

Evolving Participation of Bangladesh Police in UN Peace Keeping Mission: Challenges and Opportunities

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Abstract –Bangladesh is considered as one of the top police contributing countries in United Nations (UN). However, though the importance of the participation of police in UN Peace Keeping Operations (UNPKOs) has been increased, the scope of the Bangladesh police to participate in the UNPKOs has not been addressed entirely. Besides, there remains a knowledge gap among the existing literature regarding the issues and challenges facing by the Bangladesh police peace keepers in UN. Moreover, the existing literature fails to provide proper guideline to make the pre-deployment training programme more useful for the police peace keepers. In addition, it seems difficult to get any clearly defined literature related to the issues and challenges facing by the Bangladesh police personnel exclusively while participating in UNPKOs. Therefore, the present study aims to find out the major impediments facing by the Bangladesh police peace keepers in UNPKOs and thereby suggesting and recommending policy options to ensure the successful participation of Bangladesh Police in UNPKOs. Since, the successful and increased participation of Bangladesh police in UNPKOs will make the police peace keepers able to contribute to the economic and institutional development of the country; it is worth to conduct a detailed research in this regard.

Keywords – UNPKO, Bangladesh Police, Issues, Challenges, Peace Keepers.

INTRODUCTION

“To most people, the term “United Nations peacekeepers” conjures images of soldiers in blue helmets, but UN peacekeeping operations also include critical nonmilitary components” [1]. Since 1980s, UN police has been taking part in UN peacekeeping operations (UNPKOs). The purpose of UN police is to protecting the civilian population from human rights abuses and physical violence and thereby maintaining security. UN police serves as the national police service until domestic capacities were developed. In 1964, the police officers to the United Nations Operation were first deployed in Congo (ONUC) and the organization of the first CivPol component in the United Nations Peacekeeping Force was deployed in Cyprus (UNFICYP) [1].

During the early period, since the police have become involved with the UNPKOs, the function of the UN police was mostly centered on supporting and reporting human rights. It was facilitated with monitoring, advising and training local police on human rights. Later, the function and scope of the UN police in UNPKOs started to be changed due to the growing mandates and increased complexities in

1990s. Besides, the number of UN police has also been increased in the UN peacekeeping missions. Consequently, several changes have been brought by “the inclusion of executive policing tasks in peacekeeping mandates (such as in Eastern Slavonia and in Bosnia and Herzegovina with the creation of the International Police Task Force in 1996), and, later on, the adoption of full executive policing mandates (such as in Kosovo and Timor Leste)” [1]. “The executive policing mandates mainly involved complete responsibility in the maintenance of law and order, and the performance of the whole spectrum of activities associated with policing, including powers of arrest and detention, collecting evidence, investigation of crime and assistance in criminal investigations, border security, riot and crowd control, robust patrols, etc”[1].

Bangladesh Police has also been participating in the UNPKOs. Though Bangladesh joined UN peacekeeping operations in 1988 through contributing officers to UN Iran-Iraq Military Observer Group (UNIIMOG), the country began its involvement with the UN Police through its participation in the UN Transition Assistance

Group in Namibia in 1989. Since then, Bangladesh has continued to send its police to serve in UN peacekeeping missions and has participated in 20 missions. The official website of the Bangladesh Police says that, Bangladesh Police has sent two all-female Formed Police Units (FPUs) to United Nations Stabilisation Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) and the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO).

In addition, according to information available at official website of Bangladesh Police, Bangladesh Police sent specially equipped self-sufficient police units called Formed Police Units (FPUs) to Ivory Coast in 2005. Bangladeshi FPUs and UNPOLs with as usual name and fame are working in 7 different missions which are MONUSCO (DR CONGO), UNAMID (Darfur, Sudan), UNMISS (South Sudan), UNMIL (Liberia), MINUSTAH (Haiti), MINUSMA (Mali), Currently, from Bangladesh Police, there are 87 Individual Police Officers (IPO) working in 03 different Missions UN Peacekeeping missions, 04 Police Officers working in P-Level/UN jobs and 739 FPU members working in 5 Formed Police Units, in total 806 Police Officers are working in 05 UN Peacekeeping missions and UN HQ [2].

