Understanding Cultural Causes of Corruption: The Case of Bangladesh

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Abstract: Corrupt culture influenced significantly people living in society, which they practised intentionally or unintentionally. To some extent, these practices patronise corruption and make a significant impact on society in several ways. Thus, this paper has tried to analyse these cultural causes and cost of corruption in the context of Bangladesh. Based on empirical data collected through Bangladesh Citizens Survey, elite interview in the 2015-2016 period and participation observation, the paper identified five principal cultural causes of corruption in Bangladesh: patron-client (neo-patrimonial) networks, creating a corruption friendly environment in the society, use of ‘religion’ as a tool, low awareness and illiteracy and building corrupt culture through wrong messages in the curriculum. The paper also analyses how these factors contribute to the ‘iron triangle’ in shaping corruption and the impact of these factors in Bangladeshi society.

Keywords: Corruption, Causes of Corruption, Culture, Bangladesh, Patron-client.

I. INTRODUCTION

Corruption can develop systemically, becoming part of a society, its political context, economy and even the culture. Its consequences for elites and masses alike are often disastrous. In both developed and developing countries, governments have fallen due to accusations of corruption (Graycar & Prenzler, 2013). Bangladesh is no different. In Bangladesh, there is a famous story that is very popular might provide a better understanding of the whole context. A foreign tourist has come to visit Bangladesh. He has travelled all over the country for two weeks. When he returns to his country, his friends and family members asked, how was your visit to Bangladesh? His answer was, there must be someone (God) in the universe, or otherwise, it would be impossible to live in Bangladesh under such conditions. The appeal of this story can be understood because the people of Bangladesh must face corruption at every step of their life. People face corruption from birth to death. It has become a systemic issue that has entered all structures, foundations, divisions and exchanges in society. It is hard for citizens to ignore corruption. Not many sectors in Bangladesh that are free from corruption (Hough, 2013). Every stakeholder, including ordinary people, businesspeople, politicians and bureaucrats is part of it. In getting public or private services, citizens must pay extra-unauthorised money in most cases. People who do not pay bribes are either harassed or must pursue their services through informal mechanisms such as lobbying, or personal communication using their position. These factors denote cultural penetration of corruption in Bangladesh. Thus, this paper aims to investigate the cultural elements of corruption in Bangladesh in detail.

II. LITERATURE INQUIRY: CORRUPTION AND CULTURAL CAUSES

Corruption is a topic that has been given much emphasis on social scientists (Graycar & Prenzler, 2013). Kaufmann’s observation that ‘so far corruption has mostly inspired analyses, conferences, and writing rather than action in the international arena’ (Kaufmann, 1997, p. 118) still holds. Over the years, many scholars have drawn attention to defining corruption, the types, causes and impact of corruption, anti-corruption strategies, why anti-corruption strategy succeed or fail, etc.

The concept of corruption is ambiguous and capable of diverse and multiple definitions (Bartos, 2008; Graycar & Prenzler, 2013). It is a social, legal, economic and political concept that is always entangled in uncertainty and debate (Torsello, 2013); however, a few definitions are now widely accepted and used. The most commonly used definition is that corruption is ‘the abuse of public office for private gain’ (Mauro, 1998, p. 11) or ‘the misuse of public power, office, or authority for private benefit’ (Kim, Kim, & Lee, 2009, p. 43). This definition is used by many countries and scholars around the world and is mainly derived from the thought of Nye (1967), Klitgaard, Abaroa, & Parris (2000), and Ackerman (1999, 2007), who are scholars well-known for their conceptual work in the corruption field. Their definitions of corruption include a wide range of activities, but they are limited to the public sphere. To overcome this problem, Transparency International (TI) defines corruption as “The misuse of entrusted power for private gain” [Transparency International (TI), 2016; United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 2008, p. 18]. TI’s definition widens the arena of corruption, not limiting it to a single sector and giving emphasis to the individual’s private gain whatever is its illegitimate source.

