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Behavioural Change Communication (BCC) Approach  
for BRAC: A Formative Research

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# Executive Summary

The role of recreational activities and entertainment is now being taken very seriously by sociologists, anthropologists, development activists, and health researchers in order to understand individuals and the community in general. Though the well-articulated community-building process of Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) has contributed to such mechanized participation, the spontaneity of an independent mind is the most probable agent in the whole process. Rojek (2005) finds leisure a “crucial moment” to understand people’s choices. Moreover, in convention, leisure is an “end” by itself. Forms of entertainment are extensively used to deliver specific content to the specific community. However, in the realm of rapid technological advancement, there has been a radical shift in the nature of the forms of entertainment.

As a part of social development, BRAC has been working in the Behavioural Change Communication (BCC) areas of its programme participants for decades. Strategically, BCC utilizes popular forms of entertainment to reach out to the intended recipients. Now that we are facing a revolutionary technological change, which has also changed people’s modes of recreation, it is time to rethink the effectiveness of the conventional BCC tools and revise them if necessary.

From this point of view, this formative research was initiated to reveal the present socio-cultural situation at the grassroots level. Besides, this study intended to find out alternative BCC practices that would be adaptive to the changes in the cultural atmosphere. This exploratory formative research, by adopting focused ethnography as its core method, explored different cultural activities, domains of entertainment, and existing communication patterns in the community. Based on the analysis, this study also put forward some recommendations in order to improvise the BCC practices. The focused ethnography was conducted in a typical Bangladeshi socio-cultural setting. Dewangonj Upazila of Jamalpur district was purposively selected as the study area. The research team spent about one month with the community—observed different cultural activities, forms of entertainment, had occasional chats with people, documented the flow of process, and conducted In-Depth Interviews (IDIs) with the stakeholders. At the same time, they also performed a qualitative assessment of BRAC’s BCC practices at the grassroots level.

This study revealed the existing patterns of cultural and recreational activities at the community level that can be broadly categorized into seasonal, periodic, and everyday entertainment. Different modalities and purposiveness of entertainment, such as secular entertainment (*‘Jatrapala’*, *‘Palagaan’*, *‘Sarigaan’*, local dramas, etc.); religious entertainment (*‘Kirtan’*, *‘Waj-Mahfil’*, etc.); sports-based entertainment (football, cricket, badminton, *‘Nouka Baich’*, etc.); national interests (International Mother Language Day, National Children’s Day, Independence Day, Victory Day, etc.), local market-oriented (*Hatbar*) entertainment (*‘Mojma’*, canvassing, lottery, etc.); mobile-oriented entertainment (audio, video, picture, etc.); cable network and television, social media (Facebook, YouTube, IMO, etc.) were found to exist in the community. It was also found that a significant change has occurred in the span of everyday entertainment in both rural and peri-urban areas. This entire context was in such a phase that the information and communication technology developed in a noteworthy way. As a result, the sources of entertainment and information became personalized, localized, and digitalized. The advancement of technology created a new form of ‘digital and virtual culture’ in the community. Mobile phones had become a vibrant source of entertainment and information. People of all ages and social classes used their mobile phones for getting information, communicating with others, and for

entertainment. Diverse usages of personal mobile phones made people very familiar and habituate with digital contents, specifically Audio-Visual (AV) and with the virtual domain. At the same time, the modality of getting access to the domain of entertainment and information using personal devices shaped a notion of personalization of information and entertainment among the community people. Since internet packages offered by different mobile operators were expensive, both in rural and peri-urban areas people did not have significant access to the internet. But they had another organized structure through which they obtained digital contents and stored them on their electronic devices. Orienting this exchange of digital contents, an informal market mechanism emerged in the community which was also explored in this study.

Apart from the influence of mobile phones, it was found that local cable network-based different contents had another degree of appeal to the community. That local cable networks unfolded a new aspect of localization of digital contents. People from the local community who were involved in cultural activities tended to engage with new digital forms of entertainment contents, including product advertisements or service promotions. Locally produced audio and video contents (both recreational and promotional) created a sense of 'vicinal-connection' (ownership) in the community people regarding those contents. The local cable network-based contents played an important role as a source of information and entertainment to the people. Simultaneously, grounded mechanisms or structures, vis-à-vis access to information and entertainment in the realms of personal mobile phones as well as local cable networks were revealed through the ethnographic approach. The local content development process was also tried to explore. There were many potential knots in the complex net of the socio-cultural and economic structural processes of content digitalization. A thorough understanding of all the changes happening in the ground could be useful in opening a new window into the BCC practices. Findings also raised a flag about the importance of being sensitized about the local cultural components which might be more impulsive in BCC content development.

Finally, it emerged from the cases of BRAC's conventional BCC practices in the community that printed pictorial posters and flipcharts (conventionally used by BRAC) were losing their appeal to the target audience. Moreover, with gradual changes in the lifestyle of the people due to increasing urbanization, they were becoming busier with their income-generating activities. As a result, organizing a session of flipchart or poster facilitation was becoming more and more challenging. In addition, there were some issues that were fully dependent on the staff's subjectivity. Although this study was conducted in a particular population of Bangladesh, as per the focused ethnographic tradition, we took all the measures to make the case study as representational as possible to a typical Bangladeshi rural and peri-urban context. With the in-depth exploration and thick description of the context, we believe the results are transferable to other similar Bangladeshi contexts as well. Based on the findings of the study, we acknowledge that given the changed circumstances in the lifestyle as well as communication patterns of the people in the rural and peri-urban areas of Bangladesh, it is now important for BRAC to consider new approaches to information, communication, and education methods while preserving some of the effective conventional methods as well.

# 1. Introduction

The role of recreational activities and entertainment is now being taken very seriously by sociologists, anthropologists, development activists, and health researchers in order to understand individuals and the community in general. More specifically, many argue that people's participation, particularly to understand developmental needs, has been ambiguously designed which was not subject to any rigorous scrutiny (Piccioto, 1992; Mohammad, 2004). Thanks to the NGOs' well-articulated community-building process which has contributed to such mechanized participation, the spontaneity of an independent mind, however, is the most probable agent in the whole process. That is why Rojek (2005) finds leisure a "crucial moment" to understand people's choices. Moreover, in convention, leisure is an "end" by itself. But as soon as the sociologists and development activists began to occupy and utilize this new territory, leisure became rather a "mean" in many respects. Different forms of entertainment are extensively used by specific communities. Eventually delivering messages to these communities using their form of entertainment has become a popular strategy.

However, in the realm of rapid technological advancement, there has been a radical shift in the nature of the forms of entertainment. For example, a mobile phone with an iOS or Android operating system can act as a phone, television, music system, audio-video recorder and player, and a camera at the same time. Surely, a device like this is bound to bring about enormous changes in people's recreational activities. At the same time, social media like Facebook and YouTube also have a huge impact on people's forms of entertainment. So, social workers and development practitioners must evaluate the effectiveness of these forms of entertainment in delivering their messages.

BRAC has been working on social development and poverty reduction in Bangladesh for many decades. As a part of social development work, BRAC has also been working in the Behavioural Change Communication (BCC) areas of its programme participants. Strategically, BCC utilizes popular forms of entertainment to reach out to the intended recipients. Now that we are facing a revolutionary technological change, which has also changed people's modes of recreation, it is time to rethink the effectiveness of the conventional BCC tools and revise them if necessary. From this point of view, this formative research was initiated to reveal the present socio-cultural situation at the grassroots level. Besides, this study intended to find out alternative BCC practices that would be adoptive of the changes in the cultural atmosphere. This exploratory formative research, by adopting focused ethnography as its core method, explored different cultural activities, domains of entertainment, and existing communication patterns in the community. Based on the analysis, this study also put forward some recommendations in order to improvise the BCC practices.

The focused ethnography was conducted at Dewangonj in three phases. The team spent about one month with the community—observed different cultural activities, forms of entertainment,

had occasional chats with people, documented the flow of process, and conducted in-depth interviews with the stakeholders.

## 2. Study objective

This study intended to explore the existing forms of entertainment and cultural activities of the community people focusing on the BCC transformation in the context of the rapid development of information and communication technology at the community level in Bangladesh. Consequentially, prominent forms of institutional and programmatic BCC activities of BRAC were also scrutinized for their relevance in the present context. Eventually, an in-depth understanding of the socio-cultural scenario, a detailed review of BRAC's BCC strategies, and specific recommendations were put.



## 3. Methodology

Focused ethnography was adopted to fulfil the first objective, while process documentation of BCC activities was employed to meet the second. As a part of the formative research, a situation analysis of the existing BCC approaches as well as the economic, social, cultural, behavioural, and psychosocial context assessment of the target population were conducted following the steps elaborated below:

### Step-1: Mapping the Current BCC Methods Used by BRAC

Focusing on the following five questions, the first step was completed by using a free listing method. This free listing method helped identify the most used forms of BCC materials. Here, the respondents were the staff from BRAC's various programmes. The questions were:

1. What are the different BCC methods currently used by BRAC?
2. What materials are used?
3. Which programme uses the respective methods?
4. Who is the target audience of each method?
5. Where are the methods used?

### Step-2: Selecting BRAC's BCC Method for the Case Study and the Study Area

From the mapping of current BCC strategies, two were selected for further case studies: (1) the most conventional practice and (2) newly flourishing practice in the domain of social media the case studies were also selected based on the initial mapping of the programmatic significance. Both rural and peri-urban locations were selected for the fieldwork where a favourable context existed to observe the facilitation session of these two methods.

To conveniently perform a focused ethnography, we considered a location where we would get a typical Bangladeshi culture and behavioural notion. The patterns of BRAC's BCC materials usage were enormous due to the variety of programme activities as well as for the nature of the socio-cultural context of programme participants, particularly in the urban and rural contexts. We identified two different domains of BCC materials—printed and social media. To be focused, we considered flipcharts and posters from the printed domain and BRAC's entire social media platform on the basis of mostly used, significance, audience, purpose, etc. To assess the socio-cultural Behavioural Change Communication context, ethnographic exploration was used. Since Bangladesh is facing the era of rapid urbanization, to grasp a typical

Bangladeshi socio-cultural context in both peri-urban and rural areas, we initially chose four districts as potential sites where the ethnographic research could be conducted. Those were Mymensingh, Dinajpur, Rangpur, and Jamalpur. Given the time constraint of the formative research, we were looking for a place where most of the programmes of BRAC were active at both rural and peri-urban levels and situated at a near distance so that the research team could visit both of them frequently.

Finally, we purposively selected Dewangonj Upazila of Jamalpur district as our study area among the four initial locations. We excluded Rangpur and Dinajpur for their peripheral locations which typically are “too northern” for the mainstream Bangladeshi culture. And also, the northern part of Bangladesh is considered as a poverty-prone area where NGOs and the government have a weighty concentration. On the other hand, choosing Mymensingh would have led this project to an urban/centre bias. So we tried to avoid the immense influence of government and non-government programmes as well as urbanization. We considered such a place where we could find a typical socio-cultural and economic landscape. As a result, Dewangonj became an automatic choice for us which remained equally far from the NGO-led development and the government-led urbanization.

Dewangonj has both rural and peri-urban settings where almost all programmes of BRAC are active. Moreover, Dewangonj is an old sub-district of Bangladesh where people have experience of agriculture-based industrialization (sugar mill), railway connectivity, and even a river port, though the splendid past of the port has become misty. There is also diversity in the livelihoods of people. So the socio-cultural and economic landscape of this area is vibrant with a combination of different professions, social class divisions, and culture. The indigenous and folk cultural aspect of Jamalpur is diversely rich. Considering demographic, socio-economic, and other features that are relevant to our focused ethnography, we have chosen Dewangonj Upazila of Jamalpur district as our research field.

## Step-3: Contextual Assessment of the Target Population

At this level, an in-depth understanding of the contextual factors of the study location was required in which BRAC’s BCC practices took place. This was mainly in order to find out how BRAC interventions fit with the lifestyle of the target population.

Issues explored under the contextual assessment:

### ***-What are the socio-economic characteristics of the population?***

To cover this issue, a general idea about the professions of the people and demography of the population was captured. Certain background information was collected from Union Parishad and/or Upazila Parishad offices. A broad idea was also generated just by talking with the local community people. Here document review and informal conversations with different types of people were used as data collection methods.

***-What is the general nature of the everyday lifestyle of the target population?***

Focused ethnography was used to explore this issue. The intention was to sketch an outline of their daily activities by asking the target audience to describe their daily lives—what they did throughout a typical day—to find out how the BCC activities fit with their lifestyle.

***-What are the other existing BCC activities in the locality?***

Focused ethnography was also used to find out what other actors (except BRAC), for example, NGOs, government organizations, commercial organizations, folk sellers, etc. were engaged in BCC activities in the locality and the forms they used. Here, observation and informal discussions with respective people were used to capture an overall view.

***-What are the current sources of entertainment of the population?***

To reveal this issue, focused ethnography was once again deployed to map the existing entertainment patterns, including the use of televisions, mobile phones, YouTube, films, etc. To be specific, observation and formal and informal interviews with different people affiliated with their respective sectors were used in comprehending this issue.

## Step-4: Process Evaluation of the Communication Session

Printed BCC materials are used in almost every programme of BRAC and have a strong significance in the nature of the approved programmatic activities. They are being used by the programmes for a long time. Among these printed material-based methods, flipcharts, posters, and x-banners-based sessions have been contributing to the programmatic landscape of the Behavioural Change Communication at the grassroots. From the perspective of mostly used and the most conventional practice, printed material-oriented methods as well as newly spreading social media-based BCC domain were taken under consideration in this process documentation phase. In this process documentation method, preparation of the materials, organization of the sessions, conducting the sessions of the two selected BCC methods were included to answer the question:

***-What is the process of delivery of the BCC method?***

## Step-5: Exploring the Experience of the Stakeholders Regarding the BCC Activity

In this step, the perception of the local people regarding the printed material-based BCC activities was tried to understand. In-depth interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with programme participants who were introduced to the BCC activities were conducted to find out

if they were interested in the material, whether it fulfilled their expectations, if they had any suggestions to improve it, etc. One of the prime intentions was to answer the question:

***-What are the views of the target population regarding BRAC's BCC activities?***

Apart from this, we tried to know the views of BRAC's BCC organizers/staff through in-depth interviews. Basically, these interviews were to find out the challenges and facilitating factors faced by BRAC employees who organized the BCC activities.

## Step-6: Fieldwork and Data Analysis

The ethnographic approach was deployed to analyse the entire field data and researchers' reflections. Here, researchers themselves worked as research tools. Thick descriptions of social mechanisms emerged from the blending of observation, researchers' reflections, and different levels of discussions with the local community as well as discussions among the inter-research team members. The research team discussed their observations and reflections throughout the fieldwork and data analysis.

Researchers held their discussions in an 'adda'<sup>1</sup> environment. Especially during the period of fieldwork, the research team never cared about their official working hours. Instead, they stayed up late at night, discussing the research objectives and fieldwork. After everyday fieldwork, the team sat in a discussion followed by writing down daily findings. At the same time, they also triangulated their findings among inter-tools (IDIs, FGDs, observations, and reflections).

During data analysis, data was segregated thematically. Under themes, different data-driven sub-themes were accumulated.

The inner intention of data collection and analysis was to explore the existing mechanism of BCC and the patterns of entertainment at grassroots where BRAC's BCC activities are practiced. It was also an intention to find out a pathway of programmatic approach, which might contribute to the changing context of entertainment and access to information at grassroots.

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<sup>1</sup> Informal discussion or open discussion without any hesitation overcoming the barrier of formality. In Bengali culture 'adda' connotes an informal discussion in the cultural context of Bengali.

# 4. Findings

## 4.1 Socio-economic Context of the Study Area

### Geographical Location and Demography of Dewanganj

Dewanganj is an Upazila of Jamalpur district in Bangladesh. It covers an area of 266.59 square kilometres (102.93 square miles) and is bounded by Char Rajibpur Upazila in the north, Islampur Upazila in the south, Baksigonj Upazila, Meghalaya, and India in the east, and Gaibandha Sadar Upazila and Phulchhari Upazila in the west. It is about 42 km away from the district proper. Jamuna (Brahmaputra) is its main river. The total population of this Upazila is 258,133, of which 126,613 are male and 131,510 female. It has a population density of 965/km and the population growth is 1.17% per year.

The area is named after two saints, Dewan Shah Kamal and Dewan Shah Jamal who came from Yemen and preached Islam in this region during the Mughal era. There are eight unions and one municipality under this Upazila. Main occupations include agriculture (39.34%), fishing (1.81%), agricultural labourer (28.77%), wage labourer (3.76%), commerce (9.44%), service (5.69%), and others (11.19%) (BBS, 2011).

