Disaster and Crime in the Coastal Area of Bangladesh: Study on Police Activities

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ABSTRACT

Background: The coastal areas of Bangladesh are prone to multiple threats such as cyclones, storm surges and floods, as well as earthquakes, tsunamis, and above all, climate change. These types of disaster hamper human lives and community order. The local police force of Bangladesh has to take some seasonal actions controlling the human behavior in during and post disasters period in the coastal areas on Bangladesh.

Objective: The main focus of the study is to know how disasters and crimes are interrelated and what forms of crime are being done in the coastal areas of Bangladesh. The present study is conducted to know this involving the police force activities in the by taking the perception of the community people perceptions as well as the tentative suggestions by the mass people how to change the situations for a better milieu.

Methods and Tools: This was a mixed method study conducted among 385 study subjects residing in coastal areas of Bangladesh. Data were collected using a semi-structured interview schedule by maintaining a purposive sampling method through face-to-face interview sessions.

Results: Several 89.01% (male) and 82.15% (female) respondents of the coastal areas mentioned that they have to face tidal mostly in the terms of natural disaster. The study shows that 98.32% are committed to act of stealing (family goods, fish, trees, etc.), 59.20% committed to torture women and children, 86.37% captured the neighbors' goods and resources. Picture of crimes that were done by the local people in post-disaster in the coastal areas notably 89.36% involved in stealing and quarreling, 84.21% terrorism for money, 98.24% in the name of relief, 68.32% exchanged goods ill-legally, 42.52% sexual harassed and 58.64% ill-legal possession of land. Regarding police assistance, 26.35% respondents were helped to obey the laws, 36.95% harassed by the local police force, 53.24% faced bribe questions in the name of service, 58.03% no helped from the police force, 54.76% mentioned police didn't come to the disasters spot, 49.38% mentioned police helped to control the armed robbers, 65.96% happy to get the service from the village police force, 59.37% said police force avoided the demand of mass people.

Conclusion: This study concluded a thing that the local people of disaster affected coastal areas are committed to the act of stealing in most of the cases. They had to face tidal mostly in terms of natural disaster.

Keywords: Disaster; Crime; Coastal Areas; Police; Bangladesh

Introduction

The physical geography of Bangladesh's coastal areas is more diverse and dynamic as generally recognized. The coastal areas of Bangladesh are affected by natural disasters, land erosion and land subsidence, doing crime and recidivisms, etc. are the common picture of the coastal areas. Controlling the social and legal order for the betterment of society's people, the police force is engaged to maintain the situations that are occurred by the impact of disasters in the coastal areas. The coastal areas of Bangladesh are facing the terms of crime in a new form that makes hampered the normal livelihood pattern

of the disaster-prone community people. The police force of coastal areas is taking new forms of activities controlling crimes related to human behavior in order to make the social peace in the community level. When disasters strike communities, people largely pull together. In the wake of devastating events like earthquakes, big fires, or hurricanes, they look for ways to support one another, protect what remains, and re-establish a sense of normalcy [1]. A few people in disaster areas turn to anti-social activities, including crime. Uplifting cooperation follows community disasters, but so do looting; sexual assaults, acts of domestic violence, and fraud. Understanding these phenomena will aid the development of effective strategies to prevent antisocial actions when future disasters strike [2].

Researchers have learned that each major type of crime or anti-social behavior must be understood in its own terms. News reports often feature instances of looting in the wake of disasters that force many residents away from their homes and businesses. However, determining whether looting has occurred can be difficult. Physical damage caused by the disaster itself may give a false appearance that looting has happened [3]. Women coping with disasters may be forced into vulnerable situations, including when they try to find food and other necessities for their families or look for shelter or transportation out of a stricken area. All such endeavors can put women in contact with strangers, which increases their risk of being raped or assaulted. In addition, it is not uncommon for women in disruptive circumstances to be raped or sexually assaulted by people they know, even people with whom they have established relationships [2]. Indeed, many studies find that domestic violence increases exponentially in the wake of a community disaster. The present study is focused on the crimes in the coastal areas caused by disasters highlighting the police force activities taking the mass people perceptions as well as the stakeholder's opinions.