Thus, for many years, Bangladesh Police has been contributing to the UNPKOs with glory and success in establishing world peace. They have been lauded for their efficient contribution to the peacekeeping by the UN Undersecretary General several times [3]. With regard to this, Bangladesh has been considered as one of the leading transmitting countries in UN peacekeeping missions. However, to cope-up with the recent changes occurred in peacekeeping policy guidelines, the police peacekeepers of Bangladesh has been facing several challenges in maintaining their effective participation in the mission areas. Moreover, the existing system of recruitment and pre-deployment training system of Bangladesh Police to sending police force to the peacekeeping missions has creating more challenges toward the successful participation of police peace keepers in the UN missions.

Therefore, the aim of this study is to find out the major challenges facing by the Bangladesh police participating in the UNPKOs. It also looks at the responsible factors which create major impediments towards the successful participation of the Bangladesh police in the UNPKOs. In addition, this study has

explored whether addressing these challenges and issues brings the opportunities for the police peace keepers to contribute more to the national development of the country.

As mentioned above, Bangladesh Police is contributing to the UNPKOs successfully as one of the top police contributing countries since it has started to participate in the UNPKOs in 1989. Yet, the position of the Bangladesh police in UNPKOs has been decreasing and it has fallen from first position to third position within last couple of years. As of August 2013, Bangladesh was the top police contributing country with a total of 1,816 personnel serving in seven missions [4]. As of February 2015, Bangladesh was the second police contributing country in the world with 1336 personnel [1]. According to the official website of Bangladesh Police, “since its commencement to serve in different UN Mission, Bangladesh Police has now been the 3rd Police Contributing Country (PCC) in the world with remarkable commitments of 795 personnel to date (4 December 2018) of its own to the UN Mandate” [2]. Besides, it has become challenging to the police of Bangladesh in the UN to continue their affluent role due to the monopoly role of the Bangladesh Army in the UNPKOs. However, “it is a matter of concern that Bangladesh, in spite of being involved with peacekeeping since 1988, has not yet formulated a national policy document on how to face the challenges of present and future peacekeeping missions in the 21st century” [5] neither for Bangladesh Army nor for Bangladesh Police members who involve with the UNPKOs.

Besides, though the importance of the participation of police in UNPKOs has been increased, the scope of the Bangladesh police to participate in the UNPKOs has not been addressed entirely. Moreover, instead of giving the police force proper pre-deployment training, emphasis is given to the selection and recruitment of the police peacekeepers based on bribery and on the use of unfair means.

In addition, the existing literatures argue that the recruitment and selection process of Bangladesh police personnel for the UNPKO is highly politicized though it has not been addressed by these literatures that how this politicization occurs. Besides, though it has been argued that the pre-deployment training programme is not designed properly, it has not been suggested by the available literature that how can the training programme be improved. In addition, it seems difficult to find out any clearly defined literature

related to the issues and challenges of the Bangladesh police personnel participating in UNPKOs. Most of the literature is written based on the experiences of the military forces and the role of the police forces in this regard is almost ignored by the researchers.

Given the contexts mentioned above, the present study aims to find out the major impediments facing by the Bangladesh police peace keepers in UNPKOs and thereby suggesting and recommending policy options to ensure the successful participation of Bangladesh Police in UNPKOs. Since, the successful and increased participation of Bangladesh police in UNPKOs will be able to contribute to the economic and institutional development of the country; it is worth to conduct a detailed research in this regard.

However, in spite of having greater importance it is hard to find out any substantial research work on the participation of Bangladesh police force in UNPKOs. Though some research works on Bangladesh's participation in UNPKOs could be found but the focus of such studies is limited to the participation of Bangladesh Army in the UNPKOs. As a result, it is difficult to get any literature regarding the participation of Bangladesh police force in UNPKOs. Therefore, it is important to focus on the evolving participation of Bangladesh police in UN peace keeping missions as for long Bangladesh is considered as one of the top police contributing countries to the UN and they are also top in professional peacekeeping.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objective of this study is to explore how do the police personnel of Bangladesh successfully participating in the UN peace keeping missions and thereby contributing to the economic and institutional development of the country. As well, this study explores whether the existing policies and training guidelines provide proper assistance or increase obstacles to the Bangladeshi UN police peace keepers in this regard. Therefore, the aim of this study is to explore the major impediments facing by the Bangladesh Police force participating in the UN peace keeping missions. In addition, it has also discovered whether addressing these challenges and issues brings the opportunities for the police peace keepers to contribute more to the national development of the country.

