

Ala Uddin^{*}

Cognition, Recognition, and Prosecution of the 1971 Genocide in Bangladesh

Introduction

Since the partition of 1947, the government of Pakistan continued systematic measures to suppress the Bangali's movements. At the critical stage of the Bangali struggle, on March 25, 1971, the Pakistan army committed a premeditated massacre against the unarmed Bangali civilians in Bangladesh (East Pakistan), mainly in Dhaka ("Operation Searchlight"), which eventually evolved as a catalyst for the emergence of a separate country from Pakistan. On the one hand, it was the barbaric manifestation of the crimes against humanity; on the other hand, it was one of the stimuli for the Bangalis to jump into the Liberation War (March 26—December 16, 1971). The Pakistani forces killed three million Bangalis in this war, in which about 200,000 women were raped and sexually abused (Hossain & Mohsin, 2018; Bose, 2011). They also carried out a brutal attack on the Bangali intellectuals at the end of the war on December 14, 1971. Nevertheless, given the all-out struggle for survival, the Bangalis won the bloody war. But, the sacrifices behind the victory, the blood of three million martyrs, and the misery of 200,000 women have already faded in the joy of the victory due mainly to the lack of global recognition of this brutal genocide. This paper offers an insight

into this crucial aspect compared with other contemporary genocides.

Although the international organizations have recognized such pogroms as genocide (e.g., Rwanda genocide, Rohingya genocide), perpetrated in other parts of the world, the 1971 genocide is yet to be recognized. The international bodies, including the UN, have recognized the atrocities against the Rohingyas as genocide. They consistently have praised Bangladesh for sheltering the Rohingyas, while their position on the 1971 genocide is not reasonable. Apart from the international organizations, the government of Bangladesh is not as vocal in demanding international recognition of the genocide as it should be. While indifferent to their own genocide, Bangladesh provides all necessary assistance in recognizing and prosecuting the Rohingya genocide. In 2017, forty-seven years after the 1971 massacre, and two years after the UN declaration of International Genocide Day (December 9), Bangladesh declared March 25 as Genocide Day in Bangladesh. So far, however, there has been no adequate pressure for the recognition globally.

This paper shows that the Pakistani atrocities against the Bangalis are undoubtedly a genocide, as exemplified by the UN Genocide Convention (Article II, 1948), major theoretical orientations including the widely recognized genocide paradigm developed by Gregory Stanton (1996). Although a single definition of genocide has not yet been developed, the UN definition of genocide based on the crimes has been widely recognized. After this introduction, the theoretical context of genocide will be discussed and the atrocities of 1971 will be examined align with these theoretical contexts. In addition to the Genocide Convention by the UN, contemporary theoretical considerations will be explored in the context of brutal crimes against humanity that took place in 1971 in Bangladesh. This exploration will confirm the atrocities of 1971 as one of the brutal genocides in the world. Then the role of the

^{*} Professor, Department of Anthropology, Chittagong University

concerned organizations in domestic and international recognition of this genocide will be discussed. The reason why this genocide is not recognized internationally will be analyzed before the concluding remarks.

Understanding genocide

In general, genocide refers to the systematic extermination of a group of people – usually a racial or ethnic group- defined by the exterminators as undesirable. It is the deliberate killing of a large number of people from a particular nation or ethnic group with the aim of destroying that nation or group.

The UN Convention. As defined by UN Genocide Convention (Article II, 1948), genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

1. Killing members of the group;
2. Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
3. Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
4. Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
5. Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

Here it is important to mention that to be genocide, it is not required to destroy the whole nation at a time or commit all the crimes mentioned above.

Theoretical orientations: By reviewing the causes and consequences of genocide, the whole situation can be categorized into three major theoretical considerations: (i)

Fraction and grievance; (ii) National crises and sovereignty; and, (iii) Political power and ideology.

