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RURAL CULTURE IN THE 21ST CENTURY FILMS OF BANGLADESH

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Abstract: Bangladesh film industry had to battle against obscurity and disorientation for a long time. However, films of the 21st Century are forwarding to revive its lost identity. Few films have been made so far focusing the pre-modern rural society of the country. Due to socio-economic and cultural reasons, rural area has immense importance. Therefore, the representation of rurality in audio-visual production demands careful attention. This study has analyzed and presented how the films represent the rural culture and society. For this purpose, certain dominant Bangladesh films of the 21st Century, which portray the rural culture, have been studied. The analyses have found that the films encompass a widespread view of rural society, and delineate rural culture on certain contexts. Furthermore, it has been found that, in order to bring modernity replacing traditionality in rural society, the films are subtly playing an important role through representation.

Keywords: Rural culture, media, woman, religion, traditional, Bangladesh.

Introduction

Art is the most influential media in every society throughout human civilization. In modern time, film has emerged as a wing of technocratic art, the art through “camera eye”, which encompasses some other arts, such as literature, music, photography, play, etc. From the dawn of the twentieth Century, after the invention of motion picture recorder to till now, film has been becoming more inseparable part of people’s life. Beyond providing mere entertainment, film has some other functions too: influence, educate, motivate, represent, construct and shape opinion, provoke thought and responsibility, spread propaganda, etc. (Reeves, 1993; Swain, 2013; Wanger, 1941) Unlike all forms of art, film has an immediate and absolute economic consequence. Post-revolutionary movies of Soviet Union and post-World War I movies in Germany helped to revive the national economy of both nations (Cook & Sklar, 2019; Kepley, 1996). Iranian films present its social, cultural and political, humanitarian crises, and social norms and attitudes (Masud, 2013).

Film, to a certain degree, has become the interpreter of the world. It convinces the audience what is truth and what is history, provides constructed view of politics and events, fabricates the morality and ideology, and even ideates how the other people and nationalities should be treated like. Film as an audio-visual production puts significant impact on the community it represents, and thus creates a pseudo-world of notion, belief, thought, ideology and attitude. Movie spectators in United States, for an instance, are strongly influenced by Hollywood films as they start believing everything depicted in the film is true (Giannetti, 2014). They are mainly affected by, as Baudrillard (1994) says, *simulation*, the process in which a representation of something comes to replace the thing which is in fact represented, and therefore, the representation becomes more real than “the reality”. However, film merely represents a limited version of reality, and often a distorted one.

Bangladesh is a country of villages and rural people consist bulk of the total population. A lion share of national economy is still based on rural society although the prior scenario has been changing from the past few decades due to heavy industrialization. Hence, for learning Bangladesh society, knowledge of its rural society is imperative. Media as an important vehicle of culture in Bangladesh and elsewhere in the world often represents the rural culture. Film of Bangladesh, a dominant form and/or content of media, has also been playing an important role particularly from the 2000s interpreting the rural socio-cultural environment through audio-visual productions. In Bangladesh like elsewhere in the world, film industry is based on urban. Filmmakers, actors, crews, and other persons involved during the whole production are also from the urban culture. Therefore, it is essential to observe how these urban people depict rural culture in their creative productions, and whether these interpretations are accurate, or merely attribution. Generally speaking, films of a particular era illustrate the version of social reality of that period. Therefore, this study deals with the nature and critical aspects of the representation of rural culture in the 21st Century films of Bangladesh.

Rural Culture

The term “rural” generally indicates countryside having the features: values, traditions, and customs opposite to urban’s. Rural society is the reservoir as well as preserver of culture whereas urban is considered as the cornerstone of civilization (Ahmed, 2011). In nature, rural society is monogamous and having no or little dissimilarities from village to village unlike the urban (Slama, 2004). Culture is the sum of what and how people do in a given society, moreover, how they lead their life. Contents of culture can be both material, such as building, weapon, machine, clothing, and non-material, such as belief, values, behavior (Henslin, 2014). Therefore, rural culture is the culture from and of the villagers and villages. The utmost difference between urban and rural culture is that rural society is traditional in nature, therefore less capable to adapt or move towards

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modernity. Bangladesh rural society is based on agrarian economy, and socio-cultural life of such society is widely known as “rural way of life” (Bodenstedt, 1990).