Methods

This study is perception-based opinion survey in nature and follows mixed method approach such as quantitative and qualitative. Quantitative method is used to investigate the functions of police in the disaster's situation in the coastal areas of Bangladesh taking interview by the inhabitants of selected coastal areas. On the other hand, qualitative method is used to know the inherent facts from the stakeholders (members of local police force, elected political leaders, community leaders, senior citizens, local doctors, teachers, journalists, women representatives, lawyers, GO body in locally, NGO workers/ human rights activist, social service activists, etc.) in order to cross the data making a proactive social policy changing the situations and to hope a crime free society in the coastal areas of Bangladesh. The coastal areas of Bangladesh are the research area, but considering the communication, police functions in the coastal areas, heavily disasters affected areas is counted as priority-based research areas for collecting data both qualitative and quantitative method. The native people segment of the coastal areas is the research population and

every one of them are considered as a unit of data analysis.

At the same time, getting the Hidden Actual Facts (HAF) in the coastal areas, some stakeholders in different professions are interviewed following a checklist. Purposive sampling technique was used for collecting samples from the population which was unknown to us in terms of actual figure. It is considered this sampling procedure because it is focuses on specific cases that are dramatic or very important. Now, because of an unknown population it is very important to determine representative sample size to conduct this study. Then, the required sample size is calculated as 385. The selected sample was interviewed following a semi-structured interview schedule by maintaining purposive sampling method through face-to-face interview sessions. Ten (10) KII (Key Informants Interview) were conducted gathering the stakeholders (identity of stakeholders is mentioned in Research Approach) in the selected coastal areas who are capable to define cause-effect relationships between disaster and crime in the coastal area.

Results

Table 1 shows the types of natural disaster in the coastal areas of study locations. Several 89.01% (male) and 82.15% (female) respondents of the coastal areas mentioned that they have to face tidal mostly in the terms of natural disaster. Heavy rainfall and flood (83.00%) and tornado (83.04%) are noticed by the male respondents of the study areas. On the other hand, the female respondent's response is varied from the male respondents. The female respondents raised that heavy rainfall and flood (73.02%), and tornado (79.7%) hit them mostly.

Table 1: Types of natural disaster in coastal areas of Bangladesh.

Types of Natural Disasters	Male Respondents (%)	Female Respondents (%)
Tornado	83.04	79.7
Earthquake	0.82	1.39
Tidal	89.01	82.15
Heavy rainfall & flood	83.00	73.02
Draught	0.38	0.00
Others(tide,water victimization*)	5.82	3.75

Note: *water victimization means the power groups of coastal areas use the water according to their wishes and against of the mass people benefit in some cases.

Table 2 presents the crimes committed by the local people during disasters in the disaster affected communities. About 98.32% are committed to act of stealing (family goods, fish, trees, etc.), 59.20% committed to torture women and children, 86.37% captured the neighbors' goods and resources, and 19.68% mentioned no noticeable crimes. The table indicates a thing that the local people of disaster affected coastal areas are committed to the act of stealing in

most of the cases. The stakeholders (members of local police force) of study area are mentioned that the local people are committed to non-serious crimes in the during-disaster that are related to lives and environment. The local police force members are said that due to insufficiency of livelihood essentials things, the local people are doing these types of behavior.

Table 2: Crimes committed by local people in the disaster affected community in during disaster.

Types of Crime	Percentage
Act of stealing (family goods, fish, trees, etc)	98.32
Women and children torture	59.20
Not noticeable crimes	19.68
Captured neighbors' goods and resources	86.37
Terrorism for collecting money ill-legally	68.95
Others	0.00

Table 3 shows that the assistance(s) are got from the police force in the period of during-disaster to save the affected people. The table mentions that 26.35% respondents are helped to obey the laws, 36.95% harassed by the local police force, 53.24% faced bribe questions in the name of service, 58.03% no helped from the police force, 54.76% mentioned police didn't come to the disasters spot, 49.38% mentioned police helped to control the armed robbers, 65.96% happy to get the service from the village police force, 59.37% said police force avoided the demand of mass people, 12.35% are not interested to provide any answer. Table 4 shows the picture of crimes that are done by the local people in post-disaster in the disaster affected coastal areas. The table mentions that 89.36% are involved in stealing and quarreling, 84.21% terrorism for money, 98.24% cheated and mismanaged in the name of relief, 68.32% exchanged goods ill-legally, 42.52% are sexual harassed, 58.64% are ill-legal possession of land, 23.86% claimed for early marriage, 8734% did nepotism in facilities distributions, 14.05% don't have any comments.

Table 3: Got assistance(s) from local police force in the period of during disaster.