Genocide paradigm: Besides the Genocide Convention's characteristics, and major theoretical considerations, Gregory Stanton (in 1996) has formulated ten operational stages of genocide where each stage reinforces the others. The stages are: classification, symbolization, discrimination, dehumanization, organization, polarization, preparation, persecution, extermination, and denial. The first seven stages are early warning of genocide, while the last one is the white lie or denial of any genocidal crimes whatsoever. The first stages precede later stages but continue to operate throughout the genocidal process.

Examining the 1971 atrocities

During the difficult time in March 1971 when the streets of Dhaka came into being restless, under the direction of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the Bangalis started preparing for the freedom of struggle with 'whatever they had'. Meanwhile, on the night of March 25, the Pakistan army carried out a pre-planned brutal attack in many parts of the country, mainly in Dhaka, killing more than 50,000 unarmed Bangalis. Immediately, the war of independence started on March 26 with the declaration of independence by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

The war continued for nine months : March 26- December 16, 1971. In the war, millions of Bangalis who were largely inexperienced, unprepared, and without military strength were martyred, and more than two lakh women and girls were sexually abused. Although the Bangalis did not do very well against the heavily equipped Pakistani militias in the first two months, soon they reorganized in May and continued the all-out

struggle. Neighboring India's help is undeniable in this effort. In the end of the war, Bangladesh gained independence at the cost of the lives of three million martyrs and sacrifices of more than 200,000 women and million others' struggle and sufferings. Of these, many Bangali women were forced to become pregnant as a result of rape and gang rape; eventually, many of them had to give birth to 'war children'. The Pakistani forces tried to destroy the Bangali nation through rape. They even raped women in front of other family members failing religion or humanity.

The Pakistani forces and their local accomplices detained Bangali men and youths in several camps and indiscriminately tortured them. Many Bangalis were killed or physically injured permanently. The Pakistani forces burned down hundreds of bazaars, houses and villages. They also massively embezzled the wealth (cash, gold, silver, cows, goats, etc.) of the Bangalis, and forced them to leave their homes and hearths. They also killed Bangali intellectuals on 14 December realizing their obvious defeat. Furthermore, approximately 10 million Bangalis were forced to seek refuge in neighboring India.

Thus, the genocide was carried out through a systematic campaign where millions of Bangalis were killed, including young children and the elderly. More than two million females were raped and sexually abused; millions of Bangalis were physically and mentally retarded; one crore Bangalis were deported; countless children lost their parents (most of them were killed), and many raped women had to give birth to war-babies. Many Hindus (especially women) were forcibly converted. What is more, the planned genocide that the Pakistani authorities started in the beginning of the Liberation War in late March ended with killing the nation's intellectuals and its best citizens in mid-December. When defeat was inevitable, the Pakistani forces did not shy away from their planned massacre. Instead, to make the Bangali nation incompetent, on December

14 (again at night), the Pakistani military junta and its local collaborators selectively killed the country's renowned teachers, literary writers, artists, journalists, and doctors. Thus as per their cruel plan, they killed Bangalis on March 25, murdered, raped, looted, tortured during the war, and knowing their obvious defeat, they ended the war by selectively killing the Bangali intellectuals.

Therefore, it can be evidently claim that the atrocities penetrated by Pakistani forces against the Bangali as defined by the existing theoretical orientations including the UN definition (Article 2, 1948) are undoubtedly one the most heinous genocides known. The Convention mentions five main features: (1) killing members of the group; (2) severe bodily or mental harms; (3) physical destruction; (4) imposing measures to prevent births; and, (5) forcibly transferring children to another group (see, Hinton, 2002). A crime can be identified as genocide if any one of these five elements is present. Numerical figures are not the main consideration. Yet even considering numbers alone, the 1971 is major on the global scene. Although births were not directly interrupted by the 1971 genocide, the anarchy perpetuated across the country was of course highly unsafe for pregnant mothers and small children. Moreover, many pregnant women were sexually abused, and countless children were brutally murdered. In addition to all the elements delineated in the 1948 Convention, the brutality of 1971 was accompanied by the brutal sexual abuse of more than 200,000 women and girls. Rape was used as a weapon by pro-Pakistan extremists. They have also forcibly converted many non-Muslims (Rehman, 2012; Mookherjee, 2015). The killing of intellectuals and other potential governing citizens was mentioned above (Uddin, 2021; Uddin, 2015). All these atrocities prove one of the most heinous genocides in the history of Pakistani atrocities in 1971. Clearly, 1971 was one of the ultimate crimes against humanity we know

