

**A PEOPLES' PERSPECTIVE ON RIGHTS CENTRIC INDUSTRIAL
RESTRUCTURING AND SUSTAINABILITY: A CASE STUDY ON THE STATE
OWNED JUTE MILLS OF BANGLADESH**

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Declaration

I certify that all material in this thesis that is not my own work has been acknowledged, the work has not been submitted previously, in whole or in part, to qualify for any other academic award, and ethics, procedures and guidelines have been followed.

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May 2013

Abstract

This research project explores peoples' perceptions of their possible, desirable engagement and involvement in the industrial restructuring process initiated by the discourse of globalisation in the postcolonial state Bangladesh, presenting a case study from the state owned jute mills (SOJMs).

Jute industries had been established in the Indian subcontinent during the British period as a part of industrial capitalism (Chakrabarty, 1989; Sen, 1999). Now, as the major industrial sector in Bangladesh it has been restructured under the policy of the Jute Sector Adjustment Credit Program (JSAC). This commenced in 1991, as prescribed by the global policy regime of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. The year 1991 also marks the start of a democratic regime for the first time in the political history of Bangladesh. The discourse of globalisation as a derivation of neo-liberalism has brought the discourse of development, sustainability, efficiency, human rights and issues of good governance in Bangladesh. While industrialisation had led to evictions in peasants' communities during the colonial period, currently under the JSAC the SOJMs have been privatised and a huge number of workers have been retrenched. In 2007 during the regime of army-backed caretaker government, the final phase of JSAC faced massive challenges by the community of Khalishpur. Currently under the democratic government, the SOJMs have been in revival mode. Hence, analysis of the context reveals there is a gap between the discourse and practices regarding development, sustainability, rights and good governance. Second, there is a juxtaposition of regimes. The political regimes are either democratic or despotic. Then the eventalisation process of JSAC indicates fulfilment of the global order of the global policy regime, for Bangladesh gaining membership in the global forum. Third, the development agencies, taking the concept of rights based approach to development of Amartya Sen as fulcrum, have initiated another regime in the name of ensuing good governance by constituting non-governmental organisations as civil society (Kabeer, 2003).

Within this context the explored concept is grounded. Subaltern studies underpin the arguments of the paper and along with this I draw from the theory of critical political economy for revisiting the country's historical, political, social and cultural construction, to find out which conditions drive the conformity towards the global order of restructuring

the SOJMs. For the concept of rights and with it rights-centric restructuring, I consider the rights based approach to development of Sen. Concepts underpinning the arguments of Sen are that economic, social and cultural rights are internally related and intrinsically linked with civil and political rights in order to be realised (Sen, 1999). According to Sen (1999) the constitutive elements of rights based approach are; systematic accountability, equality, entitlement and equity. Findings suggest that the community's perspectives denote first, the aspired role of the state and then their relations with the state. The thesis contributes in the context of fluid sovereignties of a postcolonial state, how people relate their role and capacity as electoral agents in defining the aspired role of the state through presenting an ethnographic case study on restructuring of the SOJMs.

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Thesis related research outcomes

Book Chapter

- Alamgir F .2010. A Time to Love and a Time to Die: An Interpretation of Global Integration of a Public Sector Jute Mills as an Export Processing Zone. In İhsan Günaydın, I., & Yayla, H. E. (Eds.), *What Others Manifest? The World Economy in the Theoretical Turbulence of Global Finance Crisis* (pp. 173-185). Gümüşhane: Gümüşhane University.

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¹ SKOP: Federation of all Trade Union

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List of Glossary, terms and local phrases

ASA: Association for Social Advancement

BAL: Bangladesh Awamee League — the current ruling party

BJMC: Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation

BILS: Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies

BMR: Balancing Modernisation and Renovation

BNP: Bangladesh Nationalist Party — the ex-ruling party

BRAC: Building Resource across the Community. This NGO received grant for the rehabilitation of the retrenched workers of SOJMs

BUET: Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology

CBA: Collective Bargaining Agents

DFID: Department for International Development of the government of the United Kingdom

EPIDC: East Pakistan Industrial Development Corporation

EPZ : Export processing Zone

FAO: Food and Agricultural Organizations

FGD: Focus Group Discussion

ICESCR: international Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights

ICCPR: International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

IDAs: International Development Agencies

ILO: International Labour Organisation

INCIDIN Bangladesh: Integrated Community and Industrial Development in Bangladesh

IMF: International Monetary Fund

JSAC: Jute Sector Adjustment Credit Program

JPC: Jute Protection Committee

MP: Member of Parliament

NCB: Nationalised Commercial Banks

NGO: Non-Governmental Organisation

PPP: Public Private Partnership

PJMs/ PJJ: Platinum Jubilee Jute Mills

RAB: Rapid Action Battalion

SOE: State Owned Enterprise

SOJMs: State Owned Jute Mills

SASF: South Asian Social Forum

SKOP: Shramik Kormochari Eikkyo Parishad- Trade Union Federation

TUC: Trade Union Centre

UDHR: Universal Declarations of Human Rights

UN: United Nations

UNDP: United Nations Development Program

WB: The World Bank

Cha: Tea or Chai

Chat Kall-er Shramik: The workers of the government owned mills

Durga puja: Festival for the goddess Durga of the Hindu community

Eid ul Fitar: Abbreviated to Eid. The biggest festival of the Muslim community after one month fasting or after Ramadan — the Arabic month

Eid ul Azha: the second festival of the Muslim community. Known as Festival of sacrifice during the Arabic month of Hajj.

Godowns: Place where raw jute are piled

Hajira: Daily attendance

Malik (Owners): Suggests those who own privatised and privately established mills

Pan-biro: Pan is Betel. This has to be chewed with Areca nut. Bari is cheap cigarette. The pronunciation in Bangla is biro while it mostly known as bide

Vardar: Head of the workers

Shasta/ Majuro: Wages

Taka: Bangladesh currency

1 AUDI = 90 taka, in 2010-2011 April.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter Contents

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 - 1.3.5 Critical management studies and rights-centric industrial restructuring and management
- 1.4 Implications and limitations
- 1.5 Structure of the thesis

We must know whether or not we are affected or moved by the thing represented and what reasons we have for being or not being so affected.

Foucault (2006) *Hermeneutics of the Subject*, p. 503

1.1 Introduction

The conceptual framework of this thesis is based on the rights based approach to development proposed and argued by Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen. His conceptual framework of rights argues that aspirations of the people must be considered as rights if these are linked with their survivability. I explored aspirations of the community as to how they would like to be involved ,engaged with the management system and their aspired management in the context of a state owned jute mills (SOJMs) of a postcolonial state Bangladesh. In this study, I specifically draw on the literature from the domain of critical management studies. Considering that in this literature there is lack of empirical studies on peoples' aspiration to be involved and engaged in the management process, the contribution of this thesis is to present peoples' perspectives or the involved community's perspectives on their aspired management.

The purpose of this research is twofold. First it provides the perceptions of directly involved actors regarding their involvement with the industrial restructuring process and management of the State-Owned Jute Mills (Sums) in the post-colonial state of Bangladesh. Second, it discusses the perspectives of the affected community regarding their rights, rights to have livelihoods and the issues of sustainability of the mills— how these are related to the functioning of the mills. Through conducting an empirically detailed case study on the Platinum Jubilee Jute Mills (hereafter, Platinum Mills), a public sector jute mill located in Khalishpur, the study investigates the experience of involved actors and their perspectives on their aspired mode of industrial restructuring. Hence, the objective of the study is to present a framework of rights-centric restructuring, and rights-centric management.

The jute sector is one of the largest formal, export-oriented sectors to have emerged during the colonial era, when modern Bangladesh was part of the British Indian Empire, as a consequence of competitive industrial capitalism (Chakrabarty 1989; Chandavarkar, 1994, 1997, 1998). This industrial sector flourished when Bangladesh was a province of Pakistan

named East Pakistan. The jute sector comprises both the cultivation of jute (i.e. agriculture) and manufacturing of jute goods. At least 25% of the population of Bangladesh support themselves through cultivating, manufacturing and trading jute goods (Commission Report, 2011). Industrialisation during the colonial period resulted in the eviction of peasants, artisans, and cotton weavers from their lands and homes (Chakrabarty 1989) and jeopardised their livelihood and life world. Now, as one of the major formal sectors, the jute industry has been subject to a ‘structural adjustment program’ (Jute Sector Adjustment Credit program, JSAC) from 1991 as Bangladesh has sought and gained membership of the institutions of global capitalism – the World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The current mode of restructuring, based on efficiency arguments of the discourse of globalisation promotes the private mode of ownership. And it has affected the workers this time through massive retrenchment and the casualization of employment.

The year 1991 also marks the start of a democratic regime for the first time in the political history of Bangladesh. Indeed in parallel the discourse of globalisation as a derivation of neoliberalism has brought the discourse of development, sustainability, efficiency, human rights and good governance; and Bangladesh has been grappling with these notions. (Sobhan, 1993). This discourse promotes sustainability, growth and development as part of a rational economic approach; systematic participation as a measure of good governance; and democracy as a set of political practices. It considers the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and two United Nations Covenants—the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)—as the fundamental bases of human rights.

The fundamentals that UDHR assert are that rights to life and livelihood, including adequate food, health and education, are basic human rights (Articles 6, 23 and 25). These rights are also common themes in the two cited covenants of the UN. Considering these international human rights as standards and instruments, various development initiatives have been promoted by the UN and other international development agencies (IDAs). Core elements of this framework of development integrate the underpinning issues of the discursive arguments of rights and rights based approach to development proposed by the Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen (1982, 1999c & 2004a). Sen’s theory of rights suggests that issues of rights related to the survivability and security of individuals as basic human

rights are intertwined with the issues of individuals' capability (Sen, 1999c, 2004a). The capability perspective underpins the theory of rights and a right based approach to development, and suggests that the development of human capability must be the core of the development approach (Sen, 1999c, 2004a, 2005a; Evans, 2005). Hence a major condition of such development is associated with restructuring the institutional norms: making institutions more people oriented through incorporating community's perspective (Sen, 1999c, 2004a, 2005a; Evans, 2005). Therefore, issues related to basic human rights must be coupled with rights to participation, and hence the effectiveness of the rights based approach depends on strengthening accountability, equality and equity (Dèrzè & Sen, 1989; Sen 1999c). These stated notions underpin the UN framework regarding the measure of good governance, and regarded as essential features for ensuring organisation or public sector's accountability (Human Development Report, 2000). The content of the rights based approach links to the perspective of rights prevalent within the discourse of globalisation.

Reflecting upon the lineage of the restructuring program of the SOJMs and its consequences suggests that the year 2007 can be categorised as a point of departure in the history of restructuring program of the SOJMs of Bangladesh. In 2007, the army-backed caretaker government wanted to put an end to the JSAC, and initiated the process from Khalishpur, through calling off layoffs in four jute mills, and privatisation of the Peoples' Jute Mills. During that time, due to the emergency period being instigated, trade unions had to go underground. However, massive protests were organised by the general workers and by the community to fight for their survival and ensure the right to a livelihood.

Hence, in contemplating the evidence and practices of the discourse of globalisation in the case of the restructuring process of the SOJMs, and its discourse of development, sustainability, rights and good governance, this study critically examines how people define their involvement with the industrial restructuring process. The concept of involvement implies informed engagement (Derže & Sen, 2002). The explored concept is grounded in the rights based approach to development of Amartya Sen (1999c, 2004a, 2005a); contextually its notion is rooted in the practices of the projects based on the rights based approach to development and sustainability undertaken by the development agencies. The study is an attempt to explore the capability perspective linked to rights, and

rights based approach to development proposed by Sen in an industrial sphere. The rights-centric management is the derivation of the discussion of rights-centric restructuring.

The first section of this chapter discusses the research context. By providing a current overview of the jute sector, it explains the implications of functioning mills for the community of Khalishpur, the historical accounts of privatisation and the JSAC, and the significance of the SOJMs for the country. Based on that, I define the scope of the study and explain how the objectives of the study are derived. Following that, I discuss conceptual approach of the research, implications and limitations of the study.

1.2 Research context: Conditions of the emergence of the study

1.2.1 Emergence of ‘Town Khalishpur’ and implications of functioning mills

Established in 1954–55, the Platinum Jubilee Jute Mills (hereafter, Platinum Mills) is located in Khalishpur Industrial Town about 10 kilometres from Khulna City Corporation, near the banks of the Bhairab River. The collected local literature (Chowdhury, 2007; Parvin & Mostafa, 2010,) state that Khulna is the third largest industrial city of the country. The location of the city is strategic. It is situated between two capitals of the two Bangla: Dhaka and Kolkata. Dhaka is the capital of Bangladesh and Kolkata is the capital of the State of West Bengal of India. Khulna as a district is only a two-hour drive from the Indian border and the land port of Benapole. It also has the sea port of Mongla. The population of Khulna has increased sharply since the 1950s. Following the independence of India and Pakistan declared by the British rulers in 1947, Bangladesh, which had a Muslim majority was named East Pakistan and became one of the provinces of Pakistan. Hence, Khulna had to absorb an influx of Muslim migrants and refugees from the States of Bihar and West Bengal of India.



Map 1: Location of the Study Area

There had been urbanisation through industrialisation during the Pakistan regime, led by the East Pakistan Industrial Development Corporation (EPIDC); and hence Khalishpur was planned as an industrial town. A number of mills—the Crescent Jute Mills, the Peoples’

Jute Mills, the Dawlatpur Jute Mills (DJMs), the Platinum Jubilee Jute Mills, the Eastern Jute Mills, the Hard Board mills and the Newsprint mills—were established along the bank of the Bhairab river of Khalishpur. Initially refugees who had migrated to the Khulna district settled down and were then employed in the newly established mills of Khalishpur. Also, workers were employed from adjacent districts such as Barisal, and Faridpur. These areas are prone to river erosion, which leads to people becoming landless: these people then became workers in the mills. To meet the needs of these workers, who were undergoing urbanisation, shops, markets, bazaars, and living spaces mostly known as ‘Housing’ and ‘*Khema*² or/ Camps’, were developed from the 1950s (Chowdhury, 2007; Parvin & Mostafa, 2010). Thus the built environment based on those established mills was constructed in this town. Therefore, the functioning mode of mills is significant for the life-world of the community of Khalishpur, and the mills are perceived as the source of their livelihoods.

1.2.2 The political landscape of Bangladesh and its implications for the SOJMs

The study explores the issue of rights of the working class community — *Chat kall shrramik*— the jute mills workers of the government owned mills. Chatterjee (2004) argues that discussion regarding equity, equality, freedom, and property in case of a modern state is the political history of capital (p.31). The emergence of this community and process of their disappearance are entangled with the establishment, dynamics and collapse of the jute mills and the historical accounts of the political construction of Bangladesh. During her 41 years, Bangladesh has been ruled for 17 years by the civil army bureaucracy. The democracy as a governing mechanism or political construction for the people of Bangladesh is not a choice without option’ (Banerjee, 2011 argued for Indian democracy is ‘*choice without option*’). They had to and have been fighting for it. The table below provides the political land scape of Bangladesh before its emergence as a nation state to till now and implications of the political regimes to the sector.

² *Khema* is a word of Urdu Language, implies Basti or slums

Table: 1.1 Chronology of political regimes and implications to the sector

| | Political regimes | Traits | Implications to the jute Sector and the SOJMs |
|-----------|---|---|---|
| 1947-1971 | Emergence as East Pakistan | Muslim majority | Jute Mills had been established through the funding of EPIDC. |
| 1971 | Liberation war: Led by Bangladesh Awami League (BAL). | The party emerged in 1949. A party of nationalists comprises rural rich farmers, urban bourgeoisie, rural/urban educated middle class, working class community and peasants. The party chief Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, is acknowledged as the father of the nation, and Bongo Bandhu (Friend of Bangla) | Earning from exporting jute was conceived as cause that had led to the war. |
| 1972-75 | The post-independence government headed by BAL. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman brutally assassinated by the army coup in 1975. | Features reflect accommodation of the interest of various classes. But acceptance of the working class community's agenda items is reflected. | Nationalisation of all jute mills Establishment of BJMC |
| 1975-81 | Military government The Chief of Marshal law Zia-ur Rahman constituted his party— Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and became President. | Army –civil bureaucracy in power. Constituted mainly by the owners' of the denationalised mills, retired civil and army bureaucrats, urban/ rural middle class professionals. | Privatisation of the mills had been initiated. |
| 1982-1990 | 1982 second army coup | | Conducted blanket privatisation of the mills. |
| 1991-96 | Democratic regime Four-Party Alliance. | The first democratic government led by BNP in alliance with the Jamaat- I— Islam. | Initiation of JSAC |
| 1996-2001 | The second democratic government: | Regime of BAL | Carried out the policy of JSAC |
| 2001-2006 | The third democratic government | Regime of Four Party alliance again, led by BNP | Reinforcement of JSAC Marked by closure of Adamjee Jute Mills. |
| 2007-08 | Interim government | Backed by army but ran by civil bureaucrats and representatives of the civil society. | Aimed for finalising the last phase of reform under JSAC. |
| 2009-2013 | The Grand Alliance. | Alliance of 14 political parties, led by BAL. | Reopening of closed SOJMs. |

1.2.3 Historical accounts of JSAC

Jute was acclaimed as the ‘golden fibre’ of Bangladesh (Lévi-Strauss, 1952), as the country used to earn a huge amount of foreign exchange through the export of jute goods. It is commonly assumed that large earnings from jute export were one of the major factors driving the movement in Bangladesh for autonomy and separation from Pakistan (Muhammad, 2007). After the Liberation War of 1971, the post-independence government nationalised all jute mills that had been under EPIDC³, as well as other mills that had been abandoned by their owners and established Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation (BJMC) as a corporate body.

However, soon after its independence, Bangladesh had to deal with the food aid politics of the United States (Sobhan & Ahmad, 1980; Sobhan and Bhattacharaya, 1987). In 1974 a massive flood hit the country, and caused a devastating famine, while due to exporting jute goods to Cuba, the food aid under the Public Law 480 of the United States Government imposed conditionality for the policy reform in alliance with the WB (Sobhan & Ahmad, 1980; Sobhan & Bhattacharaya, 1987). The aid worked as policy instrument and, as a post-independence, war-ravaged country, Bangladesh was unable to meet such challenges, and in 1975 was forced to agree to the proposals of the WB and the IMF for partial deregulation and privatisation of some of its jute mills (Sobhan & Ahmad, 1980). Thus began the history of integration of Bangladesh into the world economy.

The continuation of such historical experiences can still be perceived under the JSAC program. This has created a serious crisis for the economy. The implications of JSAC for just the dismantling of the Adamjee Jute Mills, the largest jute mill in the world, suggest that the dismantling decision caused the retrenchment of 30,000 workers and employees, uprooted 500,000 people from a place where they lived for 50 years, and affected 10 million farmers’ families whose livelihoods were directly and indirectly linked to the functioning of the mills (Barkat, 2003).

Subsequently in April 2007 the interim government announced the closure and privatisation of the Peoples’ Jute Mills and the retrenchment of workers in four other state-owned jute mills (SOJMs): the Crescent, the Platinum Jubilee, the Star, and the Eastern Jute Mills of Khalishpur. The working class community had previously experienced the

³ East Pakistan Industrial Development Corporation

impacts of restructuring through the closure of the Adamjee and Daulatpur Jute Mills⁴, the Newsprint Mills, and Hard Board Mills⁵ in June, November and December 2002 respectively (*The Daily Samakal*, 18 July, 2007). As a consequence, almost 22,000 workers of the SOJMs in the Khulna zone and the community staged a massive demonstration and engaged in a mass protest at the 'state of the emergency situation'.⁶ The prolonged resistance of the workers caused them to pay a severe price: eleven workers died because of chronic hunger and injuries caused by brutal attacks against them by state agencies (action aid, July 2007; Chowdhury, 2007; Muhammad, 2007).

However, the interim government failed to quash such a large, coordinated and organised movement. At the local level, the movement received supported from the Jute Protection Committee, local organisations working on human rights, and the media. As a result a Peoples' Commission was formed to undertake a thorough investigation of the situation and of the killing of the workers (*Ain Salish Kendro*, September 2007). Hence, in response to this situation and to the JSAC, there were changes in the policy of the interim government. Strategically, all SOJMs remained functioning, while the Peoples' Jute Mills was leased out instead of being privatised (Chowdhury, 2007). Yet, there had been layoffs and retrenchment of workers in the name of golden handshakes and voluntary retirement services in the other four functioning jute mills (Chowdhury, 2007). The interim government applied the same strategy in mills located in two other zones, Dhaka and Chittagong, and by the end of that government's tenure in 2008 the number of workers in SOJMs had been reduced by 50% (Moazzem, Rahman, & Sobhan, 2009).

Contemporary literature, particularly the exegeses of Harvey (1995, 2003), Harvey and Swyngedow (1993), Escobar (1988, 1995, 1992,1991, 2001) , Banerjee (2008, 2011) and Banerjee, Chio & Mir, (2009a), discusses features of globalisation and community resistance at the grass-root level. The hegemony of knowledge is at the core of rationalising the discursive arguments and practice of efficiency-based market-centric development of the global policy regime (Banerjee, Chio & Mir, 2009a; Escobar, 1995,). Dismantling the entire built environment, jeopardising the livelihoods of the community and looking for spatial fixing of accumulated capital are described as 'creative destruction' by Harvey (1993). The manifestation of this process is described as 'death-world' for the

⁴ Daulatpur Jute Mills has been carrying out test run for jute production since April 2012 (Source BJMC).

⁵ Resumed its operation from 2009.

⁶ As the caretaker government was backed by the army, they announced the emergency situation

affected community by Escobar (1992, 2001). According to Harvey (1995, 2003) features of current globalism imply a process of accumulation of resources by dispossession. Drawing from Mbembe's (2003) notion of necro-politics—subjugation of life to death—Banerjee (2008, 2011) suggests the concept of necrocapitalism for the impact of globalisation. He suggests the limit of the state in the context of globalisation under neoliberalism is marked by ensuring only what is required for the market and hence extinction and eviction are corollaries (Banerjee, 2008, 2011). It is argued that in the defined space of the sovereign nation state, under democracy for managing the overall system, the internal mode of colonialism still persists for accumulation (Banerjee, 2011, Escobar, 1992).

Contemplating the evidence of restructuring of the SOJMs of Bangladesh, along with the above discussed conceptual arguments of the impact of globalisation at the local level raises questions about the policy of the global policy regime. At the global level, the prices of jute goods had started increasing during the period of dismantling of the Adamjee Mills. As a response to increasing global demand, four new jute mills in India started operation in the same year as the Adamjee was dismantled (Barkat, 2003). Those mills have created employment for 10,000 people (Barkat, 2003). In addition, the 2005 Jute Policy of India announced that India would aim to increase its exports in the global market at least five-fold by the year 2010 (Muhammad, 2007). Ecological concerns facilitated discussions regarding jute's significance as a natural fibre. The year 2009 was declared as the International Year of Natural Fibres (IYNF), heralding the following agendas: (i) raising awareness about and stimulate the demand for natural fibres; and (ii) encouraging governments to make appropriate policies that ensure the 'sustainability and efficiency of the natural fibre industries' (FAO, 2009). Moreover, China and Thailand have also gradually increased their cultivation of jute and manufacturing of jute products (Jute Commission Report, 2011).

However, in parallel, at the local level the movement initiated in Khalishpur in 2007 took the shape of a coordinated and on-going movement. The local level organisations working on human rights issues, and the Jute Protection Committee (JPC) became involved with the workers' struggle (actionaid Bangladesh, 2007). The JPC is mainly led by retired trade union leaders of the SOJMS, current jute workers, and left-oriented activists. (Please see the Appendix: D). One of the features of the movement of 2007 is the involvement of

academics, and civil society organisations. They expressed their solidarity with the workers' issue, and at the national level an alliance, called the Jute Sector Alliance (hereafter, Alliance) was formed. Moreover, the agenda of the workers regarding the 're-opening of closed mills', had been accepted and incorporated into the election manifesto of the current political parties in power. The coalition of eighteen political parties, acknowledged as the Grand Alliance and headed by the BAL, won 263 seats out of 300 in the Ninth Parliamentary Election in December 2008. After taking power, the government formed the Jute Commission (hereafter, Commission) by the Ministry of Textile and Jute (hereafter, Ministry) in order to formulate jute policy.

In November 2011 in the South Asian Social Forum (SASF) the JPC participated and delineated their agenda regarding the sector. It includes considering the sector as a jute economy, state mode of ownership for the SOJMs, along with workers' inclusion in the management process. The following section offers a current overview of the jute sector. It reflects the recent discourse of the state regarding the sector and the SOJMs.

1.2.4 Overview of the Jute Sector

Currently numbers of functioning public sector mills are 22 including three non-jute mills. While there are 27 mills under BJMC's jurisdiction, five jute mills remain closed (BJMC, 12 May, 2012). There are 121 privatised mills and 67 spinning mills (Jute Commission Report, 2011). While public sector jute mills are operating under BJMC, privately established and privatised mills are associated under the Bangladesh Jute Mills Association (BJMA). There is also the Bangladesh Jute Spinners' Association (BJSa). It is stated that the entire spinning and yarn mills have been established under the private sector and these mills are comparatively small in terms of loom numbers (Jute Protection Committee, 2011). Therefore, there are relatively fewer workers in those mills. Public sector jute mills are mainly composite mills producing hessian, sacking, and carpet backing cloth, and employing large number of workers (Jute Protection Committee, 2011).

The website of the Ministry of Textile and Jute (Ministry of Textile & Jute, 2012) communicates the recent contribution of the sector, taking the financial year 2008–2009 as the base period. It suggests that there has been a persistent increase in the demand for jute goods in the global market. Therefore, exports of raw jute and jute products have increased by 51%, while local sales have increased by 176.32% in 2009–10 in one year. Now the

sector contributes 4.54% of the total export earnings of the country. Since the sector combines agriculture and manufacturing, substantiated value is added within Bangladesh.

Within one year, the income from the sector has increased by 74.73 % and also the human resources under the Ministry have increased from 49,454 to 59,799 (Ministry of Textile & Jute, 2012). Subsequently the amount of jute-cultivable land has doubled, as the price of raw jute increased approximately 82 % and BJMC's procurement of raw jute increased by 57.15 % (Ministry of Textile & Jute, 2012). BJMC has reduced its financial loss from 45.35 million AUD in 2006–7 to 23.5 million AUD in 2009–10 (Source: BJMC Finance and Audit section).

Indeed the revival of the public sector jute mills can be traced to the government's approval of the Mandatory Jute Packaging Act in 2010, and the Industrial Policy of 2010. For the jute sector the Industrial Policy-2010 identifies following issues: (i) production of high quality jute, (ii) diversification of the jute products and campaign for the usage of jute products and thus expansion of the market of jute goods at the global level and (iii) establishment of Specialized Jute Industrial Zones (Parvin & Mostafa, 2010). The Industrial Policy -2010 suggests that through protecting the workers' rights, restructuring can be implemented under the mode private-public partnership (PPP) (Parvin & Mostafa, 2010).

Subsequently the Commission submitted its report in March 2011. This report suggests that considering the current global demand for jute goods, the state considers the importance of privatisation but places emphasis on its SOJMs, through reopening closed mills, as well as closed but leased out or privatised mills under BJMC's supervision. Those leased mills had been denationalised by 49-51% allocation of share, between BJMC and the private owners. Now most these mills are closed because of the failure of the private owners.

The draft Jute Policy of 2011⁷ incorporates almost all of the recommendations of the draft report of the Commission. Taking the election mandate as the initiator of change, and the propositions of the draft Jute Policy of 2011, the current discourse regarding the sector and SOJMs is explained in table 1.1.

⁷ The policy has been finalised as Jute Policy -2012 and uploaded in January 2013. The final version does not vary from the draft Jute Policy 2011.

Table 1.2: The recent discourse regarding the Sector and SOJMs

| Year | Events | Actions | Mantra for initiating actions |
|------------------------------|---|--|---|
| 2008 December | Reopening of all closed SOJMs | Announced as an agenda item by the Grand Alliance in its election manifesto | Securing two meals at least <i>mota chal</i> (coarse rice) and dal for the working class of the country. |
| 2009 April | Asking the democratic government to reopen all of the closed jute mills. | By the Alliance | Recognise the sector as the jute economy. |
| 2009 May | Ministry has been asked to reopen all of the closed SOJMs. | Standing Committee of the Parliament of the Ministry and advocacy by the Alliance. | In order to be aligned with the election manifesto and in response to the current global demand of jute products. |
| 2010 April to Jan 2011 | BJMC received 58.82 million USD from the Central Bank for a fresh start at 5% interest. Long-term and short term loans provided to SOJMs had been frozen and later the government launched bonds against those loans. | Ministry of Finance through the Central Bank set up: the Jute Sector cell. | Refinancing all SOJMs and other financially sick private mills. |
| 2010 June | Decoding the genome code of jute | Research funded by the government | A new beginning in the history of jute in Bangladesh. |
| 2010 October | Mandatory Jute Packaging Act | By the Parliament and the Ministry | Expansion of internal market and increase the use of eco-friendly jute bags. |

Source: Ministry, BJMC and Newspapers Kaler Kantha 24/25 November, 2011

The Jute Training Centres of BJMC have started operating again, as skill shortages are perceived as a major issue of concern (Ministry of Textile & Jute, 2012). BJMC is planning to open up jute pulp and paper mills, and jute-geotex. Moreover the Ministry expresses its commitment to making the High Commissions of Bangladesh working abroad to be more responsible increasing the foreign market for jute (Jute Policy 2011).

The above discussions regarding the recent changes indicate a diametrical shift compared with earlier government's policy regarding the sector and the SOJMs.

1.2.5 Research questions, scope and objectives of the study

Changes in the sector and the trajectory of my study have progressed in parallel. Reflecting upon the evidence of restructuring of the SOJMs, I find the following. First, there is a gap between the discourse and practices regarding development, sustainability, rights and good governance. Second, there is a juxtaposition of regimes. The political regimes are either democratic or despotic (army), and then the creation of context for implementation of JSAC indicates fulfilment of the global order of the global policy regime is inevitable for the country like Bangladesh. Third, there is another regime initiated by the development agencies in the name of ensuing good governance by constituting non-governmental organisations (NGOs) as civil society (Kabeer, 2003). Here the legitimacy of the state towards its citizens is marked and grounded in ensuring citizenship rights.

Consequently contemplating the evidence regarding movements suggests the following. First, the movement of the community of the public sector jute mills had started in Khalishpur. But the demonstration and resistance of the community of Khalishpur raised sensitisation all over the country. The Jute Alliance has been formed at Dhaka the capital of Bangladesh. This comprised individuals and institutions involved with jute, with human rights/labour rights. Also we find participation of the JPC in the SASF for voicing their issues and placing their agenda of development and sustainability regarding the jute sector and the SOJMs. Hence we can conclude that the movement of the jute community of Khalishpur has linkage with the global context of movements of the communities for their survival.

This movement of communities' against the accumulation process across the globe is seen as 'multi-placed' by Escobar (1992, 2001), and as a 'trans-local' movement by Banerjee (2011). Banerjee (2011) asks for ethnographic research of the community resistance. He argues that such research should take into account how people define their capability and political identity, and thus how they perceive the reconstruction of the entire governance process in a contested domain, within the dynamics of state and market (Banerjee, 20011). Similarly, I reflect upon the comment of Flyvbjerg (1998). He thinks that democratisation of the system implies everyday fights of the people on concrete issues (Flyvbjerg, 1998, p.5). Hence we can infer that the fighting is a process. Movements and their outcomes need to be viewed from the process perspective (Kraemer, Whiteman & Banerjee, 2010).

Contemplating and reflecting upon the contextual evidence and conceptual notions as discussed above issues, I formulate my research questions:

- First: What are the elements of and necessary conditions for implementation of a rights-centric management approach?
- Second: What would constitute a contextual framework of rights-centric management for the jute sector of Bangladesh?
- Third: What are involved and affected actors' perceptions of possible and desirable management approaches for implementation of such a framework?
- Fourth: What are involved and affected actors' perceptions of constraining and enabling elements for such possible and desirable management approaches?

Scope of the study

The process perspective of changes in the institutional context underpins the arguments of the study and based on that it presents an account of the community's views about their rights, and then their rights to be involved in defining their rights with the institutions: the mills and the state. The defined rights by the people may go beyond the rights provided by the constitution and the global discourse of rights. When the issues of rights are linked with the survivability, a question might emerge: what rights might constitute the floor and what rights constitute the ceiling.

According to Sen, (1999c, 2004a, & 2005a) peoples' aspired issues related to their capability, if not backed by the legal doctrines, as moral claims these can be regarded as rights. Hence, the scope of the study lies first in identifying the contextual conditions that facilitate or hinder the community in acquiring their aspired level of capability, and the attainment process of that capability. Second, the study explores the aspired involvement and engagement of the people in the process of managing the mills. Finally, based on such discussions, the rights-centric industrial restructuring process and rights-centric management are conceptualised, and the process of its realisation is analysed.

The objectives of the study:

The objectives of the study are:

1. To contribute to empirical accounts of the community's desired capability framework, which they claim will make them capable to deal with the current context. Dealing with the context implies equity and equality in the process of involvement and engagement with the system.

2. To identify the community's defined strategies of involvement and engagement with the management process that enhances accountability—the basis of managerial and institutional governance—and thus the sustainability of the mills.

The word 'people' mentioned in the title of the study denotes the community: the major actors in this thesis. I draw from Harvey and Swyngedow (1993) for internalising this concept with the context I came across in my process of research. Harvey (1993) regards community as follows:

'Communities are shaped historically by the daily routines which bring people together and weld working and non-working aspects of daily life into some kind of social and political unity'. (p .11)

In this study the community implies the workers of all categories: permanent and *badli*⁸, their household members and the community — whose livelihoods are dependent on the functioning of the mills. The *badli* worker system has been a practice since the inception of the mills from the colonial era (Chandravarkar, 1994). According to the labour law, *badli* workers are employed when permanent workers are on leave; and if they complete one year, their name must be appeared in the muster roll (Labour Law Bangladesh, 2006 (hereafter LLB:2006).

The literature I have gathered from local sources about the resistance and the community aspects of Khalishpur back in 2007 (Chowdhury, 2007, *The Daily Samakal*, 13 August 2007) suggests that the closure of mills heralded the gradual cessation of the daily life cycles. The locality took a shape of a deserted place (Chowdhury, 2007). Chowdhury (2007) describes the implications of the mills' sirens, as it would shape the daily routine of the people of that locality and their silencing appeared as a rupture of the usual mode of life . The functioning mills constructed the industrial land scape of Khalishpur and that formed an occupation-based community. It signifies that ironical bond under the capitalism between the community and capital as Harvey and Swyngedow (1993) indicates. They suggest (1993) —

for building the built environment and for the sake of profit, capital needs people and the community. Irony lies in here that the same capital for its further

⁸ According to the labour law, *badli workers* are employed when permanent workers are on leave; (Labour Law Bangladesh, 2006).

accumulation leaves that space and destroys the community through destroying the bond between capital and the community, that is the issue of employment

(Harvey & Swyngedow, 1993, pp. 11–13).

The argument of Harvey about the relation of the community and capital is aligned with the perspective of subaltern studies. According to Chandravarkar, (1994, 1997, 1998) the industrial community in the post-colonial state is contextually defined: the workers have migrated from the rural areas, are brought into the industrial sphere, receive employment, and get settled down based on social connections,— evolution of a ghettoised lifeworld (Chandravarkar, 1994).

1.3 Research approach and conceptual framework of rights-centric restructuring and management

The space Bangladesh is recognised as a post-colonial state. The territorial logic and sovereignty issues of the space are entwined with the dimension of time. Hence this determines the paradigms of the study. Paradigms of this study are social constructionism and the critical perspective. The social constructionist paradigm implies internalising the issue within the historical, political and cultural context (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). Evidently, within the defined context of colonialism, the current efficiency-centric development and sustainability discourse of global policy regime has constructed the reality. In line with the social constructionist ontic position of the study, the critical perspectives constitute the process of inquiry the episteme of the study. This suggests that the eventalisation process of the system needs to be examined through examining the conditions of its emergence (Foucault, 1991; Flyvbjerg, 2001). Therefore, implications of globalism at the local level require schematic analysis of its historical, political, social and cultural constructions for understanding the discontinuity and ruptures that occurred in the process of eventalisation process of the system (Foucault, 1998, 1991). In the case of this study, the eventalisation process refers to the process of imposing the JSAC, and its implementation and finalisation phases. In addition, the contextual analysis indicates the social formation process, how different factions have been formed. Strategies and tactics of power and its dynamics have implications and tools of analysis provided by the critical perspective are required for interpretation of the notions of subjectivity. I refer to strategies suggested by Foucault in this context (Foucault in Dreyfus, 1982): how the cultural and

knowledge domination has impacted on the mind-set of the people. In the case of the context for this study, ethnicity, segregation by religion, and the gender aspects need to be considered.

The theory of a rights based approach to development of Sen(1999a,b &c, 2004a &b, 2005a, 2005b), perspectives of critical political economy (Amin, 2001, 1996a, 1990, 1976; Bagchi, 1996, 1999, 2007; Banerjee, 2008, 2011; Banerjee, Chio & Mir, 2009a; Baran, 1973; Escobar, 1988, 1995, 2001; Frank, 1991a, 1966; Harvey, 1995, 2003, Harvey & Swyngedow,1993; Wallerstein,1974a,1974b,1976,2002) and subaltern studies (Chakrabarty, 1989; Chandavarkar, 1994, 1998, 2000; Chatterjee, 1998, 2004; Sen, S., 1999, 2005) are considered in developing the conceptual framework regarding the rights-centric restructuring. The theory of critical political economy and subaltern studies underpin the arguments about the context. Both these theories draw from the perspectives of Marx, Gramsci, and Foucault.

Therefore, as basic philosophical readings I consider the work of Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (197/77), and Engels, *The Conditions of the Working Class in England* (1882/1986) to find out the condition of the working class community in the context of the postcolonial state under neoliberalism. Discussions of Foucault help me to understand the manipulation technology of production, sign and system coupled with the technology of subjugation and thus how the system conducts the mode of subjectivation. The study considers the following works of Foucault: *The Foucault effect: studies in governmentality: with two lectures by and an interview with Michel Foucault*, (1991), and Dreyfus, H. and Paul, R. *Michel Foucault: Beyond structuralism and Hermeneutics* (1982). Finally I have to state that a discussion on suppression, domination and conceptualisation of social formations cannot be completed without drawing from Gramsci, *Selection from Prison Notebooks* (1988). Based on those stated exegeses, there are certain concepts that I frequently use in the thesis and in constructing my arguments. These are as follows:

Governmentality: I use the concept of governmentality in the thesis. The basic notions of this term are drawn from Foucault (1991). According to Foucault's perspective, the term governmentality implies and includes the state, its institutions, executive apparatus, and legislatures – the governance apparatus, regulations, legislations, analyses, policies,

statistics and strategies. He further explains that the government, by forming governmental apparatuses, gradually takes the role of looking after the well-being of the people. Thus the governmentalisation of state occurs, and its functions are diverse. Undertaking Foucault's concept of governmentality as a core, the notion of 'governmentalisation of the state' in the context of a post-colonial state is discussed by Chatterjee (2004) as follows:

A set of rationally manipulable instruments for reaching large section of the inhabitants of a country as the targets of their 'policies' – economic policy, administrative policy and even political mobilization. (p. 34).

System: The system has different connotations. According to the *Oxford Dictionary*:

System: a set of things working together as parts of a mechanism or an interconnecting network; a complex whole. Drawing from Foucault, we can argue that system implies: elements that constitute the system, their functioning, the process of integration of the elements and conditions that constitute the context of the functioning of those elements. Taking that idea of the system, in this thesis the term system implies the functioning elements that constitute the governance, management, legal aspects and financial integration of the mills, including BJMC, Ministry, and then the global policy making institutions the WB and the IMF.

Discourse: According to the *Oxford Dictionary* discourse implies: *the use of language in speech and writing in order to produce meaning.* According to Foucault (1974, 1991) there are certain norms that need to be maintained in formation of discourse. For instance: there must be unity in formation, approach of unity, the context that made enunciations to be produced at certain time, and made addressing the same focused determined object, objectively (Foucault, 1972, pp. 32-34)..

The presentation form of the collected perspectives is a case study. The exegesis of Flyvbjerg (2001, 2004, &2006) regarding the presentation method works as a guiding thread. Considering those notions, I think that my gathered perspectives reflect the experiences and aspirations of the involved community, and their choices in defining their capability framework. It incorporates the community's judgement. Therefore rights and aspirations of the community to be involved with the process of management reflect value-

rationality and ethics of the affected community. The situational ethics guide the process and it is context dependent (Flyvbjerg, 2001).

Reflecting on how the conditions of the study emerged; reviewing its ontological position and the process of the data collection; I think the study includes aspects of an ethnographic approach. The methods of gathering perspectives were diverse — started with having semi informal *Chai* stalls discussions, then formal interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) with members of the community. They covered all categories of workers: permanent and *badli*,⁹ male and female, Bangali and Bihari,¹⁰ or Hindu and Muslim,¹¹ their household members; the owners of *Cha* stalls, restaurants. Finally I collected the perspectives of the policy makers. As I mentioned earlier, race, ethnicity and gender have implications in terms of defining the rights and rights-centric engagement.

1.3.1 Perspective of critical political economy

The implications of the discourse of globalisation for this study are conceptualised and explained through by the theories of critical political economy.

First, the theory of world system and the core periphery proposed by Wallerstein (1974a, 1974b, 1976, 1990, 2002) Frank (1966, 1991a, 1991b) and Amin (1976, 1990) help in discussing the integration of Bangladesh with the world system as a mini-system or as periphery. Discursive arguments of this theory consider the sixteenth century as a point of reference as well as social, cultural and economic perspectives as selective procedures for informing how the construction of structures and social formations takes place. Structure is here denoted as both the centre and the periphery. The centre possesses highly developed technology, therefore enabling auto-centric resource generation, and possesses a highly skilled labour force (Amin, 1976, 1990; Wallerstein, 1974 a&b, 1976; Prebisch, 1959). Similarly, the peripheries are categorised by their limitations in terms of possessing technologies that extract resources, so they depend on the centres for the resource accumulation process; thus the labour force of the peripheries is unskilled or semi-skilled (Amin, 1976, 1990,) Wallerstein, 1974a &b,1976; Prebisch,1959). A major issue underpinning this theory is systematic deprivation and inequality within the world system,

⁹ Casual workers of the Jute Mills are known as *Badli* workers.

¹⁰ Ethnic division

¹¹ Religious segregation

which is the result of centuries of participation of peripheries in the world capitalist system (Amin, 1996; Frank, 1991a&b; Wallerstein, 1974a &b). The discourse considers the world system as a combination of multiple systems that have multi-political sovereignties, with competing interests and power (Wallerstein, 1976, 1974a). Second, the implications of globalisations — the impact of the JSAC on the life-world of the community are discussed drawing from: (Banerjee, 2008, 2011; Banerjee, Chio & Mir 2009a, Banerjee, Carter, & Clegg, 2009b; Escobar, 1992, 1995, 2001; Harvey 2003, 1995; Harvey & Swyngedow, 1993).

In the case of the social formation process, the *Dictionary of Political Economy* (Volkov, 1981) suggests that in the corpus of Marxism the basic classes of modern capitalist society are the bourgeoisie — the ruling class and the working class. The bourgeoisie as the owners of capital purchase and own the working ability of the working class as a source of human capital (Volkov, 1981). The working class are the proletariat, who are deprived of ownership of the means of production and are therefore compelled to sell their labour to the bourgeoisie (*Dictionary of Political Economy*, Volkov, 1981). Volkov (1981) further elaborates that the bureaucrats, and intellectuals; in short, the so-called middle class who hold intermediate positions between the working class, are also the elements of the ruling class. In line with Marx, discursive arguments of critical political economy define social formations in terms of participation in the process of capital accumulation in peripheries or in the postcolonial states. Classification of social formations starts for instances with the concept of nationalists or ethno-nation (Wallerstein, 1990). As a term this implies the indigenous bourgeoisie whose economic interest is masked with the national issues. Second, comprador bourgeoisie (Amin, 1976) as a concept connotes the native agents of the (ex) colonisers who after independence serve the surplus accumulation process of (with) the centres. The emergence of this concept is also associated with the creation of development missions in peripheries. According to Frank (1977), Gills & Frank (1990) and Baran (1973) generally this class is involved in the resource accumulation process with the centres, and as dominant actors they determine the redistributive mechanisms of foreign funds that flow from the centres to peripheries as aid and debt. It has been argued that this faction is responsible for the ‘underdevelopment of development’ in peripheries (Frank, 1991b; Gills & Frank, 1990). This faction is integrated with the bureaucracy to form the ruling class in the postcolonial states. Formation of this faction supports the construction of patron–client relations between the centres and peripheries (Baran, 1973;

Frank, 1977, Gills & Frank, 1990). The inevitability of the implementation of the JSAC, the dynamics of various social factions in terms of (re)configuration of the entire governance mechanism of public-sector jute mills, along with changes in the governing technology are discussed with the notions of these social formation.

The numerous economic zones across the globe could raise question regarding the structure of centres and peripheries, but the flow of finance under the global financial system is a one-way path (Patnaik, 2001). Evidence suggests that transfers of assets from the peripheries to the centre increased from 229 billion USD to 784 billion USD from 2002 to 2007 (Foster, 2007).

Having outlined the fundamentals of the concept above, I posit that this discourse of critical political economy perfectly explains the integration of Bangladesh as a mini-system within the world system.

1.3.2 Notions of Subaltern studies and certain concepts related to the context

The exegesis of subaltern studies provides notions and the trajectory for tracing the signs of the formation of the working class in the subcontinent, and invites us to consider a political-economic interpretation along with cultural analysis, as expressed particularly by Chakrabarty (1989), Chandavarkar (1994, 1998, 2000), Sen (1999), and Chatterjee (1998, 2004). The corpus of the subaltern studies regarding workers relation to capital in terms of the formation of working class consciousness suggests that race, gender, caste and place of origin—‘the rural connectivity’—are the basis and functions of the stated elements which determine the formation of social organisations and the consciousness of the workers category. The present study considers the working class community and their collectivity as the core of the discussion. The collected data suggests that the trend towards retained rural linkages and bases still persists. Moreover, workers of the jute sector played a significant role during the liberation war (Alamgir, 2011; Muhammad, 2007 ; Uddin & Hopper, 2001) and resisting the final phase of restructuring in 2007 (Chowdhury, 2007). Thus subaltern studies underpin the arguments of the study

Certainly, discussion in the thesis includes consideration of the ideas of civil society, representative democracy and bureaucracy. These concepts have been inherited from the colonial legacy, and have implications in terms of creating cultural dominance. Unmasking

the constructions of those notions, the study takes into account the exegeses of the subaltern *Pundits*, basically I draw on Chatterjee (1998, 2004). Chatterjee (1998, 2004) posits that in the current context of a post-colonial state the concept of political society is more significant, as a vast number of people and communities exist which cannot be classified according to the provided westernised notions and definitions of civil society. I find that in this case study this concept has implications.

According to the Labour Law Bangladesh 2006 the permanent workers can be unionised. Union is considered as an element of the civil society. While community is a part of the political society and concept of political society has implications in the context of a postcolonial country (Chatterjee, 2004). The vast majority of the people as a part of the political society under the democracy are continually defining their relations with the state (Chatterjee, 2004, 1998). These categories of people cannot be framed as members of civil society. These will be discussed elaborately in the Chapter 2, section 2.1.

1.3.3 Conceptualising rights: the rights based approach to development

Poverty is the function of the capability deprivation. Poverty constitutes the arguments of the theory of the rights based approach to development of Sen (1999c.). The constitutional declaration of the state sets the basis for the natural rights of the people that entail basic provision of entitlements of the citizens as fundamental human rights. In addition there are the declarations of the entitlements of rights in archaic conventions (suggested in Chapter 1 page -2) as human rights. It is regarded as a basic capability, and state declares its responsibility for its fulfilment (Sen, 1997, 1999c, & 2005a). An individual's right to livelihood as a basic human right must also be seen as related to one's civil and political rights in order to be realised (Sen, 1999c). Sen further argues that human rights or basic capability issues are viewed as social choices, so they must be decided through debate or dialogue (Sen, 1982, 1999a &c). In one hand, human rights imply people's rights, linked with the issue of survivability or human security. Political right has significance under the democratic system. Political rights extend the premise of dialogue and debate for ensuring governance mechanism, (Sen, 1997, 1999c, 2005a; UNDP, 2000 p. 25). So Evans (2005, p.90) thinks Sen's proposition of institutional changes from the aspects of capability is the most radical, because it considers peoples' view as the core of governance, and dialogue is the fulcrum. The entire approach indicates the process perspective.

