



## Genocide in 1971: An Enquiry into the Atrocities during the Liberation War of Bangladesh at Kalkini and Dasar Upazila of Madaripur District

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### ABSTRACT

The genocide of Bangladesh is one of the deadliest genocides around the world. The Pakistani armed forces conducted genocide in different parts of Bangladesh. There was widespread violence at Kalkini and Dasar Upazila of Madaripur District in 1971. But, there is an astonishing thing that there was no information on the genocide of Kalkini and Dasar Upazila in the 8<sup>th</sup> Volume of the documents of the War of Liberation compiled by the Government of Bangladesh in 1984. So, in the interest of preserving the evidence of the Great War of Liberation as well as to uphold an accurate history for the new generation present research has been carried out. Therefore, the purpose of the study is to investigate the nature of the genocide at Kalkini and Dasar Upazila. This is a qualitative study. This study attempts to enquire into the atrocities organized by the Pakistani armed forces and their local agents in 1971 at Kalkini and Dasar Upazila. The finding of the study revealed that total 133 people were brutally killed during the liberation war by the Pakistani armed forces and their local collaborators at Kalkini and Dasar Upazila.

**Keyword:** *Genocide, Kalkini and Dasar Upazila, Pakistani Armed Forces, Atrocities, 1971, Liberation War*

### INTRODUCTION

Bangladesh achieved independence in 1971 from Pakistan after nine-months of long war (Jamal, 2008). Bengalis gained their freedom in exchange of the lives and blood (Dash & Babu, 2020). The level of brutality carried out by the Pakistani occupation forces during the liberation war is very rare in the world history. The genocide in Bangladesh began on 25 March 1971 with the launch of Operation Search Light, as Pakistan began a military crackdown to suppress Bengalis those who called for the self-determination and emancipation (Ahmed, 2018). During the nine-month long war Pakistani military and their local collaborator skilled up to three million people (Delwar, 2014) and more than two lac women were abused by them (Sharlach, 2000). People had to leave their homes because of the vandalism. The war forced almost ten million people to depart the country (Datta, 2012). The Bangladesh genocide that resulted from a policy of deliberately well-planned and it had been implemented accordingly (Takai, 2011). From March 25, the Pakistani military forces launched the target killing in Bangladesh (Nishat & Hossain, 2022). Pakistani military began destruction

throughout Bangladesh. They became involved in a gruesome game of murder, rape, torture and robbery. They destroyed the houses and shops. The local collaborators assisted them in all these abomination. The main feature of the Liberation War of Bangladesh is genocide and torture (Mamoon, 2014). They killed people for having the causes of ethnic hatred, political beliefs or religious beliefs. People were murdered brutally, inhumanly and unnecessarily. The red sun of independence rose in the sky of Bangladesh in exchange of a sea of blood. There had accomplished many studies on the genocide of Bangladesh in national level and city level. But, at the regional level especially at the Upazila level there is no enough research in fact. No remarkable research has been done yet on the genocide conducted by the Pakistani armed forces and their local agents in 1971 at Kalkini and Dasar Upazila of Madaripur district. Because of having no research, the new generation knows little about the history of the liberation war. So, to compile the history of the liberation war and to investigate the nature as well as to inquire into the atrocities carried out by the Pakistani armed forces and their local agents at Kalkini and Dasar Upazila of Madaripur District in 1971 the present study has been conducted.

### OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The specific objectives of the study are:

- i. To inquire into the nature of the genocide at Kalkini and Dasar Upazila.
- ii. To investigate the atrocities at Kalkini and Dasar Upazila during the liberation war in 1971.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Mascarenhas, M. (1971) claimed for the very first time that the genocide was committed by Pakistani perpetrator in East Pakistan (presently Bangladesh) by a courageous report on Sunday Times. The reporter brought the issue in front of the world in fact. The report advocated for the result of 1970' election in Pakistan. The report revealed the interest of the Pakistani rulers at the same time upheld the deprivation of the Bengalis. The report highlighted the genocide and massive destruction from the March 1971 carried out by the Pakistani forces as well as mentioned the target killing.