of, both in numerical terms and in the amount of horrific suffering involved. Its denial is nothing less than mocking the history. That is to say, the 1971 atrocities proved to be genocide through the extreme presence of all kinds of crimes mentioned in the UN Genocide Convention (e.g., killing, torture, physical destruction, rape, forced pregnancy, etc.).

Apart from the UN convention, as per the widely known genocide paradigm developed by Gregory Stanton (in 1996), the atrocities committed in 1971 by the Pakistani forces against the Bangali is inevitably a genocide. Let's look into the different stages of genocide operations.

1. The first stage is *classification*, according to which people are divided into 'us' and 'them.' During the Liberation War, the Pakistani rulers were considered them as 'us' and the Bangalis as 'them'. This distinction was a fallout of the partition of India and has been maintained since 1947. Despite their ill-treatment, West Pakistanis used to blame the Bangalis for the breakdown of Pakistan within 25 years of the partition. It was clearly mentioned in Yahya Khan's radio speech at the beginning of the Liberation War. "It is the duty of the Pakistan Armed Forces to ensure the integrity, solidarity and security of Pakistan. I have ordered them to discharge their duty and fully restore the authority of Government . . . I appeal to my countrymen to appreciate the gravity of the situation for which the blame rests entirely on the anti- Pakistan and secessionist elements" (Pakistan Affairs, 1971).

2. The second stage is *symbolization*. Due to hatred, the Pakistani rulers used symbols vis-à-vis Bangalis like: "not pure muslims", "lowly born people", "second class citizen", and "treason". Pakistanis knew or distinguished Bangali Muslims and Hindus by their clothing (*Panjabi* or *dhoti* and *sari*). As the Bangalis were also physically different from the Pakistanis, short

in shape and mostly brown, or blackish, the Pakistani forces easily identified and symbolized them as enemy of the state.

3. *Discrimination* of the Pakistani government against the East Pakistanis was very evident in the language movement, the floods of 1970, the disregard to election results in 1970, and the establishment and prosperity of West Pakistan's industrial mills with East wing's money.

4. The fourth stage is *dehumanization*, which means that one group denies that the other group may be considered human. In February 1971, Yahya Khan was reported to have stated: "Kill three million of them, and the rest will eat out of our hands." General Niazi considered Bangladesh as a "low lying land of low lying people." Banglar Kasai General Tikka Khan, who was the architect of Operation Searchlight declared on March 27: "I will reduce this majority to a minority" (Ouassini & Ouassini, 2019).

5. *Organization* is the fifth stage which means that genocides are always organized. Such was the case with the 1971 atrocities. The Pakistani forces was organized from the beginning to suppress all forms of movements of the Bangalis.

6. *Polarization* refers to the broadcasting of polarizing propaganda. During the Liberation War, the Pakistani propaganda was that all Muslims in Bangladesh had turned into Hindus and the Liberation War was provoked by India. They also committed mass rapes as part of the campaign to populate Bangladesh with a new race of 'Pure Muslims' and to dilute, weaken and destroy Bangali nationalism.

7. *Preparation* is the seventh stage, according to which victims are identified and separated out because of their ethnic or religious identity. This was meticulously followed in 1971. The atrocities that took place in Dhaka city on March 25, the formation of Al-Badar forces, the enlistment and killing of freedom fighters, the torture of Hindus, the sexual torture of

women, the killing of intellectuals just before their defeat, etc., prove that the Pakistani forces took all possible preparation to destroy the Bangali nation.