1.3.4 Management of recovered factories of Latin America

In support the study considers the management praxis of recovered factories in Latin America. Severe economic crisis occurred in Latin America in the late 1990s and early twentieth centuries because of the pursued policy of the WB and the IMF (Ranis, 2005a, Field, 2008). The owners locked out industries; people became jobless; and there had been issues about unpaid wages (Field, 2008; Ranis, 2005). All that led the workers of several countries of the Latin America in particular Argentina, Venezuela, and Brazil to take control of the factories' management. This is known as the recovered factories movement. Evidence of management of recovered factories of mainly Argentina and Venezuela are explored. Reviewing this management approach as an alternate of market centric reform and restructuring, the study makes an attempt to ground the explored concept of rights-centric management in the real context.

1.3.5 Critical management studies and rights-centric industrial restructuring and management

The discussion in this section is divided into two sections. The first section discusses the elements and features of critical management studies. Based on this discussion the second section explains the reason for locating the study in the perspective of critical management studies.

Encountering what appears to be natural and therefore is legitimate, such as the hierarchical structure of an organisation, or the market as an efficient mode of distribution, concept of non-performance and reflexive methodology are the bases that constitute the discursive arguments of the critical management studies (Alvesson, Bridgman, & Willmott, 2009). The concept of non-performance challenges the concept of economic efficiency, and upholds that the practices of meaningful democracy in the workplace may contribute more and constitute progressive management (Spicer, Alvesson, & Kärreman, 2009). Reflexivity as the methodological mode of this perspective argues that in the process of analysis we need to scrutinise all details of applied strategies of power and constitution or the formation of subjects (Duberley & Johnson 2009). Thus three above mentioned concerned issues of critical management studies denote how reality is conditioned and constructed (Alvesson, Bridgman, & Willmott, 2009).

Contemplating the context of the study and its conceptualisation process with the discursive arguments of CMS, I place my study in this domain for the following reasons. First, people's or the community's perspectives on rights-centric management are the core issues of the study. By representing their perspectives about their rights, entitlements — issues what they consider could make them capable in terms of dealing with the context as well as the way like to be involved with the management process. I outline the contextual framework of rights-centric management. I attempt to bring peoples' perceptions about their aspired management into the learning process of management. While this suggests the micro-level aspects of management within the organisation such as in case of the study — the mills. Parallely, the conditions for the emergence of the study are rooted in the arguments and constructions of the efficiency-centric restructuring process, the conduct of the state and that raises question about the sustainable aspects of the efficiency arguments and how the community resisted it. Inquiries are based on looking into the power and politics—what in reality determines the mode of restructuring—and whether, within this context, rights-centric restructuring and management can be realised. The thesis is likely to contribute to discussions unfolding in critical management studies about the process perspective regarding organisational change. But in the context of the postcolonial states organisational structure such as the mills appears unstable; because of the pursued policy like the JSAC (Drawing from Mir and Mir 2012). Such fluidity can be conceived as the notion of imposed management and governing system by the global policy regime. In one hand that highlights the knowledge and power dominance of the West, and so the postcolonial state are perceived as neo-colonial state, as argued by Banerjee (2008). Considering the current emergence and changes in the policy regarding the functioning of the SOJMs, I posit aspects of process perspective of organisational change, micro-emancipation, and consider new forms of organisations where an organisation as an entity where people as actors, the state and corporations are interacting (Mir & Mir, 2005) for overall sustainability of the jute industry.

The discussed issues of rights-centric restructuring are explored actively; arguments are context oriented and pragmatic in the context of current re-emergence of the jute sector of Bangladesh. The explored concept rights centric restructuring is applicable in other locations where industrial restructuring is being conducted, based on private ownership, causing disappearance of the working class community — their identity. These are

discussed as elements that bring changes in management and organisational approaches, and as concepts these notions are categorised as critical performativity of the CMS by Spicer, Alvesson and Kärreman (2009).

In line with this, Willmott (2008) argues about the connectivity between the domain of CMS and global justice movements. According to him (Willmott, 2008):

Individual members of CMS already participate in movements that oppose corporate-led globalization. [...] Building upon and extending such involvements and initiatives, there is the potential to develop closer institutional links—for example, by making connections between struggles for Global Justice and insights of CMS research into the operation of global institutions such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, G8, and the World Trade Organization. (pp. 928–929)

Hence reviewing the context of the research, it can be argued that this study is contributing through strengthening that linkage of the critical management studies.

1.4 Implications and limitations

The study aims to contribute an industrial restructuring framework through exploring the community's perspectives. Its arguments are grounded in the concept of citizenship of the country. The study is an attempt to bringing the peoples' perspectives into designing the policy prescriptions of an institution. It posits that the inclusion of the actors' perspective may bring more positive changes in the life-world of the affected actors. The outcome of the study will have policy implications not only at the local level but also at the global level, as discussed in the sub section 1.3.5.

The study has following limitations. First, perception analysis requires extensive time to understand the context and also to capture people's concrete views. Second, acceptance of collected in-depth information might be constrained by the politics of games of truth and rationality. The politics of truth looks for institutionally produced and linked facts, not the perspectives of the people, who have knowledge based on experience. Finally, the strength of the study lies in its limitation, since collected perceptions are context-specific.

1.5 Structure of the thesis

Chapter two has three main sections. The first section provides a schematic analysis of the historical, social, economic, legal and cultural conditions for understanding how the current context has been arrived and what constitutes the conformity towards the global order of development and sustainability. The second section contains an analysis of the theory of the rights based approach to development, and its features, in order to investigate whether it can be applied in the industrial spheres. Thirdly, it discusses conceptual underpinnings of movements of livelihoods across the globe. Thus I make an attempt to distinguish and categorise the attributes of the movements conducted by the community of Khalishpur. Then the evidence of management of recovered factories is discussed. Finally I explore the relevance of the concept of rights centric restructuring and management in the domain of CMS. Chapter three illustrates the research context: the collapse of the jute sector and SOJMs, and implications for the community. Chapter four provides the philosophical underpinnings of the study, including how the knowledge of rights-centric management is formed. This chapter also discusses the methods and design of the research. The Platinum Jute Mills is introduced as a case here. Chapter five describes the selected findings. Chapter six comprises the theoretical discussion of the findings in relation to the research questions of rights-centric restructuring and management; and finally chapter seven explains the contribution of the research and its limitations

Chapter 2: Literature Review

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2.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter provides an overview of the jute sector, discusses the significance of the SOJMs, and of industrial restructuring and its impact. The problematisation process of the concept of rights-centric restructuring requires analysis of the context and the categorisation of its constituting elements. Hence, the literature review is structured as follows:

- First: the chapter considers the implications of contemporary globalisation of Bangladesh for conceptualising the contextual conditions of the rights based approach to development argued by Sen.
- Second: Therefore within the context of analysis of globalisation from the perspective of critical political economy, the next section discusses the consideration of a rights based approach to development of Amartya Sen, for conceptualising rights-centric industrial restructuring and management. In line with this, the Constitutional declarations regarding citizen rights, global discourse of rights and legal rights are discussed.
- Third: Drawing from Willmott (2008), we are informed that there is a stream of discussion in CMS about the global movement for social justice against the corporate led restructuring that jeopardises the livelihood and life of the community and CMS scholars have linkage with these movements. Assuming that the concept of rights-centric management in the domain of critical management studies is located here; I focus on the feature of resistance of the community against the corporate led restructuring as discussed from the perspective of critical political economy and from the exegesis of the CMS with particular reference to Banerjee's (2011) article : 'Voices of the Governed: towards a theory of the translocal'. This is followed by discussion about recovered factories management of Latin American countries to find out the notions that the rights to have livelihoods are the fulcrums of managing the industrial sphere. Finally the concepts of rights based approach to development and its relevance in the domain of CMS is discussed.

2.2 Contemporary globalisation, its emergence and consequences in Bangladesh

The discussion presented in this section is based on theory of the critical political economy, defined as the *unequal development of peripheries* by Amin (1976), the *development of underdevelopment* by Frank (1966, 1991b,) and the *mini-system* by

Wallerstein. Moreover, I draw on the work of Hamza Alavi, Amiya Kumar Bagchi (1996,2007), Prabhat Patnaik (1973,2001), Utsa Patnaik (1982,2005) and Rehman Sobhan (1979,1993, 2002,1982,1996,2002,2003), Sobhan and Ahmad (1980) —scholars of the political economy of the Indian subcontinent to conceptualise the trajectory of how the current context has been arrived at. The essence of the political economic framework lies in, as it analyses the rupture of the space from the politico-economic aspects and provides the perspective, basing on what we can internalise why change is necessary for a space like Bangladesh, and reasons why Bangladesh is conceived as a ‘colony’, then as a ‘nation-state’, ‘post-colonial state’ or developing/less developed country.

2.2.1 Historical, economic and political contextual analysis

2.2.1.1 The construction of colonialism and its consequences 1756–1947

The literature of the critical political economy (Amin 1976; Bagchi, 2007, 1996; Marx, 1854; Marx & Engels 1959/1975; Patnaik, P., 1973, 2001; Patnaik, U., 1982, 2005) suggests that the economy of Bangladesh was integrated within the world economy during the seventeenth century and at the initial phase the manipulation of technology occurred through the imposition of the Permanent Land Settlement Act. The whole Indian subcontinent came under the control of the British monarchy in 1857, thus establishing the essential condition for industrial capitalism (Marx & Engels, 1959/1975). Hence the process of industrialisation was initiated in Bangla through the establishment of the jute mills in 1855, most of which were located in Hoogly, near Kolkata (Chakrabarty, 1989) and Bangladesh became a supplier of raw jute (Khan, 2007). At the same time, the local production system of self-sufficient communities in the country had been dismantled (Marx, 1854; Marx and Engels, 1959/1975) which caused an influx of people dependent on the secondary sector into Kolkata from the state of Bihar in search of employment in the newly established industrial set-ups (Bagchi, 2007). In 1947, based along the religious divide between Hindus and Muslims, independence for India and Pakistan was announced. Bangladesh became a province of Pakistan-East Pakistan, as the majority of the population were Muslim.

2.2.1.2 Mode of developmentalism 1947-1971

After independence, Pakistan acted in accordance with the Washington consensus. It followed an agenda of developmentlism through modernisation and borrowed the largest amount of funds from the centre through the WB and the IMF in the 1950s and 1960s

(Islam, 2003) to initiate rapid industrial development under the private sector (Sobhan & Ahmad, 1980). Under the rapid industrialisation process through EPIDC the jute mills were established in Bangladesh. EPIDC provided 80% of the equity for establishing the mills in the form of state-patronised entrepreneurship, but mainly patronised Pakistani entrepreneurs (Sobhan & Ahmad, 1980). Although Bangladesh at that time contributed the largest share of the nation's foreign exchange, chiefly through the export of jute (Alavi, 1972; Maron, 1954) patronising Bangladesh entrepreneurs were very limited. Entrepreneurship capability required access to the political power and the ability to influence the top management levels of society (Banerjee, 1987; Islam, 2003). The pattern of economic construction reveals an absence of an indigenous bourgeoisie class in Bangladesh.

Parallel to economic constructions army regime as political construction became a legacy in Pakistan from 1958. Exclusion based on religion or ethnicity caused deprivation, polarisation, marginalisation of the majority of people, and promotion of cultural and ethnic division became the established pattern of governance in Pakistan (Alavi, 1971, 1973). The emergence of Bangladesh required time. In 1971, through a popular movement and bloody War of Independence, Bangladesh became an independent country.

2.2.1.3 Emergence of Bangladesh and constructions of post-independence government 1971-1975

The pattern of state bureaucratic socialism argued by Amin (1976) prevailed in Bangladesh as a political structure during this period. It included: (i) establishing state control over the industrial sector; (ii) conducting trade with socialist blocs as a notion of integrated development (Sobhan & Ahmad, 1980). Therefore, the post-independence government nationalised all enterprises that had been deserted by Pakistani entrepreneurs, established by the EPIDC, or owned by Bangladeshi entrepreneurs. It is argued in a postcolonial state, in cases where no indigenous bourgeoisie class exists, the power tends to sit with the bureaucrats, and the inherited bureaucracy of the colonial legacy remains powerful (Alavi, 1971, 1973).

Within this context a massive flood in 1974 aggravated the situation and hence, the post-independence government had to negotiate with the World Bank and the IMF for partial deregulation to manage the food shortage (Sobhan & Ahmad, 1980; Sobhan, 1979).

Subsequently, in 1975 the army bureaucracy toppled down the post-independence government, and militarisation of the polity of Bangladesh lasted for almost fifteen years till 1990.

With regard to the functioning of state-owned enterprises (SOEs) in Bangladesh, we find the following: First, a review of literature from the late 1970s suggests that bureaucratic intervention deteriorated the operational performance of state enterprises (Ahmad, 1976, 1974; Sobhan & Ahmad, 1980). The post-independence government tried to establish state control over the industries, but the control rested with the bureaucracy (Sobhan, 1979). Indeed the dominant groups determine the nature of a regime and the functioning of the state, and the dominance of the SOEs in terms of their contribution to the economy and their performance in reality has been determined and constrained by the nexus of bureaucracy and the ruling class (Sobhan, 1979). Evidence indicates that the intervention of the ministries or bureaucracy by controlling the prices of both the input and output, appointments of employees at both the enterprise and corporate body level, and the relations between trade union leaders and the political factions in power hindered the optimal performance of SOEs particularly of the SOJMs in Bangladesh (Hoque & Hopper, 1994; Sobhan, 1979; Sobhan & Ahmad, 1980; Uddin & Hopper, 2001;). Hence, Sobhan (1979) concludes:

Distributions of its surplus are constrained by the interplay of social forces within the policy. This interplay is in particular cases itself conditioned by the presence of external influences on the economic and political life of the country.

(p. 410).

The end results of such interplay constitute the conformity with the global trend of disinvestment in the public sector. In fact the 'state of emergency' which acts as 'the state of exception' had been initiated through the army regime in 1975 in the case of the sovereignty of this newly independent country, Bangladesh (Borrowing from Agamben, 2005, cited in Carl Schmitt, 1922). According to the arguments of the critical political economy as the donors provide funds as either debt or aid, they require allies at peripheries as agents who can enforce or implement the suggested economic policies (Baran, 1973; Frank, 1977; Gill & Frank, 1973). Thus, the patron-client relations between the centre and the periphery are established (Baran, 1973). This state of exception as political construction has helped the global policy regime in implementing their economic

policy in relation to global capital. The sign can be traced in the political constructions and economic reforms that have occurred in Bangladesh in last 35 years as discussed below.

2.2.1.4 Privatisation, globalisation and its construction: 1975-1990 and to the present

A hegemony of foreign funds as direct investment (Foreign Direct Investment, or FDI) and Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) aimed at addressing the country's basic needs created a regime of dependence on aid in Bangladesh from 1975 (Sobhan, 1982). Hence, under two consecutive army regimes from 1975-1990 drastic privatisation was implemented, first under the Revised Industrialisation Policy (RIP) and then through the fast-track privatisation under the New Industrial Policy (NIP) (Sandra, Quadir & Shaw, 1997). The implications entailed a comprehensive disinvestment program as well as the provision of interest-free loans to buyers of SOEs, and the establishment of the Bangladesh Export Processing Zone Authority (BEPZA) (Sandra, Quadir & Shaw, 1997). A Board of Privatisation was formed in 1993, later renamed as the Privatisation Commission (BTI, 2012). The policy approach to privatisation includes a mode of investment based on selling 51% of the shares and retaining 49% under the control of the state through the corporate body of the enterprises (Uddin, 1997). In addition, because of the attached conditionality to loans provided by the WB and the IMF, loan support for entrepreneurs increased from 4% to 88% (Sobhan, 1982). However, the mode of privatisation did not include any conditions that had to be met by the entrepreneurs (Dagedeviren, 2003).

Within this context, the World Trade Organization (WTO) emerged, which tends to reduce the policy formulation capacity of its member countries (Sobhna, 1993). As a result, the 1991 Industrial Policy of Bangladesh reflects drastic steps towards market-centric reforms (Hossain, 2004). Similarly, the reform package prescribed by the World Bank and the IMF for Bangladesh has taken the form of a Structural Adjustment Program, aimed at adjusting the economic inefficiency and ensuring the sustainability of the economy during 1991–95 (Sobhan, 1996, 2002, 2003; Uddin, 1997).

However, a review of the effects of the economic measures pursued reveals that the amount of default loans was 2794 million AUD (Drawing from Bangladesh Bank Statistics, March 2011). Over-invoicing and transferring of capital has become a trend from the early 80s (Sobhan, 2010, 1982). Second, the informal sector contains 80% of the

country's total labour force—a sectorial share of the labour force that has increased due to the decline in the public and private formal employment sectors (Mahajan, 2007).

Moreover, the financial fluidity of the global economic system is so dynamic and diverse, and the process of integration so encompassing, that due to the recent global financial crisis Bangladesh lost 48 million USD net outflow of its portfolio (Rahman, 2009). Such severe losses have been witnessed alongside the return of workers from abroad and the retrenchment of workers from the formal sector such as the jute and ready-made garments industries (World Bank, 2009). Hence according to Sobhan (2010) lack of understanding of the structural aspects of poverty of South Asia is the major limitation of the adopted policies of the global level and in relation to that policy adopted at the local level (Sobhan, 2010).

2.2.2 Social formations and governance mechanism

First: is that of the critical political economy, and its conceptualisation of the social formation in relation to an economic structure based on unequal development between the centres and the postcolonial states.

Second, ideological hegemony is exerted through the practices of knowledge—power (Escobar, 1995). I draw from the perspectives of Althusser and Foucault. Their philosophical notions help in understanding the functioning of ideological apparatuses, and how they construct cultural hegemony and thus, subjectivity. This assists in conceptualising the reason why the development and sustainability discourse of globalisation appears as a doctrine to be followed in the context of a postcolonial state like Bangladesh.

The third perspective is that of subaltern studies, which is considered in seeking to understand the modernisation effects evident in a postcolonial state and workers' relation to capital. Indeed, subaltern studies draws heavily from Marx, Gramsci and Foucault. The theoretical underpinnings of these three perspectives help in conceptualising the current global context and the position of Bangladesh within it.

2.2.2.1 Social formation in relation to historical economic legacy

Based on a Marxian perspective, Alavi (1973) argues that the state as an institution, democracy as a governance mechanism, bureaucracy as a governance apparatus, and legal doctrines are all super-structural elements that have been inherited as natural corollaries of the colonial legacy borne by a postcolonial state. He further suggests that super-structural elements like bureaucracy are ‘developed’ prior to the ‘development’ of the indigenous bourgeoisie and thus, he identifies the source of inherited power of bureaucrats (Alavi, 1973). In line with this, the theory of the core–periphery entails that the functioning of basic and super-structural elements generates ‘subjects’ as nationalists or ethno-nations. This class provides a nationalist mask for any political constitution, while its political, social, cultural and ideological constructions are always linked to economic interests (Wallerstein, 1975, 1990). The comprador bourgeoisie are the agents of the colonisers and support the formation of patron-client relations with the centres (Amin, 1976; Baran, 1973; Frank, 1977; Gills & Frank, 1991). Hence, Sobhan (1979, p. 411) states that in the case of Bangladesh, where an indigenous bourgeoisie class is absent, power is concentrated with the comprador bourgeoisie and the civil-army bureaucracy, and these are the elements of the ruling class of Bangladesh.

2.2.2.2 Ideological and cultural constructions

The modern social formation and economic constructions had been occurred in parallel in postcolonial states (Chatterjee, 2004). The effects of the exerted cultural practices of modernism require grasping of the notion of effective functioning of ideological state apparatuses as (discussed by Althusser 2001) and similarly I draw on Foucault’s (1982, 1988, 2003) perspectives regarding subjectivity to analyse the underlying ideologies that produce the subjectivity of the ruling class in the context of Bangladesh.

According to Althusser (2001, p. 101) in capitalist society the range of ideological state apparatuses includes: ‘[...]: *the education apparatus, the religious apparatus, the family apparatus, the political apparatus, the trade union apparatus, the communication apparatus, the cultural apparatus etc*’. He (2001, p. 100) concludes that the interplay of these components is aimed in ensuring and maintaining the relations of production.

In line with this assertion, Foucault (1982, p. 213; see also 2003) states that ‘*subjection is derived phenomena*’, and the interplay of disciplinary technologies and ‘power-knowledge’ strategies (for further discussion on this, see Chapter 1). Based on their

philosophical notions, in the context of Bangladesh, I trace how ideological state apparatuses are inherited institutions from the colonial legacy; systematically perpetuate their practices as culture. This constituted cultural context works for the formation of subjects and thus, the subjectivity is realised (drawing from the arguments of subaltern studies). Therefore, the knowledge hegemony of the discourse of globalisation regarding development, sustainability and good governance becomes accepted as doctrine in postcolonial states, and that discourse comes to constitute the social reality of such spaces (Escobar, 1992, 1995) as in the case of Bangladesh. Within this defined reality of a postcolonial state, the global and inherited juridical discourse of the colonial legacy constitutes the basis of any inquiry about that space and its individuals (Banerjee 2008 citing from Wood, 2003). Thus the regimes of political constructions, legal discourse, and cultural practices have been formed that exerts and influences the process of governing system as a whole.

2.2.2.3 Considered issues regarding formation of the workers as a 'working-class community'

Historiographies of subaltern studies (Chakrabarty 1989; Chandavarkar, 1994, 1997, 1998, 2000; Sen 1999) inform us that the formation of the workers faction in the context of the Indian Subcontinent has to be conceptualised as a community. It is argued that the political economy of locality plays an important role in moulding and conditioning workers' consciousness and their collectivity (Chandavarkar 1994,1997). In regard to it, he suggests temporal characteristics of the job in the industrial spheres are the cause why migrated (rural) workers had to maintain their rural linkage. He further states (Chandravarkar, 1997):

Caste and kinship ties were vital to the social organisation of workers, but so were the affinities of region and religion, workplace and neighbourhood, trade unions and political parties, all of which cut across each other. (p. 187)

Hence, segregation in terms of caste, ethnicity and mode of employment based on social networking leads to a conceptualisation of the working class of a postcolonial state as a working-class community or category (Chakrabarty, 1989; Chandravarkar, 1998). The interplay of these levels of demarcation contributes to the formation of working-class collectivity. This perspective also argues that ethnicity, religion and gender, as constituting

factors of identity, are politically constructed and invariably capitalist constructions (Sen, 2005).

In tracing the signs of this discourse in relation to the formation of the working class of Bangladesh, I find the following: First, Strauss (1952) in considering the context of the jute workers of Bangladesh notes the industrial ineptness of the workers and their connectivity with the rural base and conceptualises them as a category of evicted peasants. And, second, violent riots were held between Bihari and Bangali workers of jute mills during the Pakistan regime, which were politically linked (Maron, 1954)¹².

Within this historical backdrop the role of the union, union politics, workers' involvement with unions, and the contribution of unions in protecting workers rights in the political arena all have contextual relevance. There are three types of unions in Bangladesh: (i) a basic union, which is a union based at a specific industrial set-up; (ii) an industrial union at the sectoral level; and (iii) the national union or federation, known as SKOP¹³ (BILS, 2009). Table 2.1 below provides a picture of SKOP's role in realising workers' rights and under different political regimes.

Table 2:1 Role of SKOP¹⁴ in the realisation of workers' rights

| Parties | Government Period | Industrial policies | Trade union's role |
|--------------|-------------------|---|--|
| Awami League | 1972–1975 | State ownership | Acceptance of workers' agenda and linked union politics to that of the mainstream political parties. |
| BNP | 1975–1981 | Privatisation | SKOP along with the workers started their struggle against it. |
| Jatiyo Party | 1981–1990 | Emphasis given to liberalisation and privatisation | Same as stated above. |
| BNP | 1990–1996 | Structural Adjustment Program, liberalisation policy. | Resistance by SKOP at initial phase. The process of closing down the Adamjee Jute Mills had been strongly resisted by SKOP. On the other hand, government had to increase wages. |

¹² In particular after the victory of United Front¹² in the parliamentary election in 1954.

¹³ SKOP: Shramik Kormochari Eikko Parishad, hereafter SKOP. , Federation of trade union

¹⁴ SKOP: Shramik Kormochari Oikko Parishad, Union of Workers and Employees

| Parties | Government Period | Industrial policies | Trade union's role |
|----------------------|-------------------|---|--|
| Awami League | 1996–2001 | Same policy | Same as stated above. However, the Jute Mills' Worker Federation placed their eight point demand agenda where the wage escalation through setting up Wage Commission, reopening of closed mills, and the reformation of Labour Law. The government handed over 10 mills to SKOP under a workers' ownership. |
| BNP | 2001–2006 | Same policy, implementation of Jute Sector Adjustment Credit (JSAC) Program and closure of the Adamjee Jute Mills | No resistance by the SKOP as it was before. |
| The Caretaker Regime | 2007–08 | Completion of JSAC | Massive protest by the workers. SKOP supported this, but could not become directly involved due to the state of emergency. |

Source: Uddin, 1997, Hoque and Hopper, 1994, Khan, 1999, BILS 2006,

The dominance of left-wing political parties in forming union politics was evident during the regime of Pakistan, and hence that is the cause of initiation of trade union in the industrial sphere by the despotic army chief during the army regime in 1960s (Rahman & Lungford, 2012; Majumdar, 2006). However, it is argued that because of left leniency in union the jute mill workers' militant actions combined with those of the students' front to produce a mass uprising in support of autonomy for Bangladesh during the 1960s, and their spontaneous participation in the liberation war has been cited also (Sobhan, 1979; Uddin, 1997). It is suggested that 34.2% of freedom fighters were workers¹⁵ (Uddin, 1997, p. 173.). Consequently, it is argued that the post-independence government nationalised the industrial sector and that its policies came to favour the workers' interests, because of the pressure of the left-oriented trade unionists and intellectuals (Khan, 1999; Majumadar, 2004; Uddin, PhD thesis 1997).

¹⁵ Cited by Uddin S (1997) and he collected from the speech of the Prime Minister, Government of Bangladesh, 1972 and he referred The daily *Ittefaq*, 16 September, 1972.

Trade union politics became linked with the mainstream politics by the post-independent government, and it is identified as the cause of the erosion of the industrial culture of public enterprises (Monem, 2002; Nurruzzaman, 2004; Sobhan, 1979). Under the two consecutive army regimes SKOP resisted the decision of privatisation. However, both army regimes have formed their own political party BNP and Jatiyo Party (Nationalist Party) and tended to influence trade union politics. On the other hand, the solidarity of the SKOP and the students' front—like in the period 1968–1971 that rose again in the 1990s in opposition to the despotic army regime—are discussed in the literature (Alamgir, 2011; Uddin & Hopper, 2001). Several studies denote union activism in terms of demonstrating resistance against the states' restructuring policy in 1991–1992 (Alamgir, 2011; BILS, 2006; Hoque & Hopper, 1994; Uddin & Hopper, 2001). Considering the movements initiated by the workers from the colonial period through to the 1990s, it can be argued that workers' militancy has been always linked to political movements against colonialism, and later against the despotic military regime; and thus the function of the labour union in Bangladesh was shaped (Rahman & Langford, 2012).

However, there is dearth of literature on the workers in Bangladesh, and their day-to-day struggles as a working-class community. Correspondingly, the question of whether race, gender, religion and localism contribute to the formation of a working-class community in Bangladesh has rarely been explored. In line with it, restructuring has caused the casualization of employment and hence, increasing employment under the *badli*¹⁶ system; and issue of *badli* workers in case of public sector jute mills (Alamgir, 2011; Haque & Hopper, 1994; Uddin & Hopper, 2001). The jute mills in Bangladesh have had *badli workers* since its inception (Chakrabarty, 1989). Yet trade union activities only involve the permanent workers of the formal sector (Kabeer & Kabir, 2009) and union is considered as a part of the civil society. Invariably *badli* workers as another category are not allowed to join trade unions under the Labour Law Bangladesh 2006 (LLB, 2006), and a part of the community of the workers and belong to the domain of the political society. Hence, we find another category of workers are produced under the neoliberalism (Engels, 1882/1969). So the essence of the concept of political society as Chatterjee, (2004, 1998) argues in the context of a postcolonial state has significance in relation to Bangladesh and are discussed in the next section.

¹⁶ Under *Badli* system implies workers are appointed as *Badli* and supposed to work when the permanent workers are on leave. They are not allowed to form or be involved in a union.

2.2.2.4 Social formations as factions and governance mechanisms

The exegesis of subaltern studies suggests, the hegemony of cultural practices produces social fragmentations in postcolonial states. In the context of Bangladesh, in particular for the undertaken study it can be argued that fragmentation has been constructed initially by religious divides, such as that between Muslim and Hindu; by ethnicity, the divide between the Bihari and Bangali; and by cultural practices, those of the middle class, educated *Babu* versus the working-class *mojur/chasha*¹⁷. The policies of the colonisers first created these classifications, and then the control mechanisms were practised and became entrenched over time (drawing from Foucault, 1979). In the current context of Bangladesh as a nation-state, with regard to these established fragmentations (c.f Chaturvedi, 2007; Ludden, 2001), the creation of nationality as an identity, the imposition of representative democracy as a governing mechanism, the acceptance of the discourse of rights—indicative of imposed and posited equality and equity, and the establishment of the notion of civil society for establishing good governance within the system (Rights Based Programs coordinated and funded by UNDP) all act as ‘programs’ that tend to homogenise social fragmentations (Chatterjee, 2004; Escobar, 1992).

Therefore, it is important to analyse the term ‘civil society’ in the context of contemporary Bangladesh in order to comprehend its relation to current constructions of the discourse of globalisation as development and sustainability, and the democratic governance mechanism. Categorically, I look into the conceptual underpinnings regarding the notion of civil society proposed by Marx (1970/77) and Gramsci (1988). Marx asserts that the actions of civil society are indeed always related to economic interests, and its ideological positioning requires contemplation (Marx, 1970/1977). Gramsci (1988) considers the role of civil society from the perspective of participation of the private bodies in the realm of the public bodies—the state. Through its participation civil society plays a role in legitimising norms and thus the ‘hegemony’ of the dominant group (Gramsci, 1988, p.12). Critically considering the conceptual underpinnings of the civil society argued by Gramsci, Hunt (1989, p. 216) concludes: the civil society works as the element in between the bourgeoisie and the workers with the aim of creation of consensus, or in the process of legitimisation. Considering two assertions of these two Western philosophers from two different centuries, Marx and Gramsci, regarding the role and functions of civil society, I

¹⁷ The *mojur* are workers, and the *chasha* are peasants.

turn to the arguments provided by subaltern theorist Pundit Chatterjee (2004, 1998,). He suggests that the conditions of emergence of the concept of civil society are rooted in the posited equality, concepts of citizenship and individual freedom and rights of the West (Chatterjee, 2004, 1998,). In the context of a postcolonial state the concept has limited aspect, stating that Chatterjee argues that civil society as a concept is '*restricted to a small section of culturally equipped citizens*' (Chatterjee, 2004, p. 41). Whilst the vast majority of people as a part of the community are in relation to the state on the basis of electoral democracy as electoral agents (Chatterjee 2004, 1998). Thus the community as the political society based on their issues of survivability are in defining their relation with the state (Chatterjee, 2004). The discourse of regime regarded the political society as population by the governmentality and the state commitment lies in maintaining the well-being of that population (Chatterjee, 2004).

It is argued that during 1980s, at the first phase the liberalisation or marketisation of economy publicised the concept of 'clientelism and promoting the discourse of inefficiency and corruption of state functionaries,' (Ali, 2012; Univ, 2002). According to Ong (2006) (re) configuration of governing technology of neo-liberalism considers militarisation of the state power, the dominance of civil army-bureaucracy in entire polity, and criticism of the bureaucratic structure of its' SOEs. These discussed features are aligned with the political constructions and conducted economic reform in case of Bangladesh. In the context of Bangladesh, the governing arrangement illustrates under the despotic regime privatisation was used as a device of coalescence of the political agents and the ruling class (Quadir, 2000; Sobhan, 2002, 1982). The resulting effect was the failure of economic reform, as suggested by a number of theorists of the field of development studies (Sobhan, 2002; Univ, 2002,).

During the second phase, neo-liberalism through the discourse of globalisation has promoted the reform packages of economic development and sustainability, but incorporated the following elements: commitment to democracy, good governance, human rights, and the notion of civil society (Davis & McGregor, 2000; Sobhan, 2002, 2005, 2010). In highlighting the issues of corruption and clientelism of the system, this discourse tends to improve the quality of the governance provided by state functionaries (Kabeer, 2003; Univ 2002,). By the 1990s, the UNDP accepted approaches based on good

governance as the mode of its development program by incorporating the right to development perspective proposed by Sen (Univ, 2000, 2002, 2007). The reason is human rights are perceived as inalienable (Univ, 2007, p. 598).

Collective perspective becomes the core of the governance mechanism and the fulcrum of organisational or institutional reforms in the discourse of UNDP (1999), as well as in the discourse of development (Degnobl-Martinussen 2002; Evans 2005). Therefore, dialogue is required because the interaction between individuals, institutions, regulations and practices are mandatory for good governance (Degnobl-Martinussen 2002). Thus, the technology of participation is the fulcrum of the new technology of governing that is transparent, so that corruption can be curbed; and ‘Governance *is now seen as both outcomes and processes*’ (Degnobl-Martinussen, 2000, p. 271). Moreover, given the Millennium Development Goals, the ultimate aim of development is building and enhancing human capability (Evans, 2005). And this can be achieved through the institutional reform from the perspective of capability (Evans, 2005).

Hence, undertaking the process of democratisation by raising awareness about citizenship from the perspective of a rights based approach to development has been pursued since the 1990s with the assistance of IDAs¹⁸ by the NGOs operating in Bangladesh (Kabeer, 2003). Implementing citizenship rights to create and widen the scope of democratic participation is the aim and NGOs are conceived as civil society organisations (Degnobl-Martinussen; 2002; Kabeer, 2003). Evidently for a postcolonial state like Bangladesh its past was legacy and constructed by the history of colonialism, now we find the discourse of development and sustainability has boxed the entire current context of the country into projects (c.f Dirlík’s 1994). The denationalisation process along with structural adjustment program caused an emergence of bourgeoisie faction, and the bureaucracy is also a part of that faction. According to Sobhan (1982, 2003) and this faction is conceived as aid -enriched class and has been tied up intensively with the development program. In reality, the major actors involved in designing policy and strategy in Bangladesh remain among the bureaucrats and the newly aid-enriched classes (Sobhna, 2003). Considering the example of the formulation process of the Poverty Reduction Strategic Papers (PRSP) by the WB, Sobhan (2003) states that the process ensured the representation of empowered factions of society of the rural or urban classes (Sobhan, 2003). The exclusion or inclusion of actors

¹⁸ International Development Agencies

into this process of governance is continually (re)configured. NGOs are regarded as a part of civil societies under the development projects. And their participation with the state formation process in the name of good governance illustrates the process of constitution of another regime of sovereignty (Drawing from Ong 2006). Overlapping sovereignties is the technology of governing under neoliberalism, as suggested (C.f Ong 2006).

This section has explained the formation of various factions, and their relations to the core institutions—with the SOEs, the state, and the functioning of global policy regime. I have explored the conditions that constitute the formation of the ideology of the actors and how this ideological positioning determines their role. Based on this analysis, in the next section I discuss the conceptual underpinnings of Rights based approach to development and its application in the context of the global south but mainly Bangladesh. Thus I draw the premises of arguments of rights centric restructuring and management.

2.3. Conceptualising rights-centric restructuring and management based on a rights based approach to development

Whilst conceptualising rights-centric management is based on the rights based approach to development espoused by Sen, constitutional declarations constitute the rights of an individual or worker as the citizens and global rights doctrines define the fundamental issues pertaining to human rights. The discussion presented in this section is ordered as follows:

- Theoretical aspects of the rights based approach to development
- Contextual evidence of a rights based approach to development
- Policy and legal framework of rights

2.3.1. Theoretical aspects of the rights based approach to development

I discuss in the earlier section about the conditions of Sen's rights based approach to development to become the tool of development and of policy formulation, as this concept aimed at ensuring good governance within the global policy regime (UNDP, 2000). This concept overrides the basic needs approach of development. The limitations of needs-based development are in its approach and in the content towards alleviating poverty (Gasper, 2007). Because the raised questions are what does 'need' refer? Does need refer to ensuring subsistence living? Or does it imply the satisfaction of peoples' overall desires

(Dean, Bonvin, Vielle & Farvaque, 2005)? Another criticism of this approach is that it is imposed from the donors' perspective and focused on the provision of primary goods (Gasper, 2007).

Whilst a rights based approach suggests a distinct set of claims that a person holds over another person, a rights based approach to development implies the individual's claims on the state. Assuming that human rights are the fulcrum, the aim of such an approach is to contribute to the policy formulation process of the nation-state (Gasper, 2007).

The conceptual framework of a rights based approach views the concept of human rights primarily from the perspective of capability. Sen argues that attaining the maximum level of capability is important for an individual. He also claims that poverty and human capability are intertwined and deprivation in terms of the attainment of capability is identified as the cause of poverty and un-freedom (Sen, 1999c, p. 99). Discursive arguments of Sen regarding rights, the rights based approach, and the functioning mechanism of this approach (Anand & Sen 2000; Dèrzè & Sen 2002, 1989; Sen, 1979, 1982, 1983a, 1983 b, 1985, 1987, 1989, 1990, 1993a, 1993b, 1997a, 1997b, 1997c, 1999a, 1999b, 1999c, 2000, 2004a, 2004b, 2005a, 2005b) and discussion regarding Sen's works by ODI Briefing Paper (2001); Bagchi (1999), Beteille (1993), Cohen (1993, 1981), Gasper (2007, 2000), Nassubam (2003, 1997), Patnaik (1998) and Evans (2005) illustrate the following:

First, Sen's (1999c, 2004a) arguments for a rights based approach in relation to capability refer to the content and coverage of entitlements and also suggest the process of attainment of entitlements all constitute the capability aspect of a person (1999c).

Second, capability is determined by the provision of entitlements; therefore, it is linked to individual freedom (Sen, 1985, 1999, 2004a, 2005a). The issue of justice is embedded in the process of determining the capability. Therefore, Sen conceptualises determining process of capability and capability index is a social choice. The process implies assigning the priority of elements that constitute the quality of life (Evans, 2005).

Referring to the causes of famine in India, Bangladesh and China, Sen (1999c) points out that supply in the market does not ensure equity of distribution (Sen, 1999c) and argues about the citizenship rights as an issue of entitlement (Cohen, 1993). In that context, Sen

argues (1999c) that although democratic participatory governance and the nation-state as a structure have been in practice in all most all countries, the concept of human rights and political liberties are merely rhetoric in some countries. However, economic rights are linked to political rights so by enhancing political rights economic rights, including the building of capability can be realised (Nassubum, 2003).

Third, rights based approach is placed within the context of development, sustainability, and the efficiency arguments of the discourse of the global policy regime dominant in the late 1980s and 1990s (Evans, 2005). This period is marked by the failure of developmentalism through structural adjustment, as the outcomes of development indicate the flows of return to the centre (Evans, 2005; Univ, 2007) (discussed in sections 2.1 and 2.2).

Obviously massive social, economic, institutional and political reform and restructuring in the local, regional and national contexts are the fundamental requirements for balancing the power inequity between the developed and developing nations (Sen, 2002). Hence, Sen asks for a shift in the institutional mechanism and argues that the principal challenge remains with the notion of equity in terms of allocating provisions, which in turn enable human capability (Sen, 1999c; 2004a). Individual and collective capability needs to be realised, so that globalisation can benefit all (Sen, 1999a, 1999b, 1999c, 2002). Focusing on the capability aspect, Sen suggests for institutional approach must be interactive, and hence, Evan finds Sen's proposition regarding institutional form as more radical transformation of institutions (Evans 2005). He elaborates as follows (2005, p. 97):

The ability of communities and societies to define their goals is certainly the most basic kind of institutional technology. [...] The capability approach shifts the focus to the institutions, which facilitate choices of development goals. It puts the institutions of collective decision-making at the centre of any economic theory of development.

Fourth, Sen's recent discussions emphasise the issue of recognition. He introduces the Sanskrit word *Swakriti*, arguing that the notions of equity of identity, acknowledgement and acceptance for establishing inclusiveness of pluralist tolerance underpin the concept of *Swakriti* and hence, recognition (Sen, 2005b).

Discussions are categorised as following:

- Elements and the essence of a rights based approach to development: Rights, entitlements , capability and freedom
- Functioning mechanism of a rights based approach to development: Collective capability as a social choice and process of empowerment
- Critical reflection of a rights based approach to development
- Evidence and application of a rights based approach to development and its consequences
- Critical reflections on rights based approach to development projects conducted in Asia and Africa
- Relevance of rights-centric industrial restructuring and rights-centric management

2.3.1.1 Elements and the essence of a rights based approach to development: Rights, entitlements, capability and freedom

Considering the deontological aspects of rights, Sen (1982) proposes what he calls a goal-rights system. According to Sen, goal-rights include all aspects of rights, whether or not they are realised or fulfilled. Linking the capability perspective with the concept of goal-rights, he examines the constraining issues in relation to goal-rights and thus, defines that the goal-rights system is linked to capability. According to Sen (1982, p. 15):

A moral system in which fulfilment and nonrealization of rights are included among the goals, incorporated in the evaluation of states of affairs, and then applied to the choice of actions through consequential links will be called a goal-rights system.

Describing goal-rights as vision-oriented rights in terms of attaining capability, he suggests that there is no conflict between instrumental rights and the perceived aspects of goal-rights. He concludes:

If all goal-rights take the form of rights to certain capabilities, then a goal-rights system may be conveniently called a capability-rights system. (1982, p. 16).

According to Sen (2004a) aspired issues of rights, if these are emerged from the perspective of capability, these must be considered as issues of human rights (Sen, 2004a). Ethics, ethical and practical reasoning, and conditions of realisation underpin his theory of the elements of human rights (Sen, 2004). So Sen suggests: *Human rights are considered to be ethical or moral claims on individuals and collective agents* (Sen, cited in UNDP Report, 2000, p. 25).

Fifth, aspired issues of rights are intrinsic (Sen, 1999c). Asserting human right is a form of freedom he argues, as it is neither law nor it is derived from legislation. So human rights are natural rights (Sen, 2005a).

Sixth, capability is closely linked to human rights (Sen, 2005a). Justice can be seen as an issue of human rights when it is perceived from the capability perspective (Sen, 2004a, p. 155). Sen therefore argues (2004a, 2005a) that the defined process of attaining capability needs to be considered as implying both as an opportunity and a process and thus, covers the content of human rights (Sen, 2004a, p. 352).

Seventh, considering the argument that the notion of 'aspirations' has limitations from the perspective of legal doctrines of rights, all aspiring issues cannot be converted to rights (Sen, 1999c). With this regard Sen states human rights are ethical claims and have an aspirational aspect, and because of their normative features, the legal perspective critiques them. (2004a, p. 340) but Sen (1999c, 2004a) thinks acknowledgement of all emerged desired approaches of the people as rights is required.

Eighth, Sen considers the question of consequences, and introduces the notion of correlative obligations as conditions of the realisation of human rights (Sen, 2004a). The ethical basis of human rights confirms that there must be a set of claims by actors/agents, and that claims are materialised in a contested domain (Sen, 2004a). Practical ethical reasoning is the basis of forming the rights as claims and leads towards the formulation of legislation (Sen, 2004a).

So human rights and all rights are claims and there is urgency for the fulfilment of the claims. Organically, issues evolved into rights, which are socially recognised, and this acknowledgement leads to the institutionalisation of rights and new legislation (Sen, 1982, 1997a, 1997b, 2004a 2005a, 1999c). Sen further comments that participation in determining rights related to the security of life and daily life is a fundamental issue (1999a, 1999b).

Referring to the work of OXFAM and Save the Children, Sen denotes consultation, coordination and advocacy as tools that lead to the path of enactment of legislation, and strategies of the institutionalisation of economic social rights (Sen, 2004a). Enactment of

legislation on desired issues of rights is perceived as the ultimate consequence of the entire process (Sen, 2004a). However, if the context does not enable in terms of materialisation of rights, that is not the end of the process (Sen, 2004a). Therefore, the realisation of rights implies that tactics and strategies must be employed in the domain of contested power, in order for rights to become institutionalised.

According to Sen, major criticisms regarding human rights are that it lacks legitimacy; coherence—in that obligations need to be addressed and cultural conformity—that is, whether it is universally accepted (Sen, 1999c). However, the lack of specificity in terms of identifying the role of the duty bearer does not imply that the process of claiming rights is over (Gasper, 2007; Sen, 2004a). Usually those rights are enacted politically through the parliament (Sen, 2004a). So both democracy and the electoral process play a role in enacting the legislation or policy regarding rights and here lies the essence of the rights based approach (Sen, 2004a). According to Sen (2005a), the ‘rights’ identified under the rights based approach are claimed rights; here the corresponding duties are specified. Sen (2000) concludes that the imposition of legislation cannot ensure the fulfilment. Reflecting on the dichotomy between legal perspectives on rights and the rights based approach of Sen; it can be suggested that legitimacy, coherence and cogency are grounded in his arguments regarding rights and rights based approach (Gasper, 2007).

Moreover, Sen emphasises the dynamism of the process of conceptualising rights. Thus, rights are not a static concept, but differ across cultures and must be determined by the cultural context (Sen, 1982). Therefore, he hesitates in fixing up the capability framework (Sen, 2005a).

Third, a stratified social structure of the society appears natural, and scepticism regarding the realisation of rights is a natural corollary (Cohen, 1980; Sen, 1982, 2005a). However, the essence of Sen’s arguments is grounded in the following: (i) human rights are seen as entitlements to form capabilities, (ii) equity or distributive justice is inherent of the process of acquiring, and (iii) *swakriti* (*Recognition*). Human rights are based on certain entitlements sanctioned by the state (Sen, 1982, 1997a, 1997b, 1999c, 2004a, 2005b) and fulfilling these rights is generally a state obligation (Sen, 2004a). Indeed, the reality of inequalities in terms of caste, gender, ethnicity and religion means that recognition of this inequity, and acceptance of rights claims is essential (Sen, 2005b).

Within this context, Sen argues that the market as an institution becomes very powerful because it involves the idea of freedom and equity (Sen, 1993a, 1993b). In this regard, Sen is critical of the efficiency arguments regarding the functioning of the market (Sen, 1993a, 1993b). He concludes that the reasoning underpinning the market—that it ensures efficiency and optimality—does not hold validity (Sen, 1993a, 1993b). Indeed, in reality there is a disparity between equity perspectives and the functional approach of the market (Sen, 1993a, 1993b). The market can be responsive if the political right of the people is realised through the arrangement of a responsive public policy formulation process (Dèrzè & Sen, 1989). But this process requires a good informational base (Dèrzè & Sen, 1989). Political freedom and capability are critical to formulating directives of sustainable development (Dèrzè & Sen, 1989, 2002). In emphasising the ethical stance of the state in the functioning of the market; bringing ensuring individual freedom and political agency among citizens, so that they can determine their entitlements (Sen, 1985); and asking for *swakriti*—the pluralism and tolerance in the process, Sen constitutes the context of political and economic freedom (Sen, 2005b). Thus, the rights based approach to development is envisioned for challenging the poverty (Bagchi, 1999).

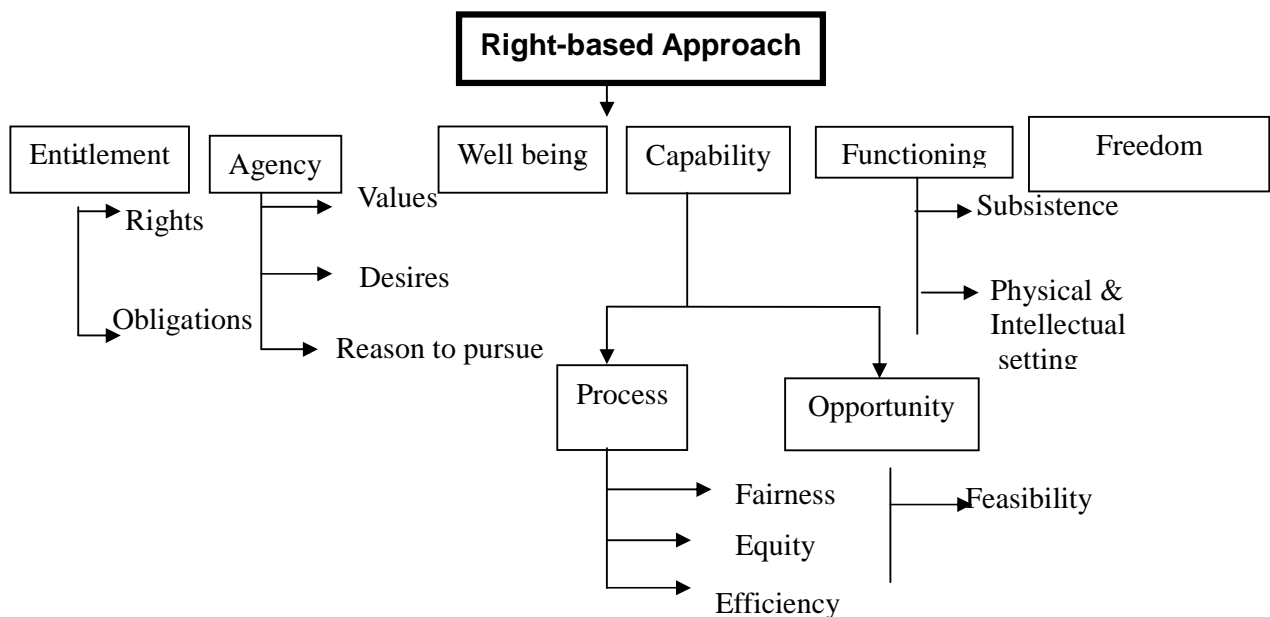
The problematisation process in the corpus of Sen has been initiated from poverty, famine and deprivation. The content and coverage of his rights based approach includes entitlement, agency, well-being, capability, functioning, freedom, and rights and human rights. The concepts of entitlement, agency approach and well-being are related and connected to the perspective of capability. Entitlements refer to a person's command over choosing one's livelihood, such as pursuing education, or having good health, shelter and mobility (Sen, 1999c). Entitlement defines ownership rights (Derze & Sen, 1989, p. 9).