Films of Bangladesh

Bangladesh emerged as a nation-state after two conflictual consecutive events: (a) the Great Indian Partition in 1947 that created two sovereign states namely India and Pakistan (undivided); and (b) the Liberation War in 1971 that separated East Pakistan as sovereign Bangladesh from West Pakistan. However, legacy of films in Indian subcontinent lies on the British colonial period. Besides, the films those have made before and after 1971 in what now is called “Bangladesh” has been designated as the films of Bangladesh. Films in this region have been evolving from time to time. The golden era of Bangla cinema was vanishing from 1980s and 1990s due to heavy commercialization and lack of creative endeavors in Bangladesh film industry (Kader, 1993). From 1971 to 1977, total of 163 films were released throughout the country where only 25 films were made with original story (Nasreen & Haq, 2008). After a heavy downfall in 1990s, the film industry of Bangladesh is reviving again since the beginning of the 21st Century. Apart from commercial movies, some creative brains are engaging in producing something “new”. Although two major lines: (a) traditional and BFDC¹-based mainstream films; and (b) independent and creative films in Bangladesh film industry have been evident, both represent society, people, and culture of the country, to some extent, differently.

Research Method

Based on social representation, the 21st Century Bangladeshi films can be divided into three broad divisions: (a) urban representation; (b) rural representation; and (c) mixed representation. Since urban population is the prime consumers of films and theatres, they are the main target audience of the production. For that reason, story, set, actor and actress, and ambience surround the urban Bangladesh in most of the films. However, a new genre of “rural films” has recently been introduced in Bangladesh cinema industry, and some independent filmmakers in coalition with few media corporations are making films on rural life. These films are the combination of both novel-based and original stories. The point should not be overlooked that novel adaptation in films often paint a social scenario of a particular period from past so it can be inconsistent with the present situation. On the other hand, commercial “formula films” often use the mixed but “utopian” representation of urban and rural society with the central focus on hero-heroine’s chemistry. Based on the discussed features, the second category of films those represent rural society and the way of life there have been considered relevant for this study. The qualitative study is mainly based of content analysis, and to do so, nine dominant and popular Bangladeshi films of the 21st Century, more precisely from 2000 to 2016, have

been selected and analyzed thoroughly. The studied films are: *Srabon Megher Din* (2000), *Lalsalu* (2001), *Matir Moyna* (2002), *Hazar Bachhor Dhore* (2005), *Molla Barir Bou* (2005), *Monpura* (2009), *Television* (2012), *Jalaler Golpo* (2014), *Oggatonama* (2016). The representational and cultural analyses of these films are based on dialogue and discourse, characterization, story, and few other necessary aspects. Furthermore, careful observation of the rural society along with pondering few secondary sources have also been conducted for relative purpose.

Rural Culture in Bangladesh Films

To analyze and discuss the relevant representation of the 21st Century Bangladesh films, distinctive propositions have been made based on socio-cultural perspective: religion, language, education, entertainment, outfit, food and healthcare, rural women, relationship, political culture, myths and superstitions, and views toward modernity. Therefore, on these specified eleven grounds, a brief discussion on the representation of rural culture in these films are being presented here.

Religion: Religion seems an inseparable part of rural life which has explicit and/or implicit impact on individuals. Islam is the most practiced religion in rural society and Muslims consist the largest religious community whereas Hindu is the largest religious minority. In rural area, some are puritanical Islamist while some believe in greater humanity. In *Oggatonama* (2016), Kefayet Uddin Paramanikopines:

Whether he is a Hindu or Muslim, he must be a son of any parents.

This version of expression is an indication of religious openness as well as liberal worldview which has ostensibly emerged from *falsafa*². On the other hand, two types of people religious followers exist in rural society: regular, and seasonal. The rural elites, such as wealthy, well-educated, established, aged, and politically powerful usually control the religious environments and systems. They are the constant and regular attendance in rites and occasions whereas ordinary villagers are seasonal. Farmers, day laborers, and other field-workers have been presented as the least pious as they are too busy in earning their livelihood:

Village head : Don't you know the scriptures!
Farmer : I'm a poor man, can't even eat.