The TI definition also contains a problem, however, as it only focuses on the individual level. In response, donor agencies in the anti-corruption field have modified the definition of corruption as follows: “The abuse of entrusted authority for illicit gain” (Disch, Vigeland, & Sundet, 2009). This covers all transactions between actors in state and non-state spheres. This definition still lacks attention to the normative issues.
involved in ‘authority,’ ‘abuse of power,’ ‘illicit gain.’ Huntington’s definition of corruption as ‘behaviour of public officials which deviates from accepted norms to serve private ends’ (2002, p. 253) thus adds an element lacking in the previously suggested definition developed by the donor agencies. The words ‘behaviour’ and ‘norms’ have a strong connection with morality. When the entrusted authority swerves from ‘norms’, they become corrupted. They break the rules, and their behaviour is unusual viewed from the perspective of routine procedures.

Considering all the definitions above, corruption can be defined as ‘the behaviour of entrusted authority that deviates from accepted norms to serve illicit gain.’ This definition of corruption suggested a few key points:

1. Corruption is a process that involves two or more actors.
2. It is interest-centric.
3. One or both parties gain something valuable to their interest or interests.
4. It occurs when actors deviate from accepted rules or norms.

These characteristics of corruption indicate that corruption is a relationship between players, in which an invisible and illegal exchange occurs between agent and client within an entrusted authority (Della Porta and Vannucci 2012). The words ‘behaviour’ and ‘norms’ have a strong connection with morality. When the entrusted authority swerves from ‘norms’, they become corrupted. They break the rules, and their behaviour is unusual viewed from the perspective of routine procedures.

Della Porta & Vannucci (2012) similarly argued that corruption is such a widespread phenomenon that many variables are likely to cause it. These variables differ from country to country and have a different impact on those countries. The variables are often linked with each other, and it is difficult to determine a single cause.

Empirical studies have found that corruption levels are also influenced by cultural and social factors like religious tradition, clientelism, human capital and ethnic fragmentation (M. H. Khan, 2002, 2005; La Porta, Lopez-de-Silanes, Shleifer, & Vishny, 1999; Mauro, 1995; Svensson, 2005; Theobald, 1999; Treisman, 2000). For example, Treisman(2000) and La Porta, Lopez-De-Silanes, Shleifer, & Vishny(1996) found that countries with higher proportions of Protestants are likely to be less corrupt compared with countries marked by hierarchical religions such as Catholicism and Islam. Patronage politics and clientelism also have strong influence on corruption levels (M. H. Khan, 2005; Theobald, 1999). In one case, leaders in cold war era Greece with patronage networks won elections, used power to expand their clientele and created a political monopoly (Legg, 1969). Mauro (1995) and La Porta et al.,(1999) found that ethnic fragmentation related to the quality of government and institutions. A quantitative comparison of the 50 states of the USA (published in 1988 by the Public Officials Integrity Section of the US Department of Justice) showed that corruption has a strong correlation with urbanisation and education (L. Huberts, 2014). Education not only creates economic opportunities, but it also helps citizens with the knowledge needed to challenge government abuses (Svensson, 2005).

This paper will draw on a range of these explanations in understanding the cultural causes and its impact of corruption in Bangladesh. The current research on corruption in Bangladesh is outdated, and the new empirical research in this paper will help to fill gaps in understanding the present situation of corruption in the cultural context in Bangladesh.

III. METHODOLOGY

The research methodology adopted in this paper seeks to answer the cultural causes of corruption in Bangladesh and its impact. It will require a multi-dimensional approach to answer these questions. Similar research shows that researchers who study corruption need a well-designed empirical strategy to investigate the phenomenon within its real-life context and with multiple sources of reliable evidence (Reinikka&Svensson, 2006; Yin, 2008). This study adopts the case study method to investigate the cultural causes of corruption and its impact using the case of Bangladesh. It combines documentary research, qualitative interviews, participant observation and a quantitative mass survey to gain insights into community and elite attitudes towards and experiences of corruption and anti-corruption efforts in Bangladesh. All the data sources have been combined to create a stronger overall analysis.

