

Sense of Community A weapon of Survival

An Ethnographic study on Korail

A thesis presented by

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Chapter 1

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Abstract:

Korail, from other side of the lake might seem as an inadequate piece of land which is occupied by 'illegal settlers' or from the research of the NGOs, people may assume that Korail is just a plot for manufacturing different social and economic problems. But from my research I want to deconstruct the lens through which we see Korail. In this research, I tried to bring the insights from the people's life and their daily struggles by living and participating with them. I observed what makes a community in a slum? How does diversity help or hinder the coping strategies in Korail? And what are the sites through which sense of community is forged in Korail? My findings gave me some unique aspects of people's life which helped me to come in my own theory. I tried to prove how housing pattern, bazars, NGOs, community based functions and role of women and fear of eviction generate sense of community among the people of Korail which they use as a weapon in daily survival.

Chapter 2

Introduction:

Since I left my hometown Rangpur 4 years ago, warmth of people and the strong sense of community feeling are the things I always miss in this anonymous capital city that is until I discovered the beauty of Korail. Korail a place which is like an island surrounded by Elite neighbors like Gulshan, Banani and Mohakhali, might seem a piece of land parachuted to a ‘wrong’ place. But that piece of land characterizes so uniquely that it might not fit in any other part of the country, neither in a village nor in a city. This urban slum has its own place in this city. On paper, Dhaka city and Korail shares same attributes of population density, untidy roads, unplanned housing, water and electricity shortage but Korail is able to make it distinct by the people who live in it. Basically, Korail is a home for the people of lower income of the city who came from almost all the parts of Bangladesh. Some people came to Korail for losing their land in river corrosion or some have come for searching a better living and some have come for a cheaper resident in the middle of the capital. One may find every possible reason for people to answer why they live in Korail.

During my 3rd year of university life, I got a job of collecting data from Korail for a research project, later I got another job from a NGO to interview people about their experiences of daily life. I consider myself very lucky that I had the opportunity to explore Korail in those days. Since then, I

have a relationship with Korail of almost 2 years. During this time I explored Korail and its people in sort of close way. I went from home to home to ask people about their condition of water supply and how they are using water, later I had the opportunity to be in their room and interviewing them about their personal lives, their past and their present. In those days, people of Korail surprised me a lot by their hospitality which remained me some things about village and suburb yet in very urban context. People are generous, humble and very social with each other which I did not found in the urban flat living culture. So, in my last semester when I need to choose a topic for my thesis, Korail was my first choice for my thesis work and I didn't have any second thought on the topic. I wanted to know about the people of Korail, what makes them the way they are now, why this cultural uniqueness of people from different parts of the country doesn't divide them, what components are playing a key role in the people's life as they make a beautiful harmony between them.

Being the student of Anthropology we have gone through so many theories on people and culture. So when we find some distinct area or people then we try to romanticize and think it as an exotic plot. I am not so indifferent but my theories seem an epic fail in the context of Korail. Korail is a great example of versatility and uniqueness. I can't find a certain pattern of people. People from a mixed backgrounds are present here, the dialect of languages are not same of everyone, home lands are different, religion might be same but it has very small role to play in everyday life hence it is very difficult to theorize this diverse group of people. In addition, as an student of anthropology I

also neither have the exotic stories like head hunter and rage in tribes of Indonesia nor any customs like 'Kula' trade form Trobriand Island in Korail. So my desire of being Malinowski faded away in Korail. I only got a group of very unique and versatile population to see what combines them in their daily activities that makes their community in such an uncommon place. My research questions are very specific and helped me to focus on the topic. My two basic research questions are,

- A) What makes a community in a slum? How does sense of community help or hinder the coping strategies in Korail?
- B) What are the sites through which sense of community is forged in Korail?

So, my ethnography aims to find out the hidden aspect of people's life from an urban slum to approach them from a different perspective. My hypothesis is very narrow and non-judgmental as a student of anthropology I was taught to be so in every situation of my life. I only have few established ideas of Korail as such, most of the people are poor and live in a very densely populated area and I have my experience about the people that they are different from the urban areas. These are my only supposition about Korail. And whatever comes later will be a result of my ethnography which will hopefully can deliver something unique in the knowledge of the world. Because, Korail has always been a center of attraction for the NGOs to conduct research hence in online libraries we

can find tons of papers on Korail. But, all the research happened on Korail so far only focus on the quantitative elements of Korail like maternity health, education and poverty. But in my research I want to focus on the interpretative part of people which will bring the insights form people's life. So in this way I think my research can make itself distinct from other studies.

In my research, I found some limitation as well. First of all, the area of my research was huge and it was not possible for one person to cover all the area for this research. Korail has population of about 3lacks and the population density is unimaginable. So covering so many people was not possible. So for my research I chose two specific areas of Korail; Bou Bazar and Jamai Bazar. Though, there are some other partial lands which are also named under Korail but Bou Bazar and Jamai Bazar are the land which got the main essence of 'Korail Slum' in it. Next, the allocated time for this research was not sufficient for me. For undergrad thesis, basically 6 months of time is minimum required but I only got three and half month of time for my research moreover this was summer semester in which we had Eid vacation which hampered my regularity a little bit. Furthermore, I think in my research if I had a group of people then we could cover more area and people of Korail which could collect more data for my research. But I think in the given time I tried my best to bring some necessary data from Korail which helped me to analyze and come to my own theory.

Chapter 3

Background information on Korail:

My research was based on both from primary and some form secondary data. After going to the field I have collected some background information about Korail. Because, having a historical knowledge is as important as present. As Foucault (1981) said ‘History is not only about past, it’s also as important in present.’ Having a historical knowledge on the field gives the researcher a holistic understanding of the research field.

