many of young Lilia's details are maneuvered as consciously as the adult's (though not in a matter-of-fact tone), like the way young Lilia draws our attention to the above-mentioned event, calling Pirzada 'the Indian Man' who shook the whole of her consciousness by giving her the lesson that he possessed an identity quite different from that of her family. This event also brings two other voices into play: that of her parents, (and her father in particular) who are already diasporic Indians, not struggling cope with a foreign culture, but settled in their adopted country, unlike Pirzada. Her father explains the reasons why Pirzada is no more an Indian following the 1947 Partition of the sub-continent on religious grounds. That is to say, Pirzada's religion, Islam, gives him a different identity, "a different country, a different colour". (p. 26) Her father's voice and role are to be bracketed in contrast to another voice, that of Mrs Kenyon's, which tends to suppress Lilia's efforts to learn sub-continental histories, while her father's insistence on knowing about her learning curriculum at school forms an antithesis to hers:

> "What exactly do they teach you at school? Do you study history? Geography?" (p. 26)

Or, more directly,

> "What is she learning?" (p. 27)

More importantly, her father brings a recurring trope to the fore through the metaphor of a map, the illustration of which is again set antithetically to Mrs Kenyon, as we shall see.

Significantly, Lilia's first lesson constitutes her maiden confrontation with the 'mottled background' of realities. She wonders how realities (based on shared cultural practices) are contrasted to historically constructed ones, Pirzada presents himself in Lilia's eyes as culturally one with her parents, but historically at odds with them. And that is why her father makes it a point to let her know that Pirzada should not be called an Indian:

> ...my father insisted that I understand the difference, and he led me to a map of the world taped to the wall over his desk. (p. 25)

Lilia's father's explanation implies how his own cultural realities are distorted by the illusive image of a 'homogeneous' nationhood constituted on the basis of religious grouping:

> "...One moment we were free and then we were sliced up", he explained, drawing an X with his finger on the countertop, "like a pie. Hindus here, Muslims there. Dacca no longer belongs to us." (p. 25)

Gradually, Lilia gets emotionally attached to Pirzada and to his family although she had not seen them; this involvement is best expressed in her following thought:

> ...an uneasiness possessed me; life, I realized, was being lived in Dacca first. I imagined Mr. Pirzada's daughters rising from sleep, tying ribbons in their hair, anticipating breakfast, preparing for school. Our meals, our actions, were only a shadow of what had already happened there, a lagging ghost of where Mr Pirzada really belonged. (p. 25)

The more she is emotionally involved, the more she is drawn to the 'mottled background' that defines them as Indians and Pirzada as Pakistani, and later on as Bangladeshi. Such a difference always appears to be a problem that we could call the *imaginary construction* of Lilia that she does not resolve imaginatively until the last days of the war.

## 2

> But I did feel, looking at these strange creatures now—the Indians—that in some way these were my people, and that I'd spent my life denying or avoiding the fact.

> I felt ashamed and incomplete at the same, as if half of me were missing, and as if I'd been colluding with my enemies, those whites who wanted Indians to be like them. Partly I blamed Dad for this...He preferred England in every way...He wasn't proud of his past, but he wasn't unproud of it either; it just existed and there wasn't any point in fetishizing it, as some liberals and Asian radicals like to do. So if I wanted the additional personality bonus of an Indian past, I would have to create it. *(Kureshi, The Buddha of Suburbia,* Childs & Williams, 1997, p. 173-74)

Young Lilia extends the answer to her father's question ('What is she learning?") through her plain yet ironic narration by enacting the process that tends to unsettle the subject-position of diasporic Indians. This enactment gives Lilia her second crucial lesson and is perceived as an effect of practices constituting her confrontation with the second form of 'mottled background' epitomized here by the working of, what Spivak (1997) calls, the 'teaching machine.' (Childs & Williams, p. 173) By way of plainly describing that enactment at school, she ironically highlights what was happening to her own indigenous culture and to its effect on Pirzada, and her ignorance of the whole issue. Failing to resist the temptation of knowing about her native histories and violating Mrs Kenyon's instruction to collect data "on a particular aspect of the Revolution" (p. 33) associated with America's colonizing status—a status that is deeply embedded into the ideological state apparatuses (ISAs) like the boys' game of "redcoats against the colonies," she approaches the "blond-wood shelves" "labeled 'Asia'" (ibid) and is then drawn to a chapter about Dhaka in a book on Pakistan. Eventually her encounter with Mrs Kenyon reveals the most significant part and thereby the key process of both forming and deforming diasporic identity.

This encounter can well be understood in terms of Lacanian psychoanalysis: Mrs Kenyon hypostatizes what Lacan calls the 'Symbolic Order' (SO) with its inviolable 'no' to the child's real desire while Lilia's urge for exploring the indigenous histories stands for the child's ever unfulfilled wish creating a perpetual sense of a 'lack-of-being' as an outcome of the process whereby the real desire (for his/her initial object) is to be repressed (Rivkin & Ryan, 1998, p.123). With the naming of objects or signifiers, one sacrifices one's desire (like Lilia's sacrifice of her mother tongue) since any utterance can be made insofar as it is permissible to the SO—the language and cultural system of any given society. In this framework, Mrs Kenyon or 'the teaching machine' executes the writings of the SO, forcibly stifling all efforts concerned with

histories of any nation *ex-centric* to American modernity in particular. Lilia's spontaneous urge, on the other hand, exhibits her attempt to construct the ego, predicated on the 'child's original symbiotic relationship with the mother' (ibid p.124) through which she seeks an imaginary fulfilment of being. But the imaginary fulfillment of being is here superseded by Lilia's mother tongue and parental culture that she learns to repress for the SO's. 'no', as if she has violated the norms of the incest taboo.Nevertheless, the authenticated role of the *SO* is nullified by the splits and displacements in the nature of "mimicry", Bhabha's problematic of colonial discourse. (Bhabha, 1992, p. 381) And yet, The *SO* identifies Lilia as Indian (she is called 'Indian witch' though endearingly), corresponding to the difference and essence of her own language and culture (the Indian *SO*), and to establish contact with that is the right of every individual. But her presence in American society makes that right a mockery since her attempt at initiating such contact is denied and rendered incestuous. Unlike Americans enjoying identities as Americans validated by that order, she is called an Indian, though contradictorily denied that right or reality and forced (in this instance, at least) to internalize with the linguistic and social roles of American society. Yet she is not to be considered an American with equal status as was also the case with the young actor Karim in Hanif Kureshi's novel, who finds out that he is not allowed to be 'English' and is asked instead to play 'Indian' characters, demonstrating Bhabha's insightful formulation of mimicry: 'almost the same, but not quite' *(ibid)*. The *SO* places the minority groups not as Americans but rather as Indians, Arabs, and Mexicans; or there are more homogenizing categories like Asians, Africans, Latin Americans, or at its extreme, labels like the "third world" or "developing countries". Paradoxically, it displaces and invalidates that essence or reality of their native identity by making them subject to another essence, the internalizing/socializing process of American language and social roles, a process which neither allows them to be American, nor gives them the opportunity to establish any real contact with the indigenous culture. Against this 'mottled background', occurs the process of 'becoming mottled', of exactly sharing Karim's 'lack-of-being', 'as if, half of me were missing'.

Mimicry positions a DS as 'the other' showing its limit to which the American *SO* neither excludes the other, nor fully accommodates.This process has its effect in destabilizing the identity of a DS, setting him/her in a position of being nowhere like that of Lilia's, or for that matter, Karim's, against which the colonizer's position or identity is made stable. But, the *SO*, we have seen, resists coherent formulation and this results in the DS's strategic or unruly resistance

that also unsettles and questions the authority of colonial discourse. This is because the process of internalization/socialization on the DS's part is not only an act of compliance with the *SO*, but also an act of repressing and retrieving a desire for the now lost and endured, the half-present identity, since s/he can never establish a real contact with that origin except in a language that is not his/hers and that transforms all his/her desired metaphors into metonymies, signifiers whose signifieds, though never entirely lost, have only a *'partial presence'*. (*ibid*, p.383,) Such acts of repression and retrieval are often manifested as a partial presence, as any explicit act of resistance, like Lilia's disobedience of Mrs Kenyon's order, is never permissible to the *SO*.

## 3

Lilia's narration frequently draws our attention to common practices, codes and concerns of Pirzada and her parents that the history distorts. Such a focal point turns out to be Lilia's implicit standard in matters of assigning identity based on common linguistic and cultural codes:

> Most of the time I remember the three of them operating during that time as if they were a single person, sharing a single meal, a single silence, a single fear. (p.41)

This 'grouping', constituted as it is on the basis of a shared linguistic and cultural bond in the adopted land, is what renders it almost impassable for Lilia, who is keen at pointing inconsistencies to isolate Pirzada from her parents. To her it is a disturbing fact that they ought to be treated as citizens belonging to two different nationalities—"It made no sense to me." (p.25) More importantly, Lilia does not have any critical overview of that 'mottled background' as it remains for young Lilia "a remote mystery with haphazard clues." (p.40) Her inaccessibility to her 'native' culture has been conditioned not only by the *SO* of American society, but also by her parents' hegemonized notions and practices like her mother's protest against her father's insistence on knowing sub-continental histories, "Imagine having to place her in a decent school. Imagine her having to read during power failures by the light of kerosene lamps. Imagine the pressures, the tutors, the constant exams". (p.27)

Lilia's own participation in the Halloween—a celebration by children who dress as ghosts, witches, etc.-- brings another facet of her consciousness to light. It enacts her socialization process, her successful internalization with the customs and conventions authorized by the American *SO* that permits her access to Nora's

house and to American society. This process differs from Mrs Kenyon's direct intervention in that it remains unnoticed by Lilia though it upholds the same principle and strategies of reminding her that she is an 'Other', an "Indian witch" that they welcome, marking one of the desires of mimicry as in Karim's articulation, 'those whites who wanted Indians to be like them.' The socialization/internalization process, facilitated by her parents' hegemonized state, disengages her of her own culture, making it a 'remote mystery' that differentiates Pirzada from theirs. Her inaccessibility to 'that remote mystery' is accompanied by her undecidablity regarding Pirzada's identity. As noticed already, she eludes critical understanding of the sub-continental *SO*, its tendency towards religion-based national identity. She evades Pirzada's difference, observing and focusing frequently how he and her parents appear to be sharing a single concern, 'a single body, a single silence, a single fear.' (p.41) This evasion of Pirzada's difference with regard to common cultural grounds is not crucial since such an approach requires physical, social and psychological accessibility to the concerned 'Order' that she has been denied. Even the adult Lilia has to demystify 'that remote mystery' by reading histories paradoxically written certainly by European or American historians.

Lilia imaginatively constructs an image of 'a single body' by metamorphosing two, three, or more separate identities. The metamorphosis imagines them to be Bangalees since this new construction is based on common linguistic and cultural codes involving an uncontrolled questioning of their Indian self. The imaginative process of constructing undifferentiated metamorphosis, then, involves an ungovernable critique of the sub-continental *Symbolic Order.* In so critiquing she seeks the foregrounding of a 'narcissistic sense of unity' or stability in her ego or self that is denied, distorted and divided against itself by the American *Symbolic Order* that mockingly makes her subject-position unstable or disunited. This process of retrieving the repressed desire for an indigenous culture is sought through an image that alters its real referent into an undifferentiated body.

## 4

Lilia furthers the process of metonymic resistance which is illustrated best in her attempt at an imaginative or metonymic construction that is half-missing, unruly and perpetual. Young Lilia's narration strategically focuses on her identifying herself with Pirzada by setting him differently in her world, involving herself emotionally with him every now and then, and finally letting herself make different imaginary and surreal constructions concerning him. However, Pirzada

never appeared to be a real referent for her constructions except in some metonymic traces like his ironic treatment of the (Eurocentric) modern code of giving thanks, his ever-present sense of being a refugee in India, particularly in Kolkata, and his constant worries about Lilia's security in American society. These traces give Pirzada a more spacious, distinctive (not stereotypical) and outstanding voice. It also denotes distinctiveness to the combined voice achieved by her identification with him.

The first and third of this series of metonymic traces set Pirzada almost on the other side of Lilia's parents who have successfully coped with the American *Symbolic Order.* In sharp contrast, Pirzada's questioning of that formal code, and at its extreme, his challenging of Lilia's safety in that *Symbolic Order* do not put him merely as the epitome of a personality untainted by Eurocentric modernism. These two constructions, firstly, represent Pirzada (not directly in Lilia's eyes, but in the readers') as someone menacing to that *Symbolic Order's* modern or colonial status. In corresponding to these traces Lilia develops an image of a person who endures all like a mother, even the ravages of his own nation and its movement towards an 'unknown destination' with an 'immovable expression'. Besides, it is only he who thinks of that American *Symbolic Order* as a threat to Lilia's existence:

> "Perhaps I should accompany them?" Mr.Pirzada suggested. He looked suddenly tired and small... and his eyes contained a panic I had never seen before." (emphasis added, p. 38)

Association of this image with a motherly figure enacts the metamorphosis even of Pirzada's sexual identity, let alone other bearings of that real referent. That all these are imaginary constructs can be seen from Lilia's assertion that there is no difference between them whereas the meticulous details devoted to recording Pirzada's activities, speeches, attitudes and reactions disclose a number of differences that remain unnoticed to young Lilia; yet that pose an attraction she cannot resist and formulate. Some of the differences can be detailed graphically as follows:

(a) The uncontaminated status of Pirzada in opposition to Lilia's parents.

(b) His finding of resemblance with his refugee compatriots.

(c) His implicit questioning of the American SO, his concern about Lilia's safety and how he himself poses a potential threat to that order unlike Lilia and her parents.

It is also interesting to note that all the metonymic traces turn out to be points of differences and then resistance. The second trace, more conspicuously than others, positions him antithetically to Lilia's parents, an opposition that is not to be synthesized or an ideological space of war enacted in the colonizer's (as opposed to the colonized) land—where her parents may at times feel deeply disappointed at the cultural difficulties they face—"doctors did not make house calls, neighbors never dropped by without an invitation, and of these things, every so often, my parents complained". (p. 24) Yet they do not obviously pose any threat to the concerned *Symbolic Order* through disavowal or questioning of that order as Pirzada does. Pirzada's sense of being a refugee in Lilia's house, like his countrymen in Kolkata, the other Bengal that is part of India, "Another refugee, I am afraid, on Indian territory" (p.28), corresponds critically to his own difference from those Bengalis whose position is settled as well as secure in the colonizer's land and does not pose any real threat to the colonizer's Order. It can be perceived as his showing of an overt disavowal to that order, exactly like his yet-to-be born country, Bangladesh, that directly defied the surrogate colonizer's (West Pakistani's) machination.

With all these metonymic traces, Lilia corresponds neither critically nor directly; instead, through her imaginative correspondence she forms an image that also defines the unsettling nature of her own subject-position:

> "As he watched he had an immovable expression on his face, composed but alert, as if someone were giving him directions to *an unknown destination.*" (p. 31,emphasis added )

By corresponding thus, she constructs another metonymy, an image with which she develops a false sense of unity in a ritualistic manner—"I did not feel the ceremonious satisfaction I normally did" (p.32)—meditated by the image of her grandmother's 'small keepsake box' in which her 'father's mother used to store the ground areca nuts she ate after her morning bath' (p.29). Conversely, Pirzada might be said to have meditated between Lilia and her real desire:

> "It was my only memento of a grandmother I had never known, and until Mr. Pirzada came to our lives I could find nothing to put inside it". (p. 30)

Pirzada does not merely reintroduce her desire; he is entangled in the constructions of images through which Lilia aims at an imaginary fullness of

being in her very act of retrieving her real repressed desire. The metonymic traces, for Pirzada mean resistance and defiance, all of which become potential metonymies in Lilia's conceptual frame. This process hints precisely at the working of Lilia's metonymic resistance, a process of identifying with Pirzada, whose existence, as has been already suggested, is menacing to the American SO, an unruly process which is not fully in her control and hence is sought in part through imaginative constructions.

But the process further complicates Lilia's subject-position which ought to be preceded by her parents' difference from her position and Mrs Kenyon's. As we have seen, the voice of Mrs Kenyon is set in contrast to that of Lilia's father. His question ("What is she learning?") and role with the metaphor of a map form an antithesis to that of Mrs Kenyon who with the map is only interested in imparting lessons on American geography and history. In spite of his resistance, their successful entry into that Order demands from them the kind of hegemonic participation that they have to succumb to.

Unlike her parents, Lilia goes through a double pressure; firstly, alienation from the physical setting of her objects of desire and, secondly, the counter-pressure of the American SO she has to affiliate with. But as this counter-pressure takes over, her consciousness makes her repress the real desire through metonymies of resistance. She endeavours to retrieve it, although it is neither temporal nor conscious like her father's. Lilia's subject-position nurtures the co-existence of a thesis (maintenance of that Order) and an antithesis (construction of metonymic resistance that variously challenges the authority and the authenticity of that Order). Her parents' diasporic position, acting in most cases as representative of that American Order, is precisely justified against Pirzada, who is simultaneously the other and a threat to the stability of that Order because of his unyielding attitudes towards it. Both these roles, that of her parents and of Pirzada's, coalesce in her, creating a quite different subject-position, a position that nourishes within an ever-absent repressed desire an ever-present retrieval attempt through metonymic constructions which are always half-missing.