To begin to identify the significant cultural causes of corruption in Bangladesh, the study categorised elite interviewee targets into significant groups like the present and former anti-corruption officials, present and former government officials, academics, NGO and civil society members, activists and CBO leaders. An initial list of specific potential interviewees was then prepared before starting the fieldwork in Bangladesh, based on the expertise, people relevant to the research questions and their availability. Nine interviews were conducted between September 2015 to April 2016 in various location in Bangladesh.

Also, the nationwide survey of 302 people was conducted to get ordinary citizens’ attitudes about corruption and anti-corruption in 27 Upazila (sub-district). The Bangladesh Citizens Survey (BCS) 2015-2016 included items asking respondents to assess the relative impact of different factors behind corruption. The total sample was stratified according to region, gender, age, occupation, and education to ensure that it was representative of Bangladeshi society. Responses to a combination of structured and open-ended questionnaire.
items were collected from each household member included in the sampled.

Additionally, participant observation was also used in this paper to make arguments stronger. Participation observation was critical to observe the cultural factors of corruption. Thus, it is essential to note the various activities in the society to understand the people involved in fraudulent activities. For example, people using religion to disguise people can be best outlined by observing their actions in society for a long time. Thus, some of the findings in this paper are based on the claim made by elite interviewee. These were later combined through participant observation and documentary evidence.

IV. GENERAL VIEWS ON CORRUPTION AND CORRUPT ACTIVITIES IN BANGLADESH

In Bangladesh, almost everyone in society sees corruption or is the victim of corruption in his or her daily life. For example, most drivers in Bangladesh get their driving license illegally via bribing personnel from the Bangladesh Road and Transport Authority (BRTA). Intermediaries negotiate for people to get false or genuine permits based on various rates (IvAca15, 2015). The question arises: when everyone is paying bribes to get services and wrongdoing becomes a regular systematised practice; can we call it as a corruption? Does the acceptance of corruption in the society mean giving bribes and the like is just part of the culture?

The Bangladesh Citizens’ Survey conducted for this paper suggests that this is not the case (see Table 1). People generally do not want things to be done in illegal ways. They think bad is bad and good is good. No matter how many people do it, anything beyond the law or ethics is seen as corruption. About 76% of respondents do not think that people should accept corrupt means even if everybody uses them. Linking this question to the example regarding driving licences (see Table 1), citizens were asked about their attitude toward a person who failed a driving test and bribed the driving examiner with 5,000 BDT. In answer to this question, 65.9% of people think that this behaviour will create ‘considerable effects’ and 28.5% of people thinks that it will create ‘large effects’ on society, presumably because it is likely to cause road accidents and loss of lives. Nevertheless, a small percentage of people in Bangladesh would gain their licences legally. There are good reasons for this apparent contradiction [Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB), 2016]. It shows the power of corrupt networks in Bangladesh. The mass of people usually surrenders to the public officials to avoid harassment and save time.

A similar dynamic exists about attitudes toward public servants receiving gifts for favours. Very few people (8.3%) believe that a public servant taking a free holiday to Thailand is not acting corruptly; however, such gifts are an increasing trend in Bangladesh. They were imported from corporate culture and have now offering and sending public servants abroad in the name of a visit has become common. Individuals who offer such holidays probably think that there is no wrongdoing if the public servant does some extra work for them. The public servant has minimal scope for visits abroad, and this may be his or her only chance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Don't Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You can’t call something corrupt if everybody does it</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>41.4%</td>
<td>34.8%</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A government employee who accepts a free holiday to Thailand in exchange for favouritism is acting corruptly.</td>
<td>53.3%</td>
<td>33.8%</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corruption in the public sector is a major problem for the community.</td>
<td>49.3%</td>
<td>40.4%</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Many people believe that Bangladesh is a corrupt country.</td>
<td>41.4%</td>
<td>41.4%</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Bangladesh Citizens Survey (BCS) 2015-2016, n=302.

Asking to assess corruption in more general terms, 89.7% of respondents think that corruption is a significant problem in the public sector and 82.8% believe that Bangladesh is a corrupt country. The broadest tension in these results is that although people do not support fraudulent activities, most of them think that corruption is a significant problem in Bangladesh. Why corruption it is? A detailed analysis of why corruption occurs in Bangladesh is presented in the next section from cultural views.