Korail is one of the largest slums in Bangladesh and is located under wards 19 and 20 of Dhaka City Corporation, adjacent to Gulshan-Banani Lake. Being so close to BRAC, the largest NGO of the world, no doubt Korail is the most studied ‘bosti’ of Bangladesh. The area of Korail is less than 1 square kilometers but the population density is unimaginable. It is very difficult to trace the actual population of Korail as people of Korail live a floating life but in different studies I found there might be 2.5 to 3 lakhs of people live in Korail with ratio of 50 percent men and 50 percent women. And the literacy rate is only 58 percent. The slum can be accessed by several roads or by water across Gulshan Lake. The main two units of Korail are known as Jamai bazar and Bou bazar. Within Bou bazar, there are four sub-sections known as Ka, Kha, Ga and Gha. In addition to the main Korail slum area, BeltoliBosti, T&T Bosti, BaidarBosti, Ershadnagar and GodownBosti a

also part of greater Korail. The slums are gradually expanding across the lake by land reclamation and through the dumping of waste and soil.

In 1961, the area concerned was acquired by Telephone and Telegraph (T&T), now Bangladesh Telecommunication Company Limited (BTCL). As communications technology progressed use of the land by BTCL for transmission equipment became increasingly obsolete prompting a large proportion of the land (90 acres) to be formally handed over to the Public Works Department (PWD) in 1990. This was allegedly in violation of a previously established agreement with former private land owners. Legal complications ensued and eventually BTCL reclaimed the 90 acres of land from PWD. Thus three parties have become stakeholders in the disputed ownership of Korail area: BTCL, PWD and the former private landowners (Working Paper, ICDDR, 2009). In the early 1990's, as a result of the unresolved issue of ownership, various T&T affiliates, local mastaans („strong men’) and influential elites from different political parties unofficially captured sections of the uninhabited land. Occupiers went on to informally rent out the land and housing to impoverished city dwellers at low rates. With increasing urbanization and evictions in other parts of Dhaka city (such as Agargaon) the demand for low-cost housing increased. Under these pressures the number of inhabitants and expanse of slum housing at Korail grew to create the slum as it is today.

More than 20,000 families now reside in Korail, comprising a significant element of Dhaka's work force in the garment, transportation, construction, land development, domestic help, waste management, small industry and informal sectors. We can find all type of labor in Korail especially child labor. Despite having some NGO schools for children in Korail, Korail serves highest number of child labor. Despite their significant contribution to the economy slum dwellers from Korail and elsewhere remain excluded from basic services principally because slums are considered to be 'illegal settlements'.

Korail also has all type of social institutions like school, mosque, madrasha, community health services and community clubs. In recent years, the number of schools and community health centers are boomed in Korail. NGO's like BRAC and JAGO foundation are responsible behind this rapid growth of schools and health centers. Besides, Korail is also home for many religions institutions like mosque and madrasha. According to survey of 2010, 95 percent of people of Korail are muslim so we will find a lot of mosques and madrashas in Korail.

Furthermore, in Korail we will also find few community clubs and political organizations. Basically, the community clubs contain some indoor games like carrom board where people enjoy their leisure time. Besides, those community clubs also arranges monthly or yearly meetings.

Below, a map of Korail is given to have a vivid experience on Korail.

Korail Slum community resources map



Chapter 4

Methodology:

As a student of Anthropology I have learnt different forms of ethnographic models such as auto ethnography, qualitative ethnography and quantitative ethnography. Basically there are two attributes of ethnography those are ethnography which includes both qualitative and quantitative methods and ethnography which includes both classical and non-classical ethnographic approach (Whitehead, 2005). The argument for the first is supported by the fact that while methods that are considered to be qualitative have long been the dominant methods paradigm in ethnography, many ethnographers trained in anthropology have also long used quantitative methods as well, as the anthropological ethnographer learns to be opened to any and all methods that can help him or her best understand the cultural system in which he or she is studying (Whitehead,2005).For me quantitative research is not going to help me in this research as sense of community is a subjective matter which can only be understood by qualitative research.

Arguments for these two attributes were made to address first the perspective among anthropologists, that the primary difference in ethnographic approaches is qualitative versus quantitative. Secondly, however, because of the debate in anthropology, in which some methods are discussed as being truly ethnographic and others as not, I have found discussions of classical,

Non-classical, and core ethnographic methods as helpful in differentiating the types of methods suitable to various ethnographic situations, while not excluding any from the range of methods that an ethnography should feel free to use so that they can adequately study the range of social setting to which ethnography is appropriate. For me, classical ethnographic methods are those that have been traditionally used by anthropologists, such as secondary data analysis, fieldwork, observing activities of interest, recording field notes and observations, participating in activities during observations (participant observation), and carrying out various forms of informal and semi-structured ethnographic interviewing. I also refer to these as Basic Classical ethnographic methods, to distinguish them from other classical ethnographic methods long employed by anthropologists, including the physical mapping of the study setting, conducting household censuses and genealogies, assessing network ties, and using photography and other audio/visual methods.

Actually, in my research I used the classical method rather basic classical method. As a student of anthropology I have read the story of Bronislaw Malinowski's adventure in the Trobriand Island and Margaret Mead's struggle in the Samoan island. Both are the classical anthropologist and considered as the founder of today's anthropology countering the armchair anthropological tradition of that time. In the research of Malinowski and Mead, they were keen in participating with their research population rather than just limiting themselves in formal interviewing sessions. Like, Malinowski and Mead I have shaped my research in a very informal approach. My primary method

of research is participated observation. Because, the difference between the larger category of classical methods and the subcategory of Basic Classical methods is associated with the social setting to be studied. The full range of classical ethnographic methods have been frequently associated with the study of communities or populations, while the Basic Classical methods are those that are administered not only to human residential communities and populations, but also applied to other social settings, such as organizations, institutions, meetings, and just about any setting in which humans are interacting (Whitehead, 2005).