In "When Mr. Pirzada Came to Dine" Jhumpa Lahiri thus addresses the key issues of diasporic literature—'displacement, migration and the notion of home'. The dislocation of the characters has been presented simultaneously from the perspectives of Lilia's parents who are 'settled' in their adopted country, of Pirzada who 'feels the pangs of exile away from his homeland', and of the narrator whose diasporic experiences places her 'between two cultures'. Karim (2006)

highlights the nature of her characters as follows: '(they) interact with people of different backgrounds, from relationships, and discover their complex, hyphenated identity;' (in Alam, 210) Unraveling the complex identity of the diasporic subject is the unifying theme of the stories collected in Lahiri's *Interpreter of Maladies* as well as her *The Namesake* in which the protagonist, Gogol Ganguly 'remains captive to his conflicted identity—is he Indian or American?'. In fact the tensions and agonies of the diasporic subject is a marked feature of the South Asian diaspora which also includes Bangladeshi diasporic writers like Abid Khan, Syed Manzurul Islam and Zadie Smith.

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# Critical Discourse Analysis and the Rational Faculty

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## Abstract

In this age, the constant desire to be the best, to achieve the highest, to attain the most power, seems to be making us compromise our moral standards. The endeavour to strive and go to the next level may not always be practiced in a healthy manner. The present era poses its own problems, issues and challenges; complexities are part and parcel of social existence. In such an environment taking things at face value could lead one to be beguiled, influenced or manipulated. Critical discourse analysis (CDA) offers a window of opportunities to make apparent the not so apparent issues of a society. Its objective is to empower people by making them conscious of the hidden structures that exist in the social makeup of a community. Once an individual or members of a community and or a society becomes aware of the issues that may have escaped them, they will be in a position to choose what to believe and what not to believe, what is authentic and what is doubtful or questionable. This paper aims to give a brief introduction to CDA and suggests how it can make the rational faculty more inquisitive outside and inside the academia.

## 1.0 Introduction

Undeniably, with the advancement of science, technology and communication we are being offered more choices than ever before, but the desire to outdo ourselves and outrival our competitors has become a part of day-to-day existence. The pace of contemporary urban lifestyle, both in developing and developed communities, is so frenetic that the need to take a moment to think through and evaluate a situation seems to be taken for granted. The assumption that this is the 21st

century, the most advanced period of the new era, where everyone has abundant creativity, and are therefore a lot smarter and cleverer than before may be a problem that is often overlooked. But, what appears to escape most of us is that, though we live in a modern, advanced world where everything is accessible with the press of a button or just a phone call, life is anything but simple. In this whirlwind of complexities we are constantly confronted with choices which are far from easy. The line between right and wrong, virtue and vice, inclusion and exclusion is too subtle. At times what seems beneficial to the individual or society may in reality not be so.

### *1.1 Underlying Principle*

Empirical evidence suggests that some people are endowed with more intelligence than others; however, this does not imply that critical thinking (hereafter CT) is intrinsic. Rather, it is an ability that needs to be acquired and nurtured. Likewise, critical discourse analysis (hereafter CDA) has to be learned and cultivated. CDA critically analyses social discourse, enabling us to better understand the issues and agendas embedded in contemporary society. Empowering us with the sort of knowledge that we lacked previously, CDA enables us to make informed and conscious choices by expanding our rational faculty. This paper introduces the basic concepts of CDA and comments on its applicability in everyday life as well as for research. In doing so it attempts to suggest how our rational faculty can be activated to make it more sensitive to the socio-cultural environment and allow us to view the world more critically.

## 2.0 Introduction to Critical Discourse Analysis

Though rapidly growing in popularity, CDA is a relatively young science. Its origin may be traced back many years ago, but the major developments in this field of linguistics have occurred in the last two decades of the twentieth century. In fact, the first 'International Conference on Critical Discourse Analysis' was held in May 2004.

### *2.1 What is CDA?*

It is somewhat difficult to come up with a satisfactory definition of CDA that may satisfy all the authorities on the subject, as they all tend to perceive and explain it according to their own theories, frameworks and studies. A simplistic view would be to consider CDA as a process, system or method for critically analysing instances of discourse in order to unveil and/or expose hidden agendas embedded in society (Haque, 2008: 483). Since it focuses on social issues, its objective is to empower people by making them conscious / aware of the hidden structures that

exist in the social make-up or have became part of the social set-up of a community. It does this by establishing a relationship between language (semiotic signs, paralanguage, advertisements, etc.), ideology and power (Haque, 2008: 484). Once an individual, a community, or a society becomes aware of issues that may have escaped the critical eye, they will be in a position to choose what to believe and what not to believe, what is authentic and what is doubtful or questionable (Haque 2004). In other words, they will be more discerning, critical and conscious about the social practices of the society and not take everything for granted.

But CDA is more than just that; it deals with real issues and real problems in society, like "globalization, social exclusion, shifts in governance, and so forth" (Fairclough, 2001a: 229). Wodak (1996: 16) tends to think of it as an instrument "whose purpose is precisely to expose veiled power structures: 'CDA aims to make more visible these opaque aspects of discourse' (Fairclough/Wodak 1996)'". It deals with social inequality; and though this may be approached from many directions CDA analysts focus on 'the role of discourse in the (re)production and challenge of dominance' (van Dijk, 2001a: 300). Dominance may be defined as the 'exercise of social power by elites, institutions or groups, that results in social inequality, including political, cultural, class, ethnic, racial and gender inequality' *(ibid.)*.

By 'critical' discourse analysis Fairclough (1995a: 132) means discourse analysis which aims to systematically explore often opaque relationships of causality and determination between (a) discursive practices, events and texts, and (b) wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes. It also investigates how such practices, events and texts arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power and strives to explore how the opacity of the relationship between discourse and society is itself a factor securing power and hegemony (Fairclough, 1995a). In other words, Fairclough (2001b: 231) perceives CDA as the analysis of the dialectical relationship between discourse (including language as well as other forms of semiosis, for instance, body language or visual image) and other forms of social practices. For him, its particular concern is with the radical changes that are taking place in contemporary social life, and with how discourse figures within processes of change, and with shifts in the relationship between semiosis and other social elements within the networks of practices.

According to van Dijk (2001b: 352), critical discourse analysis is a type of discourse analytical research that studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context, where analysts take explicit positions, and thus want to understand, expose, and ultimately resist social inequality. He (Van Dijk 2001c:

96) thinks CDA is a critical way of doing scholarship; it is, so to speak, discourse analysis 'with an attitude', focusing on social problems, and especially on the role of discourse in the production and reproduction of power abuse and domination. Wodak and Matouschek (2002: 238) opine that CDA has set itself the task, inter alia, of *utilizing an interdisciplinary approach to make transparent socially relevant problems ordinarily shrouded in a veil of discursive obfuscation.* Van Leeuwen, (2002: 166-7) believes that CDA is, or should be, concerned with not only discourse as the instrument of power and control as well as with discourse as the instrument of the social construction of reality, but also with the way in which linguistic analyses can bring to light, for instance, inequalities between addressers and addressees, or systematic omissions and distortions in representations.

### *2.2 Principles /Tenets*

The basic principles of CDA are to be seen in the approaches and / or methods of the forerunners of the field—Fairclough, van Dijk, Wodak and Kress and van Leeuwen. In general, CDA analysts deal with language, power and ideology and analyse the social order as well as the social make-up of society to unearth the hidden structures and issues embedded in that particular society. The principles / tenets are usually moulded according to the ideology, the mode of analysis and the subject or research focus of the CDA analysts. The main principles of CDA as summarised by Fairclough and Wodak (1997: 271-80) are as follows:

1. CDA addresses social problems;
2. Power relations are discursive;
3. Discourse constitutes society and culture;
4. Discourse does ideological work;
5. Discourse is historical;
6. The link between text and society is mediated;
7. Discourse analysis is interpretative and explanatory;
8. Discourse is a form of social action.

### *2.3 Objectives and Aims of CDA*

One of the objectives of CDA is to take up the cause of the oppressed and downtrodden of a society. It 'aims to show non-obvious ways in which language is involved in social relations of power and domination, and in ideology' (Fairclough, 2001a: 229). Adopting a more down to earth perspective, one could say that CDA attempts to liberate the so-called 'losers' of social life. Though CDA pays more emphasis on 'top-down' instances of dominance than 'bottom-up' relations of resistance, compliance and acceptance (van Dijk, 2001a: 300),

this does not mean that the reverse cannot also be true. Analysts focus on relations of power and dominance that are not explicit but are rather subtle, and the subtlety that manufactures consent through concealment, legitimisation and (re)production of certain discourses and / or ideologies which may be beneficial to a select few. Commenting on such objectives, van Dijk (1993) observes:

> *Though in different terms, and from different points of view, most of us deal with power, dominance, hegemony, inequality and the discursive processes of their enactment, concealment, legitimization and reproduction. And many of us are interested in the subtle means by which text and talk manage the mind and manufacture consent, on the one hand, and articulate and sustain resistance and challenge, on the other.*
>
> (van Dijk, 1993: 132)

Specifically, the aim of CDA is to unmask ideologically permeated and often obscured structures of power, political control, and dominance, as well as strategies of discriminatory inclusion and exclusion in language use (Wodak *et al.,* 1999: 8).

Fairclough (2001a: 230) is of the opinion that the scope of CDA goes beyond mere analysis and includes establishing connections between language and other social elements that are often opaque; ultimately, it is committed to bringing about social change. He goes on to say that CDA "has an emancipatory 'knowledge interest'" *(ibid.)*.

### *2.4 Beyond the academia: The so-what-factor*

In general, discourse in discourse analysis (DA) implies spoken interactions and written texts. However, in critical discourse analysis (CDA) discourse is perceived from a broader perspective; besides spoken interactions and written texts, it could also denote semiosis, advertisements, or any form of communication that is systematically able to perform the basic communicative functions. Unlike DA, the discourse in CDA is not studied independently of social issues or problems; it is through the analysis of a piece of discourse that a social problem is emphasized, a problem which may trouble sociologists, political scientists, or educationists and not merely linguists:

> *The starting point of CDA is social issues and problems. It analyses texts and interactions, and indeed any type of semiotic material (written texts, conversations, television programmes, advertisements on billboards, etc.) but it does not begin with texts and interactions; it begins with the issues which preoccupy sociologists, or political scientists, or educationists.*
>
> (Fairclough, 2001a: 229-30)

One of the distinctions between discourse analysis (DA) and critical discourse analysis (CDA) is that CDA addresses the *so-what-factor.* DA analysts generally analyze a piece of discourse (spoken or written text) from a linguistic perspective, without focusing on discourse, ideology and power in terms of the social issues; on the other hand, CDA analysts through the analysis of a piece of social discourse (spoken, written, semiotic, visual, etc. texts) focus on societal issues that perpetuate inequality. The relevance of DA is mostly confined to the confines of the academia and the research community. The usefulness of CDA goes beyond the academic and the scholarly world. Widdowson (2004) echoes this thought when he says:

> *Here was a development in linguistics which claimed to be applicable to the immediate and the pressing concerns of the non-scholarly world ... an applied linguistic approach to discourse analysis; but with an important difference. Whereas I had thought language teaching as the main area of practical concern, which discourse analysis could be relevant to, CDA had a much more ambitious and much more significant agenda. Its concern was to educate people more broadly in the abuse of power by linguistic means, to reveal how language is used for deception and distortion and the fostering of prejudice.*
>
> (Widdowson, 2004: viii)

One of the objectives of CDA is to focus on social issues and problems, and take up the cause of the oppressed and downtrodden people of a society. Some academics are more inclined to help what Fairlcough (2001c) calls the 'losers of the society'—those who are marginalized, excluded, manipulated or simply taken advantage of because they are less informed about certain social practices. Such academics seem to be sceptical about DA in the sense that it is not far reaching enough to help unveil or expose social practices that are opaque in nature. They ask such questions as 'So what if you do DA?' or 'How can DA expose social inequality?'

Crossing the boundaries of the academia and venturing into the different realms of the social context, CDA addresses issues prevailing in the contemporary society. CDA analysts make it a point to take up the position of the uninformed people and endeavour to inform them about certain deceptive social practices that are practised by the select few, that is, those in positions of power; they (CDA analysts) do this by describing and explaining the relationships of social practices in terms of discourse, ideology and power. The goal of the (CDA) analysts is to curb the power of the select few who benefit at the expense of the common people, and thereby reduce social inequality. It is this addressing of social inequality, through the critical analysis of discourse that constitutes the *so-what-factor.*

## *2.5 The Notion of Criticalness*

The notion of the 'critical' in CDA is derived from two traditions: one is based on the ideas of the Frankfurt School (especially the work of Habermas) and the other on a shared tradition with the so-called 'critical' linguistics (Titscher *et al.*, 2000: 144).

Critical discourse analysis may be perceived as an application of a kind of critical analysis evolved within 'Western' Marxism to language (Fairclough, 2001a: 232-33). One of the main elements in the formation of Western Marxism is the Frankfurt School, which originated in Germany in the 1920s (*ibid.*). Though the legacy of Western Marxism (comprising key figures and movements in twentieth-century social and political thought like Antonio Gramsci, the Frankfurt School—including Jürgen Habermas—and Louis Althusser) frame the work of critical discourse analysts, they do not place themselves within the tradition explicitly (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997: 260). A reason for this may be that the work and the approaches used vary from analyst to analyst. However, looking at the theoretical origins of CDA in its entirety, the influence of those associated with Western Marxism as well as the concepts and ideals of Mikhail Bakhtin (1981, 1986), Michel Foucault (1972a, 1972b, 1979,1981, 1984), Michel Pecheaux (1982, 1988) and Julia Kristeva (1986) cannot be denied.

In a commodified consumer-oriented society, discourse, ideology and power, in relation to the social context, constitute the foundations of CDA. The production and reproduction of discourse, via certain discursive practices, project the ideology of a select few, endowing them with the power to propagate their hidden agenda(s) so as to create and / or sustain the unequal power relations in society. It is such agendas that CDA seeks to address and expose, thus empowering the common people and balancing social inequalities. CDA underlines the significance of discourse, ideology and power in the social milieu and societal practices.

## *2.6 Approaches to CDA*

There are several approaches to CDA including those of Norman Fairclough (three-dimensional approach to discourse analysis), Teun van Dijk (socio-cognitive approach), Ruth Wodak (discourse-historical method) and Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen (socio-semiotic approach). These may be employed to analyze various (social) discourses, depending on what and how the practitioner wants to analyze. For the purpose of this paper I employ an adapted version of Fairclough's three-dimensional concept of CDA (1989, 1992, 1995a, 1999, 2001c, 2003) to analyze the data collected from the recruitment ads (in the research part of this paper), a

version which looks at discourse from the perspective of social change. But before we focus on Fairclough's framework, let us briefly touch upon the other approaches.

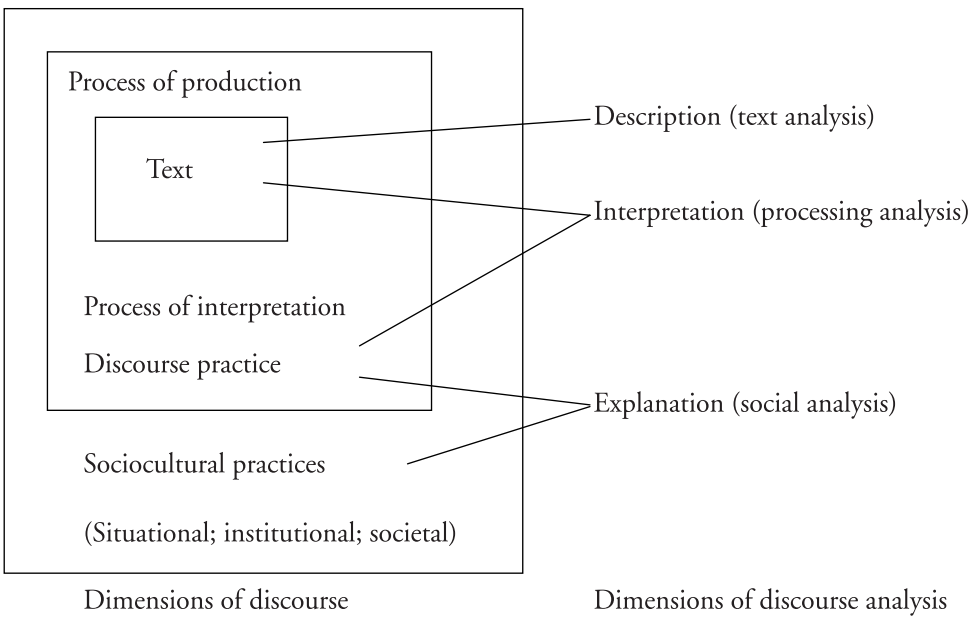
Though ideology is one of the central aspects of CDA, along with discourse and power, van Dijk's version of CDA (1998) adopts a multidisciplinary approach to the concept of ideology. According to him, most traditional approaches adopted to investigate ideology are 'rather of a *philosophical* than of a systematic, analytical and theoretical nature' (van Dijk, 1998: 313). In his groundbreaking book *Ideology: A Multidisciplinary Approach* (1998) he uses a multidisciplinary approach to analyse and explain ideology in terms of the 'triangle' of (social) *cognition, society* and *discourse (ibid.).* According to the discourse-historical approach, developed by the 'Vienna School' (comprising of Ruth Wodak, Martin Reisigl, Gilbert Weiss, Rudolf de Cillia, Meyer, Bernd Matouschek, Januschek etc.), now synonymous with Wodak (see 1996; Titscher et al., 2000), in order to understand the present we need to look at the past. In other words, the historical context is always analyzed and integrated into the interpretation of discourses and texts (Wodak and Meyer, 2001: 70).) In their socio-semiotic approach, Kress and Leeuwen (1996: 1) looks at visual 'grammar', which describes the way in which people, places and things combine in visual 'statements' of greater or lesser complexity. In their view (1996: 13; also see Kress and Leeuwen, 2001) the incursion of the visual into the many domains of public communication, where formerly language was the sole and dominant mode, is an equally significant theme for critical discourse analysis. Kress and Leeuwen (1996: 18) approaches communication from the social base, where meanings expressed by speakers, writers, printmakers, photographs, painters and sculptors are first and foremost meanings which arise out of the society in which individuals live and work.