Considering the geographical, occupational, economic, social, cultural, and infrastructural variations, it appears that both peri-urban and rural scenarios exist in this Upazila. The Upazila Sadar (proper) is under the municipality where some features of urbanization are visible in contrast to more agriculture-based rural regions. Though different characteristics of urbanization such as various non-agrarian economic activities are noticeable in this region, the notion of rural society prevails in the socio-cultural and economic domains. This Upazila Sadar is neither entirely urban nor totally rural. It is, therefore, better to see this as a peri-urban area.

Except for the municipality area, all unions of this Upazila fall under the rural category in terms of socio-economic, political, cultural, infrastructural, and geographical settings.

## 4.2 Geo-social and Cultural Features (Peri-urban and Rural)

### Peri-urban Life

Peri-urban areas can be distinguished from the rural areas based on their geographical and infrastructural features. Different educational institutions, health service providers,

government and non-government organizations are situated at Upazila Sadar. Moreover, the communication and transportation systems of the Upazila Sadar are relatively 'advanced' from the rural areas. These infrastructural and geographical settings created various opportunities for livelihood and gave some sort of socio-economic and cultural vibe of growing urbanization. Market and business climate of this peri-urban area is vibrant—wholesalers and distributors of different companies operate their businesses from here. Farmers from the villages come to the Upazila Sadar to sell their harvested crops and get better profits.

During the fieldwork, it was observed that most of the service holders are making their livelihoods in and around the Upazila Sadar. There is a chunk of government employees who work at the local government administrative office, land registry office, banks, and other government offices. Besides, schools, colleges, hospitals, sugar mills, NGOs, and even different types of shops and businesses accumulated a number of people as their employees. Local people work in most of these sectors as salaried staff. On the other hand, there are some salaried labourers in the sugar mill and a large number of people work as rickshaw pullers, transport workers, and casual labourers. The salaried employees were found to be more educated than the day labourers.

Based on the value of their income and wealth, the entire population of the peri-urban area can be categorized into three divisions of class: higher, middle, and lower. High ranked government job holders, industrialists, big businessmen are considered as higher-class people who have a good control in local politics, power structure, and also have good social networking. Though most of them live outside, they have good houses at the Upazila Sadar. Mid-level government and non-government employees, medium business owners (owners of big grocery stores, restaurants, wholesalers, etc.) come under the middle class. They, too, have some degree of connection with local politics and power structure. The lower class is defined as the cluster of low-income people in the town, such as the owners of small shops and tea stalls, local transport workers, daily labourers, carpenters, etc. There is a relation of social interdependency among these classes but the intensity of this interdependency is not as strong as it is in the rural areas.

Though it is an area of growing urbanization, social relations and solidarity remain as a mixed experience. Unlike many urban areas, there is still a sense of collective being among the inhabitants. People know their neighbours and maintain a social relationship with them. They live in social harmony and in a cordial social context where they communicate with each other as social-relatives and maintain the norms of conventional 'Bengali culture'. They have social gatherings and 'addas' at tea stalls where they discuss different social issues.

The youth of this peri-urban area were found to cultivate a cohesive social relation through some collective and co-operative work. They arrange cultural, social, and sports events in their locality by organizing sporting clubs or cultural organizations. It seemed that the socio-cultural climate of this peri-urban area offered an opportunity for collective socialization to the youth of the Dewangonj municipality area.

## Rural Life

There are eight unions under Dewangonj Upazila—Dangdhara, Char Amkhaoa, Parramrampur, Hativanga, Bahadurabad, Chikajani, Chukaibari, and Dewangonj—that can be considered as rural areas in terms of socio-economic, cultural, geographical, and communication infrastructural settings. Socio-cultural and economic posture, the research team found, is deeply based on agriculture. Due to the presence of huge fertile silt in the farmlands of these areas, the production of different crops like sugarcane, paddy, corn, maize, jute, and vegetables are abundant and the majority of the people are directly or indirectly dependent on agriculture. Most of the rural households are directly involved in farming. Apart from farmers, there are people of other professions like fishermen, day labourers, transport workers, small business owners, etc. as well. It was found that though there are people of different occupations, they all have a connection with farming. A rickshaw puller informed that although rickshaw pulling was his main occupation, he also worked in the farmlands as a day labourer and even took a small amount of land on lease to cultivate rice.

During fieldwork, four social class divisions appeared through discussions with the rural people. The divisions were made on the basis of wealth, income, and social position. They identified the divisions as rich farmland owners, middle farmland owners, smallholder-tenant farmers, and poor.

Rich farmland owners are those who have a farmland of more than 10 bighas<sup>2</sup> and livestock. Apart from land, they also have other sources of income like big businesses and good jobs in the locality. They are not directly involved in agricultural activities. Instead, they mainly hire agricultural labourers or lease their land to other smallholders or tenant farmers of the village in conditional share-cropping. Middle farmland owners have a land of 2-5 bighas and livestock. They have minimal involvement with direct farming activities and are also dependent on day labourers. They also have other sources of income like small businesses in the local Bazar (market place) or small service holding jobs.

On the other hand, smallholder-tenant farmers are mainly agricultural labourers with land fewer than two bighas. They are skilled in cultivation and other agricultural work. They work in other people's land as day labourers and sometimes take tenancy contracts or take land on conditional lease from the landowners of their villages for cultivation. They depend on the upper two classes for their livelihood and life expenses. And the last group is the most vulnerable in the community who do not have any dignified livelihood and completely depended on government's different social safety net programmes like FFW, VGD, VGF, etc. as well as on the help of the community people. The majority of them are disabled, aged widow, and workless people.

Based on the agricultural mode of production, interdependency and interrelationship are found among these four groups. The gross posture of inter-class dependency can be described in a

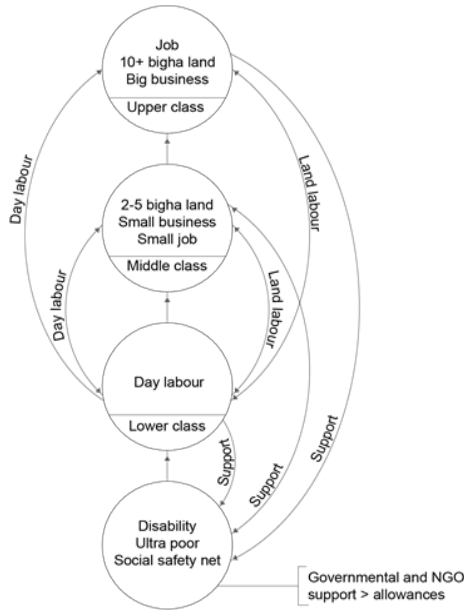
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<sup>2</sup> Bigha is a local unit of land measurement which means 1 bigha=33 decimal.

way where the first group (rich farmland owners) gives their land contracts both to the second (middle farmland owners) and the third (smallholder-tenant farmers) groups. The first group also hires day labourers from the third group for land cultivation. In the same way, the second group leases their land to the third group and hires day labourers from the same group. Members of the third group take land in agreement from both groups (first, second) and simultaneously work in the farmlands of these two groups.

**Figure 1: Rural Social Classes and Interdependency**

RURAL SOCIAL CLASSES AND INTER DEPENDENCY



Apart from this, there are some people who are engaged in the business of agricultural products. They buy products from the local market and send them to the capital and other districts for better economic profits. Dewangonj Upazila is mainly a riverine area and rivers are an important source of income for the people. There are fishing communities almost in every union. These fishing households are also engaged in cattle rearing.

In the rural areas, people maintain a much more cohesive community compared to the people of the peri-urban area. Alongside clan and kinship-based communities, joint families are found in most of the places of the rural regions. Their agricultural mode of production is one of the vital factors which help them to carry on a good 'social solidarity'. It is also observed that in the villages, people construct cultural and social relationships driven by kinship which is also a part of the conventional Bengali culture. Here kinship relation is strong—people know each other in a village setup. They tend to build their houses close to their relatives. Here, the mode of land ownership plays an important role. Though some of the rural people who have strength in economic, social, and cultural capital try to shift in the urban or peri-urban areas for pursuing a 'better' urban life. The yards of the rural houses are mainly used for crop harvesting. They are also a place for social gatherings and 'addas' to women from the neighbouring households.



People participate in different local social and cultural events like marriages, religious festivals, funeral ceremonies, '*Nouka Baich*' (rowing competition), etc. Men give 'addas' at tea stalls in the local 'hat-bazar' (markets). People exchange greetings and discuss different social, political, and personal issues. It has been known that people become united and even contribute to their local rowing team to participate in a rowing competition. They also support their team by heart in the final event. From these perspectives, a sense of social and regional unity has been also perceived in the rural society.

Though a good notion of social cohesion and harmony is observed in the rural community, in some cases interpersonal discrepancy and clashes also exist among them. There are different reasons for conflict like land ownership, relationship problem, 'Jhagra-Jhati' (quarrelling) over personal or family dominance, etc.

### **“Chaurra”: An Isolated Identity**

Due to land erosion newly form land in the river known as 'Char' is found in different places of the rural area. These places are much more remote than the mainstream rural regions. There are no well-established communication system, markets, or other facilities of 'modern' life. These 'Chars' are used as farmlands as well as living places by many people who have lost their land due to river calamity. Many villages are being formed by those people who were dislocated before from their inherited land in these 'Char' areas. People who live in 'Chars' are known as 'Chaurra' (inhabitants of Char region) in the local language. Both rural and urban people maintain a negative perception of these 'Chaurra' people, as seen in their use of the term 'Chaurra', which not only is a word that carries the idea of geographical isolation from the mainland but also bears a connotation of cultural backwardness. In some cases, this detestable view submerges the 'Char' inhabitants into an inferiority complex. Thus, 'Chaurra' becomes an isolated and cheeky identity in the region which has also enormous impact on their socialization, psycho-social behaviour, and engagement with the mainstream population.

### **Professional Risk, Changeable Profession, and Migration Tendency**

As this region is highly affected by river calamity and flood, different levels of risks are found among the people. Occupational migration is a common phenomenon and it is also visible in the local community. As there is uncertainty regarding sustainable livelihood among the people, they have a tendency to migrate to other convenient places to work in. People migrate to new places and take new occupations to survive. Beside natural disasters, rural areas have been changing gradually with the rapid growth of infrastructural and technological development. For example, once boats were used as the main transport in this riverine area. But now rivers are not much alive as they were in the past and 'Chars' are also being formed, simultaneously road infrastructure and transportation systems have been developed. As a result, the entire

commuting structural context has changed and the boatman community were forced to change their profession.

The majority of these displaced people of riverbanks (both victims of land erosion and contextual change) are surviving on different types of professions, like rickshaw pulling, driving auto-rickshaw vans (mechanized rickshaws) and other agricultural and casual labourers. Moreover, in Zeal-Bangla sugar mill (a government sugar mill) some local day labourers are recruited temporarily for three or four months during the harvesting and milling season of sugarcane. After the milling season, they have to search for other professions. Such uncertainty and professional risks combined with changing nature are observed in this region.

Professional risks also create economic vulnerability. As a result, the trend of internal and professional migration is much higher among the people where both push and pull factors are involved. Land erosion pushes people from their region to migrate to new places. People also move toward the city with the hope to change their economic condition and vulnerable context. Some of them manage some sort of work in the city to send money to their families. Those who cannot manage any source of income in the city, locate themselves in different regions of the Upazila. As we found, a group of Hindu people who lost almost everything due to frequent river erosion were living beside rail lines of the Chukaibari union. The majority of them are fishermen by profession now, though their ancestors' profession was small business and shop). They live almost hand to mouth and remain hungry when the government orders them to stop fishing during the fish breeding season. Many of these fishermen remain workless and need to lend money from other people to meet up their basic needs. Again, temporary employees of Zeal-Bangla sugar mill after completing their contractual agreement, fall on professional vulnerability. Thus, professional risk, changeable profession, and migration tendencies are found at Dewangonj.

### **Gender Perspective in the Peri-urban and Rural Areas**

Considering the gender dimension, it was observed that the genre of women's mobility in both public and private spheres is not the same in the rural and peri-urban areas. In the rural area, women are comparatively more invisible in public places like markets and roads but are more visible in farming fields. In the village, women, mostly from the middle-farmland owners and smallholder families work in the field with their male family members. They help their family farming in different stages of cultivation as they have a degree of access in these spheres and skills at agricultural activities. It seems that the present agricultural mode of production in the rural area, especially of middle and small households are highly dependent on women's participation. Simultaneously, they do their household activities like making food, child caring, keeping household clean, rearing livestock (cow, goat, cock, duck, etc.). Livestock rearing is a part of agro-economy and a source of income to farming households. On contrary, women of the higher class (rich farmland owners) do not engage in farm activities in the field; their social status, dignity, and prestige hold them back. Moreover, this high class is dependent on agriculture labourers and is not much directly involved in farming activities. But it has been observed that in some cases women of higher class help in cattle rearing.

An opposite scenario is found in the peri-urban area where mobility of women is more visible in public places including market, roads, and different government and non-government institutions. Many women work in different institutions as salaried staff. The mode of economic or professional work is highly institutionalized as well as skill and education-oriented in the peri-urban setting. So, there is no scope to helping someone in an institutional and professional atmosphere without having certain skills and access. There is a visible difference between the peri-urban area and the rural area where the rural women can work with their male members in the field, they have also experience in agriculture. In peri-urban setting women who do not work with any institution, there is no prominent opportunity through which they can engage in earning. Hence, most of the housewives remain busy with only their household chores and child caring. The notion and nature of the public working sphere in the peri-urban area do not allow women without affiliation with any institution and it requires very specific professional skills and education.

## 4.3 Existing Cultural Activities

Dewangonj is a culturally rich Upazila where the traditional Bengali culture is practiced through different cultural activities and events with different patterns. They are unique in terms of origin, seasonality, patronization, and purpose. And based on these very criteria the existing cultural activities can be divided into six categories: i. indigenous/folk, ii. 'mainstream', iii. religious, iv. sports-based, v. business-oriented, and vi. national events-based cultural activities. Seasonality is also very important since some of the events are only visible during certain seasons.

### 1. Indigenous/Folk Cultural Activities

Indigenous or folk cultural activities are the traditional events that have a long historical continuity in the community and have gradually become a part of cultural heritage by the passage of time. Being members of the community, people participate in these events as a part of their tradition and culture. Different types of indigenous or folk cultural activities and events are arranged at Dewangonj, such as 'Jatrapala', 'Palagaan', 'Jarigaan', 'Sharigaan', 'Keccha', local drama, circus, etc. Usually, these events are arranged by and are intended for the local people.

Among these events 'Palagaan', a kind of storytelling session with music and dance is very famous in this locality. A musical group of people, consisting of both men and women perform 'Palagaan' arranged by the community people at different places in the locality over the year. Most of the time the 'Palagaan' script is written based on heart-touching real stories of the locality which have been verbally transmitted over time to the current generation and turned into a myth. More than one group can perform the same story in their own form, style, and narrative. As a result, the original history deviates over time and subtle differences are found.

However, the main theme and vibe of the story remain the same, no matter how many groups are presenting the story in a 'Palagaan' form. Sometimes such stories become so famous and popular that often the 'mainstream' media make movies based on them. For example, during fieldwork, the research team came to know such a story of 'Palagaan' from the local people named 'Khairun Bibi' which is very famous and well known among them and has been so for a long time. It is the real story of a housewife who was killed by her husband out of revenge. The incident happened about more than sixty years back and only a very few people are alive now who have heard about this real occurrence in their childhood. But with the passage of time, this story turned into a folk story and the 'mainstream' media eventually made a film on this, named 'Khairun Sundari' (Fairy Khairun).

Like 'Palagaan', 'Jarigaan' is also known to be very famous in this locality. In most of the cases, they, too, are formed based on real stories. Many NGOs use the 'Jarigaan' format to build community awareness on different topics like child marriage, dowry, eve-teasing, sexual harassment, drugs, etc.

'Keccha', narration of a story with music by a cultural group is another popular folk event in the local community. According to the people, "*Ei elakay kecchar alada rokom shomman achey.*" ('Keccha' holds an important place of value in this community). If people come to know that 'Keccha' is arranged somewhere in the region, they tend to come from far away.

'Jatrapala' and circus are also famous. Theatre groups and circus parties from different regions of Bangladesh are invited to perform 'Jatrapala' and circus by some of the powerful people in the locality. The invited groups set their tents and stages for sometimes over a month. Many people come to enjoy their performance by purchasing tickets. Sometimes there is an arrangement of a house too. A large number of people are fond of the house game.