V. CULTURAL CAUSES OF CORRUPTION IN BANGLADESH

Researchers around the world failed to identify different causes of corruption because in corrupt practices many stakeholders get involved. Thus, it is hard to reduce its causes to a single factor or approach (Della Porta & Vannucci, 2012). Each element and method have links with others. Huberts(2014) has pointed out that legal, political, historical, and economic factors influence the corruption patterns found in a country.

Similarly, corruption in Bangladesh is multi-fussed and interlinked with several reasons like economic or political have a colossal effect in society. But corruption is a cultural process in Bangladesh in many aspects. People want personal progress, and they are not hindered in this process by earning it illegally. BCS 2015-2016 found 76.2% of people are against...
Patron-client relationships are ubiquitous in Bangladesh. The patron uses resources and influence to provide benefits and give shelter to the client. In exchange, the client offers general support and follow the patron’s command including doing personal services (Sarker, 2008). This concept is extensively described by M. H. Khan (1996, 1998, 2005) in the case of developing countries. The idea was initially devised by Max Weber, who identified the patronage system as one of the most critical forces in pre-capitalist forms of governance, where personal loyalty and traditional legitimacy act as a premier tool (Weber, 2009). In modern societies, the pattern of the patron-client relationship does not have the same conventional legitimacy as it once did. Now patrons want political support from clients in exchange for payoffs to capture public resources. Khan sums up the contemporary pattern of patron-client politics as follows:

**In a context where the emerging capitalist system does not enjoy political stability and general acceptance, where the state is not strong enough to enforce order by force and where civil society is failing to create the ideological support for the emergence of capitalism, patron-client networks which organize payoffs to the most vociferous opponents of the system are an effective if costly way of maintaining political stability (M. H. Khan, 1998, p. 115).**

M. H. Khan (1998) has elaborated the patterns of patron-client politics in the Bangladeshi and broader South Asian context. In the patron-client network bureaucrats and politicians remain in two parallel hierarchies, where both may be patrons for lawyer and business clients as well as a shared emotional setting. The patron does not always have to dominate the client directly. Instead, the poor client intentionally wants to serve their patron to gain some benefit. It is a kind of investment to gain a more substantial long-term interest. Thus, it could be termed as a win-win situation for both the parties in some cases. As in this situation, we often see an emotional setting in patronage relations and the need for a job to support a family is a common mechanism in shaping the patronage system. The fourth-grade employee has served his boss honestly over the years, no matter what time it is. He may take his boss’s children to school and do grocery shopping, which is not in his job description. In exchange, the manager might help him sometimes with some money or in other ways. Consequently, they have created a patron-client relationship as well as a shared emotional setting. The fourth-grade employee has done a lot of hard work to educate his child and is waiting for this opportunity to recommend him for the job to his boss. As the boss has an emotional connection and is in a patronage relationship with the employee, he helps the son to gain the position. Thereby, the patron-client relationship continues. The boss might think that he did not do anything wrong. Instead, he believes that he should be proud of his actions. The act of corruption saved the future of a family, which is true considering the situation, but unethical considering the code of conduct of the institution. Other candidates may have needed the job more desperately, and they might have more qualifications. However, the boss did

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**Figure 1:** Exchanges between Patrons and Clients in South Asia

*Source: (M. H. Khan, 1998, p. 118).*
this to continue his patronage relationship and get some favours later.

2. Creating a Corruption Friendly Environment in the Society

The patron-client networks set up people's mind to support corrupt individuals because they make it difficult for people to ignore their corrupt patrons. One of the best examples of this is the former president Hossain Mohammad Ershad. He was overthrown by a massive protest by citizens in 1990. No one believed that he would make a political come back. He was given a five-year sentence. But Ershad and his party still played a role in national politics and were later re-elected (IvGoB8, 2015).