### *2.6.1 Fairclough in Focus*

Fairclough (1995a) believes that his framework is appropriate for studying socio-cultural change in the sense that it foregrounds links between social practice and language, and for the systematic investigation of connections between the nature of social process and properties of language texts. The approach also facilitates the integration of 'micro' analysis (of discourse) and 'macro' analysis (including analysis of language policy and planning). Furthermore, it is a 'critical' approach to discourse analysis in the sense that it sets out to make visible through analysis, and to criticize connections between properties of texts and social processes and relations (ideologies, power relations) which are generally not obvious to people who produce and interpret those texts, and whose effectiveness depends upon this opacity and to criticize them *(ibid.).*

Fairclough (1995a: 97) sees discourse and any particular instance of discursive practice, as simultaneously (i) a language text, spoken or written, (ii) discourse practice (text production and interpretation), (iii) and socio-cultural practice (see Figure 1). Moreover, he (*ibid.*) believes, a piece of discourse is embedded within socio-cultural practice at a number of levels—in the immediate situation, in the wider institution or organization, and at the societal level. For instance, one can read an interaction between marital partners in terms of their particular relationships, relationships between partners within the family as an institution, or gender relationships in the larger society (*ibid.*).

Fairclough's (1995a: 97) method of discourse analysis (Figure 1) comprises (i) linguistic *description* of the language text, (ii) *interpretation* of the relationship between the (productive and interpretative) discursive process and the text, and (iii) *explanation* of the relationship between the discursive processes and the social process. He points out that a specific feature of this approach is that the link between socio-cultural practice and text is mediated by discourse practice: on the one hand, the process of text production and interpretation are shaped by (and help shape) the nature of social practice, and on the other the production process shapes (and leaves 'traces' in) the text, while the interpretation process operates upon 'cues' in the text *(ibid.)*.




*(Source: Fairclough, 1995a: 98)*

***Figure 1: Diagrammatic representation of Fairclough's three-dimensional approach***

The theoretical details of the above three-dimensional approach to CDA may be found in Fairclough's *Language and Power* (1989, 2001c), *Discourse and Social Change* (1992), *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language* (1995a), Titscher et al.'s *Methods of Text and Discourse Analysis* (2000) and Jørgensen and Phillips's *Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method* (2002).

With the purpose of extending his previously published work (Fairclough, 1989; 1992; 1995a; 1995b; 2000a; 2000b; 2001c), Fairclough (2003) in his later work directed his focus on doing a more detailed analysis of texts. Though CDA can draw upon a wide range of approaches to analysing text, Fairclough in *Discourse Analysis: Textual analysis for social research* (2003) emphasizes the linguistic analysis of texts, especially grammatical and semantic analysis.

## 3.0 CDA vs. Critical Thinking

The commonality between CDA and CT (critical thinking) is that they both share the concept of the 'critical'. In order to carry out the analysis of discourse from a CDA perspective one needs to be able to think critically. Brookfield (1987) identifies four components of CT:

- *Identifying and challenging assumptions is central to critical thinking;*
- *Challenging the importance of context is crucial to critical thinking;*
- *Critical thinkers try to imagine and explore alternatives;*
- *Imagining and exploring alternatives leads to reflective skepticism.*

(Brookfield, 1987: 7-9)

Various people interpret CT in different ways—from the ability to test meaning (Hullfish and Smith 1961), be analytical (Ennis, 1962), curious (D'Angelo, 1971), reflective (Kitchener, 1986), presumptuous (Scriven, 1976), and to display logical reasoning (Hallet, 1984; Ruggiero, 1975). Halpern (1984) perceives CT in terms of attempting to achieve a purposeful goal based on rationality, while O'Neill (1985) is more object-oriented in differentiating between prejudice and rationality and fact and belief. Brookfield (1987) points out that alternative interpretations of CT may be thought of in terms of *emancipatory learning to dialectical thinking.* From a more practical perspective, Epstein (2002: 1) suggests, 'thinking critically is a defense against a world of too much information and too many people trying to convince us'. Chaffee (2000) sees CT as a mechanism for solving problems by perceiving language and thought, and enduring practitioners with the ability to report, infer and judge so as to be able to organize constructive arguments.

Basically, all the different facets of CT are explicitly and implicitly embodied in the general concept of CDA, in the sense that they may be applicable in critically analyzing instances of social discourse in varying contexts and situations. The emancipatory notion of CDA and CT emphasizes an opaque issue that needs to be exposed and made known to the members of society. Fisher (2001) mentions that CT is sometimes referred to as 'critico-creative' thinking, and gives two related reason for this view:

> *The first is that the term 'critical thinking' is sometimes thought to sound rather 'negative', as though one's only interest is in adversely criticizing other people's arguments and ideas. This would be a serious mistake since (and this is the second reason) to be good at evaluating arguments and ideas one often has to be very imaginative and creative about other possibilities, alternative considerations, different options and so on. … In short, critical thinking is a kind of evaluative thinking—which involves both criticisms and creative thinking …*
>
> (Fisher, 2001: 13)

The negative aspect of the 'critico-creative' notion of CT is probably the closest embodiment of CDA in the sense that critical discourse analysis explores unequal dimensions of power, between the oppressor and the oppressed, taking the position of the downtrodden. It is through the critical understanding of the societal structures in terms of discourse, power and ideology that a CDA practitioner is able to focus on social issues that seem to escape the notice of ordinary people. In so doing, CDA exposes the ideology of the elite who benefit from the social abuse of power at the expense of ordinary people.

## 4.0 CDA in Instigating the Inquisitiveness of the Rational Faculty

It should be acknowledged that CDA does not offer a set of rules or guidelines which may be learnt overnight or employed to make rational decisions the very next day. From an academic perspective, CDA requires extensive reading of the critical theories and literatures of various disciplines of social sciences and the humanities; although the knowledge gathered thereby need to be reinforced by comprehending the social practices of society. However, in order to instigate the inquisitiveness of people about the basic notions of CDA, they need to view things from a more critical perspective, that is, be inquisitive, ask questions and not take anything for granted; in order to do this, social conscious ness / awareness is pertinent. This would enable them to make informed choices and not be manipulated by the discourses that are presented to them.

### *4.1 Critical Perspective in Everyday Life*

The contemporary age is so competitive that people may resort to unscrupulous means to outdo their competitors, even in the realms of education and charity. The modern era affords many choices, but before making decisions we need to ask questions and not take everything at face value. For instance, there are some educational institutions that may project the image, through prospectus and web pages, that they are world-class institutions of higher learning with state-of-the-art facilities and qualified academics dispensing quality education. In reality, however, they may be institutions operating from rented residential houses or office blocks, with part-time staff providing sub-standard education (see Haque 2005). Even when we purchase an item as simple as a bookmarker, candy, calendars, and so on, in the name of charity, we need to ponder on how much of the money will actually go towards charitable causes. Sometimes, companies, organizations or direct selling agencies use the concept of 'donate to charity' as a ploy to market certain products and boost sales production.

In today's world, projecting an image appears to be a very significant way of promoting a product, service or a personality. In promoting a personality there seems to be wide market for marketing physical beauty in the form of cosmetics, cosmetic surgery, apparels, slimming products or apparatus, packaged diets, and so forth. The media plays a very crucial role in marketizing such products through newspapers, magazines, radio, television and the Internet. A common strategy employed is the 'before and after' shots of people to show the effectiveness of the product(s) being promoted, with the help of renowned personalities. A general consumer trend is to accept whatever is presented to people as a simple solution, which they can use to eliminate their problems (be it obesity, deformities, ugliness, scars, acnes, lack of fashion sense, etc.) merely by buying the advertised product(s). What most people do not seem to realize is that the 'before and after' shots are not always the result of using merely the advertised product. For instance, buying a slimming product/apparatus or a diet package may not result in attaining a 'washboard figure'.

What is particular about 'before and after' shots (especially on the internet) is that they mention in the background in very light print '* RESULTS NOT TYPICAL'; implying that the 'after' shots may not be the typical result after using the advertised product(s). Most products using the 'before and after' shots do not mention the '* RESULTS NOT TYPICAL' clause, suggesting that the consumer can actually achieve a figure like the 'after' shot by using the advertised product(s).

It is when confronted with situations like the above that the knowledge of CDA can help readers in making informed choices rather than being influenced and manipulated by the discourse of marketization. Being critically informed, may lead readers to queries such as 'What are the side effects of using a certain sliming product?', 'What are the side effects of cosmetic surgery?', 'Why consult a physician before using a certain product?', etc. Before buying any 'abdominal-instruments' one should consider whether a mere 'three minutes a day' workout is enough to attain 'six-pack' abdominal muscles, as is promoted by various 'Smart Shop' commercials employing 'before and after' shots of models with washboard physique. In a report prepared by the FTC (Federal Trade Commission) consumer feature (September 2002) on weight loss advertisements, it was found that among the 300 ads that ran in 2001, researchers found that 55 percent made at least one false or unsubstantiated claim:

- *rapid weight loss (e.g. 'You can loose 18 pounds in one week')*
- *no need for dietary restrictions or exercise (e.g. 'Eat as much as you want – the more you eat the more you'll lose')*
- *permanent weight loss (e.g. 'take it off and keep it off')*
- *lose weight despite previous failures (e.g. 'Are you tired of fad diets that never seem to work?'*
- *scientifically proven doctor-endorsed (e.g. 'clinically tested')*
- *money-back guarantees (e.g. 'Yes. Guaranteed! You lose or it doesn't cost you a penny')*
- *safety (e.g. 'proven 100% safe' or 'natural' )*
- *before-and-after testimonials (e.g. '7 weeks ago I weighed 268 pounds; now I'm down to 148 pounds!')*

(FTC consumer feature, September 2002: 2-3)

The concept of 'Mega Sales' seems to be a marketization tool in consumer culture in recent years. Frequently employed sales tagline such as 'Buy one free one', seems to work wonders in appealing to consumers. The question that needs to be asked is, 'Are we really being offered anything free?' Apparently people seem to be influenced by the lexical choice 'free', and become manipulated into purchasing two items of a product that they may not have any real or urgent need for at that particular point in time. But the concept of getting something 'free' for the price of one seems a bargain that is too tempting to resist.

From a critical perspective, even the word 'sale' could be considered manipulative to some extent, because it gives consumers the promise of a 'good deal'. Usually sales are announced to get rid of old stocks, which if retained on

the shelves would not get sold, and whose life would otherwise wither away. Most sales items are leftover stocks from the previous season, and may have gone out of fashion. New arrivals (of goods) are not usually included in sales. Sometimes, discounts or 'offer prices' may be considered on new arrivals, but that is purely for promotional reasons.

The proverb that we should not 'judge a book by its cover' may not always be applicable in the contemporary age. Sometimes people do 'judge a book by its cover', and this is where companies tend to cash in. Packaging is a very significant marketization strategy, giving the impression that superior external packaging reflects the quality of the contents. Consumers should also remember the proverb, 'all that glitters is not gold', implying that just because the packaging may be of superior quality does not necessarily mean that the content is of high quality too. They should take the time to read the information on the label and/or packaging, and not be influenced by the external features of consumer goods.

Consumables that are on sale or are offered as 'free' to increase the sales of other products are usually very close to their expiry dates. Consumers should be very careful when purchasing such items and use the consumables before the expiry dates. Otherwise, they risk their health for a few pennies.

The basic notion of CDA can help in such situations in the sense that it teaches us not to take everything at face value. We should inquire about things, even when we are not in doubt. By inquiring, by asking questions, by trying to understand the mechanics of the society and how things function, ordinary (uninformed) people can make informed choices and not be influenced and manipulated into making uninformed choices that may initially seem beneficial, but in reality may not be so.

The concept of asking questions, being inquisitive and not taking anything at face value could be introduced as a general elective subject at secondary and tertiary levels of our educational system. The media (e.g. print and electronic) can also play a significant role in sensitizing various issues and raising the general awareness of social inequalities by emphasizing how people are influenced, deceived, marginalized, and so forth. Just like De Bono (1970) thinks that people can be trained to think creatively, asking questions about various social norms and practices in order to understand how things function in a society can also be taught. If people are taught to think critically and creatively from an early stage in life, they will have a better chance of not being taken advantage of or manipulated.

### *4.2 CDA in Research: Exclusion in Recruitment Advertisements*

Apart from the everyday use of CDA, it can also be used as a tool to analyze data for research purposes, helping us to focus on opaque (non-apparent) issues and exposing them to society at large. In doing so, society would be empowered and know what it did not know before, and people therefore would be able to make informed choices. The following pages examine ways in which job advertisements invite potential employees for various advertised positions using the critical discourse analytical (CDA) framework adapted from Fairclough (1995, 2003).

#### *4.2.1 Method of Analysis*

This part of the article will engage with Malaysian (recruitment)[1] advertising texts on different levels, but the main focus is on lexical choice, modality and hedging, and exclusion and inclusion of social actors. CDA's theoretical perspective, the assumption that language has a central role to play in the construction and maintenance of power, especially ideological power, that is the power to project one's practices as universal and 'common sense' (Fairclough, 1989), is of particular relevance here. Practitioners of CDA are particularly committed to unveiling the 'ideological loading of particular ways using language and the relations of power which underlie them' (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997: 258). Fairclough's approach in particular provides the tools necessary for detailed linguistic analysis which will bridge 'the well-known gap between micro- and macro-analysis of social phenomena' (van Dijk, 1990).

I will now examine the textual materials of selected Malaysian job advertisements in terms of content and language. Analysis of content involve screening the advertisements for unreasonable and unfair requirements which appear to be neutral on the surface, but which may in practice have a negative effect on a higher proportion of people from one group. For example, there are many job advertisements which discriminate indirectly by disproportionately disadvantaging people of certain ages (e.g. a job advertisement specifically requesting for a 23-29 year old to 'fit in with a young, vibrant and energetic team').

Textually, the analysis will focus on how the language of job advertisements can contribute to the exclusion of a significant proportion of people, who may have the right qualifications, skills and abilities for the job from the labour market. Such an analysis could reveal certain patterns of exclusion and

[1]The study is based on my Ph.D. thesis entitled *Discourse of Exclusion: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Recruitment Advertisements;* the data for the research was collected from the Malaysian context.

discrimination, which have so far been (consciously or unconsciously) overlooked and under researched. By adopting Fairclough's three-dimensional view of discourse (discourse as text, as discursive practice and as social practice) and adapting his (2003) tool for text analysis, I intend to illustrate how textual analysis can be made to be more socially relevant and meaningful.

### *4.2.2 Textual Material for Critical Analysis*

According to Fairclough (2003: 202), the aim of critical social research is 'better understanding of how societies work and [to] produce both beneficial and detrimental effects and [show] how the detrimental effects can be mitigated if not eliminated'. As regards job advertisements, the detrimental effect could be the exclusion of the best possible people from applying due to the lack of some criteria which have no direct relevance to the job. I concur with Fairclough in accepting that the social effects of discourse can only be understood by examining the actual instances of language in use, that is texts. Texts constitute a major source of evidence for empirical claims about social structures, social relations and ongoing processes. The data was gathered from two Malaysian national English newspapers, *The Star* and the *Sunday Star*; the former being a daily and the later a weekly. Thus, the data selected for critical analysis in this article is drawn from various classified sections (e.g. *Recruitment, Metro Classifieds* and *Classifieds*) of these newspapers, and cover three different months (September 2001, February 2004 and October 2004), over a period of thirty-eight months. The data is sufficient to highlight the general patterns of Malaysian recruitment advertisements. The aim here is to determine what the discriminatory criteria are and how they are semiotically constructed. By choosing different periods of time an 'unfair hiring practice' is exposed as something which is 'ongoing' and not an 'one-off' thing.

### *4.2.3 Analysis of content*

Analysis of content will be carried out simultaneously with analysis of form because content is necessarily realised in form and different content entails different form and vice versa. Since, job advertisements are directed towards certain target groups the choice of language and semiotic features in job advertisements play a significant role in conveying the preferred meaning.

Examination of the data shows that the primary criteria of exclusion, which can be directly or indirectly discriminatory, are socio-economic condition (henceforth SEC), gender, age, ethnicity, and language. Discrimination tends to treat a person or a group of persons less favourably because of a particular trait,

which is beyond his/her/their control. Socio-economic conditions for example, includes possession of a car, motorcycle and/or a driving licence, mobile phone and so forth. This can be discriminatory as it indicates a preference for a certain group in society equipped with the necessary economic means. Stating that applicants should belong to a socially or genetically defined sub-group (e.g. either a woman or a man, or someone who speaks a particular dialect or is from a particular ethnic group or of a certain age) is discriminatory especially when they are of no relevance to a job. The number of sexist and ageist job advertisements in the newspapers is a testament to how many employers in Malaysia still tie gender and age to competencies. Of course not all exclusionary criteria are discriminatory. Some are necessary and are directly related to the job to be performed and to essential duties related to the position, for instance. degrees/education required, experience, demonstrated excellence in writing/communication skills, physical requirements for essential duties, etc.