Conceptual and Analytical Framework of the Study

The conceptual framework of this study is sketched based on the existing policies and issues that creating challenges or giving opportunities for the Bangladesh

police peace keepers. Figure 1 shows that, the peacekeepers face certain challenges and at the same time they get some opportunities by participating in the UNPKOs. This study has explored whether the existing policies and issues are creating challenges or giving the opportunities to the Bangladesh police peace keepers. The conceptual framework of this research assumes that if the existing issues and policies are addressed properly by the government and the relevant authority of the country then the Bangladesh police peacekeepers in UN will be able to contribute more to the institutional, normative and economic development of the country.

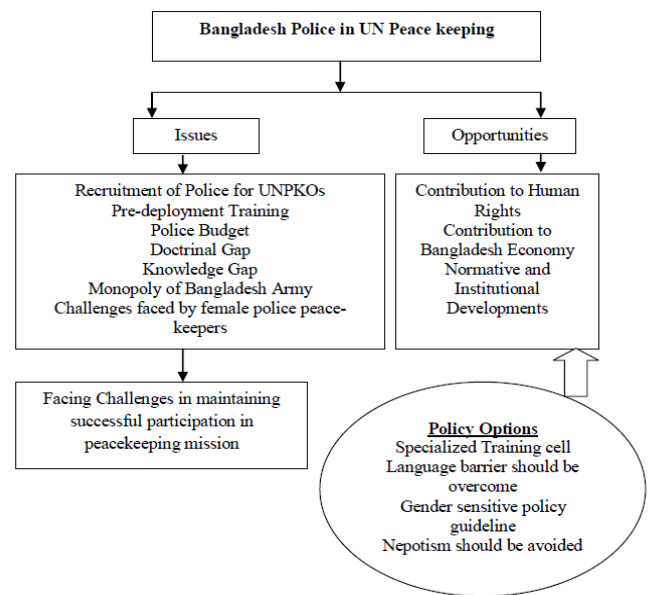


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of the Study
Compiled by Author

MATERIALS AND METHODS

For present research work, primary as well as secondary data has been used. A desk research method has been used to suggest and analyze the primary and secondary data. The information mainly has been collected through document review. Documents used in this article include different journal articles, book chapters, official reports and policies of Bangladesh Police and the UNDPKO. Different official web pages of Bangladesh police and UNPKOs have also been used as source of information of this article. The documents and reports reviewed in this article mainly focus on the selection, deployment, training and performance of Bangladesh police peacekeepers in the UNPKOs. The selection of Formed Police Unit

Guideline 2017 has also been consulted here to find out the policies of selection of police officers for peacekeeping operations. Therefore, by analyzing the contents of several academic articles and official documents of Bangladesh Police and UNPKOs the thoughts and ideas of this article have been generated.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Selection, Recruitment and Promotion of members of Bangladesh Police at national level to participate in UNPKOs

The Formed Police Unit (FPU) selection guideline to participate in the peacekeeping operations was first published in 2009 and the revised version of this guideline has been published in 2017 [5]. According to this guideline, if a departmental case against a policeman is running / pending / under process or member of three or more times punished and within three years of giving a verdict cannot go to the mission. Besides, the police members who are interested to participate in the missions must have 5 years of working experiences including a good command over mission language (English or French). In addition, those who have been awarded for their outstanding performance throughout his/her career and who have not been participated in the mission earlier will get preference during the selection process will get preference during the selection process. The female police officer who has joined the missions earlier as an IPO (Individual Police Officer) will also be in the preferred list as well. However, though the points mentioned above are the prerequisite to take part in the mission, most of the time the guideline has not been followed in practice.

Pre-deployment Training of Potential Police Peace Keepers

Though the potential police peace keepers require specialized training to perform well in the peacekeeping operations Bangladesh Police does not have a separate specialized training center like BIPSOT (Bangladesh Peace Support Operation and Training) to potential UN peacekeepers of Bangladesh [5]. Therefore, the police peacekeepers have to depend on the Police Staff College at Dhaka and Police Academy at Rajshahi to have sufficient training in this regard [5]. As a result, to cope up with the changing pattern of UNPKOs, the police peacekeepers have to face several challenges. Police forces are also facing challenges to communicate in the mission areas as they do not have proper training in learning French language.

Police Budget and Expenditure

Though the annual budget for the public order and safety has been increased (Table 1), it needs to be increased more as the robust peacekeeping requires much expensive training of officers. Besides, though it is hard to find out the specific amount of police budgeting and procurement, it can be said that the public order and safety budget is not sufficient enough. Therefore, officers are facing challenges to adjust themselves to the existing environment in the mission areas.