Although this faction seems fearful to God, they are unable to perform daily religious practices due to excessive workload. Pious as well as solvent Muslim villagers actively attend and perform weekly prayer of *Jumma* and occasions like *Shab-e-Baarat*, *Shab-e-Kaadar*, *Ramadan*, *Eid-ul-Fitr*, and *Eid-ul-Adha*. On the other hand, ordinary Hindu villagers have been seen less apathetic to regular prayer. Muslims and Hindus have more faith in their own religion-mates than their opposites³, although Hindus trust Muslims more than Muslims do to Hindus (Johansson & Stenman et al., 2009). Belief in fate is a crucial component of “rural religion”. Illiteracy and ingenuousness with fear

appeal often make the ordinary rural people more frightened towards Islam. Like Mosque, *Mazar* has also been considered to illiterate rural people as a sanctuary for beggingsalvation from all their sins. They also bestow their goods such as domestic animals, first crop of their land, money etc. in exchange of *dua*³ for their betterment. Religious deception of *pir-fakir* is a common picture. Even beggars also beg singing religious songs:

On the holy Friday, please, donate something
in the name of Allah and Muhammad!

Pir, Maulana, Maulovi, Fakir, Huzur, Imam,⁴ and other religious clergies as “holy man” stimulate and nurture the sense of religiosity among rural inhabitants. These “Godly” persons make religion more mystic, heavenly, and spiritual in front of others through their *waaz, boyan, nosihot, khutbah, dawat*,⁵ etc. Anyone who repudiates or questions the obligations and regulations in the name of religion, they usually get slandered by the dominants and their followers. In *Television* (2012):

An ordinary Villager : If you don’t mind, I want to say that nowhere in our religion enunciate on the prohibition of television.
Amin (a rural elite) : Don’t want to be a pandit with your little knowledge.

Women perceive as more religious than men. Many women recite the *Quran* in dawn and say their prayer. In rural reality, women have none but the Almighty, so they are more dependent and believer of religion. Interestingly, age and piety have apposite and parallel relationship: when an individual has become older, he has also become more pious fearing the forthcoming death. In movies, old men have been identified more religious and attendants than the youths.

Language: Rural people use dialect in their everyday conversation. These dialects vary region to region: local language of Dhaka does not match up with Sylhet’s, Barisal’s and Chittagong’s are different too. In many films, the characters use local language that seems interesting as well as a bit spooky, but very much relative with the rural context.

Table: Use of Language in Films

Dialect	Conventional form	Distortion	Meaning
<i>Tenara</i>	<i>Tara</i>	<i>t(en)ara</i>	they
<i>Tani</i>	<i>Tini</i>	<i>t(a/i)ni</i>	(s)he
<i>Thakon</i>	<i>Thaka</i>	<i>thak(on/a)</i>	to stay or live
<i>Boson</i>	<i>Bosa</i>	<i>bos(on/a)</i>	to sit
<i>Pinda</i>	<i>Pora</i>	<i>p(ind/or)a</i>	to wear

Source: Prepared by the Researcher

The table depicts how conventional forms of words have been used as dialects in films. Although the differences of them are very tiny: *en, a/i, on/a, ind/or*. In films directed by Humayun Ahmed namely *Shrabon Megher Din*

(2000), two social rural entities: elite people and ordinary people have been seen to use two different accents during conversation. Of them, wealthy elite and the remaining ancestors of *Zamindars* talk in colloquial language, and general villagers use local dialects. It, to some extent, contradicts the rural reality as most of the inhabitants of a certain village share the same accent and language pattern due to the cultural coexistence unless some of them are migrated from different area and ethnicity. Besides, conventional commercial films of Bangladesh in the 21st Century combine both the urban and rural accents, and language of these films is often colloquial and often forced endemic. Using slangs and foul words in conversation is a popular practice in rural society. In *Lalsalu* (2001):

Wife (to her son) : You bastard! Are you human born? Is money that cheap? You are son of bitch!
Husband (to wife) : You bitch! It’s your womb’s fault.
Wife (to husband) : And you old imbecile! What’ve you thought? Thought you’ve fathered them (the children)! Allah is witness, they are not from your semen.