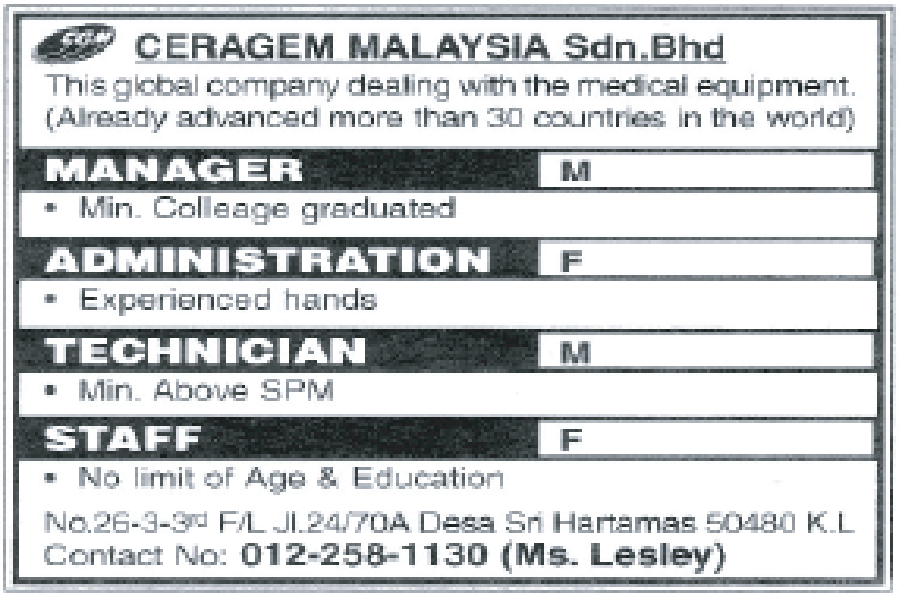
In the advertisement itself, the exclusionary criteria are presented in the form of a list sequentially arranged no doubt in terms of priority. How the various criteria are sequenced in the list is important as this can contribute to the foregrounding of certain criteria and the backgrounding of others. This is especially significant when the first criterion itself favours a particular class of individuals over other groups. In the light of the above discussion, let us now examine the following advertisements:




*(Source: StarMetro Classifieds pullout from the Star dated 24.02.2004)*
***Advertisement 1***

In Advertisement 1, the first line in the list of requirements in the two positions advertised include inherent characteristics such as ethnicity (Chinese), gender (male or female) and age limits (between 28-40; 30 and above). The next line contains the qualification of the potential candidate. The ordering of the first experience and line seems to suggest that sex, ethnicity and age are more important than qualification. This may result in the favouring of a particular class of individuals over other groups. It is also interesting to note here that in Advertisement 1, which is for a position which requires a lot of travelling, the text producer specifies preference for male applicants with a specific age range.

The preferred criteria can also be foregrounded by colour contrast. In Advertisement 2, the black and white combination as well as the abbreviated representations of the specific gender (e.g. M and F) is an effective way of highlighting the preference for a specific sex, that is, male or female. Notice the location of the abbreviation, which clearly associates the post with a specific gender:




*(Source: StarMetro Classifieds pullout from the Star dated 30.10.2004)*

*Advertisement 2*

Given such advertisements there is a strong possibility that people who have the 'required' qualifications, experience and abilities for the jobs but do not have the 'preferred' requirements as mentioned in the ad will not apply, thus

reducing the pool of potential employees. The prioritisation of discriminatory hiring criteria may send the wrong message to job applicants that is, that qualification and experience are secondary to age, gender and ethnicity.

### *4.2.4 Linguistic analysis*

In this section I will first examine how the text producer linguistically presents exclusionary requirements in terms of choice of modality, lexical choice and inclusion and exclusion of social actors. I should stress that I regard these choices as ideologically significant.

#### *4.2.4.1 Choice of modality and lexis*

Job advertisements clearly reflect the authority of the potential employer. The first major interpersonal orientation in any discourse of job advertisements is one of authority and power. The presence of explicit obligational meanings in most advertisements examined marks the unequal power relations. The text producer who writes on behalf of the potential employer positions the latter unambiguously as someone with authority to demand something from the potential applicant. The power of the organisation is overtly expressed and readers are positioned as powerless applicants. The members of the organization consider themselves as potential employers having authority and view the readers as potential job seekers with no authority

The requirements included in the text are expressed in overtly obligational forms using modality. Most modal verbs in the data are those that express compulsion which foreground the degree of commitment that ranges from high to low, for instance 'must', 'should', 'can', etc. This is not surprising since the main purpose of a job advertisement is to make known to the applicant what the prospective employer requires of them. Fairclough (2003: 171) schematically outlines the degree of commitment to obligation/necessity as follows (Table1):

**Table 1: Degree of Commitment**

| Degree of commitment | Obligation | Modal verbs |
|---|---|---|
| High | Required | Must |
| Medium | Supposed | Should |
| Low | Allowed | Can |

The organisation claims authority with respect to what kind of candidate it is looking for. The relationship as reflected in the sample sentences below is an unequal one, with the text producer fully in control of the text and taking no measures to mitigate the demands he/she makes of the potential applicant. Authority is marked through strong deontic modality such as "must", make the following requirements obligatory:

1. *Must possess own transport.*
2. *Must possess valid driving licence and own transport.*
3. *Must possess own transport with a valid driving licence and willing to travel extensively.*
4. *Must be fluent in Mandarin and Hokkien.*
5. *Must speak Chinese dialects.*
6. *Candidates must be above 22 years of age.*

In sentences 1 to 6, meanings of requirement and obligation are explicitly worded. 'Must' indicates that the potential applicant is expected to have the above pre-requisites which range from possessing "own car" and/or a driving licence, being fluent in a particular language or dialect to being of a particular age. Requirement 6 tends to exclude applicants below 22 years of age. Requirements 4 and 5 seem to marginalize those (applicants) who cannot speak the required language or dialect. One consequence of the above requirements is the exclusion of those who do not have the required prerequisites though they may have the relevant qualifications and skills.

Besides 'must' the other modals used include 'should' which involves a lesser degree of compulsion than 'must':

- *Should posses own car with valid driving licence.*
- *Should be at least in his / her thirties.*

'Must' reflects an obligatory condition whereas 'should' reflects a condition that is preferred; both assume that the author of the obligation or preference has the power to demand.

Obligation is also expressed lexically using the adverb 'only' as is illustrated in the examples below:

*1. Male only*
*2. Age between 18-35 only*
*3. Chinese female only*
*4. (Chinese Only)*
*5. Female only*

'Only' here means 'exclusively' and leaves no option. The use of 'only' here is different from its use in another context, e.g. 'Only RM5', which means 'no more than'. Notice how the requirements are worded, brief and to the point. This could be due to the need to reduce the number of words to cut cost.

Sometimes the requirements are implicitly worded, being presented as preference rather than necessity, thus softening the illocutionary force of the statement. Some of the hedging devices used include *preferably, preferred, preference, advantage, (added) advantage, encourage, welcome.* Hedging signals a reduced illocutionary commitment on the side of the text producer. Although these devices reduce the strength of the obligation, the exclusionary prerequisites are still foregrounded. The following are some sample sentences:

1. *Preferably with own transport*
2. *Preference will be given to those with transport*
3. *Added advantage if you possess own transport*
4. *Male preferred*
5. *Female preferred*
6. *Preferably male*
7. *Preferably female*
8. *Males are encouraged to apply*
9. *Females are encouraged to apply*
10. *(SPM Female Candidates are welcome)*
11. *Preferably aged below 28 yrs*
12. *Preferably Chinese*
13. *Chinese candidates preferable*
14. *Chinese preferred*
15. *Preferably able to speak in Cantonese*
16. *Well [sic] command of English and Chinese will be an advantage*

The exclusionary criteria are gender, ethnicity and age and these, as discussed earlier, can be discriminatory. The above hedging devices (e.g. *preferably, are encouraged, added advantage, are welcome*) give the impression that candidates without the requirement could still be appointed. However, from the candidate's point of view the hedging devices are more likely to be seen as more than mere linguistic devices and that an application would almost certainly be a waste of time. By using such devices, potential employers could in practice deter applicants from applying while claiming in principle not to be discriminatory at all. What is required in practice is a more positive statement that employers promote equal opportunities and positively invite applications from groups who

are likely to be deterred.

Another common device used by advertisers is what is known as a 'tag on', whereby some form of exclusionary criteria (SEC in this case) is tagged on to the end of other job requirements (that usually bears no connection to the exclusionary criteria), for example:

1. *Min SPM / MCE qualification and possess own transport*
2. *Computer literate and possess own transport*
3. *Good communication, positive attitude* & *possess own transport*
4. *Pleasant, tactful, enthusiastic and customer-focus, possess own transport*

The essential characteristic of a 'tag-on' is that it is not logically related to the item to which it is conjoined. The first item is a legitimate and necessary requirement, whereas the tag-on is exclusionary and discriminatory especially when it is not related to the performance of the job.

### *4.2.4.2 Social Actors*

Social actors are participants in social processes, and in this communicative event, the main social actors are the potential employee and the potential employer. Although the text producer is also a participant, he / she is totally silent. Being only the mouthpiece of the organisation, the total suppression of his / her role is understandable. Just as there are lexical choices and modality choices, there are also choices in the representation of social actors that is, in terms of whether they are made explicit or left implicit. According to Fairclough (2003), the choice of excluding or including the social actors may be ideologically significant. When included, potential employees are realised as nouns and pronouns. When excluded, they can either be suppressed (i.e. not mentioned in the text at all) or backgrounded (i.e. mentioned somewhere in the text, but having to be inferred in one or more places). In many of the job advertisements examined, it was found that the requirements based on SEC are articulated without the social actors as illustrated below:

- *Own motorbike*
- *Own car*
- *Own vehicle*
- *Own transport*
- *Possess motorbike*
- *Possess Class 3 Driving Licence*
- *Possess own motorcycle*

- *Possess own vehicle*
- *Have own transportation tool*
- *Have own transport*
- *Has own transport*
- *Valid driving license*
- *Class 3 driving license*
- *With own transport*

The above requirements are articulated in incomplete sentences, without the article and sometimes without the verb *(e.g. Valid driving licence, Class 3 driving licence).* They do not adhere to the normal structure of subject-verb-object. They are brief and to the point, and despite the absence of the verb and the subject we know what the potential employer wants. The requirements are stated as an existing state of affair and as such cannot be challenged. By presenting the statement of requirement without any social actors, who is doing the excluding or marginalising and who is being excluded are not made explicit or apparent, and the requirement becomes a mere condition which has to be fulfilled.

In recruitment prerequisites that adhere to the subject-verb-object formula, addressees are realised in the clause as pronouns (he, she, you) and nouns (candidate/the candidate, candidates, applicants). Notice that representations of the addressees are personal and referred to both individually (the candidate) and as a group (candidates/applicants). The following are some sample sentences offered for further examination:

1. ***He/She*** *must possess own transport and [sic] able to travel extensively within Malaysia.*
2. *The company would require* ***you*** *to possess your own transport and be willing to travel*
3. *Added advantage if* ***you*** *possess own transport*
4. ***Candidate*** *must possess own transport*
5. ***The candidate*** *should be between 24-30 years old and has a valid Class D driving licence.*
6. ***Candidates*** *should be responsible, self-motivated, possess own transport and be willing to work the necessary hours to meet project deadlines.*
7. ***Applicants*** *should have their own transportation*

The authority of the company is marked through explicit obligational modalities such as *Applicants must …; Applicants should …* which is a

characteristic of this discourse. By making explicit references to readers as applicants/candidates, they are excluded from being applicants, let alone employees.

### *4.2.5 Including the Excluded*

The purpose of job advertisements is to reach the largest qualified audience. This means the wording of the advertisements should work to include all possible recruits. Restrictions placed on the number of people who can be evaluated according to certain criteria like age, gender, ethnicity and so forth can only reduce the effectiveness of the selection. The hiring criteria and the way they are presented can potentially restrict certain people from applying for certain posts. When you reduce the size of a sample, you reduce the range of measured abilities in the sample. If a selection pool is limited to those possessing a car, having a driving licence and below 21 years old, the number of people even minimally eligible to fill a position will drop drastically. It is highly probable that the best candidate in a restricted sample will be not as good on any measurable characteristics than the best candidate in an unrestricted sample.

In recruitment advertisements, any statements inviting applicants of diverse groups would set a positive tone and an inclusive platform for everyone to apply. A fair job advertisement is one which acknowledges diversity in potential job applicants and recognises the need to choose the best possible people from the widest pool of potential employees. Instead of being exclusionary it should be inclusionary and based on ability. Fair hiring criteria are those that are objective and directly related to the job to be performed and to essential duties related to the position.

## 5.0 Conclusion

> *Are you tired of being conned? Of falling for every pitch? Of making bad decisions? Of fooling yourself? Or just being confused?*
>
> (Epstein, 2002: 1)

Almost everyone can use their rational faculty to a greater or lesser extent. However, using it to critically make informed choices on the spur of the moment is another matter. Being able to think critically is generally associated with the level of intelligence and intellectuality. Fisher (2002: 1) points out that in recent years 'critical thinking' has become something of a 'buzz word' in educational circles. Previously, educators emphasized teaching information and content and not 'thinking skills'. Edward de Bono (1970) was one of the pioneers in

suggesting that 'thinking skills' could be systematically taught and learned, and presented the world with his concept of 'lateral thinking'. On the other hand, CDA analyzes the content of social discourse (be it visual, verbal, semiotic, and so on) to expose non-apparent issues that plague society. In the tradition of critical theory, it aims to make transparent the discursive aspects of social disparity and inequalities; hence, taking up the position of the underprivileged, it (CDA) tries to expose the (linguistic) means used by the privileged to stabilize or even intensify iniquities in society (Meyer, 2001: 30).

Critical discourse analysis (CDA), unlike critical thinking (CT), is not so straightforward. To comprehend the in-depth notion of 'critical', extensive reading is required into the realms of the various disciplines of the social science and the humanities, as was mentioned earlier. However, does this imply that everyone has to be voracious readers to apply CDA in day-to-day-life? To make informed choices and not be manipulated by the commonsensical ideologies of the select few, one needs to be socially conscious. Whether this awareness is attained through basic education introduced in our education system, media sensitization (awareness), specific training in critical and creative thinking, asking questions, knowing the environment, the facts, basic human rights, society at large, or by being aware of social issues they all tend to make people more inquisitive to the point that they may experience for themselves how the mechanics of manipulation is at work. In doing so, community members can become socially empowered to decipher the unequal play of power. Maintaining a critical outlook towards life and the environment around us, and questioning social norms and practices, subconsciously instigate the inquisitiveness of our rational faculty.

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# Target Needs of English for University Education and English Textbooks up to Class XII: An Evaluation

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English courses and textbooks are meant to cater to learners' academic and professional needs of English. However, this does not seem to happen in Bangladesh; university students in the country appear to have difficulties in reading their text and reference books in English. The present English syllabuses, and materials up to class XII do not seem to prepare them for the amount and level of reading skills they need for a meaningful university education, which means quality education that helps graduates acquire the best possible knowledge and prepares them for the job market of today's globalized world and not somehow to pass examinations and obtain a certificate in different areas of study in the present world. A lack seems to exist between the levels of English language proficiency needed for higher education, and the level English courses and materials up to class XII help them attain. This paper examines the nature of this lack, and recommends measures to fill it.

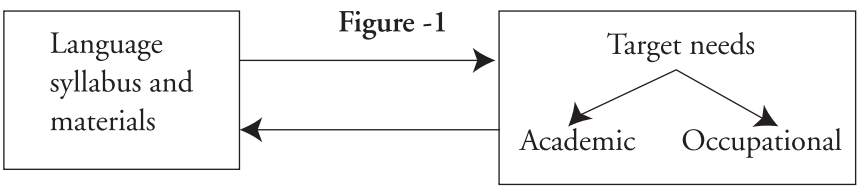
Since the beginning of the communicative movement, relating courses and materials to learners' needs has became the major thrust in English Language Teaching (ELT). Communicative syllabus and materials design was meant to cater to learners present and future (target) needs of English for various purposes. A vast amount of theory has emerged prescribing principles for course and materials design, all of which have many things in common including 'relation with learners' needs'. Many theorists of materials selection, evaluation and design, for example, Byrd (1995), Cunningsworth (1984 & 1995),

McDonough and Shaw (1997), Sheldon (1988), Tomlinson, (1998), and Richards (1993) among others, provide a checklist that includes points like layout, balance of activities, balance of skills, practice opportunities, relation to learners' needs and levels, providing roughly tuned input, interesting and motivating, tasks/activities for learners, varieties in activities, and having culturally unbiased and interesting content, relating materials to learners' learning styles and learning strategies, and incorporating recent theories of language and language learning (e.g. 'learning a language is learning to mean', and 'learning to communicate', 'learning by doing', 'discovery learning' etc.) in the materials. These are some of the major points usually taken into consideration for designing, selecting and evaluating materials.

This paper, however, takes a different perspective; it draws upon Munby's (1978) 'purposive domain', and Hutchinson and Waters' (1987) ideas of 'target needs', 'necessities', and 'lacks', and considers meeting the requirements of university level education as one of the major 'purposive domains' for textbooks up to class XII, the other being the occupational requirements after the university degree(s). The paper takes the first, the EAP (English for Academic Purposes) as its point of reference and examines how well English text books up to class XII meet the requirements of English for university education in Bangladesh. Even within EAP, the study takes only reading skills as its focus for evaluating the books; the other skills are excluded, though they are also important. Moreover, the section on lacks in levels of English is not fully developed in this paper because it needs the space of a complete paper.