Agency implies the potentiality of the person, in that they knowingly pursue their goals, have an understanding of the path to achieve their goals and have reasons to pursue them (Sen, 1982, 1999c, p. 18). Well-being requires an informational base, so that a person can determine the perfect combination of choices in order to achieve well-being (Sen, 1999a, 1999b, 1999c).

The directives of the state define entitlements, and entitlements imply wellbeing, and constitute capability (Sen, 1999c). Drawing on Sen's concept of capability aspects, Evans argues (2005a, p. 95) that these are elements that lead to the fulfilment of a life that has

value to people, and therefore connotes freedom. Ensuring a just mechanism of distribution of entitlements' is essential and adequate accessibility and availability of sources of information are preconditions (Sen, 1981,1982, 2004a; ODI, 2001). Hence fairness, equity and efficiency are important in the process, and are conditions that must be met. Opportunity is another factor in attaining capability, and indicates the presence of alternative means of ensuring feasible functioning of the individual. Functioning first implies how the person defines their wellbeing, subsistence and other physical, environmental and intellectual settings (Sen, 1999b, 1999c).

Figure: 2.1 Elements of rights based approach



Nassbaum's research (1997, 2003, 2011) on Sen's capability aspects primarily explores the conceptualisation of capability, identification of the priority issues of capability, and the categorisation of capability. According to Nassbaum (2003) when entitlements are the underpinnings of the perspective of capability, human rights and entitlements can be seen as entwined concepts. The capability continuum as identified by Nassbaum includes life, bodily health, integrity, sense, and imagination, control of ones' environment through political participation and the capacity to negotiate material issues (Nassbaum, 1997). She

categorises capability first as basic capability, which is linked to human rights; second as internal capability, which depends on the context and third as combined capability, which is the basis of the policy formulation process (Nassbaum, 1997).

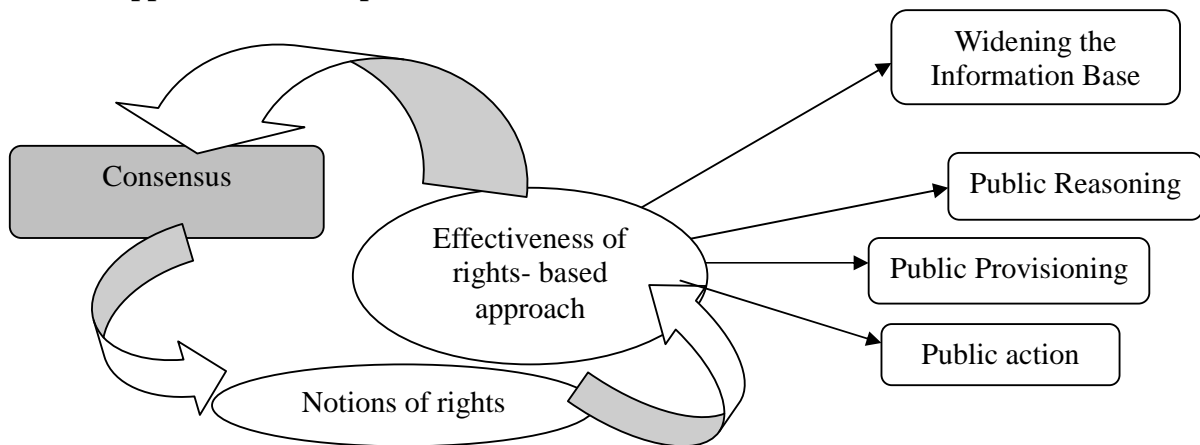
2.3.1.2 Functioning mechanism of a rights based approach to development: Collective capability as a social choice and a process of democratisation and empowerment

Having discussed the concept of rights from the perspective of capability, Sen argues that capability is a social choice and he places it at the core of development, because it implies the enhancement of human capability (Sen, 1999a,b&c). Therefore, the process of realisation is democratic (Sen, 1999a,b&c). The conditions of realisation are: (i) widening the informational base, (ii) public reasoning, (iii) public provisioning through public reasoning (Dèrzè & Sen, 1989; Sen, 1999c) and (iv) public action (Dèrzè & Sen, 1989, 2002). Interpreting social choice as a collective well-being, Sen (1999c) argues that an overall framework of social choice needs to be developed on the basis of consensus. Furthermore, justice is positioned as the kernel of the social choice. He posits that the process construes both equity and equality in terms of achieving capability (Sen, 1983). In reality, supply in the market as a condition cannot ensure a just distributive mechanism, and does not signify the efficiency of the mechanism of distributing entitlements (Sen, 1999). Widening the scope of the informational basis is essential (Dèrzè & Sen, 1989; Sen, 2001, 1990,). This ensures inclusivity and participation, and also that, in having access to adequate information, individuals can compare and evaluate their interpersonal wellbeing (Dèrzè & Sen, 1989; Sen, 1990,1999c). The heterogeneity aspect of the actors involved in the process is the primary and necessary condition in designing the informational framework (Sen, 1990), and this process is aimed at ensuring their well-being and agency (Sen, 1990).

Certainly it appears that in order to realise economic and social rights, a process of applying civil and political rights is fundamental. Public reasoning and debate are other important elements cited and can be effective through the freedom of press and freedom of expression (Dèrzè & Sen, 1989). Crystallisation of discussions regarding access to information and having information base, indicates two issues. The first condition illustrates the informed participation in the process of debate and implies enabling ability of undertaking empowered decision (Dèrzè & Sen, 1989). In addition, the entire social choice is conceived as a process, to be decided through voting or referendum system

(Dèrzè & Sen, 2002, 1989; Sen, 1999b, 1999c). The second condition highlights the democratisation process and emancipation of individual and the people.

Figure: 2.2 Capability framework as social choice and the effectiveness of a rights based approach to development



Through drawing on the capability aspects Sen also pinpoints the praxis of the people. A failure to meet the conditions of participation or debate may lead to public action (Dèrzè & Sen; 1989; Patnaik, 1998, p. 2857). Thus, Sen's capability concept (2004, 1997a&b) is linked to Freire's (1993) proposition that people have the capacity to influence social change. This implies the power an individual possesses to participate in the social life of the community (Sen, 1985, 1999c.).

Sen offers a similar argument regarding institutional reform. First, he argues that the political power of the individual through the exertion of voting rights, is a form of equating power (Sen, 1999a). Second, Sen's paradigm of development considers informed participation of the actors to be intrinsic to human development (Sen, 1999c). This entails a process of equating power, which is a prerequisite to designing responsive policy and the process must increase the level of systematic accountability (De, De, Malaise, Pierre, Lefèvre & Van der, 2009; Yamin, 2009; IDS, 2007). So he connotes institutional reforms of those organisations that are involved with the development issues of human capabilities. On this point, Evans argues that viewing institutional reforms from the perspective of capability is 'radical' (Evans, 2005, p. 90). In this context, Sen (2000, p. 4) claims that:

Democratic participation can directly enhance security through supporting human dignity (more on this presently), but they also help in securing the continuation of

daily lives (despite downturns) and even the security of survival (through the prevention of famines).

However, Sen discusses the process of formulating the capability index or framework, and concurrently he cautions that the derivation of the capability index is context specific (Sen, 1999a). He argues against the fixation of the index of any capability issues, as this might lead to the stagnation of the concept (Dèrzè & Sen, 1989; Sen, 1999c).

2.3.1.3 Critical reflection on the rights based approach to development

One criticism of the right-based approach to development is that it negates the historical context within which the suggested mechanism of rights based approach is supposed to be implemented (Chimni, 2008).

On this view, Sen's proposed path for achieving capability through social consensus and attaining equality in the process can be seen as a utopia (Béteille, 1993). Béteille (1993) further argues that inequality is embedded and hence, talking about equality requires that the space within which it is located must be defined; it cannot be such reducible (Béteille, 1993). Thus, the defining features of a historically determined space, the inequality inherent to that space, and the dynamic relationship between the two have to be defined; otherwise social changes cannot take place according to the value-based discourse of Sen (Béteille, 1993). In this regard Cohen (1993) argues that if 'capability is a form of freedom, specifically to choose a set of functioning' (p. 120), then the concept of 'ability to choose' or 'liberty to choose' is constrained for the following reasons: first, consideration has to be given to the space; and second, whether there is a process of graduation to that level, so the emergence of individual power of selection must be accounted (Cohen, 1993). Similarly, the dominance of the majority, knowledge, and privileged circumstances of the group of people are perceived as influencing factors of the entire process (Béteille, 1993; Chimini, 2008).

In the case of waged workers, their physical strength is the only commodity they can exchange to help in achieving their entitlements (Marx, 1977; Sen, 1987). Drawing from Marx's perspective, this freedom to negotiate entitlements for waged workers poses a double bind (Marx, 1977). Indeed, what they have to exchange in return for their basic entitlements is their very 'existence'.

However, here lies the relevance of an argument for social justice in designing the capability index (Sen, 1987, p. 16). However, Sen does not emphasise social fragmentation therefore, equality in his arguments appear to be aligned with the posited equality of the law (Chimin, 2008). Both these two discourses: legal doctrines and rights based approach are derived from and draw on the liberal discourse of human rights (Chimin, 2008). Critically reviewing Sen's discourse and the mainstream discourse underpinning international law, Chimni (2008) poses his following arguments categorically.

In terms of analysis of the realisation of political rights or democratic rights, both discourses are aligned; and both discourses consider that the state is a 'neutral actor' (Chimni, 2008, p. 15). Thus, the historical political legacy becomes legalised and the current state of globalism is justified (Chimni, 2008). Interestingly, according to Chimni (2008), contemporary international legal doctrines and Sen's discursive arguments on rights appear silent on the issue of social movements and their constructions at the global and local level. Describing this silence as 'puzzling', Chimni (2008, p. 17) argues that nothing has been mentioned in these two discourses about how the outcomes of the movement should be framed, which are categorised as emerged issues of rights determined by the actors.

Nevertheless, the rights based approach to development has been accepted as an instrument of development and sustainability in the Global South, of which Bangladesh is a part (discussed in section 2.2).

2.3.1.4 Evidence and application of a rights based approach to development and its consequences

The United Nations Human Development Report incorporates the capability approach of Sen (Gasper, 2000). Hence, the IDAs follows the principles outlined in this report in their funded project conducted by NGOs to make state agencies and state delivery mechanisms¹⁹ accountable (Arvind, 2009; Blackburn, Brocklesby, Crawford & Holland, 2007; Cornwall & Nyamu-Musembi, 2006; Johnson & Forsyth, 2002; De Vos, De Ceukelarine, Pèrez, Lefèvre & Van der Stuyft, 2009; Yamin, 2009). Rights based thinking is the foundation of some of the more important declarations of multilateral agencies, such

¹⁹ For instance, health, education and legal systems (access to justice).

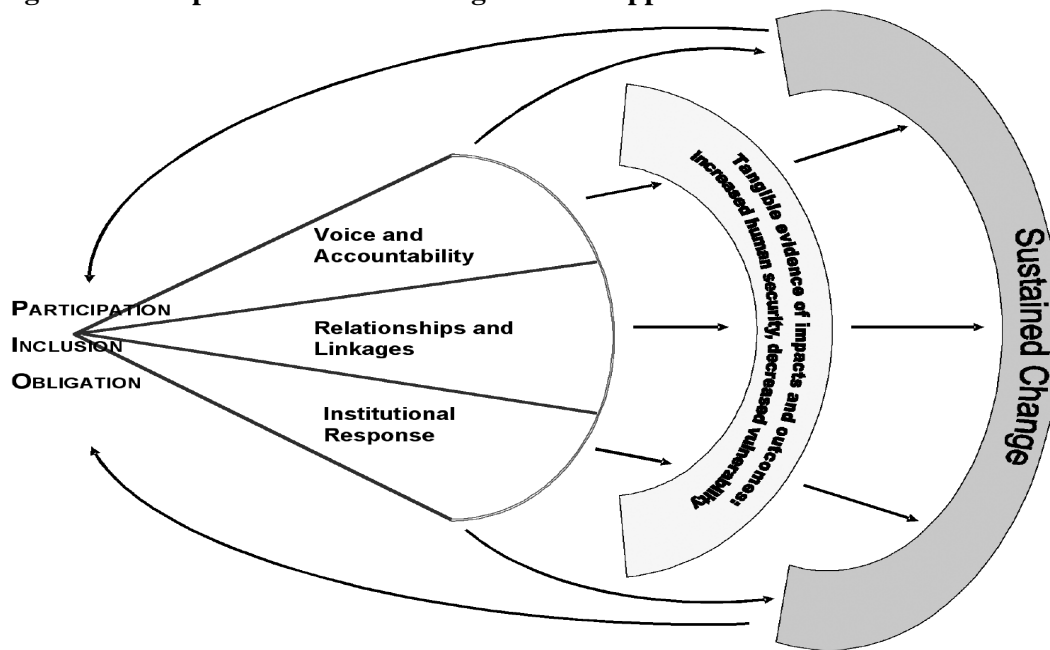
as the ILO 1999 (Sen, 2000) and CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women).

The outline provided by CR2 Social Development²⁰ about the 'RBA Learning Process' illustrates that the issue of 'voice' of the actors is taken as the fulcrum of designing projects of the rights based approach to development (CR2 Social Development, 2006.). Through connecting peoples' perspective regarding their aspired rights with the functioning of institutions that are responsible for fulfilling those rights; projects undertaken by NGOs are aimed at bringing sustainable development by meeting the millennium development goals²¹ for the region (Example CR2 Social Development, 2006).

The fundamentals of the rights based approach rests in: (i) representing the peoples' voices/demands, while concurrently it is an expression of the identity of the actors as involved actors; (ii) the selection of the conditions that will lead to the desired approach, and responses of the involved institutions; (iii) thus the accountability of the system becomes established; and (iv) participation and negotiation which constitute the democratisation process and meet the conditions for attaining good governance for that system (discussed in section 2.1.2, CR2 Social Development, Kabeer, 2003). Evidently the process of claiming rights indicates emancipation of the actors. First, issues of rights are related to their security/survivability/capability; second, actors' active participation is intrinsic; and third, the process of decentralisation is perceived. Also it indicates empowerment of the governance mechanism of the local set-up. Based on Examples CR2 Social Development (2006), the diagram below illustrates the process.

²⁰ UK-based consultancy firm.

²¹ Millennium development goals

Figure: 2.3: Implementation of the rights based approach²²

2.3.1.5 Critical reflections on the evidence of a rights based approach to development projects conducted in Asia and Africa

Assessing the outcomes of projects conducted according to the rights based approach in Bangladesh, Malawi and Peru, the impact report of the UK Interagency Group on Human Rights Based Approaches²³ (UK Interagency Group on Human Rights Based Approach, 2007) communicates that in terms of reducing the vulnerability of the actors by engaging them in rights claiming, the contribution of such projects is commendable (Crawford, 2006, pp. 7-9)²⁴. Evidence related to the context of Bangladesh, including the enhancement of the quality of life of the child labourers based on the UN Convention of Child Rights (Together with the Working Children, 2010); the strength of unity that the landless people have gained because of having their own *Samiti*²⁵, which they have mobilised through their capacity to acquiring *Khas land*²⁶, thereby establishing their citizenship rights to access

²² The structure of RBA to development (Crawford, 2006, p. 22).

²³ BOND-Networking for International Development, Care, DFID-Department of International Development, Help Age International, Save the Children, UK, VSO, UK –The Impact of Rights based Approaches to Development: Evaluation / Learning Process— Bangladesh, Malawi and Peru’.

²⁴ Such as increased and improved access to state provided basic entitlements such as primary education; healthcare, livelihood in terms of improved access to land, and increased security access to formal/legal justice systems

²⁵ *Samiti* means ‘organisation’.

²⁶ *Khas land* means ‘abandoned land’.

resources (Ali, Ali, Ahsan, Ullah, Islam & Sarkar, 2001); and improving the governance of the local school of India (Arvind, 2009), all suggests that people are seeking to claim their rights and are interacting with institutions to ensure the improvement of the governance mechanism. Participation and capacity development are critical factors in determining the impact of rights based approach projects (Ali, Ali & Sarkar; 2007; Arvind, 2009; Blackburn, Brocklesby, Crawford & Holland, 2004; De Vos, De Ceukelarine, Pèrez, Lefèvre & Van der Stuyft, 2009; Yamin, 2009). Participation in terms of materialising rights implies the politicisation of development, as it is connected with the social-political process (Blackburn, et al., 2004). Evidence provided by the report *The impact assessment of Nijera Kori*²⁷: *Tomorrow together with people* suggests that the formation of *Samitis* and their interaction and with Nijera Kori and mobilisation have created a critical consciousness among the landless people involved with *Samitis* (Ali, et.al., 2007). Few members of landless *Samitis* have become elected representatives of the local-level governance body, yet they aspire to contest in the parliamentary election (Ali, et.al., 2007). The capacity development of the people—their citizenship in claiming their rights—implies strengthening the capacity of the state-building process; and this is the aim of the rights based approach (Kabeer & Kabir, 2009; Offenheiser & Holcombe, 2003).

However, based on a systematic analysis of the effectiveness of 38 single projects grounded in the rights based approach to development conducted by Plan International²⁸ from 2007-2010 in Sub-Saharan Africa, Asia and Latin America, Schimitz (2012) concludes the following: first, there is evidence of changes in the integration mode between the community and the state; second, raising awareness by involved NGOs is prevalent in the case of individual rights, but NGOs do not interact with the factions involved with the resistance or movement in the locality they work; third, apparently programs are passive in terms of approach and are failing to ensure continuity of rights claimed by the community at the local and national level; and finally, the success of the projects is limited in terms of tackling the grounded inequalities.

Similarly, evidence drawn from the project of Nijera Kori (Ali, et al., 2007) suggests that the NGO Nijera Kori has project-oriented vision to raise awareness among the landless people and thus, to mobilise them (Ali, et al., 2007). While prevailing aspirations of the

²⁷ Nijera Kori: Do by ourselves , local NGOs works on rights based issues : mobilising landless people in claiming rights to have access to land

²⁸ Non-governmental organisation.

landless people involved with the *Samitis* is to establish their own political party and gain representation in the parliament (Ali, et al., 2007), whether this has been perceived or included, as an objective of the project is in question.

Furthermore, positive legislative changes that have occurred do not mean that the target of the program of claiming agency has been achieved (Leach, Mearns, & Scoones, 2007).

Lastly, the issue of accountability and the reach of rights based approach projects are under critique too. In the academic field there are arguments that the centre of accountability of those projects lies towards the IDAs (Cornwall & Nyamu-Musembi, 2004). The IDAs is mostly accountable to their government, and therefore, the continuity of the program depends on the interest of the government of various IDAs (Cornwall & Nyamu-Musembi, 2004). Hence, ensuring the process of the aspired accountability through the conducted projects in the locality is constrained (Cornwall & Nyamu-Musembi, 2004).

2.3.1.6 Relevance of rights-centric industrial restructuring and rights-centric management

I critically evaluate the theoretical implications and limitations of the rights based approach, along with it are the empirical evidence and implications of rights based approach. Based on this I argue that the conceptual and empirical framework of the rights based approach is contextually relevant for the study. The severe human toll of global integration of the SOJMs, and the evidence of the community's resistance against the ongoing process of restructuring (Chapter 1) form the background of my research topic. The study explores peoples' perspectives—how they would like to see the management, ownership, and their involvement with the processes of managing the mills.

Crystallising Sen's arguments indicate the following features. First, the issues of basic provisions constitute the fundamentals of capability of the people. These issues are intrinsically entangled with the peoples' survivability; therefore, these are considered as human rights. Second, based on this assertion, Sen suggests that the process of determining basic issues of capability as issues of human rights must be considered as an issue of social choice. So this has to be formulated through public reasoning. So inclusivity, recognition and the participation of all actors are features of determining the issue of social choice. Hence, the issue of justice is embedded in the process. As a result, projects based on the rights based approach to development postulate that the policy formulation process

regarding the issues of the rights of the citizens must contain all those above-stated features as argued by Sen. So public reasoning, availability of information, inclusivity through recognition and participation are essential conditions that have to be met in the policy formulation process.

Based on these arguments, I explore peoples' aspired restructuring and management. First I examine whether the framework of basic provisions provided by the state through the SOJMs are sufficient to fulfil the peoples' desired level of capability. Second, I examine whether people have the desire to be involved with the system, which means participation in the process of determining their issues of capabilities. Thus, the notion of rights-centric restructuring is formed, and identified elements of management will constitute the idea of rights-centric management aspects of the mills. The rationale that underpins my conceptualisation and contextualisation of rights-centric industrial restructuring and management is discussed below.

First, contextually I find that the rights based approach is accepted by the United Nations. Based on this, the UN has developed a good governance framework. The development agencies assume that this framework of good governance may help in achieving the UN Millennium Development goals regarding increasing human security and reduction of poverty by creating a culture of accountability within the system.

According to Escobar (1992), globalism and its implications (as discussed in section 2.1.2) in the context of post (neo) colonial states denotes two aspects. The reality of these spaces is determined by the discourse of development and sustainability (Escobar, 1992). And the inherited legal doctrines from colonialism have been coupled with the global legal doctrines and hence, this constitutes the process of enquiring the reality of the spaces (Banerjee, 2008; Escobar, 1995). On this basis, it can be argued that through promoting the rights based approach to development, Sen argues for reconstitution of the reality of post/neo-colonial states. Also he asks for the creation of a space where continual evolution and realisation of rights can take place, through the interactions of the people and institutions.

As consequences of incorporating Sen's idea into the content and practices of good governance of the aid agencies, we find that the states' role is framed as a facilitator (Parthasarathy, 2005). However, relatively sensitised about rights and entitlements, the

working class community remain outside from the good governance and citizenship rights projects of the aid agencies (Parthasarathy, 2005). Hence, the states' role is ambivalent and conflicting when the issue of privatisation and private sector management emerge. This notion can be traced back in the history of restructuring of the SOJMs of Bangladesh. Directives of the global policy regime appear to be followed, while the outcomes are retrenchment of workers and casualisation of work. So the economic and social rights were subjugated. This inspires me to attempt to find the answer regarding the role of the state and what people aspired to in terms of the role of state and entities such as the mills with which they are involved. Having discussed the concept and contextual evidence for the rights based approach, in the next section the policy and legal framework of rights are discussed and the conceptual framework is placed.

2.3.2 Policy and legal framework of rights

The constitutional declarations set out the rights of the citizens. This defines the route regarding the formulation of policy and legal doctrines. Aside from the constitution, I review the global rights doctrines and the current labour law. Discussion under this section comprises the following themes:

- Constitutional declarations: State commitments towards rights-centric management
- Doctrines of human rights in the discourse of contemporary globalisation
- ILO Conventions, Decent Work Program and Legal doctrines Bangladesh

Constitutional declarations: Do they reflect the state's commitments to rights-centric management?

The constitution of Bangladesh of 1972 had been formed on the four fundamental principles: nationalism, democracy, socialism meaning economic and social justice, and secularism. The constitution has been amended 15 times; however, the changes are political and cultural. Aside from these, the constitution now begins *with absolute trust and faith in the Almighty Allah*. Hence, one of the contradictions is grounded as a fundamental principle is secularism.

Other asserted fundamental principles are: (i) the participation of women in national life; (ii) democracy and human rights; (iii) emancipation of peasants and workers –; (iv) equality of opportunity; and (v) promotion of local government institutions (Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, 2011, accessed: www.isn.etz.ch, pp. 4–6). The

constitution declares the following to be fundamental rights: (i) equality before the law; (ii) prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth, including women having equal rights with men in all spheres; (iii) equality of opportunity in public employment; (iv) protection of law; (v) the right to life and personal liberty; (vi) freedom of assembly and freedom of association; and (vii) the right against exploitation (Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, 2011, accessed: www.isn.etz.ch, p. 4–6; 7–10, Al Farque, 2009).

Constitutionally, the country is responsible for ensuring the right to guaranteed employment at a reasonable wage (Fundamental Principles 15; 19; 20). (Source: ISN, Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh). Therefore, work is a right that is constitutionally approved for the people of Bangladesh. Creating work for the people is the responsibility of the state. Moreover state ownership, implying ownership by the state on behalf of the people, is recognised as the first priority (Fundamental Principle: 13) (Source: ISN, Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh). Second, cooperative ownership, that is ownership by cooperatives on behalf of their members within the limits prescribed by law, has been prioritised (Fundamental Principle: 13) (Source: ISN, Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh). Hence, the proposed rights-centric industrial restructuring is constitutionally legitimised.

Doctrines of human rights in the discourse of contemporary globalisation

According to the UDHR (1948), Articles 1–3, '*everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person*'. In line with these assertions, Articles 6, 7, 9, 19, 21, and 22 explains the content of civil and political human rights. For instance, everyone has the right to recognition, is equal before the law, and is '*entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law*'. Article 19 states that '*everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression*'. Article 21 states that '*everyone has the right of equal access to public service in his country*', and draws conclusions about the political entitlements of citizens under the democratic system.

Within this defined context of civil and political rights, Articles 22, 23, 24, 25 and 26 refer to issues of economic and social rights and issues of basic entitlements essential for the development of capability. They stipulate for instance, that '*everyone has the right to work, ... to protection against unemployment, ... to just and favourable remuneration, ... to*

a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being for himself and his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care, necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age'. Furthermore, *'everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests'*. Both the UN Covenants ICESCR and ICCPR declared in 1966 are derivations of the UDHR and incorporate all the major assertions. Two covenants also directly enunciate that the state is responsible for the fulfilment of all of these rights.

Human rights discourse is considered as the set code for formulating and implementing the policy in a political realm (Sen, 2004a; Gasper, 2007). However, law finds declared human rights as 'moral claims', because non-rights issues are also included (Sen, 2004a). Yet, human rights are perceived as a mechanism for defending the rights of vulnerable groups and normativity is its basis (Arango, 2003; Gasper, 2007; Sen, 2004a). According to the global human rights protocol, the state is identified as responsible for fulfilling those rights and thus, the requirements of legal doctrines regarding the clearly identified role of the duty bearers are confirmed (Sen, 2004a; Gasper, 2007).

The contradiction is marked in the declaration of UDHR-1948 and the Convention of Human Rights (1966) announced in 1966 in terms of their stance towards private property rights. While the UDRHR-1948 considers the right to private property as a basic human right, it has been omitted in the Convention of Human Rights (Gasper, 2007). Indeed, if general issues of human rights are framed according to the instrumental framework of law that defines rights, there is a possibility of marginalisation of the rights of the people, when the issue such as the right to private property comes to the fore (Gasper, 2007). In reality accessing the rights through the process is hardly reachable for the poor (Gasper, 2007). Law is determined always dialectically: on one hand, people are claiming it; on the other hand, the state ideological apparatuses are dominated by the ruling class, so reservation is natural in formatting that claimed law through its instruments as legal doctrines (Gasper, 2007).

The resources base of the member countries is another major constraining factor in terms of the compliance mechanism of the ICESCR. In particular, the conditions-imposed development aid of the global policy regime causes persistent decline in public spending (Robertson, 1994). Therefore, the resource bases of the member countries are gradually decreasing (Robertson, 1994). So compliance with global policies becomes a double bind

for member countries (Robertson, 1994). Again, compliance with the ICESCR is possible whilst the same compliance is not possible for the ICCPR if we consider the political and cultural context of the country (Dennis & Stewart, 2004).

Bangladesh as a member country has ratified all those conventions. The country established the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) in 2010. It is currently supported by the UNDP, the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA), and the Swiss Agency for Development and Swiss International Development Agency. These IDAs have undertaken the 'Bangladesh National Human Rights Commission Capacity Development Project' (Moran, Hossain, Hassan, Ahmed, &, 2011). The conducted baseline survey under this project suggests that peoples' general understanding of rights comprises their civil, political rights and rights that are related to the development of their capacity (Moran et al., 2011).

ILO conventions, decent work program and legal doctrines Bangladesh

Bangladesh has ratified all of the core human rights treaties, seven fundamental conventions of the ILO (29; 87; 98; 100; 105; 111 and 182) except for the Convention for minimum age of work #138 (please see the Appendix A: Status of Ratification/Accession of Principal Human Rights in Bangladesh). In addition, the country has ratified C118, the Equality of Treatment (Social Security) Convention and C144, the Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention. Consequently, as a member country Bangladesh is also responsible for complying with the ILO declarations of the Decent Work Agenda (DWA). The DWA asks for enhancement of workers' rights through facilitating the scope of dialogue, and protection of workers through strengthening the social safety network. The most significant aspect of the DWA is enforcement of protocols of legal doctrines (Hossain, Ahmed & Akter, 2010). The DWA is aligned with the country's commitment to the UN Millennium Development goals (Hossain, Ahmed & Akter, 2010). The DWA has conceptual alignment with the rights based approach (drawing from Sen, 2000).

As a result of the global discourse regarding inclusivity, in Bangladesh consultations have become a popular mode of dialogue in the policy formulation process (Al Faruque, 2009). The process includes actors for instance, workers, owners, civil societies, and government factions (Al Faruque, 2009). Currently, there are five types of tripartite bodies that ensure dialogue among the actors: the Labour Court; the Tripartite Consultative Council; the

Minimum Wage Board; the Tripartite Productivity Committee; and the National Council for Skill Development and Training (Al Faruque, 2009, p. 69). When required government constitutes National Wage Commission, and this includes workers' representatives (Al Faruque, 2009, p. 69).

Overview of the Labour Law

A study conducted by the Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies (BILS,2006) note that the current Labour Law of Bangladesh 2006 (LLB 2006) is the consolidation of 50 labour laws that the country inherited from the colonial legacy (Hossain, Ahmed & Akter, 2010). According to LLB 2006, the stated issues of workers' rights are: every worker should receive a letter of employment; there must be one month notification for retrenchment or for discharge; and in all cases money owing has to be paid duly. As collective issues regarding the well-being of the workers, are: wages have to be revised systematically; workers should work eight hours per day, retrenched workers have the right to be re-employed; laid-off workers are entitled to their entire compensation package; overtime payment has to be paid at double the hourly wage rate; and workers have the right to a share of profits. Aside from issues of subsistence and workplace rights, working conditions—for instance, a clean working environment, fire extinguishers and exits, provision of drinking water, toilets and canteens—are discussed.

In the case of *badli* workers, Labour Law Bangladesh (LLB) (2006, p. 9), states that

Worker shall be called a badli -worker if he is employed in an establishment in the post of a permanent worker or probation during the period who is temporarily absent'.

Furthermore, the LLB: 2006 (p. 13) states the following in regard to the rights of laid-off *badli* workers:

A badli -worker whose name appears on the muster roll of an establishment shall be regarded as a worker for the purpose of this section if he has completed one year continuous service in the establishment under a same employer, if he is laid off he shall be paid compensation by the employer duly.

Moreover, *badli* workers are allowed to receive a festival bonus if the worker works for 180 days for the same enterprise.

However, in reality, 50% of the workforce of the public sector jute mills is employed under the *badli* system (as discussed in section 2.2.1). According to the LLB 2006:²⁹ (i) they are not allowed to join a basic union or trade union federation; (ii) they are not supposed to be provided with an employment contract, or medical, annual and casual leave, a provident fund and gratuity benefits, (iii) they are not entitled to prior notice before they are terminated or retrenched. However, under the fundamental conventions of ILO, *badli* workers are also entitled to these stated provisions.

The CBA is the elected body and agents are elected for two years (LLB, 2006). It works as a surveillance body that supervises how workers' rights are implemented (LLB, 2006). Also the CBA has negotiation powers (LLB, 2006; Uddin, 2006). For the settlement of disputes, the CBA and management are required to visit the Directorate of Labour (LLB, 2006). However, *badli workers* are not allowed to be organised, or to be associated with the trade union of the factory (LLB, 2006).

According to the Industrial Ordinance 1969, every industrial enterprise that employs more than 50 workers is required to have a Participation Committee (Khan, 1999). The number of representatives in the committee from the workers' side and the employers' group must be equal (Khan, 1999). The Directorate of Labour in every locality is responsible for the formation of the Committee, and should be informed about the outcome of Participation Committee meetings (Khan, 1999). The LLB 2006 asks for activating the Participation Committee in industrial enterprises (Al Faruque, 2009).

The major criticism of the LLB 2006 is its silence about what a victim could claim from the owners if there is a violation of law, that is, legal compensation packages (Hossain, Ahmed & Akter, 2010). Furthermore, a review of the implementation process of the LLB 2006 indicates that in reality power remains with the government; so application of the law depends on the government's decisions (Uddin, Hannan & Mondal, 2007). Execution of ILO conventions depends on the governmentality of that specific country (Uddin, Hanna & Mondol, 2007). Despite lacking administrative rigour, LLB 2006 is quite aligned with the DWAs and ILO Conventions (Hossain, Ahmed & Akter, 2010; Uddin, et al., 2007).

²⁹ Labour Law Bangladesh-2006 (LLB2006)

2.4 Critical management studies (CMS) and rights-centric management

This study is contributing to the domain of CMS, where movement for global justice and social justice of development of the global south against the corporate-led restructuring are discussed (Willmott, 2008, p. 929). Within the context of the communities' resistance against the market-led restructuring, based on Sen's proposition of rights based approach to development, the study explores involved community of the SOJMs perspectives regarding the desired restructuring mode and their aspirations to be involved with the management of the mills. Hence, the instances of the communities' resistance and constructions have relevance for the study and therefore, I look into current evidence of structure, practices and process of management, and governance of factories through the recovered factories movement in Venezuela and Argentina, assuming that the right to survive and to have identity as workers is the basis in terms of establishing community ownership over the factories.

It is argued that mainstream organisation researchers are entrapped in terms of doing research on organisations and organisational theories driven by the interest of organisations (Perrow, 2000). So Perrow (2000) argues the social role of organisations, both private and public, has been hardly explored. However, in the domain of CMS questioning of concepts in terms of their social meaning for individuals as well as their organisational meaning is the norm. For example, terms such as bureaucracy, managerial practice, power and coercion, subjectivity and hegemony and exploitation are subject to interrogation (Adler, Forbes & Willmott, 2008). From the perspectives of critical theory and labour process theory, and from the Foucauldian perspective, research on whether and how consent is manufactured, and on participation is a method of co-optation that aims for productivity and profitability has been discussed since the late 70s (Adler, Forbes, Willmott, 2008; Hardy & Clegg, 2006.; Mir & Mir, 2005). Hence, an approach of critical interpretation as well as critical research on management is evident in the CMS. Based on this approach, we find that notions such as microemancipation and consideration of organisational change from the process perspective are discussed (Alvesson & Willmott, 1992; Touska & Chia, 2002). Micro-emancipation in relation to the community of organisational actors is not discussed as a concept that implies self-determination of the members. Rather, it is presented as the emergence of critical consciousness that leads the

community to move away from oppression, or that causes movement towards a process of resistance (Alvesson & Willmott, 1992; Krammer, Whiteman & Banerjee, 2010). These concepts have relevance for the current study in relation to engagement with the community of the mills.

Having stated that, this section first discusses the resistance of the community for social justice in economic restructuring across the globe and its conceptual underpinnings. This is followed by discussion regarding the recovered factories functioning in the context of Venezuela and Argentina. Finally, I will focus rights based approach to development of Sen and relevance of this perspective in the domain of CMS.

2.4.1 The conceptual underpinnings of movements in peripheries or in ‘postcolonial sovereignties’

We need to analyse critically both the discourse of movement and the movement itself. The extinction of livelihood, life-world and identity by global accumulation is identified as the root cause of community resistance across the globe (Amin et al., 1982; Fuentes & Frank, 1989; Tanvnti, 2003; Wallerstein, 2002). The endless accumulation requires transformation of capital, stating that Harvey and Swyngedouw (1993, p. 7) claim this is why capital has abandoned the built environment and conclude that ‘*creative destruction*’, *dislocation*, *rationalization create the contested zone between community and economy* (Harvey & Swyngedouw, 1993, p. 20). Entailing that these movements merge because of deprivation of livelihoods, but are inherently linked to political oppression; and therefore, class as a component in the movement needs to be carefully interrogated (Amin et al, 1982; Fuentes and Frank, 1989; Wallerstein, 2002). In relation to this, Harvey’s arguments (2003) suggest that urban consciousness has to be realised in respect of the urbanisation of capital. His arguments regarding movements in the urban context align with subaltern studies. Subaltern studies assume (Chakrabarty, 1989; Chandravarkar, 1994; Sen 1999) that in theorising working-class movements in terms of race, caste, religion, gender and localism is vital. As workers migrate to industrial neighbourhoods based on community nexus, fragmentation within the working-class community needs to be considered. In addition, in the current context as a result of restructuring there is increased casualisation of employment, and the division between *badli* and permanent workers in the context of the jute mill sector adds another layer of social division (Alamgir, 2011; de Haan, 2001;).

However, the trend of movements suggests that although suppression and confrontation are features of primitive accumulation, co-optation is another feature (Harvey, 2003, p. 146). Thus, he concludes: *'No matter how universal the process of proletarianisation, the result is not the creation of a homogenous proletariat'*. Moreover, pointing out the localisation as a feature within the discourse of movements, Harvey (2003) asserts that this discourse may fail to comprehend the global aspects of 'global accumulation' and ironically, the local movements might be transformed into a device of global capital. He (Harvey, 2003) suspects through questioning the role and commitment of traditional forms of organisations, such as the nation-state, trade union or political party, these movements might become aligned with the agenda of global capital (Harvey (2003) further states. Consequently it is necessary to take a more penetrating look at the role of NGOs involved with movements—to explore the internalities of these movements (Banerjee, 2011; Harvey, 2003). Indeed, movements in post/neo-colonial countries are organised against the politics of development and sustainability of the World Bank, the IMF and the WTO (Banerje, 2011; Harvey, 2003).

As I state earlier although economic crisis is perceived as the major conflicting issue, a common current that underpins the conceptual and empirical evidence presented by these movements emphasises the notions of extinction and the formation of identity and cultural (re) construction (Amin, Arrighi, Frank and Wallerstein, 1982; Escobar, 1992). Hence the critical element of solidarity is that critical awareness or conscientisation that evolves around oppression and that the praxis of struggle is an endeavour to transform a situation as suggested by Freire (1993). So, the loop of social movements contains conscientisation and the transformation of set practices of oppression.

Hence, the above discussions highlight two aspects regarding the organising features of movements. First, movement and its construction have to be viewed from the process perspective and second, constituting a new political domain is one of the aims of these movements, so that the voices of the unheard come to be recognised in the political realm (Banerjee, 2011; Escobar; 1992; Harvey, 2003). The organisational aspect of community struggle is conceived in the literature in terms of how it takes place, the agency of the actors, and not exclusively from the conflict and outcome perspective (Banerjee, 2011; Escobar, 1992; Kramer, Whiteman, Banerjee, 2010; Otto & Bohm, 2006). It is suggested

that a wide range of actors and organisations with different perspectives are brought together in horizontal relations within community-based movements (Amin et al., 1982; Banerjee, 2011). Therefore, heterogeneity is one of the major features of such an alliance. The outcome-oriented perspective looks for concrete evidence and existence of movement-entity, while Escobar (1992) argues that actors in movements, in clarifying their own positioning as well as their positioning with other movements (networking) and thus, is reinforcement of the process perspective. Under the process perspective the notion of reconstitution of fragmented identity, the issue of micro-emancipation and the fluidity of the organisational aspects of these movements as features are considered (Kramer, Whiteman, & Banerjee, 2010; Banerjee, 2011).

Parallely, the community's resistance denotes its creation of a new political base. Drawing from Freire (1993) it can be argued that such creation of a political base implies the personal and political transformation of the actors involved. Such transformation depends on the potentiality of human agency in defining one's own rights on one's own terms (Freire, 1993). It also implies that actors are demanding that the state ensure its legitimacy towards its citizens and by acting responsible, fulfilling the basic issues of entitlements (Dèrzè & Sen, 2002). The next section I review experiences of management of recovered factories in Venezuela and Argentina as an alternate industrial restructuring process,.

2.4.2 Recovered factories of Venezuela and Argentina: Rights, entitlements, —process of democratisation and empowerment in the workplace?

This section discusses the evidence that we gather from the functioning of the recovered factories; in order to find out whether entitlements, rights, capability and process of democratisation in the workplace and the citizenship rights are the leading forces of the management process and determine the relations between the state and management of the recovered factories. Based on this analysis, I discuss whether this discussion has relevance for the explored concept: rights-centric restructuring and management.

The populist as well as the academic literature from the period of the late 1990s to now inform us that the historical legacy of integration with globalism has set the current context of social transformation in Latin America (Ellner, 2005; García-Guadilla, 2005; Harris, 2007; Huber, 2004; Lebowitz, 2006, 2010; Parkar, 2005; Ranis, 2005, 2006a, 2006b). A schematic analysis of the construction of the economy at the regional, national and local

level illustrates the salient changes of this space is grounded in solidarity. The process of restructuring places the community at the centre prioritises the community's well-being and acts for making the process of attainment of required capability of the community more efficient (García-Guadilla, 2005; Harris, 2007; Lebowitz, 2006, 2009a, 2009b; Parkar, 2005; Ranis, 2005, 2006a, 2006b).

Within this context, the management of recovered factories is regarded as the capital-labour relations beyond the control of property ownership (North & Huber, 2004; Ranis, 2004, 2005, 2010). The movement of unemployed workers—taking control over their announced bankrupt factories and running those occupied factories for their survival—has been supported by the larger middle class, civil society organisations, NGOs, sectors working on human rights, legal practitioners and leftists (El-Najjir, 2010; Lewis & Klein, 2007; North & Hurber, 2004; Ranis, 2005, 2006a, 2010; Vega, 2009).

Workers' commitment is at the fulcrum of the workers' cooperatives (Ranis 2010). Cooperatives are also aimed at rebuilding the individual and collective identity of the workers (Larrabure, 2010). It is argued that one of the outcomes of the financial collapse of 2001-2003 was the annihilation of the identity of workers as 'workers' (Lewis and Klein, 2007).

Common features regarding the functioning of the recovered factories are: (i) temporary state control; (ii) the workers' assembly is the core body of the organisation, and assemblies select the governing body; and (iii) the assembly takes the prime financial decisions regarding the distribution of earnings, managing assets and liabilities (Ranis, 2005a). Recovered factories are considered as social property and hence, ownership of these factories implies social ownership of the community (Lebowitz, 2006). So, on one hand, the community needs to determine the production level, and on the other hand the entire system suggests that accountability lies with the community (Lebowitz, 2006).

The concept of private property is the foundation of the constitutions and legal discourse; so, legislative reforms and support are essential for constructing the base of recovered factories (Ranis, 2010). In the case of Venezuela, the state takes a facilitator role in such transformations (Otero & Bastidas, 2002; Lebowitz, 2006). The constitution has been revised and hence, the social mode of production and the co-management at factory level are approved (Lebowitz, 2006). At the policy level, the reform agenda has been

reviewed, hence the restructuring process has to be done through negotiation with the existing management of the specific enterprise (Otero & Bastidas, 2002). Moreover, the privatised enterprise has to provide between 10 and 20 % of stock ownership to the employees (Otero & Bastidas, 2002).

The critical legal and financial challenges faced by the workers of cooperatives of Venezuela and Argentina differ. The state role is more neutral in Argentina compared to Venezuela in terms of legal support (North & Huber, 2004, p. 982). Also investment from the capitalist side is less and there is political threat too (Ranis, 2010). Initially these recovered factories took the strategy of crisis prevention (Ranis, 2005a). So there has been series of reforms in legislation, particularly in the bankruptcy law (Ranis, 2005a). The reformed bankruptcy law suggests that if the majority of workers agree, then they could run the production of the enterprise that has been announced as bankrupt (Ranis, 2005a). In Argentina around 150 to 200 factories, basically food processing and packaging, pharmacies, auto parts, private schools, health clinics, supermarkets and hotels have been organised under recaptured factories, and 15,000 workers are involved (Ranis, 2010).

Is it challenging for the politics and the ruling class of Venezuela and Argentina? In the case of Venezuela encountering, the class perspective is the real challenge (Ellner, 2005; Guidilla, 2005). So scepticism prevails because separation, fragmentation and exclusion are common features in every sphere (Ellner, 2005; Guidilla, 2005). In the case of Argentina, struggle for the survivability of the workers is in a contested domain with the state (Ranis, 2010). The workers' contestation for the legitimacy of their enterprises with juridical apparatuses, and with the acquiring of capital, indicates a process of new social formation (Ranis, 2010). At the local level, law has been reformed so the factories located in their locality are in operation. However, at the central level, because of state inertia, reforms of the constitution or main legal doctrines are challenges (Ranis, 2010). The workers are capable of tracing out and debating about the limitation of neo-liberal economy that continually raises disparity and dispossession. The continuation of the gathered support of civil society is also confusing, particularly on issues of achieving distributive fairness (Ranis, 2010). Within this context, changes in the government, that is, if another political party comes into power, would certainly have an impact on economic and legal policy (El-Najjar, 2010). Despite all these challenges, because of some features of the economy or because of their internal policies, the current global financial crisis did not

have much impact on either Venezuela or Argentina, compared with the impacts on the economy of Mexico and Brazil (Jara, Moreno & Tovar 2009; Ocampo, 2010).

In conclusion, it can be argued that the recovered factories movements illustrate the following features: (i) provision of basic entitlements of the workers over market doctrines, and the provisions decided by the workers; (ii) democratisation process at the workplace, as accountability of the institutions is systematised. The essence of the recovered factories management process lies in conceptualising this as an on-going learning process. An emergence of consciousness is perceived, along with the enhancement of the capability of the workers. These rebuild the individual and collective identity of the workers. This is a demonstration of a reform process, which focuses on issues of entitlement, equity, and empowerment. Hence, this can be categorised as a community-led restructuring, as the concern for socio-economic development is reflected. This reform process could be challenging for the set rules of restructuring provided by the ruling class and by the WB and the IMF. All the above stated features are in alignment with the argument of Sen (1999c, 2004a, 2005a&b) and his rights based approach to development. This is an example of capability-concerned management and indicates an alternative community-led restructuring process. The state has a significant role. Although the question prevails like the governing body of the recovered factories whether political parties that occupy power want to be accountable to their constituencies.

2.4.3 Entitlement, rights, capability, democratisation in the work place: Rights based approach to development and CMS

In the domain of CMS, there is critique of the term participation as it is applied and discussed in the mainstream academic discourse of management. In the business management studies participation is discussed as a means of empowerment of the actors or workers, while the scholars of CMS consider that the process of participation facilitates managerial power over the disempowered actors (Hardy & Clegg, 2006; Mir & Mir, 2005). In line with this argument, concepts like motivation, participation, and process of empowerment as applied in human relations movement, the Total Quality Management by Edward Deming, Japanese style of management, and self-management style practised in the former Yugoslavia appear as instrumentalist tools of extracting productivity (Hardy & Clegg, 2006; Lebowitz, 2006; Mir & Mir, 2005). And the process suggests intensification

of gaze by the management, and as a result the concern for inter or self-disciplinary process or self-surveillance is embedded in the arguments (Hardy & Clegg, 2006; Lebowitz, 2006; Mir & Mir, 2005). Essentially, the question has been raised whether mechanisms regarding participation are aimed at emancipation of the actors or the formation of more governable employees (Mir & Mir, 2005) in the domain of the CMS.

Within this context I discuss the relevance of the concept of the rights based approach to development of Sen in CMS. Drawing from Sen, we are informed that aspired issues are rights if these are linked with the survivability of the actors. Hence, basic provisions those determine the capability of the actors, are considered as human rights. And issues regarded as human rights need to be decided through public reasoning as a social collective choice. This implies the process of democratisation in terms of deciding the basket of rights and entitlements at the organisational level or micro level. Consequently, argument of Sen is grounded in here that realisation of economic and social rights depend on the political entitlement of the actors (Dèrzè & Sen, 2002). Parallely projects undertaken by the NGOs under the rights based approach to development illustrate entitlement and rights set the ground of organisational change in the name of participation of the actors. It is initiated at the organisational level, but connects the state level too, and reinforces the capability aspects of citizenship. Evidently, the conceptualisation of political society's mechanism based on electoral agency-ship as argued by Chatterjee (2004) at the context of the postcolonial state is reflected in the perspective and application of the rights based approach to development.