For me, though my research was focused on a community of a ‘same’ culture where I thought cultural difference is not going to be a factor as the difference is only in class, I am proved wrong as my research moved forward. The kind of perspective which Malinowsky gave us where all the Whiteman has same culture and all the Trobrianders also follows same culture proved wrong here. First I thought, our difference is only in the class as I come from a middle class and suburb background but my research population the people of Korail are seen as poorer class people, which I think has a little role to play but I found Korail’s culture is also very unique and distinctive from rest of the parts which the research of the NGOs fails to bring forward. Furthermore, our language might be similar but the dialects are so distinctive which criticizes my ethnography as auto ethnography. According to Hayano (1979) there are some criteria of being an auto ethnographer, 1) there could be identity matches (according to racial, social, ethnic, religious, residential or sex). 2) There could be

similarities with some sub cultural, professional or recreational groups 3) the ethnographer could change his/her identity and then s/he do ethnography. In my research I have found that there might be similarities in our sex and religion but the kinds of life they lead here have made them socially, culturally and ethnically different. But in my two years of visit in Korail I think I managed to minimize those differences which helped me a lot in rapport build up and participated observing. I have participated with the people of Korail form very early morning till they finish most of their household works. I have seen them working with each other and also observed little things which makes them a community like sharing gas stoves, lining up for toilet in morning also quarreling for little things then again shorting things up.

In addition to participant observation, I have also done some informal interviews with people from all sorts of life like tea seller, domestic worker, vegetable sellers, laundry man and also random people sitting in a tea stall. My questions were not structured which gave me freedom to approach them in an easy way and getting answers from very informal conversations.

Another important aim of my research was to give a balance between the voice of male and female. Because, as a student of anthropology I have taught to bring the voice of the women in discussion as most of the classic and colonial writings are androcentric which is problematic because a society was never the way it is now without the role of women. Women play a very influential role in the social functions so bringing up their voices will give my research an additional impetus. In addition, in

Korail the ratio of men and women are the same and the most of the NGO's which are working there, are targeting women as the weapon for implementing 'development' projects. So, in this research I tried to listen to the voice of women and used their perspectives of community living and daily survival in Korail so that my research gets more quality in it.

Furthermore, I have also included some results and data from my previous research project which was on the NGO's working in Korail. From that project I had some good links in Korail which helped a lot in this research for example I have interviewed the leader of UPPR project of Korail who is a key person in Korail, about 50 to 60 thousand people are member of UPPR and all of them are under that leader. In that UPPR project we had a formal questioner which basically asked them about their life history in Korail, about the community living and their involvement with the NGOs. I basically focused on the questions which are related with community involvement. The research was on 120 people of Korail which basically asked questions about community development projects and saw how NGO's are using this sense of community to run different projects in this locality. From that research questioner I only took few questions and answers which focused on their community living and neighborhood. (See appendix for the questionnaires).

A part from those research people, I did my own interview with people to find out specific things about them and their survival by using community as a weapon. My questioner was much unstructured and interview was informal. I took interview of total 15 random people o

Korail, which included 12 common people from tea shops, Bazars and from random houses. Other three people are basically public figure of Korail, first one a woman who is involved with Community Development Committee project in Korail which basically cover around 70 to 80 thousand people of Korail. Below, there is some of the question which I asked:

- 1) What are the difference you find in Korail and your homeland?
- 2) Do you think people are more close to each other here in Korail than you saw in your home land?
- 3) How many people you know in Korail and how do you interact with them daily?
- 4) Do you feel safe in sharing your emotions with each other?
- 5) Can you tell me any romour or myths of Korail?
- 6) What is your future plan in Korail?
- 7) If you got evicted, do you want to go back to your homeland, why?

Next, I also took interview form an official from BRAC NGO which is another very influential NGO is Korail and runs several project in Korail based on communities. Next, I took another interview of Assistant professor of BRAC University who lived in Korail for 7 years, interestingly

not for any project but to enjoy the living environment of Korail. His point of views opened some new doors for my research and gave me some really good perspectives. Last but not least, I literally, did participant observation in Korail to see the housing pattern and the improvisation of the household people in daily life. For this reason, I chose a day and a house and went there at 6.30 am when the people start to work for rest of the day. I stayed there till afternoon once they are done with most of the household chores. I had an experience which gave me lots of insights of the people and their daily routine lives.

During those days of my research, I used to visit Korail in the morning. I used to take a boat ride instead of other vehicles. The boats are run by people of Korail and its another unique feature of Korail in the middle of capital. The system is very sound and everyone follow the rule. Every boat can only take 6 people at once and the rent is only two taka for each. After reaching to the mainland, I used to walk in the narrow road of the Korail and use to observe the essence of Korail. There are some occasion where I walked hours in Korail and did not take any interviews. In middle of walking I used to sit in any shops and took notes of what I was observing. Then sometimes I talked with people and asked questions about their life in Korail. I recorded the conversations and took notes of important point. Then after coming to home I listened the conversation and first I transcribed them in English later I used them in my findings.

Chapter 5

Literature Review:

In the literature review part, I made a balance in choosing the literature. Basically I focused on some classical theories of community and some previous works done on Korail and a psychological study on human psychology to understand how the sense of community forms in a human mind. First I chose three classical readings of Benedict Anderson's 'Imagined community', Ernest Renan's 'What is Nation' and Marshall Sahlins's 'What is Kinship'. The reason I chose these three classical theories is to articulate my theoretical frame work under those theories of nationalism and kinship. I know my research is related with sense of community not nationalism. But in some way, nationalism and sense of community both works in a parallel way. As Bernard Yack(2012) in his book *Nationalism and the Moral Psychology of Community* cites 'A nation is a community. In other words, a nation is a group of people who imagined themselves connected to each other as object of special concern and loyalty by something that they share. As such, a nation is more than a set or a species and less than an organization. The mere sharing of some characteristics or practice, such as skin color or a language, may make individuals members of a set; but until they affirm what they share as a source of mutual concern and loyalty these individuals do not form a community'. So in my research I tried to relate the basic of how nationalism forms among a group of people with the basis of how sense of community develops among slum living people.

Next, I also took some previous work on Korail to have a contemporary understanding on Korail. One of the big problems that I had in my research was a lack of qualitative research on Korail. All the online sources and online libraries got a handsome numbers of papers on Korail but almost all of them are quantitative. For example, BRAC and ICDDR,B has a good number of research on Korail like on maternity health, exclusion, poverty and education under supervision of Sabina Faiz Rashid but neither of them explains anything anthropological which relates the people, their living and the non-materialistic part of the people. This also gave me encouragement about my work. As my work can contribute something new for the readers and hopefully I can depict Korail living people form a new perspective.

