

Abstracts

Abstract of the Ph. D research study on Islamic Management and Its Present Applications in Bangladesh

Management plays an important role in the socio-economic development of a country. The concept of management has been developed in western economy in recent years. But Prophet Muhammad (SM) developed a pragmatic system of management (Islamic Management) in the seventh century in his Medanian first Islamic state and very successfully managed an ignorant society in a very systematic manner. His successors like Abu Bakr (RA), Umar (RA), Utman (RA) and Ali (RA) proved themselves as successful leaders, managers and politicians following the principles, rules, procedures, policies followed by Muhammad (SM). In this study an attempt is made to prove that the system of management of Islam or Islamic management is not inferior rather superior to the present system of management or traditional management. The research reported in this dissertation also presents an effort to find out the superiority of *Shuratic* management over the present system of participative

management, scientific management in Islam, over the Taylors scientific management. In theoretical study researcher also attempts to explain Planning in Islamic perspective, Organizing in Islamic perspective, Motivation in Islamic perspective, Controlling in Islamic perspective, Exemplary leadership in Islam, specially the Prophet Muhammad's (SM) leadership, leadership of Abu Bakr (RA) and leadership of Umar Ibnul Khattab (RA).

The sources of data used for analysis of different factors were collected from secondary and primary sources. Secondary sources were the Qur'an and *Hadith*, literature published in International Islamic University Malaysia, Islamic Foundation Bangladesh, Islamic university Library, Kushtia, Islami Bank

Research Academy, Islamic Economic Research Bureau, Bangladesh and statistical year book, Bangladesh and others. To collect data from field study two sets of questionnaire have been developed and randomly selected 25% of Imams from Chittagong city and 50% Imams from Kushtia town were interviewed with the help of relevant questionnaire. For the analysis of data collected from field study, programmes like SPSS have been used.

Executives of 25% of total registered Islamic NGO's were interviewed personally by the researcher for the purpose of collecting data with regard to functions, management and their achievement in establishing principles and procedures of Islamic management in Bangladesh. Islamic Foundation Bangladesh & Islami Bank Bangladesh Ltd. were also included in the study.

Major conclusions from the field study are the followings:

1. There is no development of concept of Islamic management or there is no development of the definition of Islamic management though so many writings have been published on Islamic management. Management thinkers have been trying to shed light on different aspects of management only.
2. Islamic history teaches us some lessons that can become the basis for managing different organizations. They have been extracted from the experiences of the early Muslims who had proven themselves to be successful managers and leaders of the Islamic state. They were much aware of the character building, proper time management, putting the right people in the right place, flexible management system, human relations, proper decision-making, controlling, justice and motivation.
3. Islam supports the functions of present system of management. Various verses from the Holy Qur'an and *Hadith* support this present system of management. Islam recognizes these functions of present system of management to apply in every sphere of life.
4. From the empirical study of different mosques of Chittagong city and Kushtia town it is observed that the Muslims of the study area have taken much initiative to establish mosque by spending lot of money for creating a favourable environment for

Islamic activities of the study area. Information received from the Imams of the mosques of the study area shows that the Motowallies intervene in the normal management affairs of the mosques. Financial mismanagement is also observed in the management of mosques by Motowallies.

5. It is evident from the study area of Chittagong, the people of the area get enough opportunities to get clear conception about Islam through the annual *Mahfils*.
6. It is also observed from the study of Chittagong that greater portion of *Imams* has got political participations--mostly in Islamic groups.
7. Religious sense in the study area of Kushtia town is poor. Mosques are very few and most of the mosques (83.33%) of Kushtia town have come into existence after 1950. The main reasons are the growth and departure of Hindu community in large number from this part (Bangladesh) of the then Pakistan, growth of Muslim population in this area, development of Islamic sense and responsibilities of Muslims of the study area.
8. There is not any provision of annual *Mahfil* in 73.33% of mosques in Kushtia.
9. Regarding programmes of the Mosques it is noticed that Muslims residing near different mosques of the study area (Kushtia) are found to prefer to join Tabligue activities due to the dedicated efforts of *Tabligue Jamat*.