In line with these arguments regarding political entitlements and electoral agency by Sen and Chatterjee , we find in the domain of CMS, the stream of postcolonial studies urge for further research for exploring resistant community aspirations in the context of a post-resistance scenario (Banerjee, 2011). Within this context imagining of new institutional mechanisms from the perspectives of the involved but disempowered community are asked to be explored in the field of critical management studies by Mir and Mir (2002, 2013). Indeed recent arguments of Mir and Mir (2013) reflect the following urgency with regard to the concept of the political society:

We would especially encourage an attempt to explore the concept of 'political society', a new formulation that has emerged in the poorer nations as a polar opposite of 'civil society' (Chatterjee, 2005). (P.98).

Similarly the argument of Sen's rights based approach to development, where rights are categorised as aspired issues and the process of determining rights is a collective social choice, can be conceptualised as a notion of organisational change from the process perspective. Aspirations of involvement by the community and outcomes can be regarded as a notion of microemancipation.

According to Morgan and Spicer (2009), studies and research in the discipline of critical management studies conceptualise organisational change as a continuing issue. The values added through bringing changes are interpreted constantly, but depend on the perspective of the involved actors (Tsoukas & Chia, 2002). Organisations are shaped and reshaped through the interactions of actors, norms, and on-going discourse (Tsoukas & Chia, 2002). Indeed the critical perspective explored the political process, as well as political struggles of the people (Buchanan & Badham, 1999; Morgan & Spicer, 2009). Thus this perspective suggests that both the struggle and the process interactively set the context for changes. Dialectical aspects of organisations are discussed in the domain of critical management studies.

However, also it is argued that in the studies of organisations change as a process is more focused while the organisation as a structure appears stable (Mir & Mir, 2012). But Mir and Mir, (2002, 2012, p. 424; Pichard & Mir, 2010) posit that under the institutionalisation and legitimisation of regimes of unequal exchange nothing appears certain. And hence, the stability of entities and their existence are fluid (Mir & Mir, 2002; Pichard & Mir, 2010). Therefore, the position of the space where the organisation is placed, its political economy, historical trajectories of formation of organisation and people must be taken into account as elements of theorising organisations (Mir & Mir, 2002, 2005). Reflecting on Mills' (1959) work '*The Social Imagination*' Mir and Mir (2002, p. 15) state:

[...] we ought to demand that our theories act with an 'organisational' imagination.

In parallel, on-going discourse regarding the issue of conceptualising micro-emancipation suggests actors' continual actions constitute their engagement both as dominated and active factions, and resist and reconstruct the context (Alvesson & Willmott, 1992). Day-to-day real-life conflicts and reconciliation processes that people face underlay the concept

of micro-emancipation (Alvesson & Willmott, 1992). Hence, Alvesson and Willmott (1992, p. 447) mark micro emancipation as a notion, does not imply the grand assertion of 'transformation of consciousness'. According to them:

Inherent in the concept of micro-emancipation is an emphasis on partial, temporary movements that break away from diverse forms of oppression, rather than successive moves toward a predetermined state of liberation. This micro view of emancipation differs markedly from the traditional conception of a one-way transformation of consciousness from 'false' to 'true' as the crucial element in the change from an oppressive social order to one that is in harmony with clarified wants and ethical principles. (Alvesson and Willmott (1992, pp. 446–7)

In analysing micro-emancipation, we need to be careful about the interplay of factors that constitute dominance and fragmentation in social relations, such as ethnicity, gender (Alvesson & Willmott, 1992). Hence in deciding the basic entitlements and rights or in terms of rights centric industrial restructuring the actors' imagination of being involved with the process is considered as a notion of micro-emancipation in the regular process of organisational activities. Alongside, people identity in the context of an organisation is also constant influx and is constituted by the organisation itself, as well as by institutional regimes such as state and legal regimes (Hardy & Clegg, 2006). Hence, ethnicity and religion segregations play roles in identity formation in the workplace (Hardy & Clegg, 2006).

In the section 2.1.2, I discuss how subjugation to the dominance of knowledge and culture exert influences tends to produce homogenisation, and constitutes the subject in the context of Bangladesh. Alongside, I mention earlier that focusing on structure, regulations and transformation, the formation of the subject and subjectivity, manufacturing consent are interrogated in the domain of critical management studies from the perspective of Labour Process Theory (Adler, Forbes & Willmott, 2008). Later we find arguments of interrogating subjectivity from the Foucauldian perspectives (Adler, Forbes & Willmott, 2008; Knight & Willmott, 1989; Newton, 1998). In line with this we find in the postcolonial literature of the CMS ambivalence and hybridity are discussed from the perspective of knowledge power dominance of the centre in the case of constitution of subjectivity of the employees in the context of multinational corporation in peripheries

(Mir , Banerjee, Mir , 2008). But there is a dearth of discussion about the workers; and their consciousness in the context of the postcolonial states.

Aside from this limitation, there is an argument for undertaking research on how an individual's own realisation could alter the context (Newton, 1998). Nevertheless, the resistance of the community of Khalishpur provides another dimension if we perceive the phenomenon as a notion of representing micro-emancipation and the study tends to explore actors' own realisation about their entitlements, rights and how they think they can be capable in dealing with the context where they interact. Correspondingly, Evans (2005) argues that to counter the failure of development, institutional reform has to consider peoples' view and has to be culturally shaped. Hence, Evans (2005) assumes that Sen's capability perspective has the capacity for imagining institutions where the engagement of the people as citizens is their right and they take part in determining their priorities (Evans, 2005).

In response to the lack of research on the life-world and subjectivity of workers, this study contributes into this domain through investigating the life-world of the workers' community of the jute mills. First, the explored concept of rights-centric restructuring and management is contributing into this imagination of new institutional spheres at the postcolonial context; where the mill as the basis of work place and state as the basis of governing institutors are perceived in relation with the prescribed policy doctrine of the global policy regime — the WB and the IMF. Second, micro-emancipation and conceptualisation of changes in organisations from the process perspective, argued in the CMS are related to the explored and discussed issues of rights-centric industrial restructuring and its derivation — rights-centric management. Third, inclusion of rights based approach to development in terms of exploring the aspirations of the community to be involved with their workplace is another contribution of this study. Finally, the conceptual framework of rights based approach to development provides us the opportunity to investigate how community perceives the issue of rights to have private property and rights to have livelihoods. The two declared basic human rights, and these functions in opposite directions.

2.5 Conclusion

The study is intended to explore peoples' perspective regarding the restructuring process and their involvement and engagement with the mill. The contribution of the study is to capture and represent peoples' voice and thus, it contributes to developing a rights-centric management framework.

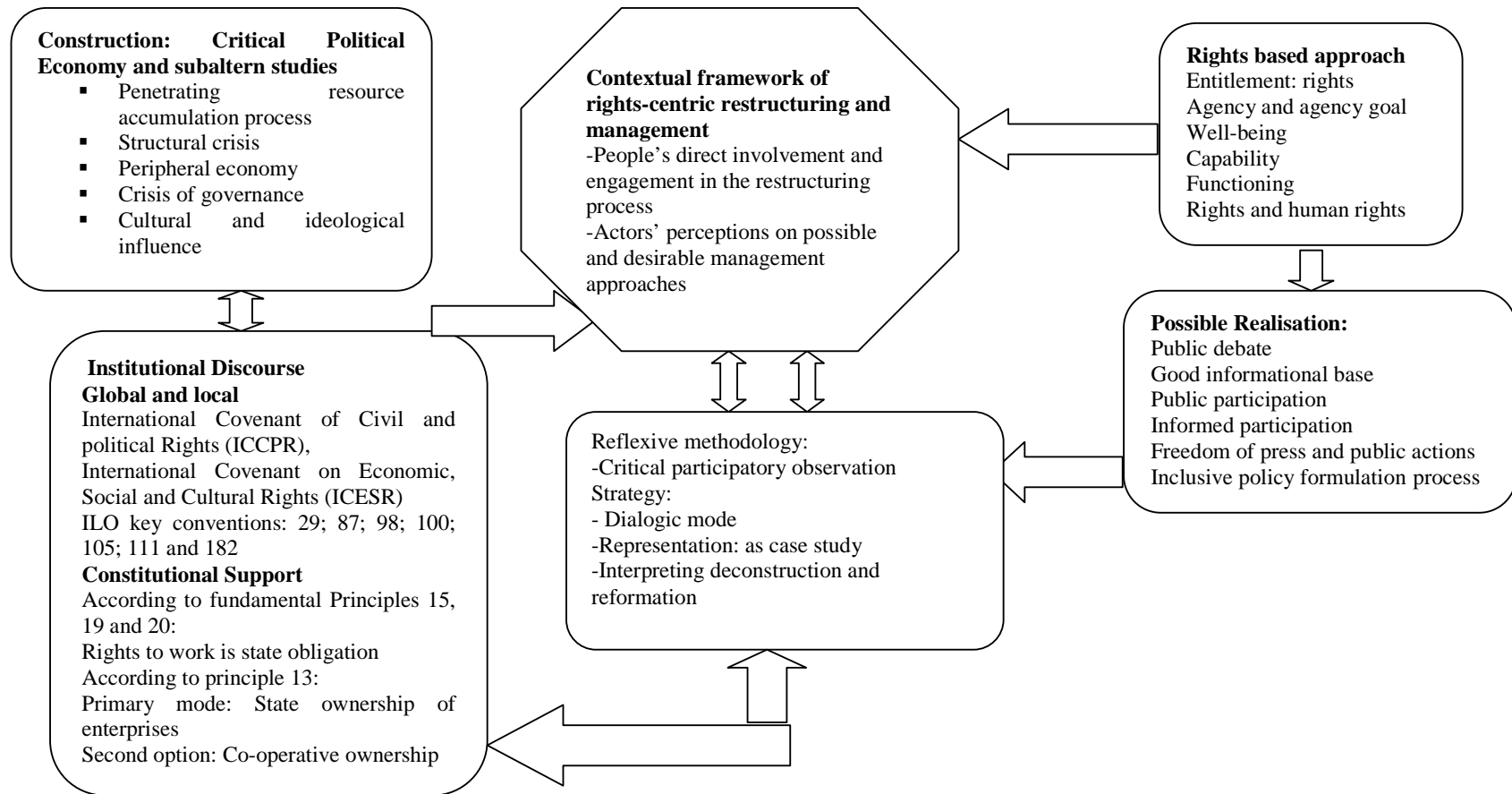
The concept of Sen's right-based approach underpins the concept of rights-centric restructuring and RCM. The UDHR, ICESCR and ICCPR form the basis of human rights concepts and the Constitution of the country sets the context. The constitution of the country provides the basis of arguments regarding the entitlement framework of the citizens that includes both the economic entitlement and political entitlements of the citizen. The actors involved with the functioning of the mills—the workers and community—are all citizens of Bangladesh and are entitled to receive state enunciated provisions for attaining their capability. The civil and political entitlements imply the role of the citizens as electoral agents. Concept of rights-centric is derived from those assertions. The contextual legitimacy of the concept rights-centric is grounded in all the global and national level assertions of rights. In line with this, Sen's exegesis provides the conceptual basis of the explored concepts. So, the explored concepts and arguments have relevancy and authenticity at the local and global level.

I also discuss the emergence of Bangladesh as a post to neo-colonial state by discussing its historical, economic and political emergence from the perspective of the theory of the Centre and periphery. In line with this, I focus on the country's legal, cultural, and political practices that contribute to the formation of social factions. Social factions for instance, the ruling class consists of aid-enriched class, the comprador bourgeoisie and bureaucracy, and civil societies as faction represent the middle class. These factions are the production of ideological state apparatuses. Thus, their subjectivity is shaped and the process perpetuates the hegemonic relations of the centre, and constitutes the context that confirms the continual adaptation with the global order. Concurrently, taking the exegesis of the subaltern studies, I try to frame the constitution of the working class as a community in the context of Bangladesh. Thus I bring the discussion of the constitution of working class as a category from the perspective of the Subaltern studies into the domain of the CMS. This is

the contribution of the study into the postcolonial critique of capitalism in the CMS domain.

Finally the discussion of participation in the management literature connects elements of participation with the issue of productivity. While the critical management perspective asks that issues be explored from the interdisciplinary approaches. The rights-centric restructuring is explored from the perspective of the rights based approach to development at the industrial sphere. The study explores: peoples' views and whether the market-centric solution of restructuring appears 'natural/only option' to them. Therefore, it is a challenge to the 'naturalised' restructuring measure propagated by the development and sustainability discourse. Subsequently, the state as an institution is responsible for conducting the process of restructuring. The community resisted the decision in 2007, so the state had to call off privatisation. The resistance of the community, civil society's activism, the formation of the Alliance, and linkage of the movement and its agenda with the regional and global agenda of other social movement for the right to a livelihood, suggest emergence of critical consciousness in the community's mind-set: a notion of micro-emancipation. Similarly the formation of the Commission for incorporating peoples' perspective into the policy formulation process denotes changes in the state's mechanism for managing organisations. This illustrates changes in organisational approaches and can be conceived of and argued from the process perspective. In parallel, the question of subjectivity of the community on one hand could be self-determining, but on the other hand, people could perceive changes that are slanted towards emancipatory mode are costly for them. The study aims to explore this.

Figure: 2.4 Conceptual Framework: Rights-Centric Restructuring and Rights-Centric Management



Chapter 3 Research Context

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3.1 Route and roots of the collapse of the governance, management of the SOJMs and role of the workers (1973–2008)

This section first discusses the governance and management structure of the SOJMs. Next, by analysing the global discourse and local responses to this discourse, I discuss the failure of the SOJMs. The third section analyses the responses of workers and unions to the dismantling of the SOJMs and, finally, how the global integration of the SOJMs impacted the community.

3.3.1 The governance and management structure of the SOJMs

The Nationalisation Order and subsequent Presidential Orders (PO 27, and its revised version in March 1982) made the SOJMs responsible and accountable to a range of public institutions. The governance and operational mechanism of the SOJMs basically involved three institutions.

First, the Ministry of Textiles and Jute as the highest body, designs the governance mechanism for the sector. The Ministry as the core body defines the practices and formulates and approves the policy and operational norms of managing the mills' through BJMC. The Ministry also supervises BJMC. According to the website of the Ministry, the Ministry had first been established as the Ministry of Textiles in 1977. In 1982 it was merged with the Ministry of Industry then in 1985 the Textile part of the Ministry of Industry became the Ministry of Jute and Textile. In 1986 it was divided into two separate Ministries: the Jute Ministry and the Textile Ministry. In 2004 the Ministry of Textile and Jute were again merged. The Minister heads the Ministry, one of the peoples' elected representatives. Currently the total number of employees is 94. The Secretary is the operational Chief of the Ministry. The Ministry has following divisions: Administration, Policy, Planning, and Privatisation. The Joint Secretary heads these two divisions and there are other two divisions known as the agency division for Jute and Textile. The Jute Division coordinates all affairs related to the following institutions: Directorate of Jute, Bangladesh Jute Research Institute, and Jute Diversification Promotion Centre. The Directorate of Jute links jute cultivation and jute purchasing issues at the district and sub-district level. The district-level establishment of the Directorate of Jute oversees procurement process, and the quality and process of storing raw jute by the SOJMs.

As the supreme authority, the Ministry's policy division designs and formulate the policy of the entire jute sector. The policy comprises and links aspects of jute cultivation with its export, manufacturing, and labour issues related to BJMC's mills. The Ministry coordinates its operation with the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Labour affairs, and the Ministry of Finance. Financial allocation, budgetary allocation and funding issues are coordinated with the Ministry of Finance. The Ministry of Finance also deals with the policy of privatisation and negotiates with donors such as the WB and the IMF.

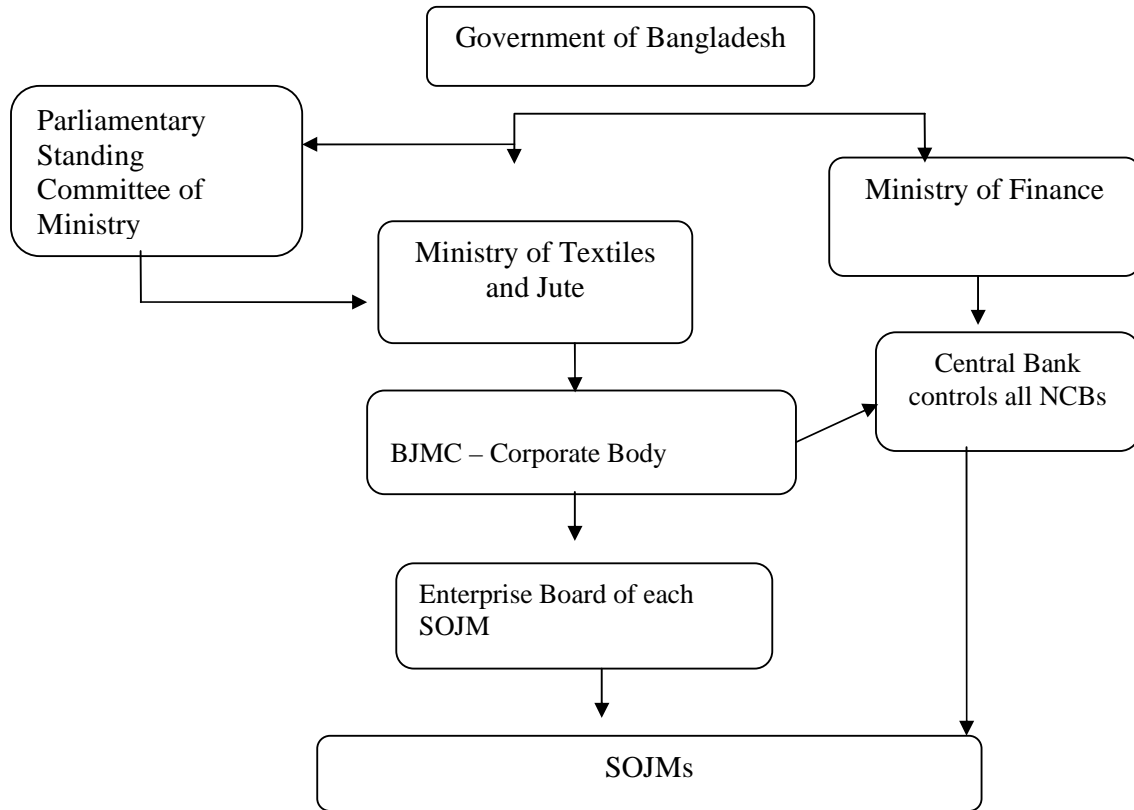
Second, the Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation (BJMC) is the overarching corporate body. According to PO #27, control, coordination, supervision and monitoring of the SOJMs are the BJMC's responsibility. The board of the BJMC is the apex body of operation and is headed by the Chairman. The government appoints both the Chairman and Directors. The board is fully under the control of and is reportable to the Ministry of Textiles and Jute. BJMC executives are posted at the mill level to manage the overall operations.

Overall monitoring, supervision, management and marketing are the responsibility of BJMC. The Chairman heads it and this post in the past had been/is usually occupied by the Joint Secretary or the Additional Secretary of the Ministry on deputation. Indeed, the practice in the past was/is that all the directors' posts were/are occupied by bureaucrats. The five major divisions are: Production and Jute, Finance and Accounts, Research and Quality Control, Marketing, and Planning.

According to the current set-up, BJMC has three zone offices in Dhaka, Chittagong (the Second largest city in the south-east corner of Bangladesh) and Khulna. Currently the total number of employees at the staff level is 2759 and officers 1172 (MIS Report, September 2010).

The Enterprise Board of the mill is the core body that monitors, approves and executes decisions regarding functioning of the mills. Thus, it is nodal point for centre-level and local-level activities. The Enterprise Board is headed by any of the members of the BJMC board, and includes members at the Deputy Secretary level from the relevant ministries: Textiles and Jute, and Finance. Besides, the General Manager of the Nationalised Commercial Bank (NCB) responsible for the financial conduct of the mills has to represent in the board. The Head of the mills (known as the Project Head or General Manager) and the Head of Finance and Accounts of the mills are members of the Enterprise Board.

Figure: 3.1 The governance structure of the SOJMs



3.3.2 Collapse of the governance structure of the SOJMs

The table below presents in chronological order a list of major events, actors and enacted policy that have impacted on the performance of the public sector mills, along with the corresponding dominant political discourse in place at the time.

Table: 3.1 List of major events, actors and dominant political discourse regarding the SOJMs (1973–2008)

| | Event | Key actors | Dominant discourse | Consequences |
|-----------|--|--|--|---|
| 1972–1975 | Nationalisation of all jute mills. Establishment of Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation (BJMC) as umbrella organisation for setting and managing policy. | Post-independence government. Post-independence government. | State socialism. Social control over resources. Centre that connects manufacturing with marketing at the local, regional and global levels. | President Order 1972 Total number of mills, 77. Number of mills under BJMC, 82 |
| 1980–1985 | Privatisation of eight mills. BJMC earned huge amount of profit in 1977–78 and 1980–81. Privatisation of 35 jute mills. Gradual reduction in loom numbers. | Military government: civil–army nexus, World Bank, IMF. As above. | Privatisation of the sector, non-viability because of emergence of artificial fibre, so Reducing the size of operation. Inefficiency, corruption, political influence through union in SOJMs, and non-viability of the sector. | Parallel construction: number of zone offices increased and branch offices established in foreign countries to promote exportation. Initiation of loss. |
| 1992–1996 | Initiation of JSAC. Conditions of first tranche. Closure of five jute mills. | Four-Party Alliance: The first democratically elected government and the World Bank. | As above. | 70,000 workers made jobless as 10 mills became privatised. Number of SOJMs under BJMC: 38. |
| 1994–2006 | Second tranche US\$247 million provided for closure of the Adamjee Jute Mills and three other mills. | As above | As above | Closure of the Adamjee Jute Mills caused the retrenchment of 30,000 workers, affected 5 million people dependent on its functioning and 10 million farmer family members. |

| | Event | Key actors | Dominant discourse | Consequences |
|---------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|---|---|
| 2007–08 | Four jute mills leased out. | Interim caretaker government. | Mission was finalising the last phase of reform under JSAC. | Functioning SOJMs: 16. Number of workers reduced by 50%. In some SOJMs, 40 weeks wages and nine months salaries remained due. |

(Source: Moazzem, Rahman, & Sobhan, 2009, Ministry of Textile and Jute, BJMC and Commission Report, March 2011)

An analysis of these major events and the role of the actors involved reveal the following: The post-independence government established the BJMC as an umbrella organisation in order to link the cultivation of jute with industrial initiatives and to adopt a global approach to marketing (Sobhan & Ahmad, 1980). We find in the first Five-Year Plan, the sector had been categorised as a national sector, brought under the central planning system and included as an item in the annual budget of the government (Ali, 2007). Besides, a review of the Five-Year Plans from 1973 to 2001 indicates that in 30 years funding for Balancing Modernisation and Renovation (BMR) had only been considered once in the first Five-Year Plan (Alamgir, 2011). An examination of the export trends for Bangladesh from 1972/73 to 2003 reveals that jute held more than 89% of total exports at the start of this period. The performance of the BJMC was only profitable for the first three years (1973–1977) of its entire existence (Khan, 2007).

However, denationalisation of the SOJMs had been conducted by two successive army regimes under the Revised and New Industrial Policy (discussed in sections 1.2 and 2.1.1). Table 2.2 shows that in the early phase of the 1980s, 35 jute mills were denationalised, which reduced the production capacity of the BJMC's mills (Alamgir, 2011). Thus, the capacity of the BJMC to manage bulk orders at the global level were affected (Alamgir, 2011). In addition, the 1980s saw an administrative expansion of the BJMC as the number of zone offices increased and few export offices were established abroad (Ali, 2007). Hence, it has been argued that those steps led to the SOJMs becoming loss-making concerns (Ali, 2007). The combined effect of contracting the sector's production capacity while expanding its administrative set-up was that the sectors' contribution to export

earnings decreased to 15.39% in 1992–1993, from the 89% seen in the early 1970s (Ali, 2009). Indeed, the dominant purchasing trend within the global market indicates that dealing in bulk orders is one of the major strengths in order to compete in this market (Ali, 2007).

Within this context, the mantra of JSAC has become that the sector is not viable due to the competitiveness of artificial fibre. The JSAC is marked primarily for the closure of the Adamjee Jute Mills. Citing the studies conducted by the WB of that time, Hoque and Hopper (1994, p. 26) state that the Adamjee Jute Mills were identified as ‘the worst mill of BJMC’. Under the JSAC measures of reform are mainly, golden handshakes (GH), end-of-contract benefit/voluntary retirement service (VRS), and ‘set-up’. ‘Set-up’ implies a reform process that produced a rationalised workforce and a budgeted number of looms (Alamgir, 2011). The terms GH and VRS suggest that if an employee of the SOJMs takes retirement under this scheme, their post and recruitment for that position is ended (circular by the Ministry January 26, 1994). By 2002–2003, the sector’s contribution towards exports amounted to only 5.2% (Ali, 2009). Under the JSAC, the mode of ownership transfer only implies changes in the ownership of the mills. So the workforce of mills that are scheduled for privatisation or closure had to be retrenched under the prescribed policy of golden handshakes, and officers are absorbed by BJMC (Alamgir, 2011).

Parallel, in the contemporary mainstream literature: chronic loss because of the ritualistic budgeting system, a lack of coordination, excessively lengthy decision-making processes because of the extensive chain of command, the political appointment at the top executive level from the bureaucracy, corruption, over employment, and too much political influence through union as significant traits of SOJMs in Bangladesh (Bhaskar & Khan, 1995; Bhshkar, Gupta, & Khan, 2006; Hoque & Hopper, 1994; Hoque, Siddique & Hopper, 1994).

Yet, it is also argued (Ahamd 1976, 1987; Sobhan, 1979, 1982; Sobhan & Ahmad, 1980; Hoque & Hopper, 1994) that critiquing the public sector in terms of its inefficiency is an indication of alignment with the global discourse. Despite consistent crisis, the public sector jute mills were considered a good source of employment that offers comparatively high salaries (Hoque & Hopper, 1994, 2001; Hoque, Siddique & Hopper, 1994). Hoque and Hoppers’ (1994) findings inform us that during the 1990s, when there was discontent

among jute mill managers, the intervention of the WB in the policy formulation process of the government, disrupted in the regular management processes in place in the mills. Consequently, in the case of the SOJMs, the invasion of aid agencies through government regulations and the government's political dominance in industrial relations, are the factors that led to inconsistency in the accountability system of the SOJMs (Hoque & Hopper 1994; Hoque, Siddique & Hopper, 1994).

However, critical studies of the sector (Ali, 2007; Mahmud, 2007, 2002) and a review of circulars from the Ministry and the BJMC³⁰ reveal that major causes of the sector's losses were: first, consistent delays on the part of the nationalised commercial banks in paying off cash credit to the mills for the procurement of raw jute during the buying season; and second, the price control mechanism by the Ministry. Fixing the price of procurement below the market price during the buying season and when the buying season is over then procuring at the market rate is identified as one of the cause that causes loss to the mills. Moreover, frequent power disruptions and labour unrest have also been identified as the third and fourth contributing causes respectively, of disruption to production (Muhammad, 2007).

Historical accounts of the jute industry suggest that it was never viable. During the British colonial period, the Indian Jute Mills Association (IJMA) consistently received government patronage (Chakrabarty, 1989; Sen, 1999). Correspondingly, during the regime of Pakistan, 30–35% of bonus vouchers had been provided to the owners of jute mills as support for an export-earning sector (Ali, 2007). However, in reviewing the jute policies and Five Year Plans³¹, it is evident that the state has never provided any incentives either financially or otherwise to the jute sector for technological development or the expansion of the market, either internally or externally. And hence, the BJMC became dependent on loans (Hoque, Siddique & Hopper, 2001). Currently the garments sector alone receives nearly 140.28 million USD in support from public resources and similar types of facilities are provided to enterprises in the EPZs (Mahmud, 2002) yet as an export-oriented sector the jute sector has not received similar supports (Bhattacharya & Titumir, 2001).

³⁰ Circular: 16 October 1979, 1 August 1977, July 4, 1977, 14 May 1977, April 26, 1976, December 11, 1975

³¹ Jute Policy, 1988–89, 2002, Five Year Plans: 1973-78, 1978-80, 1981-85, 1985-90, 1990-1995, 1997-2002)

The resultant effects of the global integration of Bangladeshi SOJMs are, first, that the privatisation of jute mills has significantly reduced the number of employees and workers (Bhaskar, & Khan, 1995; Bhshkar, Gupta, & Khan, 2006) and second, that the performance of the privatised jute mills shows a trend of negative growth (Dagedeviren, 2003). During the period when the Adamjee Jute Mills were being dismantled the amount of non-performing loans provided to private entrepreneurs totalled around 400 million USD (*The Daily Janakantha*, 13 July 2002). Hence, this scenario invalidates the discourse of efficiency and profitability through privatisation. Third, the performance of the Adamjee EPZ does not indicate that it is a viable option. Since its establishment from 2006 to till April 2011, it has created 15,517 jobs, and total investment in the mill has amounted to 122.16 million USD (Alamgir, 2011). Yet it has been consistently affirmed by the media and the global policy regime that there would be an investment of more than 400 million USD in the Adamjee EPZ, which would create 100,000 jobs (*The Daily Star*, 6 March 2006; Zhu, 2007). Fourth, the participatory review of structural adjustment in Bangladesh shows that many of the retrenched workers have not yet been paid off (Bhattacharaya & Titumir, 2001), whilst those that have been paid often do not know where to invest this money (Bhattacharaya & Titumir, 2001). Fifth, evidence indicates that high-level corruption mostly occurs at the policy-making level during the process of disinvestment and privatisation. For example, 29 jute mills worth a total of 35 million USD were denationalised at the value of about 785,000 USD (Taskforce Report, 1991, cited in Muhammad, 2002). Another example is the undervaluation of machinery evident in the closure of the Adamjee Mills, which caused 1.49 billion USD shortfalls for the government (*The Daily Star*, 26 August 2008). Hence, the discourse that cites corruption at mill level as an indicator of failure is questionable. Finally, the impacts of these various issues on the worker community have included irregularity in the payment of wages and unexpected delays of up to five or six years in receiving their retirement benefits (Alamgir, 2011).

Apparently, privatisation, reconstruction as the EPZ, disinvestment, and the leasing out of loss-making ventures—all have all been presented as a solution the problem of loss in the SOJMs. Drawing from Foucault (1982) it can be argued that the world system through its global policy regime produces the truth and rationalises all these diverse solutions as

rational arguments. Parallel policy prescriptions and support of the industry in India at the same time also nullifies the argument of non-viability of the sector as propagated by the global policy regime (Barkat, 2003). Evidently Bangladesh has been destined to be an exporter of the primary product of raw jute. Hence, this is categorised as the root cause of the structural crisis (Frank & Gills, 1991a; Prebisch 1959). Similarly, whether corruption can be addressed by global forces from the perspective of so-called ‘good governance’ is questionable. All of the arguments presented for dismantling the SOJMs have been used only to promote the goal of bringing the Bangladeshi public-sector jute economy under the control of market-centric global forces and to create a reserve workforce without creating any new industrial sector to absorb the workers evicted from the jute sector.

3.3.3 Collapse of the mills, engagement and involvement of the workers and trade unions and overall implications

The academic literature referred in the earlier section, based primarily in a political-economic perspective, has helped me to conceptualise the political-economic context of the collapse of the structures. But there is a dearth of direct research into the impact of the JSAC program or the implications of globalisation for the life-world of the affected community. Hence, I draw on contextual sources for tracing the involvement of the workers and the implications of the collapse of the mills at the local level. I review the daily newspaper reports (*The Dali New Age*, 23–27 February 2006, 1 August 2008, 2006, *The Daily Prothom Alo*, *The Daily Samakal* 18 September 2008), the Monthly newsletter of actionaid Bangladesh (2007, July), Bulletin Ain o Salish Kendro³² (2007, September) report of the local journal (Chowdhury, 2007), papers presented at seminars regarding economic implications (Ali, 2009, 2012; M. Ali, 2007). Finally I draw on the research I conducted to find out how the workers of the Adamjee Jute Mills — the affected community interprets the global order of dismantling of the Adamjee Mills and turning it into an EZP, and the implications of this decision on their lifeworld (Alamgir, 2011)³³. Furthermore, I consider the analysis on the implications of JSAC, I gather from AKM Masud Ali, researcher on labour rights issues and Shaidullah Chwodhury, retired employee/union leader of Latif Bawani Jute mills during the participatory learning workshop, and in the seminar of the JPC in the SASF on the 19th and 20th November, 2011.

³² Local-level NGOs.

³³ This study is not a part of the Phd study.

There has been strong propaganda that the militancy of trade unions disrupted the mode of production of the SOJMs (*Daily Ittefaq*, 2002; Hoque & Hopper, 1994; Hoque, Siddique & Hopper, 1994; Hoque & Hopper, 2001). However, the oral history of the union leaders collected by BILS (2006), arguments of Sobhan (1979), and Ali (2009,2012) suggest that the collectivity and consciousness of the jute mill workers as a working-class community within a country like Bangladesh cannot be typically categorised (see the discussion of this community's conditions and features in Section 2.1.2).

Drawing from BILS (2006), and Ali (2009), it is assumed that for many Bangalis, working in the jute mills was their first experience of industrial culture and urbanisation. Gradually they became involved in trade unions, came to recognise themselves as a workforce, and learnt how individual agendas can translate into a collective agenda. Within this context, the liberation war added another dimension in terms of achieving something collectively. The people perceived themselves as an organised force that could change the broader political and socio-economic scenario, and post-war reconstruction favoured the workers by helping them to secure jobs, while their involvement in trade unions empowered them and enabled them to perceive their own influence at the national level.

Politicisation of trade unions was initiated after 1973 by the post-independence government. Joining a single state political party was made mandatory for trade unions (Sobhan & Ahmad, 1980). Hence, political opportunists transformed trade unions into a platform that could link with the power nexus (Sobhan & Ahmad, 1980). Such construction supported the two consecutive army regimes (after the pro-state socialist post-independence regime was toppled by the military in 1975). Through the institutionalisation of the politics of patron-client relations with trade union leaders (Momen, 2002; Nuruzzaman, 2006) under these two despotic regimes, drastic denationalisation was implemented without any apparent resistance from the workers (Momen, 2002; Nuruzzaman, 2006). Such a mode of union politics has created an image of trade unions as violence-producing institutions and union leaders came to ignore their role as a surveillance body for labour-management relations. The ruling parties use their own unions to nullify the hegemony of the unions of other political parties over the jute mill workers. In line with the above analysis, the political culture of Bangladesh suggests that

all regimes, whether despotic or democratic, relies heavily on the mobilisation of the people by the trade unions (Uddin & Hopper, 2001).

Hence we gather that as the mills fall under the public sector, the workers' participation in support of the ruling parties at their political events has been compulsory and orchestrated by both the union leaders and management, and workers sees this as one of the issues that have hampered production in the sector (Chowdhury, 2011). Hence Uddin and Hopper (2001) suggest that through the control over public sector enterprises politicians have sought to establish their popular image, and to open a path for global capital.

I mention earlier that JSAC is marked by dismantling of the Adamjee Jute Mills. Did implementation of reforms under the JSAC, in particular the dismantling of the Adamjee Jute Mills, faced resistance? Determining a clear answer to this question is critical. The first democratic government—the Four Party Alliance led by the BNP ³⁴ in 1991—initiated the closure and the mill was finally closed down in 2002 during the second tenure of the BNP (see Table 2.2). The collected literature on the Adamjee Jute Mills suggests the following: strong demonstrations early on by the workers and SKOP compelled the government to temporarily suspend the disinvestment program (see Table 2.1; Hoque & Hopper, 1994). As a concession to the workers, the government of the day even set up a Wage Commission and provided a new revised (increased) wage scale (Hoque & Hopper, 1994).

However, under the second tenure of the BNP, implementing the JSAC became comparatively less of a challenge for the ruling class. Indeed by that time the country had already experienced 10 years of democratic regime, and under the democratic regime the functioning of SKOP is not directed by the interests of the workers (Chowdhury, 2011). On the contrary, it belongs to the domain of the trade unions of the two mainstream political parties, and their trade union sections reinforce those decisions that protect the interests of their political parties or interest of the politics ((Chowdhury, 2011). For the union leaders, as the culture of union politics has evolved, alignment with the interests of their own political parties is natural (Chowdhury, 2011). And the reality for the general workers is that they have been deprived of the opportunity to participate in the decision-

³⁴ The BNP is the Bangladesh Nationalist Party constituted by President Zia, who led the first army regime.

making process on managerial issues and in negotiations on benefit packages or facilities and therefore, of being able to make management accountable through the collective action by union leaders (Alamgir, 2011). Issues around workers' rights have been subjugated by the functioning of the partisan-centric politics of unions, and the conspiracy of the state executives regarding perpetuation of a crisis, (Alamgir, 2011). Thus, the process of subjectivation has forced the workers to take the role of mere wage labourers (Alamgir, 2011). It was also a fact that recruitment had been stopped for almost fifteen years, and for the senior workers receiving entire retirement benefits at a time appeared more lucrative (Alamgir, 2011). As silent spectators, they have witnessed the corruption at their own mills and have failed in resisting retrenchment through the 'golden handshake' (Ali, 2011, 2012).

Dismantling of the Adamjee Jute Mills was publicised as a milestone of the country's economic development by the media, civil society organisations — NGOs and businessmen, and faced no resistance from SKOP (Ali, 2011, example Zhu, 2007). Moreover, the institutionally produced 'truths' regarding the Adamjee Jute Mills by the World Bank³⁵ (Ali, 2009,2012) had been consistently authenticated by the media (*The Daily Ittefaq* 7 July, 2002). After the dismantling, it was publicised that success of the decision had shown that the workers were not as violent as they had been portrayed (*The Daily Ittefaq* 7 July, 2002). Moreover, it is also suggested that NGOs in the country have projects of development, sustainability and good governance that are funded by foreign donors, and some of these projects entailed exposure visits for trade union leaders in the Western countries, presuming that such visits would support them in responding appropriately to issues of privatisation (Alamgir, 2011). Hence, through its implementation strategies the global discourse of development and sustainability exerts its cultural dominance and perpetuates its hegemonic influence over the consciousness of postcolonial nations (Ali, 2012).

Arguments regarding the implications of globalisation at the local level are drawn from the work of Harvey (1993, 2003), Escobar (1992, 1995), Banerjee (2008), Banerjee and Linstead (2001, 2004), Banerjee, Chio & Mir, (2009a), Banerjee, Carter & Clegg (2009b)

³⁵ Suggested by Hopper and Hoque, 1994 – the worst mill of the BJMC.

and Chatterjee (2004) and I attempt to internalise these arguments with those of Ong (2006) who utilises an anthropological perspective in examining globalisation.

The features of globalisation that underpin the arguments of these authors are as follows: creative destruction for accumulation, accumulation by dispossession and dislocation, perpetuation of accumulation by creating a category of 'others', annihilation of identity, and accumulation by subjugation. And these stated features strengthen the arguments regarding the fluidity of the notion of sovereignty in the context of a postcolonial state and the creation of neo-colonial state.

Contextual evidence suggests colonisation of the life-world has evicted these people from their rural communities and it has taken at least fifty years for these workers and their families to adapt to this new lifestyle (Chowdhury, 2007). The mills which are the workplace for these people, the colonies adjacent to the mills which constitute the living spaces, the schools established for the workers' children nearby, the playgrounds, the mosques and the temples built in these communities all make up the life-world of the workers and their families. The disciplinary technologies of various institutions exert meticulous rituals of power that manifest as cultural practices in the life-world. According to Ali (2009):

These people have been provided with an industrial culture, identity, exposure to urban life and above all at least a secure life for workers and their families' (Ali, 2009, p. 20). He further states that 'there had been a distinct cultural transformation and an orientation to an institutional life' (p. 20).

The global order of restructuring has not only brought insecurity in terms of lost identity and segregation from the industrial culture, but it has also created a feeling of dispossession among the people, which drawing from Harvey (1993, 2003) can be categorised as the creative destruction of the built environment and culture through the annihilation of identity, and dispossession and dislocation of a community.

Borrowing from Foucault (1982, p. 216) it can be argued that for the general workers globalisation presents a 'double bind'. The techniques and strategies of this discourse have created fragmentation, individualisation and factions among workers. Evidence suggests in the case of the collapse of the Adamjee Jute Mills (Alamgir, 2011), the following: first,

for the elderly workers the expedient payment of retirement benefits and access to rehabilitation programs announced by the government induced them to opt for golden handshakes. On the other hand, the comparatively young workers were a minority, so there was no collective resistance to the reform measures. The process thus ensures individualisation while also limiting collective resistance and ultimately ensures the workers' acceptance of retrenchment. As argued in the contemporary postcolonial literature, this process represents the effective annihilation of individual identity (Escobar, 1992, 1995) as a worker of the formal sector and loss of collective identity as a formal industrial workforce (Tavnati, 2003). The process of globalisation drives the disappearance of the workers of the jute mills from the broader social-political-economic scenario. Thus, we can trace the signs of annihilation of identity and through this, measure the community is dislocated and disposed.

From the perspective of critical management studies, one implication of globalisation is that it entails the continuation of colonialism through the practices of its technology of knowledge, without having to extend its territorial control (Mir, Banerjee & Mir, 2008, p. 220). It is argued that the resultant effects of globalisation in postcolonial states include creation of an informal labour pool and the legitimisation of the directives of the market (Banerjee, 2008; Banerjee & Linstead, 2004, 2001; Banerjee, Cartan, & Clegg, 2009b; Banerjee, Chio and Mir, 2009a). Through its demonstrations of violence, the state strengthens the totalising effect of imperialist power institutionally (of global agencies such as the World Bank and the IMF), resource-wise (of transnational corporations and international bourgeoisies), and the regime of the discourse of development and sustainability (Banerjee, 2008).

Based on this analysis, the outcomes of restructuring illustrate that one of the major implications of globalisation for the SOJMs is that of sponsored unemployment through the practice of golden handshakes (Ali, 2012). Mass retrenchment initially produced a huge number of workers as industrial reserve forces for the informal sector, as well as *badli*³⁶ in the privatised jute mills (Bhaskar & Khan, 1995; Uddin & Hopper, 2001). Recent findings indicate that ex-workers of the closed SOJMs prefer to work as *badli* in

³⁶ According to the Labour Law of 2006, *Badli* -workers are a distinct category of worker, who can be appointed in the absence of the permanent workers and are entitled to receive wages announced by the Wage Board.

other SOJMs, where wage levels are better than in the private sector (Alamgir, 2011). Thus, the new and rationalised system creates ‘others’ within the system—here *Badli* as a system and *badli workers* as ‘others’—who become ensnared in the project of ‘accumulation by dispossession’ according to Harvey’s analysis (2003, p. 141).

When considering the EPZ as an alternative source of employment, it is suggested that the wages provided in the EPZs are comparatively less than the wage level for workers in the SOJMs (Gazette Notification, 2010, October). In addition, workers in the EPZs are not entitled to form any workers associations or to join the trade unions of any political party (ICTU, 2000). The code of conduct for working in the informal sector, as an informal workforce in a formal sector or under a quasi-legal contract as formal workers of EPZs denotes that globalisation systematically suppresses and conceals workers’ voices and constrains industrial democratic dialogic relations (Habermas, 1971/ 1987). All suggests encompassing feature of global discourse and its totalising effects, includes the polity of the nation-state (Banerjee, 2008) and thus, the perpetuation of accumulation is grounded and it can be conceived as globalism.

Beyond the workers themselves, the findings suggest that in most cases the children of the former employees of closed mills could no longer continue their education and had to abandon school to themselves look for work at a very young age (Ali, 2009). Specifically, daughters of the retrenched workers of the SOJMs are employed in the garment or knitting industries , and at the same time, there is evidence that many female ex-workers ended up as either domestic household workers or beggars (Alamgir, 2011). While some female members of male workers’ households ended up becoming sex workers (Ali, Ali & Sarkar, 2005). All of these women previously had been assigned specific roles in the agrarian economy, which had been lost initially through their forced adaptation to the industrial-urban life. In the current context the female family members of the retrenched workers have been forced to come out of their domesticity in search of work. Contemporary globalisation causes yet another rupture, in this case revealing the gendered aspects of accumulation of globalism (Hartsock, 2006, p. 186).

Drawing from Foucault’s perspective (1982, p. 216) it can be argued that globalisation has created a process of depoliticisation and acts as a double bind. It has destroyed the identity of the formal workforce, collective identity is subjugated. Work becomes an opportunity

and the right to work becomes an idea, as we find retrenched workers of the Adamjee Mills have been re-employed as *badli* (Alamgir, 2011). The workers are placed in the contested domain of livelihoods. In parallel, the process of negotiating rights—for example, the right to have work in the political domain is abolished in line with the transformation in union politics (Chowdhury, 2011; Ali, 2011). On the other hand, under the governing technology of globalisation, rights are an intuitional discourse mainly of NGOs and are negotiated by dialogue, and policy is formulated by systematically maintaining technologies of participation of selective actors (Sobhan, 2002).

Finally we find in 2007 under the state of emergency, the interim government adopted numerous strategies of subjugation, including the non-payment of wages, keeping the workers starving, and at the extreme leading to the death of the workers through starvation and tension (action aid Bangladesh, 2007, July; Mohammad, 2007). As described below:

Thousands of jute mills workers in Bangladesh's Khulna industrial region are at the verge of being starved due to non-payment of their salaries and other dues since a declaration of lay-offs by the jute mills administration since April 18. Seven jute workers are reported dead during 6–11 June as family sources say they died of prolonged starvation and tension of being deprived of livelihood. [...] There are eight government owned jute mills in Khulna, four of them (People's Jute Mill, Platinum Jubilee Jute Mill, Crescent Jute Mill and Star Jute Mill) were closed down and thousands of their workers were laid off and have not been paid salaries and dues that sparked protests in April 2007 (actionaid Bangladesh, July 2007).

According to Ali (Appendix G, *The Daily Prothom Alo*, 20 November, 2011) when the policy of the state is not a part of its philosophy then there will be trend of changing in policy when there is a change in the government and that has happened in case of our jute sector. In this context I find the governing technology under neoliberalism argued by Ong (2006) helps in understanding the sign and construction of the final phase of the JSAC, conducted by the interim government in 2007-2008. Crystallisation of above arguments highlights the following. First, it could be argued that the process of integrating the jute sector within the globalised economy manifests as the following: management by extraction, through plundering the resources of an established industry, management by exclusion through abolishing the industrial democratic practices, management by

expulsion through destroying the source of livelihood for an entire community and management by creating violence, suppression and subjugation (Banerjee 2008, 2011). Drawing from the concept of necropolitics as proposed by Mbembe (2003) the experience of the community of jute workers of the SOJMs could be viewed as the subjugation of life to death or the living as dead. Banerjee (2008, 2011) describes these as a feature of necrocapitalism – management of global accumulation process through subjugation of life to capitalism.

Second, we find that the civil-army bureaucracy came back into power in the name of the caretaker government in 2007. The state of emergency instigated during this time signals an ‘exceptional situation’, and the form and presence of a caretaker government implies the fluidity of the governance mechanism of a nation-state like Bangladesh, (in line with the exegesis of Ong 2006).

In parallel, constructing the context for implementation and finalisation of JSAC illustrates that the territorial space and its polity are shaped by the interplay of the economy of neoliberalism (Banerjee, 2008, 2011; Harvey, 2003). The interim government, the economy and polity have been organised around substantiating the JSAC program. According to Ong (2006) ‘the state of exception’ becomes perpetuated state in case of flexible and graduating sovereignty of a nation- state. These have been categorised as governing techniques under neoliberalism, the sign can be traced down in case of the post-colonial states (Banerjee, 2008). Thus, through the signs denoted by Banerjee (2008, 2011) and Harvey (2003), Bangladesh can be marked as a neo-colonial state.

3.3.4 Jute community of Khalishpur in resistance: The emergence of an alternative discourse

This section explains and categorises the features of the community-based movement in Khalishpur and compare these features and elements with the claims presented in the literature on such grassroots political movements based on conflict over resources occurring across the globe.

The community of Khalishpur has experienced the severity of crisis as a result of the policy decisions of the JSAC for more than 20 years. The insecurity around the loss of livelihood

and the loss of collective identity as the ‘workers of public-owned jute mills’ led 22,000 workers from the seven public-sector jute mills in the Khulna zone to demonstrate in a show of massive resistance when the interim government announced its decision to lay off workers and close the mills (actionaid, July: 2007; Muhammad, 2007; Chowdhury, 2007). The movement was militant but the state played a most repressive role to ensure the dominance of the market. According to Chowdhury (2007,p.212):

All those starved workers of Jute Mills of Khalishpur, under the emergency situation have been forced to launch the movement for 40 weeks unpaid Shaptah³⁷ and against the caretaker government’s decision of laying off workers of three Jute Mills and closure of the Peoples’ Jute Mills. RAB³⁸, Police and allied force have been employed. Now the government has lodged a lawsuit against 2500 workers for breaking the emergency law.