Assistance Types	Percentage
Helped to obey the laws	26.35
Local police force harassed the affected people	36.95
Demanded bribe if anyone goes to get help	53.24
No helped from police force	58.03
Police forces didn't come the disaster spot	54.76
Police helped to control the armed robbers	49.38
Village police helped the affected people	65.96
Police avoided the affected people in the name of not related in routine duty	59.37
Others (don't know, not interested in comments, etc)	12.35

Table 4: Crimes committed by local people in post-disaster period.

Crimes Type	Percentage
Stealing and quarreling	89.36
Terrorism for money	84.21
Cheating and mismanagement in the name of relief	98.24
Exchange goods ill-legally	68.32
Sexual harassment	42.52
Ill-legal possession of land	58.64
Increase the rate of early marriage	23.86
Nepotism in facilities distributions	87.34
Others (don't know, etc)	14.05

Table 5 expresses the expecting assistance(s) from the police force after post-disaster. The respondents have to mention the views as like that 89.63% expect help for recovering having lost resources and persons, 98.67% want to be saved from torture and attacks, 68.03% claim help to load a GD, 62.38% expressed that don't go police station without any emergency, 98.02% need help to minimize the chaos. Table 6 is important in the sense of depreciations list in during-disaster in the disaster affected coastal areas. The table mentions that 97.85% respondents are damaged the houses, 49.62% are captured others land ill-legally, 87.37% damaged the crops, 86.35% missed the domestic animals. Table 7 notes the person who is mostly committed crimes in during-disaster. The table mentions that 86.03% of local people are committed crimes mostly, 13.97% respondents said that people out the local area have committed crimes. Table opines a statement that the crime(s) in the disaster affected coastal areas has mostly been performed by the local people.

Table 5: Expecting assistance(s) from police force after post-disaster.

Expecting Assistance(s)	Percentage
Help for recovering having lost resources and person(s)	89.63
Be saved from torture and attacks	98.67
Loading the GD (general diary)	68.03
Don't go without emergency problems	62.38
Need help to minimize the chaos	98.02

Table 6: Names of depreciation by crime(s) in the period of during disaster.

Names of Depreciation	Percentage
Damaged the houses(s)	97.85
Ill-legal possession of land	49.62
Damaged the crops	87.37
Missing the domestic animals	86.35

Table 7: Person(s) who are mostly committed crime(s) in during disaster.

Committed Crimes by Person(s)	Percentage
Local people	86.03
Person(s) out of local area	13.97
Others	0.00

The study area is observed by taking interviews of noted personalities who are worked/ lived there. The noted personalities referred that,

a)   Most of the people of disaster affected coastal areas are poor in all sites. It is not possible by them to fulfill their needs and demand in during and post disaster so that the local people have done some undesirable behaves. The noted person mentioned that unique proverb as like "necessity knows no law".

b)   The local people are satisfied if their demands and needs are fulfilled by the govt. and other agencies. The local people like that the local police force comes forward to help the affected people in the disaster period.

c)   The local police force has noted that in the duration of disaster everyone is busy to protect oneself. So that police force is busy to protect, at first, them and try to save their logistics support of profession secondly. The local people claim that police force is not professionalized according to serve the mass people as the profession commitment. Table 8 highlights the person(s) who are mostly being victimized in during-disaster. The table mentions that 4.82% male persons are being victimized, 51.23% female person being victimized, 24.30% children are hampered by the disasters, and 19.65% senior citizens are suffered by the disasters.

Table 8: Person(s) who are mostly being victimized in during-disaster.

Victimized Person(s)	Percentage
Male person	4 .82
Female person	51.23
Children	24.30
Senior citizens	19.65

Discussion

The study is conducted to know the relationship between disaster and crime in the coastal areas of Bangladesh. In the period of data collection procedure, some issues are observed in the coastal areas that interrelated in the livelihood pattern of coastal people. The people of coastal areas are facing the disaster and its impact from the long time. The coastal people are capable more than in the previous period because they are known how to face the disaster its related factors from the multi-dimensional institutions which are working the in the coastal areas. In some cases, the coastal people are annoyed to local police force due to their (police) late responses to combat the disaster-oriented crimes. On the other hand, the coastal people's perception are being changed day by day towards police force because of they (police) are trying to serve the local people in the durations of natural and man-made catastrophes. Bangladesh with a huge population is situated in a geographical position which is called disaster prone country internationally [4].