Table 1. Public Order and Safety Budget; Source: Ministry of Finance

FY	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Public Order and Safety Budget (%)	5.7	5.7	7.5	4.2	4.5

Source: Budget in Brief (Achieve), Finance Division, Ministry of Finance [6]

Monopoly of Bangladesh Army

Though the existing literature shows that the Government of Bangladesh (GoB), Armed Forces Division (AFD), Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) and the Bangladesh Police play crucial roles in taking the decision of sending troops and police personnel to UN, the decisions regarding the participation of Bangladesh Police in the UNPKOs have been monopolized by the Bangladesh Army most of the time [5].

Doctrinal or Guidance Gap and Knowledge Gap

Though the contribution and the importance of UN police to the peace keeping operations have been increased day by day, it lacks proper guidance and UN doctrinal support to govern all aspects of police operations. Along with the contributions of new policies to the development of common standards for police in peacekeeping, proper guidance on protection is needed further. Besides, it is hard to find out relevant literature related to the contribution and challenges of the Bangladesh Police in this regard, as the members of the Bangladesh Police are not active enough to reveal their challenges and opportunities through scholarly research works. This leads to knowledge gap about the pros and cons of the contribution of Police forces to the UNPKOs.

Challenges Faced by Female Police Peacekeepers

Bangladesh is one of the top female police officer contributor countries of the UNPKOs and they have been considered as the role model in the community of the Mission area [7]. However, the policy guideline of sending police peacekeepers to the mission has not been made gender sensitive yet. The stereotype mentality of policy makers creates several challenges toward the participation of female police officers in the missions which include dual responsibility of women at home and workplace, language barrier, unhealthy sanitation system in the mission areas and so on.

Opportunities

Successful completion of UNPKOs by the police peacekeepers of Bangladesh may give the police members the scope to learn how to ensure human rights of the people of the country. Besides, the norms and values they acquire from the missions also contribute to the normative and institutional development of the country as well. In addition, as the police officers who participate in the UNPKOs are continue to receive their national salary, while the UN pays a daily Mission Subsistence Allowance (MSA) [8]. It may contribute to the economic development of the country. Further, the successful participation of Bangladesh Police forces in the missions has increased the scope of the police force's to participate more in the missions. As a result, Bangladesh Police has now been the 3rd Police Contributing Country (PCC) in the world [2]. However, the opportunities and the contribution of the police peacekeepers to the society will be increased more if the challenges mentioned above meet successfully through the implementation of the following policy options mentioned in the recommendation section of this paper.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

For long, Bangladesh is considered as one of the highest police contributing countries to the UN. Bangladesh Police is not only top in number in the world; they are also top in professional peacekeeping. The reputation of Bangladesh female Police units in Haiti is widely acclaimed as it responded quickly while the rights of women and children were frustratingly violated, though the participation has been curtailed later. In D R Congo the 2nd contingent of Female Police of Bangladesh is working very hard. According to Bangladesh Police, Bangladesh Police peace keepers as "early peace builders" have all the qualities to implement peace building tasks by providing security

umbrella, training for the local Police to build up their capacity in collaboration with other partners. However, it has been found that peacekeeper selection policy in Bangladesh is highly politicized with bribery [9]. Besides, the pre-deployment training of the Bangladesh police peacekeepers lacks several important aspects related to the protection of human rights.

However, as the world is changeable and is changing day by day, so UN Police mandate continues to change. Therefore, Bangladesh Police needs to cope with major changes in UN. Consequently, in order to ensure the successful participation of Bangladesh police in UNPKOs, enhanced competency and skills emphasizing on the potential problems of different regions are needed to be ensured first. Besides, the country should be careful about issues that may affect the recruitment and training processes of the Bangladesh police in UNPKOs. Moreover, the government of the country should be concerned about the increased challenges facing by the police peacekeepers participating in the peacekeeping missions.

Based on the above mentioned discussions, this study believes that the challenges faced by the police peacekeepers in Bangladesh can be overcome if the following issues are addressed properly:

- Pre-deployment training should be provided by a specialized cell of Bangladesh Police.
- Language barrier should be overcome by appointing both English and French language expert with necessary logistical support.
- Policy guidelines should be made gender sensitive.
- Bangladesh police members who have first-hand experience to join the missions should involve themselves with scholarly research works to reveal the challenges and opportunities of the police peace-keepers.
- The existing policy guidelines must be followed strictly during the recruitment of police officers for the mission by avoiding nepotism.

Moreover, detailed research works are need to be done through the incorporation of ideas and views from the experienced police peace keepers which has not been done in this research due to having limited access to Bangladesh police personnel.

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