It is now well established that English course and materials should be designed to cater to learners' needs, both general and specific. It is important to analyze what Munby (op.cit.) describes as 'purposive domains' which includes needs of English for both academic and occupational purposes in a particular context. In the Munby model, specifying target needs is an important pre-requisite for course and materials design. To determine learning objectives and contents of courses, analysis of these target needs is essential. Course and materials design, therefore, should follow a model like the one in Figure 1 below:

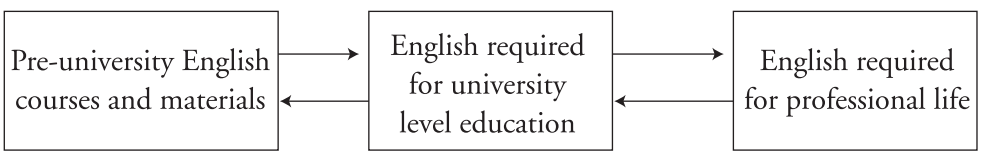
**Figure -1**



The target needs for academic purposes should be the English language proficiency required for higher education, both general and technical, and that for occupational purposes should be the competence required for effective performance in different professions, for example, as engineers, doctors, teachers, bureaucrats, businessmen, nurses, office clerks, secretaries and the like.

Materials designers should determine what amount and level of English are required for university education, and English courses and materials from class1 to class XII, should prepare learners for those target needs accordingly. The entire education program of a country, therefore, may be divided into two major stages: (1) pre-university stage, and (2) University stage. Objectives of the pre-university English courses and materials should be to prepare learners for the challenges of university academic programmes, and university programmes should prepare them for professional life. The requirements of the professional life should, therefore, be set as the target for university English courses, and the English required for meaningful university education should be the target set for pre-university English courses. There always will be some challenge when students move from one level of education to the next higher level, but if the challenge is too big and unmanageable; the standard of education is bound to suffer. The challenge should not be more than i+1 (Krashen, 1981). The pre-university courses should set this as its important goal. The model for course and materials design up to class XII should, therefore, be like the one in Figure 2 below:

**Figure 2**




In Bangladesh, materials are not designed with these ideas in mind. Materials up to class XII are basically EGP (English for General Purposes) in nature, with no emphasis on learners' EAP and EOP (English for Occupational Purposes) needs of learners, There does not seem to be any link between the level and amount of English in the pre-university courses and those required for undergraduate level studies, both at home and abroad.

One major problem for Bangladesh is that the present generation of university students in the country does not seem to have the level of reading competence required for a meaningful higher education of an international

standard in today's increasingly globalizing world. The standard of education in the country is, therefore, suffering badly. The question is: Why is this happening?

Another very pertinent question in this respect is: are not the English courses and materials up to class XII preparing learners adequately undergraduate level studies? This basic question is taken as the yardstick to evaluate the textbooks up to class XII.

For the purpose, it is important to examine the amount and level of reading English courses and materials up to class XII provide, and the amount and level of reading competence required for effective higher education in the country to find out if there is any lack between the amount and level of English at pre-university level English courses and requirements of English for university education. This paper tries to examine both with reference to some studies done in the country and with a survey done recently by the author himself.

The paper examines the available library resources of the country and university syllabuses and textbooks of different subjects to examine the amount and level of reading skills required for higher education. The paper also examines the amount and level of English provided by materials up to class XII, and then compares the amount and level provided up to class XII and those required for university education. To be more specific, the study

i) examines syllabuses of different disciplines at the higher level, to see the number of text and reference books, and thereby, the amount and level of reading required.

ii) examines library information to see the amount of reading required for meaningful higher education in Bangladesh.

iii) examines level of language of the text books in different subjects of undergraduate programmes.

iv) analyses the English textbooks up to class XII to see the amount and level of English they help learners attain, and

v) compares no. iv with nos. i, ii and iii above.

The next section of the paper presents some of the findings on the topic.

## The Study:
## Amount of Reading needed for the university level:

### (a) Data from Syllabus Analysis

Analysis of syllabuses of a number of undergraduate programmes of different disciplines of study shows that most of the text/reference books in most of the disciplines are in English. The data of syllabus analysis is presented in Table 1:

**Table 1**

**Amount of Reading Required for University Level Education as Found from Syllabus Analysis**

| Institute | No. of Depts | Undergraduate | | | | | Graduate | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Books | English | % | Bangla | % | Books | English | % | Bangla | % |
| DU | 17 | 4439 | 4079 | 91.89 | 360 | 7.11 | 1892 | 1839 | 97.2 | 53 | 2.8 |
| RU | 37 | 10696 | 8893 | 83.14 | 1803 | 16.86 | 3949 | 3547 | 89.89 | 402 | 10.11 |
| Agr. U | 7 | 2217 | 2182 | 98.42 | 35 | 1.58 | 1061 | 1052 | 99.15 | 9 | 0.85 |
| AH Col Ed. | 13 | 2281 | 1915 | 83.95 | 366 | 16.05 | 1313 | 1155 | 87.96 | 158 | 12.04 |
| Col | 12 | 2126 | 1765 | 83.01 | 361 | 16.99 | 1238 | 1225 | 98.95 | 13 | 1.05 |
| Total | 88 | 21759 | 18825 | 86.52 | 2934 | 13.48 | 9453 | 8818 | 93.28 | 635 | 6.72 |

*Source of Data: Haque (1996)*

[For details about the Departments, see Appendix 1]

It is seen from the data that of the 21,759 books recommended in the undergraduate syllabuses of the 88 departments in 4 public universities and two government colleges, of a total number of 21759 books 18,825, i.e. 86.52 percent books are in English, and of the 9453 books recommended in the syllabuses for graduate level, 8818, i.e. 93.28 percent books are in English. This suggests that a lot of reading in English is required for both undergraduate and graduate levels in the country.

[1]In table 1 the abbreviations used are as follows: DU= Dhaka University, RU= Rajshahi University, AGR. Uni= Agriculture University, Mymensigh, AH Col= Govt. Azizul Haque College, Bogra, Ed. col= Govt. Edward College,

In a survey, Haque (2006) finds that undergraduate students in Bangladesh are required to read 90 text/reference books in English on an average in the four years of their Honours programme, and the average number. of pages in each book is 250, which means that undergraduate students have to read 22,500 pages in four years, that means 5, 625 pages of English texts every year, which is a lot of reading. Even if students read 25% of these texts, the total number of pages to be read in a year would be 1,406. The scenario is presented in Table 2 below:

**Table 2**

| Average no. of books to be read in 4 years | Average no. of pages in the books | Total no of pages to be read in 4 years | Number of pages to be read in a year | 25% of the texts |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 90 | 250 | 22,500 | 5,625 | 1,405.5 |

**(b) Amount of reading skills in english as seen from library information**

***(I) Amount of reading as suggested by library information***

Information about available library resources in the country also suggests that a extensive reading in English is required for university education in Bangladesh. The data presented in Table 3 below presents a clear picture of the library resources of the country.

**Table 3**

**Library Information of the Major Universities**

| Inst/Univ | Books | | | | | Journals | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Total No. | English | % | Bangla | % | Total No. | English | % | Bangla | % |
| DU | 600000 | 405668 | 67.61 | 194332 | 32.39 | 73500 | 65662 | 89.34 | 7838 | 10.66 |
| RU | 274586 | 198982 | 72.47 | 75604 | 27.53 | 36290 | 35582 | 98.05 | 708 | 1.95 |
| AGr. U | 141321 | 120282 | 85.11 | 21039 | 14.89 | 35577 | 33248 | 93.45 | 2329 | 6.55 |
| BUET | 117718 | 92887 | 78.91 | 24831 | 21.09 | 15143 | 13587 | 89.72 | 1556 | 10.28 |
| Med. Col | 18500 | 17400 | 94.05 | 1100 | 5.95 | 2000 | 1345 | 67.25 | 655 | 32.75 |
| Ed. Col | 25516 | 14132 | 55.38 | 11384 | 44.62 | 420 | 227 | 54.05 | 193 | 45.95 |
| AH Col | 20639 | 10555 | 51.15 | 10084 | 48.86 | 550 | 360 | 65.45 | 190 | 34.55 |
| Total | 1198280 | 859846 | 71.76 | 338434 | 28.24 | 163480 | 150011 | 91.76 | 13469 | 8.24 |

*Source of Data: Haque (2006)*

The data shows that the percentages of books in English in Dhaka University, Rajshahi University, Mymensingh Agriculture University, Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology, Edward College and Azizul Haque College libraries are 67.61, 72.47, 85.11, 78.91, 94.05, 55.38, and 51.15, and the percentages of journals in these institutes are 89.3, 98.0, 98.1, 93.9, 67.3, 54.0, and 65.5, respectively. [It is noteworthy that the percentage is significantly higher in the universities than in the colleges]. In all these institutions, of the total number of 11, 98, 280 books, 8,59,846, i.e. 71.76 percent are in English, and of the 1,63,480 copies of different journals, 1,50,011, i.e. 91.76 percent are in English. The data suggests that extensive reading in English is required for meaningful higher education in the country.

**(II) Seminar Library Information:**

Resources in the seminar libraries in the country also present a similar picture. The data from Haque's (2006) study, presented in Table 4 below, shows that the materials in the seminar libraries also are mostly in English.

**Table 4**

**Seminar Library Information**

| Inst/Univ | Books | | | | | Journals | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Total No. | English | % | Bangla | % | Total No. | English | % | Bangla | % |
| DU | 99849 | 94664 | 94.81 | 5185 | 5.19 | 10415 | 8339 | 80.07 | 2076 | 19.93 |
| RU | 71551 | 50858 | 71.08 | 20065 | 28.92 | 15018 | 13570 | 90.36 | 1448 | 9.64 |
| BUET | 46485 | 45282 | 97.41 | 1203 | 2.59 | 5459 | 5459 | 100.0 | 00 | 00 |
| Agr.Uni | 22255 | 20900 | 93.91 | 1355 | 6.09 | 6860 | 6850 | 99.85 | 10 | 0.15 |
| Ed. Col | 24618 | 6426 | 26.10 | 18192 | 73.90 | 144 | 50 | 34.72 | 94 | 65.28 |
| AHCol | 6471 | 3055 | 47.21 | 3416 | 52.79 | 107 | 76 | 71.03 | 31 | 28.97 |
| Total | 271329 | 221189 | 81.52 | 50140 | 18.48 | 38003 | 34345 | 90.37 | 3370 | 9.63 |

*Source of Data: Haque (1996)*

The data from seminar libraries of sixteen Departments of Dhaka University, thirty departments of Rajshahi University, ten departments of BUET, three departments of Mymensigh Agriculture university, twelve departments of Edward College, Pabna, and nine departments of Azizul Haque College, Bogra show that there are 2, 71,329 books of which 2,21,189 i.e.

81.52 percent are in English, and of the 38,003 copies of journals in these seminar libraries, 34,345 , i.e. 90.37 percent are in English. The institution-wise percentages of books in Dhaka, Rajshahi, BUET, and Agriculture Universities, and in Azizul Haque College, and Edward College are 94.81, 71.08, 97.41, 93.91, 26.10, 47.21, and that of journals are 80.07, 90.36, 100.00, 99.85, 34.72, and 71.03, respectively. It is noteworthy that the percentage is significantly higher in universities than in colleges. The data suggests conclusively that a lot of reading in English is required for university education in Bangladesh.

**(c) Amount of reading provided up to class XII:**

In contrast, up to class XII, students read about 500 pages in twelve years. The break-up is as follows:

**Table 5**

**Amount of reading provided up to class XII**

| Level | Total no of pages | No. of pages a year |
|---|---|---|
| I-V (in five years) | 133 pages | 27 pages |
| VI-X | 254 pages | 51 pages |
| XI-XII | 113 | 56.5 pages |

**Table 6**

**Class-wise break up of the amount of reading up to class XII:**

| Level | Total no. of pages (texts/passages) |
|---|---|
| Class I | 09 |
| Class II | 10 |
| Class III | 29 |
| Class IV | 37 |
| Class V | 48 |
| Class VI | 42 |
| Class VII | 52 |
| Class VIII | 58 |
| Classes IX-X | 102 |
| Classes XI-XII | 113 |
| Total | 500 |

If we divide the total number of pages read up to class XII by twelve, we see that students, on an average, read about forty two pages a year.

**Lack or Gap:**

In Table 2 (p.4) above, it was found that students are required to read at least 1406 pages of English from their text and reference books a year, and from Table 6 (p. 6) above, it we saw that students read only 500 pages in twelve years, i.e. forty two pages a year. From Hutchinson and Waters (1987), we know that lack = target requirement – present level. Thus students' lack in Bangladesh is 1406-42= 1364 pages. The picture is presented in Table 7 below.

**Table 7**

**Comparison of amount of reading required and done**

| Amount of Reading for undergraduate level | Amount of reading done up to Class XII | Lack |
|---|---|---|
| At least 1,406 pages a year | 42 pages a year | 1364 pages a year |

So a student who has read only 42 pages a year, and a total of 500 pages up to class XII, has to read 5,622, or at least 1,406 pages a year and 5,622 pages in four years

**Present and Target Levels of Reading and the Lack as Found in Tasmin (2001)**

The present and target levels of reading and the lack of the students of English Department at Rajshahi University were examined by Tasmin (2001) through questionnaire survey and interviews with teachers and students. The study shows that for all the nineteen items surveyed for reading skills, the target requirements are quite high, but the present levels are very low, and there is a significant lack in all the items. A 5 point rating scale was used for both the questionnaire survey and interviews with teachers and students, and the values assigned were as follows: (a) for studying present level, 1= bad, 2= below average, 3=good, 4= very good, 5=Excellent command, and for studying required level, they were as follows: 1= Seldom required, 2= sometimes required, 3=often required, 4= very often required, and 5= always required. The mean scores were interpreted as follows: (a) for target level, 1.00 to 1.99=low requirement, 2.00 to 2.99=rather high, 3.00 to 3.99=high, 4.00 to 4.99= very high, 5.00=excellent (b) for present level, 1.00-1.99=bad, 2.00 to 2.99= below average, 3.00 to 3.99=good, 4.00 to 4.99= very good,5.00=excellent and (c) for lacks, .01 to .99=low, 1.00 to 1.99 = rather big, above 2.00 to 2.99= huge, 3.00 and above=very huge.

The mean scores for target level and present level in Table 8 were analysed by calculating the average of the mean scores of teacher's questionnaire survey and interview, and students' questionnaire survey and interview. For example, the mean scores for variable 1 in the students' questionnaire survey and interview were 1.07, and 1.13 respectively, and the average of the two is 1.10. The mean scores of variable 1 in teachers' questionnaire survey and interview were 1.35 and 1.13 respectively, and average of the two is 1.24. The average of 1.10 (average of students questionnaire survey and interview) and 1.24 (average of teachers' questionnaire survey and interview) is 1.16, which is shown as the mean score of present level of students for variable 1 in the table. Similarly, for the target level of the same variable, the average of the mean scores of students' questionnaire survey and interview and teachers' questionnaire survey and interview were calculated. The mean for item 1 in the students' questionnaire survey and interview were 3.37 and 3.35 respectively; the average of the two is 3.36. The mean scores of the item in teachers' questionnaire survey and interview were 3.26 and 3.34, and the average of the two is 3.30. The average of 3.36 (average of the mean scores of students' questionnaire survey and interview) and 3.30 (average of the mean scores of teachers' questionnaire survey and interview) is 3.33, which appears as the mean score for target level in the table. The lack has been calculated by using the formula, target level—present level = lack. For variable 1, it is 3.33— 1.16= 2.17. The data is presented in a synthesized form in Table 8 below:

**Table 8**

**Reading Competence needed for English Department**

| Sl. No. | Question/Statement | Target Needs | Present Level | Lacks |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Reading prescribed literary texts | 3.33 | 1.16 | 2.17 |
| 2 | Reading literary criticism | 3.68 | 1.35 | 2.33 |
| 3 | Reading journals | 3.62 | 1.87 | 1.75 |
| 4 | Understanding unfamiliar words and expressions in texts | 3.65 | 1.14 | 2.51 |
| 5 | Guessing meaning of words from context | 3.48 | 1.63 | 1.85 |
| 6 | Understanding literal (denotative) and figurative (connotative) meanings of words | 3.72 | 1.60 | 2.12 |
| 7 | Interpreting figurative expressions | 3.99 | 1.21 | 2.44 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8 | Reacting to sensory images | 3.63 | 1.61 | 2.02 |
| 9 | Understanding long sentences | 3.10 | 1.52 | 1.58 |
| 10 | Understanding shifts and transitions of ideas in a text | 3.39 | 1.61 | 1.78 |
| 11 | Understanding gist | 3.29 | 1.47 | 1.82 |
| 12 | Understanding mood, tone and purpose in a text | 3.32 | 1.42 | 1.90 |
| 13 | Critical appreciation and evaluation | 3.45 | 1.39 | 2.06 |
| 14 | Interpreting texts | 3.64 | 1.44 | 2.20 |
| 15 | Making Inferences from text | 3.61 | 1.61 | 2.00 |
| 16 | Understanding text organization | 3.61 | 1.61 | 2.00 |
| 17 | Understanding aspects of style | 3.24 | 1.65 | 1.59 |
| 18 | Understanding different genres of writing e.g. poetry, drama, fiction etc. | 3.38 | 1.47 | 1.91 |
| 19 | Reference skills such as dictionary, index, notes etc. | 3.13 | 1.47 | 1.66 |

*N.B. The lowest value on the rating scale is 1 and the highest is 5.*
*Source: Tasmin (2001)*

The required level, present level, and lack for the items, respectively, are: (1) reading literary texts-3.33 ( high) required, 1.16 (bad), and 2.17(huge); (2) reading literary criticism 3.68 (close to very high), 1.35(bad), and 2.33 (huge); (3) reading journals 3.62 (close to very high), 1.87 (bad), and 1.75 (rather big); (4) understanding unfamiliar words and expressions in texts 3.65 (close to very often or very high), 1.14 (bad), and 2.51 (huge); (5) guessing word meanings from contexts 3.48 (high), 1.63 (bad), and 1.85 (rather big); (6)understanding denotative and connotative meanings 3.72 (close to very high), 1.60 (bad), and 2.12 (huge); (7) interpreting figurative expressions 3.99 (close to very high), 1.21(bad), and 2.44 (huge); (8) reacting to sensory images 3.63 (close to very high), 1.61 (bad), and 2.02 (huge); (9) understanding long sentences 3.63 (close to very high), 1.61(bad), and 1.58 (rather big); (10) understanding shifts and transitions in texts 3.10(high), 1.52 (bad), and 1.78 (rather big); (11) understanding gist 3.29 (high), 1.47(bad), and 1.82 (rather big); (12) understanding mood, tone and purpose in a text 3.32 (high), 1.42 (bad), and 1.90 (rather big); (13) critical appreciation of texts 3.45 (high) , 1.39 (bad), and 2.06 (huge); (14) interpreting texts 3.64 (close to very high), 1.44 (bad) ,and 2.20 (huge); (15) making inferences from texts 3.61 (close to very high), 1.61 (bad), and 2.00 (huge); (16) understanding text organization 3.61 (close to very high), 1.61 (bad), and 2.00 (huge); (17) understanding aspects of

style 3.24 (high), 1.65 (bad), and 1.59 (rather big); (18) understanding different genres of writing 3.38 (high), 1.47 (bad), and 1.91 (rather); and (19) reference skills 3.13 (close to very high), 1.47 (bad), and 1.66 (rather big).