8. *Persecution* refers to the systematic abuse, hostility, and mistreatment of group of people by a dominant or powerful group, caused explicitly by race, ethnicity, political or religious beliefs. Throughout the Pakistani rule (1947-1971) these elements were extremely evident against the Bangalis.

9. The ninth stage is *extermination*. The extent and influence of the perpetrators of the 1971 genocide proved to be the key to the Bangalis extermination. On March 25, 1971, just before the Pakistani dictator General Ayub Khan left Dhaka, he ordered a full-scale military attack on East Pakistani citizens. It was designed to eradicate Bangali nationalism and restore West Pakistan's dominance over East Pakistan.

10. The last stage is *denial*. The primary responsibility for the 1971 genocide lies with the Pakistani military forces. Their local associates were also responsible for this heinous crime. To date, however, Pakistan has categorically denied their crime against humanity or genocide. Neither Pakistani miscreants nor their accomplices (such as Jamati Islami) have conformed responsibility for the atrocities.

Apart from this, the existing major theoretical orientations also verify the 1971 atrocities as genocide through ethnoreligious divisions, national crises, and political ideologies or powers.

(1) *Fraction and grievance*: Genocide is predicted by extreme ethno-religious divisions in Pakistan where the level of grievances between groups reaches such a level that the group (i.e., Pakistan) holding state power treats 'others' (i.e., Bangali) inhumanely.

(2) *National crises and sovereignty*: Catastrophic events involving the masses like economic deprivation,

revolution, or any epidemic can lead to genocide or similar situation. Economic deprivation in Bangladesh (East Pakistan) was inextricably linked with the right of Bangalis to self-determination (Van Schendel, 2009, p. 63).

(3) *Political power and ideology*: According to its exponent Rummel, "The more power a government has, the more it can act arbitrarily according to the whims and desires of the elite, and the more it will make war on others and murder its foreign and domestic subjects". In this context, economically, politically and militarily, the Pakistanis had been at the center of power, while the Bangalis were marginal from very beginning. Economic deprivation in Bangladesh (East Pakistan) was inextricably linked with the right of Bangalis to self-determination (Van Schendel, 2009, p. 63).

Role of relevant organizations

The preceding discussion suggests that the 1971 atrocities must be genocide in all respects in terms of numbers, dimensions or atrocities. Its prevalence is more extreme than any recent genocide. While all the definitions or theoretical considerations prove the atrocities of 1971 to be genocide, to date this most barbaric program has not been recognized internationally. However, international organizations have recognized such atrocities as genocide (e.g., Rwanda genocide, Rohingya genocide). In the recent genocide, the atrocities against the Rohingya have been recognized by the international community, including the United Nations, as genocide. They have praised Bangladesh for providing shelter to the Rohingya, but their position on the 1971 genocide is not reasonable.

Based on historical and authentic information, it can be claimed that the atrocities waged against the Bangalis in 1971 were more

acute than the Rohingya genocide committed in 2017. The whole world, including the UN, has praised Bangladesh for providing shelter and assistance to Rohingya victims of the genocide in Myanmar. However, their concern regarding the 1971 genocide in Bangladesh is paradoxically reluctant.

Nonetheless, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu clarified his position on the atrocities of 1971 in early 1972, and took required steps in this regard. The first statement made by Bangabandhu in the independent country on January 10, 1972 also revealed this:

“Today, in percentage terms, I am reliably informed, nearly 30 lakh people have been killed in Bengal. In the Second World War and also in the First World War, such a number of people, such a number of common citizens did not die, were not martyred, which happened in my 7-crore people’s Bangladesh.”

Extremely hurt by this heinous massacre, Bangabandhu started the trial of crimes against humanity or war criminals immediately after the independence. He also passed the Collaborators Act (1972) and the International Crime Act of 1973, which barred any associates from re-entering Bangladesh. About 37,000 associates were arrested. 26,000 people were pardoned and released on amnesty because no serious criminal charges had been filed against them (Momen, 2008). However, cases have been completed against about 800 people and they have been sentenced to imprisonment. Another 11,000 were in jail and their trials are ongoing. In addition, those who were involved in crimes against humanity and anti-Bangladesh have been deprived of Bangladesh nationality. However, he could not complete the trial of these criminals as he was brutally killed in August 1975 by the misguided military youths.