These phenomena well supported by social status is gained in exchange for black money. Corrupt people are in high demand in Bangladesh because they are often the source of fundraising for clubs and other community development resources. Even religious-based institutions like mosques, temples and churches, educational institutions and hospitals are sponsored by corrupt people. By accepting those donations, society is ultimately supporting corrupt transactions. One typical example is a prize giving ceremony of a local cricket match, in which the prize was not presented by someone of higher social status such as a headmaster or university teacher. Instead, a customs officer was invited to be the guest of honour because he had donated 10000 BDT to the club. This cultural setting encourages corruption because people are judged by money, rather than honesty, morality, ethics or other positive human qualities (IvAca12, 2015; IvCBO24, 2016).

Even, in the case of marriage, people think about the income of a potential groom. People, in this case, does not think whether his wealth is from corrupt money or not (IvAca12, 2015). Everyone wants his or her daughter or sister to live in comfort, rather than living an honest life. To gain prestige, men will say that they work as a 'loan officer' in a bank. This cultural setting encourages corruption because people are judged by money, rather than honesty, morality, ethics or other positive human qualities (IvAca12, 2015; IvCBO24, 2016).

3. Use of 'Religion' as a Tool

Bangladeshi citizens practise Islamic norms and values. Religious socialisation is a continuous process, and it starts from early ages and continues until death, involving the family and other institutions. The independent Bangladesh constitution in 1972 recognised secularism as one of the state principles, but Islam has gradually been restored as the de facto state religion (Hakim, 1998). Religion is now part of politics in Bangladesh, with some of the newer political parties based on Islamic ideology. Most government offices have a separate place to pray, and officials say their prayers regularly. Overall, it is impossible to ignore the importance of Islam in politics and policy. One of the best examples is declaring 'Friday' as the weekend due to 'Jumma' prayers. This change occurred during the Ershad era due to respect for religion and massive public demand (Khan, 2016).

Why is Bangladesh such a corruption-prone country despite having strong religious values? One obvious reason for such an outcome is mainly because many corrupt officials use religion as a veil to cover their fraudulent activities. For example, in many government offices, officials wear the Tupi (religious cap) and Panjabi (the traditional dress that provides evidence of Islamic ideology) and keep their beards long to carry on Sunna. Some of them practise genuinely, and others are doing it to disguise their corruption. Empirical findings (mainly participation observation) uncover several unethical activities of many officials. While several attempted to interview of the anti-corruption and government officials was made, officials were absent in their allocated desk (mainly in-service desk, information centre) during busy time more than one hour or more. Surprisingly, many of those officials went for a break during prayer time and took a long break. However, officials are entitled to have an hour lunch break. Many of those officials were not found in their office in time or leave the office before 5.00 pm (government office runs 9.00 am. to 5.00 pm.). However, these officials were known as an honest and religious person in those offices even though they do not follow the code of conduct (IvACC18, 2015).

Another fine example of the use of religion was witnessed in the case of an anti-corruption official. He was found to wearing Tupi and Panjabi all the in the office. He also prays in time in the office. However, findings from elite interviews suggest that he was an active member of a corrupt syndicate that belongs in the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC). These syndicate members are very popular in the ACC because they give help and gifts to junior officials in times of special need or on special occasions. Some of them are known as Khalifa because of their charity to subordinate officials. However, they earn a lot of money through the syndicate.

The use of ‘religion’ as a tool becomes increasingly common because nowadays officials are not afraid of the Almighty. According one government official interviewed for this paper,

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2. Khalifa in Islam is a believer in or follower of Islam as well as very benevolent.
there may be an increased number of so-called theists going to religious institutions, but they do not seem to care about their accountability to God (IvGoB8, 2015). Everyone in Bangladesh in an early age is bound to learn and memorise The Holy Quran, but people do not practice the essence of The Holy Quran (IvAca15). Despite having so many Madrasas in the country, people do not hesitate to become involved in corruption (IvAca12, 2015).