The gesture-call system of language is also seen in movies. Kinesics⁶ and paralanguage⁷ as implicit but crucial methods of interaction, such as beaoning, crying and laughing for certain reasons and often to draw attention, winking, etc. (Haviland, 1999) have also been discerned in every films.

Education: Many rural parents want their children to be a genuine and loyal disciple of *Madrasa*, and become a religious and righteous person rather than a well-educated being. Often, modernity purveyed by educated people and traditional and religious orthodoxy collide. Tanvir Mokammel depicts this situation in *Lalsalu* (2001). In lieu of establishing a modern school in village, the local *Huzur* asked the Chairman for an Islamic school:

Huzur : I intended to establish an Islamic school in the village. Children are remaining ignorant about Islamic scriptures.

Moktob is another religious school where children go for Islamic education. The belittling tendency of real world and ideological hegemony of rural elite often drives ordinary rural people to deny the advance and modern education system addressing it as an “education of evil”. Concept of heaven and inferno shapes the education and learning process in rural society. However, social modernization is forcing this condition to be changed so that the literacy rate is increasing (Mannan, 2003).

Entertainment: Scopes of entertainment in rural society are remarkably limited. Lack of technology, inability of innovation, scarcity of money, and lack of willingness remained the ways of entertainment in rural area traditional. In most cases, villagers are deprived of modern taste of life. They try and overuse their narrow options of recreation. Music and game are the two

ancient forms of amusement in rural area of Bangladesh for decades. Even farmers work in the field singing some popular local songs altogether.

Evening is the prime time when villagers often gather in an open place to enjoy *Ashor*, rural music program performed by local music groups and/or musicians. *Matir Moyna* (2002), *Lalsalu* (2001), and *Shrabon Megher Din* (2000) have represented a smaller portion of such arrangement. Usually *jaari*, *shaari*, *murshidi*, and *bauffolk* and antique music is performed in such programs. Tone, taste, and flavor of village have been embodied in these songs. The vocals are often called *boyati*. The lyrics of the songs contain spiritual, educative, rational, and emotional contents. They perform with some traditional musical instruments: *dhol*, *tobla*, *ektara*, *dotara*, *khonjon*, flute, etc.:

Oh my mad horse!
You ride me from place to place.

Puthi is a book of poetic traditional tales and religious stories of rural ancient Bengal. In the past, village men gathered at a place in evening and recited those tales. Hazar Bachhor Dhore (2005) depicts. Nonetheless at present time the tradition has been disappeared and new recreational activities have occupied the space. Religious and cultural occasions: *Eid*, *Noboborsho*, *Nobanno* offer the villagers to celebrate and perform social and rejuvenating activities. Circus, boat race, puppet show, bioscope, *jatra pala*—the most common ways of entertainments in village, however, are losing their erstwhile appeal. Bazar and tea stalls have become men's temporary clubs and meeting place nowadays. Women usually attend to programs around their homes. Occasional games in village increase the excitement and joy. However, new age communication technology is gradually penetrating and occupying the life of rural youths.

Clothing: Rural men and women usually wear simple dress and ornaments for both economic and cultural reasons. In *Lalsalu* (2001) which represents the pre-liberation period social reality, Muslim men with lower economic background have been seen wearing *lungi*, *footua* and barely sandal in foot. Social elites wear rich clothes like *panjabi*, *pajama*, *kurta*, *tupi*, and *jubba*. Hindu men wear *dhoti*. Men usually abstain from using any ornament and cosmetic (Murshid, 2006). Wrist watch is often worn by wealthy men. *Matir Moyna* (2002) delineates the pre-liberation period of Bangladesh when some pious tend to use *surma* in their eyes to look innocent. Newly married brides and grooms wear different dress and costumes: brides are often adorned with heavy makeup and clothes while grooms wear traditional Muslim garments with a maximum neat-and-clean outfit.