Given the ideological shifts during the post-75 governments, the Liberation War of 1971 and the genocide did not get weight to them. After the government led by Bangabandhu’s daughter Sheikh Hasina came to power in 1996, the issue of genocide came to the fore again. Her government restored the 1972 constitution in 2011, and ensured the trial of notable criminals involved in the 1971 crimes against humanity, who were also involved in the 1971 genocide. While Bangabandhu’s party, the Awami League is in power, 47 years after the 1971 genocide and two years after the United Nations declaration of the International Day of Genocide (December 9), Bangladesh declared March 25 as the Day of Genocide in 2017. Nevertheless, so far, Bangladesh has not been able to create enough pressure for global recognition. Half a century has already passed. Now it is needed to take immediate steps to recognize the 1971 genocide.

Like government authorities, non-governmental organizations have not been very vocal in recognizing and prosecuting the 1971 genocide. Exceptionally, though, the Nirmul Committee has been raised the issue since the early 1990s (Tithi, 2021; Uddin, 2021). Liberation War Museum and Genocide Archive are also advocating for the recognition. There are over 150 universities in Bangladesh; however, only Dhaka University has a center for genocide (running during the last decade).

The result of non-trial or social injustice



'Don't you recognize me, Sir? You were my commander; I was a freedom fighter.' This cartoon published in 1981 criticized the political elite's treatment of those who had risked their lives for the nation's independence in 1971. (Source: van Schendel, 2009, p. 216)

Due to the lack of recognition and lack of justice, offenders give birth to crimes in society. In effect, instability prevails in the society. On the other hand, most of the general freedom fighters remained oppressed in the society. Therefore, recognition of genocide is necessary not only to honor the victims or respect the history, but also to prevent such unexpected situation in society.

Campaign for justice



Nirmul Committee poster announcing the people's trial of Golam Azam on 26 march 1992.

Concerning issues

Despite the fact that there is no justification for not being recognized the genocide internationally, apart from the preparation or required steps from Bangladesh, several technical reasons involving local and global issues are considered that should be overcome through appropriate measures.

(1) East Pakistan/Bangladesh identity crisis: Although the number and scale of brutality in 1971 were widespread, the international community was somewhat hesitant and indifferent as no specific country claimed it as genocide, while Bangladesh was not recognized then as an independent country. The issue was unresolved for a long time, whether it was genocide against East Pakistanis, Bangladeshis, or the Bangali nation, and which country can legitimately claim for it. Moreover, the importance and significance of the war/crime in the post-1975 regime was deliberately ignored.

(2) Victory of the victims: The victims of the genocide were Bangalis who won the war and gained independence in the final stage of the war. In such a situation, the winners were so engrossed in the victory of complacency that the demand for recognition of genocide or the issue of victims lost its apparent significance. The winners could not focus on any issue other than victory and nation building.

(3) Minority-majority dilemma: When it comes to recognizing or deliberately eradicating an atrocity as genocide, the victims are usually minority in terms of ethnicity or identity and is weaker on the question of political leadership. But in the case of Bangladesh, it was not true. On the contrary, despite being in the majority (ethnically and religiously), and despite being politically strong with peoples' mandate in elections, the Bangalis were exploited by West Pakistan for 23 years after 1947 and brutally massacred in 1971.

(4) Muslim-Muslim war: From the religious perspective, war or genocide usually occurs between people of different religions, such as the Rohingya genocide or the Holocaust. But the atrocities that took place in 1971 were against the Bangladeshi Muslims, while the Pakistani Muslims did not consider the Bangali Muslims as real Muslims. According to Pakistanis, the Islam of Bangali Muslims was tainted by Hinduism and Indian culture. As a result, the atrocities of 1971 did not get much attention or publicity from religious point of view, especially to the Middle Eastern Muslim countries.