4. Low Awareness and Illiteracy

Lack of education and low awareness of laws and rules promote corruption. It has been seen that the amount of bribe paid by poorer families is much greater compared to rich people (Hallak & Poisson, 2001). This cause of corruption may be becoming less important in Bangladesh. In recent years, the literacy rate in Bangladesh has improved. According to The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the literacy rate among people aged 15 years and older is 58.31% [The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 2015] and 62.248 million people have an internet connection [The Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC), 2016]. Although in recent years the literacy rate and public awareness in Bangladesh have improved significantly, there is still a need to improve awareness and literacy.

In the BCS 2015-2016, 45.4% of respondents think that lack of awareness among the people is one of the causes of corruption. Regarding illiteracy, only 36.1% of people in the citizen's survey believe that this is one of the main causes of corruption in Bangladesh. This is low compared to the other causes of corruption in the BCS 2015-2016. People who identified low awareness as one of the leading causes of corruption believe that it is particularly related to the culture of rural Bangladesh. It remains a common problem at the village level, as villagers are not used to coming to government offices and lack information and confidence. For example, a person may come to a land office with a land dispute lacking confidence and feeling anxious about losing his or her land. As he or she is not aware of the government services, they can easily be misled by an intermediary or official who takes advantage of them (IvGoB36 2016).

5. Building Corrupt Culture through Wrong Messages in the Curriculum

Socialisation into corruption is supported by a culture of wrong messages in the education curriculum, especially in primary and secondary level reading materials. During this period of their lives, children are creating the vision that they will try to follow. In Bangladesh, the education curriculum does not provide moral education against corruption (IvACC3, 2015). Instead, it helps to create a corruption friendly culture. An example given by an interviewee shows this:

In class seven there is the mathematics of ‘interest’, and ‘profit-loss’ said that, if 'x' ton of water is mixed with 'y' ton of milk, then it will increase, and we will gain profit. Therefore, if you want to gain profit, you have to mix water with milk. You will make more money if you do corruption. Hence, you can go ahead! These things are promoting a corruption friendly culture (IvAca12, 2015).

Similarly, there is a contradiction between national prohibitions on child marriage and message the messages sent in textbooks. The law states that girls should not get married before 18 or before being an adult and that it is a crime to marry before 18. Therefore, the education system should teach girls to follow this law. However, in classes during their early years of schooling, they read poems celebrating marriage and being a bride, accompanied by fabulous pictures of brides. So, when a girl sees this, she is likely to think of becoming married as soon as possible. Teachers are not able to give them the message to wait until they are 18 years (IvAca12, 2015). Bangladesh culture is more likely to adopt the kind of mathematics or poem above, rather than anti-corruption messages. When children grew up, they do not respond to lectures on ethical education, as they are not used to listening to those principles (IvGoB20, 2016).

VI. SHAPING CORRUPTION THROUGH ‘IRON TRIANGLES’

The five causes (dominated by the first three) of cultural causes identified in this paper help to shape corruption through the ‘iron triangle’ of politics, bureaucracy, and business elites. The term ‘iron triangle’ is derived from Japanese politics where the ‘power structure is based on an association of bureaucratic, political, and business elites’ (Moon & Ingraham, 1998; Pfiffner, 1987; Bertrand, Kramarz, Schoar, & Thesmar, 2007). In the Bangladeshi case, triangular manipulation can be defined as;

manipulation by the dominant interest group and the coalition of interests among “governing elites”, “fortune seeking political entrepreneurs” and privileged business communities, governing elites include both political leadership and bureaucracy (Mashreque, 2012).

All the stakeholders involved in the corrupt transactions are embedded in a manipulative structure. This nexus dictates policy as they form hidden understandings to promote particular government policies and decisions (Mashreque, 2012). The interlocking relationships between business, political and bureaucratic elites draw any result in corrupt collusion. Most politicians in Bangladesh are involved in the business, while business people and senior bureaucrats increasingly enter politics. Relationships between the three groups are close, and members of all three groups have