The newsletter of actionaid Bangladesh (July 2007), Chowdhury (2007), the Monthly Bulletin of An Shalish Kendro (September, 2007) and a series of reports in the daily newspapers and Muhammad (2007) all discussed the establishment of *Longorkhana*³⁹ for the starved workers and their families by the local organisations and community, which was demolished by the armed forces within four days, leading to continued fighting with the armed forces. This action established a coordinated, on-going movement and an Alliance was formed at the national level and linked to the JPC at the local level. At one point the workers and caretaker government reached a point of negotiation and the mills resumed their operations. Yet, at the end of the regime of the caretaker government, according to a Circular of the Ministry (20 February 2008: Ministry of Textiles and Jute), two jute mills—the Peoples’ and the Quami Jute Mills—were closed down and disposed of as lease property under a private ownership arrangement. However, the JPC’s inclusion in the South Asian Social Forum has linked the workers movement to the broader global context.

The collapse of SOJMs in Bangladesh was not an isolated experience, and the worker/community movement for basic entitlements is also not an exception. Such movements are now common across the globe in response to the global-political-economic

³⁷ *Shaptah* means ‘weekly wages’.

³⁸ Rapid Action Battalion.

³⁹ *Longorkhana* means ‘soup kitchen’.

program aimed at the extinction of identity through the dismantling of the livelihoods of peoples (Otero, 2004; Tanvnti, 2003). For instance, the Chiapas (Otero, 2004), La Via Campesina (Desmarias, 2007; McMichael, 2006); recovered factories movements in Latin American countries, based on the principle of worker autonomy in factories that have been locked out by management because of bankruptcy, resistance against international corporations by people for ensuring the necessary subsistence for survival in various countries of Latin America (Otto and Bohm, 2006; Spence & Shenkin, 2008) confrontations in Cancun and Hong Kong, local community movements against corporate mining (Banerjee, 2011; Luthfa, 2011), the recent emergence of the Occupy Movement (of the 99% against the 1%)—all of these movements signify peoples' resistance against profit-seeking trade experts (Ali, 2012; Sobhan, 2002) and a historical shift. The existence of the 99% matters in the economic-political domain (Ali, 2012) and within this context the World Social Forum (WSF) as a common platform for all people, communicates global solidarity among such movements at the local level (Sen, 2007). As a global platform it is in contestation on the politics of voicing the implications of globalism to global audience, and asks for global social justice of globalisation. Hence, the WSF has been described as 'globalism from below' (Cleaver, 1998; Harvey, 1995; Otero 2004; Sen 2007). According to Santos (2006, 2008, p.8) WSF is an initiation of reconstituting the epistemology of the Global south: what is absent, and what is present; what matters and what is real.

3.4 Conclusion

In conclusion, this section has described the structure and collapse of the governance mechanism of the SOJMs, the implications of such for the community, and the functioning of the governmentality that shaped conformity to the global order, in this case this finalisation of the JSAC program. As I state at the beginning of this section that there is a lack of academic research conducted on the impact globalisation on the lifeworld of the jute community. Based on those conceptual notions, I trace the collapse of the entire governance mechanism of the public sector jute mills, its implications for the community, and the mode of subjectivation that compelled the community to accept this global order as inevitable in the initial phase. However, resistance of the community during the finalisation phase of the JSAC denotes that the actors have realised the implications of

globalisation. They are now in a contested domain in ensuring their survivability and thus, their rights. I draw on from Banerjee's arguments of regarding necrocapitalism (2008) and constitution of accumulation process that transforms the postcolonial state into neo-colonial states. Again, I look into his (Banerjee, 2011) and Mir and Mir's (2005, 2013) arguments further research on the voices of the governed regarding the organisation — where they interact, and their relations with the state in the context of the postcolonial state. The resistance of the community is an indication of their collectivity against the process that is extinguishing their identity and thus, their survivability. It is an expression of their consciousness. Exploring that consciousness, their subjectivity, and whether that would lead to rights-centric restructuring and management is the aim of this study.

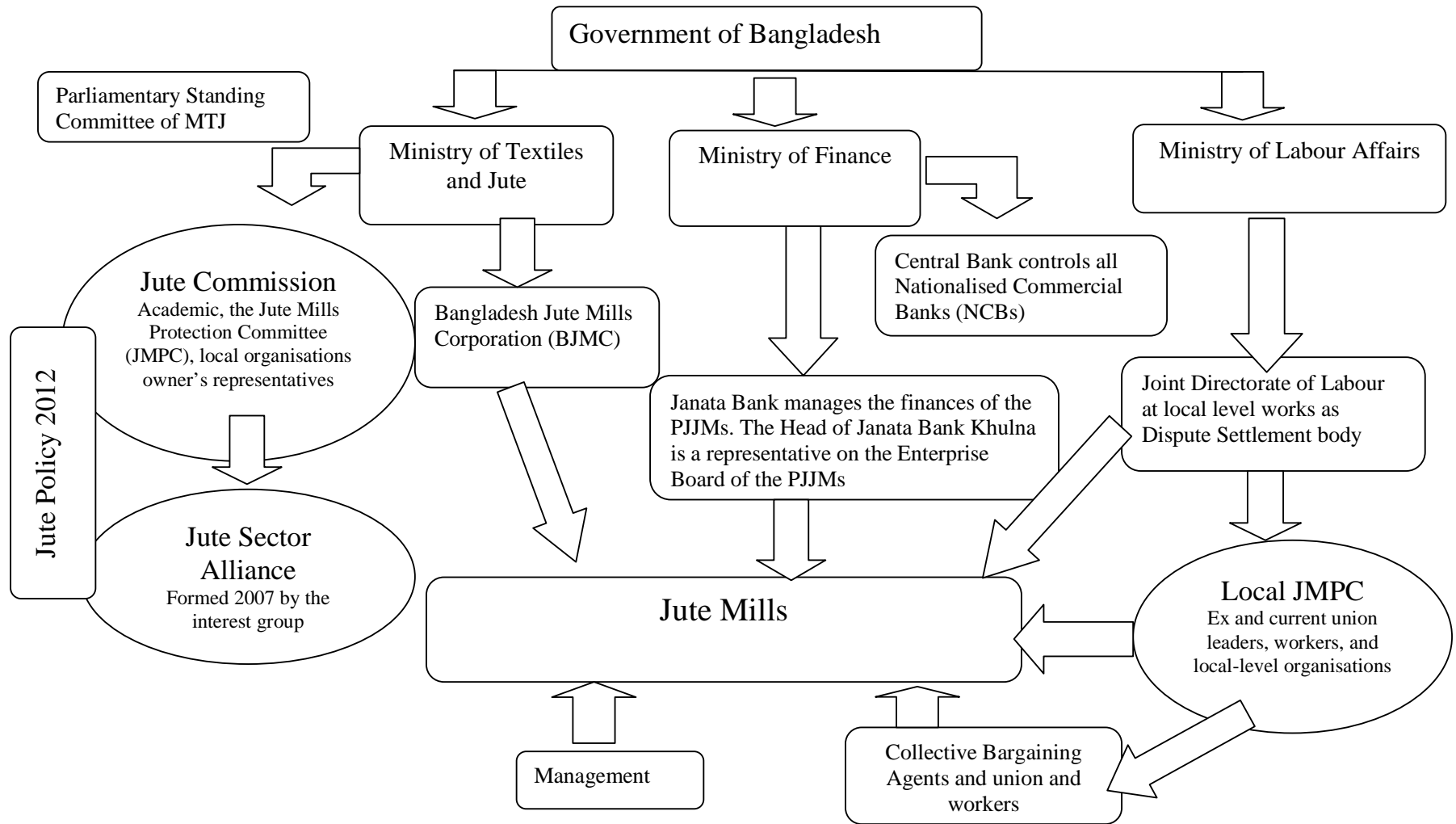


Figure: 3.2 Currently Involved actors with the SOJMs: Policy making and policy influencing groups

Chapter 4: Methodology

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- 4.3 Research methods
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 - 4.3.3 Documents and the method of collection
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4.1 Introduction

The study is an attempt to learn the perspectives of the major actors about their engagement and involvement with the process of industrial restructuring of the SOJMS. In chapter 1, provides the context for the research: the emergence of Khalishpur, the implications of the mills, and resistance of the community against the restructuring process of the JSAC in 2007. Chapter 2 provides the contextual and conceptual background of the restructuring process. It deals with how efficiency-centric discourse of globalisation has affected the life-world of community involved with the functioning of the SOJMs from the perspective of the critical political economy and subaltern studies. It also discusses the theoretical framework of the rights based approach of Sen and discusses evidence for the application of this theory in the development field. Considering the issue of ‘voicing’, rights based projects are aimed at developing the capability aspects of the people from the perspective of rights, and the right to participate in decision making on issues that concerns their survivability (Sen, 1999c, 2004a). Thus these rights based projects are conducted in order to develop the consciousness of the people and to further the realisation of citizenship rights (Kabeer, 2003).

Thus the context of emergence of the rights-centric restructuring and management is conceptualised. Basic research questions focus on exploring the necessary conditions and elements of rights-centric restructuring and management approach associated with rights-centric restructuring, and issues that the community consider can facilitate or hinder the process of implementation of their aspired restructuring process and management. The objectives of the study are as follows: to contribute empirical accounts of the community’s perspectives regarding their aspired involvement with the mills, to gain insights about their desired mode of restructuring of the mills, and to account for their explained strategies for materialising rights-centric management.

This chapter starts with discussions regarding the philosophical underpinnings and methodology of the study. This study took an ethnographic research approach. Intensive field work was undertaken, with perspectives gathered through discussions using unstructured questionnaires (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000, Silverman, 2006). So, the researcher’s role, including gaining access to the community life and gaining their trust are issues of concern that need to be discussed. The gathered perspectives and observations

will be presented as a case form. So, in, this chapter the Platinum Jute Mills, its linkages with BJMC, the Ministry and other Ministries is discussed. I also collected documents, but interactions— interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs) and informal discussion in *chai*-stall or restaurants—were more significant sources for gathering the perspectives of the community. Finally the process of analysis of the collected perspectives is discussed.

4.2 Research paradigm and methodology

I mentioned in chapter 1 briefly the ontological and epistemological position of the study. Its ontology is social constructionist. The theoretical framework of the proposed research is an infusion of critical thoughts that complement each other in inquiry. The theory of critical political economy and the theory of subaltern studies are all based on the theories of critical perspectives, as these are derived from Marxian and the poststructuralist perspectives. The latter mainly draws from the perspectives of Foucault, Gramsci and Althusser. In line with this, the conceptual framework of the rights based approach to development posits that aspired issues related to the rights and survivability must be considered as issues of human rights (Sen, 2004a, 2005a, 1999c). Aspired perspectives regarding rights must be explored and identified by consulting with the involved actors (Sen, 2004a, 1999c). Indeed the study is located in the domain of critical management studies, and hence the methodology of the research is reflexive. Table 3:1 below outlines the research approach adopted in this study, which is mainly based on discussions about paradigms of the study by Guba and Lincoln (2005, p.195).

Table 4.1 Research approach

| | Constructionist | Critical perspective | Implications |
|--------------|---|---|--|
| Ontology | Reality is conditioned, constructed and subjective. | Reality is framed within a power structure. | According to the stated paradigm the phenomenon is perceived from the historical, political and cultural aspects (Lincoln & Guba, 2005). The history of colonisation and later the discourse of efficiency, development and sustainability have constructed this reality. |
| Epistemology | Engagement with the situation which is emotional. | Subjectivist value laden, need to check understanding with respondents. | Established social, political and cultural hegemony necessitates critical analysis of the super-structural elements. This study considers the theory of critical political economy and the subaltern studies for understanding the context and construction. The conceptual framework of rights-centric restructuring considers the conceptual framework of the rights based approach to development. Hence the theoretical framework of the research is context specific, and hence Foucault (1998) suggests that inquiry norms need to be contextually grounded. |

Methodology

The methodology of the social constructionist and critical perspectives paradigms takes into account hermeneutic, dialectical and dialogic approaches (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). Dialectical aspect appears as an essential mode under the social constructionist and critical perspectives (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). If the study has the constructionist point of view application of various approaches in terms of exploration of a phenomenon is required (Silverman, 2006).

Drawing from Foucault (1998), a technique of interpretation under critical thought considers the historical legacy of a phenomenon: discontinuity and ruptures in its constitutions. Indeed the phenomenon of restructuring in the context of Bangladesh can be perceived through these lenses as a descendant, not as a manifestation (Drawing from Flyvbjerg, 2001; Foucault, 1998). In line with that, critical management scholars ask for critical applications of interpretation in case of conducting research on organisational issues in the context of postcolonial states, in order to reveal the inter- dynamics of power

and knowledge, and ideological dominance in constituting subjectivation, and construction of identity (Mir & Mir, 2002; Prasad & Mir, 2002 ; Prasad & Prasad 2002).

Considering the paradigmatic methodological features of the study, I think the study has two aspects. Critiquing and analysing the eventalisation process of industrial restructuring and consequences of globalisation. On the other hand perspectives have been gathered regarding peoples' aspired process of restructuring. Therefore the methodology of the study is reflexive (Drawing from the arguments of the scholars of critical management studies: Alvesson & Deetz, 2000; Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 2000; Flyvbjerg, 2001, 2006; Hardy & Clegg, 1997; Kleinsasser, 2010), for reasons discussed below.

The technology of production and the technology of the system and sign thrive for building knowledge that is scientific and efficiency oriented (Scherer, 2009). In this context the critical perspective believes in contributing knowledge through exploring how people or individuals are subjugated by those systems and finally transform those systems (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000; Scherer, 2009). It takes the mode of deriving knowledge basing on theory, through the communicative process that connects people with each other and with their context. According to Schwandt (1997) reflexive methododology is defined as:

[...] the process of critical self-reflection on one's biases, theoretical predispositions, preferences, and so forth. Reflexivity, however, also signals inspection of potential sources of bias and their control; it points to the fact that the inquirer is a part of the setting, context, and social phenomenon he or she seeks to understand. Hence, reflexivity can be a means for critically inspecting the entire research process [...]. (p.136).

This methodology is considered pragmatic, because it connects theory into practice (Alvesson, 2011; Alvesson & Deetz, 2000) .

In encountering the naturalised aspects of efficiency arguments of the discourse of globalisation, I draw on Foucault's perspectives. In *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Foucault calls for a rigorous critical approach to analysis of the context and of the hegemony of discursive arguments in terms of production of truth (Foucault cited in Dreyfus, 1982; Foucault, 1972,). Foucault argues that there should be a method of inquiry

that can identify the strength of such prevailing discursive arguments and examine whether they can sustain such interrogations (Foucault, 1972).

Accordingly, Hardy and Clegg (1997) argue that subjects are in double bind in the research of the critical theories. Subjects are perceived through the lens of ideological consciousness and subjectivity, and the process lacks a comprehensive framework for representing the account of the subjects (Hardy & Clegg, 1997). But reflexive methodology suggests that the process includes engagement of the actors and aspects of reformation (Hardy & Clegg, 1997), and hence it reflects Freire's idea of conscientization (Drawing from Alvesson & Deetz, 2000). These arguments are aligned with Sen's arguments about the agency of the actors. Defining aspired issues as 'goals rights' of the people, Sen thinks that those aspired aspects need to be accounted for, because people must have reasons to pursue these goals as aspirations (Sen, 2004, 2005a,).

Focusing on the issue of restructuring the process of collecting views for the study can be denoted as to create a space where people could actively participate in order to articulate their aspiring involvement and engagement and express their experiences of industrial restructuring. The study broadly explored the perspectives of four categories of actors: the community⁴⁰ at the local level, managers and executives of BJMC, policy makers including bureaucrats and the members of the JPC, and members of the Alliance/Commission. Categorisation of participants at local level had been done with the support of the participants through *Chai* stall discussion. This is discussed further in chapter 4 and presented in table 4:1. The point I would like make here is that in narrating the story I place more emphasis on the workers' category, who are basically the most disadvantaged category. This is further divided in terms of *badli* and permanent, as well as in terms of ethnicity, race and gender. I have then added the views of other actors, for instance: the management of the mills, Board Members of BJMC, bureaucrats of the Ministry, elected policy makers at the state level, and members of the JPC and Alliance that either reinforce or challenge the perspectives of the disadvantaged categories. Categorising the union appeared problematic to me. On issues related to the micro practice of power, domination is demonstrated in regard to corruption, and the union is perceived to be in alignment with management by the workers. However, in regard to macro level issues such as the survivability of the mills against the closure, or privatisation of the mills, or about the

⁴⁰ Defines elaborately in Chapter 1 , p. 20.

JSAC; the perspectives of the union, workers, household members and the surrounding community — the owners of *chai-bidi* stalls or the restaurants are aligned. Consolidation of the perspective of these groups constitutes the broader community aspect in terms of telling the tale in chapter 4. The perspectives of all categories of actors: policy - influencing and policy- making groups have been considered.

I did not look for participants' 'truthful' comments of their experiences and views about restructuring or their aspirations of involvement. Moreover, experiences and aspirations cannot be expressed as variables and factors, or analysed quantitatively. Aspirations imply desire. And desire cannot be classified as 'true' or 'false'. Rational perspectives of knowledge formation process may raise the question about whether aspired issues are realistic. The perspectives regarding the plausibility of rights-centric restructuring and management has been collected and authenticated in participatory learning workshops. Having discussed the philosophies that underpin the process of knowledge formation of rights-centric restructuring process and management, I discuss the further issues that address the overall methodology.

4.3 Research methods

Method indicates a process and approaches. According to Silverman (2006, p. 15) method implies a *set of specific research techniques*. In line with this, Alvesson and Deetz (2000) suggest that method does not denote an instrumental aspect of conducting research; rather in the case of qualitative research the researcher involvement is subjective and she is engaged with the research issues. It is initiated by observing, inquiring, receiving information and gaining perceptions, these are comprised as method (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000). Hence they (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000) conclude that through the method evidence is shaped and reproduced as materials.

Concrete understanding of the issue closely and collaboratively requires critical observation of the context, actors and location and hence an extensive field visit is required (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

The approach of the study was ethnographic, and the features of the entailed methods were participatory observation, collection of documents, inquiries or interviews, and a participatory learning workshop (Drawing from Alvesson & Deetz, 2000; Silverman, 2006). I conducted this workshop in November 2011 through delivering a seminar in the SASF. The study has a feature of ethnographic study, and focused on exploring involved actors' perspectives about their engagement. The research site Khalishpur, the Platinum Jubilee Jute Mills was chosen as the field, and as a case respectively. The method of presentation is the case study.

4.3.1 Case study as a method

This research comprises a single case study. The definition of a single case study explains that it has to be a detailed and intensive (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p. 62). The case study method is considered to be a good model for human learning (Flyvbjerg, 2001). Understanding human behaviour requires the ability to observe and interpret participants' experiences and perspectives within that context (Flyvbjerg, 2001). Flyvbjerg (2001) argues close and detailed observation of the real life situation is critical to understanding the reality. Hence the case study method is a process that can generate, accommodate and represent the complexities of real life experiences (Fleming 2004, PhD thesis 2004. Flyvbjerg, 2001, 2004).

In this regard, case studies generate precise concrete, practical and context-dependent knowledge (Bryman & Bell, 2007). The collected perspectives and observations are considered as data and that is presented in the form of a case, and in alignment with conceptual framework (Bryman & Bell, 2007). They offer an exposure to the practical aspects of a phenomenon through taking the context of its emergence as the core (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 379). Issues emerge from the local context and implications are grounded in that context; nevertheless, the pragmatically conducted research issue is linked with the global context and has to be communicated globally (Flyvbjerg, 2001, 2006,). Therefore, in qualitative research, case study is considered the appropriate presentation form of a research that has a pragmatic nuance (Flyvbjerg, 2001). In presenting the case, reliability of the empirical accounts and theory are critical issues (Flyvbjerg, 2001).

4.3.1.1 The case study: Platinum Jubilee Jute Mills BJMC and the involved Ministries

I selected the Platinum Jubilee Jute Mills, located in Khalishpur, for investigation. I discuss the reasons for my selection in Chapter 1. First, it was one of the four jute mills that were intended to be closed down. Second, its location and size made it suitable for the study. Figure 3.1 illustrates its positioning with respect to all other public institutions. Apart from these public institutions in the current context, the JPC, Alliance and the Commission have a role in designing the policy of the sector.

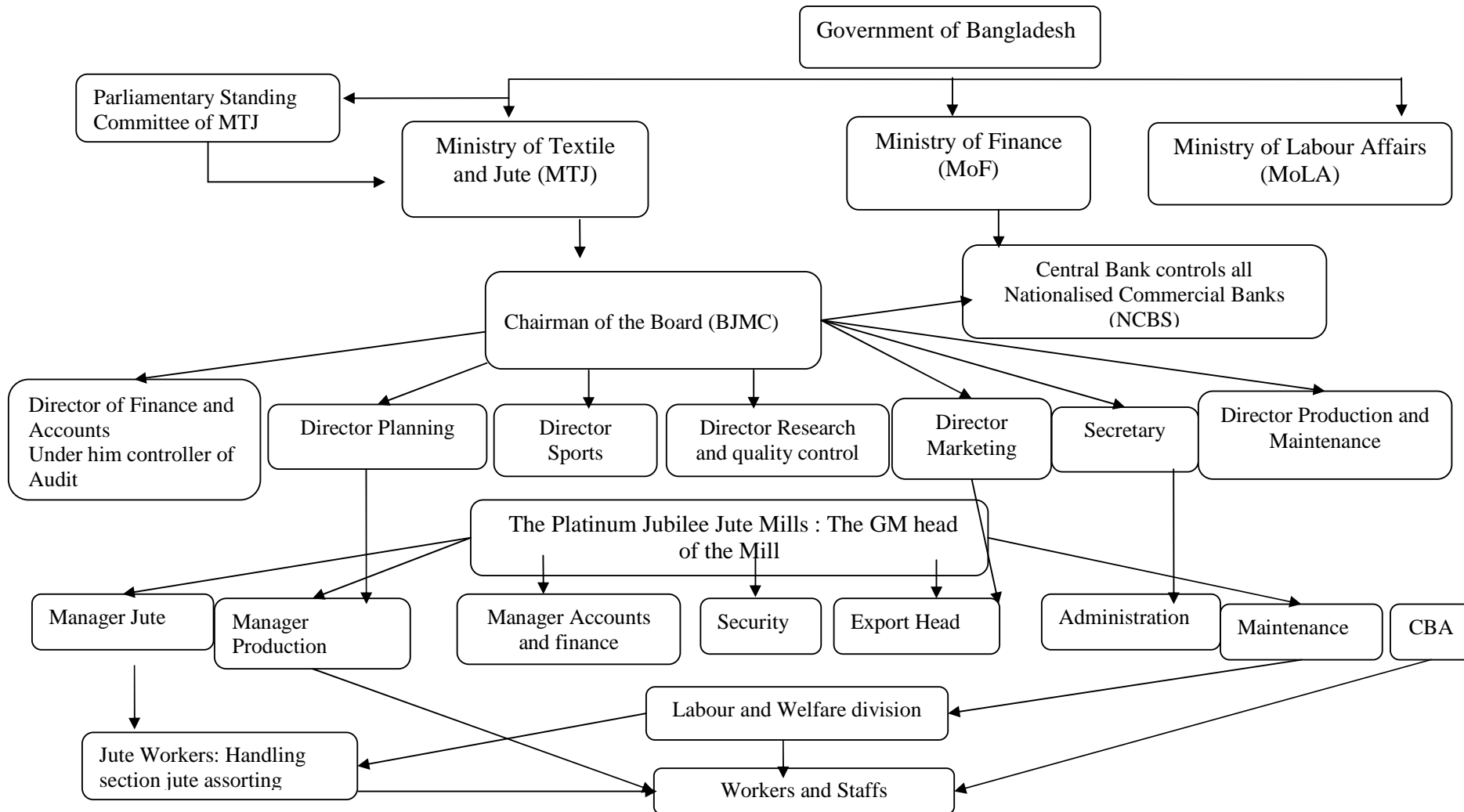
The document *Profile of The Platinum Jubilee Jute Mills* signed by the Deputy General Manager,— the current Head of the Mill, on June 19, 2009 stated that the jute mills started commercial production in 1958, and in 1966 a second mill (#2) was established out of surplus profits. The establishment covered 61.44 acres of land, including: the mill premises; a workers' colony, comprising both a series of buildings and a series of Kachha houses; a school for the children of mill officials, staff and workers; mosques and temples; and grocery shops run by the workers. The total number of looms initially was 957; currently 810 are in operation. The Mills' conduct its financial dealing with the Corporate Branch of Janata Bank: a nationalised commercial bank located in Khulna metropolitan city. For its operation, the Platinum Mills also has to maintain relations with particular public service agencies like the Power Development Board, the Police and others agencies (Please see the appendix B: The Platinum Mills and the involved institutions).

The mills comprise sections for jute handling, batching, preparing, winding and spinning. These sections are jointly known as the production side. The weaving section and the sewing section are known as the factory side. There are also mechanical, workshop and boiler sections. There is a grading system for ranking the workers from 1 to 8. Grade 1 workers are known as helpers. Grade 4 to 8 is designated for *Sardars*. However, the weaving section starts with grade 4. The mills operate on a shift basis. Formally there are shifts A and B, each consisting of 2 lots of 4 hours. There is an informal C shift, which is not reported in the Monthly Information System Report, because it is operated on the production side. Only the amount of total finished products is counted in the MIS report. The C shift starts at 10pm and finishes at 6am. There are 6964 workers: out of this, 3382 are permanent workers and 3582 are *badli* workers. Moreover there are factions in terms of gender. Number of female *badli workers* is 144 and female permanent workers are 34 (MIS Report: December 2010). The total number of employees and staff is 286. This

category can be further divided into the following categories: (i) first class officers or the managerial level officers, (ii) second class officers, and (iii) staff. The staff level is further categorised as clerical and non-clerical. Clerical staffs are divided into Upper Dealing and Lower Dealing Assistants: according to the discourse of the mills they are known as *Boro Babu* and *Choto Babu* respectively. Non-clerical staff comprises Member of Lower Subordinate Staff (MLSS), *Jharudars* (cleaners) and gardeners. Officers' and managers are recognised as BJMC's officials, while workers and staff are recognised as mill employees. There are no female officials. The post of the Head of the Mills belongs to the category of the General Manager. The departments' heads are in the deputy general manager category.

The Enterprise Board of the Platinum Mill mills is headed by the Chairman of BJMC. Other members are the Deputy Secretary of the Ministry and the Ministry of Finance. Besides, as local-level representatives, the General Manager of the Janata Bank — the assigned nationalised commercial bank, the General Manager or Head of the Mills and the Head of the Finance and Accounts department of the mills are also members.

Figure4.1 :Positioning the Platinum Mills and involved actors around it: Chain of command formal and informal



4.3.2 Participatory observation: Gaining access to the mills, getting settled down, building trust and other challenges

Access is important in the case of empirical studies conducted in critical management studies, because the adopted methods of gathering data are participatory observation, and interactions (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000). Doing critical research is considered quite challenging; as the outcomes or focus of the research are not profit oriented (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000). Critical researchers are committed to producing in-depth or 'thick' accounts of the researched issues. Those issues are collectively formed with the participants, and must be meaningful to those people (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000). Therefore interaction is essential along with observation, otherwise in-depth accounts cannot be developed through observation alone (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000).

Gathering in-depth views of a wide range of actors, the researchers need to obtain the consent letter of the authority of the institution that is going to be investigated. I consider at initial phase approval of the Ethics application sets the ground of conducting research at field level. Collecting peoples' perspective is the fulcrum of my research, obtaining the consent letter was a mandatory requirement for initiating my field work. Based on my family's networks in the bureaucracy, I had managed to obtain the letter of consent from the Secretary of the Ministry in May 2010. I had to submit my intended field plan and questionnaire of semi-structured interviews or focus group discussions as requirements of the Ministry with the letter of seeking approval from the Ministry. My overarching questionnaire focused on : *How would you like to see the management system in the next 5 to 10 years; how would you like to be involved with the system; what necessary and significant changes have to be taken place to bring about such changes and who can bring about such changes?*

My field work can be divided into two phase. During first phase I spent eight months from September 2010 to April 2011 in the field. The second phase field work was conducted in November 2011. In this second visit, first, I conducted the participatory learning workshop in the SASF in order to communicate and validate interpretation of the findings to wider ranges of actors. And then I visited BJMC and Platinum Mills for communicating the interpretation of findings to the community; again for authentication of my understanding of their views to represent their voiced issues.

During the first phase from September to October 2010 I had to spend two months in each of the Ministry and BJMC respectively. According to the protocol of the research set by the Ethics Application, and by the bureaucracy of Bangladesh I had to communicate first with the Ministry. According to the Arabic calendar when I commenced my field it was the last phase of the month of *Ramadan*. This is the fasting month for the Muslim community, and the office hours that time is from 9.30 am to 3.30 pm. Moreover, Eid-ul-Fitar, the biggest religious festival for the Muslim community, was held at that time.

Hence it took first two weeks of September to receive the copy of the official letter signed by the Senior Assistant Secretary of the Ministry to the Chairman of BJMC. Following that, BJMC processed a letter to the Head or General Manager of the Platinum Jute Mills. The content of both the letters from the two institutions suggested the assigned authorities for arrangement of the necessary support for my research and took the letter as an 'instruction through a humble request'⁴¹. The Director of Research and Quality Control of BJMC had been assigned as my contact person for the entire period of my research. During these two months I was asked to submit list of documents I needed from BJMC. Moreover, spending time in these institutions helped me to learn about the culture of interactions between the Ministry and the BJMC, the culture of BJMC, and the Board members of BJMC. I found that the Director Research and Quality Control and the Director Marketing are my alumni. We studied for the Masters of Business Administration at the same Institute of the University of Dhaka. Hence the study and I came out of the clutch of that established parent-based- nexus- identity at BJMC. During those two months I also established connections with members of the Alliance and the Commission with help from my activist's friends.

I spent the period from November 2010 to February 2011 in Khalishpur. The authority arranged my accommodation in the Guest House of the Crescent Jute Mills. I had been told to take my parents in order for settling me down there. Thus I had another cultural experience of doing research on and in the public sector. It was not like my experience as a researcher or as a consultant of NGOs even in remote corners of the country. At that time there had been a CBA election in the mills. My parents left me in the first week of November settling me down in an NGO-owned Guest House in Khulna to ensure my security and the safety of my laptop. We managed this with the help of a friend of one of

⁴¹ *Anurodhkrome adesh interesting bureaucratic language*

my activist friends, Nazmul Azam, who has an eco-tourism business and research organisation in Khulna⁴². He was also involved with the movement of the community in 2007. Through him I became familiar with the local level members of the JPC. He assigned one of his female research staff as my research assistant for a couple of weeks, until I became known within the premises of Khalishpur and in the Platinum Mills.

We had to take a rickshaw ride for more than 50 minutes from Khulna to Khalishpur in the foggy winter morning. Through having *chai* stall discussions during the first phase I studied the scope of the field work, and selected and categorised my participants. In the Platinum Mills, the Assistant Manager of Labour and Welfare was designated as my liaison. He had asked me to submit my questionnaire and field plan. I was also asked to initiate interviews first with the senior management and with the currently elected Collective Bargaining Agents. The Labour Office is a large room shared by nine clerical staff and two orderly or non-clerical staff with ten desks, one type writer and a series of wooden cabinets. It became my office for four months. A small vacated room adjacent to the main room was allocated for conducting FGDs and interviews with the workers and the staff. The photos of the Platinum Mills, its main gate, administrative buildings, map of the Mill #1 and Mill #2 and the Labour and Welfare office are attached. (See Appendix: D).

The service *Boro Babu* of the Labour office arranged the schedule of FGDs and interviews according to my field plan, after having discussed it with the Production Manager and the shift in-charge. I had the opportunity to talk with all types of workers of almost all divisions. We took much care in the case of piece-rate workers, since their payment of wages is aligned with their average rate of finished work.

I conducted all of the field level discussions during the period from the third week of November 2010 to February 2011, since I had to take another break due to *Eid-ul Ajha*⁴³ in the second week of November 2010.

I find that the image of the researcher's identity is fluid, and varies during the time of the conducted research. Initially the consent letter obtained from the Ministry based on a family friendship required for the approval of the Ethics Application constituted the

⁴² Khulna has a large mangrove forest called *Sundarban*

⁴³ Another festival followed after Hajj day by the Muslim community.

perspectives of the people of the Platinum Mills about me. It was assumed by the senior officials of the mills and the union leaders that I must be related to the Secretary, and that I was involved with the current ruling party. The post of the Secretary is bureaucratic, but being promoted to that level requires an alliance with one of the two main political parties, either BAL or BNP. At first meeting with the senior managers of both the mills Platinum and Crescent⁴⁴ one common question I had been asked whether I had been involved with the student politics during my student life in the University of Dhaka. Identifying political association of anyone unknown is the current reality of the bureaucracy I gather. Strategically I avoided the question. It is also a fact, that I did not face such question from the participants of the workers' category. Yet, gradually when I unfolded my pack of discussions through focusing on major questions, what I intended became clarified. Then the community identified me as an agent sent by the government to gather the 'real' picture and their perspectives about the mills. Indeed I became involved in everyday nitty-gritty issues, for instance, I had to help female workers in writing applications to the mills' management on different issues, such as asking that their offspring be given the job of *badli* worker, requesting an allotment of a quarter, or asking admission for the children to the mills' school. I came across a large faction of staffs and workers involved with the trade union of other political parties, mainly with the Workers' Party of Bangladesh. Initially I felt invisible obstacles in dealing with the staffs of the Labour office; for instance in terms of accessing the list of documents or in arrangement of FGDs and interviews. Because of being perceived as a highly connected person, I assumed I had been facing challenges in gaining trust of the participants overall. The networking of my activists' friends helped me to gain the confidence of this group.

Hence in the first week of December, I shifted to the Guest House of the Platinum Jute Mills, because by that time I also realised that I had gathered adequate trust and support of the community to live now on the mills' premises.

I was seldom allowed to pay for my *chai*⁴⁵, because of being student. Interestingly, I had been asked several times how much I receive as a 'stipend'. The Vice President of the Workers Front of the current ruling party, was also an ex-trade union leader, he guessed

⁴⁴ Due to CBA election I met them first in officially in an organised Lunch by the Platinum Mills

⁴⁵ Cha means tea in Bangla language

my scholarship could be monthly 80000 taka⁴⁶ (900 AUD) and instantly his assumption was quashed by the following comment of the Service Babu:⁴⁷ *'if a person has the capability of earning that much money, he/she would never ever spend month after month in the mill'*. Thus I became oriented to the industrial culture, its discourse and dry humour embedded in their conversation.

During the wrapping-up phase of my field work, I had been told that there was a rumour among the community that after finishing my investigation I would become the 'Head of the entire Jute Sector'. Hence I found I had been perceived by the mill management as politically connected; and to the staff — my home district was the most important issue (localism). The workers thought that I had been appointed to undertake an investigation; the household members of the permanent workers looked at me as a 'single' woman who hadn't done yet her *faraz*,⁴⁸. That is, I am not yet married; and the female workers perceived me as I am, one of them, a fighter.

Drawing from Bryman and Bell (2007), I conclude that the above discussed process of gaining detailed understanding about the lifeworld and functioning of the mills has the feature of participatory observation. I discuss how I had been perceived. It is argued that the researchers' role and identity have implications in collection of data under ethnography (Atkinson & Hammersley, 1994). As such considering my engagement with the community, the method can be categorised as an ethnographic approach (Based on their provided definition Bryman & Bell, 2007). Whilst I collected 'data' by spending eight months in the field Khalishpur and Dhaka, I spent my first 35 years of life there, watched how restructuring of the mills and banks impacted the life world of the people around me. My own ethnicity and background are key. I raised and studied in Dhaka. On this basis I consider the study has the feature of an ethnographic approach.

⁴⁶ BDT Bangladesh Currency taka 1 Australian dollar is 80 BDT that time

⁴⁷ Babu: implies clerk Upper Dealing Assistant in Jute Mills

⁴⁸ Faraz implies the most important things that people have to do in their life. For example, saying prayer five times is one of the farazs of the Muslim community.

4.3.3 Documents and the method of collection

Documents are important for tracing the policies and practices—the construction of the context (as suggested by Silverman 2006). I collected circulars, gazetteers, and policy documents related to the JSAC, on disinvestment, set-up, liquidation of BJMC, privatisation, leasing out mills, golden handshakes, and voluntary retirement services. In addition I collected the recruitment policy at the officers' level, circulars about purchasing jute, and documents about appointments at the workers' level, the policy of wage fixation, and financial statements of the Platinum Jute Mills for the previous ten years (A list of documents is provided in Appendix D). Finally from the parliament I collected the meeting proceedings of the Standing Committee of the Parliament of the Ministry of Textile and Jute to gain insights about the current discourse of the highest policy approval body regarding the jute sector and the SOJMs. I collected the report presented by the JPC in the SASF, and the Commission Report submitted to the Ministry.

4.3.4 Interviews and focus group discussions (November 2010 to April 2011)

The concrete understanding of the community about their entitlements and rights, and aspiration to be involved with the mill are considered as outcomes of the study and these can be known through interviews and FGDs. Interaction and communication require a collaborative effort between the interviewees and interviewers, or participants and the researcher (Fontana & Frey, 2005, p. 696). Through interviews, a context specific story is created, which is certainly a mutual creation (Fontana and Frey, 2005). Through reflecting probe the researcher can develop the list of issues that have significant concern (Ziessel, 1993). In addition Alvesson and Deetz (2000) suggest that the extension of the selection of actors can go beyond the anticipated categorisation in the case of research under critical management studies. Concern has to be provided in the case of managing the multiplicities of the collected voices (suggested by Flyvbjerg, 2006). I believe that the process of conducting the interactions with the participants followed all those features discussed above. The reasons for conducting interviews and FGDS and how participants have been engaged in dialogue are explained in the table below.

Table 4.2: Focus group discussion and interviews

| Method | Implications |
|---------------------------|--|
| 1. Focus group discussion | <p>I conducted FGDs with the workers of different sections: Jute, handling, spinning and weaving, <i>Sardars</i>, non-clerical staff, security guards and their family members.</p> <p>Focus group discussion is a form of interviewing and helps to cover a number of participants. This is an effective way of collecting pluralistic views. I also find conflicting issues emerged from FGD organically and then there is again organic way of reaching consensus. Prioritisation of gathered data is in-built. Dominance of any members is evident. Usually this was managed by other members, also I had to intervene.</p> <p>However, I found FGDs also did not allow expressing views openly. So, I had to talk to some of my participants when they expressed their intention of talking to me alone. Those views have been gathered as field notes.</p> |
| 2. In-depth interviews | <p>Interviews I used as a mode of gathering views from those who hold key positions institutionally responsible about the mills.</p> <p>Semi-structured interviews have been mainly conducted with the managers, union leaders, Enterprise Board members, and members of the JPC at the mill level.</p> <p>Central level: I conducted interviews with — Board members of BJMC, Secretary and Joint Secretary of the Ministry, Minister of Finance, Local Member of the Parliament/ State Minister of Labour, Chairperson of the Standing Committee of the Parliament of the Ministry, and the members of the Commission/ Alliance. (Please see the Appendix E).</p> |

The study entailed participatory research. The initial categorisation of actors for the research proposal—local, central and members of the Alliance/Commission—had been revised numerous times and are discussed in detail in chapter 4. Evidence of participation can be traced to in the process of selecting the participants of the research. The conducted interviews, and FGDS can be divided into the following phases:

First phase, November 2010: I collected the views of the senior management of the mills and had a two-hour long discussion with the elected CBA. In addition, with the help of the Service *Boro Babu* I had discussions with the *Sardars* and workers. Through *chai*-stall discussions I categorised my participants and grasped what was the real issue of that time. The stored raw jute, the CBA election and the irregularity of appointing *badli* workers and

issues concerning the survivability of the mills were the most frequently discussed subjects.

Second phase, December 2010: I finished conducting FGDs with all categories of workers. Because of how the FGDs had been arranged, I had to conduct one FGD per day.

Third phase, January 2011: I interviewed local-level members of the JPC. I also conducted FGDs with the Bhairi, Hindu workers, and with the household members of the workers. During this phase I came across other actors such as workers who had received golden handshakes voluntarily in 2004, and traced the rehabilitation program of the retrenched workers, and retired manager of the mills.

Fourth phase, February 2011: I interviewed the General Manager, of the Janata Bank in Khulna — the local-level representative in the Enterprise Board. I also interviewed government officers who are responsible for looking after the mills: the Deputy Director of the Directorate of Jute, the Joint Directorate of Labour and the factory inspectors.

February–April 2011: I interviewed BJMC board members, the Secretary and the Joint Secretary of the Ministry, the Minister of Finance, the Chairperson of the Standing Committee of the Parliament of the Ministry, the State Minister of Labour (who is also the Member of Parliament for Khalishpur), the Chairperson of the Privatisation Commission, and members of the Alliance and Commission. I approached one of the national level Chief Economists of the WB. He became interested in my topic and we had an informal chat for almost an hour, but he did not agree to be interviewed.

In the end I ended up with 80 interviews and 33 FGDs, with altogether 170 hours of recorded material. The FGDs consisted mainly of 8–10 members. Initially I had been asked to conduct FGDs in the Board Room, located adjacent to the office of the Head of the mills. I found that interruptions by his Orderly and personal assistant disrupted the rhythm of the discussion. Therefore I shifted the location conducting FGDs to the Labour Office. The place of conversation plays a role (Silverman, 2007). Although some of the workers had appreciated that because of my study they had the opportunity to see the Board Room or visit the Head Office of the mills, I found that shifting location worked well. The workers appeared more comfortable in the Labour Office, because along with the mill floor, they visit this place almost every day.

My questions were unstructured and open-ended and had been revised several times. I followed mainly the framework below:

Introductory questions: Building rapport and setting scenario

- How long you have been working in this mill
- How you have been appointed?
- Do you live in the workers' colony?
- Rapport building: So, how did you celebrate Eid this year and where?
- Probing
- What is your home district? Location
- What did you with the Eid bonus this year?

Firstly through this probing I wanted to find out whether access to land causes any changes in the attitude among workers

Location: to know from where and how they been recruited. I did not have to ask it, I had been asked always. The concept of home district is very strong in the culture of the mills.

Introductory questions for the members of the JPC/ Alliance and Commission

- How they became involved with the movement
- How they formed the Alliance
- Their role at present

Then I proceeded with my main overarching questions.

Major line of inquiry:

- How would you like to see management of your mill in 5-10 years from now?
- In order to achieve such management mode what significant changes need to be taken place at mill and at state level?
- What will be the key factors and events that will be necessary to make these changes happen?
- Who can really initiate such changes?
- In the current context, what do you see as positive aspects that might lead towards achieving your desired approach of management?
- What do you perceive in the current context as major obstacles to you achieving your desired management mode at the mill level and central level?
- What do you consider as major causes that create differences between your desired mode of management and the current practiced one?

- What do you consider as major factors in the past that have caused the current context
- Did all of you join the demonstration back in 2007? If yes then
- What led you to join the demonstration in 2007?
- What do you consider as fundamental elements that constitute your rights (entitlements) in this mill and in state level?
Added later
- What do you consider as major reasons for the government to pursue privatization?
- What are the major differences in the mode of management in privatized and in state-owned jute mills? What causes such differences?

Concluding questions:

What they think overall

I had to recontextualise the language of the questions categorically. ‘Rights’ in Bangla language is ‘*Odhikar*’. *Odhikar* as a word is/ and has been used by the middle class in their discourse both oral and written. My experiences at the field level suggest the community prefer to delineate issues regarding rights as *Najjyo paona* or entitlements. They know what ‘*odhikar*’ means, but it is not their usual mode of expressing what they consider as rights.

I had to be cautious when analysing conversations in terms of noticing pretentious discourse that is oriented to political interests, such as: ‘*you know our father of the nation Bongo Bondhu, as he had been the founder of the current ruling party. ... So nothing can happen in this regime.*

I found that the Chairman of BJMC and some senior workers referred to me as ‘Ma’ or ‘mother’. It is a common way that seniors address young girls affectionately. Moreover, ‘tumi’ is the informal ‘you’ used in communication in the Bangla language. The addressed me in ‘tumi’. Yet, I found this approach of addressing me quite domineering while I was interviewing them.

All the interviews and discussions were conducted in Bangla. Not all interviews and interactions were recorded. In some cases it was felt that the recording device itself could generate discomfort or curiosity among interviewees; in those cases extensive field notes were taken. Initially in the first week of December 2010 during the first phase of interviews, two-hour long discussions with the current CBA members and leader of *badli* workers had been transcribed and the issues that emerged were communicated to the participants. All transcriptions were done in the field.

I collected information about the mills, its management and its relations with the locality, as well as the views of the community as to how they would like the entire system of the mills to function and how they would like to be engaged. My collected perspectives can be considered as narratives. People narrated me stories, on the basis of a time frame. Senior workers and union leader along with the ex-union leaders went back and forth when they narrated their work experience. They traced back to before the liberation war to tell me how their time in the mills had been under the EPIDC ownership; they discussed issues about subsidies provided by the Pakistan government; and they discussed the process of denationalisation. The workers appointed in the 1970-80s narrated their experiences of receiving a profit bonus in the 1980s and the effects of JSAC. The current newly recruited *badli* workers referred mainly to their recent experiences. Both the participants and researchers share the same historical, political, ethnic and nationality background, and so rapport building and relating the issues were easy. Yet, no participant in any category had thought that someone would have come from Australia and asked them: *how you would like to see the management and like to be involved with it.*

I consider my collected comments as narratives. People told me stories. These have two aspects — experience and aspirations, as I mentioned earlier. The stories have been told in a time frame, based on current context the participants reflected back and expressed their aspired future, and the approach was episodic. These are discussed as the major features about narratives (Bryman and Bell (2007, p.571), and so based on these assertions I consider my gathered views as narratives. Hence in my entire thesis I hardly use the word ‘data’ because I find my collected views/perspectives are lived narratives — have nuance of life.

4.3.5 Participatory learning workshops (November 2011)

Flyvbjerg (2006) suggests that a successful constructed dialogue or perspective has the capacity that anybody interested in the subject can be engaged with the process of providing his or her views. According to Anrgrogino (2005) this is a process that ensures multiplicity of sources of information, and reflections, and hence conflicting views come at a conjuncture.

Findings that emerged from the collected perspectives were communicated on the 19th of November 2011 in the SASF. I consider this as a participatory learning workshop on rights-centric restructuring and management. It had been attended by workers, current and retired union leaders of Khalishpur, the Executive Director of Rupayun, and the convener of the *badli* workers committee of the Workers' Party Bangladesh involved with the JPC. The Commission/ Alliance members also joined in the workshop. The Member secretary of the Alliance also a Commission member—the representative of INCIDIN Bangladesh—chaired the process. The media and other interested individuals also participated. The workshop lasted three hours. It also received wide coverage in the highest circulated Bangla newspaper *The Daily Prothom Alo*. I consider the participatory learning workshop cannot be considered as a dialogue between the participants and me; rather, it included participants interested in the issue. On the following day, the JPC arranged their seminar where I was one of the speakers. It was also attended by interested actors and chaired by the current Minister of Information. Photos of the forums are included in the Appendix,D along with the translated news report, published on 20th November in *The Daily Prothom Alo*. During these forums, I played two roles. In the first workshop I conducted I performed the role of communicating my findings and in the Seminar organised by the JPC I communicated my observations. Thus the necessary condition and elements of rights-centric restructuring and management have been collaboratively developed. The authentication lies in that there was a broader participation in these forums and there was involvement of the media.

4.3.6 Observation in field notes

I think that the above discussions also reflect the political and social dynamics of the mills, the power relations, and the gender dimension and can be considered as a method of

participatory observation in ethnography. Observation implies an approach of engagement of the researcher with the context (Anrosino, 2005). The approaches can be attentive listening during informal chats, and hanging around and observing the daily routine work and interactions between and among people (Fontana & Frey, 2005). I observed mainly interactions between and among the following: workers with the staff of the labour office – as management, with the union leaders, union leaders and management, union leaders and BJMC, Ministry and BJMC, the JPC with the workers; and how BJMC and the Ministry interacts with the members of the Commission/ Alliance. I gathered an understanding of the context, perceptions, aspirations and culture within the mills, and within the broader community (Drawing from Atkinson & Dalemont, 2005, Zeisel, 1993).

Through observation and listening, the researcher can grasp the context and thus understand what should be emphasised when conducting interviews and FGDs (Zeisel, 1993). I ended up with eight note books full of field notes. By examining the field notes I can trace how the survivability of the mills emerged as a complex issue. First: I find it is linked with the procurement of jute during the buying season, as an issue of right to livelihoods; belongingness of the community towards the mills; Gradually the complexity of management-union relations with the workers in determining the issues of entitlements, the resistance, and oppression during the caretaker regime emerged. Also I find in my field notes how in the highly gendered institution simultaneously compassion co-exists within the community. My field notes bear the gathered sighs and anxieties of the community about the temporary aspects of the policy of running the mills, and whether the current re-emergence would be continued. At night at the Guest House, where there was no internet or television, it was the notebook and me: a researcher and an enthusiastic observer faced each other. Silverman argues (2006, p. 92): *in making field notes one is not simply recording data but also analysing them*. Field notes imply an interaction of the researcher with herself again, and thus she distils her understanding as she tries to make sense of what she finds (Emerson, 1995).