Apart from these prominent activities, there are also many other folk activities which are being practiced by the community people for decades.

## 2. 'Mainstream'/'New Forms' of Cultural Activities

New forms of cultural activities are considered as the activities which are formed with the rapid growth of technology over the decades. They can be categorized into two classes: a. mobile phone-based activities and b. cable network and television-based activities.

### *a. Mobile Phone-based Activities*

Based on the multi-pattern usage of mobile phones, different activities are found. Now, a mobile phone is not only a tool of communication but has multidimensional usage. Two types of mobile phones are being used by the people of this region, one is smartphone and the other is feature-phone. Mainly financially capable youth and technologically advanced aged people

use smartphones while others use feature-phones. Smartphone usage rate is higher in the peri-urban area than it is in the rural, as more solvent and educated people live in the peri-urban area. On the other hand, the majority of the rural people use feature-phones due to their economic and educational backwardness.

Apart from talking with people, smartphones can be used to browse the internet, run different mobile apps (Messenger, IMO, WhatsApp, etc.), capture photos and videos, listen to music, watch films, etc. Feature-phones are primarily used to communicate with people. Most of the feature-phones have the option to use memory cards on which people can store audio songs (in mp3 format) and videos in low resolution (3gp format). There are many memory card-loading shops in the rural and peri-urban areas from where people get their memory cards loaded with different contents by paying a certain amount of money.

Considering the psycho-graphic perspective, smartphone users have the tendency to surf the internet and access different social media domains. Those who have economic solvency buy internet packages offered by different mobile operators. There are certain limitations of data (megabyte-based) usage and the internet packages come with expiry dates. Depending on the data limits, users browse the internet and download different contents. In most of the cases, smartphone users who have internet access, also have a Facebook account. Their most common activities on Facebook include adding people to their friend lists, sharing different contents, such as photos, videos, texts, links, etc. There are also some local people who get a high number of 'likes' on their posts and are considered as 'Facebook celebrity'. This also creates social capital in the real world for the community. Local Facebook users have also developed different Facebook groups. Among them, different sports clubs or youth clubs use Facebook groups to update their activities and maintain communication with the group members.

### *b. Cable Network and Television-based Activities*

New forms of cultural activities based on cable networks and televisions are found in the community. People who have television, in most of the cases, have a cable network connection at their house, shop, or office. In the rural area, almost every tea stall has a television and cable network connection to attract customers, whereas in the peri-urban area such stalls are small in number, as most of the people have television and cable network connection at their houses. This is because in the rural area the rate of affordability of a television with a cable network connection is not that high compared to the peri-urban area. At the peri-urban level, low-income people who do not have a television at their houses gather here to drink tea, gossip, and watch the television. People who do have televisions and cable network connections at their houses also come to the tea stalls. These people think that they have little scope of watching television as per their interests in their houses since their wives or other members of the family have different tastes and interests. So they come to the tea stalls, have tea, give 'addas', and watch their favourite programmes. People with different tastes and interests watch different programmes telecasted on national, international, and local channels and

discuss different social issues. There are also different locally developed folk and funny contents that are found telecasting from the local cable networks. People are interested in these contents too. This 'mainstream' form of cultural activities based on television and cable network is found to be formed in recent years.

### 3. Religious Cultural Activities

Religion being an important part of 'cultural phenomenon', as described by E.B. Tylor, has a great influence on cultural activities in both rural and peri-urban areas. Religious events and rituals are performed by definite religious groups at Dewangonj. Islam and Hinduism are two of the major religions in this area. So religious cultural activities are mainly of these two religions. Among them, Islam-based religious activities are 'Waj-Mahfil' (Islamic speech given to a gathered mass), 'Milad-Mahfil' (a form of prayer asking for blessing), 'Orosh-Mahfil' (reunion and some rituals performed by the disciples of a saint on his death anniversary in a 'Majar'), Eid, etc. On the other hand, 'Kirtan' (a ritual performed to ask for forgiveness), Puja, etc. are found in the Hindu community. Among these religious cultural activities, 'Kirtan' and 'Waj-Mahfil' were found to be pro-active during the fieldwork.

#### 'Kirtan': Narration of Religious Norms and Values

'Kirtan' or 'Kirtana' is a Sanskrit word that means "narrating, reciting, telling, describing" an idea or a story. It also refers to a genre of religious performance, connoting a musical form of narration or shared recitation, particularly of spiritual or religious ideas (Ananda Lal, 2009). 'Kirtan' is a very pro-active religio cultural activity the Hindu community of Dewangonj.

'Kirtan' is arranged by the followers of Hinduism mainly during the 'Kartik-Agryohayon' (October-December) month of the Bengali calendar, known as 'Damodor' month when they remain vegetarian, abstaining from fish and meat with the hope to gain Mohadev's (one of the supreme Hindu deities) satisfaction. During the fieldwork, a 'Kirtan' was observed by the research team. It was arranged in the yard of a fisherman. Regarding 'Kirtan' an old community member said, "*It is their traditional event and also a matter of the community's dignity.*"

Their kith and kin came from different places to participate in the 'Kirtan'. A festive mood was found at the spot where the 'Kirtan' was arranged. Different traditional manners and customs were followed.

A 'Kunja' was formed by fixing four young banana plants in a square shape and 'alpona' (design) was drawn on the ground depicting Krishna's (according to Hinduism an incarnation of Lord Vishnu, one of the supreme deities) footprint and it was believed that 'Krishna' would come to that place. Furthermore, a 'Kula' (traditional household kit used for husking grains) full of folk things like paddy, betel leaf, grasses, 'Prodip' (oil-fuelled lamp), etc. was arranged as a part of the ritual.

Both men and women were present during the 'Kirtan'. Many of the household women remained busy cooking food (rice, vegetables, and dessert) for the guests. Relatives of the household from different places gathered to enjoy the event. To them the whole event also was a chance to socialize, show collective solidarity, and make their social bonding stronger. A young fisherman from the community said, *"If they have any collisions, conflicts, or quarrels among them, they resolve it in this event holding each other and asking for forgiveness."* Thus, 'Kirtan' plays an important role in resolving their interpersonal problems and making their social unity stronger. It also plays a role in showing the activeness and existence of a religion in a mixed religious atmosphere where communal sentiment is present and the minority is always at the risk of attack from the majority.

After a short speech given by 'Brahmin', different musical groups, consisting of both men and women from nearby regions, performed the 'Kirtan' song where everyone played a different local musical instrument. They continuously performed one after another with different tone and voice, though the lyric was the same: *'Hore ram o hore Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hore Hore.'* The frequent uttering of the same lyric with a tone of joy and sadness created musical harmony and viewers were found to be fully dissolved in it. Sometimes they sang in a univocal tone, sometimes they performed solely but never stopped synchronizing with the team. The reason behind the difference of tone is that different traditional Bengali instruments like 'Dhol', harmonium, flute, 'Khonjoni', etc. are played during their performance. Centring a point they moved on in a circle and uttered the same lyrics. According to Hinduism, life is the summation of equal pain and joy, known as 'lila' to them. Therefore, they pray to God in both tones so that they are able to realize the reality of worldly pain and pleasures. Besides, different performers of the same group sang in different tones maintaining harmony, reflecting the disparity and class division of a complex society. In the power practice domain, the voice of the powerful is loud, whereas poor people talk in a low voice. Wearing the same colour (yellowish) dress, a group was found to perform and also made eye contact with the viewers.

The whole session went on till dawn and stopped when 'azan' (call for prayer in Islam) was given, as a respect to other religions. After a whole night's participation, guests were refreshed by the cooked food. During 'Kirtan' guests were also offered local foods, fruits, tea, etc. 'Kirtan' was open for everyone, irrespective of gender, race, and religion. Local government representatives were also invited to the 'Kirtan'. For example, while observing 'Kirtan', the research team was entertained by different local foods which also reflects the traditional hospitable nature of the Bengali society. The team also found the Union Parishad (UP) member in the 'Kirtan', though he was from a Muslim community.

### **'Waj-Mahfil': Religious Preaching**

Like 'Kirtan', 'Waj-Mahfil' is another form of religious cultural activity that was found to be vibrant among the Muslims of both rural and peri-urban areas. When the research team went to the field, it was a season of 'Waj-Mahfil'. Different Islamic groups, mosques, graveyard committee, institutions, and community-based organizations were found to arrange 'Waj-Mahfils' during this time.

The competition among different communities was visible centring the 'Waj-Mahfil'. Every community wanted to hire 'valo' (renowned) religious speakers from outside the community. It seemed that renowned preachers from outside the locality added a degree of value to the 'Waj-Mahfil' and to some extent, the outsider preacher could attract the attention of a greater number of people.

Different volunteers worked at different stages of the events, especially fund-raising from the community. They stopped people on the road to raise funds. For example, while going to the field the researcher team was stopped by a young group of people who were collecting money for a 'Waj-Mahfil'. To promote 'Waj-Mahfils' different types of communication tools and methods were used. Posters, leaflets, announcements, decorated gates, etc. were some of the most visible practices.

In most of the cases, 'Waj-Mahfil' was arranged at night so that a large number of people could participate and pray to Allah. Like 'Kirtan', 'Waj-Mahfil' also has an important influence in nurturing social solidarity and unity.

#### 4. Sports-based Cultural Activities

Sports-based cultural activities, such as football, cricket, badminton, 'Nouka Baich' (rowing competition), etc. were found in both rural and peri-urban areas of Dewangonj. Region-based competitions of these sports events were arranged in the locality.

It is known that among all the events, 'Nouka Baich', a common traditional Bengali sports-based cultural activity is famous among the local rural people. During the rainy season when the river is full of water, this event is arranged by the community people. Region-based groups take part in this competition. Each region has at least one boat and group members of that region unite together to compete. This is not a mere competition to them but a symbol of their social dignity. The social status and dignity of a region depend on the outcome of the event.

People socially own the event and inspire their native teams. The winner group is awarded with different gifts like various electronic devices, cows, etc. Sometimes winner team arrange a 'Mejban' (feast) with the contribution of villagers as a celebration of their victory. Thus, 'Nouka Baich' serves as another form of collectivity in the local rural community.

#### 5. Business-oriented Cultural Activities

Business-oriented cultural activities are considered those which have a role in promoting a business or products using cultural components. Different types of business-oriented cultural activities are found in the locality like 'Mojma' (canvassing), announcements in an attractive voice and playing songs on a loud-speaker, locally produced advertisements on TV, etc. During fieldwork, the research team observed that canvassing, announcements, and local



advertisements were influential business-oriented cultural activities at Dewangonj. The research team also observed a ‘Mojma’ session at the local market.

A brief description of that ‘Mojma’ is given below:

### **‘Mojma’: Hypnotic Magical Moment**

‘Mojma’ (canvassing) was found as a native form of product promotional tool as well as a folk cultural activity in the local market. In both rural and peri-urban markets, this type of product promotional culture was found. The ‘Mojma’ session observed by the research team was arranged at a local market near the Upazila Sadar. The main communicator of this ‘Mojma’ session was a locally known cultural entity who was famous for his long ‘artist’ career (about 40 years) and voluntary activities in the locality. Since he was known to everyone, he had popularity and acceptance to the community and to some extent; he was a ‘local cultural icon’. He arranged that ‘Mojma’ in the local market on ‘Hatbar’ (local market day) with the intention to sell some medicinal products of local companies.

In arranging the canvassing session, he chose a convenient time—just before sunset when most of the people (who came to market) were ready to go home after completing their market-oriented businesses. Largely local farmers from neighbouring villages come to the village market on ‘Hatbar’ to sell out their agricultural products and to buy daily commodities. People usually complete their product selling activities before the sunset and have money in their pockets. Many of them came to Mojma with both money and time to enjoy the performance as well as to buy medicine from the canvasser. They gathered around the canvasser and canvasser sold his products in a ‘Mojma’ session through a charismatic performance of storytelling. The ‘Mojma’ performer comes closer to the viewers in the sphere of trust-building. A trustworthy relation with the ‘Mojma’ performer influences the audiences to finally buy the product.

## **6. National Events-based Cultural Activities:**

National events-based cultural activities are also visible in both peri-urban and rural areas. As per different government instructions, local government administration, schools, and other government and non-government organizations usually arrange cultural events on major national days. Among them, International Mother Language Day, National Children’s Day, Independence Day, Victory Day, etc. are more visible.

Different educational institutions with the help of their students arrange various programmes where students, teachers, guardians, Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO), and local government representatives actively participate. In some schools, sports and cultural competitions are arranged to bloom the potentials of talented students and to inspire them. Apart from schools and colleges, Govt. ShilpaKala Academy also arranges such events targeting national days where local cultural icons and cultural groups perform. Sometimes performers are also hired from Dhaka to make the events more successful and attractive.

Traditional Bengali culture-based events like 'Pohela Baishakh' (the first day of the first month in Bengali calendar) are eagerly celebrated by the community people, in which case the youth often play a vital role. It was observed that handmade posters, festoons, wall paintings, and designs based on 'Pohela Baishakh' were done by the youth of the community to bring a more festive mood to the event. Band performance, drama, dance, etc. are also arranged.

### **Seasonality of Cultural Activities**

Seasonality is an important factor regarding local cultural activities. Based on the seasonality, variations in cultural events were found in the community. These various cultural events have different degrees of correlation with social, cultural, geographical, and economic aspects. Dewangonj is mainly an agro-based and river erosion-prone area. So cultural activities are dependent on the production of agricultural products and the natural environment. Most of the 'Char' areas go under water during the rainy season and seasonal floods are common in this locality. During that time, farmers do not have any work in the field and pass an idle time. In this damp and lazy season, people participate in exciting events like 'Nouka Baich and get recreation from them. From that point of view, seasonality and geographical aspects are relevant in understanding the seasonality of cultural events.

After the rainy season, water gradually goes away from the arable lands and people start to engage in farming activities in full swing. Their busyness remains till the harvesting season. After the harvesting season, farmers get their crops and have financial smoothness by selling it. Winter season is an ideal time for arranging different cultural events, like 'Palagaan', 'Kirtan', 'Waj-Mahfil', etc., as the environment of this season is more favourable and people have money in hand to arrange an event easily. Moreover, some institutions, especially the religious ones sustain on social donation and try to raise their funds by arranging some religious cultural activities like 'Waj-Mahfil'. Other cultural groups and individuals also take initiatives to arrange cultural programs taking peoples' economic and environmental contexts into consideration. As people have both money and leisure to engage in cultural events, different types of indigenous and religious cultural events are arranged during winter.

Apart from these, open space is required in arranging such events where a large number of people can gather. After harvesting crops, fields become good and feasible venues for the arranged events. Night time is preferred for arranging events so that people of all professions can participate.

## 4.4 Domains of Entertainment

It was found that different patterns of cultural activities create different domains of entertainment in Dewangonj. Variations and differences are also found in the domain of entertainment based on region, profession, social class, gender, and age. People usually are entertained by different sources. As a whole, the domain of entertainment in this region can be categorized into three boarder essences: 1. personal/individual source of entertainment, 2. cable network-based entertainment, and 3. collective source of entertainment.

### 1. Personal/Individual Source of Entertainment

Individual entertainment is considered as the type of entertainment that people enjoy independently at an individual and private level. With the immense advancement of technology, individual entertainment also reshaped and the tools of entertainment have been changing with the passage of time. In the large area of individual entertainment, radio and television are being replaced by mobile phones both in peri-urban and rural areas. Most of the radio and television features, such as music, films, news are now available on mobile phones.