## Required Level of Reading as found in Haque's (2006) Study:

The level of reading for university textbooks are upper-intermediate in Science, Social Science, and Business departments, especially in 1st and 2nd year Honours levels. Words are not very unfamiliar, and sentences are not too long. However, there are some technical terms that can be challenging. Reading texts of the social science faculty are of an advanced level. They contain many unfamiliar words and expressions, and many technical terms. Sentences are often very long. Text/reference books of Law and English are of a fairly advanced level. There are too many difficult/unfamiliar words and expressions, technical terms and culturally loaded and emotionally charged language in literary texts.

## Level of Reading up to Class XII:

Level of reading up to class XII is also of intermediate level. There are many words and expressions that are fairly advanced; many others are of upper-intermediate level. The sentences are quite long, complex, and sophisticated. But the readings are mostly of general type, not EAP type. There is a good deal of variety; some topics relate to medical science, some to environmental science, culture, language and other social issues, but strictly speaking, they are more of general type texts, than focusing on topics or areas of different specific academic disciplines.

## Lack between the level of reading up to class XII and the level required for higher education:

There is not a significant lack between the levels of reading done in classes XI-XII and the level of reading required for university education. The level of the XI-XII book is intermediate and that of the university level for most subjects ranges from upper intermediate to advanced. There is some challenge, but the challenge is manageable, an i+1 [ i stands for the learners' present level, and 1 stands for a little higher than the present level. It is also called 'comprehensible input'] type challenge. However, in some subjects, for example, English and Law, the required level of English is very advanced, and so it offers a big challenge for learners. So any student who read English textbooks up to class XII, and did not depend solely on guide books, should not face much difficulty in reading their university text/reference books in English, except in some special cases, like law and literature, and some social science departments.

## The Sub-skills of Reading Required for University Education and the Sub-skills Covered up to class XII:

### 1) Sub-skills required for university education:

For reading university textbooks in different disciplines, students need to have proficiency at both the lower and higher order sub-skills as shown in the list below:

**a) Lower order sub-skills:**

i) Understand written expression; ii) reading with appropriate speed; iii) reading for specific information; iv) reading for specific information (scanning); v) reading for gist, details or general comprehension (skimming); vi) consulting dictionary for word meanings

**b) Higher order sub-skills:**

i) Predicting about the text; ii) guessing word meanings by using contextual clues; iii) inferring from text; iv) interpreting text; v) critically evaluating texts; vi) giving personal response to texts; vii) relating textual information to the world, to personal experience(s); vii) distinguishing facts from opinions; ix) surveying text organization (finding coherence of texts and cohesion of ideas); x) transferring information from tables and graphs to texts and vice versa; xi) understanding the author's position, and attitude; xii) understanding tone and mood in a piece of writing. (Nuttal, 1942; Willams, 1984; Grellet, Harmer,1986 among others)

### 2) Sub-skills of reading covered up to class XII:

The English syllabus mentions both the lower and higher order sub-skills. For the reading section, the H.S.C. English syllabus, for example, states:

**"Students should be able to:**

a) Understand (i) written expression, ii) narrative texts, iii) descriptive texts, iv) argumentative texts, (v) formal and informal letters, vi) authentic texts adapted where necessary taken from newspapers and brochures and vii) appropriately selected and, if necessary, adapted literary texts.

b) Using such written reference sources as (i) indexes, ii) tables of contents, iii) dictionaries, and iv) general reference works related to other subjects of study at this level.

c) Read exclusively with appropriate speed.

d) i) skim for gist, scan for specific information, iii) infer the meanings of words

from their context, iv) recognize topic sentences, v) distinguish fact from opinion, vi) detect appropriate inferential meaning, vii) draw appropriate conclusions, and viii) recognize the significance of such cohesive devices as linking words and reference words.

e) Recognize the functions of different punctuation and graphological devices. "

*(NCTB English Syllabus for XI-XII, 1996:137-138)*

However, in the Higher Secondary English textbook, in classroom teaching and testing (H.S.C. Examination) lower order sub-skills are emphasized. The sub-skills covered in the tests and classrooms are: matching words with their meanings, answering specific information of lift-out type, matching information provided in two columns, reading close, giving a title to a passage, and understanding main idea. Hence, there is a gap; students find it difficult to tackle the higher order sub-skills of reading in their university textbooks.

## A Recent Survey with 1st year Honours Students:

A survey was conducted with sixty five students from five different faculties of Rajshahi University to find out about the amount of reading they have to do in English, and the difficulties, if any, they have with reading university text books. (For details about sampling for the study see Appendix 2)

**Table 10**

**Results:**

**Table 10 below presents the results of the survey:**

| Questions | Arts | Sciences | S. Science | Busi -ess | Life and Earth | Law |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| What percentage of text/reference books is in English?<br>a) less than 30%, b) 30-50%<br>c) 50-70% d) above 70% | d=100 % | d=100 % | d=100 % | d=100 % | d=100 % | D=100 % |
| What percentage of your text/reference books are in Bangla?<br>a) less than 30%, b) 30-50%<br>c) 50-70% d) above 70% | a=100 % | a=100 % | a=100 % | a=100 % | a=100 % | A=100 % |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Do you find your university text/reference books difficult to understand?<br>a) not so difficult b) difficult, c) very difficult | b=100 % | a=100 % | b=100 % | a=100 % | a=100 % | B=100 % |
| Do you find your university text/reference books difficult to understand?<br>a) not so difficult b) difficult, c) very difficult | a=25%<br>b=50%<br>c=25% | a=75%<br>b=25% | a=80%<br>b=20% | a=75%<br>b=25% | a=75%<br>b=25% | a=20%<br>b=50%<br>c=30% |
| Do you find technical words that are difficult to understand?<br>a) some b) many c) too many | a=25%<br>b=50%<br>c=25% | a=100 % | a=25%<br>b=75% | a=25%<br>b=75% | a=100 % | a=20%<br>b=60%<br>c=20% |
| Do you find long sentences that are difficult for you to understand?<br>a) some b) many c) too many | b=75%<br>c=25% | a=100 % | b=75%<br>c=25% | a=100 % | a=100 % | b=80%<br>c=20% |
| How long does it usually take for you to read a page of your text/reference books in English?<br>a) 15-20 minutes 20-30 minutes c) more than 30 minutes | a=25%<br>b=50%<br>c=25% | b=100 % | a=20%<br>b=50%<br>c=30% | b=100 % | b=100 % | a=20%<br>b=50%<br>c=30% |
| Do you think the English text books that you read up to class XII prepared you for reading your university text/reference books<br>a) very little b) to some extent c) quite well | b=75%<br>a=25% | b=100 % | b=100 % | b=100 % | b=100 % | B=100 % |
| Do you think it would have been more useful if the English textbooks contained some topics from your subject area?<br>a) no b) a little c) very much | b=75%<br>a=25% | b=100 % | b=100 % | b=100 % | b=100 % | B=100 % |
| Do you think if there had been more reading for you from class I to Class XII, you would have been much more competent in reading your university text/reference books?<br>a) no b) to some extent c) a lot | b=75%<br>a=25% | b=100 % | b=100 % | b=100 % | b=100 % | B=100 % |

*Note: The letters in columns 2, 3,4,5,6, and 7 refer to the options given to the students below each question in column 1 and the percentage shown against the letters is the percentage of responses for each option*

For question 1, all the respondents say that more than 70% of their text/reference books are in English.

For question 2, all the respondents say that less than 30% of their books are in Bangla. In fact respondents from some departments, for example English, said that all their books are in English

For question 3, all respondents from Arts, Social Science and Law faculties say that they find their text/reference books difficult, but respondents from Science, Business, and Life and Earth Faculties say that their text/reference books are not so difficult.

For question 4, a large number of students from different faculties she that they find their textbooks difficult to understand because of their difficulty in reading English, though some students say that they do not find it so difficult.

In response to question 5 and 6, a high percentage of students say that they find many unfamiliar technical words and too many long, complex and involved sentences in their text/reference books, which prove difficult for them.

Responses to question. 7 show that students have slow speed in reading; most of them take about 30 minutes to read a page of their text books, but it should not take more than 15/20 minutes. Most students feel that if there were more reading, and reading of different subject related EAP type texts, it would have been more useful for them (responses to questions 8, 9 and 10).

## Conclusion and Recommendations:

Thus it is seen that there is a big lack between the amount of reading students have done up to class XII and the amount of reading they are required to do for their undergraduate programs in different subjects under different faculties. As students do a small amount of reading (only 42 pages a year) up to class XII, their reading speed is slow, and so they find it difficult to manage the extensive of reading they are required to do (1406 pages a year) at the university level However there should not be any major problem with the level of English, as there is no big lack between the levels of English in English text books up to class XII and that of the undergraduate text books, only except in the case of text books of English and Law. The level of university text books do not prove 'so difficult' for students, it seems within i+1 level of difficulty, for those who read English text books up to class XII. However, the fact is, a large majority of the students do not read the English text books. They depend only on the guide/note

books, and so they find it difficult to read their university text/reference books in English.

Their fun, as far as the purpose of preparing learners for reading university textbooks are concerned, the level of English in the English textbooks up to class XII, especially XI-XII textbook, is adequate, but the amount of reading must be increased, as the respondents of the study indicate. Also some EAP type texts should be included in class IX - XII English text books to prepare learners for different specific areas of study at the undergraduate level.

English for both general and specific purposes, especially EAP, should be covered in English textbooks up to class XII. The pre-university level English programme may be divided into three stages: Stage 1 (Classes I -VIII) should focus mainly on EGP, or basic skills, including, vocabulary, basic grammar, notions, functions, the major skills and their sub-skills; stage 2 (classes IX-X), should have about30-40% EAP and 60-70% EGP texts; and stage 3 (classes XI- XII) should have 60 to 70% EAP materials, and the rest; EGP materials; Additional reading materials of both EGP and EAP type texts as rapid readers may also be used from class IX to minimize the lack between the amount of reading covered in pre-university courses and required for university courses.

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## Appendix 1

For syllabus analysis, the syllabus of the following departments were examined:

**1. Dhaka University:**

a) Faculty of Arts: English, History, Islamic History and Culture, Philosophy
b) Faculty of Science: Economics, Sociology, Political Science,
c) Faculty of Law: Department of law and Justice
d) Business Administration: Accounting, Management Studies, Marketing
e) Science: Physics, Chemistry, Botany, Zoology, Mathematics, Computer Science.

**2. Rajshahi University:**

a) Faculty of Arts: English, Bengali, History, Islamic History and Culture, Philosophy, Language, Islamic studies, Arabic.
b) Faculty of Social Science: Economics, Sociology, Social Work, Political Science, Public Administration, Mass Communication, Anthropology
c) Faculty of Law: Department of Law and Justice
d) Faculty of Business Administration: Accounting, Management, Finance and Banking, Marketing, Institute of Business Administration (Only MBA Program offered)

e) Science Faculty: Physics, Applied Chemistry, Bio-Chemistry and Molecular Biology, Mathematics, Computer Science and technology, Statistics, Information and communication Technology, Botany, Zoology, Geography and Environmental Sciences, Fisheries and Aqua Culture, Population Science and Human Resource Development, Genetics and Breeding,

**3. Agriculture University:**

a) Agriculture Faculty: Agronomy, Horticulture,
b) Veterinanry Science faculty: Surgery and Obstetrics, Pharmacology and Hygiene,
c) Agricultural Engineering and Technology: Food Technology and Rural Industries
d) Agricultural Economics Faculty: Agricultural Economics

**4. Govt. Azizul Haque College:**

a) Arts Faculty: English, History, Philosophy, Islamic History and Culture
b) Social Science Faculty: Economics, Sociology, Political Science
c) Bisiness Studies Faculty: Accounting, Management
d) Science faculty: Physics, Chemistry, Botany, Geography

**5. Govt. Edward College, Pabna:**

a) Arts Faculty: English, History, Philosophy, Islamic History and Culture
b) Social Science Faculty: Economics, Sociology, Political Science
c) Bisiness Studies Faculty: Accounting, Management
d) Science Faculty: Physics, Chemistry, Botany

For seminar library information, in addition to the departments of the five institutions mentioned above, the following departments of BUET were also surveyed:

1. Civil Engineering Faculty: Civil Engineering, Water Resources Engineering,
2. Architecture and Planning: Architecture, Urban and Regional Planning
3. Electrical and Electronic Engineering: Electrical and Electronic Engineering, Computer Science and Engineering
4. Mechanical Engineering: Mechanical Engineering, Industrial Production Engineering, Naval architecture and marine Engineering.
5. Chemical Engineering: Chemical Engineering, Metallurgical Engineering

## Appendix 2

Sampling:
The table below shows the detailed sampling plan for the survey:

**Table 9**

**Sampling Plan for the survey**

| Faculty | Departments | No of students | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| Arts | English | 08 | 08 |
| Science | Applied Physics | 03 | 15 |
| | Physics | 03 | |
| | Bio-Chemistry | 03 | |
| | ICE | 03 | |
| | Chemistry | 03 | |
| Business Faculty | Management | 03 | 12 |
| | Finance | 03 | |
| | Accounting | 03 | |
| | Marketing | 03 | |
| Social Science | Sociology | 02 | 10 |
| | Economics | 02 | |
| | Mass Communication | 02 | |
| | Public Administration | 02 | |
| | Anthropology | 02 | |
| Life and Earth | Botany | 03 | 12 |
| | Zoology | 03 | |
| | Population Science | 03 | |
| | Genetics and Breeding | 03 | |
| Law | Law | 08 | 08 |
| 6 Faculties | 21 | 65 | 65 |

## Appendix-3
## Questionnaire

**Instruction:** This questionnaire is meant for collecting data for a research paper. Your co-operation will be highly appreciated. All information will be strictly confidential and used only for the purpose of this research.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. M. Shahidullah
Professor, Department of English
Rajshahi University

### Part-A

Name: ----------

Department:----------

University/College:----------

Level of Study: First year/ 2nd year ( Tick as appropriate)

### Part-B

N.B. For each question, some options are provided. Please tick only one that you consider most appropriate for each question.

1. What percentage of text/reference books is in English?
   a) less than 30%, b) 30-50% c) 50-70% d) above 70%

2. What percentage of your text/reference books are in Bangla?
   a) less than 30%, b) 30-50% c) 50-70% d) above 70%

3. Do you find your university text/reference books difficult to understand?
   a) not so difficult b) difficult, c) very difficult

4. How many unfamiliar (difficult) words you find (on an average) in a page of your text/reference books?
   a) less than 20 b) 20-30, c) 30-40, d) Above 40

5. Do you find technical words that are difficult to understand?
   a) some b) many c) too many

6. Do you find long sentences that are difficult for you to understand?
   a) some b) many c) too many

7. How long does it usually take for you to read a page of your text/reference books in English?
   a) 15-20 minutes 20-30 minutes c) more than 30 minutes

8. Do you think the English text books that you read up to class XII prepared you for reading your university text/reference books
   a) very little b) to some extent c) quite well

9. Do you think it would have been more useful if the English textbooks contained some topics from your subject area?
   a) no b) a little c) very much

10. Do you think if there had been more reading for you from class I to Class XII, you would have been much more competent in reading your university text/reference books?
    a) no b) to some extent c) a lot

# Socio-Demographic and Health Factors Affecting Maternal Mortality in Rural Bangladesh

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## Abstract:

The present study examines the impact of non-biological factors such as age, birth-order, education, smoking, anaemia, and tetanus vaccination on maternal mortality using data on maternal deaths collected by Gonoshayastha Kendra (GK) from 592 villages of Bangladesh. The analysis of data reveals that further reduction in maternal mortality is possible in rural Bangladesh through vigorous campaigns against smoking, preventing births to women with four or more children, delaying first time childbearing, prevention and treatment of anaemia, and promoting full doses of tetanus vaccination for pregnant women.