Madraa is an Arabic word for any type of educational institution. In Bangladesh as well as in the West, the word usually refers to Islamic religious school or college for the study. However, in Madrasa Islamic education is not, the only subject taught and there is modern curriculum. In general, all the students in Madrasa are Muslims in Bangladesh.
the person known as the compassionate to other people role in shaping corruption among those actors. For example, cultural environment, illiteracy or religion plays a significant reforms. The cultural setup like patrimonial network, the triangles and their resistance forms structural barriers to share an interest in resisting attempts to weaken the iron 2014). A large number of participants in these relationships place when the rehabilitation program starts (Z. I. Khan, levels of the fraudulent transaction. Corruption can also take project co-ordinator approves all this as he can gain from both becoming active to turn lower value agricultural land into the more valuable property by building temporary structures on it. They may rent or buy these lands from members of the government. His or her local support or popularity also made him the perfect candidate for such mega projects.

VII. WHAT ARE THE IMPACTS IN THE SOCIETY?
The effects of corruption in Bangladesh are immeasurable. Billions of dollars are lost at a societal level (Zafarullah & Siddiquee, 2001). Individuals also suffer from corruption. In the BCS 2015-2016, most people (69.9%) believe that corruption has an impact on people's lives either directly or indirectly. Similarly, TIB also found that 67.8% of people had been victims of corruption in Bangladesh (see Table2). The similar results of the BCS 2015-2016 and the TIB’s National Household Survey (2012 and 1015) suggest the validity of the BCS 2015-2016 survey and confirm the extent of the daily corruption situation in Bangladesh. Corruption prevails at every step in the daily lives of ordinary people and has significant effects.

Table 2: Effects of Corruption: Comparison between TIB and BCS 2015-2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Name</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>% Effects or Victim of Corruption</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh Citizens Survey (2015-2016)</td>
<td>302</td>
<td>69.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TIB Household Survey 2015</td>
<td>15206</td>
<td>67.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TIB Household Survey 2012</td>
<td>7906</td>
<td>63.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: BCS 2015-2016, TIB’s National Household Survey 2015 and 2012. Apart from financial loss, cultural causes of corruption have significant impact over the daily life of Bangladeshi citizens. These impacts are costly and destroy the social structure and social bonding. People now accept petty corruption to get services because they do not have any other alternatives. People will try to find the easiest way to solve their problems. In many cases, people who refuse to pay bribes face harassment, lack of cooperation and extra time taken to provide services. This causes severe mental pressure for people who want, for example, to get their pensions or endowments from the government. As one academic who was interviewed for this paper mentioned, an income tax official harassed him even though he had followed all the correct taxation steps. When his lawyer insisted, he prepares false documents to lessen his tax, he refused and went on paying the exact amount, following the code of conduct. He was harassed as he did not pay the expected bribe (IvAca15, 2015). Such behaviour from tax officials encourages ordinary people to follow illegal ways, which ultimately institutionalises corruption. One academic’s personal experience indicates this problem:

In my apartment building, there is a generator, and I can use two lights there. However, I try to use three lights, and I asked the caretaker what I could do? He said you do not need to take permission. Just do it, because every flat member has taken illegal lines to their house. There are 32 families in that building, and none is following the rules here. Everyone is breaking the rules. When it comes
When everybody in an office is involved in corrupt practices, it becomes difficult for honest people to sustain in those organisations. In many cases, people either quit their job or engage in corrupt practices. People who are not involved in corruption sometimes are victimised (IvCSNGO10, 2015). In their social context, they may be seen as ‘foolish.’ Family members may also try to get them to adopt corrupt practices instead of ethical norms and values. This ultimately creates an ‘informal mechanism’ of solving problems with a high exchange of rents. Poor people who cannot pay are deprived of government services like education, health and jobs. In some cases, poor people may take advantage of ‘informal mechanisms’ through personal connections in patron-client relationships. On the other hand, people with money, networks and connections have every advantage in getting services from the government.