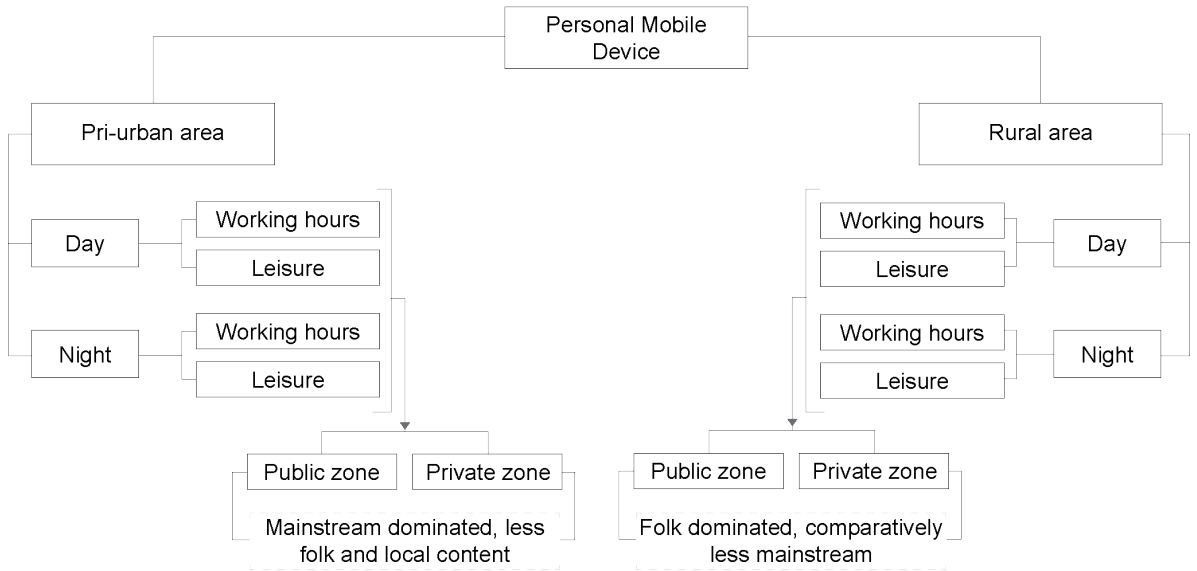
Considering personal mobile phone-based entertainment, at both peri-urban and rural levels variation of contents were found. The peri-urban region is mainly less folk-dominated and new forms of entertainment contents are popular. On the other hand, in the rural region, folk-dominated contents are more popular.

In consideration of usage of time and sphere (private and public) at the individual level, modes of entertainment and recreation differ equally in peri-urban and rural settings. People use mobile phones both day and night during their working hours and leisure. Again, some people who work at night, fishermen, for example, were found to enjoy music on their mobile phones while catching fish at night. People who work by day also use mobile phones for enjoyment as per their convenience.

The pattern of watching contents also varies. While some contents that do not need privacy are mainly enjoyed during the day, other 'secret' contents which demand privacy are mainly consumed at night. Thus, the scenario of mobile phone-based content watching changes depending on the sphere (private and public) and time.

**Figure 2. Personal Mobile Phone-based Entertainment**

PERSONAL MOBILE DEVICE BASED ENTERTAINMENT



Those who use smartphones have the tendency to use different mobile-based apps for gaming, video calling, content sharing, photo-editing, downloading contents from online, chatting, voice recording, etc. Among these apps (for voice calling) Messenger, WhatsApp, and IMO are famous among them because of their ‘easy’-to-use features.

Facebook and YouTube are two of the most famous sites for smartphone users which are also important sources of their entertainment. The majority of smartphone users have a Facebook account where they make virtual friends from their known circle as well as unknown people. They add people, ‘like’ different pages, read the news, watch videos, post personal photos and links on their timeline, chat with friends and thus, the use of Facebook captures a large part of the personal entertainment domain. On the other hand, YouTube is a popular video sharing and watching site. Most of the YouTube users informed that along with local folk and funny contents they also watch ‘mainstream’ dramas, movies, and music videos.

## 2. Cable Network-based Entertainment Sources

The cable network is also a great source of entertainment now-a-days in both peri-urban and rural areas. Different national, international, and local channels with varieties of programmes are found telecasting on the cable network. Most of the tea stalls in the peri-urban and rural areas have televisions to attract customers and increase their sell. People gather in such stalls

to watch television, gossip, drink tea, and to be entertained. Most of them who watch television at tea stalls either do not enjoy watching television at their houses because they cannot watch programmes they like without interruption due to the other household members' control over the television, or because they do not have a television at their houses.

People watch news, films, music videos, documentaries, sports, crime-reports, etc. on television. There are some groups of people who bet on sports matches while they watch television at the tea stall. The shop keeper gives priority to the majority's interest. They also debate and share their opinions on different national, international, and personal issues after watching different news, programmes, drama, films, etc. Thus, tea stall-based television watching becomes an important platform for their social gathering, gossiping, and, entertainment. Particularly in the rural area, a vibrant cultural atmosphere regarding television watching was observed by the research team.

Apart from different national and international channels, the role of local channel-based entertainment was noteworthy. Different types of entertainment contents like locally-produced dramas, music videos, advertisements, funny videos, films, etc. telecasted on these local channels. People have much interest in these channels as they get different contents made in the local language and with local actors. In peri-urban and rural areas, people know each other and when they find someone they know on the television screen, it gives them much fun and enjoyment. Local contents represent the local socio-cultural patterns and people can easily relate with them.

Furthermore, different business organizations give advertisements on local channels so that people can learn about their organizations, products, and services. These advertisements often are made in the local language. So the local people get interested in their products and institutions. Some local channels were found to telecast the video of a picnic arranged by an educational institution. Observing the circumstance, it seemed that local channels mostly prioritize locally-produced contents with an objective to get attraction from the community people.

Some programs are found to telecast live on local channels. It was observed that a 'Waj-Mahfil' was being telecasted live on a local channel so that people who did not come to the 'Mahfil' could watch it from their home.

From the perspective of the local cultural domain, it became obvious that the cable network was a vital tool of entertainment to the local community people.

### 3. Collective Source of Entertainment

Events from where people get collective entertainment are considered as collective sources of entertainment. Four categories of collective sources of entertainment were found at

Dewangonj: sports-based entertainment, folk entertainment, religious entertainment, and product promotions or business-oriented entertainment.

Locally arranged sports events like 'Nouka Baich', cricket, football, etc. play an important role as a source of collective entertainment. People gather together to participate in such events collectively and be entertained. Again, different folk entertainment like 'Keccha', 'Palagaan', 'Jatrapala', drama, etc. work as a collective source of entertainment.

Religious events like 'Kirtan' and 'Waj-Mahfil' are also an important source of collective entertainment. A huge number of people were observed to participate in these events. For example, the research team observed a 'Kirtan' during the fieldwork where the community people stayed up the whole night to enjoy and actively participate in it.

Like 'Kirtan', 'Waj-Mahfil' also works as a collective source of entertainment for Muslims. Different Islamic songs without instruments are played in 'Waj-Mahfils' and religious preachers keep their speeches from a religious point of view.

Product promotional activities like 'Mojma' (canvassing) are also a source of collective entertainment. The research team observed a 'Mojma' where they saw people gathering around a 'Mojma' performer to get fun. Considering the pattern of 'Mojma', it was observed that the 'Mojma' started with a magical and alluring intro. The performer took a transparent jar full of fresh water and from that jar he first took a sip of water. After that, he chose a person from the crowd and asked him to take a sip from this jar as a witness. Then again asked the man to give a 'fu' (blow) into the jar and told the audience that a catfish would be materialized inside the jar after a few minutes and covered it with a 'Gamcha' (a local form of towels). After a few seconds, the performer asked that guy who blew on the jar, "'Bishmilla' boila fu dicho?" (Have you uttered 'Bismillah' before blowing into the jar?). After getting a negative reply from the young man, he again told him to give a blow by saying 'Bismillah' (a good wish sentence used by the Muslims before starting any work). Thus, he made a mysterious, alluring, and enjoyable environment to hold the audience's attention from the beginning to the end of this 'Mojma' session. People waited to see catfish coming out from jar but he did not open it and continued with his main purpose tactfully. The canvasser used the local language and complete the whole session in a satirical mood so that people get entertainment from it. Many people gathered there to enjoy the 'Mojma' and many of them bought medicine from the performer too. It appeared that there still is a space for 'Mojma' in the local community and it is also a folk source of collective entertainment to them.

### *Live Cultural Activities and Entertainment Using Technology*

Live cultural activities and events are also a source of entertainment for the community. Watching sports-based events (world cup football, cricket matches of the Bangladesh Cricket Team, Indian Premier League (IPL), etc.) on the 'big screen' (projector) is also very famous in now-a-days. These events are arranged by the local people as well as the local government, different companies, and organizations. Community people gather to enjoy such events with

enthusiasm. Apart from sports events, NGOs and government agencies arrange video shows on the projector (known as 'Bioscope') which is also a component of live entertainment in the locality.

### *Gender Dimension in the Domain of Entertainment*

Considering the gender dimension in the use of mobile phones, it was observed that the rate of mobile phone usage among women in the peri-urban area is higher than that of in the rural area. Such a difference is due to women of the peri-urban area being comparatively more educated and financially solvent than the women of the rural area. Social restriction on women's mobile phone usage is absent in the peri-urban area. In the peri-urban area, the mobility of women is visible. They go to schools, colleges, and workplaces. So they need to communicate with their family members using phones. On the other hand, negative notions of women using mobile phones are found in the rural area. For example, a group of 'Murubbis' (the aged group of people in the community) said, "Meyera mobile use korle nosto hoy." (Girls would be derailed if they use mobile phones.) They thought that access to mobile phones gives adolescent and young girls a passage of chatting with boys and get involved in 'Prem-Piriti' (romantic relationship) and later they elope with their lovers. So girls should not be given any mobile phones. Many of the women from the rural area informed that they do not need a mobile phone because they used their husbands' phones to communicate with their relatives and the common notion of husbands regarding the phone usage of their wives reveals through a conversation of a traditional rural husband: "Kar sathe kotha bolbe? Amar phone diyei to kotha bolte pare." (With whom would she talk? She can use my phone if she wants.) To be very specific, the usage of smartphones among the rural women seemed limited. There is, however, also a large number of women with mobile phones in the rural area whose husbands stay and work in Dhaka and therefore, need a mobile phone to communicate.

Though many women are using mobile phones in both peri-urban and rural areas, the ratio of women using mobile phones is comparatively low than the rate of men. Consequently, women's access to social media and the internet is also limited. Rural women almost have no access to the internet, whereas urban women have limited access but comparatively very small in number to men.

Again, in the area of cable network-based television watching habit, a difference was observed between men and women. Women from both peri-urban and rural areas watch television at their houses. After completing their household chores they get leisure in the evening. So this is the peak time for them to watch television. Women have more interests in different drama serials on Indian channels, like *G Bangla* and *Star Jalsha*. They watch Bangladeshi channels too. In the rural area, not every household has a television. Some of the women, therefore, sometimes to go to their neighbour's house to watch television and gossip.

Active participation of women on the collective entertainment domain was observed mainly in religious collective entertainment, like 'Waj-Mahfil' and 'Kirtan'. During the fieldwork, a group

of women was found heading towards a 'Waj-Mahfil' where a separate sitting arrangement was made for them. Similarly, women were seen to participate in 'Kirtan'.

### *Patronization/Sponsors of Local Cultural Events and Activities*

Local cultural events and activities are patronized by different types of political and non-political stakeholders, such as government and non-government organizations, cultural and religious institutions, communities, and even an individual. Most of the indigenous cultural activities and events like 'Palagaan', 'Jatrapala', etc. are arranged by the local community. In some cases, political or influential people of the local community help to organize a program.

Both personal and collective patronizations were found to organize different religious events like 'Waj-Mahfil', 'Kirtan', etc. For example, the 'Kirtan' that was observed by the research team during the fieldwork, was first initiated by a single household but other people of the community soon participated and donated money as per their ability. Local government also helped them by donating two sacks of rice and the UP member was present during the event.

Again, 'Waj-Mahfil' is arranged with personal and collective patronization. Interpersonal donation is a very important source of funds for this event. Different political leaders, businessmen, and other people donate as per their capacity to enhance their 'social dignity' by holding an 'honorary position' in such events. In the same way, different sports-based events, like 'Noukabaich' is arranged by the active participation of the community people. Funds are raised from different levels of the community people who donate to support their region-based team.

On the other hand, different national events are patronized by the local government and various government agencies. Youths of the community also raise funds to arrange events, like 'Bengali Naboborsho'. Different NGOs also patronize some events as per their programmatic objectives.

### *Peri-urban Life Remains Long Awake at Night*

Human behaviour, communication patterns, and habits need to be perceived in the context of existing entertainment domain, professional reality or class division, social stratification as well as in socio-economic and psycho-social contexts.

It was observed that there is a professional dissimilarity between the people of the peri-urban area and those from the rural area. Peri-urban area is pro-active during the day and the night due to the diversity of professions of the people who live there. People have affiliations with different government, non-government and local institutions. As a result, people remain active throughout the day. Apart from this, the rail station is situated in the peri-urban area and centring the commuting setup, different transport workers, hotels, small shops, tea stalls remain active at night to provide service to the train passengers. Various agricultural products



are sent to Dhaka, the capital city of Bangladesh at night. So, labourers also remain awake till midnight. Furthermore, youths in this area play different games like badminton and carom at night. As a whole, the peri-urban area is pro-active twenty-four hours a day.

On the contrary, most of the people from the rural area are farmers. They work in their fields from dawn to dusk and remain busy throughout the day with farming. Most of them do not even have the time to come to their houses for launch. Instead, their family members take their food in the field. They come to the house before sunset and then take bath. After a hectic day, they become free in the evening and come to the nearby local market to pass their leisure time. They give 'addas' at the local tea stall, watch television, have tea, and discuss personal and social issues. This 'adda' continues for two or three hours. After that, they go back to their houses and pass some time with their family members. Then after having dinner, they go to bed. With the rise of the sun, the whole routine repeats itself. This is almost the common scenario of the majority of the rural people. But variations are also found in the rural area based on people's professions. There are some people who are fishermen and catch fish in the river at night. They work the whole night and return in the morning. After selling their fish in the local market they come back to their houses, take a meal, and sleep till noon. Then they pass time with their counterparts and family members and take preparation again for catching fish. They also go to the nearby tea stall for having some tea and 'adda' in the evening.

Considering the gender dimension, in both peri-urban and rural areas women remain busy with their household chores. They wake up in the morning, clean their houses, and prepare food for their husbands and children. After having breakfast their husbands go to work and children are sent to the school. During this time they take preparation for cooking launch. The majority of the women are involved with livestock rearing in the rural areas. Some of them are seen to gather together to learn the Quran from an Islamic teacher. To them this is also a place for socializing and entertainment. This session continues for one-two hours. After that, they return home to complete the unfinished work. After preparing launch they become free for a while and have their bath. By this time their husbands and children return from their respective places. They take lunch after feeding their husbands and children. After that, they have some leisure in the evening. They are seen to gossip together with their neighbours in the yard in the evening. After the sunset, and those who have a television at their home watch television and those who do not go to their neighbour's house. By ten pm most of the villagers go to sleep.

Those who are job holders remain busy throughout the day at the office and before sunset get back to their house. After that, they finish their household activities.

Due to having different professional reality they have different types of activeness and time management. And subsequently, peri-urban society remains long awake at night and active comparing to the rural area.

## 4.5 Emergence of a 'New Form' of Culture

Bangladeshi society has undergone a process of 'acculturation' due to the impact of rapid urbanization and technological growth. This has created a change in the social, psychological, and cultural lives of the community people of both peri-urban and rural areas. A creative type of acculturation is noticed at Dewangonj. Though the rate of rapid change is high in the peri-urban area compared to the rural, people from both areas were found to adopt the new culture while holding their original cultural values and tradition at the same time. As a result, both indigenous and prevailing cultural elements are found active at Dewangonj. But the society is heading more towards new cultural forms and people are trying to adopt this changing nature of culture in their own way.

Surely, in this global era of science and technology the society is facing a new cultural era and the impact of 'acculturation' can be noticed in the changes of religious practice, food, language, clothing, entertainment patterns, and other social institutions. It can be noticed that before the expansion of modern tools of entertainment people were more engaged in their rural forms of cultural activities. For example, local drama, 'Jatrapala' 'Palagaan' 'Keccha', etc. were very popular among them. As a result, indigenous events were arranged frequently and people participated in a large number. But now the scenario has changed. Different cultural activities now are more linked to the advanced forms of technology.

While in the past people gathered together to enjoy 'Jatrapala', 'Palagaan', drama, etc. they now tend to enjoy films on mobiles, televisions, or in cinema halls. Their ways of socializing are changing too. Now-a-days they like to give 'adda' and watch television at tea stalls. They discuss different national and international issues shown on television. While in earlier times, the newspaper was the only way to know the current situation of the world and only a few members of educated people of the society discussed such issues, now people from all classes are more interested to discuss and debate different social issues as they have access to television and mobile phones.

As people's perceptions about themselves and the world around them changed and they became aware of the current vibes of the society, it affected their social behaviour, communication patterns, food habits, dress up, etc. Different types of clothes are now becoming popular among the community which they came to know from Indian drama serials, films, advertisements, etc. Different festivals have been reshaped due to the influence of new cultural norms. Different Indian music in the Hindi language is played on a sound box in different festivals like marriage ceremonies. Again, some changes took place in folk festivals too. In an informal discussion with some 'Murubbis', they commented, *"Society is not like as it was before. Different folk events are being changed by the influence of social, cultural, and economic 'development' over time. For example, in the past 'Palagaan', 'Jatrapala', dramas had special attraction, honour, and value to the community people, but now the image of those events has changed. Now-a-days, 'Jatrapala' means vulgar dance of some hired girl in a remote zone of the community. There is no morality in the arrangement as well as the organizers of*

*these events. So people have no respect for such cultural events as they know that nudity and vulgarity have gripped them.”*

It also emerged from their statement that the changing nature of culture has influenced their social psychology. Some people considered certain cultural activities that were being practiced for many years like 'Jatrapala' as 'Haram' or non-Islamic. This might be due to the general Islamization of the people in recent years.