Rahman, H.H. (1984) upheld the information related to genocide, refugee camp and relevant events in the 8<sup>th</sup> volume of Liberation War of Bangladesh: Document. The editor highlighted the atrocities, brutality of the genocide of different areas of Bangladesh. Surprisingly, there was no information about the genocide of Kalkini and Dasar Upazila of Madaripur district. The document mainly pointed out the genocide of Dhaka Division including Old Dhaka, Dhaka University, Rajarbagh Police Line, Narsingdi, Mymensingh, Kishoreganj.

Akmam, W. (2002) stated precisely genocide and presented the historical background of the War of Liberation in Bangladesh. The study focused on the atrocities which was committed against the Bengalis as a part of the systematic and calculated policy of genocide by the Pakistani forces throughout the nine months. The study found the main targets of the Pakistani forces and addressed the principle motive of West Pakistani leaders was to suppress the Bengalis.

Hasan, M.A. (2010) pointed out the gender and religion based genocide in 1971. The study revealed the nature of the torture and genocide. Basically, the study upheld the genocide of Dhaka Division including the genocide of Dhaka University, Narayanganj, Gazipur, Joydebpur, Tangail, Mymensingh, Kishoreganj, Faridpur and the genocide of A R Hawlader Jute Mill of Madaripur.

Goswami, A. K. (2011) recapitulated genocide and crimes against humanity by the Pakistani army and their local collaborators in 1971 in Bangladesh. The study showed Hamoodur Rahman Commission Report and stated that the report was not the proper reflection or the true picture of the War of 1971. The report was surely manipulated by the Pakistani Government. Moreover, the study pointed out the number of victims those who were killed as well as raped brutally by the Pakistani forces and their local collaborators. The study asserted that the commission was formed with a view to explaining the defeating in the war and the report was determined as per the ideology and the blueprint of West Pakistan because the report rejected the genocide of three million people.

Zingel, W. P. (2013) clarified the term genocide and indicated the eight stages of genocide given by the Gregory H. Stanton. The study showed the mass violence in the history of Bangladesh including colonial genocide in India, Bengal famine in 1943, communal riots in 1947 and the genocide in 1971 by the Pakistani forces. The study followed descriptive and historical method to accomplish. The study pointed out the disparities between the East and West wings of Pakistan.

Hasan, M.A. (2013) pointed out the causes behind the genocide including egoistic superiority, evil instinct, racism and hatred, the lust for power and mass rape and the drive for destruction and transformed annihilation tendency which all trigger genocide. At the same time author pointed out the prevention of the genocide including denouncing evil policy, reconstruction of values against all sorts of racism, hatred and polluted identity, truth, trial, peace, justice and reconciliation. The author upheld the genocide and crimes against humanity in Bangladesh in 1971 by the Pakistani army and their local spies.

Mamoon, M. (2014) addressed the main feature of the Liberation War of Bangladesh. The study revealed that the genocide and the torture were the main features of the war. The study upheld that though the genocide of Bangladesh was very indiscriminate but there was given a priority during execution. The study showed that the Pakistani forces identified their main enemies including freedom fighters, hindu community, students and intellectuals. Besides, the study upheld the nature of the genocide and torture.

Mamoon, M. (2015) discussed the genocide of Chuknagar of Atlia, Dumuria, Khulna. The book revealed the background of the Chuknagar genocide. Besides, the book described the genocide and torture of Chuknagar. The study upheld the numbers of victim preparing a list those who were killed at Chuknagar mentioning 8,000 to 10,000 people. The study also upheld the offender of the genocide.

Rahman, A. (2017) focused on the reality by providing the evidence of the genocide. To prove the number of three million martyrs in the liberation war, the report showed the evidence with mentioning the news report of the world wide famous newspapers including Pravda, Morning News, the report of The National Geography and the UN report on the 33th year of UDHR in 1981 on the genocide of Bangladesh. The report presented the statistics and research of the Ted Robert Gurr, Leo Kuper and R J Rummel to establish the truth. Moreover the study analyzed the population growth rate and mentioned that there was dramatically increased the mortality rate and decreased the birth rate. Considering all these data and statistics, the report asserted that the three million martyrs in the war of the liberation were a reality and not a myth.