4.4 Process of analysing

Consider the data analysis of the study as an on-going process. Sense making is and was a part of the research process. I started the analysis of the narratives. The entire process was an on-going process.

After coming back to Melbourne I had to translate transcribed materials into English. Then I continued analysing. I used the qualitative data analysis software NVIVO 9 only for categorising themes. Out of my collected interviews and FGDs, I selected and translated 49 interviews and 33 FGDs that covered all groups of actors. When I found data saturation; as the material appeared repetitive and no new themes were seen to emerge: I stopped the process of translation and analysis.

I started analysis through open coding, highlighting the relevant part and then placing them into categories as free nodes. Gradually I identified the relationship among nodes and the linkage with the emerged categories and thus tree nodes were formed — the major themes have been emerged. In addition, I had to deal with 300 pages of field notes. The gathered materials can be categorised into two groups: information (what exists now, existed before, and how the changes have been done); and approaches (what the participants would like to see and how it can be done). Using a reflexive approach to interpretation provided the opportunity for the researcher to reflect on the collected perspectives not from the lens of identifying what is ‘reality’ or ‘true’ (Alvesson, 2011). The polyphony of voices was maintained in collecting perspectives and also in representations, but this needs further explanation. I mention earlier that I preferred to represent the story from the perspectives of the most disadvantaged category, that is, the workers. That category was further divided according to their mode of employment—*badli* and permanent— and by ethnicity, religion and gender. Then I added the perspectives of the other categories: executives, policy makers and activists. My research issue is rights. And I did the following: what the people consider as rights; how rights were viewed, assessed, and subjugated; whether participation in the process of management is conceived as a right; and the dominant faction’s perception about the system and the rights of the workers to be involved. Gaining insightful perspectives requires critical interpretation of the interpreted materials (Alvesson, 2011).

Collecting views is an interactive process and in this process I find that people first constructed their identities, either individually or collectively—we the *badli* workers’ or ‘female workers’—along with their identity as ‘jute mill workers’. Major themes generated reflect three major concerns: (i) economic; (ii) political, social, legal, and the role of WB; and (iii) cultural or ideological. The generated themes from the collaboratively

produced materials are: construction of identity; politics, political interests, or politically motivated interactions of the politicians; role of state, constitutional obligations, law, and policy formulation and implementation process. Economic issues are: funding and the mills' entitlement of having government funding, privatisation, issues of privatised mills, JSAC as a policy, golden handshakes In line with these other emerged themes are management system, ownership, localism, process of entering into the mills, relation of the workers with the union and management, domination and suppression (Drawing from Alvesson, 2011, p.100).

Alvesson (2011) argues that in analysing interviews, the theoretical framework is the fulcrum. The conceptual framework of rights includes constitutional declarations and Sen's rights based approach. The political and economic context and ideological expression are interpreted from theoretical lenses of critical political economy and subaltern studies. In case of categorising gathered views, where these views are conforming, confirming, contradicting and challenging have been analysed with a rigour. By stating the story coherently, consensus contradictions, or dissensus on identified issues have been maintained (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Analysis has been conducted based on the theoretical lenses of the research.

4.5 Dealing with ethical issues in research

Obtaining the consent of the participants, providing questionnaires and ensuring confidentiality are requirements of the ethics application, and must be followed. Can administrative requirements of ethics for conducting research designed at the Western context cover ethical issues of the research conducted in other context? For instance initially the workers perceived their participation in the research as an instruction of the management. The involvement of the management I had to maintain and hence the Production Manager and *Boro Babu* had to be involved for the arrangement of FGDS. Notion of independent individual freedom is not that strong in the context of the SOJMs of Bangladesh. So, how sincerely I communicated to them that their willingness to be participated in the research was the major issue; it appears to me a ritualistic process.

Building trust and confidence is important (Bryman & Bell, 2007). But it acts as a double bind for the researcher. First, the confidence I gathered in terms of the closeness I built

with the community haunts me now about whether I am doing justice to my participants in terms of representing their aspirations as well as experiences. Similarly, many issues that were conveyed to me were done so confidentially, although these are relevant. I have faced an internal and ongoing debate about whether it is ethical to bring up those topics into the public domain.

Second I have been confronted with the internal ethical concerns of a researcher, including questions such as: 'am I just using them to acquire my degree'. Besides, I think my class position, upbringing and gender have role in shaping my views, in collection and analysis of views. Ethics cannot be categorised as an isolated issue of an individual; indeed it is an outcome of social, historical, political ideological and cultural conditions. But I had to be strategic in dealing with the political issues with the management of the mills and with the staff of the Labour Office. Also I found it difficult to hold my views in a highly gendered industrial culture of the mills. Now question is what code of ethics researcher should follow?

Aside from that, drawing from Wray-Bliss and Brewis (2008) if the heterogeneity of voices, in particular the voices of disadvantaged factions, matter in the process in terms of producing the research output in collaboration with the participants, I confirm that I thoroughly maintained this. The applied methods confirm the objective of bringing at surface level the discussion of the 'real people' — community — individually and group wise from the mill level (Drawing from Cairns, 2004). Therefore participation was ensured first, through selecting the participants, and designing the field plan — in consultation with the participants. Also I crystallised the discussed issues first through communicating the narrated issues from my initial collected interviews and FGDs. Finally at the second phase through the participatory learning workshop in the SASF and through discussions in the mills I communicated my findings and received authentication.

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter has aimed to provide empirical accounts — the process, and method I applied, including what I as a researcher faced during I conducted the study. The purpose is to present how I undertook the empirical part of the thesis. In the following chapter, the story is presented with the selected perspectives of the actors. This provides an in-depth account of aspired management and restructuring. Chapter 5 will discuss what these selected perspectives or the story means in relation to the theoretical questions first: the necessary conditions and elements of rights-centric restructuring and management; and second: how the rights centric restructuring can be implemented.

Chapter 5: Findings

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⁴⁹ *Badli* neta Interview #16, CBA, FGD #1, and FGD, 2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,14,15,16,18,20 Mostly permanent workers and senior *Badli* workers

⁵⁰ CBA, FGD#1, The ex-president of the Platinum Jubilee Mills, 2008-2010, Interview #14, President of the Workers' party of Bangladesh, Interview # 26,

⁵¹ The ex-president of CBA 2008-2010, Current Assistant Secretary Interview #14,13, CBA FGD#1,permanet workers, FGD#2,7

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⁵² Pan is Betel. This has to be chewed with Areca nut. *Biri* is cheap cigarette. The pronunciation in Bangla is *biri* while it mostly known as *bidi*

⁵³ Suggested in almost all conducted FGDs with the workers, and further authenticated and repeated in the Seminar of the SASF

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- 5.5.9 Conclusion

⁵⁴ Politics as the usage suggests

⁵⁵ Literary meaning of *Rajniti* implies rule of politics and *pet-niti* means rules/direction of the stomach.,

⁵⁶ Mastans: hooligans

5.1 Introduction

The methodological guidelines of this thesis, as discussed in chapter three, have been followed in representing a case study of perceptions of the actors regarding the current situation, their aspirations regarding their involvement with the management and governing mechanism, and the factors that are considered as enabling factors in terms of fulfilling their aspired involvement in the context of the Platinum Mills of Khalishpur.

5.1.1 Institutional arrangement of mill's functioning system and categorisation of actors

The Nationalisation Order, subsequent Presidential Order (PO 27, announced March 1972) and its revised version of 1982 made the mills accountable to a range of public institutions as discussed in (Chapter 2 , Section 2.2.1 and figure 2.1). Apart from that, currently the JPC, Alliance and the Commission have a role in designing the policy of the sector. Figure 4.1 shows the institutions involved with the mills. Complex webs of organisations are now involved in the functioning of the mills. Broadly, these can be divided into two: (i) policy-making factions; and (ii) policy-influencing factions. Based on how the field work had been primarily designed, actors are broadly categorised into two levels: (A) Local or mill level actors; and (B) Actors at the central level.

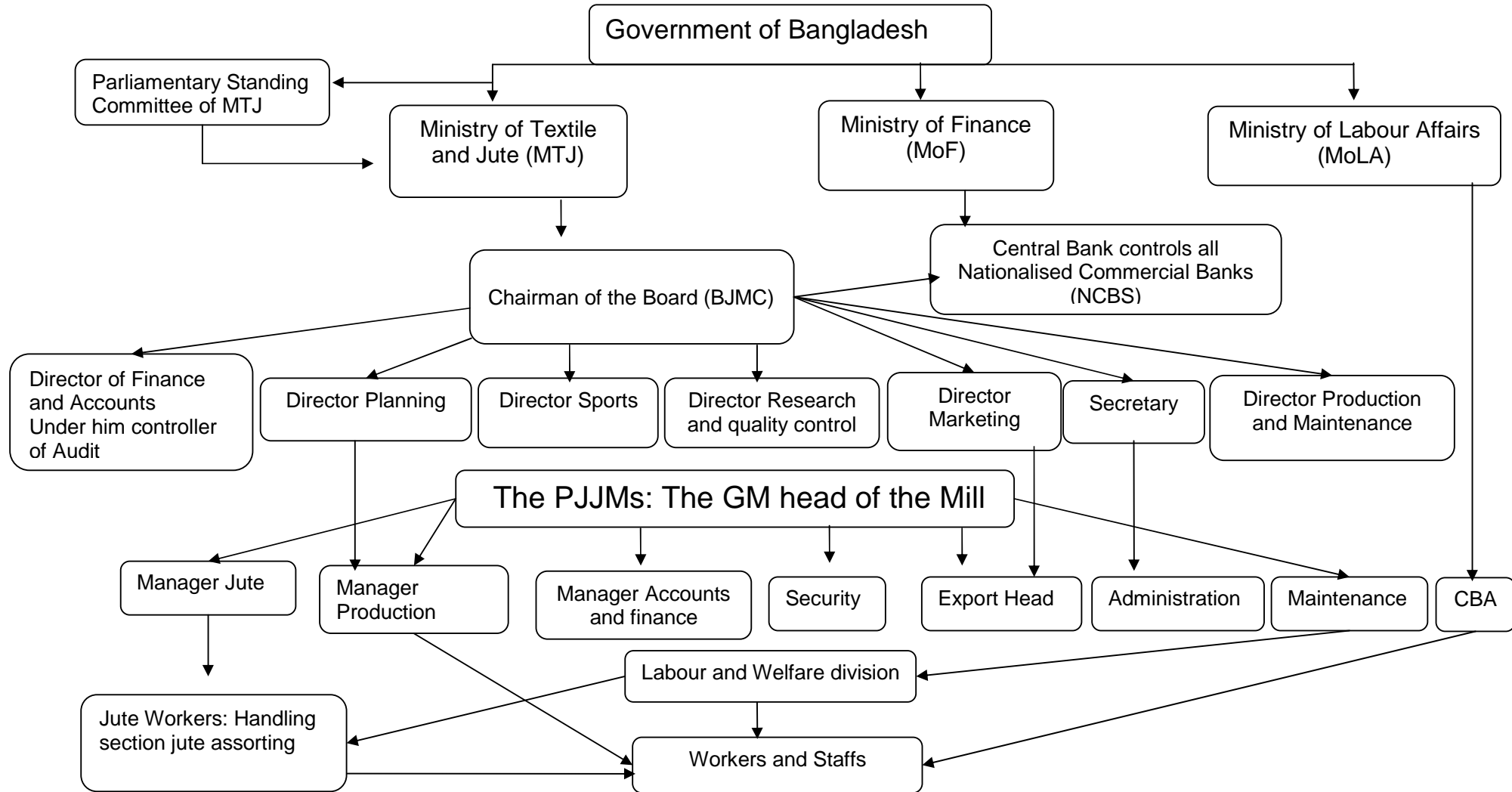
(A) Categorisation of actors at the local level

The initial classification of actors at the mill level was based on the MIS report collected from BJMC on the Platinum Jubilee Jute Mills (here after, the Platinum Mills). They were classified as follows:

- (1) Male and female workers under the categories of permanent and *badli* ,
- (2) Union leaders and the current elected CBA,
- (3) Staff clerical known as UDA (Upper Dealing Assistant) and LDA (Lower Dealing Assistant) and non-clerical staff under the categories of Orderly and MLSS,
- (4) Senior management officials of the mills (who according to PO 27 are considered as BJMC officials).

- (5) Household members of the workers and members of surrounding community whose livelihood depends on the functioning of the mill, and
- (6) The local level members of the JMPC.

Figure 5.1 Positioning of the platinum mills, interactions with the institutions and involved actors



However, this initial classification of local level actors had to be revised several times as I gradually made inroads into the life-world of the community of the Platinum Mills, informally through discussions around the *Chai* stall, and formally through FGDs and semi-structured interviews. The table below contains information regarding identified actors, classification of the actors and reasons for the classifications as per the suggestions of the participants.

Table 5.1.1: Further classification of actors and reasons for selection:

| A. | Local level | Classification of further actors | Reasons for identification |
|----|---|---|---|
| A1 | Mill level actors | Permanent and <i>badli</i> workers on the production side: Spinning, batching and winding section. | Are paid on a time-rate basis. Known as time-rate workers. |
| | | Permanent and <i>badli</i> workers on the weaving and finishing side, including the sewing section. | Are paid on a piece-rate basis Generally known as fixed-rate workers. |
| | | Permanent and <i>badli</i> workers of the Handling sections of the Jute Department | The Handling section is partially privatised and the workers of the Platinum Mills have lodged an injunction against this decision. |
| | | Bihari and Hindu workers and their household members | Actors who are marginalised by ethnicity and religion |
| | | <i>Jamadars</i> : non-clerical staff who belong mainly to the Hindu schedule caste community | |
| | | Retrenched workers currently working as Rickshaw pullers | |
| A2 | Participants of the JMPC (suggested by the CBA and the leader of <i>badli</i> workers) | The Vice President of the workers front of the current ruling party | Ex-union leader of the Platinum Mills and a member of the current Wage Commission formed by the government. |
| | | Secretary of the Workers' Federation of the Workers' Party of Bangladesh | Ex- union leader of the Platinum Mills. |
| | | Ward Commissioner of Khalishpur | A local elected agent and an ex-union leader |
| | | President of the Youth Forum of the Workers' Party of Bangladesh | The Convener of the <i>badli</i> workers of all mills including private and privatised mills of Bangladesh. |
| | | Representative of Rupayan | Local level organisation working on workers' rights in liaison with |

| A. | Local level | Classification of further actors | Reasons for identification |
|----|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| | | | actionaid Bangladesh since 2007 |
| | | Retired Manager of the Mill | Associated with the JMPC |
| A3 | Other institutionally involved actors | Mayor | City Mayor of Khulna, who looks after the well-being of this industrial town |
| | | The General Manager of Janta Bank ⁵⁷ | Local level member of the Enterprise Board of the mill. |
| | | Director of the Joint Directorate of Labour | Representing the Ministry of Labour and has a role in the case of dispute settlement between mill management and workers. |
| | | Factory Inspector | Ministry of Industry |
| | | Representative of Jute Directorate | Ministry of Jute |
| | | Two local level journalists | Work in local daily newspapers and involved as correspondents of the daily newspaper at the national level and Bangladesh Television. |

(A) Categorisation of actors at the central level:

Central level actors can be categorised into four groups. The table below shows the classification of central level actors and their involvement with the responsible institutions:

Table 5.1.2 Classification of actors and their positioning central level

| B | Central level | Classification of actors |
|------------------|--|--|
| B1 | BJMC supervisory and executive body | Board members and Chairman of BJMC |
| | Ministry of Textile and Jute: Policy-making and control body | Secretary and Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Textile and Jute |
| B2 | Elected political actors | State Minister of Labour and the local Member of Parliament |
| | | Minister of Finance and Planning |
| | | The Chairman of the Standing Committee of the Parliament on the Ministry of Textile and Jute |
| | | Chairman Privatisation Commission |
| | | Ex Member of Parliament of the locality |
| B3 Civil society | Members selected from the Alliance as members of the Jute Commission for | President of the Alliance and Commission |
| | | The members of the Trade Union Centre |

⁵⁷ The nationalised commercial banks (NCBs) located in Khulna city

| B | Central level | Classification of actors |
|---|------------------------------|--|
| | formulating Jute Policy 2011 | (TUC) of the Communist Party of Bangladesh, representing the JMPC The Member Secretary of the Alliance, representative of Integrated and Community Development in Bangladesh (INCIDIN Bangladesh) |

5.1.2 Collection, collation and representation of narratives

At the local level, 34 interviews and 33 FGDs were conducted. The data collected through interviews and FGDs are also supported by frequent informal *Cha-pan-biri*⁵⁸ stall discussions attended by *badli* and permanent workers, owners of *Cha-pan-biri* stalls, members of workers' households and small traders working around the mill. These collective categories of actors are denoted as the 'community'. At the central level, fifteen interviews were conducted with actors categorised into four and explained in the Table 4.1.2. A very complex web of actors was found in regard to the management system of the mills and hence actors can be further classified as state and non-state actors.

All the interviews and discussions were conducted in Bangla. Not all interviews and interactions were recorded. In some cases it was felt that the recording device itself could generate discomfort or curiosity among interviewees; in those cases extensive field notes were taken. Issues were generated when I asked participants the overarching questions: 'How would you like to see the management system in next five to ten years? How would you like to be involved with the system? What necessary and significant changes have to take place to bring about such changes and who can bring about such changes?'

Initially, I took a random set of transcripts and coded them under the themes. I compared the provided information, experiences and approaches of the actors in the different categories, and here I present those as their perspectives, perceptions and conceptualisations. The collected documents and my observations also have a role. In the current context when the mills' are in an emerging mode my study produced sensitisation among management, union leaders, workers and executives of BJMC. Initially I had been perceived as an agent of the current government appointed to conduct an overall inspection

⁵⁸ Pan is Betel. This has to be chewed with Areca nut. *Biri* is cheap cigarette. The pronunciation in Bangla is *biri* while it mostly known as *bidi*.

of the mills. Hence union members wanted to give me a ‘true picture about the entire system’, that concentrated mainly on corruption of the executives, excessive intervention by the BJMC, and the apathy of the political parties towards the mills because of the WB’s policy. Similarly, the mills’ management highlighted the ‘rowdy attitude’ of union leaders, the political affiliation of the union leaders disrupting the overall discipline of the mills, and workers’ apathy towards work (Interview #1, 2, 3, 5, 6). The accounts provided by the workers reflect that they and the mills became the victim of the conspiracy conducted by the union leaders, management; the ruling political parties. These groups are responsible for the destitution of the workers.

In the following discussion, the gathered perspectives are structured into four sections. The first section discusses peoples’ perceptions about the functioning of the mill, and the survivability of the mills. The second section deals with the creation of a crisis and how the mills became loss-making entities and how the community resisted the last phase of the JSAC. The third section deals with workers’ perception about the legacy of the crisis and the role of management. The fourth section discusses how people conceptualise their rights and entitlements.⁵⁹ (This includes perceptions about aspired management, ownership, policy and practices, and discusses the plausibility and possibility of aspired management within the post-resistance context of the re-emergence of the mills.

I visited Khalishpur for the second time after presenting my findings in a Seminar in the South Asian Social Forum (SASF) in November 2011. The Seminar was attended by central level actors, journalists and local level members of the JPC, including union leaders of the government-owned mills of Khalishpur. The JPC had a very large presence at the SASF under the banner of ‘Jute and Jute Mills: Protesting Neoliberal Myth’.⁶⁰ During my second visit to Khalishpur, I stayed for a week to communicate the findings I gathered during my first field trips from their narratives.

⁵⁹ Rights as entitlements in Bangla: Najjyo paona implies paona entitlement and Najjyo means legally justified. So in case of entitlement it implies what is provided in the constitution.

⁶⁰ Please see the appendix D photographs about JMPC participation in SASF.

5.2 ‘Our survival depends on the mills’ survival’: Peoples’ perceptions about functioning of the mills

The discussion in this section concentrates mainly on how the community perceives the implications of the functioning of the mills in their life-world within the context of the recent revival of the mills. This is followed by a discussion of the plausibility of working in privately established or privatised mills as an alternative and workers’ perspectives regarding the social and economic significance of SOJMs. The survivability of the mills has emerged as an issue crucial to the survival of the community.

5.2.1 Survivability of the mills and the community of Khalishpur

The recent revival of the mills has greatly sensitised the people. Furthermore, Khalishpur is the centre of activities of the government’s reviving of mills. Reopening of closed and leased-out mills commenced in Khalishpur with the reopening of the Peoples’ Jute Mills under the name Khalishpur Jute Mills. In discussions the community frequently reflected back and forth, as they identified distinct time periods with reference to the ruling parties of the time. For instance: ‘before this government came into the power’; ‘during last the caretaker regime,’⁶¹ and ‘after 2009 when the democratic regime or current ruling party came into power.’⁶²

The community regards the last twenty years as a ‘crisis period’ as they had experiences of being laid off, mill closures, a crisis in raw jute supplies, and piled-up finished products not delivered and scattered all along the premises of the mills. They also spoke about inconsistencies in terms of payment of *Shaptah*,⁶³ retirement benefits and the complicated process of withdrawing funds from the Provident Fund. There was almost no permanent recruitment at any level. Hence the recent government initiatives,⁶⁴ in particular the circular #142 sent in July 2010 — regarding procuring raw jute at market prices, timely releases of working capital, consistent supply of electricity, and the paying off of all workers’ dues — represent historical changes in the process of managing the mill. The appointments of expert senior officials of BJMC on the board of directors and as the

⁶¹ The caretaker regime continued from January 2007- December 2008

⁶² I state in the introductory chapter that the year 2009-10 is considered as the point of departure in the history of SOJMs.

⁶³ Weekly wages.

⁶⁴ As discussed in Introduction chapter, reduction of lending interest rate for jute mills, launching bonds out of accumulated loans and timely release of cash during the buying season of jute .

Chairman of BJMC are commonly regarded as the causes of such positive approaches towards managing the mills. In addition, on January 13, 2011⁶⁵ another ‘historical circular’ was sent regarding initiating the gradual appointment of *badli* workers as permanent workers on a seniority basis to the 30% vacated posts in the current set-up. The demand for jute goods in the international market and the election mandate of the current ruling party are the root causes for changes to the approach of managing the mills. Leader of the *badli* workers explained:

There was an overnight change in the policy of managing the mills. This year the mill management procured raw jute during the buying season .We have been working for twenty years, but have never seen such an amount of jute in our entire working life. ... Now there is an optimum level of production and a consistent supply of electricity. The mill is now running profitably and all dues have been paid off and we receive Shaptah regularly’. (Interview #16 and similar citations in FGD #1).

He further added: *They [the ruling political party] are now bound to run the mill; we have cast votes for them for their election mandate of running the SOJMs’*⁶⁶(Leader of the *badli* workers, Interview #16).

Newly refurbished shops selling electronic goods, cell phone repair centres, shops for renting DVDs, and billboards of the branches of prominent micro-credit NGOs such as BRAC and ASA⁶⁷ along Khalishpur Road now constitute the landscape of Khalishpur. The fully functioning jute mills — the Crescent Jute Mills and The Platinum Jubilee Jute Mills — and the experimental operation of the Peoples’ Jute Mills indicate the re-emergence of this industrial town. i.e. ‘Town Khalishpur’. In parallel, other constructions – such as the conversion of ‘world renowned’⁶⁸ newsprint mills into the Office of the Rapid Action Battalion, the ghostly appearance of the Workers’ Welfare Centre (an establishment of the Ministry of Labour from the early 1960s) and *Khema*,⁶⁹ the dwelling areas of the workers indicating the settlement process conducted during the 1950s – denote its history of emergence as a space and the ruptures it has been through during the last fifty years.

⁶⁵ I was in Khalishpur at that time.

⁶⁶ Comment I gathered from various Chai stall discussions.

⁶⁷ BRAC: Building Resource Across the Community , ASA: Association for Social Advancement

⁶⁸ According to the community of the Platinum Jute Mills

⁶⁹ *Khema* is an Urdu word for slums

These signs indicate the early settlement process for industrialisation conducted during the 1950s, and denote emergence of Khalishpur as a space. Within this surrounding, the community of the Platinum Mills comprises approximately 40,000 people. Mills are the fulcrum of the life-world of the community.

All these shops: chai stalls, bazaars, suppliers of fish, stationers, vegetables vendors, grocery shops, the rickshaw pullers, or the track or van that carries raw materials or finished products: they depend on our earnings. Here everybody's lives are interlinked and totally depend on the working of the mill. It works as a chain with multiple links but every link is important for the survival of this locality.
(Female participants, FGD#14)

Another comment:

When the mills were closed or about to close their operation, [...] in 2004–2008, Khalispur seem deserted. ... People felt frightened to go outside after sunset.

Constructed from field notes. (Local woman activist interview#28)

The workers' faction is the major constituting element of the community. Initially workers are employed under the *badli system*. There had been irregularity in appointing permanent workers for almost sixteen years. Few permanent workers have been appointed, yet the number of *badli workers* is increasing. Features of the *badli* workers as category reflect geographical, regional, social and economic aspects. Khalishpur lies in the southern part of the country. This region is prone to floods, cyclones and river erosion. Frequent cyclones have increased the salinity of the soil resulting in a reduction of opportunities to work as seasonal agricultural wage workers. Therefore, migrating to Khalispur, the only industrial town, in search of work is a natural corollary: *I came after Aila⁷⁰ with my husband. There was no way to work as agricultural worker.* (Comment of a female *badli* workers collected from permanent and *badli* female workers, FGD#14)

There is an intergenerational aspect to the *badli* system: some participants working under the *badli* system are the offspring of permanent workers. *My grandfather used to work here and then my uncle, now I am working as a badli in the spinning section.* (One participant of *badli* workers, FGD #20)

⁷⁰ Aila was the second tropical cyclone that caused extensive damage in Bangladesh in May 2009. .

There is another group of workers who had been retrenched by the government-owned mills when those mills had been privatised, and are now employed under the *Badli* system in the Platinum Mills.

My grade is 4 as a badli worker, because I am a weaver. I used to work as a permanent worker in the Peoples' Jute Mills. The People's mills had been given to the owner. I looked for a job here (Badli workers, FGD #21).

Hence young adults are drawn by older workers and then settled down depending on their social nexus, mainly family or neighbours. An informal recruitment process is conducted through the Sardars,⁷¹ union leaders and staff.

'We came here in search of work based on someone, like my brother-in-law arranged the job and helped me in settling down. ... It is like a tree. It has its trunk and then branches are grown.' (Badli workers, FGD #21)

There is a gender dimension in how the workers' faction is formed. The necessity of a functioning mill is reflected in one female *badli* participant's statement:⁷² *We are rootless people; where would we go back to? We came with our husbands and now they have left us* (Female permanent and *badli* worker #14, 15, female *badli* workers #17)

I found that there is a pool of labour out there waiting to be appointed as *badli workers* as the condition of the mills change. As a wife of a *badli workers* narrated:

If through the process most of our husbands can be appointed as permanent workers, then if Allah wants it this time I may take a chance to look for a job. (One of the members of FGD#23).

Linking the functioning mode of the mill with their existence, *badli* workers signify their relations with the mills. Their need to exist determines their level of involvement with the mill. The leader of *badli* workers commented

I have to work as long as I survive and for our survival, the mills have to function. [...] I am not a permanent worker that after retirement will go back to his village with 7 lakh⁷³ taka. (Interview #16).

⁷¹ Head of workers

⁷² FGD 17

⁷³ Hundreds thousands

The workers regard their experience in the mill as the only skill they possess, so if the mill is closed there is no scope for them to find any other job. If the mill functions they can remain employed and can afford to educate their children and build a concrete house after retirement. It is a means of surviving in the present and a hope for a secure future: an assurance of a secure life and life-world. One group of participants narrated:

We consider a permanent job in the government mill for a worker as the farmer considers possessing a piece of land. The way he adores his asset — we think in the same way. (Permanent workers, FGD #9)

In 2012, the workers received a festival bonus prior to the festivals, which was the first time that they had received any festival allowance in past twenty years. Using the festival bonus to purchase valuable items was common in earlier times. They had this chance again in 2012. The President of the CBA narrated:

In 2007–08, we performed our Eid Jamat⁷⁴ on the street as a sign of protest. ... This year during Eid, fifty colour televisions and ten fridges (refrigerators) in total entered into the houses of the Platinum Mills colony. (President of the CBA, FGD# 1)

The religious festival such as *Durga Puja*⁷⁵ of the Hindu community this year has been organised in the temple located inside the mill, as it had been practice before. Similarly, annual cultural events such as *Jatra*⁷⁶ and the yearly picnic of the employees⁷⁷ have also been re-initiated. I participated in all those events as a guest. These events are financed by the welfare fund of the employees and are organised collectively. I was asked to stay back a few more days to enjoy the annual sports event for all mills of BJMC, planned to be held in February 2011 in Khalishpur.

The workers do not consider the mill as a place where they come for work, but as a space where they belong and which they own. The workers' colonies, the Basti⁷⁸ where the *Badli* workers and most of the female workers live are located near the railway track adjacent to the mills. The children play along the track, and everybody knows each other. I was

⁷⁴ Eid Jamat: Prayer of the Eid day has social significance for the Muslim community

⁷⁵ The biggest festival of the Bangali Hindu community

⁷⁶ Jatra is a popular form of Bangali theatre,

⁷⁷ According to the discourse of mill, employees means staff and workers

⁷⁸ *Basti* means shanty area or slums

invited for lunch several times on Fridays⁷⁹ mainly by the female workers to their homes. There is a very deep emotional bond that they possess with the mill, with their job and with the community where they belong. The permanent and *badli female* workers suggested:

The mill is not place where we come for work, we belong here. If these mills do not function ... only for these mills we can feed our children, we think our children can be also employed here ... a deep maya (attachment), we possess with the mill.
(Permanent and *badli* female workers #12).

This is the ultimate aspiration regarding the functioning of the mill in the life-world of the community. They also link with my aspirations in conducting this research: I was told numerous times: ‘...because of the functioning mills you are in Khalishpur now, and could pursue your research’. (Constructed from field notes).

5.2.2 SOJMS are goldmine of the country⁸⁰

The permanent workers faced a persistent crisis over last twenty years and for the *badli* workers it was unlikely that they would be appointed as permanent workers. However, all categories of workers still prefer to work in the Platinum Mills or government-owned mills. According to the workers, most of the privatised mills in this locality are closed. They frequently refer as evidence the recent failure of the owners in running the Peoples’ Mills. It was leased out in 2008 by the caretaker government. The workers claim that the owners of the privatised mills have neither the intention nor the competence to run such massive mills. Similarly, privately owned mills are often dubbed ‘blood suckers’. They draw on the hard labour of the workers and pay them minimally. On the other hand, in the government-owned mills, the payment of *Shaptah* or weekly payment to the workers is relatively good. As one of the workers commented:

*In the case of the privatised mills, the owners want to borrow money from the bank and use the mill as a mortgage and then they close the mill. Yes, privately established mills are earning a profit, but at the cost of the workers. They give 560 taka⁸¹ Shaptah to the workers. While even as *badli* in Platinum Mills we earn an*

⁷⁹ Weekly holiday of the workerslatinum

⁸⁰ Permanent workers male and female , FGD# 9,7, 14,

⁸¹ 90 taka=1 AUD

average 700/800 taka per week minimum. ... We have to pay rent. ... You know the price of one kilo rice in the current bazaar is 45-40 taka. How can we survive? Private mills are located in rural areas, so people living there can work together with their wives and children and so they can survive. (Badli workers, FGD#19

Furthermore, workers think that jobs in privatised mills are not secure. The owners are not bound to follow the legal rules, regulations and the wage scale provided by the Wage Commission, and if any accidents occur, there is no provision for claiming insurance or compensation. The CBA of the owners' mills act to protect the interests of the owners, because they have to protect their jobs. The ex-President of CBA further added:

The wage scale that had been announced in 1995 still persists in private jute mills. Owners have their own mechanism of managing bureaucrats as well as politicians. 'They' advocate that private mills earn a profit and our SOJMs are conceived as loss-making concerns. (Interview #14)

Therefore, the workers refer government-owned mills as the 'goldmine' of the country, a source of employment for a huge number of people, since a vast section of the peasants' community is dependent on its functioning. The country has acute unemployment problems, and other sources of employment are limited. So the community considers that such labour-intensive industry, which also helps to earn foreign currency, needs to survive. There is a common perception that the government has to change its perspective about the policy of running SOJMs. The community agrees and understands that mills are business enterprises but they think the state should consider them as social concerns.

If this sector runs efficiently then the entire working class and the peasants will have a secure life. Ok, it is a business concern, but its survival is important; government should consider it as a social concern. (The permanent workers, FGD # 8).

The community further added: *if it is privatised then not even a fly will be around Khalishpur. People will have to beg in the streets instead of being here. (Household members of the permanent workers, #25).*

At the central level, the Board members of BJMC confirmed that the inadequate wage scale of the privatised mills is a challenge for the functioning of the SOJMs. Thus the private sector mills are perceived profitable. While mills under BJMC have the capacity to

bulk sell, the private sector mills do not have that capacity, as the Director Marketing of BJMC suggested:

'BJMC possess the capacity of supplying 40,000 bales of materials within one or two months. Exporting such a bulk amount may require forty months for private and privatised jute mills. (The Director Marketing, Interview # 36).

According to the executives of BJMC, the joining of SOJMs to the jute market as a buyer in 2010 has stopped the private owners,⁸² jute traders and the shippers exploiting the market price of raw jute in their favour. So it helps the farmers to receive a fair price for their products. This resonates with the remark I gathered from female workers: *Because of these mills we are surviving with our children, so many people live on its functioning. Jute is the golden fibre of the country, and the mills are the gold mine* (FGD, # 14, female permanent and *badli* workers).

5.2.3 The role of state and the survivability of the mill – *Primacy is political will*

The workers consider that a comprehensive policy and consistent application of that policy are essential pre-conditions of survivability. It implies there should be no change in policy and planning if the political regime changes. *The mills need proper policies, rules and regulations. There should be a system that in absence of government and BJMC, the mills could run on their own. ... Changes of government means there may be a change of policy so there should be a concrete policy.* (*Badli* workers, FGD #20). The community perceives the government concern is the major issue that determines the survivability of the mill.

5.2.3.1 Operational modes of survivability

In regard to operational procedure the workers suggest a number of measures, basing on their experience. They perceive that sporadic layoffs or retrenchment of workers disrupt the production process, because the number of workers, machines and looms had all been properly calculated. Furthermore, they consider that regular and mandatory budgetary allocation for the procurement of raw jute would help to minimise bureaucracy's hegemony in terms of releasing cash on time, and controlling procurement prices.

Each machine requires two helpers and one machine operator: all had been calculated by EPIDC when they set up the mills. [...] and there must be budgetary

⁸² Owners implied owners of the privately and privatised mills

allocation for the procurement of jute. Then the bureaucrats cannot intervene in the procurement process. (CBA, FGD#1).

They assume that the government exchanges jute product with the government of other countries, so budgetary allocation for the procurement of raw jute is the right of the public sector jute mills:

There is an exchange of products, and money goes straight to the treasury, so there should be allocation for the mill (Badli workers #21).

Moreover, the community thinks that since the Power Development Board, which supplies electricity, and the Nationalised Commercial Banks, which are responsible for looking after the financial situation of the mill, are service sectors under the government, then the government must have supportive policies and a coordinated approach for the public-owned jute mills. The leader of *badli workers* explained:

We just want to see a properly functioning machine and have it aligned with the existing the capacity of people. Now we never see electricity disruptions. ... Before it had been hour after hour that we remained idle. No work, because no electricity. These are all state-owned enterprises, our asset! ... Why is there no electricity because of unpaid dues? We have to look from this perspective: that all is under government's ownership and we will put in our efforts and it will bring prosperity for all. (Interview #16).

In line with its massive capacity development initiatives at all levels of employees, systematic planning for Balancing Modernisation and Renovation of the mills, and understanding global markets are considered as essential conditions for the effective functioning of the mills; the community still talks about the *Dundee pass*⁸³ expert Managers of the mills they came to know or found during the regime of EPIDC. The CBA suggested:

The government has to take the initiative for expansion of the internal market, thereby reducing dependence on external markets. (CBA, FGD#1).

⁸³ 'Dundee Pass' is a discourse of the jute mills. This implies Managers had been graduated from the Jute Technology Institute of Dundee

5.2.3.2 Norms of and revised structure of involved entities for ensuring survivability

Lack of supervision and monitoring are perceived as causes of the mills being a loss-making concern. Therefore systematic coordination, supervision and monitoring of the mill are issues of concern for the workers. They described the following.

First, there should be formal regular discussions among workers, the union, and mill management. This must become a practice; otherwise a lack of coordination causes mistrust. One group of participants commented four times on its importance and finally concluded: *'otherwise we always make each other responsible for any sort of anomalies'*. (Permanent workers, FGD#9).

Second, the CBA should have formal control over management practices. The community argue that the CBA must understand that their role is protecting the interests of the workers, and that an effective CBA is the precondition for managing the mill. A responsible attitude of the CBA, mill management and bureaucrats are required for effective management of the mills.

Managing the mill depends on the CBA, the mill management authority and the BJMC/Ministry. If they want they discuss together and they can bring changes. They can let us know what is going on through meetings or whatever. (Permanent workers, FGD#7).

Similarly the CBA want formal participation in the management of the mill. They assume that their role is not properly evaluated and that formal engagement can make them more accountable.

Why they don't send a circular, we want to discuss with management about the mill and we want it officially. [...] Those officers they get transferred frequently, but we remain here, we live here. (The ex-president of CBA2008-2010)

Frequent transfer of managers and officers appear problematic to the workers. They cannot comprehend where the systematic accountability of management is grounded. As a result the workers believe that solution lies in the mills functioning as an independent entity like a *Pan-bidi* shop⁸⁴:

⁸⁴ Pan: Betel-nut, *biri*: cheap cigarette, usually known as *bidi*

It should function like Cha-Pan-Biri Shops, with its own income and expenditure as an entity and the GM of the mill has to be responsible for the entire earnings and expenditure of the mill. (Most of all FGDs #7, 14,15,18,21, Interviews, #17,Cha stall discussions).

On the issues of better supervision I gather two opposing perspectives about how to restructure the existing institutions involved with the mills. One group of workers consider that structural changes are required for effective supervision and the zone office has to be revitalised for extensive coordination. However, other groups claim that since the mills have to carry the expense of managing the zone office and BJMC as administrative units, the existence of the zone office is a burden for the mill.

BJMC deducts 5% from the sale proceeds of the mill in order to maintain these units. The structure of BJMC should be downsized. (CBA, FGD#1).

There is a perception too that the BJMC should work as a central hub of SOJMs; while Quality Control and the Jute Department can be decentralised (Interview # 26,29,30,49).

5.2.3.3 Role of the state and other challenges for ensuring survivability

'The matter is not about the number of people who get to be employed. The government has to think "it is my family and I should have a plan of how I run my family. My plan has to include all my family members, I will look after them". This is survivability. It means looking after all those included in my family. (FGD #1)

This comment is a critical reflection about the on-going practices and policy that the community has perceived over the last twenty years (Discussed in Chapter 2). In regard to the public sector jute mills and its existence as an entity, a question that concerns the community is: *whether there any other countries in the world that have got a Ministry of Jute and Minister of Jute. Then why does this Ministry pursue policies and practices that led to devastation of the mills?* (Permanent workers, FGD# 8). The community wants the government to play not only a supportive role, but also a key role in terms of management, investment and ownership too.

The CBA members presume that mills had been constructed, and that a territory was marked through their boundaries to indicate an area for a certain class of people in the society, and that this is important for the peaceful functioning of the society too:

It is an encircled community; the lower class people of the society live here. In the past, the government used to provide subsidies in order for it to function. Otherwise people will be forced to be involved with mugging and criminal activities as a source of living and such incidences took place in 2006 during the last tenure of BNP ... (FGD #1).

The role that the community expects from the state appears to be a parental role: so I gathered throughout my journey with the people of the Platinum Jute Mills in search of conditions of survivability of the mill and their aspired management system. As they explained:

The government is like parents. If our parents are going in the right direction and give us the right direction we may spend our days in hardship but still we will be happy, because we know what keeps us happy is their objective. (Female Workers, FGD # 14).

If we are free from anxiety, we feel secure; then we can put more effort into producing. If we keep worrying about whether the mills remain functioning and how we survive, then...? (Permanent workers, FGD# 9).

So, survivability of the mill is intrinsically linked with the survivability of the community; they perceive this as an issue related to the right to work and the right to live properly.

Concluding remarks:

In this section I discuss how people perceive the significance of the functioning mills for their survivability. In their narratives they frequently referred to a comprehensive policy as an essential condition. They have experienced crises in their lives because of changes in policy. The next section describes the community's experience of crisis over the last twenty years and their resistance against the initiative of finalising the JSAC.

5.3 ‘During the last twenty years there had been crisis everywhere...’⁸⁵— crisis, loss and resistance of the community in 2007

The community have witnessed changes over time in the approaches of managing the mill. They consider that these have resulted in crises, and have implications for the mill and their lives. However, in 2007 the workers of the government-owned mills of Khalishpur resisted the decision of closure, lay-off and privatisation of the Peoples’ Jute Mills violently. Discussions in this section contain perspectives regarding the pursued policy and its effects in terms of constituting this crisis, and the resistance of the community against the state order of finalisation of the JSAC in 2007.

5.3.1 ‘The mills became loss-making concerns because the plan was as such’⁸⁶: Myth of loss and crisis

The management of the mills have propagated the view that workers’ apathy about work is the cause of loss in the mills: *The workers don’t work in the SOJMs, that is the cause; they want to work in the public sector jute mills* (The General Manager or Project Head, Interview #1)⁸⁷.

Such propaganda has deeply affected the workers’ mindset. Initially I had to face their resistance as ‘silence’, and heard their whispers: ‘... has come to investigate our faults. (Permanent workers, FGD#3). And during the interview I was told: *Now we stop talking to the journalists. We talk about our issues and they publish something else that goes against us.* (Permanent workers, FGD#2). They firmly assert that only through hard labour can they continue production with old machinery and equipment. Currently, because of their labour, the same mills, which had been making a loss for last twenty years is attaining the target level of production. They explained:

[...] *We work hard, we struggle with the 50-year-old machine, we sweat, and we burn our energy and labour...and we are blamed and made responsible for every faults.[...] They say we don’t work!* (Permanent workers#9)

⁸⁵ *Badli* neta Interview #16, CBA, FGD #1, and FGD, 2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,14,15,16,18,20 Mostly permanent workers and senior *Badli* workers

⁸⁶ CBA, FGD#1, The ex-president of the Platinum Jubilee Mills, 2008-2010, Interview #14, President of the Workers’ party of Bangladesh, Interview # 26.

⁸⁷ Same comment I gathered from management of the mills

The community thinks that manifestation of the mills as loss-making concerns is a function of management, bureaucracy and political agents. They claim that these groups jointly conducted/ conduct corrupt practices, but applied/ apply those practices as supervision, and implementation policy. Thus they created loss; and this has been manifested and perpetuated in the name of crisis. According to them: *'There had been empty godowns⁸⁸, empty stores ... only loss and loss. The reasons for loss are rooted in the work conducted by 'pen'⁸⁹ not by our tasks. (Permanent and badli female workers, FGD#15). This is discussed in the following section.*

5.3.1.1 'Ruling class and the owners are all in a nexus': Story behind privatisation of the mills

The community consider that bureaucracy, political agents and owners all are in nexus and have pursued the policy of constituting a crisis in order to uphold the owners' interest, so that mills could be privatised. It starts with the manipulation of the procurement of raw jute, and creation of a severe crisis. They claim that all forms of governments in the last twenty years, either army or democratic and finally the last caretaker government (2007–08) pursued the same single policy, which is: 'no financing to the mill'.

Whoever came into the power— it does not matter which one [...] no funding to the mills (4/5 times). [...] [It was a] conspiracy of the ruling class. The mills were privatized for loss. We mean they showed loss. On the other hand they did it for their gain. ... The owners' visit the rulers, bureaucrats with briefcases full of money get things done: for example fixing of the procurement price and not to supervise the mill. ... Look at the Parliament, who are there? ... Either they are representing the owners or they are the owners of the mills. [...] They [political parties and bureaucrats] performed their assigned duty. ...handed those loss-incurring ventures to the private owners as they had an agreement with the WB. The WB prescribed not to give subsidies and support to loss-making ventures. (FGD#1).

The CBA further suggest that because of the severe cash crisis, management borrowed funds by pledging the procured raw jute and there had been lay- off of the mills. Therefore

⁸⁸ Warehouse

⁸⁹ Pen is used in Bangla language

the mills had to bear the cost of the accumulated loan until 2009. This led to continual irregularities in meeting the essential expenses of operating the mills. The CBA described:

Until 2009, the bank deducted 25% from all sales proceeds of the mills. The remaining 75% [of cash generated out of sales] was not enough to purchase raw jute, materials and then to pay our mojuri⁹⁰. So there had been consistent irregularity in paying off Shaptah, and retirement benefits. (FGD #1)

Thus the workers regard the root cause of negligence in managing mill with the agreement the government had with the WB for facilitating the privatisation policy: the JSAC.

I gather from union leaders and members of the JPC that nationalisation, establishment of BJMC, establishing jute-purchasing agencies for the procurement of raw jute directly from the farmers, and developing the Industrial Managements Cadre Service system through sending officers to East European countries to gain exposure to managing industrial set-ups had been planned and employed by the post-independence government as a means of rejuvenating the mills. Because of such strategies, the mills acquired profit from 1978-80 (Interview #26, 27, 49). Senior permanent workers repeatedly recalled that they had received a profit bonus during the 1980s (Permanent workers FGDs, #8).

It was also suggested that exporting raw jute is profitable, so manipulation through hoarding is another feature of the sector. Members of the JPC further consider that the ruling class and the law enforcement agencies are connected, and this interest-based nexus is perceived as one of the causes of the collapse of the post-independence government. The retired manager of the mills, stated:

In '73-74, we had faced problem because of hoarding of raw jute. The post-independence government had forced the hoarders through the bank for the payment of credit and thus ensured the supply raw jute at a reasonable price in the market. I think the killing of Bongobondhu⁹¹ was not only an international conspiracy; the traders of raw jute could be associated with the plan. The entire procurement process became a ploy and a trend after the fall of the post-independence government. (Interview # 27).

⁹⁰ Mojuri: wages, mojur means workers

⁹¹ Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was the President of the Post-independence government, and one of the founders of the current ruling party Bangladesh Awamee league.

In summary in on one hand private ownership and on the other hand profitable aspects of exporting raw jute are the reasons for the alignment of interests between the ruling class and bureaucrats, and that led them to be in alignment with the JSAC policy of the WB.

5.3.1.2 ‘JSAC —is it a policy or a ploy’?

Abruptly machines had been discarded as scrap, which costs a lot of money [...] and now people who could use those machines they have been retrenched [...] is it an [indication] of appropriate planning. (The ex-President of CBA 2008–10, Interview # 14)

This statement of the CBA leader reflects the overall implications of JSAC for the mills. In reality with the implementation of JSAC they have experienced imposition of set-up⁹², a continual lack of supply of raw jute, ingredients, and spare machinery parts, no overhauling of machines, and continual irregularity in the payment of *Shaptah* and the receiving of retirement benefit. *‘It took more than 6 years to get the pension; we witnessed death of the retired workers, without receiving the entire amount of their retirement benefits* (Permanent workers, FGD#18)

Within this context of chronic loss and crisis the community suggest that they had been introduced to the concepts of golden handshakes (GH) or voluntary retirements service (VRS) as offers from 1994–1996⁹³. Accepting GH/VRS includes 30% top up payment over the gross payment and ensures receiving of payment duly. One group of permanent workers explained:

...we can receive it very quickly, while in usual cases it takes 5-6 years to get [the entire amount of retirement benefit package]. There is some extra payment too. (FGD#7).

With the severity of the crisis, and seeing the closure of other mills, applying for golden handshakes appeared as only option to the workers. As one worker commented:

Why should not we apply? We watched a lot ... how the world famous mill Newsprint mill, Hardboard mills, and Marwardi Jute Mills⁹⁴ were closed and

⁹² Explained in Chapter 2, downsizing the workforce in alignment with the number of operating looms

⁹³ Circulars regarding JSAC I had reviewed in the Labour and Welfare Office, but was not allowed to get photocopy, sent on 1994, 1996 after the dismantled process of Adajee Mills had been initiated

⁹⁴ All are located in Khalishpur. *Marwardi Mills*: Dawlatpur Jute Mills

finally overnight the government shut down the Adamjee. (Pakhi — leader of female workers: Interview #17).

The staffs of the labour office are officially responsible for conducting the scheme, and they reported finding the situation ‘bizarre’. While the dearth of funding meant that raw jute could not be procured and there had been a crisis, simultaneously under the VRS and golden handshake schemes, a huge amount of cash had been provided to the mills. Service *Boro Babu* of the Labour Office commented

‘Within ten days, 10 million taka had been paid to the retired officials and worker. [...] By the year 2006–2007 around 14000 workers of entire zone applied for golden handshakes. (Interview# 11).