Apart from this, new tools and technologies like mobile phones, televisions, cable networks, and the cyber world have influenced this cultural change. People have access to the internet and they are now more concerned about what is happening around the world. The youth are now trendy to follow the 'modern' forms of the prevailing culture. They have been changing their nature of communication patterns too. For example, while at first meeting people used to say, "Bhai, kemon achen?" (Brother, how are you?), now they embrace each other saying, "What's up, bro?" Newly formed different words in the cyber world like 'wow', 'selfie', 'chhagu', 'murad takla', 'joss', 'LOL', etc. have been taken by the youth community as their daily form of communication. Their behaviour is also changing due to the influence of this world. The youth are fond of taking 'selfies' while roaming around. Their issue of discussion is centred on the cyber world. The research team found some youth wearing T-shirts with a recently viral quotation from Facebook, 'Mod kha, Manush Hobi' [If you drink alcohol, you will be a perfect man (A very famous quote from a recent Facebook celebrity named Sefu Da in Bangladesh)]. Besides, different T-shirts were found to contain the logos of international brands, viral dialogues, quotations from the cyber world, emoticons, caricatures, etc. The notion of social status has also changed over the years. Having a smartphone upgrades one's social status in the community as well as the circle he/she belongs to. For instance, during the fieldwork, a young farmer was found to use a highly expensive smartphone though he is not economically solvent. At both peri-urban and rural levels these changes are visible where people are trying to adopt the new cultural vibe while holding onto their traditional culture. Individualism is being formed among the upcoming generation who is the main host of the acculturation. Again, Indian drama serials have some impact on the family life of the community creating different complexities.

As a whole, acculturation at the grassroots level creates a mix cultural environment where the prevailing practice tends to dominate the indigenous ones, thus creating a complex and sophisticated form of culture.

## Class Divisions and Bourdieu's Concept of Capital

Considering social and cultural capital, a different scenario of class divisions is found in both peri-urban and rural settings. In the peri-urban area the upper-class people, mainly industrialists, big businessmen, and government job holders achieved social capital due to their engagement in politics and different institutions. Interpersonal relationships with different public representatives and political leaders, engagement in different social events, membership

of different social organizations also create social capital. Thus, those who are middle class also hold a higher position in society due to their social and cultural capital. In the rural context, 'Avijatyo' (clan-based superiority and power) is still very prominent and people of 'Uchu Bongsho' (higher caste) hold a higher position in the society despite having low economic capital. Local representatives in most of the cases are found to be the member of 'higher group' as they inherit 'avijatyo' from their ancestors in the embodied cultural capital form (Bourdieu, 1990:114). Again, another form of cultural capital is seen among the local celebrities (popular actors on the local channels, social media-based popular profile, etc.) and cultural icons. These people hold a very popular and 'good' image toward the community people. For example, during the fieldwork, we met a local celebrity and content developer for local channels, who is very famous among the community people. Though he is a lawyer by profession, people consider him as a 'character' of a locally produced drama. "*Ore abar keda na chene...?*" (Who does not know him?), a rickshaw puller replied when he was asked if he knew about the man. Again, a local cultural icon and canvasser was also very popular among the community. It was seen that during a 'Hatbar', he arranged a 'Mojma' and sold some local products (herbal medicine). Religious leaders like Imams, religious orators, priests also get respect and dignity in the society.

It was observed that social relationship and embodiment was very strong in both peri-urban and rural areas. People unite together in different social events, maintain social relations and thus, maintain the interpersonal relationship. In the rural area, clan-based households are found where members of the same clan live together. Though conflicts and quarrels are very common, social representation of collectiveness and solidarity are visible. Region-based sentiment and unity are also visible among them. Different types of sports-based events like 'Nouka Baich', cricket, football, etc. are arranged. Winning these competitions is a symbol of respect and a chance to show their collective solidarity. People unite during these events to patronage and support their teams.

In the point of presence in the cyber world, people of the peri-urban area have higher access to the internet than the rural people. Accessing the cyber world depends upon their capability of using data packages (megabyte-based) offered by mobile operators. Though usage of smartphone exists in both rural and peri-urban areas, the capability of buying internet packages differs. In the rural context, as the flow of economy is much more dependent on agriculture, cash is not available to people throughout the year. As a result, very few people with mobile phones have the ability to buy internet packages regularly. During the fieldwork, it was found that a local farmer who had a smartphone with high configuration (Oppo Brand) but could not use the internet due to lack of money. He also informed that using a smartphone is also a matter of social status, as having a 'good' phone increases the social status of a person in the friend circle.

People's mobility, consuming internet and using communication devices are dependent on regular consistent income or flow of cash. For example, the research team found a farmer who bought a motorbike but did not have money to buy fuel. In this regard, he said, "*After harvesting the sugarcane I will get money, then there will be no problem. We are farmers; cash*

*flow is not consistent in our pockets. Our income depends on the seasonality of the crop. In town, people have a regular income, a monthly salary but we are fully dependent on our crops.”* A different scenario was observed in the peri-urban area. Usage of smartphones and access to the internet are comparatively high and people have a regular flow of economy that helps them to afford the expenses.

Though women in the peri-urban area have mobile phones with access to the internet, as a whole, the usage of mobile phones and access to the cyber world are still limited in both peri-urban and rural areas.

## Peri-urban ‘Habitus’ and Rural ‘Habitus’

Here, the concept of ‘habitus’ from the French social scientist, Pierre Bourdieu becomes important when we consider the entertainment-oriented behaviour of the community. The habitus is socialized norms or trends that guide the behaviour and thinking of a community. It influences the identity, actions, and choices of the individual. It refers to the physical embodiment of cultural capital, to the deeply ingrained habits, skills, and dispositions that people possess due to their life experiences. The habitus structures inherent qualities of the mind and character in an individual and is produced by the conditions associated with a particular class of conditions of existence, this constitutes of systems of durable and transposable personalities (Bourdieu, P., 1990). The concept ‘habitus’ is a notion that is deeply internalized social structure, strongly controlling and largely inaccessible into consciousness (Ortner, S. B., 2006). Social notions of the structure are reflected through the ‘habitus’ of an individual. Ultimately, the order of social class came forward in understanding the individual level of social behaviour, using technology as well as the taste of entertainment. Here, socio-economic and cultural factors also became very obvious to take into consideration, specifically realizing the dynamics of behavioural change communication and local entertainment.

Variation in the socio-economic and cultural context is visible between the peri-urban and the rural area. The social structure and the mode of capital are also different in many terms in these two areas. Education, skills, occupations, socialization, social class division, acculturation, etc. shape an individual’s behavioural domain which is relevant to reveal the social and individual relationship with the domain of entertainment, from where they mainly get recreation. This entertainment domain is interlinked with the behavioural aspect of the people too.

## Mechanisms of Development and Access to Local Content

Due to the changing patterns of entertainment, the contents of entertainment have also changed over the course of time. With the rapid outburst of technology, different virtual contents are being created to meet people’s demand and a growing market of these contents is

found. Certain groups of people both at 'mainstream' and local levels are found to be involved in the production and transmission of these contents to the targeted community. Certain mechanisms have grown up through which people get access to these content both at the personal and collective levels.

## Mechanism of the Local Content Production

If we consider the process of local content production, it has been observed that firstly, content demand is created based on the requirement of different agencies like government and non-government organizations, social institutions, business and trade groups, entrepreneurs, and individuals. Different categories of contents are produced as per their requirements like films, short films, advertisements, dramas, music videos, funny clips, etc. Targeting the community people these contents are created using the local language and local entertainers.

Considering the local content production scenario, it was observed that the local content production mechanism functions aligning with some individuals and cultural groups at the local level. Here, a case of an individual who was an advocate by profession and a 'cultural icon' to the community can be mentioned.

It is to be noted that this person is very much pro-active in the cultural area of this region for a long time (over 40 years) and has a good connection with the district 'ShilpaKala' (fine arts) Academy, theatres group, local administrators, and cultural groups. He writes drama scripts, screenplays, 'Palagaan', songs, etc. He has a good relationship with the local government administrative body too and has been involved in organizing different national events-based programs for a long time that also made his position very strong in the cultural sphere of this region. Though he lived in the district proper, a certain chain was maintained through which the production of such contents was regulated.

However, due to having a connection with cultural activities he started producing different local contents just for his hobby from a non-professional point of view. Since he produced local dramas, short films, etc. using the notion of local culture and the local language, he got popularity among the community people. Gradually, different agencies started coming to him to make different contents as per their requirements.

Here, his role can be considered as an agent of making local contents. It is to be noted that this person did not act as a sole agent; other agents exist in the community who are related to the production of local contents. For example, different theatre groups, local actors, videographers, editors, cable network operators also act as agents.

Again, there are some videography-shops at the district proper where they professionally cover many social events. Many small businessmen and entrepreneurs only know these videographers' shops; they go there with their requirements. Then the videographer makes a

contract in collaboration with both cultural groups and iconic individuals. Thus, customers of the local contents reach the content creator group.

After the agreement with the customer, an individual cultural icon, cultural groups, and technical experts work in collaboration. The cultural iconic person writes scripts and hires actors from their known circle and finally complete the shooting and editing, etc.

In general, when an agency decides to make a local content for business or social awareness purposes, they go through this mechanism.

After completing all the processes of production, the produced content is given to certain agencies and circulated in diverse convenient media, mainly they are sent to the local television channels to reach the targeted community. Thus, following this mechanism a created content was being transmitted to the community.

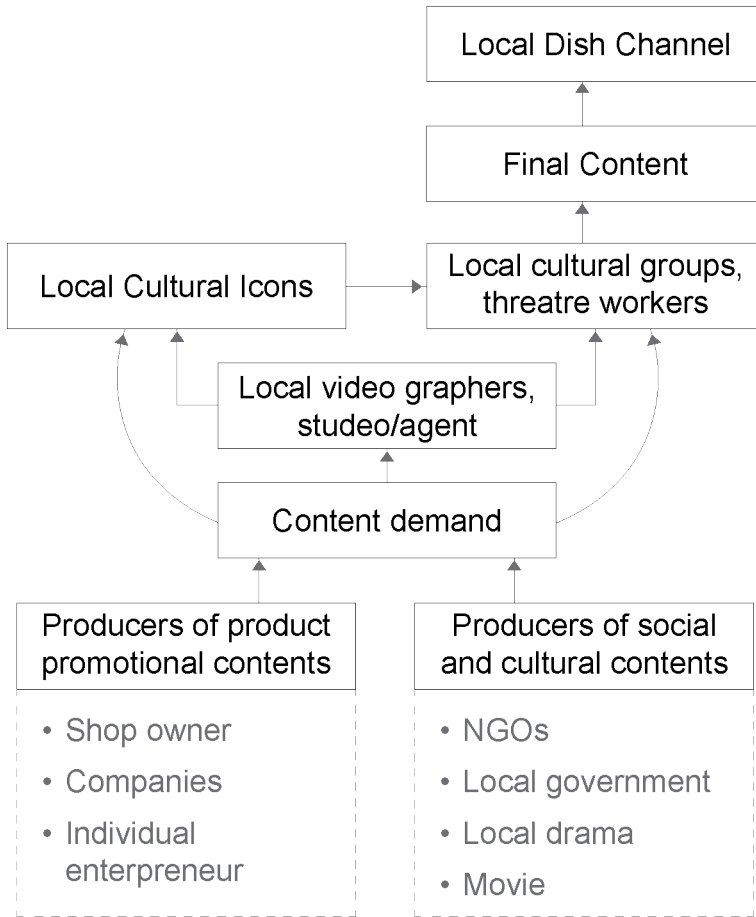
## Cost

According to this mechanism, the production cost of the local content is not too high. Local content developers mainly deal with the local customers who do not have a big budget for the contents. Customers bargain with the content developers while they make an agreement. In average 20,000-25,000 BDT is spent for 1-4 minutes long TV content.

In this regard, a content developer said, *“Joto gur toto mitha, taka beshi khoroch korle valo hobe. Amra komer moddhei korar chesta kori, karon customer er taka kom.”*(You get what you pay for.)

**Figure 3: Content Development Process of Local Cable Network Channels**

## CONTENT DEVELOPMENT PROCESS OF LOCAL DISH CHANNEL



### Access to Content at the Individual Level

At the individual level different contents transmitted to a personal mobile phone by three sources. One is from the memory card-loading shop, another is from sharing apps and devices (e.g. Share-It, Bluetooth) and thirdly, from internet download. Certain business is growing up based on content loading on memory cards by different local shops.

Content is shared among known circle using sharing apps and mobile devices at free of cost. Here, social networks and relations (social capital) help an individual to get access to the contents.



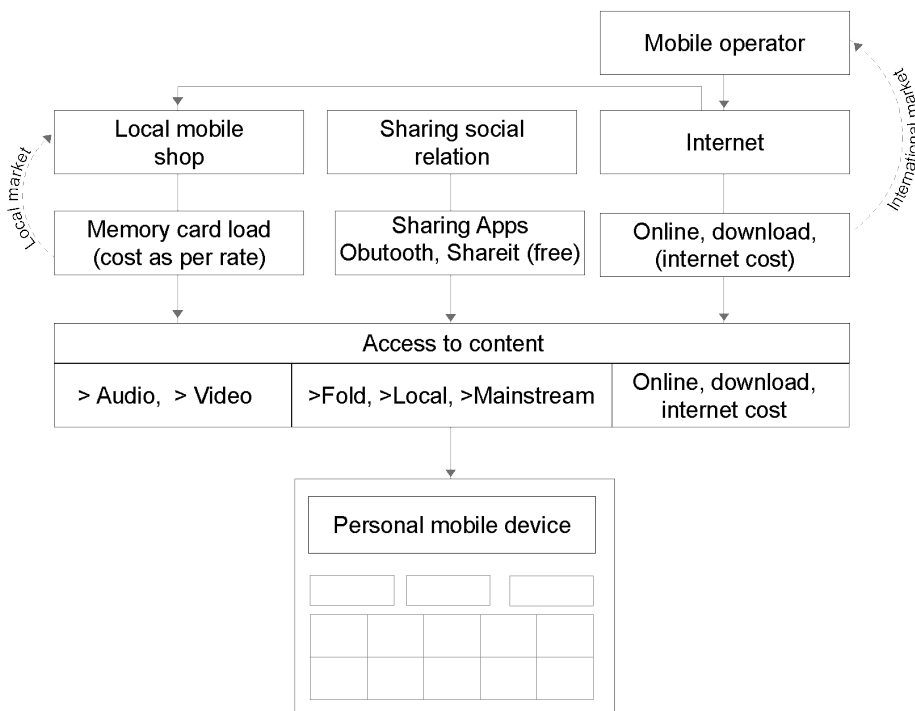
There is a demand for both local and 'mainstream' contents among the local people. If the memory card-based transmission of the content is considered then it is observed that there are different mobile shops in the locality from where an individual can get his/her required contents. These mobile shops have a collection of varieties of contents like audio songs, video songs, films, short films, dramas, music videos, funny clips, documentaries, cartoons, and locally recorded folk events like 'Palagaan', 'Jatrapala', 'Keccha', etc. They sell these contents to the customer as per gigabyte. Per gigabyte of content is loaded on the memory card at 10-20 BDT but varies based on the interpersonal relationship. Though local people have less idea about gigabyte units, they understand it in their own way, like one gigabyte is equal to three films, four folders of songs, some videos, etc.

The third source of content is the internet from where an individual downloads different contents. They browse different sites and see various contents too. Here the internet users need to spend megabits which are not free of cost.

Thus, the internet plays an important source of content for both individuals and mobile shops. Different mobile operators offer data packages at different rates and individuals buy it according to one's capacity. People purchase different internet packages offered by mobile operators which are a part of the multinational business where mobile operators play an important role.