Last of all, I also went through some physiological study on people which helped me to understand people being form a new horizon. I reviewed two papers for this segment, first ‘Sense of Community: A Definition and Theory’ (1986) by David W. McMillan and David M. Chavis and second one is Nationalism and the Moral Psychology of Community (2012) by Bernard Yack.

Imagined community by Benedict Anderson:

Imagined community of Benedict Anderson Perhaps the most read book about nationalism. Anderson adheres to the modernization argument explaining the origin of nations. In other words,

nations developed as a necessary component of industrial society, though neither 'economic interest, Liberalism, nor Enlightenment could, or did, create in themselves the kind, or shape, or imagined community' (65). Breaking from Gellner (1983) as the first edition of *Imagined Communities*, Anderson places greater emphasis on the constructed nature of culture and on the role of print capitalism to the development of nations. On the cultural front, Anderson argues that pre-national culture was religious culture. Nations replaced this religious culture with their own uniquely constructed national cultures. Anderson places print capitalism at the very heart of his theory, claiming that it was print capitalism which allowed for the development of these new national cultures and created the specific formations which the new nations would eventually take.

The reason I took this classic theory to implement the theory of imagined community in the context of Koaril. Do the people of Korail see themselves as an imagined community as they have a bounded geographical location and majority of people of same religion? Or they just see themselves as a temporary group of people without a common ground.

What is Nation by Ernest Renan:

Ernest Renan attempts to define nation in his essay 'What is a nation.' Renan endeavors to define a legitimate nation by reflecting on the uprisings led by nationalist leaders during the revolutions of 1848. He urges people to come together, and look to common bonding experiences

that do not stifle progress and unity because of the differences in race, language, religion and geography. Ernest Renan's central argument is a nation is a conglomerate of people who share a common past and have derived a strong bond, with an agreement to stay together and be governed by mutual consent in the future. Renan believed that nation developed from the common needs of people consist of different social groups seeking a 'Collective Identity'. This Collective identity is subjective which varies from one nation to others. Renan discredits the theory that race is the basis for unification of people. For example, during French revolution, France was very a diverse state; people from different ethnic backgrounds were present in France though nationalism took placed in France. Renan also argued that neither religion nor language can be basis of solidarity because language invites people to unite but doesn't have the force to invent nationalism and religion has become an individual matter which lost the force to generate nationalism. Furthermore, Renan also emphasized on forgetfulness which has catalyst effect on nationalism. Similarly 'historical error' was essential in creation of nations where historical research for revealing unwanted truth can be endanger nationhood. So the core element of Renan's argument of forming nationalism is a 'Common Interest' among the people. This 'Common Interest' drives people to join and form a community which later becomes a nation. Member of a community feel as they have accomplished something great if they are able to survive in an adverse situation.

The reason I reviewed this classical theory for my research to find out the ‘Common Interest’ among the Korail people. The point to be noted is my research have nothing to do with the nationalism as it’s a political ideology but these classical theories explains a great dilemmas of how people gather and how they come to a common ground. In Korail, a huge number of distinct people living in a location surrounded by alienated elite class society, so what ‘Common Interest’ they serve together, what is the glue element among them, I am going to find out this question in my research.

What Kinship is By Marshal Sahlins:

Sahlins (2011) in his article ‘What Kinship is’ he introduced a new concept in forming community and kinship. He coined the term ‘mutuality of being’ in his discussion. For him kinship is not bounded within blood or marriage, rather kinship can be formed by body, feelings and experience. He gave lot of examples around the world to support his point of view. For example, in Kamea tribe of New Guinea people ignore the connection between child and the conceiver. A child is known by people who raise them. Next, in the Inupiat tribe of Alaskan North Slope, a child is named after a dead person of the family which makes them family member of the namers. Here kinship is not formed by begetter rather their namer. Next, brother and sister of Karembola people are rooted in one another. The brother can claim that he had given birth to his sister's son. Another

interesting case of New Guineans of the Nebilyar valley is where kinship is produced by 'fat' an essential matter of living organism. It can be done by sharing foods like sweet potatoes or pork. If people shares food from same land which contains fat then that will make them members of that kinship. In addition, fat is presented both in the mother's milk and father's semen so it gives a new born child a substantial connection with its parents.

The reason I chose this literature to implement the concept of 'mutuality of being' in the context of Korail living people. I know in the context of Korail, kinship pattern among the general people is not applicable but I can take this essence to see how they are jamming together and whether sharing daily element have an impact on them in tying fictive kinship or not.

Sense of Community: A Definition and Theory by McMillan & Chavis:

Among theories of Psychological Sense of Community, McMillan & Chavis's (1986) is by far the most influential, and is the starting point for most of the recent research on psychological sense of community. In their discussions of the construct of Psychological Sense of Community, McMillan & Chavis (1986) prefer the abbreviated label 'Sense of Community,' and provide the following one-sentence definition: 'Sense of Community is a feeling that members have of belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith that members' needs will be met through their commitment to be together.' McMillan & Chavis (1986) propose that Sense of

Community is composed of four elements. 1) Membership 2) Influence 3) Integration and fulfillment of needs 4) Shared emotional connection.

Membership

The first aspect of Sense of Community is membership in that community. Reviewing relevant literature on particular dimensions of membership, McMillan & Chavis identified five attributes:

- A) Boundaries
- B) Emotional safety
- C) A sense of belonging and identification
- D) Personal investment
- E) A common symbol system

Boundaries' are marked by such things as language, dress, and ritual, indicating who belongs and who does not. Especially in groups that have boundaries that are less than clearly obvious, deviants or outsiders may be held in lower regard or even denounced or punished. The authors acknowledge that 'boundaries' is the most troublesome feature of the 'membership' portion of the definition, but point out that 'While much sympathetic interest in and research on the deviant have

been generated, group members' legitimate needs for boundaries to protect their intimate social connections have often been overlooked.