(5) Lack of research on genocide: There is not enough research on genocide in Bangladesh; also, there is no concrete data on the victims and the crimes including the killing fields. Therefore, Bangladesh's position remains weak in presenting the necessary information to the relevant international organizations, which is one of the major reasons behind the indifferent position of the international organizations in recognition of the 1971 genocide.

The scope of research and seminars on this issue should be facilitated at home and abroad.

(6) Political upheaval and ideological inconsistencies: Political upheaval and ideological inconsistencies are also responsible for ensuring recognition and justice for the 1971 genocide. Due to the post-'75 political unrest, the spirit of the Liberation War, the movement, and the freedom fighters' sacrifices were not cherished by the government and for the next three decades. Moreover, different political orientations based on religion have been practiced for decades in the post-Mujib regimes. As a result, Bangladesh's position has not been solidified until recently, when it came to the issue of national observance and international recognition of the 1971 atrocities as genocide.

(7) Non-observance of the day: This is identified as a unfortunate cause. The rationale for claiming it in the global arena has been very weak as it was not observed in the country, where it was committed. Suppose the day is not marked as a genocide day commemorating the victims in a country that achieved independence through the blood of three million martyrs and more than 200,000 women's abuses. In that case, its recognition and demand for justice are really unreasonable. However, since 2017, Bangladesh officially recognized March 25 as Genocide Day. What is needed now is for the country to observe the day with solemnity and effectively demand recognition and justice in the international arena. It is noteworthy to mention that as a result of the observance of the 21st February 1952 as *Shahid Dibas* in Bangladesh, it has been recognized and celebrated as International Mother Language Day since 1999.

(8) Independence of Bangladesh vs Indo-Pakistani war: Another reason for non-recognition of the genocide was the involvement of India (For Bangladesh and against Pakistan)), Pakistan's arch-enemy, in the Bangalis' Liberation War, though it was vital for the Bangalis. Due to the involvement of India in the war in favor of Bangladesh and against the Pakistan, the war was immediately

known internationally as the Indo-Pakistani War. The war of independence of East Pakistan was carried out a new state called Bangladesh. But, since the state of Bangladesh was not born until December 16, the struggle for the liberation of Bangalis was a technical limitation or legal point of view, in claiming the battle for independence of Bangladesh or the atrocities of Pakistanis genocide in Bangladesh. However, it is the diplomatic failure and disrespect to the Bangali victims in the genocide. Moreover, defeat to India was more honorable for Pakistan than defeat to emerging Bangladesh. On the other hand, India had a lot of pride in defeating Pakistan rather than just helping Bangladesh in the war. Given the reasons, both countries (publicly/privately) often promoted Bangladesh's Liberation War as an Indo-Pakistani war deceiving history.

(9) Diplomatic indifference: According to many, the political will of the governments of Bangladesh, the political upheaval (1975-1996), and the diplomatic failure for not being recognize the 1971 massacre as a brutal genocide even in this half-century. The Nirmul Committee has been doing this advocacy for a long time. Diplomats in foreign missions need to be more attentive in this regard. Bangladeshi immigrants and diaspora community need to be involved in this effort. Well-founded demands for genocide should be raised through various conventions and seminars with the concerned organizations. To this end, government and non-government organizations have to work together with determination.

Discussion and conclusion

The atrocities committed by Pakistani forces against the Bangalis as defined by the existing theoretical orientations including the UN definition (Article 2, 1948) are undoubtedly one the most heinous genocides known. The convention mentions five major crimes, and any crime can be identified as genocide if any of these five elements is present in a pogrom. Numerical figures are not the main consideration. Yet even considering numbers alone,

the 1971 is major on the global scene. Although births were not directly interrupted by the 1971 genocide, the anarchy perpetuated across the country was of course highly unsafe for pregnant mothers and small children. Moreover, many pregnant women were sexually abused, and countless children were brutally murdered. In addition to all the elements delineated in the 1948 Convention, the brutality of 1971 was accompanied by the brutal sexual abuse of more than 200,000 women and girls. Rape was used as a weapon by pro-Pakistan extremists. They have also forcibly converted many non-Muslims (Rehman, 2012; Mookherjee, 2015). The killing of intellectuals and other potential governing citizens was mentioned above (Uddin, 2021; Uddin, 2015). All these atrocities prove one of the most heinous genocides in the history of Pakistani atrocities in 1971. Clearly, 1971 was one of the ultimate crimes against humanity we know of, both in numerical terms and in the amount of horrific suffering involved. Its denial is nothing less than mocking history.