**Figure 4: Individual Aspect of Entertainment**

INDIVIDUAL ASPECT OF ENTERTAINMENT



## Access to Content at the Collective Level: Cable Network-based Sphere at Dewangonj

Local television channels regulated by cable network operators play the most vital role in the transmission of local contents at the collective level to the targeted community. It is to be noted that there are different local channels in both peri-urban and rural areas that are regulated by cable network an organization. The President post of this organization is politically influential, under whom different local channel owners regulate their activities. Every local channel owner is free to telecast different contents on their channel and they pay a certain amount of money to the President. An interconnection among the owner is also noticed. This organization sometimes decides what to telecast on their channel. But the community people's tastes and interests are given the most priority.

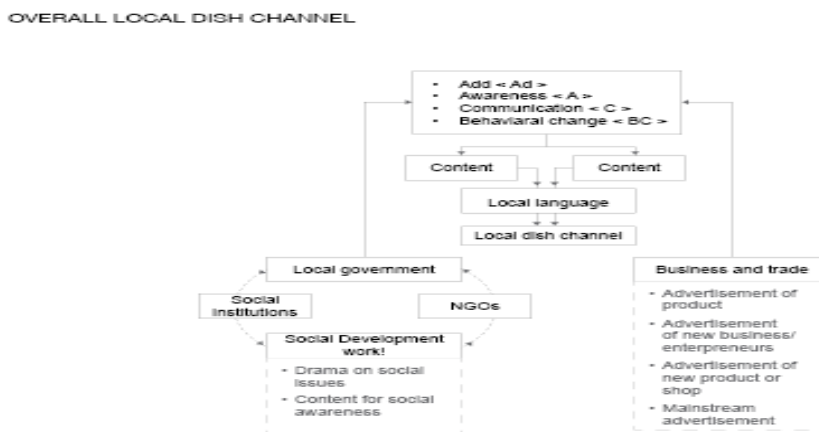
However, four categories of contents like advertisements, social awareness, communication, and behavioural change are finally received by the local channel owners to telecast on their channels. Among the four categories, different business and trade groups create contents on advertisements of products, services, new businesses, entrepreneurs, etc., while government agencies and NGOs create contents on social issues, awareness, and behavioural changes, etc. For example, to create awareness against begging, the local government administration produced a content (short drama) with the collaboration of a local icon using the local language, as noticed during fieldwork by the research team. These agencies make some agreement with the local channel owners to telecast their content on their channel. A certain amount of money is taken as a fee form the agencies monthly. And finally, the finished content is telecasted on the local channels.

It's evident that there are market demands of these contents. The main reason behind it can be that these contents are created in the local language using local actors. So when people watch these they feel more native and seeing their known person on the television screen get delighted. They also see some known stories and locations more closely related to their lives. So people can easily relate to these contents. The local cultural icon is very much close to their heart and they take them as a part of their life, irrespective of the actor's original social status and class. For example, during the field work when the research team was on a rickshaw to an interview with the local cultural icon who was a lawyer by profession, they asked the rickshaw puller whether he knew him or not, the rickshaw puller replied, "Ore abar keda na chene?" (Who doesn't know him?). It seems that the rickshaw puller considers him as the fictional character played on the local films, short dramas, and advertisements and thinks him as one of them. Though in social stratification and class division, a lawyer holds a higher position than a rickshaw puller.

Thus, contents are transmitted to the targeted community following different mechanisms. Though there is a market demand of these contents, there are certain groups of people, especially the educated group finds these contents boring, monotonous, and repetition of the same plot, style, form, and type-cast acting. They have very little interest in these and consider

these as ‘classless’ and ‘tasteless’ production. While talking with the President of Jamalpur cable network organization, he voiced a similar opinion. He told that once they took an initiative to stop this nonsense but as there are certain viewers of these contents at the root level and local channel owners get some money from different agencies, he had to withdraw his decision. Now, as he is getting money every month from the local channel owners, it does not matter to him what contents are telecasted on the local channels.

**Figure 5: Overall State of Local Cable Network Channels**



## 4.6 Behavioural Change Communication (BCC): Situation of the Study Area

Different types of communication patterns were noticed at Dewangonj. Broadly, five agencies are found to communicate with the people to serve their purposes: i. local government, ii. NGO or donor agency, iii. social-cultural-religious organization, iv. product or service promotional communication, and v. political communication. Variations and interconnectivity are found among their communication patterns.

### 1. Local Government

The local government establishes communication with the community regarding different social issues, events, disasters, etc. When the local government gets instructions from higher authority, they work as per the instructions and transmit different government orders to the

root level. They create awareness among the people on different social issues like child marriage, eve-teasing, dowry, drugs, caring for pregnant women, facilities of the community clinic, and different developmental work of the government. Besides, when an official order is given from the district level to inform people on different issues like public exams, natural disasters, etc. the local government uses different communication tools, such as mike, social media, and even graffiti to inform the people.

For example, when the research team was on the field, they found the district office to use miking to inform people about the rules and regulations of the Junior School Certificate (J.S.C.) exam. Again, the team found a graffiti, 'Balyo bibaho rukhte hole awaj tulo tale tate' (Stand up against child marriage) about child marriage on the wall of Zeal Bangla sugar mill by the local government and UNICEF.

## 2. NGO or Donor Agency

Different NGOs and donor agencies work in this area to develop people's socio-economic conditions. To create behavioural changes and awareness among the community, different types of communication patterns and tools like posters, leaflets, graffiti, miking, video shows on projectors, etc. are used at both collective and personal levels. Different seminars, workshops, drama shows, folk events are arranged to establish their agenda. These organizations collaborate with the local government to get direct access to the people. With the help of local public representatives, local representatives of each organization arrange these events.

The research team observed such a workshop on the topic 'How to strengthen the role of the local government for the development of children' arranged by UNICEF in collaboration with the local government. Guests from different levels of the society like UP chairman, members, distinguished individuals of the community, guardians, representatives of UNO were found to be present there. Each invited guest was given 300 BDT honorarium, bag, pen, notebook, and lunch for joining this workshop from the organization. In that programme, the UP chairman was adorned the position of chief guest and others joined as special guests. The UP chairman gave a short speech describing his role in child development. He also promised to donate for the children from his personal fund. Local representatives of that organization were found busy satisfying the invited guests and sending photos to higher authorities through Messenger to inform them about the event. To test the output of the workshop at the end, guests were given some tasks to depict and present their ideas of child development on a paper. But it was found that most of them were at loss and did not know what to write. The local representatives of that organization then helped the guests with ideas and they were seen to write those on the paper.

### 3. Social-Cultural-Religious Organization

Social, cultural, and religious organizations have their own patterns of communication with the people which they use for different purposes. Various folk events are arranged where different communication tools, such as posters, wall writings, miking, etc. are used to communicate with and inform the people. Different types of communication patterns and tools were seen to use for 'Waj-Mahfils'. Among them, miking and posters are two of the most visible communication tools. Posters of different shapes and sizes are fitted to places like tea stalls, walls, public places, transport bodies, etc. to grab the attention of the community people. In such posters, all the information regarding the events like time, date, place, arrangement committee, patronization, chief-guests, special guests, donors are found. Volunteers are also seen distributing small size posters. Besides, money receipts are given to the people who donated money in these events.

Apart from posters, miking is also used as an important communication tool to inform the community about such events and to collect money. In that case, an auto-rickshaw is hired and some recorded information is played. Sometimes, religious songs are played to break the monotony of the announcement. Some representatives of the event committee also work as mike-men. In some cases, using the religious sentiment, the volunteer team collects money for the events from passengers on road. They even show frustration if anyone refuses to give money. The research team faced a similar incident while they were going to field by rickshaw.

Furthermore, gates are constructed at different places to make people aware of the events and bring a more festive mood. The live telecast of a 'Waj-Mahfil' was found on the local channels by the research team. So the local channels are also used as a communication tool. It is to be noted here that a double-layered communication system is found based on a single event. First, the event itself is a communication mechanism and informing people about the event serves as the second layer. 'Khutba' [speech given by religious leader before 'Jumma' (special prayer on Friday in Islam)] is also used as a religious communication tool. The Imam (religious leader) gives a short speech on different religious and social issues which in some degrees is associated with religious and social behavioural change.

Similarly, in 'Kirtan' different forms of communication are used. Posters are used as a communication tool to inform people about the event.

The research team observed a 'Kirtan' where a Brahmin (higher caste of Hindu religion) of their community first gave a short speech towards the grouped people. He explained different verses from their scripture. His speech contained different social and lifestyle-based issues (devotion to God, duties towards human beings, social awareness including dowry, child marriage, eve-teasing, etc.) and advice. It seemed that the speech of the religious leader was very influential in terms of behavioural change of the community. Here the Brahmin established a unique pattern of communication. After the accomplishment of Brahmin's speech, the musical group performed 'Kirtan'. During 'Kirtan', the art group members communicated with each other and

with the gathered people through different 'eye contacts and body language'. The way of performance had an exceptional impulse that made people attentive and passionate about the performance.

#### 4. Product/Service Promotional Communication

It was found that both folk and modern forms of communication patterns and tools are used for product or service promotions. Posters, banners, billboards, panaflex, wall paintings, miking, advertisements on the local channels, etc. were used as communication tools. Details or a summary of the product is found to be written there. Both 'mainstream' media celebrities and 'local' celebrities are used for product promotions on posters and billboards. Product or service advertisements, using pop-ups and videos are given on local cable networks. Again, mike is used in an abundant rate for product promotions.

Different folk tools like 'Mojma' are also used for product promotions and sell. The research team observed such a 'Mojma' where the canvasser used his own techniques successfully to sell his products and the community people found it very interesting. At first, he welcomed people to join him. Though some people were moving here and there and paid little attention to him, when some people were headed towards him, others got interested. Children were found to stand beside him with a curious mind as if he was a magician or a comedian. He reminded people about his long term cultural image to the community and tried to get acceptance. He was also trying to make his product trustworthy by using sentiments of localism by telling them, "Ami apnader nijederi lok. Amare sobai chinen. Ami apnader thokanor bebosa kori na." (I am from your locality; in fact, we know each other. I cannot bluff.) After that, the canvasser explained the reason for his arrival and introduced his products (some medicines for worms and sexual diseases). He then explained to people the bad impact of worms inside the human body. The way of his explanation was in satirical with the use of the local language. He was raising awareness among the people about health issues giving them 'local' explanations of diseases. For example, while discussing the bad impacts of worms, he was telling that worms lived on human sperm, hormone, and calcium inside the body and suggested people to take these tablets to get rid of the worms. He also added that people would get concrete proof if they slept taking these tablets at night and the following morning if they defecated at 'Kushar Khet' (sugarcane field). Though the bad habit of open defecation changed in the community, there were still some people who used to defecate in open places. To some extent, it seemed that the lecture of the canvasser regarding open defecation created a sense of joke among the people who attended the 'Majma'. Thus, by placing different funny arguments from different aspects, he was trying to convince people more about his products. People were found to be very much attentive. The canvasser claimed himself as an 'uneducated' person knowing nothing as a part of self-criticizing to get acceptance from the community. He added that only small worms would come out but the bigger ones would not but if any did then that person was lucky. He also said that the original price of the product was high but as he was selling it as

‘kompanir procharer sharthe’ (for promotional purposes of the company), he would sell it at a reduced price and give a tablet for free to anyone who bought two.

Giving explanations from different angles, he offered and made people hypnotized by his strong communication skills. He tried to get the attention and trust of the people to sell his products and that worked, as many people started to purchase them. After selling tablets for worms, he started to sell ‘Shukro Shanjiboni’ (herbal medicine for men’s sexual stamina).

Since there were different forms of taboos regarding open discussions about sexual diseases, he avoided the word ‘sex’ very consciously and in a metaphoric way which was also humorous. He was using different metaphors to give people an idea about his products like, “*Jader sharindar tar chirra gechey tarai use korben, tar abar jora lagbo.*” (Only those with sexual problems are to use this and the problems will be solved).

Though initially, he was claiming the product as medicine for allergy and arthritis, the targeted people understood the original use of the product by his language and way of communication. He said that if anyone took this medicine for allergy and arthritis then he would have to take cold water at night but if anyone used this product for sexual purposes then he would take hot water. In this process, people who were ashamed of buying the products felt free to buy it.

Eye contact of the canvasser with the targeted community was also very important here. Initially, when none was paying much attention to his products, he opened a bottle and gave people to eat at free of cost. But people were hesitant to take it as they did not know what they were going to consume. In this context, he then said, pinching the community, “*Valo jinish manush magna dileo khayna.*” (People won’t take good things even if you give them for free). He also mentioned the historical past of the country when the British gave tea at free of cost, making tea our daily habit and now people take a cup of tea at 5 BDT. And finally, people began to buy the products.

In an informal discussion with the canvasser, he informed that the products have 80% quality and his image is 20%. Both of which convinced people to purchase medicines from his van.

## 5. Political Communication

Different political leaders and local representatives also maintain a pattern of communication. Like other agencies, they use posters, leaflets, banners, billboards, stickers, festoons, and wall paintings, etc. as communication tools. Not only the established political personalities but also those who are thinking to join politics use these tools to get introduced to the community. Different posters are seen where these people give greetings of Eid, Puja, ‘Noboborsho’, etc.

## 6. Most Visible BCC Tools in the Community

Different types of BCC tools are visible in the community like publicizing using mikes (typically known as miking), canvassing, posters, leaflets, graffiti, local cable channels, etc. Among these, the most visible BCC tools in the community can be considered as miking. Though it is a very common tool that is being used for a long time in the community, with the advancement of technology some changes can be noticed in the pattern and usage of it. Now-a-days, different agencies are using this tool for different purposes. For example, government agencies use this tool to inform people about different notices given to them from a government official on various events and natural disasters.

Again, to inform people about any local events like 'Palagaan', 'Jatrapala', circus, rowing competitions, etc. miking is used as an important tool by the arrangement committee. Different non-government agencies use this tool for establishing their various agendas like creating public awareness, events, etc. For product and service promotions miking is used at a great rate both in peri-urban and rural areas. Different canvassers also use miking to sell their products to the target community. Different business organizations use it to inform people about their services and products like private hospitals, coaching centres, insecticides, local medicine, seeds, etc. The research team found different service businesses and product promotions, even the news of newly released bricks also being given by miking. Different religious institutions also use this tool for different events like 'Waj-Mahfil', 'Milad-Mahfil', 'Kirtan', etc. Apart from this, for different election campaign miking is used by various political parties.

Now-a-days, miking is used from the personal to the institutional level. Different agencies use this tool exceedingly for different purposes. But it is to be noted here that the pattern has changed over time. Previously, the mike-man used to announce certain information verbally but now recorded information loaded on the memory card is played on a phone which then is amplified by the mike. Even the research team observed a recorded version of the announcement of a person's death being played.

There are some agencies that create a recorded version of the information. There are some people who write a script on certain information and give voice to it. In most cases, auto-rickshaw or auto-car are used for miking. In that case, the auto-rickshaw driver regulates it. Sometimes, to get more attraction from the community, different entertaining content like a parody of a song (use of a common tune replaced by definite lyrics), popular song, and movie dialogues are used at intervals to remove the monotony and gain public attention.

## 4.7 State of the BCC Materials of BRAC

BRAC uses both printed and virtual contents as BCC materials for different programmes. By interviewing respective programme personnel at Head Office (HO), objectives, usages, and



programmes' perceptions of these materials are known. A quick and draft sketch on these materials can be found in the following discussion.

## BRAC Micro-Finance (MF) Programme

### ***Use of Printed Materials***

There are many printed materials in Micro-Finance (MF) programme. Among them x-banners, flipcharts are being used for behavioural change of participants or clients. Broadly there are two types of material usages. One is for the group and the other is for the individuals. There are also two types of contents of materials, one on the promotion of new products (loan service) and the other is on financial behavioural change.

The three mostly used printed materials:

- Flipcharts and posters are used by Customer Service Assistants (CSAs) for Pre-Disbarment Orientation (PDO) among a new group of borrowers. CSAs are using these materials at the branch offices. These materials basically give information on financial literacy as well as behavioural aspects. These are the mostly used BCC materials in MF.
- Flyer is mainly used for product promotions at the individual level.
- X-banner is used for groups in the community. It is occasionally used in a Village Organization (VO) during different campaigns. But the contents of x-banner are almost similar to the flipcharts of CSAs. The purpose of using x-banner is to create financial literacy among the borrowers and create behavioural changes.

### ***Programme's Perception of the Printed Materials***

The programme perceives that the significance of these printed materials is high as they think customers at least can understand the loan provision. They get some financial literacy which makes them act as good and responsible loan-takers. They also become aware of savings and the credit shield. Moreover, the information on health, hygiene, and social issues also helps them to be aware of their development and welfare.

### ***Use of Social Media (Cyber World)***

To prioritize materials for social media the set of criteria considered are: most focused issues and content, significance, target audience, objective/purpose.