## METHODOLOGY

This is a qualitative study. To accomplish the study descriptive and historical research methods are employed. The data used in the study are based on primary and secondary sources. To collect the primary data, purposive sampling and random stratified sampling methods have been applied. The interview and questionnaire (including an open and closed ended) methods have been used to gather primary data. It was an effort to renovate the history of genocide based on oral history including direct interviews of eyewitnesses, victims, and relatives of the victims of the genocide as well as the freedom fighters from both Upazila. For secondary data, this research has reviewed existing research works including different books, journals, articles, newspapers, e-papers, websites, and documents. This research largely analyzes the data of genocidal events and atrocities of 15 Union and 1 Municipality of Kalkini and Dasar Upazila. The collected data has been analyzed using thematic analysis.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Pakistani armed forces and their local agents committed genocide in Bangladesh. After the genocide of Dhaka city on 25<sup>th</sup> March of 1971, the atrocities were spread all over Bangladesh within very few days. Their destructive actions spread in district, city, municipality, Upazila and even in the villages. The entire Bangladesh was turned into debris. The Kalkini and Dasar Upazila of Madaripur district were also affected then. From the later part of April 1971 to December 8 of 1971 the perpetrators carried out genocide at Kalkini and Dasar Upazila. The following table mainly provides the information on the atrocities of the genocide of Kalkini and Dasar Upazila during the liberation war of Bangladesh in 1971.

**Table 1: The list of atrocities at Kalkini and Dasar Upazila in 1971**

Name of Upazila	Mass Killing	Minority killings	Intellectual killings	Rape	Firing in houses & shops
Kalkini	62	34	4	8	296
Dasar	71	38	1	4	177
Total-	133	72	5	12	473

**Source: Field study**

The above table states a total 133 people were brutally killed by the Pakistani armed forces and local collaborators including 62 people from Kalkini and 71 people from Dasar Upazila. Those who were murdered among them most of the people were minorities. Total 72 people from Hindu community were exterminated including 34 people from Kalkini and 38 people from Dasar Upazila. They assassinated intellectuals with the support of their local agents for creating the intellectual vacuum in Bangladesh as well as to disorganize to the Bengalis. Total 4 intellectuals were cruelly killed including Abdul Khalek Master, Dr. Momin Uddin Dhalil, Dr. Sushil and Chairman Hasem Sardar from Kalkini Upazila. Apart from this, Nowab Kazi who was an intellectual was inhumanly murdered from Dasar Upazila. Pakistani army personnel committed heinous crime like; rape. There were some women at Kalkini and Dasar Upazila who lost their honor. Total 12 women were raped by the Pakistani armed forces. At Nabagram union of Dasar Upazila, Chintamoyi Baroi was viciously raped. She is still alive. She is a war heroine (gazette no. 297). Moreover, The Pakistani military and their local agents set fire on at least 473 houses and shops in the different places during the Liberation War in 1971 at Kalkini and Dasar Upazila of Madaripur district.

### **The nature of Genocide at Kalkini and Dasar Upazila**

As part of the genocide of Bangladesh, the Pakistani armed forces carried out genocide at Kalkini and Dasar Upazila of Madaripur district then. The nature of Genocide at Kalkini and Dasar Upazila was terrific. According to the Google Translate, the term nature implies as the basic or inherent features of something, especially when seen as characteristic of it. The nature of the genocide of Kalkini and Dasar Upazila was consisted of mass killing, minorities killing, intellectual murder, torture, rape, plunder, setting fire. In fact, all the features of the genocide were present there. The Pakistani armed forces killed people indiscriminately. They had vastly persecuted minorities mostly Hindus. They killed intellectuals. Moreover, the Pakistani military committed crime like rape. Not only that, they conducted plunder as well kindled to the houses and shops at Kalkini and Dasar Upazila. Besides, the nature of the torture was horrible. They killed unarmed people by charging bayonet, shooting, burning, slaughtering, burying the living people and hanging. It has found that the nature of the genocide of Bangladesh also existed in the genocide of Kalkini and Dasar Upazila.