In addition to the UN Convention on Genocide, if we follow the ten stages of genocide as described by the famous genocide expert Gregory Stanton (1996), again we see that Pakistani atrocities against Bangalis very brutal and horrendous indeed (Stanton, 1996; Uddin, 2021). Through classification, the Pakistani rulers divided the citizenry between 'us' (Pakistani) and 'they' (Bangalis as anti-Pakistani). Symbolization is the visual manifestation of hatred against Bangalis. Pakistani rulers denied Bangalis' rights (discrimination); Bangalis were treated with no human rights or physical dignity. Pakistani soldiers were trained to carry out the destruction of Bangalis (organization), while propaganda was spread by hate groups (polarization). Pakistani forces planned the genocide (preparation). These seven stages all warn of genocide. In the eight stage Bangalis were segregated so that atrocities could be carried (persecution). In the ninth stage (extermination) Pakistani forces killed Bangalis in a

deliberate and systematic campaign of brutality. The last stage involves denial – for the Pakistan government spectacularly denied the whole process of genocide. Thus through Stanton's stages we see clear evidence of Pakistani atrocities against Bangalis (Uddin, 2021). Moreover, the existing theoretical orientations (e.g., fraction, national crisis, and power) fit with life-experiences of the Bangalis indicating the systematic persecutions perpetrated by the Pakistanis as genocide.

Concluding remarks

The significance of recognizing genocide both internationally and domestically is to honor victims with dignity and to keep the present world free from such crimes against humanity. If the victims are not given due respect and proper recognition, then the birth and existence of the nation itself is disrespected. It is not wise to be content merely with the victory in the Liberation War. Recognition of genocide and its justice are crucial for the spirit and authentic history of the Liberation War as they must be presented to future generations. Just relying on memory is not enough. Memory does not last long, it may become distorted over time, even lost. Therefore, it is equally important to rejoice in the victory of the war of liberation or freedom and ensure justice to history. There is no alternative to recognizing and prosecuting genocide in order to sustain history, respect victims of atrocities, and prevent future recurrences of such crimes. If justice is not ensured, the opportunity to create various criminal activities, including oppression of minorities, remains open.

If the 1971 genocide remains unrecognized globally and the killers are not brought to justice, the history of the Liberation War is likely to be shattered. The real freedom fighters may be marginalized in society as the anti-war cliques are more organized and consolidated. This is neither impossible nor new in Bangladesh. This trend is also observed in Bangladesh due to the failure to reach an accepted position on many issues of the Liberation War, including non-recognition of genocide, non-trial

of all identified killers, and lack of a valid list of freedom fighters and collaborators (*rajakar*) in the 1971 war. In order to prevent anti-war spirit, war criminals must be appropriately identified and brought to justice. The current government has already confirmed the punishment of a number of people involved in the 1971 crimes against humanity. It is very necessary to provide punishment for the rest of the criminals including the list of *razakar*. If the perpetrators of the genocide of 1971, including the occupation forces of Pakistan, are not brought to justice, crime will increase in the society and innocent people will suffer. The words of history and justice will cry.