There are still no significant materials or activities of MF on social media. The programme thinks that its participants or clients still have not much presence in the virtual domain. But they think

MF should be active on social media in response to their different criticism on the national media. They are thinking about developing a social media communication material presenting the financial inclusion of marginalized people and how it is working for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). They also want to represent the real scenario of MF at the community level. They had a discussion with BRAC's Communication team in this regard and it is in progress. Targeting different occasions/events they occasionally try to give some posts on Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube.

### ***Suggestion from MF***

According to MF personnel, the programme should always think about the cost-effectiveness whenever any initiative for Behavioural Change Communication is taken. Apart from this, other organizations' BCC practices in the community also need to be known.

## **BRAC Education Programme (BEP)**

### ***Use of Printed Materials***

BRAC Education Programme (BEP) has different types of modules and training materials for their teachers, adolescent leaders, staff, and training facilitators which are basically used for building up the capacity of a group of people who make awareness in the community through their activities. Their activities also create some effects on the behavioural aspect of the community as well, though these are not directly communication materials targeting the community people. From the point of BEP, it has emerged that one-to-one communication has significance in the community regarding behavioural change and building awareness.

Mostly they use printed materials like posters, leaflets, and flipcharts. Flipcharts are used targeting the specific group of people like Person with Disabilities (PWD), ethnic groups, etc. Leaflets are mostly used for service promotional purposes and posters for behavioural change and building awareness on different issues among adolescents and parents in the community.

The three mostly used printed materials:

- Posters are used among adolescent boys and girls, their parents, and teachers. Adolescent Development clubs and schools are the places where posters are shown to communicate with the audience. The process and purpose of poster-based sessions are similar to the facilitation activities of flipcharts. The programme thinks posters can present a lot of content at a glance. Moreover, it is helpful to facilitate a group.
- Leaflets are basically used for service promotions regarding new schools of cost recovery model (cost sharing). It is a one-to-one communication material.

- Flipcharts are used targeting the specific group of people like Person with Disabilities (PWD), ethnic groups, etc.

### ***Program's Perception of Printed Materials***

Printed materials are used mostly from the interest of the program. The programme identifies some issues on which they generate some materials to make changes in the behavioural aspect of the participants. The programme also thinks that these materials have significance in the community. There are a few materials in some specific projects focusing on the donor requirement.

### ***Use of Social Media (Cyber World)***

To prioritize materials for social media, the following set of criteria have been considered: most focused issues and contents, significance, target audience, objective/purpose.

BEP thinks that there is not much significance of social media, especially in the aspects of programme participants' behavioural change and awareness building at the grassroots level. BEP tries to engage with national mass media to bring their programmatic achievements into focus. They also post some write-ups in BRAC's blog reflecting their programme impact. They give event-based posts on Facebook too.

## **Health Nutrition and Population Programme (HNPP)**

### ***Use of printed materials***

HNPP informed that the context of the community has changed in terms of health-seeking behaviour and health and hygiene awareness. Considering the changing context they are trying to make changes in their BCC materials too. Though still, they are using flipcharts for one-to-one communication, the content of the flipcharts have been customized targeting the need of the specific group of audience. Flipcharts are the most used printed materials in the community. They also have modified these flipcharts keeping in mind the promotional aspect of the program's service packages, which are developed under the cost recovery programme model.

They categorized the entire Behavioural Change and Communication feature into two classes considering the process of session conduction: one-to-one communication and group communication. Apart from flipcharts, there are some posters which are developed targeting the specific group of audience. Adolescent boys and girls are targeted for modifying their daily lifestyle. They demonstrate (poster) materials in different schools to bring a positive change in the adolescent's daily life behaviour.

The three mostly used printed materials:

- Flipcharts are the most used materials targeting specific issues and products.
- Leaflets are for product promotion, BCC as well as building awareness on certain issues.
- Posters are for BCC as well as building awareness on certain issues.

### ***Use of Edu-tainment***

HNPP also uses the tools of edu-tainment like popular theatre in the community on different issues. In this case, they basically depend on the Community Empowerment Programme (CEP). HNPP helps CEP to develop a script of the play focusing on specific issues and after that CEP takes it to the grassroots level. They use '*Jarigaan*', '*Sharigaan*', and '*Gombhira*' in some donor-funded projects to meet the donor requirement.

### ***National Media***

HNPP also uses national mass media (TV, radio) with the support of the donor to promote a change in the behavioural aspect of the broader society, e.g. TB, communication. In the course of time, Audio-Visual materials on different issues have been broadcasted on the national media.

### ***Digital Materials***

HNPP also introduced a mobile app to the community people to make them aware of a particular nutritional aspect. To some extent, this app is a digital version of the flipchart. '*Pusti kormis*' use their smartphones to show some pictorial messages to the participants. During the session, they also describe all the pictorial information as others do with flipcharts.

Sometimes HNPP uses digital Audio-Visual media in the community. They show AV materials on particular issues to the community people. It basically depends on the donor's interest.

### ***Use Social Media (Cyber World)***

HNPP often emails all BRAC staff, giving them health tips as well as messages about lifestyle modification. HNPP also posts videos on YouTube. The overall presence of HNPP in social media is not on the rise.

## **BRAC Communication**

BRAC communication department basically handles the social media domain. They upload contents according to the requirement of different programs. There are various platforms of

social media like Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Blogger, LinkedIn, Instagram, and websites. Programs request the Communication department to develop social media contents as per their needs. According to the Communication department, the number of viewers of social media is increasing day by day. Some materials/contents really did a good job in terms of the number of viewers, comments, shares, etc. They also give their posts targeting different groups of stakeholders, e.g. donors, counties, etc. Most of the users of social media who visit BRAC's social media platform are aged 18-35.

It has emerged through the discussion with the Director of Communication that they are really interested to know about the cyber-culture, especially the notion regarding Violence against Woman and Children (VAWC).

## BRAC in Social Media Domain

BRAC joined the video-sharing social media, YouTube on January 19, 2015. Since then the YouTube channel posted a total of 177 videos on different topics like social awareness, skill development, campaign, interviews, BRAC activities, employee's feelings about BRAC, docu-drama, and other social issues. There are a total of 41,8534 views (till January 02, 2018) of these videos posted from BRAC YouTube channel. BRAC digital communication team regularly monitors these domains. The official website of BRAC, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Google+ are connected with this channel so that a viewer can easily visit them. The feature channel BRAC world maintained from the USA is also connected with this channel. In total, 2,008 people of different age, sex, and location (till January 02, 2019) subscribed to this channel. It seems that different videos regarding social issues and awareness got much publicity and popularity. Considering the highest views it appears that people are much more interested in different social awareness topics like women harassment, law enforcement, consultancy, humanitarian activities, social issues, skill development, etc.

## Psycho-graphic Perspective

From the psycho-graphic data, it comes out that a short film regarding land right which was released on BRAC YouTube channel on July 17, 2018 is the most viewed video on this channel with a total of 31,300 views till the writing this report (January 02, 2019). The title of this video is in Bengali 'Bangladesh ki asholei amader matrivumi?' (Is Bangladesh really our motherland?). Besides, there is another video titled 'Speak up against sexual harassment' which has a total of 33,763 views and 32 comments. It is important to note here that people both on Facebook and YouTube put their views about the video in the comment section. It is also found that in the comment section they also debate the topics and present their logic. Apart from these, videos regarding Rohingya crisis, skill development, innovative ideas, BRAC Adolescent Club girls' football match ranked in the highest position considering views. Each of these videos has more than 20 thousand views. It is also important to note that animated videos are also much popular on YouTube channels.

From BRAC YouTube channel’s demographic data it is found that most of the viewers are from Dhaka city. Besides, people across different areas of Bangladesh usually watched these videos. Basically, the people of Chittagong, Sylhet, Khulna, Rajshahi, Gazipur, and Rangpur are mostly engaged in these videos. The ratio of male and female viewers of BRAC YouTube channel is 74% and 26% respectively. The highest number of viewers belong to the age group of 25-34. There are also other groups of people but are small in number. From the following table an overall idea of the viewers can be found:

**Table 4.1: BRAC YouTube Channel Viewers from Bangladesh**

Viewer’s Age	Watch Time	Male	Female
13-17 years	0.6%	74%	26%
18-24 years	26%	78%	22%
25-34 years	54%	77%	23%
35-44 years	15%	85%	15%
45-54 years	2.4%	75%	25%
55-64 years	1.6%	66%	34%
65+	0.9%	67%	33%

According to the recent data from programme personnel (March 10, 2019), we can get an overall idea about the male and female ratio of YouTube viewers in Bangladesh and the rest of the world.

**Table 4.2: Ratio of YouTube Viewership**

Ratio of YouTube Viewership	Male	Female
Total YouTube viewers in Bangladesh	67%	33%
BRAC YouTube Channel viewers in Bangladesh	74%	26%
BRAC YouTube channel viewers around the world	76%	24%

From the above data, it is evident that in all cases female viewers are less in number than male viewers. The programme personnel thinks that programme presence in social media should be increased. They also think that they need a better understanding of the impact of social media.

## 4.8 BCC Practices in the Community: Process Documentation

Different BCC materials are used by respective programs at the community level. Here we have focused on flipcharts used by Targeting Ultra Poverty (TUP), PRA used by TUP, X-banners used by MF, posters used by ADP, and leaflets used by seed enterprise as communication tools.

## Flipchart Facilitation of TUP

Flipcharts are used for community mobilization by the TUP programme as a BCC tool. Among the twelve issues, five social and seven health issues are discussed through it. Programme staff perceive that it is mainly to give a proper idea about different issues by showing pictorials with explanations. It is being used as a BCC tool by TUP since 2013. Before flipcharts, TUP used guidelines on different issues as BCC tools and POs used these guidelines in group discussion sessions and during home visits. But it was found that people could hardly remember the issues discussed. Moreover, POs used to memorize the issues of the guideline and present them to the community. Sometimes they forgot some of the issues which created an embracing situation. Some POs brought different seasonal vegetables like pumpkin, carrots, etc. while discussing food value and health issues to make the session livelier from their individual creativity. After that, the necessity of flipcharts was felt by the program. From the demand of the ground level, the use of flipcharts was introduced. Now, flipcharts are used in group visits twice a month in a 15-20 minute long session.

However, in process documentation, a flipchart facilitation session was observed by the research team which was arranged in a courtyard of a TUP member. It was around 09:00 am on a foggy winter morning in a village of Dewangonj. Members of the household were found cooking. Yet, they welcomed the facilitator and the research team. The PO introduced the research team saying that they had come from the head office. Almost half an hour was spent to make the environment ready for the session. Around 14-15 women took part in that session who were mainly housewives. Some of them came with their children.

After giving a welcome speech, the facilitator opened up the flipchart and recapped on the previous session. After that, he discussed the necessity of family planning. The whole session was around 15-20 minutes. After completing the session, the PO was found to be in a hurry to collect money from the members (as this was TUP-2 grade group). It seemed that the time selection for the session was not perfect because women in the rural areas remain busy in the morning with various household chores. So they cannot pay proper attention to the facilitator. From field observation, it was seen that some women wanted to leave the session due to their household chores. Even the host member was also very busy preparing food, helping her child get ready for school, and with other activities. She was interrupting frequently in the session and the PO forced her to stay in the session.

The environment was also not right for such a session, as there was not enough space for sitting arrangement and some members were sitting far away and unable to see the flipchart. Children carried by some members were crying, creating an uncomfortable situation. Some households were caught in the middle of cooking. The PO scold some of the members for coming late. The participants of the session hardly concentrated and the session was interrupted repeatedly. As the members were rural women, they had various household works to complete. However, they stayed in the session just out of respect for the PO. It was observed that the PO had a strong rapport with the members. As a consequence, from social and humanitarian aspects

they continued the session. Again, as this is an asset-transforming program, some of them stayed there with the hope to get some benefits from the PO.

Observing the whole session, the research team found that the PO was more active in making the members memorize the issues instead of explaining them. He said, “Ja bolchi shob thoter agay mukhosto-thuthosto thakte hobe.” (All the issues discussed should be memorized properly). So they were too busy in memorizing to understand the topics clearly.

The research team took an exit interview with the community. They asked some questions like whether they could recall the topic that was discussed right then or previously. Some of them replied that they could partially recall the event. As they had to remain busy for household activities, they got less time to nurture the topics. Again, the PO used to come once in 15 days, so they forget almost everything from the previous session.

POs also have different observations regarding flipcharts. By talking with them it was found that flipcharts are not that effective in gaining people’s interests. Besides, flipcharts are not large enough, so people sitting behind can hardly follow it. According to them, some changes are needed to make the session more effective and alternative tools can be taken into consideration so that the purpose of the programs serve properly.

## X-banner Facilitation of MF

X-banner facilitation of the MF programme was observed in Kalkihara village of Dewangonj Upazila to notify people about micro-finance while forming new VO. The session was arranged in the courtyard of a government housing project. A time was fixed on the previous discussion with the villagers. But in reality, the session started one and a half hours late. The sitting arrangement of the villagers was made on the floor, while aged men were given chairs. The research team observed that the facilitator fixed the x-banner on a haystack, though the given instruction was to fix the banner on an x-banner stick. But the facilitator did not bring the stick with her. The fixation was not perfect and the x-banner dropped down frequently. This was creating an embarrassing situation. As the facilitator thought that the research team came from the head office (though the research team cleared their positions), she was nervous and scared. She willingly told the researcher that due to a long distance she did not bring the stick with her. Following are some of the observations made by the research team:

### ***Giving Unclear and Incomplete Ideas about BRAC***

From the very beginning of x-banner facilitation, unclear and incomplete ideas about BRAC were given. At the left corner of the x-banner introductory information about BRAC was given. But while introducing BRAC to the community the facilitator said, “BRAC bishwer ek nombor protishthan.” (BRAC is the number one organization in the world). Though it was written on that banner in Bengali that ‘Bartomane BRAC prithibir shobcheye baro besarkari unnyon sanghstha.’ (Currently, BRAC is the largest non-government organization in the world). After



that, she mentioned the name of the founder of BRAC, Sir Fazle Hasan Abed. When the villagers asked the reason for the prefix 'Sir' in his name, the facilitator replied, "'Sir' is added to his name as he is a very well-known person in the world."

Again, at the right corner of the banner, there was a pictorial representation of BRAC's six major programs. She just explained the MF programme and merely uttered the name of the other five programs without explaining them clearly. It seems that if she had explained the other five programs, people would get an overall idea about BRAC. She could have also linked up her programs with other programs. It was observed that the facilitator could not tell about her programme properly. Overall, the facilitator gave unclear, incomplete ideas and information about BRAC.

### ***Hasty Session***

The facilitator was found in a hurry to end her session. Though she explained that she had another session at another spot. She added that due to the remoteness of the area, she would conduct two sessions in one day, though official instruction was to complete just one. Had the facilitator come another day, she could end every session properly.

### ***Reluctance to Facilitate X-banner***

The facilitator was reluctant to facilitate the x-banner. Though one of the main reasons of facilitating an x-banner is to give a holistic introduction about BRAC from pictorial explanations of all the major programs so that the community people can connect more with the issues to be discussed. But it was observed that when the x-banner was falling down frequently she folded and kept it on a haystack. Therefore, the importance of x-banner was neglected.

### ***Lack of Creativity, Innovation, and Monotonousness***

The whole session appeared to be monotonous and lacked creativity and innovation. There were scopes to make this session more attractive to the participators. For example, though the facilitator did not bring an x-banner stick with her, she could use some other tools from the surrounding environment to fix it properly. She could even ask for help from the participants (villagers) for fixation. Again, different government and non-government institutions also run micro-finance programs in the same community. So when BRAC enters this arena, it is important to make the community understand the uniqueness of BRAC. This can also play a role in lifting up the branding aspect of BRAC among the community.

### ***Presence of Close-relatives (Husband) at the Spot and Reluctance to Follow Official Decorum***

The presence of close relatives at the spot of x-banner facilitation was observed to create some hesitation and complexities. It is to be noted here that the facilitator came with her husband at the spot. The research team also had an informal discussion with that person to know the reason behind his presence. The person replied that as the place was remote and the time of the session was evening, he came here for his wife's safety. Considering the remoteness and time his presence was reasonable but he could stay at a little further distance during the

session. Moreover, that person was a famous footballer (as well as a local politician) and maintained a very fashionable dress-up (wearing jeans, sunglasses, jacket), drawing lots of public attention. So when he was sitting on a chair in front of the community people, it made a 'hierarchical connotation'. The facilitator seemed not to be relaxed due to the presence of her husband as well as the research team.