In rural area, both young and older women wear *saree* as a traditional dress. Married Hindu women use *shankha* and *shindur*. *Burqa* and often *neqab* were almost mandatory and socially attributed for all ages of Muslim women in outside-of-home due to religious restriction. However, the social construction of dress code has been becoming more liberal so that the young women

have already started wearing *salwar kameez* that makes their movement more flexible. In villages, the common etiquette of housewives is to turn the veil over the face in front of outsiders. Rural women have to work hard and often more than men both inside and outside of home, therefore facial and physical beauty do not beg an important concern for them. On the other hand, few loving housewives wear garland, bangle, laces, tip, fairness cream, ornaments, and cosmetics to mitigate their desire, or to entertain their husbands.

Food and healthcare: Although rural people consume fresh food, but the imbalance of vitamins and other necessary food elements often cause them to suffer from malnutrition. Rice, plough and vegetables are the main foods in rural Bangladesh for years. Most of the villages are blessed with abundance of fish. Treatment as well as healthcare system is one of the biggest backwardness in rural area. Enough hospitals, clinic, diagnostic centers, and other facilities are absent there. As a result, the suffering of sick people is extreme from time to time. Women are the deadly victim as they have to endure a lot in their reproduction period. Lack of proper treatment often causes fatal consequence both for mother and child. Traditional techniques used in reproduction make the situation worse. *Kabiraz*, *ojha*, *hakim*, *aya*, *dai*, etc. are the popular local doctors and nurses. Their methods of treatment are unreliable as well as non-scientific. In *Jalaler Golpo* (2014), due to infertility of wife, *Kabiraz* suggests the husband a weird process of being a father:

Kabiraz : You've to shave your mustache to become father.

Medicine referred by these “doctors” are usually *gaachgaachra* means herbal, *tabiz*, *koboz*, *pani pora*, *jhar fuk*,⁸ etc. They even confidently demonstrate the effectiveness of their medicines:

Kabiraz : My medicine must make a woman pregnant, and if any man uses it also can be pregnant.

Rural women: In Bangladesh, men rule over the society as well as women. Patriarchy is an integral social phenomenon in rural area that makes women suppressed and marginalized. A woman is merely considered as for husband's service and recreation, sex-provider, and/or a servant of husband's family; therefore, a man marries a girl for doing the household chores. Chairman suggests *Huzur* to get married:

Chairman : You need a wife. Capable men shouldn't live alone. Domestic works are also increasing.

Rural women are less empowered than the urban women. Almost no young woman is allowed to go outside of home without either husband or parent's permission, and they are socially prohibited to closely contact with other men. They should be veiled in front of young men, should stay behind the fence, and do not allowed in men's discussion. Women's opinion is mostly avoided

in decision-making process as man is the sole authority of the family and society. A man, in popular view of rural society, who obeys woman's opinion and instruction has been considered no virility at all. *Imam* states:

...but the problem is, if a man listen to a woman loses his manliness.

Wife and other women must be docile, thus they can be "ideal women" in society. Husband can beat his wife if he wants to even often without any reason. Wife has no right to criticize husband.

Wife : You made my whole life miserable.

Husband : You bitch! I'll gag your mouth.

Beating of wife in little or no fault is a common malpractice of men in rural society. Men from neighborhood also support the act of beating:

Neighbor : Beat her! Beat the hell out of her!

A woman's life was a real tragedy both in family and society decades ago depicted in *Lalsalu* (2001) and *Hazar Bachhor Dhore* (2005). In recent time, the situation is, to some extent, becoming liberal and favorable for woman that has been sighted in *Shrabon Megher Din* (2000), *Television* (2012), and *Molla Barir Bou* (2005) based on contemporary stories. Feeling of motherhood seems one of the most intense propensity among rural woman for which they can sacrifice everything. They tend to protect her child like armor from any hardship and risk. Mother alone fosters her child beside household activities. Maternity is a reason that explains why women are being weakened and oppressed in patriarchic system. They often have to bear the liability of husband's impotency, and being disgraced as barren women in front of the society. An infertile woman has to struggle in husband's family, and sometimes, has to let him re-marry hiding tears:

Chomiron Bibi (crying) : May I tell you something? Why don't you marry again?

The directors of popular cinema often create voyeuristic scenes for commercial purpose. In a scene of *Hazar Bachhar Dhore* (2005), old man sitting in a balcony was observing a girl (Ambia) through window who was drying her hair by shaking her head and sweeping the hair with the towel after taking a bath. Though the male gaze is not exceptional case in rural context, but film scenes like these are in fact a bit of exaggeration of reality (Bhowmick, 2009).