## 1.0 Introduction

Bangladesh has made significant strides towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which was formally endorsed in 2000 by 189 member countries of the UN. However, the country's scorecard on maternal health goal falls short of expectation. According to the MDG target, Bangladesh is expected to reduce maternal mortality ratio (MMR) from around 574 maternal deaths due to pregnancy and childbirth-related complications per 100,000 live births in 1990 to 143 by 2015. Despite some progress, only 44 percent of this target was achieved by 2000. An additional 56 percent has to be reduced to achieve MDG target in less than a decade. MMR was estimated to be around 320 per 100,000 live births during 1998-2000 (National Institute of Population Research and Training, et al 2003). An estimated 14,000 Bangladeshi women die from pregnancy and childbirth-related complications per year (UNFPA 2006).

Many of these deaths are related to demographic, social and nutritional conditions, health practices and habits. The paper is an attempt to identify some proximate determinants of maternal deaths, since identification of such factors may lead to a selection of interventions amenable to policy prescriptions for reduction of these deaths from non-biological/ non-medical factors and contribute significantly to achieving the MDG on maternal health.

## 2.0 Factors Affecting Maternal Mortality

Maternal deaths are examined in relation to demographic factors, socio-economic conditions, nutritional status and health habits and practices. Demographic situations are determined in terms of maternal age and gravidity. Gravidity in this study refers to the number of pregnancies experienced by a woman prior to the death event examined in this study. Socio-economic Status (SES) of a household in this study is determined on the basis of various qualitative and quantitative socio-economic, demographic and health indicators such as occupation of head of the household, dietary intake (calories and protein consumption) of household members, household ownership of land for cultivation and homestead, and domestic animals, fruit trees and household assets, materials used in the construction of roof, wall and floor of the house, accessibility of household to safe drinking water, sanitation, and consumer durables, and proximity of household to the nearest road, to name a few. On the basis of these considerations a village level GK health worker (based upon his or her visits to the household) classifies a household into one of the following five categories: *destitute, very poor, poor, middle class and rich.* However, no quantifiable data has been collected to objectively verify these criteria. In this analysis, socio-economic status of a household is re-grouped into just two categories: (a) poor by merging destitute; very poor and poor; and (b) well off by merging middle class and rich. This re-classification is done keeping in view the small number of cases of maternal deaths and its distribution across socio-economic status (SES). Mother's education was also considered as a proximate determinant of maternal mortality.

## 3.0 Data and Reliability of Data

The study will be based on a panel data set, in which several cohorts of women were followed from the time of their conception until the outcome of their pregnancies (until 42 days after the delivery). It is extremely rare in the developing country setting to have such unique data set. The panel data consists of those who had conceived and delivered between 15 April 2002 and 14 April 2005. Field level health workers of Gonoshasthaya Kendra (GK) collected the data from 592 villages as part of routine surveillance. GK is one of the largest

service providers in the health sector outside of the Government of Bangladesh. It serves over one million populations in 592 villages geographically spread across the country in 15 districts.

How reliable is the data on maternal mortality collected by GK? Data on maternal mortality is suspect even in developed countries such as Netherlands and the United States. As high as 25% of maternal deaths were not reported in these countries (Smith JC et al 1980, Schuitemaker N et al 1997). Maternal deaths constitute about 25% of deaths among women of reproductive age in developing countries (Royston, E and Armstrong, S 1989), compared to only 14 percent in the GK programme areas. The possibility of under-reporting of maternal deaths cannot be completely ruled out in the GK programme areas, particularly those abortion related deaths, which take place in the early stage of pregnancy. Usually, it takes about 3-months well into pregnancy before a GK worker identifies this. However, every effort was made to minimize this omission. GK health workers meticulously collect all vital events in the GK programme areas; including maternal deaths under close supervision and monitoring of their supervisors and village level Health Committee. All pregnant women are registered and followed for antenatal and post-natal care services by health workers. Moreover, GK local level health workers organize follow-up meetings at the house of the deceased pregnant woman, and discuss with the family members, including the funeral attendees, the possible reason(s) for the death and how this could have been prevented. GK supervisors regularly check with local priests about funeral ceremonies and count new grave(s). Under this watertight follow-up system, it is very unlikely that a maternal death would be missed out of reporting, unless it is purposively or inadvertently done, which is unacceptable unless proven otherwise. An independent evaluation of quality of population data, including maternal death, routinely collected by GK in its programme villages through its field level health workers, was conducted in 10% or 60 of its programme villages by GK Research and Evaluation Division by employing a new batch of interviewers and supervisors in May 2006. Data on maternal deaths collected by this new set of interviewers matched the corresponding data reported by health workers during April 2005-May 2006 in the same 60 villages (Gonoshastha Kendra 2007).This further confirms the reliability of the data on maternal deaths collected by GK.

## 4.0 Adult Female Mortality

Table 1 presents adult female and maternal deaths in the programme villages of Gonoshayastha Kendra (GK) during 15 April 2002-14 April 2005. There were

616 adult female deaths, yielding an adult female death rate of 0.90 per thousand women in the reproductive ages 15-49 years. Of 616 adult female deaths, 86 or 14 percent of adult female deaths were identified as maternity related, that is, occurring during pregnancy or within 42 days of the pregnancy ending. The comparable figure at the national level was around 35 percent during the 1980s (Ginneken, J.Van, et al 1998), indicating a downward trend in adult female mortality rate over the years. There were 48,362 pregnancy terminations and 46,320 live births, resulting in a maternal mortality ratio of 1.78, per 1000 reported pregnancy termination or 1.86 per 1,000 live births during 2002-05.

**Table 1**

**Distribution of birth, adult female and maternal deaths during the period 15 April 2002 - 14 April 2005.**

| Group | Population | Deaths | Death rate (per 1000) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Females aged 15-49 | 684328* | 616 | 0.90 |
| Females with pregnancy termination | 48362 | 86 | 1.78 |
| Live births | 46320 | 86 | 1.86 |

**Refers to total number of women in the reproductive ages (15-49 years) during 2002-05*

Most of the maternal deaths (81.4%) were attributed to direct obstetric causes, particularly post-partum haemorrhage and eclampsia, accounting for 95% of all direct causes (Chauhury, RH and Zafrullah, C 2008). The remaining causes were attributed to factors indirectly related to pregnancy such as age, gravity, socio-economic status, education, smoking, anaemia and tetanus vaccination. This paper examines the gross and net effect of these socio-demographic and health factors on maternal mortality.

## 5.0 Socio-demographic and Health Factors Affecting Maternal Mortality

Seven hypotheses are posited for verification in this study.

(i) The higher the chances of pregnancy among younger and older women, the higher the risk of their death due to maternal/childbirth related complications.

(ii) The higher the chances of pregnancy among women with many children (4 or more) and women experiencing first time childbearing, the higher

the risk of their death due to maternal/childbirth related complications, compared to those with 2-3 children.

(iii) The higher the socio-economic status of a pregnant woman, the lower the chances of her death due to maternal/childbirth related complications.

(iv) The higher the level of education of a pregnant woman, the lower the chances of her death due to maternal/childbirth related complications.

(v) The higher the level of anaemia of a pregnant woman, the higher the chances of her death due to maternal/childbirth related complications.

(vi) The greater the frequency of smoking by a pregnant woman, the higher the chances of her death due to maternal/childbirth related complications.

(vii) The higher the chances a pregnant woman has been vaccinated against tetanus, the lower the chances of her death due to maternal/childbirth related complications.

**The justifications for postulating each of these hypotheses are elaborated in sub-sections 5.1-5.7.**

The effect of socio-demographic factors on MMR is examined at bi-variate and multi-variate levels. At the bi-variate level simple two-way relationships are examined between MMR and socio-demographic variables and the findings are presented in Table 2. At the multi-variate level, net effect of a socio-demographic variable (independent variable) on MMR (dependent variable) is examined by taking into account the effect of other socio-demographic and health-related variables (i.e. age, gravidity, socio-economic status, education, smoking, anaemia and tetanus), using a logistic regression specification:

$$\ln\left(\frac{p}{1-p}\right) = \vec{X}\vec{\beta} + \varepsilon \qquad (1)$$

*Where:*

p is the relative frequency of MMR in the $i^{th}$ sample
X is a vector of independent variables (age, gravidity, socio-economic status, anaemia, tetanus, and smoking status)
β is the corresponding vector of coefficients
ε is the stochastic disturbance term

Equation (1) is estimated using the Generalized Least Square (GLS) estimator.

Regression results are presented in Table 3, in which the coefficients are expressed as deviations from the omitted category.

### *5.1 Demographic Factors:*

#### *5.1.1 Maternal Mortality and Age*

One would expect to find a U-shaped relationship between age and maternal mortality (MMR), in which MMR is expected to be very high among high-risk very young and older child bearers. Data in Table 2 in general tend to support this hypothesized relationship, particularly at older ages. The risk is relatively higher among mothers under 30. Thereafter, the risk of maternal mortality increases sharply and reaches its highest at age 40 and above. However, when the net effect of age on MMR is examined by taking allowance of the correlations of other independent variables (gravidity, mother's education, smoking status, tetanus vaccination, socio-economic status, and anaemia) with age and dependant variable (MMR), the relationship turns weak and statistically insignificant (See regression results in Table 3). As expected, the regression results show that younger, middle-aged and older women aged 15-19, 30-39 and 40 and above have higher chances of maternal mortality, compared to women aged 20-29. The chances of death of adolescent (15-19 years), middle-aged (30-39 years) and older mothers (40 years and above) are 1.11, 1.10 and 1.82 times higher, compared to women aged 20-29. But the differences are not statistically significant (see Table 3).

#### *5.1.2 Maternal Mortality and Gravidity*

Gravidity in this study refers to the number of pregnancies experienced by a woman prior to the birth and death event examined in this study. All pregnancies are at risk. However, the risk is unusually high among women experiencing first time childbearing and women with many pregnancies. Data in Table 2 confirm the expected association between gravidity and risk of maternal mortality. MMR is relatively higher among women experiencing their first childbearing episodes, compared to women with 1-2 previous pregnancies. The rate falls sharply for women with 1-2 previous pregnancies. Thereafter, it rises very high, reaching its highest among women with 3 or more gravidities. This U-shaped relationship between gravidity and MMR still holds, even when allowance is made of the relationship of gravidity with other independent variables and maternal mortality (see regression results in Table 3). Regression result shows that chances of death of mothers with no previous pregnancies and 3 or more previous pregnancies prior to the current pregnancy are 2.29 and 2.25 times higher, compared to mothers with 1-2 previous pregnancies. These differences are statistically significant (see Table 3).

## *5.2 Social Factors*

### *5.2.1 Socio-economic Status (SES) and Maternal Mortality*

Socio-economic Status (SES) of a household in this study is determined on the basis of various qualitative and quantitative socio-economic, demographic and health indicators (for details, see section 2). SES of a household is likely to be inversely associated with MMR because mothers of well-off households are expected to be more aware of life threatening risks of pregnancies than mothers of poor households. The former is also more likely to access and utilize antenatal and post-natal care services than the latter because of their greater awareness and affordability. This is also indirectly supported by data in Table 2, which shows higher MMR for women of poor SES background, compared to women of well-off SES background. However, this relationship is not statistically significant (i.e., chances of death of mothers with higher SES are not significantly different from mothers with poor SES background) when allowance is made for other factors, which are related to both SES and MMR (see Table 3).

### *5.2.2 Maternal Education and Maternal Mortality*

One would expect to find an inverse relationship between the education of the mother and maternal mortality. An educated pregnant woman is more likely to be aware of the complications of pregnancies and their consequences on life. Therefore, she is expected to better manage her pregnancy in terms of seeking and utilizing antenatal and postnatal care services than her counterpart who has little or no formal education. Utilization of medical advice and services is also likely to be higher among mothers with formal education than their counterparts with no formal education as the former is likely to read and follow medical instructions more carefully than the latter. One would therefore expect to find an inverse relationship between education and maternal mortality. The higher the level of education, the lower the level of maternal mortality. Data in Table 2 show an unexpected relationship between maternal mortality and her level of education, in which maternal mortality shows a positive relationship with education. The picture, however, reverses when allowance is made for other variables (see regression results in Table 3), which are related to mother's education and maternal mortality. The net effect of maternal education shows an inverse relationship with maternal death. Mothers with no formal education are 1.24 times more likely to die due to pregnancy and childbirth-related complications, compared to mothers who have some education. But the difference is not statistically significant.

### *5.3 Health Factors*

#### *5.3.1 Tetanus and Maternal Mortality*

Tetanus is a life-threatening disease, for which there is a little or no treatment. However, this can be prevented through tetanus vaccination. A pregnant mother is more vulnerable to this deadly disease, particularly when delivery takes place in poor sanitary conditions as in many developing countries, including Bangladesh. It is a common practice in Bangladesh, particularly in rural areas, to cut the umbilical cord using non-sanitary (unclean) steel blade or blade made of bamboo and paste a mixture of ashes and cow dung on the cord. These unhygienic practices expose a pregnant woman to higher risk of tetanus infection. Moreover, home, which still remains the place of delivery for the absolute majority of women, particularly rural women, is mostly in a state of poor sanitary conditions. This may also expose a rural pregnant woman to tetanus infection during postpartum period. Data in table 2 confirm a considerably higher MMR for pregnant women who were not vaccinated against tetanus, compared to those who were vaccinated. This finding still holds even when allowance is made for other variables, which are related to tetanus vaccination as well as MMR (see regression table 3). Regression result shows significantly lower chances of MMR among women who were vaccinated, compared to those who were not vaccinated. Mothers who were vaccinated are 0.18 times less likely to die, compared to mothers who were vaccinated.

#### *5.3.2 Anaemia and Maternal Mortality*

Very often women become anaemic during pregnancy due to increase in demand for iron and other vitamins. The mother must increase her production of red blood cells to meet the needs of the foetus and the placenta. Foetal iron metabolism is completely dependent on maternal iron diet i.e. iron transport from the placenta. In order to have enough red blood cells for the foetus, the body starts to produce more red blood cells and plasma. It has been estimated that the blood volume increases approximately 50 percent during pregnancy, although the plasma amount is disproportionately greater. This causes dilution of the blood, making haemoglobin concentration fall, reaching its lowest between 25 and 30 weeks unless treated with iron supplementation. Fall in haemoglobin level below normal level may expose a pregnant woman to higher risk of death. Anaemia status of a pregnant woman in GK programme villages is determined by visual examination of eyes with Sahli's Haemoglobinometer during ANC visit by health workers and is categorized into: (1) normal to very mild, and (2) moderate to severe. Data in Table 2 confirm this connection between haemoglobin level and maternal mortality, in which women with moderate to severe anaemia have considerably higher MMR, compared to women with normal to mild anaemia. The

bi-variate relationship observed between anaemia level and maternal mortality still holds, even when allowance is made for other variables which have bearing on both independent (anaemia) and dependent (MMR) variables, as the result of regression analysis shows (see Table 3). Pregnant women with moderate to severe anaemia are 35.45 times more likely to die, compared to pregnant women with normal to mild anaemia. And this difference is found to be statistically significant.

### *5.3.3 Smoking and Maternal Mortality*

Smoking is injurious to health and is strongly associated with many life-threatening diseases such as cancer and various coronary diseases. Smoking may increase blood pressure and can expose a pregnant woman to higher risk of death by further aggravating pregnancy-induced hypertension. Coma and convulsions associated with pregnancy-induced hypertension take a large toll of maternal deaths in Bangladesh (National Institute of Population Research and Training, et al 2003). One would, therefore, expect to find higher MMR among mothers who smoke than those who do not smoke. This is also borne out by data both at bi-variate and multi-variate levels. Data in Table 2, which examine the two-way relationship between smoking and MMR show that women who smoke have considerably higher MMR, compared to women who do not smoke. This two-way relationship between MMR and smoking still holds even when allowance is made of other independent variables, which are related to both MMR and smoking (See Table 3). Pregnant women who smoke are 14.17 times more likely to die, compared to women who do not smoke and this difference is found to be highly significant.