Again, instead of giving the identity of BRAC employees, the facilitator was more interested to give the identity of a famous footballer's wife. So the villagers were giving special attention to the couple. To some extent, it seemed that the people were treating them as 'elite' which had an influence on building up rapport too.

### ***Lack of Empathy, Patience, and Cordial Behaviour***

It was found that the facilitator lacked empathy, patience, and cordial behaviour. She needed to be more empathetic towards the community to get the best output. The facilitator had the urge to collect money, instead of proper session facilitation. So it seemed that she had gone there only to collect the money. Here it is important to be self-aware and self-motivated from an empathetic point of view. It is needed to discuss issues on which the facilitator has beliefs from the level of her understanding.

### ***Uninterested Audience***

It was observed that the participants were not much concentrated and were rather disconnected from the facilitator. After completing the whole session the facilitator asked the villagers to raise any questions regarding the session. But they replied that they had nothing to ask. But here, if the facilitator could make the audience more interested, then they would ask different questions regarding BRAC.

### ***'Subjectivity' of the Frontline-Staff, Performance, and Target-based Intervention:***

As a whole, three points can be considered which has affected the overall process documentation: employee's reality, empathy, and organizational culture.

### ***Employee's Reality***

Employees have to work under different circumstances, which are not always favourable to them. They have a huge workload and pressure from the office to fulfil the target. So they are found to be in a hurry to complete those tasks. Besides, an official at the field level has to engage in some official work apart from the fieldwork. Certain responsibilities are imposed on them from the office so they cannot fully concentrate on the process documentation. Again, the remoteness of the spot, gender dimension, socio-cultural context, etc. make the reality tough. So unfavourable work environment exists to some extent which is a challenge to the facilitators.

## ***Empathy***

Empathy is another important point to consider. Empathy, love, and humanity toward programme participants are required for a more successful outcome. A facilitator needs to play the role of a mentor, motivator, and pathfinder to the community to make them aware of the different social issues to improve their lifestyle. Besides, how devotedly they work is also very important. A facilitator should be more cordial and sensible while working in the field. For this purpose, his/her behaviour, patience, ability to explain, analytical approach, capability, convincing power, etc. are very important. It is also to be noted that whether a worker is only busy to fill his/her target or if he/she is self-motivated bearing real love and humanity for the people in the heart.

## ***Organizational Culture***

Organizational culture has influenced creating an individual reality of a worker. Every organization has some internal culture that a worker needs to practice as the office decorum. A form of the institutional hierarchy is created based on different posts and positions of the worker. Though in the development sector 'Bhai/Apa culture' is present to remove positional hierarchy, in some cases, the potential practice of hierarchy can be noticed. An official cannot fully make him/her free from the circle of hierarchy which has an effect on his/her behaviour. In this context, when an official goes to the field and deals with the community people, the institutional culture is found to be expressed. Thus, a collision is formed with individual behaviour and institutional behaviour. Many officials fail to distinguish between these two and thus, an invisible form of hierarchy and mixed attitudes become apparent.

Again, when an official enters into a field, another form of hierarchy is formed based on his/her dress-up, economical condition, way of talking, professional position, etc. As a result, when a worker works in such an environment then he/she practices institutional attitude, making an invisible form of hierarchy. During the fieldwork, the research team observed a similar incident from a PO. While facilitating flipcharts, some participants were late to the spot. And the PO was talking with them in a 'rough' voice. Again, when some participants tended to move on, he forced them to stay.

It is to be noted that an individual's attitude is dependent on his/her social, cultural, and economic capital. So when a worker at the field level finds someone having less capital, then his/her attitude changes. As the social, cultural, and economic capital of the worker is often more than that of the targeted communities, the worker cannot fully free himself/herself from the hierarchy practice. Overall, organizational culture practiced at the root level has an impact on the process documentation.

## ***Contextual Shift through Technological Journey in the Grassroots***

It was found that local modality of generation regarding entertainment and the recreational notion were being transformed into a new phase with the flow of 'digital technology'. At the individual level, the nature of recreation and information was being personalized by the various

usages of mobile phones. Moreover, there is an affluence of social experience which conjures an individual to shape his/her awareness of any information. The penetration of modern technologies like mobile, television, and the internet has created a new form of behavioural atmosphere regarding access to information, entertainment, and recreation. People are more interested in digital technology-based content. Literatures show that the use of mobile phones has dramatically increased all over the country.

According to the national online portal, 'Bangladesh Open Data', after the launch of 3G service in 2013, internet penetration in Bangladesh grew by 22% by the end of 2014. Around 10.5 million additional internet subscribers formed with an average 3% growth rate per month (BTRC, September 2015). According to the report, at present, there are 54 million active internet subscribers (BTRC, September 2015). Among them, 96% are on mobile and 10 million use smartphones. Overall internet penetration is 34% in Bangladesh according to the BTRC report, 2015.

Our research found that mobile phones are no longer a mere communication device; it has also occupied a significant domain of entertainment in both individual and social spheres. From the overall observation, it could be realized that the sessions of printed materials (flipcharts, X-banners, etc.) were monotonous and lacked fun. Besides, with the immense advancement of technology people are less interested to get entertainment from printed materials. They have different digital sources of entertainment. They search for something interesting and also visible. So flipcharts cannot meet up their changed demand in this context.

In this regard, a middle-aged man said, *"Time has changed. Now-a-days, mobile is the main source of recreation and access to information. People need not go far to get any information, they can get everything from their phones. Any news comes within a glance. Everybody has a mobile phone on which they can watch movies. This is like a box of magic!"*

Since personalization of entertainment occurred due to the advancement of technology, now-a-days, people are reluctant to get information as well as 'collective entertainment' from those sort of conventionally arranged gatherings of 'developmental intention'. It is needed to notice that the manner of social development work has changed over the decades along with institutional strategies. Concurrently, people's perception regarding the development organizations and their modality is being changed too. At present, they have various scopes to get information and entertainment privately from different sources like mobile phones, televisions, etc.

### ***Contextual Shift in Socio-economic and Cultural Horizon:***

The local people were found busy with their income-generating activities. Even the engagement of women with Income Generating Activities (IGAs) has increased over the last decades. Literature shows that male members of the rural households are being engaged in non-farming activities and women remain within the farm sector (Hossain. M., & Bayes. A., 2018). So very logically it appeared from our fieldwork that women stay busy with both agricultural and

household work. It was also found that most of the programs of BRAC have a special focus on women. As on, the BCC session in a VO setup faced difficulty to attract adequate attention from the participants. Similarly, another literature showed that solidarity within VOs has been deteriorated which was also associated with the adverse effect on poverty alleviation and empowerment of the poor. (Rafi. M., & et.al., 2016). Many of the members were found absent-minded and even wanted to leave that session due to their business and some were attentive to the lecture of the flipchart during fieldwork. It also emerged from the fieldwork that BRAC staff were running with the courage of their target fulfilment; they did not have the option to consider the participants' convenient time in case of arranging sessions.

After a flipchart facilitation session, one of the attentive participants said during the exit interview, *"Sir is doing many things [help] for us. Can't we do this little [listening] one? It is our duty to hear...."*

This statement expresses some notion of showing gratitude towards the BRAC workers. It appeared that people engaged with BRAC's BCC just out of courtesy and not out of interest.

Apart from this, in the domain of getting information and entertainment of the community people, a deep silent change has occurred. Now-a-days, people are only interested in audio-visual contents that are more attractive than any printed materials or centred VO-based session facilitation.

### ***Sense of 'Ownership' on Institutional Information***

'Perception of information/knowledge' has a high level of connection with the behavioural change. If communication of information (knowledge) does not get fidelity in the community then it is hard to expect behavioural change at the individual level, or broadly in the community. There are plenty of examples to show that if the community subscribes information with 'ownership' then changes happen on the horizon of behaviour too. In this regard, it emerged from the fieldwork that there were some end users of printed material who could not own the information whole-heartedly. A participant of an arranged flipchart facilitation session said during her exit interview,

*"We hear and think that all [of what they are saying] are good for us. They are talking about our well-being. Are they saying anything bad? No, if so then we will not pay attention. Since they are not saying anything about bad things, why will we take this thing badly!? I think they are working hard for us, we should be grateful to them."*

If we go through the hermeneutics of the above statement, it reflects people were not thinking that flipchart facilitation was their voice. The use of pronouns 'we' and 'they' gave a sense that connotes like an outsider's voice was making them convince. In a microscopic way, it shows that there was a gap between the organization and the programme participants.

### ***BRAC Frontline-Staff's Perception of the Conventional Printed BCC Materials***

The role of frontline workers is vital in BCC-related intervention programs. They mainly facilitate BCC materials at the community level. Relation development and the way of communication depend on the 'subjectivity' and occupational context of the workers. Workers were overloaded with their target-oriented approach at the field level and the organizational arrangement made them hasty during the BCC session facilitation. Many a time they did not bother to think about the participants' perception and even their convenient time while they were arranging a BCC session in the community.

This entire situation combined with different aspects emerged as demerits of conventional VO-based BCC practices. In some cases, it seemed that these sorts of practices might need to be revised, considering the shifting nature of access to information and entertainment, socio-economic, and socio-cultural contexts. During the fieldwork, the research team talked with frontline-staff who usually facilitate different sessions using printed materials like flipcharts, posters, x-banners, etc. They also identified the contextual shift of participant's behavioural aspects regarding access to information and entertainment; specifically the point of habituating with digital technology and contents. They also thought that the awareness building sessions might be more attractive by using digital (audio-visual) contents. Most of them emphasized the various usages of mobile phones and the domain of mobile phone-based contents. Two statements from the field might give an insight regarding the existing print material-based BCC practice at the community level.

*One of the field-staff said, "What we show them are some pictures of cartoons on a printed poster or a flipchart, but they are used to watching audio-visual contents. Printed pictures cannot create that much degree of appeal that they can get from audio-visual contents. It would be better if we can think about the media."*

*Another staff said, "I saw, during my field visit, that women are stitching 'Kantha' (quilt) and watching audio-visual contents on their mobile phones. I believe if we can provide some interesting drama on our programme activities, they will enjoy. I think they will be able to realize matters well too."*

## 5. Conclusion

The current study shows that a range of weighty changes has taken place on the horizon of entertainment patterns and access to information of the people in the study area. This entire context is in such a phase where the information and communication technology developed in a noteworthy way. As a result, the sources of entertainment and information became personalized, localized, and digitalized. It seemed that the advancement of technology created new forms of 'digital and virtual culture' in the community. It was revealed that mobile phones have become a vibrant source of entertainment and information to the people. People of all ages and social classes used their mobile phones for getting information, communicating with others, and entertainment. The diverse usage of personal mobile phones made people habituate with digital contents, specifically with Audio-Visual contents and the virtual domain. At the same time, modality of getting access to the domain of entertainment and information using personal devices shaped a notion of personalization of information and entertainment among the community people.

Apart from the influence of mobile phones, it was found that the local cable network-based different contents had another degree of appeal to the community. They unfolded a new aspect of the localization of digital contents. People from the local community who were involved in cultural activities tended to engage in new digital forms of entertainment contents including product advertisements or service promotions. Locally produced audio and video contents (both recreational and promotional) created a sense of 'vicinal-connection' (ownership) in the community people regarding those contents. The local cable network-produced contents played an important role as people's source of information and entertainment too. Simultaneously, grounded mechanisms or structures, vis-à-vis access to information, and entertainment in both realms of personal mobile phones as well as local cable networks were revealed through the ethnographic approach. The local content development process was also tried to explore. There were many potential knots in the complex net of the socio-cultural and economic structural processes of content digitalization.

A thorough understanding of all the changes that happened could be useful in opening a new window into the perspective of BCC. Findings also raised a flag about the importance of being sensitized about the local cultural components, which might be more impulsive in BCC content development.

Finally, it emerged from the cases of BRAC's conventional BCC practice in the community that printed pictorial-posters and flipcharts (conventionally used by BRAC) were losing their appeal to the target audience. Moreover, with gradual changes in the lifestyle of the people due to increasing urbanization, they were becoming busier with their income-generating activities. As a result, organizing a session of flipchart or poster facilitation was becoming more and more challenging.

In addition, there were some issues that were fully dependent on the staff's subjectivity.

Although this study was conducted in a particular population in Bangladesh as per the focused ethnographic tradition, we took all the measures to make the case study as representational as possible to a typical Bangladeshi rural and peri-urban context. With the in-depth exploration and broad descriptions of the context, we believe the results are transferable to other similar Bangladeshi contexts as well. Based on the findings of the study, we acknowledge that given the changed circumstances in the lifestyle as well as communication patterns of the people in the rural and peri-urban areas of Bangladesh, it is now important for BRAC to consider new approaches to information, communication, and educational methods while preserving some of the effective conventional methods as well. We have the following recommendations:

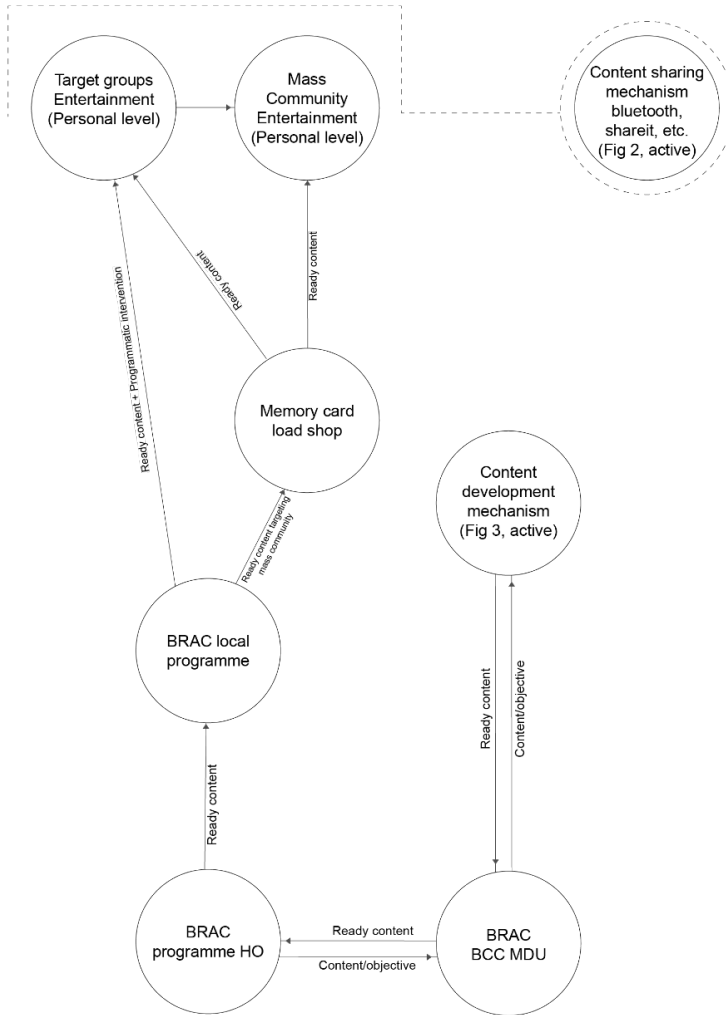


## 6. Recommendations

- Mobile phones should be taken very seriously. Mobile phone contents can be developed targeting the programme participants as per the programme objective. Here, the size of the contents needs to be taken into consideration so that both users of smart and feature phones can use them. A programmatic initiative can be taken in collaboration with respective BRAC programme HO, BRAC MDU, BRAC local office, local content developers and mobile phone memory card-loading shops.
- The boundary walls of BRAC offices can be used as a platform for innovative wall-paintings and graffiti along with other potential community space. In this case, community involvement can be ensured by engaging BRAC ADP club members.
- Skill development or adequate training for the frontline-staff who are facilitating flipcharts, x-banners, and posters at the grassroots level is needed. Training should be focused on the objective of the material, empathetic aspect of programme staff towards the targeted population, and capacity to relate with other BRAC programmes. Instead of being text-heavy, banners should be pictorial and info-graphic.
- Contents should be region-specific. Local resourceful people or celebrities can be engaged in the phase of BCC materials development. Local language and cultural notion may also be considered in developing BCC materials.
- Local cable networks appeared to be a useful and cost-effective tool that reaches out a good number of people. BCC should utilize this gateway.
- Social media contents can also be contextual and culture-specific. Local BRAC offices can operate a Facebook page on a regular basis, in order to reach out to a good number of people.
- Overall, individual entertainment devices and features (such as mobile phones and social media) need to be incorporated in the upcoming BCC strategy.

**Figure 6: Piloting Plan on Memory Card-load BCC Intervention**

PILOTING PLAN ON MEMORY CARD LOAD BCC INTERVENTION



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