Now, the community considers when mills are in revival, that the strategic implementation of golden handshakes destroyed the mill’s capacity. A general remark was:

‘...now we understand that the mills have lost its expert hands’ (The leader of the *badli* workers # 16).

The non-viability of the jute industry was suggested as the reason for the implementation of JSAC; while at the same time the WB provided funding for the BMR and the establishment of new jute mills in India. It has raised question about the authenticity of the JSAC as a policy. The ex-President of the CBA (2008–2010) stated:

The funding of the WB to India indicates there was always and there is a market for jute products. ... Why they wanted to close down our mills, in particular the mills under the public ownership? Besides, labour cost is higher in India. (Interview #14)

In relation to it the board members of BJMC stated that in order to meet the condition of JSAC — for reduction of the cost of operation — mills are required to have 50% of their workforce as permanent. Naturally the remaining workforce has to be employed under the *badli* system. Whilst² adjustment to match machine and worker numbers is an essential condition for smooth production, the Director Marketing went on: *The badli system implies temporary and this system; it impedes that pace of production* (Interview #36).

The collected comments on the implications of JSAC imply that as a policy it is responsible for limiting the vision of the executives about managing the mill as an entity.

The sporadic approach to mitigating the crisis made them view the mill as a project. In relation to this, the representative of INCIDIN Bangladesh expressed:

What restructuring mainly did it drove us away from the concept of central and integrated planning system. (Interview #, 49).

‘We had to accept the crises’ – this is the response I received question in regard to what role the community played against this process of constituting crisis. The common statement I gathered:

[...] what we could do? We didn’t have power, we are general workers ... we were helpless, accepted everything as our destiny. (Permanent workers, FGD #7, 5, 14).

However, that helpless community resisted the finalisation phase of the JSAC in 2007. The next section tells that tale.

5.3.2 Community in resistance in 2007: ‘Mill has to be functioning one agenda one demand and one goal’

5.3.2.1 Emergence of the movement: ‘There had been howling everywhere’

The community thinks that dismantling the government-owned mills was the mission of the caretaker government, and that government pursued it for two years.

No jute [...] no production ...there had been howling everywhere. We the permanent workers, after giving our daily Hajira⁹⁵ used to look for work. What didn’t we do? We pulled rickshaws, vans⁹⁶, worked as daily agricultural wage workers. (Permanent workers, FGD#9).

The fierce situation was more vividly detailed in the following statement:

We were horrified seeing how our colleagues had been losing jobs. They treated us like cats and dogs. [...] . We had to work for eight hours at a time but the payment was for four hours. Names of the laid-off and terminated workers used to come out on the notice board daily. At one point we started making fun of it: ‘how many wickets have fallen today’. .. Every morning I woke up in a panic about whether I would see my name on the list. (Permanent workers, FGD # 2).

⁹⁵ Daily attendance

⁹⁶ Tri-cycle

In the case of *badli* workers, management cancelled their gate passes,⁹⁷ thus removing their right to work under the *badli* system. They were compelled to work on a daily basis as wage workers. The leader of the *badli* workers explained:

They made us work just like a Joan⁹⁸, we had been paid 100–110 taka on a daily basis, and 26 Shapaths had been due. (Interview #16).

The workers suggest starvation coupled up with oppression like cancellation of gate pass for *badli* workers, termination, lay-off, and finally they watched the closing down of the Peoples' Mills. Therefore, knowing the severity of breaking the rule of laws of the emergency period, they had been forced to initiate demonstrations based on one issue, as they narrated:

We had only one demand: first we need the mill, so could remain employed as workers and the payment of dues. (This statement I gather from all categories of workers).

5.3.2.2 Features of the movement: 'We are starved workers of the SOJMs'

All categories of actors at the local level suggested that the movement constituted by the workers, initiated spontaneously, and that the entire community of Khalishpur, local organisations, and journalists joined in that workers-led movement. Union leaders of the mainstream political parties (the current President, FGD#1) had to be underground due to the emergency situation. But union leaders involved with the left-wing political parties confirmed that they had been actively involved with the movement, and so they elected as the President of the CBA of 2008 of the Platinum Mills (The ex-president 2008–2010, and the current Assistant Secretary of CBA, interview #14, 13)

Gradually, to lead the movement an ad hoc committee had been formed by the permanent workers. Correspondingly, 20000 *badli* workers of the Khulna Zone became organised and constituted a platform called 'Badli Workers' Committee'. The severity of the movements was intensified as getting back the *badli card* became an issue of life and death for the *badli* workers. The leader: of the *badli* workers explained.

'To become badli -workers, to get back our identity card and our work we had to place our lives at risks. One badli worker Jashim had been killed [...] We got

⁹⁷ Gate pass means identity card as *Badli* worker

⁹⁸ Joan means reserved army force

arrested and they took us to the railway track and forced to lie down there and the Divisional Police Commissioner threatened to run the train over us because we had demonstrations in the emergency regime. He told us that he had killed many terrorists under crossfire, so he could kill us too. I replied to him 'those that you killed Sir, they were terrorists. We are starving workers of SOJMs'. (Interview #16).

Similarly the Headmaster of the Platinum Mills' School narrated that the situation had driven the teachers of the schools at all government-owned mills of Khalishpur to organise a procession to draw mass attention. The Headmaster of the Platinum Mills expressed:

The school remained open with 1200 starving children, while most of the teacher left by accepting golden handshakes. (Interview # 10).

As usual the armed force battalion raided the colony and *basti*⁹⁹ of both permanent and *badli* workers for a month, and the male members remained underground.¹⁰⁰ As one of the household members of the permanent workers commented:

*Police raided the entire colony and took our sons when they could not find our husbands and they were swearing '...movements, we will show your movements through your c**t'. (FGD # 25).*

According to the leader of the ad hoc committee it took almost forty days for them to reach a consensus with the industrial adviser of the caretaker government. He commented:

We told the adviser, the mill has to be functioning. The mill cannot be closed down [...] you know, we have witnessed Adamjee's closure. (Leader of the ad- hoc committee, Interview #15).

The local organisations and journalists joined in the movement and organised support locally and nationally for the workers' families. More attention was paid to arranging admission and admission fees for the school and colleges for the children of the laid-off and retrenched workers.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ Slums

¹⁰⁰ Household members of the permanent workers, FGD#25, household members of *Badli* workers, FGD#23

¹⁰¹ Representative of Rupayun, Interview #29, President of the Youth Forum/Convener of *Badli* workers of the private mills, Interview #28

A major feature of the movement of 2007 is that it had been initiated by the general workers, and there had been numerous causalities. During the interview the CBA explained:

Seventy workers have been released before the Eid¹⁰² last month, after three years. They had been arrested because of burning down the Police Box. [...] Workers had been starving for days after days. Out of that they started demonstrations. ... Such movement always takes a militant shape, gets out of control. (FGD, #1).

The resistance of the community of the jute mills took the shape of a movement. The survivability of the mills is not only important to the community belonging to the jute mills; it is linked with the entire community of Khalishpur. Therefore all gathered under one platform in 2007.

5.3.2.3 Caretaker government was illegal: it didn't have legal identity as an entity¹⁰³

According to the constitution of Bangladesh, a caretaker government can remain in power for three months, and its responsibility is to conduct the parliamentary election freely and fairly. The last caretaker government continued for two years from January 2007 to December 2008. Because of its noncompliance with the constitution, the last regime of the caretaker government as well as the Welfare Committee it formed to look after the management of the mills of this zone were both perceived as illegal.

The caretaker government formed Welfare Committee for supervising the mills. Now that government had to leave power and that Welfare Committee is 'vanished'¹⁰⁴. [...] That government undertook terminations and layoffs of the workers. [...] As an illegal government, all its deeds are illegal, (Permanent workers, FGD #9, similar citation in FGD#1, 2, 7 Interview #13, 14).

However, the leader of the *badli* workers thinks that his inclusion in the Welfare Committee is the first formal recognition of *badli* workers:

[Inclusion in the committee] was an outcome of the challenge that I took and proved to the Industrial Adviser that time that Badli -workers were young, capable and the real workforce of the mill. Fifty per cent of us got back our badli cards

¹⁰² November 2010,

¹⁰³ The ex-president of CBA 2008-2010, Current Assistant Secretary Interview #14,13, CBA FGD#1,permanet workers, FGD#2,7

¹⁰⁴ Humour or sarcasm

*and the remaining fifty per cent are employed on a daily basis*¹⁰⁵ (Interview #16).

So this implies that in one hand through the apparent formal recognition of the *badli workers*. On the other hand the caretaker government legitimised its recruitment of the workers under a daily basis and thus they wanted to reduce the total labour cost¹⁰⁶.

There are two strongly held yet opposing opinions of the workers about the role of the ad hoc committee. One group of workers appreciate their role, as they claim that the ad hoc committee facilitated the payments of their dues. The other group of workers consider that members of the ad hoc committee later played a role as planted agents of the caretaker government and helped the regime to implement decisions such as terminations, layoffs and strategic application of the golden handshake and VRS schemes. In relation to this, the report of the Factory Inspector submitted on the 30th March 2008 on the Platinum Mills stated that by the 21st July 2007, 3773 workers had been laid off and 2932 were re-appointed again, 668 workers were terminated and 153 workers remained as laid-off workers and at that time the laid-off workers had not been paid their due benefits.

At the central level I gathered the following comment about the movement and the construction of the caretaker government.

The movement was spontaneous and coordinated by the general workers [...However,] later it had been planned/used strategically in order to destroy all traditional form of organisational set up that is, unions and the permanent workforce ... and they aimed to run the mill with the badli -workers and thus the cost would be reduced. (The representative of TUC, Interview #48).

Analysis of the above discussion reveals first that the caretaker government has created mistrust among general workers about the union leadership and tried to establish a non-unionised leadership. Second, it has created a rift between the permanent and *badli* workers in terms of raising issue like *badli* workers are ‘young’ and ‘skilled’ workforce, and the permanent workers are old.

5.3.2.4 Experience of 2007: ‘whatever we had possessed, we had to sell it to survive’

The severity of the experiences of 2007 varied across categories of workers. A common statement was: *whatever we had possessed, we had to sell it to survive [...]* jewelleryes,

¹⁰⁵ Exact translation which means: the caretaker government re-employed 50 % of *Badli* workers under *Badli* system.

¹⁰⁶ This group workers are cheap source of labour, recruited by paying 95-100 , discussed in earlier section

*watches, blankets.*¹⁰⁷ The female participants further added: *'even the mosquito nets, we sold for cash to buy food'*. (Permanent female workers, FGD#12). Similarly, I found that participants under the *sardars* and LDAs¹⁰⁸ categories had to sell their inherited property in order to provide for their children's education.

(Permanent works, FGD#2).

Through various *Cha-* stall discussions and FGDs I gather bits and pieces of their experiences to try to form the story. I came to know that in order to minimise the severity of the crisis, management initiated distribution of wage slips, so the workers could use it to borrow cash, and purchase their necessities. The workers suggested that they sold the wage slips at forty to sixty per cent discount rates. According to the female and *badli workers* their situation was more acute as they had to think about paying rent. So for both categories of workers looking for a job became essential. The female workers were employed at the temporary Mess of the Armed Forces Battalions. The comments I gathered in support of this are as follows:

We used to receive 500 taka out of 1000 taka wage slips. We had to pay the rent too. What to do; we had to think about food as well as about the shelter. [...] we worked as temporary domestic household workers. [...] We worked in their Mess, they¹⁰⁹ occupied the entire Khalishpur, we used to cook their food, do their laundry [...] (Female workers permanent and badli FGDs#12, 14, 15).

While buying on credit was comparatively easy for the permanent workers, for *badli* workers the situation was more acute. When the amount of borrowing exceeded 100 AUD the grocers stopped selling to them on credit. Hence looking for job to support their families became essential for the wives of *badli* workers.

We had to look for work; even our children are employed as workers. All hands of the house are required to be engaged. (Household members of *badli* workers, FGD#23).

In reply to my question about to whom they used to sell their wage slips, I was told the following:

¹⁰⁷ CBA, FGD#1, 2,5,6,7,8,9,10,12,13,14,15

¹⁰⁸ Lower Dealing Assistants: Clerical staff

¹⁰⁹ Deployed armed forces

On Thursday¹¹⁰ the entire areas of the mills were crowded by traders ('Amlabadi, Pujibadi'¹¹¹). They used to buy the wage slips ... Mr Alam¹¹² earned more than 2 cr¹¹³ taka out of it'. (The ex-President of CBA 2008-10, Interview#14).

Borrowing was inevitable for all categories of workers, and still they have been bearing that burden. According to them, the borrowed amount varies between 222 AUD to 2500 AUD. Usually the wives of the permanent workers and female permanent workers are involved with the *Samities*¹¹⁴ of various NGOs; however, during that time NGOs ceased their lending program:

Samities' stopped giving loans for 45 days. We borrowed from inside. Some of our colleagues are rich. They bought our wage slips. (Permanent female workers, FGD#12,).

I found a pamphlet under the glass sheet of the desk of the Service *Boro Babu* about the rehabilitation program for the retrenched workers by the BRAC. Through probing I gathered that there was supposed to be a project, but they are not aware about its outcomes or how the project was to be initiated. I visited the Regional Office, Area Office and the Branch Office of BRAC located in Khalishpur and found out that the project was closed down in 2009. On my way back to the mills my rickshaw puller came out with the answer. Being a retired worker (who had taken a golden handshake) from the Platinum Mills, he became involved with the project. The project provided skill development training and he received training in raising poultry. But since he does not have anything noted as an asset such as his own house or a 'permanent job in the mill', he could not borrow money from the BRAC so that he could raise his own poultry. Now rickshaw pulling is his source of living. He has three daughters and they all now should have been married (Constructed from the field notes).

Tales of the tolls of the crisis were gradually unfolding during the post-lunch chat at the Labour Officer, or when strolling with the female staff around the mills' premises after office hours. Several suicide cases happened inside the workers' and staff colony; along

¹¹⁰ Shaptah is distributed on Thursday

¹¹¹ Amlabadi: means bureaucrats and Pourjibadi means capitalists but two words are very much used

¹¹² May be a renowned contractor of Khalishpur

¹¹³ 250,000 AUD

¹¹⁴ Samiti implies basic organisation of doing micro-credit program. NGOs conducted this program in neighbourhood first through forming Samiti

with this, chronic mental depressions are now reality. Disjointed or dismantled family, and with members departing and living apart are common features of the families of the workers and staff after the crisis and have deeply affected the community. The severity of the situation drove the female household members of the workers to be engaged in sex work for a living at that time:

Girls of the colony had been seen on the street'. (The ex-President of CBA 2008–10, Interview #14).

In case of the participants of Bihari and female workers' categories, I notice that their children abandoned school in 2006–07 and their sons are all employed either as carpenters, or helpers in motor garages or in restaurants. They commented:

I have three sons and two daughters. The daughters are at home; they look after the household work. The sons are all working, the youngest one working as a carpenter. [...] they left school in 2006 or '07. (Re-appointed permanent female workers, FGD#13).

Another comment was:

My eldest son left school during the time of the caretaker government; we are poor people, that time there was nothing to eat. So he took a job in a welding shop. (Comment of household member of Bihari worker, Interview #22).

5.3.2.5 Outcomes of the movements: If mills survive the workers will survive

Yes definitely our movements back in 2007 provided a signal to the current ruling party. They came with a very constructive election manifesto and mandate. It reflects what we wanted from them. They got the message that if they do not run those mills, do not do proper supervision, they would face the same challenges as the previous ruling parties. (The Current CBA, FGD #1)

This statement reflects how the community perceive the significance of their resistance: they connect it with the current context of the re-emergence of the mills. It also denotes what is expected from the political parties. The workers are firm in stating that there should no further privatisation, when the current management, CBA and workers have earned 69000 AUD last month.

The survivability of the mills and the struggle of the workers are not confined to within the space of the mills. Direct interventions of local organisations their support during and after the movement particularly in the case of continuing the education of the children of the workers in the Peoples' Jute Mills: all have contributed to developing a close network between the workers and local level organisations. It is connected with the Alliance formed at the central level. And according to the Alliance members a single platform on the jute issue has been created. The actors of the Alliance/Commission suggest that propaganda about inefficiency and corruption in the SOJMs over the last twenty years validated and legalised denationalisation as a mechanism of attaining development. However, the movement of 2007 had a greater coverage, the representative of INCIDIN/ explained:

People have realised the outcomes of restructuring; that led to developing a greater solidarity among all factions ... so, a space for discussions that involved all factions and looked into restructuring from the perspective of economic justice has been created. (Interview #49).

Concluding remarks

To conclude, drawing from the community perspectives, this section firstly discussed how executives, bureaucrats and the ruling class created and perpetuated a crisis situation in the mills. That helped in implementing the JSAC. Thus the bureaucrats served the interest of the ruling class or owners; and they all are aligned with the policy suggested by the WB. Secondly, I discussed the context for the emergence of resistance in the community in 2007. By exploring their narratives, I provided a sketch of a destitute community, their agency in resisting the global order and how they define the outcomes of their movement. In the next section I discuss the community perspectives about the impact of the legacy of crisis in their life-world.

5.4 The legacy of crisis, its impact and role of management —till now

Nowadays it looks like a festival on Thursday afternoons, the weekly pay day of the workers. Vendors gather with products, such as winter vegetables, and fruits such as grapes, apples and oranges, considered as nutritious 'foreign' fruits. Alongside, T-shirts, jackets, sweaters, and shirts —products rejected to be exported of the garments industries, and blankets are sold. I was told that this had been the tradition during '80s and early '90s.

Hence within this current context the workers analyse and internalise the impact of the pursued policy in their life and life-world. Gathered perspectives are categorised into three sections: (a) workers' perspective about union, mill management and the Ministry; (b) Work, working condition, wages and entitlements; and (c) Role of judicial system: Labour Directorate, Court and the JSAC .

5.4.1 Workers' perspective about union, mill management and the Ministry

5.4.1.1 Involvement with the mills and Perspective about union: Union is now a pocket union'

The mills are responsible for the recruitment of their employees. Most of my participants in the workers' category belong to Grade 1 and Grade 2, while Sardars range mainly from Grade 4 to 6. The weaver's grade starts at Grade 4.

For the workers working under the *badli* system is the way to be involved with the mills. Union leaders and *sardars* are the points of recruitment and management is a part of this recruitment process. The mode of employment requires receiving a 'gate pass', or 'identity card' as *badli* worker from the designated service *Babu*. They have to renew their gate pass every quarter. The amount of money the workers usually pay for having a gate pass varies from 1400 to 8000 taka. This is the practice and culture to be involved with the mill.

The workers narrated:

Money is distributed through the channels from trade union leaders, employees of labour office, time keepers, and production officers to the Head of the mill – we mean the GM Sir. I paid 1400 taka because I used to know one of the sardars' of Mill #2. [...] It also depends on negotiation and bargaining skill. (Badli female workers, FGD # 17).

The CBA is considered as the basic institution of the workers and is supposed to look after workers' rights. It consists of 25 members and they are elected for two years. The workers suggest that the quality of the union as a surveillance body has been declining over the years. Union leaders ask for money for negotiating issues and work for influential workers who have the ability to pay them for negotiating their individual issues. The common perspective about union is:

The union is a pocket union. It belongs to those who are powerful (pujipoti: capitalists). We cannot initiate a discussion by paying 10 taka just like that, [...] but those people instantly can pay 50 taka and lodge their issue. (Bihari workers, FGD#18).

Within this context, Bihari and female workers, the marginal categories of workers, think union leaders consider them only as ‘voters’. One statement I gathered was:

*We are important to CBA leaders during election. We are their Shona Shona¹¹⁵ when it is over ... then we are m****r f****r.* (Permanent workers female, FGD#12, Bihari workers #18, Household members permanent workers, FGD#25).

Evidence suggests that workers’ places of origin are important for determining workers’ relation with the mills and the entire dynamics of the mills, as union politics is based on it. In support of this prevailing notion, I gathered from a female permanent worker the following. : *‘who will help me; I am from Sirajganj¹¹⁶ ... so I cannot manage a badli card for my daughter’* (Permanent female workers, FGD#12)

After watching the CBA election of November 2010 for the Platinum and Crescent mills closely and having day-long informal chats during the election days for these two mills, I gathered that around 3-8000 AUD is spent on the election campaign by the candidates. So corruption is a consequence. (Please see the Appendix: F Photos of election campaigns).

It is suggested that few union leaders are involved with the politics of the ruling parties and general workers are not involved with the politics and are not that militant. Hence, the Service Boro Babu of the Labour noted: *Out of 3300 workers 10% are very rowdy and disobedient. They are linked with partisan politics and we cannot take any action against them.* (Interview#11).

Yet, despite obtaining the approval of management, Rupayan¹¹⁷ could not conduct an awareness-raising program among workers regarding the selection criteria for electing their representative. (Interview#26).

¹¹⁵ Shona exact meaning is gold, so it implies dearest

¹¹⁶ District located in Northern part

¹¹⁷ The local level organisation working on human and labour rights issues, now it is associated with actionaid Bangladesh .

However, the workers assume that the accountability of the union is judged through the election. Moreover, they suggested ‘*we need the union*’ because union leaders facilitate their issues, for instance processing their loan or leave application with the management. Thus they think:

If there is more corruption then they will lose the next election. That we count as their accountability towards us. (Permanent workers, FGD# 2).

In relations to this discussion the CBA also consider managing leave, loan applications, and allocation of duties as their responsibility. The Assistant Secretary of the CBA commented:

Since, the usual mode of function of the mills’ has been disrupted, now management has made union responsible for dealing with these issues that are supposed to be done systematically. (Interview # 13).

Union leaders presume that the system has its own loopholes: for example, their two-year tenure appears too short to them for bringing about any meaningful changes. There is a common perception among the workers’ community that both management and union are active, while union leaders perceive their participation is notional depending on management. The ex-president of the Platinum Mills 2008–2010 suggests:

These two years appear very limited to take an issue and follow it up; besides it is called union +management = management, but we are not formally involved, [...] no representation in the Enterprise Board (Interview # 14, similar citation, CBA, FGD#1).

The current CBA further added:

The project head has immense power according to the policy. [...] We say what we are entitled to say. (The CBA, FGD#1).

So the norms regarding union activities are perceived as constraining in performing union’s designated role.

5.4.1.2 Mill management, BJMC, and Ministry: ‘facilitators or devourer’?

Workers regard the executives’ roles in the mills’ management and the supervisory role of BJMC officials are aligned in terms of extracting money from the mills. These are discussed below.

First, according to the workers, the union is not officially involved in the procurement process. Yet, it is suggested that union leaders are involved and receive their due shares, and thus corrupt management 'manages' the union leaders. So the union support the management. One group of workers commented:

When the lower quality of procured raw jute hampers the mode of smooth production, if we raise voice, the union comes forward, not to protect us, but establish their command over us and ask us to do our own job. (Permanent workers, FGD# 7).

Second, the recruitment process of *badli* workers is another source of extorting money. This practice of extortion by the CBA and management has raised scepticism among *badli* workers about whether the prescribed the process of appointment of them as permanent workers (Circular 13 January 2011) would be followed. As workers remarked: [union] *Leaders are asking money to make us permanent workers. How we can manage 20 to 30 thousands taka. (Badli workers, FGD #21).*

Third, the overlooking of corrupt practices, such as procurement of rotten raw jute and the appointment of more than the required number of *badli* workers have caused serious doubt among the workers about the entire audit process of the BJMC. One remark I gathered was:

Audit is routine work and auditors are also managed. (Leader of badli workers, Interview #16)

Another comment was:

In 2007 I think finished goods of 280 million taka had been piled up and gradually were exported but the mill did not receive that money (Service Boro Babu, Interview#11).

Fourth, the community have experienced until recently that members of the board of BJMC were usually deputed officials either from the Ministries or the army, and they lack expert knowledge about jute. Their lack of interest in supervising the mills was also mentioned. One comment I collected about the deputed directors was:

Taking a cutting part¹¹⁸ of jute; they used to ask 'from where you have got this kind of jute, so short in terms of length'. (The CBA, FGD#1).

¹¹⁸ A part of raw jute

Hence lack of supervision, lack of access to information, and gaps in communication and have made workers dubious about the accountability of management.

Interestingly, I discover that management of the mills is more penetrating. It works invisibly. According to the head of the Security Department controlling any incident such as fire in the jute godown, in the mills, and regular surveillance are the major responsibilities of this department. However, as an additional responsibility, this wing has to provide the daily security report to the Head of the mills based on the collected information through their planted agents among workers and by the appointed security guards. Thus the authority is updated regarding ongoing issues around the mills: prevailing discontent, or if there is a possibility of demonstration. I went through some of the reports; the content is exhaustive. Even my activities had been also under their close watch in the first couple of weeks. The Security Chief has to maintain liaison with the Police and intelligence. Interestingly the head of this Wing is officially reportable only to the head of the Mills. Like the head of all sections he does not have to communicate or to send report of the Security Department of BJMC.

5.4.2 Work, working condition, wages and entitlements

Currently huge numbers of workers under the *badli* system have been recruited, so having work on a regular basis becomes a problem. The workers, management and the members of the JPC (retired union leaders) suggest that according to the law, the mills can appoint 25% of their permanent workers as *badli* workers. The following view prevails about the number of workers a mill can have under *badli* system:

Badli workers should be 25% of total permanent workers.¹¹⁹ [...] they have ignored the law and have recruited equal number of badli workers. 'So we cannot work six days...so what is the implications of law, if it is not implemented [stated three times] (The leader badli workers, Interview #16).

In reviewing the LLB 2006, and circulars on appointment of workers that I gathered from the Labour Office, I did not come across any notification about the above suggested ideal ratio of *badli* and permanent workers in the mills. The circulars regarding the issue of appointing workers from 1996 to 2009 communicate that recruitment of huge number of

¹¹⁹ I did not find any circular on the ratio of permanent and *Badli* workers in a mills

badli workers, and simultaneously discontinuation in appointing permanent workers all are practices. For example the circular sent on July 7, 2009 from the Ministry ordered that 50% of the current set-up should be filled by appointing *badli workers*, and with no permanent workers to be appointed without BJMC's approval. Subsequently in response to my query about the number of *badli workers*, the Controller of BJMC confirmed that objections from auditors regarding number of *Badli workers* is a routine issue, because of the inherent inconsistency of policies and practices (Controller, Interview #41). Yet as far as I know this information has never been communicated to the mills. The circular about permanency¹²⁰ is not going to resolve this issue for all types of *badli workers*. *Badli workers* of the handling section are excluded from this circular. Due to the revision of the set-up, the handling section has been contracted out in all mills of BJMC. However, the workers of the handling section of the Platinum Mills lodged a case against this management decision, and since this legal appeal is ongoing, this section still exists only in the Platinum Mills. Interestingly the Court's decision is on the workers' side. Through contributing money the workers have pursued this legal process for almost ten years. The question that this group of *badli workers* put forward: *If the authority ignores the Court decision ... then mugging and hijacking will remain as options for living. (Badli workers: Handling section FGD#22).*

There is another conflicting issue between the permanent workers and *badli workers* about who works in the C shift. As a third shift, it operates between 10 pm to 6 am, and usually it is operated by *badli workers*. Having a regular schedule in this shift is considered by *badli workers* as their right.¹²¹ On the other hand, for permanent workers working in C shift and on Friday is a means of earning overtime, and the overtime wage rate was supposed to be doubled. Now permanent workers who work overtime or in the C shift are receiving the wage rate that is paid to *badli workers*. One group of permanent workers commented: *Now we do not have the overtime facility and the wage rate that we receive for doing overtime is actually the badli worker's wage rate [...] but we have to accept it. (FGD#9).* So on the issues of entitlement and rights, permanent and *badli workers* are in conflict.

¹²⁰ Which arrived on the 13 January 2011 regarding appointing *Badli workers* as permanent workers

¹²¹ The leader of the *Badli workers* commented: *I had a discussion with the GM Sir for operating C shift, and mill has resumed this shift (Interview #16).*

Again the reappointment of laid-off workers during the caretaker regime by the current government had made it difficult for *badli workers* to have regular work. One worker remarked: *These people [terminated and laid off workers] are very old and already became deskilled as they had been laid-off for almost three years [...] Ignoring [the mills'] young badli workers who have become an expert workforce: what a policy! Besides, because of the recruitment of new Badli workers even a worker like me working for more than 18 years is told: "baba can you please take a break for this shift. [...] As they [Sardar, staff perceived as management] already took money for employing them [newly recruited badli workers], so they have to allocate work to them* (Leader of the *badli* workers, Interview#16).

Therefore taking on a second job is a necessity for all types of *badli workers*, particularly for those who are newly recruited. Although it is difficult to find work, they have to be in the queue every day to get the call for work. However, in case of male *badli* -workers, if their labour is not required for that day, they can go for any temporary job such as pulling a van or rickshaw.

Similarly I find members of the lower subordinate staff (MLSS) have been working for a decade on a daily basis. In order to work in any government-owned institutions, the maximum age for male and female candidates has to be 30 and 32 respectively. As a result although here had been vacancies announced by BJMC for such posts, they could not apply. Instead they lodged a case against BJMC on that announcement of vacancies. The Court gave decision on their favour. However, like the workers of handling section, they appear sceptical about whether that verdict would be implemented. They expressed:

The court has ordered the authority to recruit us as a permanent MLSS and our date of joining should be our original date of joining [so the age factor can be managed] (Non clerical staff: MLSS, FGD#27).

Aside from such created heterogeneity, the workers sense that there are systematic differences between the workers and officers.¹²² The comment of current President of CBA reflected that:

¹²² According to the PO #27 officers are regarded as employees of BJMC, and staff and workers are employees of the mills.

In 2007, we¹²³ faced the challenges ... I had to hide out, but officers remained in the mills (FGD#1).

There is a provision for officers to be absorbed in BJMC when mills are privatised under the JSAC (Discussed in section 2.2).

5.4.2.1 'Life appears a raft on the flowing water' – Perspectives of female badli workers

Within this male-dominated ghettoised environment, female workers are certainly the most destitute category. Looking for a temporary job is difficult for the female workers, because working as domestic household workers requires a regular presence in the workplace. If they do not obtain regular work twice in each week, then leaving Khalishpur appears as the only option for the female *badli* workers. So they concluded: *Our life is a raft on the flowing water* (Rani, leader of female *badli* workers, permanent and *badli* female workers FGD #14). They also think that since the permanent workers have right to take leave, they can take leave at least once in a week, as they narrated:

If they take leave we get the opportunity to work at least one day in a week. Even if they [the authority, permanent workers and the senior badli -workers] give us duty on 'C' shift, we can survive [...] (FGD#17).

Hence, inconsistencies in policies and gap between practices and policies, lack of information, and lack of compliance with the law raise questions in the community about the management system.

5.4.2.2 Conditions of the working environment

Over the last twenty years, normal approaches such as training, promotion and having linear career paths have all been disrupted. I gathered that most of the participants in the worker and staff categories have been promoted only once in 30 years of working in the mills. Furthermore, there was/ also a provision to be promoted to the upper level by the lower category of employees. As one group remarked:

We have watched over the years as some of the practices have been abandoned gradually. Before a worker could be appointed as a sweeper and then as a Peon¹²⁴.

¹²³ The employees of the mills workers and staff

[...] From this post he would be promoted to a clerk. Now we don't see this trend. (Non-clerical staff, Orderly, and Security Guards, FGD#28, elected members of CBA, FGD#1)

I gather from the report of the Factory Inspector, and from interviews with him that anomalies, inconsistencies and non-compliance with the LLB2006 in terms of not providing uniforms, dust masks, protective glasses for the workers of the workshop, separate toilets for male and female workers, or a register for the female workers regarding their maternity leave are raised routinely (The Report of the Factory Inspector Platinum Jubilee Jute Mills on the 2nd of August 2008, Factory Inspector, Interview #32).¹²⁵ In reply to my queries regarding these issues, the female participants communicated that using the toilet is impossible at night because it is located outside of the mill and it is not secure. But they need a place for saying Namaz¹²⁶ like their male counterparts. One group of female workers raised it three times (FGD#14). Moreover, working continually for four hours with old machines is considered strenuous. All workers and staff habitually take *Pan*.¹²⁷ According to them taking *Pan* is not only a part of culture, chewing it helps them in clearing their throat, as the jute particles are flying around, so their throats get choked.

5.4.2.3 Wages and entitlements

According to the effective Gazette regarding Wages of the Jute Mills workers (January 2005) the monthly wage of the permanent workers starts from 3890 taka per month: the basic salary is 2450 taka,¹²⁸ and the rest rent, medical facilities, transport expense are added facilities. *Badli* workers at Grade 1 receive 2450 taka plus the festival bonus; while staff appointed on a daily basis receives 150 taka per day for 26 days¹²⁹ of a month and are not entitled to receive the festival bonus. Wages of the weavers start from 4580 taka.

Having discussed the differences in wages by the policy and practices, I focus on the perspectives of marginalised categories of workers about the quality of their received entitlements, since they are the most deprived group.

¹²⁴ Here this word implies Orderly

¹²⁵ He visited the Platinum Mills on the 30th January 2011. He showed me the draft report, but he had hesitation in giving me the photocopy of that draft report.

¹²⁶ Namaz - Muslims pray five times in a day

¹²⁷ Betel-nut

¹²⁸ Taka Bangladesh currency, 90 taka = 1 AUD, in 2010

¹²⁹ Friday is the only weekly holidays.

5.4.2.4 Perspective of female and Bihari and Hindu workers

According to the policy,¹³⁰ 60% and 10 % of the rent allowance is deducted from the wages of the workers living in the colony, or *Kacha* houses provided by the mills respectively. In addition their transport allowance is also deducted too. Therefore workers who receive housing from the mills are naturally assumed to be more privileged and affluent. Allotment of the mills' housing depends on the connections that a permanent worker has with the union leaders, mills' management. Also it requires financial capability of that worker. The workers' suggest that the 'price' of the allotment varies. Houses located in the Kacha line¹³¹ cost around 800 AUD, while the allotment of a Quarter¹³², costs 1200 AUD.¹³³ This price or cost implies the bribe that has to be paid to the union leaders and mill management.

Securing a proper living space is the most vital issue for both female *badli* and permanent workers. They are the breadwinners of their family. Alternative living arrangements are limited for them as they have to live with their families. Discussion with the female workers reveals that a group of female workers who are widows of permanent workers had been offered a job in the mills, but obtaining housing from the mills appears impossible to them (FGD#12). Financial capability and social connections with union leaders and management is commonly perceived as the major issues that control the allotment of the mills' housing. One group of female permanent workers remarked:

It requires paying 50 to 60 thousands taka ... the allocation process includes: first, permission of CBA leaders because they will forward our demand to the labour and welfare office[...] then staffs of the Labour offices and the mills' management have to give final approval. All of them share in this money [...] We don't know anyone... CBA leaders they come to us only during elections. (FGD #12)

The perspectives of all categories of female workers suggest that managing rent and shelter are acute problems:

'We remain starving but rent has to be paid': Now the house rent is increasing every year. If we don't pay on time the house owners start swearing so we prefer to remain hungry but want to pay them first. Renting a room now costs 1000 to 1200

¹³⁰ Gazette, 7September-2006

¹³¹ Kacha Housing

¹³² Quarter means the way it is used — an apartment in the colony

¹³³ Suggested in every FGD, workers living in the colony or outside the colony, FGD#8,12,14,15,17,18,

taka monthly including electricity. Electricity bills increases every year so does the rent. (FGD#12).

While, the male workers can come alone in search of work, and I find some male workers, both *badli* and permanent their families live in villages. So it is easier for them as a single person managing a living space and some of them I find have managed a space for living in the abandoned buildings of the mills. They suggested: '*it is living by gathering*' (*Badli* male workers, FGD#21). Moreover, some male *badli workers* along their families live in some vacated buildings of the closed jute mills.

The situation is so acute that newly recruited *badli* female workers raised the question of why management does not distribute these run-down buildings to them. There are incidences where *badli workers* had shared the cost of allotment with the hope of subletting that space from the permanent workers, but they have been deceived. One group of female *badli workers*' narrated:

As badli workers, we are not legally entitled to have an allotment, so we cannot use legal action through lodging an official complaint to the management or union leaders against this cheating. (Badli female workers, FGD#17).

Participants belonging to the Bihari and Hindu categories suggest that they do not want to be involved with such issues. Issues related to the basic provisions appear to them as facilities, because it requires strong connection with the union and management. Household members of Hindu workers narrated:

We are minority Hindu workers, we are always deprived in terms of having any facilities; we also do not want to get involved. Getting any facility depends on leaders and they are very tricky. (FGD#26).

5.4.2.5 The mills' school and provided medical facilities

The common perception is that the quality of provided education in the school of the Platinum Mills is deteriorating. So, arrangements for private tuition are considered necessary for the children. In relation to the, the Headmaster of the school suggests that for 1500 students the school has got only 30 teachers. The persistent crisis in the mill has coupled with the declining interest of the supervisory bodies about the school has resulted in the deteriorating quality of education. The headmaster of the Platinum Mills' School

remarked: *I had to recruit four teachers under the badli card [as Badli workers] and four teachers have been recruited on a daily basis. Officers do not admit their children here; it has been stopped gradually but started from 2000.* (Interview #10).

The workers belonging to the female and Bihari categories are generally not interested in discussing the quality of education at the school. The children of most of the participants of these two categories left the school in 2006–2007.

In regard to the quality of provided medical facilities, I was told that mill used to provide medications, but now due to changes in government policy, medical facilities are added as allowance to the wages bill. But the role of the doctor of the mills is limited to authenticating medical leave and giving prescriptions.¹³⁴ *We can't afford proper nutritious food and medical treatment [Permanent workers, FGD#8...]*

5.4.2.6 Suppression and domination: 'Walls have ears'

Based on my observations I find that 'fear' and mistrust are deeply rooted in the participants' mindset. Several times at the conclusion of conversation I was told:

Many issues we couldn't communicate, because of the presence of [names]; they are from Faridpur¹³⁵ and highly connected with the union leaders and management. So can we visit you in the evening?' (Jamadar: female non-clerical staff, FGD#16).

Another collected comment was:

We cannot say everything to everyone. Now here we are saying everything. But we have to be careful. Walls have ears. (Permanent workers, FGD #3)

Termination, suspension and delivery charge sheets are frequently used as instruments for regulating the workers. According to the Service *Boro Babu* of the Labour Office these tools are used when workers' negligence or vandalism disrupts the production. However, the workers think these are used to silence their voice, specifically when they raise concerns about the quality of jute. According to them, rotten jute hampers the smooth production process. They remarked:

Indirectly we have to suffer if we raise our voice against any illegal issue. I would

¹³⁴ All FGDS with the workers.

¹³⁵ I discussed in the beginning that the dominance of faction of workers from particular districts, such as Faridpur and Barishal is evident.

be terminated. (Permanent Workers, FGD#5).

Badli workers presume that by having the status of *badli* they cannot join the union and this reinforces the systematic domination they endure. They cannot ask simple questions regarding their job schedule. One group of *badli* workers commented:

Today in our batching section, five permanent workers are on leave. We were told no badli workers would be appointed today. When I asked the Babu 'why'? he did not bother to listen; and the leaders also did not consider it as an important issue. So nobody cares about us. (FGD#21).

Hence, lack of norms regarding their inclusion within the system facilitates domination over *badli workers*, although *badli* workers assume that they are the major workforce of the mills.

Is this life!¹³⁶

Discussion under this theme concentrates mainly on female workers. The hyper-masculinised environment is the basic feature of the jute mills. Although female workers have been working in the mill since its inception, the process of appointing them as permanent workers in the zone started only sixteen years ago. This process had been initiated following a massive protest and demonstration organised by the female workers of the Platinum Mills. It took almost eight years for them to achieve the right to become a permanent worker. Pakhi the leader of this movement narrated her experience:

*We have a life, we have the right to have that life which includes dignity and respect. [...] Why won't the system allow it? [...] We had initiated the process in 1988 and in 1996 we were appointed as permanent workers. I had to face a false case lodged by the management for attempted murder.[...] Staff and colleagues used to tease: 'you will be made permanent workers through your c**t. ... 'No quota system: based on seniority female workers should be appointed as permanent workers. On this issue we got our victory from the Court ...* (Female leaders Pakhi and Rani, Interview#17).

¹³⁶ Sufia: Bihari female worker. She is officially 58 years old but unofficially her age she think around 70. Her husband died twenty years ago. FGD#12

Why they had to go to court to fight for that right is not clear to them. I tried to learn the reason for management's objection and violent resistance to this issue. In reply to my queries, Service *Boro Babu* of the labour office in an exclusive evening chat on a Friday¹³⁷ narrated:

They [female workers] pollute the environment. [...] you know ...the curves and movements [...] are enough. Jute workers' characters are bad. Don't you see all brothels are located near to the jute mills. (Constructed from the field notes).

Being women is the identified reason why they do not have the right to become permanent workers. Yet the number of female workers under the *badli system* is increasing, because they can be hired at the minimum wage. One *Sardar* commented:

You see all those girls; the caretaker government initiated it as a mission, because of reducing cost of labour'. (Permanent workers, FGD#10).

However, they still remain vulnerable. They spoke three times about the issue of security and safety during a two-hour FGD. They stated:

Security and safety depends on you...don't you think? (Female badli workers, FGD#17).

Informal conversations with staff of the labour office suggest that in order to be on the regular job lists for female *badli workers* sexual involvement with the Babus, union leaders and officers is corollary. Hence roles such as temporary wives and multiple marriages are their other reality.

Female workers are employed mainly in the sewing section and a few of them have been appointed as helpers on the production side. Workers in the sewing section receive wages under the piece-rate system. Hence all these female workers work around 14–16 hours a day in order to earn 14 AUD per week. They narrated:

In order to earn at least a decent level of money we have to come in by 5.30 am, and we leave at 10 pm. Our families depend on our earnings. We don't have a life; sometimes we wonder is this called life (Permanent and badli female works, FGD#14).

¹³⁷ Weekly holiday

Hence Sufia broke into tears and carried on: *Is this a life? Am I a living being or I just am bearing a structure, a shadow* (participant of FGD# 14).

Female permanent workers appointed on the production side have remained in grade 1, as helpers for the last sixteen years. They feel frustrated, and are bullied by their male counterparts. As they narrated:

*Every word starts with S***t [...]. They tell us 'we will ask the management to remove this grade. ..You just stand in one place and earn money* (Permanent and *badli* female workers #15).

A deep bonding based on respect is embedded in their every-day relations. The continuous process of coping up with as well as against the domination has also raised a challenging attitude in them. One comment I gathered was: *Our male colleagues feel envious seeing our relations* (Permanent and *badli* female workers #15). I was invited for lunch at their places almost every Friday: *who knows whose daughter ...now lives here alone ... working for us.*

5.4.3 Role of the judicial system: Labour Directorate, Court and the JSAC

After reviewing the entire current employment process of the BJMC, and the workers' struggles to gain employment illustrates that officially the law enforcement agency overrides administrative decisions in establishing justice in employment practices in the mills. Besides it is suggested that too much political invasion is the major cause that deteriorates the usual dispute mechanism between workers and management. The director of the Joint Directorate of Labour (JDL) commented: *...now they prefer to go directly to MP or to the Minister.*(Interview#33).

5.4.4 Experience of November 2011

In February 2011 I left Khalishpur, although I had been asked to stay back for few days to monitor the appointment procedure of the *badli* workers as permanent. During my second trip in November 2011, I found that after becoming a permanent worker the leader of *badli* workers had joined the workers' union of the current political party in power. He informed

me that almost 60% of senior *badli* workers have been appointed as permanent workers. By that time my participants had realised that I am only a student, and hence this time I left Khalishpur with their best wishes for the accomplishment of my degree.

Concluding remarks

In conclusion, in this section I first discussed the legacy of crisis and how it has created fragmentations and impacted on the life world of the jute workers. Second, I discuss the loopholes in the accountability of the system, and its roots in the lack of access to information. Third, I discuss the domination of union leaders. While amiability is embedded in the culture of mill, as kinship is the basis of recruitment, very often I witnessed feuds in the labour office on issues like the approval of a worker' leave, who had been absent for more than two months without any notification. Fourth I discuss how the futures of application of the court rulings regarding employment of non-clerical staff or the workers of handling section are still undetermined. The next chapter describes the aspirations of the community to be involved with the process of managing mills; and how they define their rights and entitlements in order to deal with the current context.

5.5 Views about aspired management, rights and entitlements

Evidently in the current context the management and restructuring of the mill is not confined to the boundaries of the Ministries. Neither is it an issue of the WB which is negotiated with the Ministries, as it had been done previously (Discussed in Chapter 2; Hoque and Hopper, 1994).

The collected perspectives of the involved actors about their aspired management and involvement of the mills, along with the community now includes the members of the JPC and the members of the Commission/Alliance. They are categorised as policy-influencing factions. In line with this, the elected political actors: The Finance Minister, The local MP or the State Minister of Labour, The Chairperson of the Standing Committee of the Parliament of the Ministry and the Chairman of the Privatisation Commission, bureaucrats of the Ministry, and executives of BJMC are categorised as policy makers [presented in figure 4.1]. Discussions are primarily structured as follows:

- Aspired management and ownership: *If the government can run the state, then why can they not run the mills?*

- Conceptualising rights: *We are all citizens of Bangladesh*
- Plausibility and possibility of aspired management: *We don't understand politics ('rajniti'¹³⁸); we understand when our stomach is empty ('petniti'¹³⁹)*
- Actors can initiate changes: *GOVERNMENT!! Government can initiate all changes*
- Constitutional declaration or privatisation: Perspective of the policy makers

5.5.1 Aspired management and ownership: If government can run the state, then why can they not run the mills?

The discussion regarding how the community would like to see the management of the mill starts with defining, first, the aspired position of the sector at the national level and the role of the state. Thus the CBA commented:

The sector has the capacity to unify together the peasants and the workers' community, and it must be the fulcrum, and thus the significance of the sector has to be counted (FGD#1).

Within this defined context the proposed agenda of the people are as follows:

First, the jute sector implies the jute economy. It has to be conceptualised as an integrated element of the country's policy of development, industrialisation and poverty reduction. The representative of INCIDIN Bangladesh narrated:

The policy that concerns the farmers should have the vision of forming farmers' cooperatives, and linking those cooperatives with the SOJMs'. Thus the government can protect the farmers from the clutches of the middlemen and corruption in the procurement process. (Interview#49)

The community wants the state to have a vision for the sector and they suggest that jute technology should be incorporated into tertiary education in order to have expert and capable human resources. One collected remark noted:

The High Commission offices should act as facilitators in growing the market, being the connecting point of the Ministry/BJMC with the international market (The CBA, FGD#1).

¹³⁸ Politics as the usage suggests

¹³⁹ Literary meaning of rajniti is rule of politics and pet-niti implies rules/direction of the stomach.,

The role of government appears bewildering to the community. They believe the state is supposed to look after its people. Hence one participant remarked:

The government which takes money from the people for governing the state and people; the government spends that money on killing its people! Then what is the use of such a government? The government can run a state, then why not state-owned mills?

(Service Boro Babu, Interview#11).

Based on their experience in 2006–07, the community raises questions about the legitimacy of a government if its decisions cause death and deprivation. They think the regime could be despotic or democratic and the ruling parties' mandate could be different. But the community demands:

A declaration from all ruling parties and forms of governance including the caretaker government if there are changes to governance mechanism. The mills should remain under state ownership (Service Boro Babu of the Labour Office, Interview #11).

The state mode of ownership is the desired mode of ownership. The relationship that the community possesses with the state mode of ownership of the mills, explained as follows:

The mills should be under the state mode of ownership. The owner of the mill is literally the government but we are also the owners. We provide our physical effort and government runs the mill. When we retire then our brothers and children will be employed here. (Badli workers, FGD#21).

Another gathered comment was: *We prefer state ownership and also our participation.* (Permanent workers, FGD # 7).

Despite facing huge crisis the community still trusts the state mode of ownership of the mills. In relation to this, at the central level, the representative of INCIDIN Bangladesh and TUC suggest that in the case of decisions which have impacts on workers' lives, workers and their representatives should have the power to decide. Hence, the representative of INCIDIN Bangladesh concluded:

To us, the concepts of rights are intrinsically related to the issue of participation. We consider it as an entitlement of every citizen. [...] Workers as citizens are

entitled to participate in the decision-making process of the entity. (Interview # 49).

5.5.1.1 Mill as an independent entity Like Cha-Pan-biri¹⁴⁰ shop

One of the major conditions for the survivability of the mills lies in making it an independent entity, and this notion is also connected with the proposition of its financial autonomy. According to the CBA, the format of the budget is now provided by the BJMC and it is the responsibility of the mills to complete that format, so there is no scope for setting aside any funds, and making plans for the improvement of provided benefits.

Yes we want our income and expenditure to remain at our disposal. We will be responsible for earning the money and we should be responsible for spending it. Local level recruitment should be the mills' responsibility. Recruiting mill staff, employees, junior officers, and drivers should rest with the mills. (FGD#1).

The mills have to be established first as an entity. The community perceives that thereby the financial accountability can be ensured. What I gathered from formal and informal discussions is: *If this transfer of officers' from one mill to another continues then it is difficult to get accounts of all transactions from them.* (Constructed from the field notes). So if the mill becomes an entity the mills managers can be made accountable.