Due to fragile geographical location, the people of Bangladesh are facing the disasters frequently. The people of disaster prone areas have scope hardly to change their fate and position by the own resources as well as capacity. By the Govt. programs and NGOs initiatives, the situation is changed slowly but proper way. Floods are a common disaster in the coastal areas of Bangladesh [5]. The history of floods in Bangladesh captures tragic documents for the people. Floods are the most frequent disasters in Bangladesh, causing immense suffering to many people, damaging infrastructure and other resources. Roughly one-third of the country become severely affected by floods while the catastrophic floods of 1988, 1998, 2004, and 2007 caused inundation of more than 60 percent of the country's land (The Daily Star).

The four types of flooding in Bangladesh include flash floods caused by overflowing of hilly rivers of eastern and northern Bangladesh; rain floods caused by drainage congestion and heavy rain falls; river floods during monsoon season; and coastal floods caused by storm surges. The causes behind the floods of Bangladesh indicate the natural and human influenced factors. Crime and recidivisms in the coastal area are done mostly due to floods. And the floods also make the other problems that stimulate the human of doing crimes such as river erosion, damaging embankments, damaged standing crops and infrastructures in the coastal areas. Disasters in coastal areas of Bangladesh create a vulnerable situation on the human life, social and cultural progress. Disasters also make favorable environment of doing crimes in the coastal areas though these types of crimes are non-serious criteria in most of cases. The police force of south Asian countries has taken some pertinent programs to save the human of disaster prone areas. Though the action of programs of the countries is varied because of the situation and causes of disasters as well as the human movement are also different from one to one.

Geographically, Bangladesh is a land of disaster prone and the disaster (both natural and man-made) for Bangladesh is a curse for the mass people particularly the people in the coastal areas. The mass people have to face any type of disaster in anytime. Considering the consequences of disasters, the field based professions are involved to rescue the affected people as well as to control the public procurement for the batter safety. In the legal aspects of disasters management of Bangladesh has specified some roles for police department considering the overall disasters situation. The prime objectives involving the police force in disaster management are to:

a.   Engage the police force in emergency responses in disasters, rescue and rehabilitation programs in post disasters,

b.   Take professional actions for the field level police unit increasing the working skills. Actually, there is no research report and documents on the police role in disasters prone areas. Form the daily newspaper, some information is collected but it is not enough according to the role of police.

In Bangladesh, the police of local level have performed lot of activities to save the disaster affected people, and it is recognized in national and international level. The country of Japan in South Asia has faced disaster as daily events. The police department of Japan government has taken some pertinent programs and actions that recover the people from any undesirable situations as like crimes. The disaster affected people in Japan are well trained by the local police force in the question of how to tackle the disaster situation. And the police force of Japan has conducted some preventive parameters to control the human behaviors as if any unexpected situation is not done. The police force of Japan has made a model how to control the human ill motive as like crimes in the period of disasters, and it (model) is used in many countries. For the better improvement, the Bangladesh police force may be introduced the model in controlling the field situation. Disasters promote criminal behaviors among the human in the disaster affected areas. In some cases, crimes welcome disasters both man-made and natural.

An article written by Fullerton, et al. [6] is published on the disasters and crimes situation in the disaster prone country, and has declared that disaster is an event that more or less depends on the human behavior. Local people of disaster affected areas have done some unethical activities that will damage the normalcy of the mass people. The study is guided by a clear methodological direction but the field situation makes some difficulties that intervenes the study perceptions, and it is called the limitations of the study. The present study is conducted to know the role of police force in the coastal areas of Bangladesh. When it is said for the respondents, it is a fearing issue for the local people. The local people, in some cases, feel uneasy to provide the actual situation with data collectors. Second limitation of the study is desperate weather in the data collection period in the research areas. For that the data collectors are faced some painful environments to meet with the local people known as respondents in the study. The police force is treated as study stakeholders but in the interviewing session the police force is controlled themselves not to open the actual situations that are done in the coastal areas.

Conclusion

Disasters in coastal areas of Bangladesh create a vulnerable situation on the human life, social and cultural progress. Disasters also make favorable environment of doing crimes in the coastal areas though these types of crimes are non-serious criteria in most of cases. This study concluded a thing that the local people of disaster affected coastal areas are committed to act of stealing in most of the cases. They had to face tidal mostly in the terms of natural disaster.

Conflict of Interest

This was a self-funding study. There was no conflict of interest.

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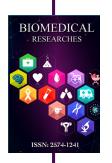
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