The other four attributes of membership are 'emotional safety' (or, more broadly, security; willingness to reveal how one really feels), 'a sense of belonging and identification' (expectation or faith that I will belong, and acceptance by the community), 'personal investment' (cognitive dissonance theorists), and 'a common symbol system.' Regarding this fifth attribute, the authors quote Nisbet& Perrin, asserting that: Understanding common symbol systems is a prerequisite to understanding community. 'The symbol is to the social world what the cell is to the biotic world and the atom to the physical world.... The symbol is the beginning of the social world as we know it' (Nisbet & Perrin, 1977, p. 47).

Influence: McMillan & Chavis (1986) point out that influence in a community is bidirectional: members of a group must feel empowered to have influence over what a group does (otherwise they would not be motivated to participate), and group cohesiveness depends upon the group having some influence over its members. The authors cite several studies that suggest that these two apparently contradictory forces can be at work simultaneously, and assert that: People who acknowledge that others' needs, values, and opinions matter to them are often the most influential group members,

while those who always push to influence, try to dominate others, and ignore the wishes and opinions of others are often the least powerful members.

Integration and fulfillment of needs:

McMillan & Chavis employ the word 'needs' here (as is commonly used among psychologists, though perhaps somewhat inaccurately) to mean more than survival and other needs as such, but to include also that which is desired and valued. Members of groups are seen as being rewarded in various ways for their participation, which Rappaport (1977) calls person-environment fit. Cited research indicates that this would include the status of being a member, as well as the benefits that might accrue from the competence of other members. 'Shared values' is discussed as a concept that can give direction to the issue of which 'needs' beyond survival will be pursued.

Shared emotional connection:

McMillan & Chavis's summary statement on shared emotional connection includes the assertion that 'it seems to be the definitive element for true community' (1986, p. 14). They mention the role of shared history (participation in or at least identification with it). McMillan adds that 'shared history becomes the community's story symbolized in art' (in a very broad sense).

The reason I reviewed this article, is to match all these aspect of community with people of Korail. Korail is not a permanent settlement for the dwellers yet there has been series of event happened in the people's life that can make them a community. The above four points membership, influence, needs, connection all might have a key role in a the slum dwellers life which I am going to find out by asking them questions about their lives and what they think of their surrounding people and vice versa.

Nationalism and the moral psychology of community by Bernard Yack:

‘Nationalism is one of the modern history’s great surprises’: why has the nation risen to such unprecedented political importance in what should have been the age of the individual? The question has continued to trouble scholars of nationalism and it provides the starting point for Bernard Yack’s book, *Nationalism and The Moral Psychology of Community*. Most theorists of have answered the puzzle by arguing that nationalism is something other than it seems: it is either an intruder from the pre-modern world (Grosby, 1994, p 164-71), or it is a purely modern phenomenon (Gellner, 1990). Yack however contends that there is something wrong with our understanding of community and modern society.

One of the key objective of the book is therefore to develop a broader and more flexible theory of community, 'one that treats community as a generic component of human association', rather than a special product of traditional family and village life. Yank (2012) does not deny that nations are imagined or constructed, but he argues that they are 'imagined or constructed by people trying to make sense of intergenerational connection that they have received rather chosen'. The nation therefore does not owe its existence to natural necessity or human choice; it develops out of the contingencies of history and human development. Yack (2012) consequently views the nation as a relatively old phenomenon. Nationalism, however, is relatively new.

Form Yack articulation of Nationalism I will try to find the intergenerational connection of community in Korail and will try to find the question whether it's received or chosen.

Worried Lives: Poverty, Gender and Reproductive Health for Adolescent Women in a Slum in Dhaka, Bangladesh by Sabina Faiz Rashid:

In the research paper of Sabina Raahsid, she basically studies urban slums of Dhaka where Korail played a significant role to find out the reproduction health and the effects of early marriage for the women. Her findings basically show that, rapid urbanization, social and political-economic inequalities are reshaping the dynamics of reproductive behavior in the slum. Ethnographic data was

collected for this research over a 14 month-period, using a variety of methods: 153 surveys, 50 repeated in-depth interviews and 8 case studies with adolescent women and their families. Out of 153, 72% of married adolescent women were forced to bear children before they were ready. Young women recognize that children are a necessity, a practical requirement as marital breakdowns are increasing and young women hope that they can rely on their children for financial support. Institutional and systemic inequalities, socio-cultural norms and harsh political economic conditions reinforce the need for sons in the slums. Unlike females, males are unconstrained by the ideologies of *pardah* and can work at a relatively young age, without fears of sexual harassment. She found that there are more employment opportunities for young males in the city. Although children are valued, chronic poverty also means that there is this tension around fertility and in the 50 in-depth interviews, 20% of young women were also forced to terminate their first pregnancies. Reproductive micro politics of unpaid dowry, desertion, polygamy and rivalry among family members, in-laws and co-wives, and overall competition over limited resources are many of the reasons given for forced terminations. Unequal gender and power relations combined with structural and political-economic inequalities force many poor married adolescent women go along with decisions, which adversely affect their reproductive bodies and health, but they do so to gain advantages under conditions of extreme destitution and limited options.

The reason I chose this paper is to give an example about the works which are available on Korail. Most of them look for the problems and reasons related to Korail which I think miss a very important segment of Korail which is its people and its community. I think the reason my work will be different and will add something new in the knowledge is I tried to find the insights of peoples life and I listened to their voice unlike the NGOs.