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Abstract of the Ph.D research study on
NGOs and Empowerment: The Socio-political Contexts
of NGOs' Grassroots Empowerment in Bangladesh
at Graduate School of International Development (GSID)
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The objective of this research was to analyze and find out the effectiveness of NGOs' participatory approaches and strategies in mobilizing and empowering rural poor women in Bangladesh. In particular it examined the two largest NGOs in Bangladesh, namely BRAC and PROSHIKA. The evidence in this research indicates that, contrary to expectations, the strategy of group formation and group-based mobilization is not turning the grass roots groups into powerful institutions for social and political change, and is not empowering the rural women as expected. The central argument in this research is that the process of BRAC and PROSHIKA's samiti (group) formation suffers from internal contradictions, and therefore it does not appear to be effective in developing collective identity and collective empowerment of the poor women. The internal contradictions mainly concern organizational of the samitis. The NGOs expect the samitis to set out with the objectives of social and political change, but the samitis limit their objectives to the immediate opportunity to access credit from NGOs. The central argument is supported by two sub-arguments: first, due to different samiti objectives, internal samiti management becomes weak; and second, for the same reason the samitis do not take collective actions against social and political injustices. The findings from three aspects of the grass roots samitis, namely, samiti formation process (chapter four), internal samiti management (chapter five) and performance of the samitis in selected social and political actions (chapter five) substantiate the central argument in this research.

The theoretical background and justification of the study was, as discussed in the first chapter, based on the popular view that

participatory approaches to development are effective in improving the conditions of local people. According to this view, participatory approaches involve mobilization of the grassroots people and their active participation in the development process, which ultimately leads to their empowerment. NGOs are considered to be the most effective catalysts to facilitate mobilization, participation and empowerment. This research aimed to examine this view by analyzing the social and political mobilization and empowerment strategies of BRAC and PROSHIKA in Bangladesh. Bangladesh NGOs are considered pioneers in innovative strategies of grassroots empowerment, so those NGOs can be taken as good examples to illustrate the potential of NGOs in socio-political mobilization and empowerment of women.

In order to liberate women from their subordinate and dependent position, BRAC and PROSHIKA mobilize them against the prevailing socio-political constraints. In so doing, the main strategy of BRAC and PROSHIKA is to organize the poor women into samitis, conscientize them about socio-political realities, and encourage them to act collectively to fight against the social and political injustice. Such ways of samiti formation, conscientization and action are supposed to create collective identity, group solidarity and collective empowerment. To what extent is the strategy creating collective identity and collective empowerment as expected?

To examine the effectiveness of group approach and its potential to create collective identity and collective empowerment, chapter three of this study took up a case study of a major women's political mobilization incident led by PROSHIKA. The case study shed light on the question of mobilization, participation and empowerment. The incident was a woman's political demonstration and showdown against an Islamic community in the district city of Brahmanbaria in 1998. The Islamic community initially opposed a PROSHIKA - organized weeklong fair that involved women's participation. PROSHIKA's

reaction to the Islamic opposition led to the showdown, which turned into a bloody incident making it a national political crisis bearing many political crisis bearing many political implication. Eventually, the mobilization came to be seen as a great failure.

The consequences and implications of this incident offer practical insights into the problems associated with grassroots mobilization and participation. The case study indicated two basic points. First, PROSHIKA heavily influenced and interfered with the mobilization process, which contradicted its own purported participatory development approach. In the process of mobilization, PROSHIKA became a stronger force than the grass roots participants in the planning, initiating and managing of the mobilization process, and in making decisions about it. It took the lead role in interpreting the context, identifying the problems and offering solution according to its own ideological standpoints. Second, the grassroots samittis demonstrated organizational weaknesses, and their incapability to organize and mobilize themselves for social and political actions.

These two points led to the questioning of the effectiveness of grassroots institution building through samitti formation. The case study argued that PROSHIKA overpowered the grassroots samittis because the samittis were not strong enough to influence PROSHIKA's decisions. Why were the samittis not stronger? The chapter suggested that answers to this question should be found in the process of samitti formation, internal management of the samittis, and in their social and political activities.

Chapter four presented a detailed picture of the process of institution building through samitti formation. It described how the samitti formation of BRAC and PROSHIKA takes place at the grassroots level. It found that the samitti formation was almost exclusively handled by the

members themselves, and the NGO workers played no significant role in the process. Samiti formation reflected a true participatory process involving negotiation, compromise and consensus building among the members. The members went through different phases of negotiation at different levels. At the personal level, they were greatly encouraged to form or join a samiti taking into consideration the opportunity to access credit, but at the family level the husbands or elderly *murubbis* exerted their power and influence over the decisions of the potential members. However, through persuasive dialogue the members succeeded in achieving consent at the family level, which was again prompted by the economic benefits, negotiation for samiti formation became further complicated at the neighbourhood level when neighbours came together to form a samiti. Informal relation of trust, reciprocity and obligations led them' to form samitis according to their own preferences and interests that remained hidden from the knowledge of the NGO workers.