There, the paper argues that it is not wise to be complacent in the victory of the Liberation War. In order to uphold the spirit and factual history of the war to future generations, the genocide requires international recognition and justice. It must be remembered that memory does not last long; it may become distorted over time (Mookherjee, 2006). Furthermore, recognition of the genocide is not just a matter of commemorating the victims but also creating a global responsibility to prevent such crimes in the future. This year Bangladesh observes 50 years of its independence, and victory, while half a century has been spent without international recognition of the 1971 genocide. Given that so much time has already passed reluctantly, I urge the concerned bodies to immediately take effective steps immediately to recognize and prosecute the 'yet-to-be-recognized' and 'going-to-be-forgotten' genocide.

References

Askari, Rashid (February 7, 2021). Bangabandhu's January 10, 1972 speech in translation. *UNB*.

<https://unb.com.bd/category/Opinion/bangabandhus-january-10-1972-speech-in-translation/40793>

Daily Star. (December 12, 2021). 'Genocide Day Today: When ballots countered by bullets.' The Daily Star. <https://www.thedailystar.net/frontpage/when-ballots-countered-bullets-1381117>

Daily Star. (December 9, 2015). 'Pakistan Lying, Still: Pakistanis tried to keep foreign journos away.' The Daily Star. <https://www.thedailystar.net/frontpage/pakistanis-tried-keep-foreign-journos-away-184396>

Dhaka Tribune. (March 11, 2017). Parliament declares March 25 Genocide Day. <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/2017/03/11/march-25-declared-genocide-day>

Hinton, A. L. (2002). Introduction: Genocide and Anthropology. In Hinton, A. L. (ed.), *Genocide: An Anthropological Reader* (pp. 1-23). Blackwell Publishers.

Momen, A. (March 19, 2008). 'War criminals of 1971: Time to take action.' *The Daily Star*. <https://www.thedailystar.net/news-detail-28326>

Mookherjee, N. (2015). *The Spectral Wound*. Duke University Press.

Mookherjee, N. (2006) "Muktir Gaan, the Raped Women and Migrant Identities of Bangladesh War". In: *Gender, Conflict and Migration*, Sage Publications, New Delhi, 71-96.

Ouassini, A. and Ouassini, N. (2019). "Kill 3 Million and the Rest Will Eat of Our Hands": Genocide, Rape, and the

Bangladeshi War of Liberation. In Jacob, F. (Ed.) *Genocide and Mass Violence in Asia: An Introductory Reader*. Walter de Gruyter GmbH.

<https://www.degruyter.com/document/doi/10.1515/9783110659054-003/html>

Pakistan Affairs. (January 15, 1971). 'Nation Goes to Poll 56 Million Ballots. Vol. XXIV, No. 1. Washington, D.C.

Rehman, J. L. (2012). *Rape as religious terrorism and genocide the 1971 war between East and West Pakistan*. Master Thesis. California State University, Long Beach. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing. 1522254.

https://media.proquest.com/media/hms/ORIG/2/T4DrI?_s=kjTqBxlH47RHQazmN9G6V7QCzmk%3D

Roy, S. (2001). 'Attacks on Hindus in Bangladesh Raise Fears of Talibanization.' *Asian Week*, Nov. 23 – Nov. 28, 2001 <https://home.iitk.ac.in/~hcverma/Article/Genocide%20of%20Hindus%20in%20banglasdesh.pdf>

Stanton, G. (1996). The Ten Stages of Genocide. *Genocide Watch*. <https://www.genocidewatch.com/tenstages>

Tithi, N. (December 15, 2021). Gano Adalat: The rallying cry of the masses for justice. <https://www.thedailystar.net/in-focus/gano-adalat-205765>

Uddin, A. (2015). 'Politics of Secularism and the State of Religious Pluralism in Bangladesh.' *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies* 38(3), 42-54

Uddin, A. (2021). 'Recognition and prosecution of the 1971 genocide in Bangladesh.' *Dhaka Courier* 38 (22), 30-33.

Uddin, A. (2021). 'Recognition and trial of the 1971 genocide against Bangalis.' *South Asia Democratic Forum*, 224, pp. 1-8. DOI: 10.48251/SADF.ISSN.2406-5617.C224

Van Schendel, W. (2009). *A History of Bangladesh*. Cambridge University Press.