Chapter 6

Findings:

The findings which I got from my observation and participant observation are given below:

Influence of Housing pattern in generating sense of community

The two of the mostly populated areas of Korail are JamaiBazar and BouBazar which were my focus for my research as almost 80 percent people of Korail live there according to Tonni Apa who works with Community Development Committee in Korail. In Korail, I had a very hard time in finding any harmony and pattern among things. I mentioned earlier that it's the heterogeneity and mixture of different colors which made Korail so different in the middle of the capital but the only thing which is common is the housing pattern. It's a unique kind of housing pattern I found in a Bosti. The houses that I went to collect data, all of them have almost 5 to 15 rooms, one or two toilets and a kitchen. All of them are cramped in least possible space. Each of the rooms is not more than 90 square feet for each family which contains members from 3 to 7 people. For example, one of my interviewee Motiyar Rahman (46) live with his wife and 4 children, the elder son is 20 year old and elder daughter is of 12 years. All of them live in 12 feet by 9 feet room. Moreover, in their house there are 9 rooms for 9 families and one toilet, one shower and only one kitchen where they have 3 gas stoves and only one water line where water stays for few minutes in the morning. I went to that

house very early in the morning for observing how they manage to work with this limited amount of resources. When I went there at 6.45am, Korail was just starting to warm up. In the house where I passed a half day to observe the daily activities of the people was a tin shed house though it was a two floored house where they use wood to build the floors and bamboos for pillars. Like most of the front of the houses in Korail, that also had very small space but filled with water drums and water line pipes and was very untidy because of the continuous leakage from the water lines and drains. In my observation I found within the small land people are living in very systematic way. Usually they manage to do the entire household works by supporting each other which is a great example of harmony. A part from the supporting each other, sometimes disagreements also happen among people of a same house. For example, one of my interviewee told me about an incident when all the seven families divided into groups and started quarrelling with each other for water. Water supply was having problem in that time so all of them collected water in the drums but someone spoilt the water as a reason they faced shortage of water at the night. My interviewee told me that the quarrelling went for today's and some of them did not talk to each other for a week. But after a week and half, situation got normal automatically. This is very common in living in Bosti as people will not survive if they divide themselves. They know that they only got unity and their community as their weapon of survival.

Queue in the toilet and shower

The toilet and the shower were separated like most of other houses of Korail because of using them separately. In the morning there was a very common scenario of queue in the shower. There are people from different professions live in Korail so they have different timings for their jobs but all of them start their day very early. Like, Md. Alam who is a driver and works for a NGO, basically he goes to work at 11 a.m. which gives him time to wake up late but when I asked him why he starts his day so early then he replies, 'In Korail, it's never very early or late, I need to take a shower in the morning because by 8 there will no water'. Some of the people were also waiting for their number in the toilet as well but neither of them looked disgusted or impatience. When I asked Mst. Hasina about it, she replied, 'it is not a big issue for me, in morning all of us know that we all in a hurry so everyone takes least time in the toilet'. Then I further asked her about this experience and her village condition then she further replied, 'In village it was different, the quality of life was better there but you know in Korail we are here for better standard of life'. Then, I went inside the shower and noticed a very unusual thing for me, there was a mid-aged man who was taking a shower on the side of the shower and on the other side there was another woman who was giving shower to her little son. I observed that here was no shyness between them in the shower and it seemed so obvious for them. These practices are outcome of fictive kinship ties among the people. People who are living with each other from a long period of shares most of the private things with each other and

finds an emotional security in them which leads them to ties fictive kinship with other. This fictive kinship bonds make those people a community and generates the sense of community.

Sharing of Kitchen

Later, when I went in the kitchen I found there were only three gas stoves for 7 families and two women and one man were cooking rice on the stoves. I sat there and talked with them for a half an hour. First I asked them how they manage to cook for 7 families only in one kitchen. They replied that they have divided times for each family in the kitchen according to their need. For example, Rahima khatun who works in a garment has to go for work at 8 in the morning so she uses the kitchen first and makes breakfast and lunch both at the same time for herself and her husband. Then, another family gets to use the kitchen. But then I asked them, in morning all of the people need to make breakfast early so how do they manage? Rahima showed me the person next to her who was cooking something and said that in morning all of us are in a hurry so we share to cook food. For example, the man was cooking rice both for his family and someone else's family in the same pot.

They gave him only the raw rice and he cooks for both families. I asked the man, how do you divide the rice after cooking? He replied, 'We do not divide our food, we share the rice together'. But they prepare additional curries separately for their own family. This is a system which is unusual for me. Though all the seven families are from different parts of Bangladesh, neither of them are relatives

nor know each other from great number of time as they are renters but somehow they got adjusted in this way where they do not find any problem in everyday life.

In my research I also talked with my interviewees about their previous lives before coming to Korail. I wanted to know about the difference between the previous life and life in Korail. How do they differential these two lives and whether they want to go back to village or not. I found that people came in Korail because of mostly economic necessity and most of the renters do not have any land left in their villages. For example, my interviewee Matiyur Rahman (36) sold his land in Thakurgoan for her wife's treatment and then he came to Korail in search for income for his family. My another interviewee Jamal (30) also lost his land in river erosion in Khulna 18 years ago then came to Korail. These people are now like natives of Korail. They have no personal land to go back in there village. I asked them whether they miss their villages or not. They said they miss their land but I observed very little emotion of nostalgia on their faces, the struggle of life I think faded the remaining emotions from them.

Bazars melting spot for males

Another observation of Korail was its bazars. Korail can be easily called as Korail Bazar, as someone may get confused whether it's a bazar in Bosti or a Bosti in a Bazar. They main two areas of Korail are named after Bazars; Bou bazar and Jamai bazar which literally mean Bride Market and