Analysis in the chapter illustrated that samiti formation at the grassroots level occurred through a process of social interface where the members made offstage negotiations among themselves about the objectives and activities of the samitis. The NGOs expect that the grass roots conditions that perpetuate their disempowerment. But the offstage negotiation in the process of samiti formation created informal understanding among the members that they were concerned mainly with issues of immediate economic interests, and were not interested in social and political action. The NGO workers remained almost detached from the process of offstage negotiation, and therefore the members enjoyed liberty to set their samiti objectives according to their own negotiated terms and preferences. This produced a gap between the NGOs' expectations regarding the grassroots samitis, and the objectives of the samitis negotiated offstage. This led to

the question as to what extent the grassroots samitis had been able to create collective solidarity and empowerment.

Chapter Five examined selected activities of the grass roots samitis in order to see how they meet the NGO objectives of collective solidarity building and creation of collective empowerment. This was done by looking at two sets of indicators. These are internal organizational management, and performance of the samitis in selected social and political activities.

The four management indicators in the chapter found that informal ways of samiti formation had direct impacts on organizational management in terms of maintaining official samiti requirements, formalities and discipline. The samitis were not formed exclusively by the officially targeted very poor and landless women and this lack of homogeneity was an obstacle to the development of group consciousness. Further, the samitis were supposed to convene weekly meetings, but meetings were not held at stipulated times, the members did not attend the meetings on time, and they displayed apathy towards attending meetings at all.

Furthermore, the samitis were supposed to follow official codes of conduct such as roll call, sitting in rows and collective recitation of samiti principles. However, the data in chapter five found that the meetings were held in an informal way that prevented the members from coming into direct contact with each other in an official forum. In most of the samiti meetings those official codes of conduct were not followed. The NGO workers paid little attention to the matter, and the members remained under only loose obligation to follow internal discipline of the samitis. A clear linkage was detected between this apathy towards proper organizational management and the ways the samitis were formed through offstage negotiation, as discussed in chapter five.

Chapter five also showed that the samiti performance in seven selected social and political activities was poor. In terms of acquiring basic literacy the BRAC members enjoyed no organizational facilities, so they depended on other members to learn just how to write their names in order to receive loans. The HRLE program of BRAC does not offer courses on reading and writing, so the members remained weak in basic literacy. The curriculum of PROSHIKA adult schools was found to be more effective, but still fell short of providing enough literacy training in a short period of time.

Regarding awareness of equal rights of men and women, the chapter found that the members in fact maintained a different concept of equality than the NGO vision. They still found the gender division of labour acceptable to them in the context of the rural society. However, they hoped to enjoy greater opportunities to engage in income earning activities.

The members showed particularly poor performance in the most important issues such as marriage, divorce, dowry and polygamy. The members found that child marriage, arbitrary divorce, dowry demand in marriage and polygamy were influenced by the circumstances of the socially risky, as it might create misunderstanding among them and enmity with neighbours. The members generally maintained a positive outlook about avoiding dowry, but practical consideration of economic benefit and social security of their daughters made them ignore the legal aspects of such practices. The chapter also found that the members had not become fully able to avoid dependency on moneylenders.

In other social and political activities such as participation in *shalish*, voting and running for election, the evidence in the chapter showed almost no capability among the members. They did not participate in *shalish* processes or run in local election. They stated that political issues were contested on grounds of money, influence, muscle power and violence. The evidence found very few indications of collective efforts to protest social and political injustices.

The evidence in chapter five suggests a number of points. First, collective identity and collectivity appear to be limited only to the sense of 'belongingness' to a samiti. Second, economic concerns take precedence over social action and social change. Third, the members tend to individualize social and political issues instead of making them collective. In social and political actions, the members tend to separate between learning legal knowledge about marriage, divorce, dowry and political rights, and individual practice of it, owing to the pressure of existing socio-political conventions. So finally, the evidence in this study shows that the grassroots samitis are not becoming powerful institutions for social and political change.

The implication of this study for BRAC and PROSHIKA as well as other NGOs in Bangladesh is that they need to be cautious about the objective of empowerment and re-evaluate group-based strategies so that the groups are formed in accordance with the state objectives of empowerment. The general replicability of the findings of this study to NGOs working in other countries might be considered to the extent of group formation processes as long as the NGOs follow a group-based strategy of grassroots empowerment. However, the local socio-political contexts vary from country to country. Therefore, generalization of the findings of this study for NGOs in other countries should be taken with caution, because the research methodology hinges importantly upon the specificity of the local contexts.

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