**Table 2**

**Reproductive and Biosocial Factors Affecting Maternal Mortality Ratio**

| | Variable | Maternal Mortality Ratio |
|---|---|---|
| Age of Mother | 15-19 | 145.2 |
| | 20-29 | 143.2 |
| | 30-39 | 333.3 |
| | 40+ | 589.9 |
| | **Total** | **186** |
| Gravidity (Number of previous pregnancies) | 0 | 175.2 |
| | 1-2 | 98.8 |
| | 3-4 | 351.9 |
| | 5-8 | 458.2 |
| | **Total** | **186** |
| Socio-economic status | Very poor | 280.7 |
| | Poor | 200.6 |
| | Well-off | 110.9 |
| | **Total** | **186** |
| Vaccination (TT) | Vaccinated | 144.4 |
| | Not vaccinated | 150.3 |
| | **Total** | **186** |
| Status of Smoking | Yes | 306 |
| | No | 126.3 |
| | **Total** | **186** |
| Maternal education | No education | 183 |
| | Some education | 192 |
| | **Total** | **186** |
| Anaemia | Normal to very mild | 124 |
| | Moderate to severe | 243 |
| | **Total** | **186** |

**Table 3**

**Logistic Binary Regression Model of Determinants of Maternal Mortality (Chances of Survival of Pregnant Women)**

| Independent Variable | Regression Coefficient | Significance Level |
|---|---|---|
| **Age of mother** | | |
| 20-29 | - | - |
| 15-19 | 1.11 | 0.80 |
| 30-39 | 1.10 | 0.52 |
| 40+ | 1.82 | 0.17 |
| **Gravidity (Previous pregnancies)** | | |
| 1-2 | - | - |
| 0 | 2.29 | 0.009 |
| 3 and over | 2.25 | 0.009 |
| **Mother's education** | | |
| Some education | - | - |
| No education | 1.24 | 0.410 |
| **Smoking Status** | | |
| Not Smoking | - | - |
| Smoking | 14.17 | .000 |
| **Immunization against tetanus toxoid** | | |
| Not Immunized | - | - |
| Immunized | -.184 | .000 |
| **Economic Status** | | |
| Very Poor & Poor | - | - |
| Well-off | -0.82 | 0.578 |
| **Anaemia (haemoglobin) Level** | | |
| Normal to very mild | - | - |
| Moderate to severe | 35.45 | 0.000 |

## 6.0 Policy Lessons

The findings clearly point out to the need for preventing smoking, discouraging births to women with four or more children, delaying births to primigravidas, treatment of aneamia, and promotion of full doses of tetanus vaccination for pregnant women. These factors will help to significantly reduce maternal mortality.

Prevention of smoking will require, among other things, an all-out campaign against smoking using electronic and print media, mobilizing support of national and local leaders, including community and religious leaders to speak against smoking in public fora, and imposing heavy duties/taxes on tobacco products. Consideration should also be made to include lessons on adverse health consequences of smoking in school curricula.

Prevention of births to women with 4 or more children and delaying births to primigravidas (i.e. first time pregnant women), particularly the former still remains a major challenge to reduction of maternal mortality in rural Bangladesh. Among currently pregnant women, about 41 percent are with 4 or more children and 17 percent are primigravidas (National Institute of Population Research and Training, et al 2005). A massive information, education and communication campaign is needed to raise awareness among all concerned, particularly husbands, mother-in-laws and married women of the adverse consequences of pregnancy on the lives of women with multiple children and among first time pregnant women. Mothers with 4 or more children should be encouraged to accept terminal methods of family planning to stop having babies, while married women without previous pregnancies should be encouraged to accept temporary methods to delay pregnancies beyond age 19. The use of terminal methods in Bangladesh is low (female sterilization-5.0%, male sterilization- 0.7%) and also declining in recent years (National Institute of Population Research and Training, et al 2007). The unmet need for family planning, defined as fecund women who are currently married and who say either that they do not want any more children or that they want to wait two or more years before having another child, but are not using contraception, is also very high (19.8%) among currently married adolescent women (National Institute of Population Research and Training, et al 2007). Government should promote and ensure availability of terminal methods to high parity women and temporary methods of contraceptives to younger women. NGOs can also play a leading role in this respect. Consideration should also be given to include lessons on adverse health consequences of pregnancy for women with high parity and first time pregnant women into formal and non-formal school curricula.

Reduction of anemia is another major challenge to reduction of maternal mortality. Fifty-nine percent of pregnant and lactating women are anaemic in rural Bangladesh (Dhaka University 1998). In most cases, anaemia is a consequence of malnutrition, i.e., inadequacy of required nutrients in the diet or inability to properly absorb the food a person consumes. The nutrient

deficiencies, which are directly related to anaemia are iron, vitamin, riboflavin, folic and other micro-nutrients. The prevention and treatment of anaemia will call for providing iron-folic-acid tablets to anaemic pregnant women. Consideration should be given to fortification of community-consumed food as a means of improving the micro-nutrient intake of iron and foliates among pregnant and lactating women. There is a need to promote nutrition education among family members, particularly a need for additional nutrients and a balanced diet for a pregnant woman. In Bangladesh a woman generally is the last family member to eat after feeding every one else in the family. In many poor households with constrained food consumption to begin with, very little is left over to eat by the time it is the mother's time to eat. Family members should be educated to discontinue this practice by allowing pregnant women to rather eat first. In the long-run, it is necessary to improve the nutrition of the girl child by promoting her value.

Considerable progress has been made with regard to tetanus vaccination coverage of pregnant women in Bangladesh. Four out of five currently pregnant women are reported to have received tetanus vaccination for the last pregnancy (National Institute of Population Research and Training, et al 2003). The coverage of tetanus vaccination, however, needs to be further improved in order to bring about a significant reduction in maternal mortality. This can be achieved, to a great extent, by meeting the unmet need for tetanus vaccination of the rural population, particularly the poorer section of the population who fall far behind the national average in receiving antenatal care. Targeted care to poor mothers must be made through external efforts by all concerned to motivate and encourage them to use maternal health services.

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# BOOK REVIEW

## Sex in Consumer Culture: the Erotic Content of Media and Marketing

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Freud might have overstated the case in claiming that everything people do can be linked to sex, but his ideas have had a deep impact on the development of theories and research models about sex and consumption patterns. Sexuality is a fundamental characteristic of people that influences their thoughts and behaviors, their orientation toward others, and life in general. Sex sells. It always has, beyond that cliché's inevitable appearance in media and marketing conversations. Despite the presence of sexual information in mainstream advertising, either in the form of sexual behavior, nudity, scantily-clad models, fetishism, or promises of sexual fulfillment and intimacy, few sources are available to those interested in studying this multifaceted phenomenon. Although sexual appeals are used to sell more products—and to boost popularity of media products such as television programming, films, magazines, music, and web sites—many scholars and consumers are still unable to describe "if" and "how" sex sells. *Sex in Consumer Culture: the Erotic Content of Media and Marketing* addresses these concerns by bringing together writers, thinkers, and researchers from several areas to examine what sex "is" in marketing, how it works, and how it may affect consumers and society.

Parents, pressure groups, and lawmakers soundly criticize the advertising industry for its portrayal of sex. Yet the outlets for and diversity of sexual fare continue to grow along with the toleration of sexual imagery. "We love our media sex, and we hate it too". (Sapolsky, 2003, p.296). Sex may thrive in popular culture and in

promotional activities precisely because it has been sanitized from many political, educational, and religious discourses. Negation of sexual content in some spheres of life probably ensures that it will remain an active presence in others, and in our own time, this content is carried out by mass media in its many forms. The collection of chapters in this book weighs in on the cultural duplicity noted by Saplosky, by documenting and describing the nature of sexual content in America's public media and promotional spaces. That sex is ubiquitous is no surprise. Far from heralding the obvious, however, the media and marketing scholars whose essays and research reports comprise this book paint an intriguing and eroticized vision of a mediated landscape. In so doing, they review pertinent research and break new ground in their analyses of a sexualized media, advertising content, and promotional culture.

Most social science work that studies mediated sexuality in mainstream America falls within two related but distinct areas. One of them may be characterized as traditional content and effects investigations conducted by mass communication scholars. Typical fare includes content analyses of television programming (e.g. prime time, soaps), music videos, magazines (e.g. editorial content, covers), books, films, and video games. The second research area is commonly referred to as sex in advertising research. Research in this domain is concerned with the use of sex for promotional uses – to sell products and to influence how consumers think and feel about certain products and brands. Like media research, sexual content in ads also varies between and among media (Reichert, 2002). Although a metaphorical boundary exists between editorial content and advertising/marketing, both are concerned with similar sexual content, and more importantly, both have similar goals in relation to consumers. Sex is added to programming to attract viewers about the subject, just as sexual appeals are added to advertising to attract consumers. For example, in media literature there is little discussion of how sex operates or functions in the mainstream media beyond the implicit assumption that sex is used to attract the attention of certain audiences who find sexual information pleasurable and arousing. In this sense, network "promos" or movie trailers can sprinkle in quick cuts of passionate scenes, erotic encounters, or feature disrobing implicitly promising that more is in store. The same is true of magazine covers featuring partially clad women confirming the belief that: "The cover of any successful magazine is a shrewd advertisement for what lies inside" (Handy, 1999, p.75). In In such eases, readers make little distinction between sex-tinged editorial content and the sexually-oriented advertising that pays for content, and thus, these magazines become a "seamless feast of eroticized eye candy" (Reichert, 2002). Sex can influence audiences in other ways as well. For example, the hedonic value of

sex can make the viewing experience more pleasurable; in other words viewers stay tuned longer either in anticipation of the erotic scenes or because what they are viewing is pleasurable. Consider the placement of cheerleaders and female sportscasters within sports coverage. This way media content can certainly be considered a "product" as it is either bought or paid for directly (i.e., consumers who buy magazines, films, music) or indirectly (i.e., firms that pay networks for access to viewers and advertising).

Although discussions of both 'sexualized' promotional products and mass media products are included within the covers of this book, it is difficult to construct a single definition that fits this global approach. Here, it is encompassed thus: "sexuality in the form of nudity, sexual imagery, innuendo, and double entendre employed as an advertising tool in the marketing culture and mass media" (Reichert *et al,* 2006). Scholars from different research traditions vary in terms of the levels of meaning they analyze and the concerns they address with regard to sex in advertising. For example, marketers are primarily concerned with micro-level effects; they want to know how sexual information evokes reactions within viewers, and how those reactions influence consumer behavior. Important variables include attention, feelings about the ad and about the brand, memory, and intentions to purchase the advertised product. Humanities researchers see sexual stimuli from wholly different perspectives, usually at the macro level. These scholars are interested in what sex-tinged advertising says about cultural myths, power, iconographies, relationships, development of gender identities and stereotypes, people's fantasies, ethics, and shared grammars of the body as commodity. In this book, several authors approach their topics by writing histories of cultural movements and using these histories as places from which to address sexual appeals. Although scholars from both the sciences and humanities usually discuss sexual appeals inside disciplinary boundaries, this collection allows dialogue to occur across those boundaries to create synergy among these varied perspectives. In addition, because sex is wrapped up in issues of power, sexuality, gender, and culture, the waters of this collection believes that it is important to talk about these appeals from multiple perspectives.

Exploring how sex is used to eroticize media, chapters in the first section titled "Sexualizing Media" of the collection describe the nature of sexual content in mainstream media forms, including films, music videos, video games, magazines and sports programming. For example, Mary Beth Oliver and Sriram Kalyanaraman in "Using Sex to Sell Movies: A Content Analysis of Movie Trailers" report the results of sexual content analysis in movie trailers. The authors indicate

that in addition to public relations efforts, and the creation of "buzz" effects, trailers are a primary form of movie promotion, and sexual content is present in a sizeable portion of movie trailers. In a related piece, Julie Andsager in "Seduction, Shock, and Sales" provides a concise review of sex in music video research, and argues that women such as Britney Spears, Christina Aguilera, Madonna or Shania Twain, brand themselves sexually and often rebrand themselves thus depending on the status and goals of their music careers. Again, in "Voluptuous Vixens and Macho Males: A Look at the Portrayal of Gender and Sexuality in Video Games", Stacy L. Smith and Emily Moyer-Guse shows how sex also finds expression in video game culture, stimulating not only "incalculable sales" of the game but also producing a lucrative cult following. They draw on examples like Lara Croft, the animated and "freakishly curvaceous" heroine of the popular Tomb Raider video game, who inspired two subsequent films featuring Angelina Jolie. In "Sex and the Marketing of Contemporary Consumer Magazines", Jacqueline Lambiase and Tom Reichert trace the history of masculinity in its various forms into the present-day sexualized images of men in "men's magazines". They juxtapose "masculinism" with "feminism", and provide a foundation for understanding the increased prevalence of men as objects of sex in consumer culture. On a similar note, Jamie Skerski attacks the pseudo-sexuality sold in contemporary sports channels in "From Sideline to Centerfold: The Sexual Commodification of Female Sportscasters".

The first two chapters of the second section ("Sexualizing Products") provide valuable overviews of the types and levels of sexual content directed toward two audiences: adolescents and internet users. Other chapters in this section examine erotic advertising content in specific product categories such as fashion, digital cameras, and beer. Carol Pardun and Kathy Forde examine "mediated sex" in their chapter "Sexual Content of Television Commercials Watched by Early Adolescents", and find that sexual content directed to these vulnerable audiences varies by audience race and gender. For example, one disturbing finding is that most sexual interactions in ads occur between unmarried, and potentially uncommitted, characters. Moving from traditional media to new media, in one of the very few systematic analyses of "mainstream" sexual content on the internet, Art Ramirez describes through a thorough content analysis the prevalence of sex in ads appearing on popular news, sports, and entertainment sites. Ramirez's sampling technique, involving randomized capturing of screen grabs, provides an excellent example of sampling web content so it can be subject to traditional content analysis methods. Moving from aggregate to the specific, the next chapter explores how alcoholic beverages and sexual themes are intimately entwined in American advertising. Although Jason Chambers is a historian, he situates the three rather

contemporary and controversial beer campaigns as ways in which marketers attempt to sexually brand their products while appealing to young males, and provides interpretation and context about why two of these campaigns were more effective than the third. In "From Polo to Provocateur: (Re) Branding Polo/Ralph Lauren with Sex in Advertising", Tom Reichert and Tray LaCaze carefully navigate their way through the use of sex in the fashion industry. The authors speculate on how and why a successful fashion brand such as Polo/Ralph Lauren can successfully sexualize its image. Fashion advertising also serves as the subject of Debra Merskin's work ("Where are the Clothes? The Pornographic Gaze in Mainstream American Fashion Advertising") on pornographic conventions used by women's clothing makers in advertising. She uses film, communication, and fashion theories to weave together the sexually-oriented narratives that emerge from fashion advertising. While these pornographic codes may serve as subtext within such advertising, they work to normalize objectification of women and girls as sexually available. Because female viewers of all ages are the intended consumers of such advertising from fashion magazines, women's conditioning by these pornographic conventions deserve our attention. Theorizing about the "logic of pornography", Jonathan Schroeder and Pierre McDonagh scrutinize digital camera advertising, and explore how it works by creating desire both for products and for flesh through a kind of sanctioned voyeurism. These circulating images of eroticized women in digital camera advertising, found in print and on the Web, trivialize sexuality, place female "objects" under surveillance, and again normalize pornographic conventions in mainstream culture.

"Sexualizing People", the final section of the book, focuses on people themselves as participants in erotic branding, as stereotypes, and as consumers of eroticized media. Corporate America often uses female workers to sexually brand products and services in live promotional activities. Using in-depth narrative interviewing of female employees, Jacqueline Lambiase chronicles and interprets these activities through semiotic analysis. Expected by their employers to generate "cocktail-party and call-girl vibes", these female employees use physical attractiveness, eroticized clothing, and well-known sexual scripts to sell products and attract attention. The study's findings confirm "sexual-scripting theory as well as document implicit employer demands for sexual behavior patterns well beyond the boundaries of explicit marketing policies". Using examples of people featured in the "Style" section of the *New York Times Magazine,* Stephen Gould shows how types of people become sexualized. He extends his theory of advertising lovemaps to explain how people and their contexts may become "fetishized" within fashion photography. Audience research on effects and preferences is also encouraged by

Dana Mastro and Susannah Stern, who study race and gender as critical factors regarding sexualized images in prime-time television advertising. The strength of this chapter is its summation of racial eroticization. Dovetailing with this study of racial depictions, is Diane Grimes' "Getting a Bit of the Other: Sexualized Stereotypes of Asian and Black Women in Planned Parenthood"; she undertakes a different methodology to describe sex and minority representation. Armed with a critical-cultural interpretivist framework she argues that the ads-intentionally or not-reinforce certain perceptions when paired with images of white men in a sexual health context. Gary Soldow uses historical methods to demonstrate the wily way that marketers target gay audience with homoerotic imagery. Focusing on the ultimate embodiment of "sexualizing people", a study by Larry Lance explores how people sell themselves when looking for romantic partners in personal ads. His analysis convincingly demonstrates that product manufacturers and media promoters are not the only ones who use sex to attract audiences, brand products, and sell goods.

A benefit of this book is that it does not focus on only quantitative or qualitative research, but encompasses both approaches. It includes chapters across disciplines from scholars who explore erotic appeals through a range of methods including empiricism, theory, interpretive analysis, and some of what lies among these perspectives. The more quantitative perspectives include studies of audience effects and individual difference variables, integrative reviews of past research, and new studies that build on past research using theories not yet applied to understanding the effects of these appeals. Definitional issues are addressed, and directions for future research are noted. Qualitative perspectives include studies by scholars working in visual persuasion, rhetoric, cultural studies, media studies, gender studies, and others. Although the different contributors vary in their approaches, each of them examines how sexual appeals function in today's consumer culture environment. At its heart, the book is envisioned by the editors as a source book on sex in consumerism that spans qualitative and quantitative perspectives, documents past research, reports new research, and provides clear directions for future research.

Even living in Bangladesh, we can not stay too far away from the western trends of "sexualized persuasion" in advertising. Western visual "sex noise" surrounds us through films, music videos, television programming, web content, magazine and book covers, and beyond. Indeed over the years, little in our "Bengali" culture has been left untouched by the cycles of economic boom and bust, by sweeping cultural realignments, and by the social fads including the youth craze, clothes,

leisure, and sexuality. These practices have opened up the boundaries of sexual behavior and effected marketing communications norms in Bangladesh, and are, thus, making inroads into our mainstream culture. There is, therefore, a substantial need for addressing the issue of sex in advertising with insightful research and constructive debate even in bangladesh. To this end, *Sex in Consumer Culture: the Erotic Content of Media and Marketing* can help those interested in the nature, nuances and evolution of erotic appeals in Bangladeshi consumer culture to navigate the disparate information available within disciplinary boundaries.

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