Groom Market. I spent a whole day only in the bazars of Korail which was my most difficult day of the research. The Bazars are not a separate place for trading in Korail rather the Bazars are everywhere in Korail. All the narrow and main streets of Korail contain thousands of shops. I did not find any locations which do not have at least 5/6 shops. I asked the people of the Bazars about the interesting naming and find out that the names were there since Korail's establishment. The general reply from the people was, in Bou bazar most of the buyers are women and in Jamai bazar most of the buyers are men so the names came from there. But in my observation I did not find any difference in the buyers, both the areas are always crowded with both men and women buyers most of the time. But the bazars are basically the melting spot for the males. Males gather in the shops of bazar during work or after daily works and used to have 'Adda' sessions which is not unique but a very influential actor in generation sense of community among them. In my interview of professor Kabir from Architecture department of BRAC University who spend 7 years in Korail also highlighted the uniqueness of bazar in Korail. He mentioned that the bazars are the center for all poor people not only from Korail but also people of Banani and Mohakhali as the people get all sort of things in every possible quantities. In the bazars I spend time in tea shops where I found that tea shops are like a gossip place for men. Rahmatullah (40) who owns a tea shops in BouBazar has spent his major part of life by sitting in the shop and selling tea. It might sound boring work selling tea from 7 am to 10 pm but I observed a very different scenario. Those little shops of Korail are playing

a core role in the development of sense of community. In the shop of Rahmatullah, 'Adda' is a 24/7 matter and free cup of tea is very common. People were sitting there either taking rest from work or talking about their life. During my talk with Rahmantullah, he said he never goes out of Korail not even in holidays. He keeps open the shop 365 day of year as it is his entertainment of life. I observed that during my talking of 45 minutes, about 8 to 10 people were sitting in the shop and tried to be part of our conversation and added a lot in my findings. In those conversations, I could feel the unity and the feeling of belonging among them when they share tea and cigarette with each other.

The income from these shops is not always enough for the family so most of time both husband and wife has to work. Sometime the wife works as domestic worker in Gulshan or Banani or in garments like Motiur Rahman's wife works in a garment factory as a cleaner. Also in some other cases I observed there are some shops which were run by females like Kohinur Akter who came from Faridpur and works in her husband's shop when her husband goes for lunch or for other works. I asked her about whether her husband helps her in household chores or not. She replied negatively and added that 'She and her husband both run this shop. She also does all the household works and look after her children. Though she was working more than her husband but she does not feel any problem with that, because it's all for sake of her family'.

NGO meetings the melting ground for the women

Usually, like all the other patriarchal societies Korail is also a place which I think run mostly by women yet the role of women is ignored like always. Like, Kohinur Akter (37), I observed the women are doing basically all the household chores and daily negotiations with life. Life in a slum is not just all about economic struggles, a family has to go through a lot of other situations as well for example collecting water in the morning, boiling the water for drinking, negotiation with other families of the house for toilet serial and serial in the kitchen and other usual chores which in my observation were done mostly by women. I have the examples from my day long stay in a house. Despite doing most of the works women's roles are not reorganized.

In a society the role of women to bringing out sense of community is significant that's why different organization and NGOs target women for different projects. BRAC is a NGO which runs different project in Korail. One of the projects is related with micro-finance. Like all other part of the country, in Korail only women are the part of microfinance program. So as a reason, women get opportunity to meet with each other and have discussion on daily events. Like BRAC, Community Development Committee also emphasized women in their projects. During my interview with CDC leader Tonni Apa she told me how CDC is working in Korail and why women are the focus point of CDC, according to her, 'There are about 16 local CDC leaders in Korail. There are total 37 CDCs in Korail. Here CDCs are having 250 to 300 members. About 100 thousand people are involved with CDC. CDC doesn't have any male member. I asked her about why they only chose women for

running their projects. Then she replied, 'Community development projects are designed for maximum benefits for the community so involving women in the projects provides loyalty to the projects'. For this reason women in Korail get more opportunity to meet up in the NGO meetings and can discuss social issues which I think has a lot to do with increase in the sense of community as women run Korail mostly. Though Lamia Karim in her book *Women in Debt in Bangladesh*, mentioned that microfinance programs are dividing women in the rural Bangladesh by competing with each other. But in Korail which is an urban slum I observe a different picture. For example, Tonni Apa took me to her next room where I saw a man sitting on the bed who lost his leg in a train accident. His wife took a loan of 15000 taka from CDC but due to her husband's accident she was unable to repay the loan. So when the neighboring people got to know that they collected 15000 taka from all the members of CDC and repaid the loan for him. This is a very unique example of solidarity and sense of community in Korail. Women of Korail are taking the advantage of the NGOs to create a community among them which is helping all the people of Korail.

Role of community based functions in generating sense of community

Furthermore, another important factor of Korail which I think is the most important in the development of sense of community is 'community based functions'. Korail is basically government's land so the land and the people living on it are illegal migrants. A land which is home

for around 3 lack people can't survive without the government's infrastructure and help. But in my research I found Korail is an exceptional. There is no formal government provided electricity, water, policing, drainage facility, school and sanitation in Korail till now but the amazing fact is people of Korail did not wait for government to provide them those facilities. They introduced those facilities privately. Government does not help them rather government creates obstacles for them, though a huge number of people living in Korail in a very systematical way. All the electricity, water and sanitation, policing and schooling system are the outcome of the community good will and community based NGO's working there. In my interview with Professor Kabir who gave his architectural point of view on Korail, advocated a lot about the model of Korail. According to him, Korail can be a role model for the whole city. His observations first seemed very theoretical but later I found them very logical. According to him, 'Undoubtedly, Korail is a good example of community living. We want to design a community without automobile; Korail is a community without automobile. Any car or automobile vehicle can't enter there. Look at Gulshan or Banani or other sophisticated area of this city, one person is riding on one car, this is not environment friendly. As planners we don't want a city like this.' He also added that, 'The people of Korail are using the lake beside Korail for transportation and it's amazing that how they manage it. There never occur any problems or disorganizing incident. There are 100 to 150 boats at most, in the morning, when it is rush hour, every boat carry just six people, not a single person more than six. They are doing it in a

cost effective way as well.’ Professor Kabir pointed out ‘self-organization’ a very unique feature of Korail which I missed in my observation. Everything in Korail is working in systematic way as the people who runs them synchronized themselves in this way. They do not have any government or police to look over or control them so they have their own kind of way of living, where everything works in proper way for their own betterment. In order to manage these facilities, people should have a harmony among them which in my research I found as sense of community.