Denying merit (as shown in an example) when filling positions serving the nation also has a severe social impact. First, it creates an ineffective public sector that lacks the professionalism and skills to overcome crises. According to one interviewee, excessive corruption in the education and professional sectors creates ‘brainless’ professional bodies in Bangladesh. As a result, some Bangladesh bureaucrats are unable to negotiate effectively with foreign delegates and Bangladesh loses international opportunities to get ahead (IvAca15, 2015). At the same time, people who do not get jobs will likely consider corruption when next searching for employment. In the longer run, this will encourage students not to concentrate on their studies and ethical practice as they see policymakers fail to practice principles, norms and rules. Thus, the next generation is likely to become involved in corruption and illegality.

Finally, and more significantly key members of iron triangles through patrimonial networks are also able to cooperate in circumventing new integrity measures. One good example in Bangladesh concerned the Pre-shipment Inspection (PSI) of imported goods, introduced by the government in 2000 to help the National Board of Revenue (NBR) generate revenue by minimising corruption in the customs service and to reduce the red tape for importers clearing goods. The decision was welcomed by many in the business community, because of the apparent virtues of the system, which included transparency.

Similar arrangements had worked well in other countries. However, this good initiative failed due to a nexus of some businessperson, politicians, tax officials and PSI staff. They arranged fraudulent imports using false declarations, under- and over-invoicing, fake inspections and incorrect certification of consignments. For example, new Rolls Royces without doors were designated as non-usable vehicles to avoid heavy taxes. The door arrived in separate containers, and later the complete cars were sold in fancy showroom. Heavy duty sophisticated photocopiers were listed as tax-free personal computers, B&H cigarettes as tennis balls, Hummer SUV vehicles were recorded at half their value, and so on. The PSI companies received their licences due to political linkages and created a nexus with bureaucrats and politicians to oversee and manage the whole process. In 2006, the PSI system was abolished by the government when the NBR advised it of the huge losses of revenue (Haque, 2013).

VIII. CONCLUSION

The paper provided great detail on the cultural causes of corruption in Bangladesh. The argument of this paper shows that people in networks of patron-client relations, religion, illiteracy, the wrong message in education can make a difference in corruption. Whether corruption is petty or grand, individual or collective, most of the population is involved in different parts of a corruption chain through cultural means. There is hardly any room for people to escape from it. It has now become a tradition that people who have money will get nominations for election, be invited to social programs as the chief guests, and so on. Corrupt people are culturally adopted as they spend money on people. The top corrupt person in an area, for example, will be the most significant donor for building a local mosque and thus corruption gets legitimacy (IvAca15, 2015).

Bangladeshi people are willingly or unwillingly playing a ‘dual role’, as they do not like corruption and think that corruption is hurting them. At the same time, they are involved in corruption when they need to do so. There is always a demand for corruption in society, and people want to be a part of corrupt networks because they produce results. The findings of this paper suggest that people hate corrupt people and want to escape from the corrupt system, but cultural factors deny them the opportunity to get out of the system. In a poverty prone country, people always look for a chance and thus the patron-client network persists. It has been shown that this corruption not only creates economic problems for people but it also creates social issues and it undermines national pride in Bangladesh.

REFERENCES


APPENDICES

Elite Interviewee Codes (Anonymized)

Interviews of this study were conducted under the University of Sydney Project No 2015/577 which was approval by the Human Research Ethics Committee on 19 August 2015. In compliance with the University of Sydney’s code of practice on research ethics, I agreed that any information that was obtained in connection with this study through interviews and that could be identified with interviewees would remain confidential and would be disclosed only with the permission of interviewees, except as required by law. With the permission of interviewees, I only discussed and published the results of the interviews as part of this study. Moreover, to prevent any interviewee from any potential for harm, it was my aim that in this paper or any other publication, information would be provided in such a way that s/he cannot be identified. Therefore, to ensure confidentiality of interviewees, in this instance, no details have been given.

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<td>Mid-Range Official of Anti-Corruption Commission, GoB.</td>
<td>26.10.2015</td>
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<td>Former Cabinet Secretary, GOB.</td>
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<td>Prominent Civil Society Member, Organizer and Academics.</td>
<td>22.11.2015</td>
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<td>IvAca12</td>
<td>Corruption Expert and Professor of Political Science.</td>
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<td>Professor of Public Administration and Governance Expert.</td>
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