Woman in a conservative family is restricted from doing many activities, including wandering without permission, reveals herself in front of outsiders, etc. Although in present time the overall scenario has been changing remarkably, but rural women are still remaining in the marginal social position (Afsaruddin, 1990). In rural society, husband used to scold his wife even in a simple matter.

Husband : In an open place, don't stand brazenly like that.

In *Monpura* (2009), rural bride Pori has to commit suicide to get relief from mental torture. Besides, silent revolution of women towards socially constructed inequality between men and women and a loud voice against patriarchic oppression has also been portrayed in some films. Jamila in *Lalsalu* (2001) and Parul in *Molla Barir Bou* (2005) are the two influential characters who revolt against the accustomed reality of the backward rural society.

Relationship: In Bengali literature lovers are depicted as coward i.e. Rabindranath Tagore's *Hoimonty* and *Aporichita*, and Sharatchandra's *Porineeta* (Chowdhury, 1968). Women's emotion and demands are undervalued in rural context, and because of familial and social bounding, a husband or lover cannot easily cross the line to favor his wife or lover. Rural people demean and criticize internal affection between a couple. Conservative society like rural Bangladesh forbids love. As the societal surveillance is highly rigid, a couple is forced to maintain secrecy in their communication. Inadequate communication increases the level of interpersonal shyness and shapes their face-to-face conversation. In *Television* (2012), Farooki portrays the scenario of lovers' gaze naively when Solaiman has to grab her lover Kohinoor's hand in a secret place, she would not let him to do so.

Solaiman : My ear and mind want to hear your voice more and more like 24 hours a day.

Husband-wife relationship seems slightly different. They make love, do quarrel, and live under the same roof sharing happiness and sorrows throughout the life. Though difficulties happen in their lives, they stick together for years not only and always for social bondage but also for profound fondness to each other. Often, husbands are disparaged by other elder family members if they love his wife firmly.

In village, a young male usually addresses other elder males as *Miavai* (elder brother) from respect. Concord and conflict exist side by side. In developing rural society, obsolete ideology of ignorant elder and fresh thought of educated young collide in various aspects. In *Television* (2012):

Young Monju : Do you know what the problem of old men is? They always think youngsters are on the way of ruin so that they make various rules and regulations in society.

Youngsters want the backward society to transform into a modern one. Conversely, elders try to prevent their efforts. In practice, these vindictive orthodox people are not capable enough to adopt anything new. They do nothing but fear the forwardness so they try to convince people that modernity is evil.

or irreligious. In movie, the village Chairman prevents television entering the village addressing it as a “box of evil” which would will spoil the villagers. However, later, the young people raise their voice against this dictatorship.

Political culture: Legislation and adjudication system in rural area is, to some extent, pre-modern and void. *Salish*, *panchayat*, yard-assembly etc. are the form of local judiciary. Rural elites like Chairman, *Imam*, *Maulana*, *Pir* and other educated and wealthy men constitute the judicial body. They give their decision hearing the complaint of victim and defense of accused. Whipping, exile, ostracize, fine, etc. are the common punishments. In most cases, judge's biased wish is prevailed in the verdict. However, the previous appeal of local jurisdiction in rural area is eroding and being ousted due to the modern law and justice. Village politics encompass the life of rural people subtly. Grouping, meeting, planning, and discussion are very common as well as crucial features of local politics. Rural elites control the political environment. They play game in which ordinary villagers are merely the dice. *Monpura* (2009) draws the reality as the Chairman's son commits a murder, but the servant has to bear the liability and banishment.