Fear of eviction

Fear of eviction is one of the few things which are presented among all the people of Korail. This is a possible situation which everyone is always aware of in their daily activities. Every beginning of the year the city-corporation announces about eviction which leaves the people in great terror. Eviction happened in Korail more than once but not in the heart of Korail. Korail constantly expands as a reason sometimes it grabs the lake by dumping wastes or it grabs official land. As a reason every year, a minor eviction happens in Korail. In 2011 a major eviction happened in Korail. First the eviction took place just at the outside of Korail but later people got to know that government was planning to evict the whole Korail. As a reason, all the people of Korail raised their voices and came in the street. They occupied the Mohakhali-Banani main road of an hour later after the surety from government official they went back and eviction was stopped. I also have another

example from my previous work on Korail. While I was working in Korail for another project, I went to interview a woman but she was not in the situation of giving interview. She built her house on the lake as a reason city-corporation gave her notice to move her house otherwise they will break the house. I found the woman madly crying and screaming. The neighbors were there to help her in moving her stuffs from the house.

These are very common story of Korail. Every people of Korail knows that someday they might need to face another eviction as a result they cannot afford division among them. They only have their community to hold their back. So I think this fear of eviction gives them a common purpose to unite and share the sense of community.

Chapter 7

Analysis:

I mentioned earlier, Korail's diversity and multi-cultural trade was something which not only attracted me but also gave me hard time in theorizing Korail. In theorizing I first looked for Earnest Renan's 'common ground or the common interest' among the people. My hypothesis about Korail People was, they are poor so first I tried to use 'Poverty' as the common ground for the people which join most of them. But in my findings I proved wrong. In Korail I found that not every people are poor in Korail. People may assume that all the people of Korail are dealing with poverty but in some cases I found that some house owners are earning about one lakh a month from the room rent. Though poverty has many other dimensions than income, I only took income to characterize poverty as in Korail most people comes for economic survival.

So, that led me to find that once essential element which combines my whole population to come in a common ground and have that essence to imagine as a community. In my observation, in Korail every single person whether s/he was a day labor or a child playing in narrow road was dealing with one common thing which was 'Struggle'. Korail a place where people are living for a reason not willingly, struggle was a common element which was present in most of them. That 'Struggle' is an outcome of a long term process and has lots of ingredients. First, the fear of eviction

is the core element behind the daily struggle of the people. All the people of Korail have the fear of eviction always in their minds which leads them to a great insecurity. According to Professor Kabir, 'I think the people living in Korail are not able to share the full potential of a community feeling because most of them don't have any ownership here, if they do they can get attached to this place in a stronger way. Banani is beside of Korail; if you want to make a comparison the people of Korail are having the feelings of community more than the people of Banani. The people of Korail are living in a society of mutual sharing; it's the good side of Korail I think.' This insecurity of eviction is a daily struggle for the people of Korail which is present among all the dwellers. Second, the civic facilities of Korail are very pitiable as all the people are deprive of safe water, electricity, good sanitation and drainage system. In addition the housing condition and density of population are also not suitable for living. These facilities are the basic needs of the people which all the people of Korail are deprive of. Even if, the wealthy and local powerful leaders can afford those things in Korail but without the goodwill of the government, people of Korail still have a long way to find those facilities for free. So, these daily deprivations of basic needs for those people became a daily matter of negotiation form life which combines them and gives them a common ground in life to see themselves as a community.

Furthermore, the daily sharing of 'Needs' tied those people in a fictive kinship pattern. We know according to Marshall Sahlins that apart from blood and marriage there are many other way of

tying kinship which he called ‘mutuality of being’. In the people of Korail these mutuality of being formed by daily sharing and improvising in daily struggles together. In Korail, the primary relationship between people has always been the most featured aspect in my observation. People who do not know each other from a long period of time yet they address each other as brother, sister or uncle, aunt. This fictive kinship gave them a ground to see each other as their own people in this anonymous place. So in my analysis I think the ‘Struggle of the people’ and ‘Fictive kinship ties’ among the people are the main elements in generating the sense of community in Korail which is the only weapon for their daily survival in this wonderful piece of land.

Conclusion:

Form the day one to till today, Korail reminds me a lot of vibrancy in its characteristics that’s why I think there are a lot of possibilities in this place. A land which is surrounded by a ton of problems can be an example for the rest of people. In this research, apart from all the findings, I got some personal findings for myself which showed me that a land is nothing without its people. A land gets its identity through the people who live in it not by the surroundings. Besides the ‘common struggle of the people’ and ‘the fictive kinship ties’, I think there are more hidden elements are unpacked there and need to be explored. So, from my research I like to give this message to the

world that, we should change our lens to see something unique otherwise we may ignore the beauty we have so close to us in search of exoticism which is far from us.

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Appendix:

Questioners from CDC project:

- 1) Over the last 5-10 years, what are some things you and/or your household have done to improve your economic condition?
- 2) What are the main OBSTACLES preventing you and your household from improving your living conditions? (Or, rephrase: ‘What are some ways you think you could improve your living conditions?’)
- 3) If YOUR HOUSEHOLD were given 10,000 taka today, how would you use these funds?
[Prompt only if necessary: to build housing? improve services? take out a loan? start a business?]
- 4) If YOUR COMMUNITY were given 50 lakh taka, how do you think the community SHOULD use those funds?
- 5) CURRENTLY, do you worry about EVICTION? What do you think is the best strategy for your household, or others, to avoid eviction?
- 6) Do you think that voting can help your family or your community? What responsibilities do you feel the GOVERNMENT has towards helping your family and/or your community?
- 7) How has the CDC (Community Development Committee) changed your community?
- 8) Can you give me an example of when your voice has mattered or when it has not mattered?

- 9) CURRENTLY, are you satisfied with your life in this settlement, in general? Do you feel PHYSICALLY SAFE in this community?
- 10) Do you feel that residents in this settlement HELP EACH OTHER and TRUST EACH OTHER?
- 11) What are the issues that bring your community TOGETHER?
- 12) HOW do people SOLVE CONFLICTS in the community?
- 13) What do you LIKE BEST about living in this community?
- 14) What do you LIKE LEAST about living in this community?