### **FINDINGS**

The points highlighted by the most respondents including eyewitnesses, freedom fighters, victims and the relatives of the victims of the genocide from the study area. The findings of the study are given below-

- ❖ The nature of the genocide of Kalkini and Dasar Upazila contains the mass killing, intellectual killing, minority killings, torture, rape of women, setting fire on houses and shops as well as looting by the Pakistani military and their local agents during the liberation war in 1971.
- ❖ The Pakistani armed forces and their local collaborators killed total 133 people, among all the martyrs total 72 minorities Hindu people were murdered heartlessly at Kalkini and Dasar Upazila. A total of 5 intellectuals were killed brutally at Kalkini and Dasar Upazila.
- ❖ A total of 12 women were raped by the Pakistani armed forces.
- ❖ The Pakistani Army and their local agents set fire on about 473 houses and shops in the different places during the Liberation War at Kalkini and Dasar Upazila.
- ❖ In addition, Pakistani forces and their local spies looted valuable things including money, gold, jewelry, rice, pulse, cattle and so on.
- ❖ Some killing fields have been found at Kalkini and Dasar Upazila including the Lal (Red) Bridge killing field at Bhurghata of Kalkini Upazila. Apart from this, Nilkhola killing field at Gopalpur, Bir Mohon killing field at Kazibakai of Dasar Upazila.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The people of Kalkini and Dasar Upazila were affected by the terrible attack by the Pakistani armed forces in 1971. They committed mass killing in different places. So, there are some killing fields at Kalkini and Dasar Upazila which mentioned above. But, after the five decades of independence, these are still unprotected. Even, there are no nameplates at the killing fields. While collecting the data on genocide, the eyewitnesses, freedom fighters, victims, relatives of the victims and the local people demanded to take proper steps to preserve those killing fields for the safe guarding the history of the liberation war. Because, these killing fields are as the mark of the genocide at Kalkini and Dasar Upazila. Moreover, many victims family (those who lost their relatives, family members) have claimed acknowledgment. They have not been recognized as martyr family yet.

### **CONCLUSION**

Genocide is the thoughtful destruction, in whole or in part, by a government or its agent, of a racial, sexual, religious, tribal or political minority (Islam, 2019). It involves not only mass

killing but also starvation, forced deportation and political, economic and biological suppression. Genocide includes three key components like; ideology, technology and bureaucracy/organization (Porter, 1982). In the different stages of the human history, genocide has taken place. Bangladesh's emergence as a sovereign nation-state came at the expense of millions of victims in 1971 (Hossain & Joarder, 2018). The Bangladesh genocide was one of the deadliest genocides. The main feature of the Bangladesh liberation war was genocide and torture (Mamoon, 2014). The Pakistani military rulers planned to destroy Bengalis to sustain their existence as well as their power or dominance over East Pakistan (present Bangladesh). So, the Pakistani ruling elites appointed to the Pakistan armed forces to suppress the movement of the independence. As a result, the whole world had seen a terrible genocide in Bangladesh in 1971. From March 25, 1971 the Pakistani forces officially launched destruction in Bangladesh. And within a very short time, the whole of Bangladesh was affected by their destructive activities and cruel atrocities. Kalkini and Dasar Upazila of Madaripur district were also affected by their brutal genocide. In the later of April 1971, the Pakistani military attacked on Kalkini and Dasar Upazila. The nature of the genocide at Kalkini and Dasar Upazila covers mass killing, intellectual killing, minority killing, torture, rape of women, setting fire on houses and shops as well as looting. In fact, all the features of the Bangladesh genocide were present at Kalkini and Dasar Upazila. At Kalkini and Dasar Upazila, still there are the sign of the horrific genocide and brutal atrocities. That terrible memories still touches people's mind. A total of 133 people were brutally killed by the Pakistani military and their local agents at Kalkini and Dasar Upazila of Madaripur district in 1971.

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