Myths, mysticism and superstitions: Social myths and spiritual belief comprise the rural people's basic understanding of the world. Superstitions and mysticism about life and the world emerge from the lack of proper education and knowledge. Rural people become fugitive and alienated owing to these spiritual preconceptions (Mannan, 2003). Rural society of Bangladesh is still conveying manifold myths for decades. Most of them originate from religion, popular stories, and fears. Conventional religious myths and prejudices in rural society include drinking *pani pora* and *jhar fuk* from a religious clergy during illness as medicine, “everything is God's will”, “none can alter his own fate”, fear of *Jinn Pori*, affected by water and air popularly known as *pani laga* and *batash laga*, poverty is due to sins, etc. Prejudice has devastating impact on woman's pregnancy and reproduction as a woman gives birth to a dead child, she is seen as ill-omened. Some people think infertility caused from fetter, therefore, sterile woman often has to endure frightful treatment by *ojha*:

Kabiraz : You might've *Jinn* with you and that's why you remain infertile.

The concept of soul has been remaining rural people surprised for centuries. Due to proper scientific knowledge, they tend to mix up their fantasy and spiritual perception with reality and fact. Not only elders but also curious children misinterpret the idea with their own perceptions because of illiteracy and scientific knowledge.

Anu : Where do people go when they die? What did they become?

Rokon : I think they turn into birds.

In *Jalaler Golpo* (2014), a poor and corrupted man runs his business with a child's foot-touched water and convinces the villagers that it would heal their diseases. Afterwards, during epidemic, people accuse the child for this created situation and address him as *Kufa* (bad omen).

Views toward modernity: Traditional rural ideology collides with modern ideology. Orthodox village elites deny the necessity of modern education. Rigid people lag behind because of unwillingness to adapt new ideas and innovation frequently for their betterment as they fear of losing traditions and previous practices (Rogers, 1983). Hence, they tend to scold modernity every now and then. In *Matir Moyna* (2002), *Madrasa Huzur* nags at his disciple:

Huzur : Some “westernized” schoolboys must be corrupting you.

He also argues that the name ‘*Anu*’ must be changed as it is not an Islamic name rather sounds like a foreign name:

Huzur : Are you the new boy? What's your name?

Anu : My name is *Anu*.

Huzur : *Astagfirullah!* This is not an Islamic name. From now your name will be *Anwar*. Muhammad *Anwar*.

Conflict between modern and traditional thought, education, way of life and entertainment, favoring religious institution than school, technophobia, traditional ancestral profession as well as medicare, etc. are the primary traits of pre-modern rural society those have been depicted in films creatively. In *Matir Moyna* (2002), father of *Anu* is seen hostile to the modern medicine and very fond of Homeopathic.

Conclusion

Contemporary rural society has been characterized by inadequate education, economic backwardness, repressive socio-political setting and culture, dominance of religion and superstitions in everyday life, and less adaptation capacity and enthusiasm of the village dwellers with social modernity. Despite the limitations, communication technology and information system along with other forces are bridging the gap between urban and rural Bangladesh. Having various modern facilities in recent time, rurality, to a certain degree, is under transformation. Rural family is becoming more nuclear, and collectivistic society is breaking down. Patron-client relation is gradually declining, and individualism is on the rise. The education and use of communication technology are increasing which consequently making the people conscious. In

such backdrop, some 21st Century films have beautifully portrayed the rural ways of life: thought, clothing, food, occupation, religion, relationship, and so on, including conflict between traditionality and modernity. Apart from the mere representation of rural life, these films have implicit agenda for change. Through visualizing the faces of traditional backward rural society of Bangladesh, contemporary films have deliberately been trying to sketch how the rural society is being incessantly deprived of mass attention and social progress. In this regard, films of 21st Century, through powerful representation, are carrying out its social responsibility.

Notes

1. Bangladesh Film Development Corporation (BFDC) is a government owned and operated institution for the development of film of Bangladesh. It was established in 1957.
2. *Falsafa* is the philosophical branch of Islam opposite to puritanical Islam.
3. *Dua* is an act of supplicating to *Allah*, according to Islam.
4. *Pir*, *Maulana*, *Maulovi*, *Fakir*, *Huzur*, and *Imam* are the Islamic clergymen and preachers who usually perform different religious activities and have specific distinctions and social positions.
5. *Waaz*, *boyan*, *nosihot*, *khutbah*, *dawat* are the forms of Islamic preaching.
6. Kinesics is the communication through body language.
7. Paralanguage is the communication through the language of expression.
8. *Tabiz*, *koboz*, *pani pora*, and *djar fuk* are the traditional treatments in rural Bangladesh.

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