5.5.1.2 Mode of inclusion

The first priority in regard to inclusion is having information about the entire aspect of the mills. The community suggests that providing information to the community regarding the mills should be under a policy. They suggest a chart can be posted in front of the mills' gate, providing information on the target production target, sales volume, purchase price of jute, and sales price. One group of permanent workers also consider that comparative information on other mills under BJMC should be also provided. They commented: *information on other mills can also be communicated through publishing a monthly bulletin and it will be inspiring; we will be encouraged and feel competitive (FGD#9).*

Second, to enable their integration, the workers of all categories think information regarding the issue related to any sort of facilities provided by the government to the

¹⁴⁰ Pan is Betel. This has to be chewed with Areca nut. *Biri* is cheap cigarette. The pronunciation in Bangla is *biri* while it mostly known as *bidi*

workers must be communicated by media such as television and newspapers. *So we can know the entire issue: Otherwise what government announces, BJMC adds or deducts something and thus it obstructs our provision of entitlements.* (FGD#3). The conclusion is *'there should be no secrecy in managing the mills.* (Representative of TUC, Interview #48).

The workers also identify that to be integrated and to be able voice their issues; there must be the arrangement of meetings. It could enable them in communicating what they require. The workers want to have divisional meetings with the head of their department. They request that apart from the *Sardars*, there should be two representatives of workers from each section of the department at such meetings. And such meetings must be held with the head of the mills once a quarter or every six months. (Permanent workers, FGD#5).

Indeed the workers want to participate in formal meetings between union leaders and the mills' management in particular if it is related to the budget and planning. They explained:

We do not have any role in drawing up the budget. [...] We think that when union members discuss such issues related to the workers the representative of each section as non-union members should also be there. Then we can know the resolution and decisions of the meeting. (FGD#8)

This statement reflects the desire to have: (i) exact information (ii) participation; and (iii) parallel representation. Also indicates community's distrust in the union and management. A comment I heard very often was that more interaction can change the entire situation of the mills: *To bring about changes more interaction is required. The executives, BJMC and Ministry officials should talk to us. If there is a problem they should talk to us like you do.* (Household members of the Permanent workers, FGD # 25, and constructed from the field notes).

The workers and union leaders believe representation in the Enterprise Board¹⁴¹ is the effective way of having access to complete information regarding the procurement process of raw jute, parts and machinery, income, and how the income is distributed. Workers of

¹⁴¹ The constitution of the Enterprise Board has been discussed in the Chapter 2 and also in the section 4.1. It is headed by the Chairman or any Board members of BJMC. There are representation from the Ministry of Finance, Textile and Jute and they usually belong to the level of Deputy Secretary, The General manager of the Nationalised Commercial Bank, head of the Mills – the General Manager and the head of the Finance and Accounts department of the Mills are also members.

all categories consider that representatives have to be selected by all. One group of the permanent workers expressed:

There should be someone in the Enterprise Board. We know about the production but do not know about the selling. And he also can make them (board members) aware of our situation. It will empower us and we can voice our issues. ...

We think those who work all are workers. Some put physical effort and some work based on education ... (FGD#10).

Union leaders consider that if the management of the mills as it is propagated 'management and CBA' their representation is must in the Enterprise Board. The CBA the according to the *Industrial Relation Ordinance 1969* (Discussed in the Chapter 2, section 2.3.34) mills can have a participation committee. Hence they expressed: *we are thinking about reactivation of participation committee, so the CBA can be included officially in the procurement process and in formulation of budget.* The union leaders consider they are accountable towards the mill and the community, and their commitment can be strengthened if the CBA is formally become involved. Then they will be officially responsible for communicating decisions to the workers. The ex-president of CBA 2008–10 commented:

We belong to the mill. We cannot be transferred. ... Through election held every two years our accountability is judged. All official decisions regarding the process can be communicated by conducting gate meetings.¹⁴² (Interview #14)

It appears to be an unanimously agreed issue among the community that the mill should no longer be used as a political pawn. From the comments of several participants, it seems that an effective trade union is the primary precondition of their aspired management. Acknowledging that fact, the union leaders think a committee should be formed at the zone level, which takes four to five members of each CBA. The gathered comment about the aspired role of the CBA at the mills, zone and central level is,

[...]Through conducting regular review meetings, this committee could discuss in detail the following issues: expenditure on the procurement of raw jute; where the finished goods are exported; and what the current challenges are. Workers'

¹⁴²Gate meeting is a common term in the mill. CBA and TU leaders communicate to the workers in front of the main gate of the mill

representation everywhere can bring about transparency in the process. (The ex-President of CBA 2008–10, Interview #14).

The ex-president of the CBA further suggests that based on the results of the review meetings, annual plan of the each mills can be collected and a zone-wise plan for all mills can be designed. He thinks the annual budgetary allocation and workers' entitlement are major issues and through this process the provision of enhancement of the quality of the entitlements could be placed zone wise collectively in the budget. According to the ex-president of CBA 2008-10,

Such meetings should be a regular part of the management function and could be held once in every four months. Through consultation and planning there is an aspiration of making the entire process comparatively transparent. (Interview #14).

In line with this, according to the representative of the TUC a day can be announced and allocated for the consultation about the budget of the mill with the workers. A closed door consultation between union and workers on the floor is possible. He narrated: *a shift can be cancelled for such consultation. Four hours do not matter or can be communicated through the gate meeting on Friday.* (Interview#48).

In regard to the representation of workers on the Enterprise Board I gather two different perspectives. One group of participants consider representation is a necessary condition for voicing workers' issues, (Permanent and *badli* workers, FGD#2,4,5,6,8,9,10,11,12,14,15,19). Another group of workers appears doubtful about whether their representation is empowering. The fact is this group of workers emphasises on the positional power of the officers'. They commented:

Workers' representation will be token, notional or ornamental. Workers, we are not educated, and practical knowledge doesn't matter. If on any issues that manager tells me, 'no you are not correct. What I say: that is correct and factual.' I cannot tell that Manager that he is not right. They will not listen to us. (Permanent workers, FGD #7).

However, the workers consider that union members are educated and can handle situations that may emerge in the Enterprise Board. Indeed formal inclusion of workers'

representatives is desired and required. The ex-President of the CBA 2008-10, Platinum Mills concluded:

It does not matter whether it is under a private ownership or government ownership in any way such regulations regarding official discussions between the management and union members should be initiated. (Interview #14)

5.5.1.3 Inclusion of actors at local level in the Enterprise Board

The community considers that the District Commissioner, Ward Commissioner, and local MP must be included in the Enterprise Board. They suggest that an effective monitoring committee at the zone level should be formed. That committee should include the Ward Commissioner, Mayor and the District and Police Commissioner and the administrative representatives. Gathered comment:

The District Commissioner and Police Commissioner must be included in the monitoring committee; it will strengthen supervision. (Permanent workers, FGD#7)

They also suggest that at the zone level a governing body can be formed, similar to the Enterprise Board. Local elected bodies, including the local MP, administrative bodies, and representatives of local business associations and traders can be included as the member of the committee (FGD, 2,8,9,10,12,14,15,18,19,20, Interview:13,14, 27,49,50).

The General Manager of the Janta Bank possesses similar perspective, being a member of the Enterprise Board. He thinks

It is difficult for the Ministries' officials to attend meetings at the local level. But the Board could be more effective if the local level officials can be included. (Interview #30)

The Ward Commissioner being an elected representative of the locality considers his presence is must in the Enterprise Board

I am responsible for these people [the workers]. I think I should be consulted and must be included in the Board. (Interview #24).

In connection to this I found that the Commission/ Alliance members ask that local level organisations which are concerned with environmental and human rights issues be included in the Enterprise Board of the mills or the zone level committee. Emphasising the

formation of farmers' cooperatives and their inclusion in the Board, the representative of INCIDIN Bangladesh noted:

Inclusion of various interest groups at the local level into the process can ensure transparency of procurement of raw jute, and thus corruption will no longer be profitable (Interview #49).

5.5.1.4 Representation, inclusion and recognition

There is discontent among other members of the CBA that if required the Chairman asks only the President and the General Secretary of the CBA for visiting BJMC, when he needs their advices. So their suggestion is:

It could be formal and at least out of 25 members of the CBA they could ask four of us to represent our mill in such discussion (The CBA#1).

Although workers' representation is preserved in national level committees such as the Wage Commission and the Jute Commission, according to the ex-president of CBA2008-10, workers' representation in those committees is nominal when compared with the number of actors representing bureaucrats and the owners. Moreover, selected union and workers' representatives are usually retired workers who are involved with the workers' front of the ruling parties. Hence, this makes the community sceptical about whether these selected members effectively negotiate when they are partisan union members of the ruling parties (FGD, 2, 3, 5, 8, 9, 10, 12, 14, 15, and 20). The ex-president of the CBA 2008–10 of the mills stated:

Usually the ruling party select its union leaders as representatives. Besides, comparing the ratio of members selected from the categories of the bureaucrats, owners and workers, I think workers' representation in any committees is ornamental. [...] The government should include some young trade union members in those committees and they can also select representatives from SKOP. There are 18 registered unions under SKOP. (Interview #14).

For formulation of comprehensive, responsive policy and planning (discussed in 4.2.3 section), it has been suggested that consultation, discussion, exchange of dialogue and cautious selection of workers' representatives as well as equality in representation are necessary. The workers consider their representation is a scope of voicing their issues

However, for encountering or neutralising the bureaucratic role, in policy formulation process, the suggestion is:

The number of representatives of actors from all categories should be equal in all constituted bodies for the mills at all levels (The ex-president of CBA 2008–210, Interview #14).

On that issue the comment of the President of the Workers' Federation (and ex-union leader of the Platinum Mills) is pertinent. According to him:

[An integrated policy] has to be designed through consultations with all [the workers]. This policy cannot be formulated by a consultant or a Secretary of the Ministry. And that policy will be adapted by the board and should be implemented as a law [so it cannot be changed] (Interview # 24).

Representation or voicing own issues appears vital to the community for the survivability of the mills as well as for their survivability. The ex- President of the CBA 2008–10 of the Platinum Mills thinks: *There should be workers' representation in the Standing Committee of the Parliament [Ministry] so our voice can be directly heard there.* (Interview #14). He also emphasises on representation of media in the Standing Committee of the Parliament of the Ministry's meeting.

Subsequently, the workers suggest that the application of policy in managing the mills must be consistent with ILO conventions regarding workers' rights, and those administrative actions should be based on those conventions (Permanent workers, FGD#9). Presenting their own issues by themselves appears as the essential condition of participation for the workers and the essence of the aspired governing mechanism.

5.5.1.5 Perspective of managerial responsibility of BJMC and Ministry

People want to see BJMC as an autonomous body, accountable to the Ministry and free from political influence and with no appointments to the board from the Ministries. The CBA narrated:

BJMC should be independent, and should provide guidelines regarding managing the overall mills, particularly the production plan,, and should also do marketing (FGD#1).

A second issue of concern to the community is effective auditing. The comment I gathered on this issue was:

We want to see BJMC/Ministry not as a devourer but as a protector. Being a protector's means they will provide whatever is necessary, and it will take the report regarding expenditure of allocation. Sister, any officer of BJMC gets a salary 14 times more than us. [...] We get 1200 taka per week as Shaptah they get 14000 per month. Without any visible task, so, they [BJMC] should do extensive field visits for inspection and monitoring purposes. (Permanent workers, FGD #2)

Also I gather that the involvement of BJMC as the managing authority is considered excessive and exhaustive, *'even for recruiting workers, buying spare parts, a simple pinion, we need BJMC's permission* (Constructed from the field notes, *Service Boro Babu*).

Decentralisation is commonly suggested by the community (Section 4.2.3). They recommend that zone offices be headed by Directors of Jute and Research and quality control, because their advices are more frequently required at mills level. (Representative of TUC, Head of Export, and President of the Youth Forum/Convener of the *badli* workers of the private mills Interview #9, 25,48).

In regard to managerial accountability, I gather two perspectives about the final authority under which the mills and BJMC must operate and be accountable. Most of the workers and all activists suggested that BJMC as a supervisory authority must be accountable to the Standing Committee of the Parliament through the Ministry. The role of the Standing Committee becomes vital if there is a complaint or anomalies. The committee is responsible in terms of conducting enquiries and, can ask for explanations. The workers suggested that there be unannounced visits of the members of Standing Committee or their designated representatives.

[...] as the people' representatives they can visit and should visit the mills.
(Permanent workers, FGD#5).

However, the community perceives that changes in the regime also cause changes in the institutional structure. According to them the Standing Committee of the Parliament has the power when democracy is the form of governing mechanism. So, few members of the union consider the Ministry as the ultimate authority. As they remarked:

*If there is Parliament then we can have the Standing Committee of the Parliament.
It does not have any power to make the Ministry accountable. The Standing*

Committee of the Parliament is empowered by the functioning of the Parliament. ... It does not hold supreme authority. The ruling party gets changed, but the Ministry and Secretary, they always remain, and they are forever. (The current CBA, FGD #1).

5.5.1.6 Management we wish to see¹⁴³

The workers argue that their aspired management has to be efficient, transparent and accountable, and must have vision. According to CBA:

Such a 'visionary'¹⁴⁴ management system must be led by capable human resources.(FGD#1).

The concept of capable human resources implies that professionally sound people are assigned to the right posts. The most valued qualities that the workers would like to see in the people representing management are commitment, cooperation, responsibility, honesty and sincerity. So, the CBA remarked:

A code of conduct has to be signed by the management and elected CBA members (FGD#1).

Practice of signing code of conduct can raise cautiousness and consciousness, about the consequences of breaking those codes. And it can be lawfully ensured.

The community also thinks that dynamic organisation implies that workers are regularly promoted, receive profit bonuses, and have the possibility of joining management, and a career path to all level of workers and staff should be resumed. In order to have an expert and skilled human resource, the CBA would like to see the mills' school in the following way:

[...] in future the school of the mills be upgraded to a Jute Technology Institute with the school incorporating both basic and technical educational components(The CBA, FGD#1).

However, there is an alternative perspective for managing the mill at the mill level. The evidence of profitability of the Ship Yard¹⁴⁵ after being handed over to the Naval Force of the country inspired some workers of the mills. Hence these groups of workers conceive that in the same way the mills should be entirely under the direct supervision of the army

¹⁴³ Suggested in almost all conducted FGDs with the workers, and further authenticated and repeated in the participatory learning worksho of the SASF

¹⁴⁴ Implies could be able to see the future

¹⁴⁵ Ship manufacturing outlet of the government

(Permanent and *badli* workers, FGD#2, 3, 6, 5, 7, 21). However, such a proposition is strongly rejected by other groups of workers, who remarked:

We have a democratic country; we are not under any military regime, so there is no question of having any navy or army here. We have our Jute Ministry and BJMC. So the mills should be under their supervision. We just want our government to take care of things more effectively. The military and army have their place and it is in the cantonment. (Badli workers, FGD#21).

5.5.1.7 Workers' mode and other prevailing notions of ownership

I find that the workers are not interested about the issue of workers' ownership of the mill. They seem sceptical about the mode of management. Because they think, under government ownership there is certainty about regular revision of the wage scale; because union is there for raising this issue. Their question is: under workers' mode of ownership whether union will exist, or union will take over the management. Although the general workers lack trust in the union leadership, they assume that if the mills are under any other mode of ownership, even under workers' ownership the union as the negotiation body, might be abandoned. Therefore revision of wages cannot be conducted as it is a practice in case of the privatised and private mills. Hence, in all FGDs I find that despite all criticisms, in reality the existence of union is important to the workers (Permanent and *badli* workers, FGD #2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 2, 21).

The union members are also not interested in workers' ownership; hence they asked me the following question:

Do you know that in 1996, ten jute mills were handed over to the Federation of Unions of the Jute workers. [...]. However, most of those mills had to be closed down. (FGD#1)

Later at the central level the representatives of TUC informed me that paying back all liabilities of the mills had been imposed as a condition by the bureaucrats. This required financial arrangements, and that were impossible for the workers to arrange. Now three mills have been operating. However, entire management and ownership have been subcontracted. So those mills are now under private hands and workers are working in the mills only as workers (Interview #48).

Currently, there is an on-going discussion in the newspaper and electronic media, initiated by the Finance Minister, regarding transforming the mills into holding companies. The suggested mode of ownership is Public–Private Partnerships (PPP). The community including union members appear entirely indifferent about the issue. Yet the Vice President of the Workers’ Front of the political party currently in power, after observing my work for almost three months, thinks that my topic is fascinating, but it has no significance and relevance in the current context. According to him, *changes are happening soon. I had discussions [he didn’t mention with whom] regarding the ownership, governing system and management approach of the mills. These mills are becoming holding companies* (Interview #25).

However, another gathered perspective suggests the private public partnership (PPP) mode can be aspired too, if organisations and groups working on human rights and environmental issues are interested in buying individual mills’ shares. The representative of INCIDIN Bangladesh concluded:

If we concentrate our discussion only on this sector within the boundary of mills, or entirely as an issue of management or if we make the Ministry entirely responsible for its functioning, there is no way accountability can be strengthened. Bureaucracy cannot be solely responsible for the entire governing system of the mills. (Interview #49).

The community consistently emphasise that they prefer the state mode of ownership, with their participation in managing the mills. Within the framework of the state mode of ownership of the mills, the community define their rights.

5.5.2 Conceptualising rights: ‘All are citizens of Bangladesh’

Rights and entitlements are always fair claims. ...Is there anything called unjustified rights and entitlements?’¹⁴⁶

—Permanent workers, FGD #5

The community’s conceptualisation of rights is rooted in the declarations of the constitution regarding citizens’ rights. The concept of citizen I find to be deeply rooted in the mindset of workers, and hence discussions under this section emerged from that perspective.

¹⁴⁶ Shokol paonai najjo paona onajjp paona bole kichu nai- there is nothing called unfair-entitlement

5.5.2.1 The right to work and state-provided rights and entitlements

The discussion of this concept focuses mainly on the right to work, and the right to have a secure job and a secure life, since such security has been challenged as a result of policies pursued by the state. Hence one group of Sardars noted: *Our entitlements and rights are what have been declared as entitlements and rights in the constitution and in ILO convention (FGD#9).*

The following are generic issues of rights as commonly perceived by all categories of workers: a secure job; a functioning mill; functioning machinery; proper living space with secure supplies of electricity, water and fuel; proper wages aligned with the current market price of food; and payment of retirement benefits when due. One group of workers explained:

Our working rights imply our right of living. We have the right to work as we need it for our living. We consider that our rights imply that we work and we have two square meals every day and we will sleep happily at night. So ensuring these issues we consider as ensuring our rights. (The permanent workers, FGD#5).

In line with this, regularity of payments of *Shaptah*, retirement benefits and regular revision of wage scales are also considered as rights. The leader of the *badli* workers commented: *I do not want what all those big bureaucrats usually get. ... As a worker I have one issue. I will provide my labour and will take my Shaptah. We have the right to work and we are the citizens of this country. (Interview #16).* A secure job implies a stable working environment and functioning machinery. All are considered as rights: *we would like to be in peace. No more tension. We cannot bear it anymore...'* (Female workers, FGD#12).

The workers are aware and concerned about the quality and adequacy of provided subsistence. They know that availing themselves of quality services such as private schooling for their children or attending a private clinic for better health services is impossible for them. But they think as the mills are state owned, the school should have the right to receive all the facilities that are provided to public schools (Current CBA, FGD#1). Similarly, the workers do physical work, so they expect their medical benefits to be substantial. Female workers suppose that the mill should provide vitamin capsules too.

Thus female *badli* workers define their rights: *everybody understands his/her wellbeing ... and that is rights or entitlements.* (FGD#17). Other workers provided further clarification of the content of rights:

We want to see our children doing a PhD like you, or we want to see our children studying in the BUET¹⁴⁷ and Medical Colleges. State-provided facilities should be distributed equally. ... Can we send my children to a kindergarten for better education? No. We don't have the ability to pay 500 taka fees per month. But if we do not get what we are entitled to, how we can fulfil that dream'. (Badli workers, FGD #19).

Coping with the incessantly increasing 'market price' of subsistence appears impossible. The household members of the permanent workers commented: *'The money they (workers) bring every week is not even enough to boil the hot water.* (FGD #25. So the announcement of the revised wage-scale is vital. Moreover, the system of revision should be set as the norm in alignment with the announcement of the pay scale. The government declared the pay scale for the officers, including staff, the workers note.

Two years ago pay scale was announced. We buy food at the same bazaar as the officers. It is easier to spend three to four days without anxiety from our Shaptah; however, the rest of the days of the week seem impossible [...] (Female workers FGD #12).

Moreover there is no rationing system for people on lower incomes. It appears unjust to the workers of the Platinum Mills¹⁴⁸ that despite being workers of SOJMs they are not entitled to a have rationing system, while the government regiments enjoy such entitlements.

Within this context, considering themselves as another category of workers, *badli workers* categorise their rights as follows¹⁴⁹. First, they regard being appointed systematically as permanent workers as their fundamental human right. A permanent job in the SOJMs implies a formal contract of employment and a secure life. Second is a regular work

¹⁴⁷ BUET: Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology

¹⁴⁸ Cited in every FGDs and in Cha stall discussions

¹⁴⁹ Constructed from the field notes. They uttered those while they had been taking preparation for the grand reception of the Moha Guru (this is the local term used for the ex-union leader of the Platinum Mills, and current the Vice President of the Workers' Front of the current political party in power) , on the 13 January 2011. Besides I find this comment in all FGDs with the *Badli* workers. 17,19,20, Interview #16

schedule with at least three days of work per week. Third is that *badli* workers conceive state-provided entitlements – for example dwellings, insurance facilities, retirement benefits – as having to be equally distributed between them and their colleagues working as permanent workers. They suggest that fixing the ratio of *badli* and permanent workers is essential and has to be under proper regulations, so that the arrangement of equal entitlements becomes easier for the state. As the *badli* workers noted:

Otherwise because of the system some people are deprived. We also think that because the badli system prevails and will remain all the state-approved entitlements for its workers should be provided to us. We think there is no distinction between permanent workers and badli workers in terms of the effort they put in, their labour, so why is there a distinction in terms of payment? We have the right to receive the hajira¹⁵⁰ bonus; we have the right to have facilities of the provident fund and gratuity, insurance coverage, medical compensation for accidental death, living space, the right to be promoted duly and routinely, and enjoying leave facilities’.-Constructed from field notes, *badli* workers, 13th January 2011, before the grand celebration of the circular regarding appointment as permanent worker.

5.5.2.2 Perspective of the female workers:

Gender inequality is deeply rooted in the culture of the mill. The female workers do not view their employment as an indicator of empowerment. They have to work for their survival and for their children, as majority of the female workers’ husbands have abandoned them: *we have to survive and to us survival implies struggle*. (Permanent and *badli* female workers, FGD# 14, as well as all FGDs with female workers). So, they suggest that the government should implement a law that a man cannot marry more than once (*Badli* female workers, FGD#17).

A secure life also incorporates security of the livelihood of children. I find that in the case of female workers, ensuring a secure life for their children is perceived as a vital issue. Hence, they think *‘children of the workers should be systematically appointed. [...] Who will listen to us ... we don’t have a moustache.’* (Permanent female workers, FGD#12). Both female and *Badli* workers are worried about the arrangement of dowries for their

¹⁵⁰ Bonus given on the basis of attendance on the duty

daughters' marriage. Borrowing through the *Samiti* or any other source is costly I gathered the following comment:

The government should provide funding for the arrangement of the marriage of the badli workers daughters through the mills. (Badli workers, FGD#20).

In line with this one group of permanent male workers think there should be a specific policy regarding female workers in the mills: because this is lacking, their female colleagues are exploited. The gathered comment is: *They (female workers) have come for work ...but the attitude is an issue: those who supervise those who manage their attitude. It requires a policy so that everything can be under discipline. (FGD#7).*

5.5.2.3 The right to organise and represent

The right to one's own voice is an important issue and this appears possible through representation. The discussion in this section focuses mainly on *badli* and female workers. Casting votes in CBA elections implies selecting representatives, and this appears as the most important issue of rights for *badli* workers. It represents a formal engagement with the mill. The *badli* workers pose this as a vexed issue: they raise the question that if they can vote in parliamentary and local elections for candidates to look after their issues and interests, *then why we are not allowed to elect our leaders who will look after our rights as workers?*' (*Badli* workers, FGD#19). Otherwise, they claim, formal recognition of the '*Badli* Workers' Committee is required. Almost 20,000 *badli* workers in seven jute mills of this Khulna Zone formed the *Badli Workers'* Committee in 2007 (Leader of the *badli* workers, Interview #16). Yet, under the (LLB) 2006, floating workers cannot form any organisation. Since under the *badli* system, workers do not have any formal contract with the mill, they are regarded as floating workers; hence, their organisation cannot be registered. But they have issues related to their survivability and rights that need to be raised [Discussed in the sub section 4.4.2].

5.5.2.4 Perspective of the female workers

As I discuss in Section 4.4, jute mills are a male ghetto. Hence there is no union representation of female workers. From the five FGDs with both permanent and *badli* female workers, I gather that they want female *Sardar* and representatives of female workers in the CBA to voice their issues. They commented:

We came for survival. But it is also important to live with dignity and honour. ... People talk bad and make comments if we frequently visit Sardars for instructions. There is no difference between permanent female and badli workers ... even in emergency situations such as needing to go to toilet we prefer to remain silent. We need a female Sardar. We think we are competent,' (Female workers, FGD #15).

Representation in the union is important for voicing their issues. Their effort to contest union elections during 1990s resulted in failure due to the role of union leaders. The union leaders did not endorse the female candidates, so they had to contest individually. Rani is a focal person for female *badli* workers in the Committee of *badli* workers. Both Rani and Pakhi¹⁵¹ disclosed:

Women are also human beings, people here they don't understand that. This is the first time in our life we are expressing all these to you and this is the first time we have visited the Head Office. Our territory is limited to the Labour Office of the mills. We are not allowed to talk. (Pakhi and Rani , Interview #17, similar citation FGD #12, 14,15,18).

5.5.2.5 Effective union and the right of association: 'there is the union so we feel more protected'

Despite all criticisms (discussed in subsection 4.4.2) newly recruited female *badli workers* think they are more protected in the Platinum Jute Mills, when considering the challenges of sexual harassment that they have experienced in private mills or in garment industries. They obtain their job through social networking; hence that relationship works to protect them. Moreover, in the Platinum Mills, there is a union, so they can lodge a complaint. The female *badli* workers voiced:

Everywhere, it doesn't matter whether we are working in private jute mills or in garments companies. ...and it starts from Sardar, to the officers, they exploit us just like that. Nobody is there to protect us. But here we know some people and then there is the union so we feel more protected. (Female *badli* workers, FGD #17).

They consider having voting rights to elect their CBA is the most important issue. This, the female *badli* workers suggest, can make them empowered, to raise their voice against any

¹⁵¹ Rani considers herself as a follower of Pakhi, who led the movement of female workers to be appointed as permanent workers in 1988-90 and contested the union election

deprivation or anomalies, and is the only way to make the union responsible for protecting them.

It is generally perceived and agreed that to ensure rights, it is essential to have an effective and active union. It is commonly perceived that union leaders to some extent protect workers if they are unjustifiably punished or terminated. As a body for negotiation with management and putting forward their agenda, workers regard the union as immensely important.

Because of the trade union we can turn somewhere ... we can raise our issues when we are deprived, tortured or exploited. It is necessary to have trade unions. (Permanent workers, FGD #7).

Their definition of their aspired trade union is: *We want to see trade union leaders who are honest and earnest. We want a worker friendly union.* (Badli workers, FGD#19). In this regard union leader also expressed: *through formalising union leaders' participation ...you know, we would like to see a transparent union.* (The ex-president of the CBA 2008–10, Interview #14). However, I find both the union and mill management to be indifferent to the issue of female representation in the CBA.

5.5.2.6 The availability of information, and its relationship to participation

The availability of information and how it is made available appear important to all categories of workers. They believe that to ensure their wellbeing – and they regard their wellbeing as linked with the wellbeing of the mill – they need all kinds of information (This aspect is discussed in the previous section). Under this theme I find the importance of having access to information at individual level can create a difference. Hence, in one FGD, I came across the arguments of two female participants working under the *badli* system about provisions for admitting their children into the mill's school. While one participant assumes that *badli* workers cannot admit their children without an assurance from a permanent worker, the other participant, who is employed as a temporary household worker in the Production Manager's house, knows that they have this right and admitted her son to the school of the mills (*Badli* female workers, FGD#17). So the difference in terms of well-being through the access to information is evident.

5.5.2.7 Social recognition and aspiration

On this issue I gathered two different perspectives from all categories of workers. However, the majority of workers consider that working in SOJMs means a respectable secure life. It is their utmost aspiration because it confers social recognition. One group of permanent workers perceive that arranging a marriage for their daughters is easier for them because they are recognised as the permanent workers of a government-owned mill.

My son-in-law agreed to get married with my daughter only because his father in law is an employee of government owned mills. (FGD # 11)

Other groups of permanent workers perceive that due to their experience of consistent crisis, their whole life appears as a failure.

BJMC has recently advertised for the recruitment of staff and officers. I had asked my son to submit an application, he straight away replied me, “do you want me to go through the same trauma, the crisis and insecurity that you have been through”. (FGD#2).

Badli workers also have similar perspectives. One group of *badli* workers consider collectivity is important. As they narrated:

We are involved with 20,000 people (including badli workers in all seven jute mills of the zone). ... So we respect this place. We always feel we are not alone in case of any crisis situation. You could have a job that matches your skill: you are doing a PhD. We have a job that is compatible with our situation. (Badli workers, FGD#19).

Other *badli* workers find that the infrequent nature of the appointment of *badli* workers to permanent positions is a crucial issue. Their insecure future makes their children's lives also uncertain. But in their own social network they feel proud of being an employee of a government-owned mill.

5.5.2.8 Perspective of Hindu and Bihari workers

In discussions about the issues of rights and entitlements, both Bihari and Hindu workers appear indifferent. They remain isolated and live outside the mill, although they have been working for more than two generations in the mill. The common perspective I gathered from them is: *we try to avoid all sorts of conflicts.* (Bihari workers, FGD#18, Household members of Hindu workers, FGD #26). I could not engage Hindu workers into conversations. Apparently Bihari workers hold two conflicting perspectives about the entire system. On one hand, they completely distrust the system.

We are Non-Bangali. We do not even visit the mills' appointed doctor. You know we have an 'Urdu' accent. So when they understand we are 'Urdu-speaking', they do not treat us properly. So it is better to visit an outside clinic or a nursing home and spend money so we save our lives. (Bihari workers, FGD#18).

On the other hand, state recognition of them as citizens during the caretaker regime led to remarkable changes in their mindset. They voted for the first time in the ninth Parliamentary Election in December 2008: Bihari workers along with their household members mentioned three times in one discussion that now they could avail of drinking water, sanitation facilities and could receive loans for refurbishment of dwellings conducted and supervised locally by the Ward Commissioner— *'it is a change'* [Constructed from the field notes, Bihari Community¹⁵²]

It is difficult to know the exact number of Bihari and Hindu workers working in the mills. Delwar *Choto Babu*¹⁵³ of the Labour Office manages the MIS section of the entire workforce. He thinks that collecting such segregated data is of no importance to the mills. He showed me a reporting form of the Ministry of Labour Affairs dated September 2006. It has been designed to collect the numbers of Muslim workers, workers of other religions, Bangali workers, and non-Bangali workers. Delwar stopped sending such information to the Ministry in 2006. His view is: *'all workers are citizens of Bangladesh'*. He noted:

*First I started receiving such stupid forms from 2001 when the Alliance of Four Party*¹⁵⁴ *came into the power for the second time. In 2006 I decided not to send that report. ...I haven't yet received any notification from the Ministry. All those bu**** bureaucrats...it is a product of their head. (Constructed from file notes, Delwar, Labour Office).*

5.5.3 Plausibility and possibility of aspired management: 'We don't understand politics ('rajniti'¹⁵⁵); we understand when our stomach is empty ('petniti'¹⁵⁶)

¹⁵² The Bihari community who opted for going back to Pakistan after the liberation war of 1971 became and known as stranded Pakistani. They usually live in Khema. The participants I spoke belong to this category

¹⁵³ Lower Dealing Assistant

¹⁵⁴ BNP led four party alliance

¹⁵⁵ Politics as the usage suggests

¹⁵⁶ Literary meaning of rajniti is rule of politics and pet-niti implies rules/direction of the stomach.,

This section discusses perceptions gathered from the participants about the enabling and constraining contextual factors that may enhance the implementation process of their aspired management or aggravate the situation, and issues that lead them to be optimistic or sceptical.

After the resistance of 2007, I find that the emerged consciousness is the fulcrum. It shapes the views of the community about the future of the mills and their approaches of balancing the current management tactics. The workers understand the current profitability of the mills is the outcome of their effort and it is their collective achievement. One participant commented:

Now we can say and we are proud to say that the Jute Mills are a profit-making concern. (The Assistant Secretary, Interview#13).

Regarding this sensitisation as the enabling element, I discuss the gathered perspectives below.

In the context of rising demand for jute products due to environmental concerns at the global level, the community appreciates the current initiatives of the government that support both public and private mills. Those measures of the government according to the community can be considered as enabling factors for their aspired mills. The current CBA further expressed:

Five to ten years from now: given the way government has been initiating actions, if those initiatives are sustained, we think there is a possibility for a bright future for the mills. (FGD #1).

Sensitisation and collective approach of the community can be traced to their action for ensuring the stability of the current operative mode of the mills. In informal discussions in *Cha* stalls I heard from various sources that a few months earlier, a large gathering of workers in front of the mill gate had prevented lorries from entering the mills. These Lorries were carrying rotten jute, costing around 55.55 million AUD, which had been purchased by corrupt management. The workers acknowledged the support they received on this issue from the local MP¹⁵⁷. She managed the bureaucrats at the top level. Similarly, local journalists covered the incident widely. As a result, the Head of the Mills, the Head

¹⁵⁷ State Minister of Labour

of Jute and Finance department of the Platinum Mills were suspended. The current CBA narrated:

The Prime Minister, the State Minister of Labour / local MP and the Minister,¹⁵⁸ we are confident about them: if this ruling party remains in power for 10 to 15 years, these institutions will be more prosperous. [...] We can call her [local MP] directly on her mobile¹⁵⁹ [uttered 2 times]. [...] Government once allocated the money¹⁶⁰ [Sigh] wastage and vandalism by management... (FGD#1).

According to the leader of the *badli workers*, creating jobs is the responsibility of the ruling parties. So, *badli* workers maintain a liaison with the local MP regarding their permanency issue. As he commented:

We are her¹⁶¹ voters, we elected her, [...] so we have the right to involve her with the issue of our permanency (The leader of the badli workers, Interview #16).

The above statements indicate that in the current context, the community's rely on the current elected political agents by observing their activities regarding the sector. It also suggests that the dynamics of the mills are defined by the two categories of actors: (i) political agents; and (ii) the bureaucracy.

The scepticism of the community is also grounded in the combined role of these two categories of actors and that they identify as the constraining factors of their aspired management of the mills.

5.5.3.1 The role of the political agents: 'the government-owned mills as a dustbin'!

According to the community changes in political regimes and ruling parties affect the functioning system of the mills and their livelihood. Comparing their experience of regimes under the two main political parties, the nationalists political party (BAL) — that led the liberation war in 1971, and the army-established political party (BNP), the community assumes that the structure of the political parties is an important factor. It determines the level, and degree of created crisis. The experience of acute crisis of 2004–07 is the basis of such assumption. I heard several times that the Finance Minister of BNP

¹⁵⁸ The Minister of Textile and Jute

¹⁵⁹ Cell phone

¹⁶⁰ This current government provided money as seed money

¹⁶¹ Local MP/ the state Minister of the Labour Affairs

(2001–2006) declare in the media that government-owned mills were a dustbin. The gathered remark:

[..] The government-owned mills are a dustbin! So no more financing. BNP's members are mostly owners. So, whenever BNP occupies power it destroys any of the government sectors. ... In its last tenure it destroyed Adamjee. (Current CBA, FGD #1)

Therefore, the community relates the recent support scheme of the current ruling party to its historical initiatives¹⁶² regarding the jute mills during the post-independence period. One group of participants commented:

Nationalisation was conducted by the father of Sheikh Hasina.¹⁶³ As long as she is in power, the mill will not be closed. ... (Sigh). (Permanent and badli female workers. FGD# 14).

Currently the Standing Committee of the Parliament is playing an active role as the highest supervisory body. During my stay, I found teams from BJMC often visiting the mills to investigate controversial issues that have been raised either in Parliament or in meeting of the Standing Committee.

However, representation of the owners' class in the two political parties, and their experience of suffering during the last tenure of the current ruling party in 1996–2001¹⁶⁴, (please see the Table 2.1), make the community sceptical about the future of the mills and their existence. The current CBA narrated:

Standing Committee of the Parliament, who are they? They are either owners Or they are the representatives of the owners, and they will definitely voice their issues. (The current CBA, FGD#1).

So, despite showing their confidence in the core body of the current ruling party, scepticism prevails in the mindset of the people about whose interest would come first in the design of policies regarding the functioning system of the mills and the sector.

¹⁶² Discussed in 4.3 section

¹⁶³ The current Prime Minister and leader of Bangladesh Awame League BAL

¹⁶⁴ 1996-2001 the last Tenure of the current ruling party

Since the existence of the mills determines the existence of the community, they firmly communicate that if government changes its current policy, if anything goes wrong now they will again launch a movement. The success of the community's resistance in 2007 has generated a feeling of collectivity. The workers expressed:

If we find anything wrong we will launch another movement. For us all roads are already closed. There is no alternative work. [...] Previously we had thought we were alone but now we do not think we are alone anymore. (Badli workers, FGD#20).

Hence the female workers drew the conclusion: *We don't understand politics ('rajniti'¹⁶⁵); we understand when our stomach is empty ('petniti'¹⁶⁶)* (Permanent and badli female workers, FGD#14).

The members of JPC, however, think that initiating a movement will be difficult since partisan politics and parochialism have crippled union politics and the mind-set of workers (President of the Youth Forum, Interview #25, 23).¹⁶⁷ Yet, all participants irrespective of their status as permanent or *badli* and their identity in terms of gender, ethnicity and religion are united on one issue, as they narrated:

We resisted the decision of the caretaker government in 2007. If there is any step towards privatisation we will not accept such decisions anymore. If it happens again we will resist and our situation will be: live or let's die together (FGD #14).

5.5.3.2 'Ploys and conspiracy are everywhere': The role of bureaucracy, the ruling class and the WB

During my presence in Khalishpur, there were a couple of incidences of fire in the jute Godowns¹⁶⁸ in several government-owned mills. This caused despair in the community, as it is suggested that fire in the Godown is a common practice of corrupt management after procuring rotten raw jute.¹⁶⁹ Another interpretation that I gather from BJMC officials is: India does not want to see the mills of Bangladesh functioning (Constructed from the field notes, The Controller of Finance). Another perception prevails that Indian nationals

¹⁶⁵ Politics as the usage suggests

¹⁶⁶ Literary meaning of rajniti is rule of politics and pet-niti implies rules/direction of the stomach.,

¹⁶⁷ Similar comment representative of TUC and President of the Workers Federation/ex-union leaders , Interview #48,23

¹⁶⁸ Means warehouse for storing raw jute

¹⁶⁹ Constructed from the field notes

occupy executive positions in the WB; as a result the regional policy regarding jute is now to re-locate the industry to India. The Assistant Secretary of the CBA remarked: *The WB/IMF want to close down all mills and industries of our countries and transfer those set up to 'other' countries* (Interview#13).

However, in relation to this, the collected perspective from members of the JPC (ex-union leaders) suggests that India depends on Bangladesh for its internal consumption of jute products. Hence, they associate the fire in the jute Godown is a part of the conspiracy of the *'ruling classes, involved with hoarding for trading and exporting of raw jute'* (The retired Manager of the Mill, and Representative of TUC, Interview #30, 49).

The balancing modernisation and renovation is a common concern and the community looks for government's initiatives. However, the Finance Minister confirmed that the mills had received all financial and infrastructural support for re-initiating their operation. Now, BJMC as a corporate body is responsible for generating funding out of its surplus in order to conduct balancing modernisation and renovation. So there will be no more budgetary allocation.

We provided them with whatever they had asked for; now conducting balancing modernisation and renovation is BJMC's responsibility (The Minister of Finance, Interview #43).

Subsequently the Secretary of the Ministry confirmed that there would be no more funding: *The Ministry of Finance is not going to give us a scraped coin next year* (Interview #40).

Observing the current government initiatives regarding the jute sector and the SOJMs the representative of the TUC/ finds inconsistency in government's planning. According to him in one hand the ruling party is concerned about its election mandate; but on the other hand government had an agreement with the WB. Thus the representative of TUC concluded: *[...]ruling party is facing now a conflict of interest, as there had been an agreement between the government and the WB [Otherwise how it possible] providing money to the same bureaucrats without any agreement with them about the better performance of the mills.[...]* (Interview #48).

Hence the plausibility of aspired management depends on, first in the sign of emerged consciousness of the community in terms of keeping the mills' functioning. But it is entwined with a sense of scepticism regarding the political parties' stance, the ploys of bureaucracy and the WB policy.

5.5.4 Actors can initiate changes: 'GOVERNMENT!! Government can initiate all changes'

At the local level, the workers assume that some of the changes can be made by the management and union, for instance communicating to them the outcomes of informal meetings held between the CBA and mill management. Disclosing the meeting minutes could be made official if a circular is sent by BJMC (Permanent workers, FGD#7).

I find from all FGDs with the workers and CBA that they think only government can bring all aspired changes. The community also suggests that BJMC as a supervisory authority can initiate some changes but at the end it lies with the government. One group of participant remarked: *Governments!! Governments can do everything if the government wants to. They can fulfil our every need and demand.* (Permanent and *badli* female workers, FGD #17).

In line with the workers, union members suggest that if the Ministry through BJMC sends a circular stating that one or two CBA members needs to be included in every on-going, upcoming project of the mills and in the procurement process: *This will be enough to initiate changes.* (CBA #1).

According to the leader of the *badli* workers, the local and central level NGOs work as 'lobbyist' and along with them the members of the JPC can also influence the process on their behalf (Interview #16).

5.5.5 Perspective of the policy makers

Perspective of the context setters

Discussions are categorised into two broad sections.

1. Participation and inclusion into management

2. Perspectives regarding ownership mechanism

5.5.5.1 Participation and inclusion into the system of management – ‘Union leaders cannot act as Mastans’¹⁷⁰

The local MP/ the State Minister of Labour and the Chairman of BJMC are aligned in their opinion on formal recognition and inclusion of *badli* workers into the system through recognising the *badli* Workers’ Committee and providing them with the right to vote in union elections. The local MP stated:

Since mills have organised trade unions and they are elected representatives of the workers. Formal recognition of badli -workers’ committees as another committee of another category of workers will create chaos. As to approving badli workers’ voting rights, this will encourage trade union leaders to appoint more badli -workers to increase their chances of being elected, which cannot be encouraged.

(Local MP/State Minister of Labour, Interview#42)

Workers’ representation and participation in the Enterprise Board

I gather two different opinions regarding workers’ representation and participation in the Enterprise Board. BJMC officials appeared confused when I raised the issue of representation of workers or their selected union member on the Enterprise Board. The Chairman of BJMC commented:

In order to participate, union members must have knowledge about ‘scientific leadership; otherwise there will be unnecessary arguments in board meeting. They cannot act as Mastans’¹⁷¹, of the political parties (Interview #35).

Furthermore, inclusion of worker’s representatives means management secrets have to be disclosed. As the Controller of Audit and Finance of BJMC noted: *As an example, if a laying-off policy is going to be implemented then?* (Interview#38).

Moreover, executives acknowledge that an active participation committee for managing the mill is specified in the Industrial Relations Ordinance (1969). Since the mills have an active union, according to the Chairman of BJMC: *Activating this committee will not create any significant changes.* (Interview #35).

¹⁷⁰ Mastans: hooligans
¹⁷¹

Considering that the Enterprise Board of the mills is an execution committee, not a policy implementation or formulation body, the executives of BJMC suggest that inclusion of the workers' representative or union leaders must be at the central level board that is Board of BJMC. The reason is this board formulates policy (Director Marketing, Interview #36).

On the contrary, elected political actors the local MP, the Chairman of the Standing Committee of the Parliament of the Ministry and the Finance Minister consider inclusion is important, because workers are now more conscious. They assume that such inclusion provides scope for listening to the views of workers and also enables information to be communicated to workers. Assuming that inclusion and representation will bring positive changes in the overall management, one gathered comment:

Workers' representation in the Enterprise Board ensures better relations between workers and management. [...] We prefer workers representation in everything and it is important, so certainly we will support such a decision. (The chairperson of the Standing Committee of the Parliament of the Ministry Interview #44).

Hence the two opposite perspectives I find. In one hand the executives posit that the secrecy is required for managing the mills. On the other hand, the political representatives consider inclusion of workers in the process of management of the mills can ensure better coordination and disclosure of information.

Inclusion of local elected actors and administrative representation

In regard to the inclusion of local elected bodies into the Enterprise Board I gathered two different perceptions. According to the Chairman of BJMC during the regime of EPIDC¹⁷² there had been a Welfare Committee for managing the mills, which included elected bodies at the local level. However, inclusion of the local elected bodies in the current context requires the participants' commitment, and hence The Chairman of BJMC stated:

Otherwise, there will be political influence and dominance over the mills' management, and local leaders' will tend to influence the recruitment process of the mills' management towards appointing their[local leaders] people. (Interview #35)

¹⁷² EPIDC: East Pakistan Industrial Development Corporation

On the contrary, in regard to the inclusion of local elected bodies, the Chairperson of the Standing Committee of the Parliament of the Ministry thinks that changes in policy have superficial impact, as long as the affected actors are not sensitised about their responsibilities and rights.

It will create harmonious relations, which is important for better functioning of the mill. Consensus and consciousness are both required for substantiating any changes that can bring sustainability'. (Interview # 44).

5.5.5.2 Perspectives regarding the ownership: Government is not a good businessman

At the central level various concepts are being considered in regard to the ownership of SOJMs. These include Private-Public Partnerships (PPPs), and turning them into Holding Companies or Public Limited Companies (PLCs) and then registering all SOJMs under the Companies Act. The gathered perspectives and my observations are discussed below.

Executives of BJMC have two opinions. Most of the Directors prefer the state mode of ownership, and under the current situation they find solace in the sensitisation of the workers about mills' should be functioning. All Directors are almost at the phase of retirement, and they had never thought that they could be appointed as the Director of BJMC. At the current stage they are in limbo as it is not clear whether the Ministry is going to reappoint them on a contract basis. Chairman of BJMC is a retired BJMC executive, has been appointed as a Chairman under two years contract. Hence I also find in BJMC the appointment through contract of all most of all Directors and Chairman is perceived as an indicative of the temporariness of decisions by the employees. Hence, the directors want BJMC should be out of the grip of the Ministry and must act as an autonomous body. The Director of Marketing remarked

Today¹⁷³ is my last day in BJMC. In the 30-years history of BJMC, as an executive of BJMC, my appointment as the Director of Marketing is the first appointment of an executive of BJMC at this post.[...] It is frustrating, that you would find that your boss (deputed Director)¹⁷⁴ didn't know anything. To appoint directors in the vacated posts, for example the Director of Finance, or Director of Production, we need permission from the Ministries, the Ministry of Textile and Jute, Finance and

¹⁷³ 10th March 2011

¹⁷⁴ The Board behind him shows in 30 years at least 35 bureaucrats were appointed

*then Establishment*¹⁷⁵. BJMC should be autonomous. It is required for the flexible functioning of a business concern, but ownership of the mills should remain with the state. (Interview#36).

However, the Directors suggest the WB policy is not supportive for the operation of the jute manufacturing industries. Because its policy recommends for establishing twine mills, which has flourished under the private sector (the Director of Marketing and the Controller, Interview # 36, 38). The Chairman appears enthusiastic in expressing his plan of buying 2 % share of all privatised but closed down mill, and then reopening all those mills as BJMC's mills. BJMC has got 49% share in all those privatised but closed down mills.

In case of newly recruited officers, I gather from their discourse that they prefer the PPP mode. They find the mode of government-owned enterprises archaic: the most often used technological equipment is the typewriter, while computers and internet technology have been provided to the Directors. They believe that the PPP as a mode is appealing¹⁷⁶. It may change the dynamics of BJMC. But they also consider job is more secured in the public sector. Hence I gathered the following comment:

Believe me I worked in private sector they used I mean also officers as slaves. Job is not secured. (Manager/ Head of Export Interview #9).

The fact is the WB has been promoting PPP for the last two years.¹⁷⁷

The Minister of Finance and the Chairman of the Privatisation Commission¹⁷⁸ are retired bureaucrats, but now elected public representatives, along with them I find as the current bureaucrats, the Secretary and the Joint Secretary of the Ministry are aligned in their stance that PPP is the preferred mode of ownership. The Finance Minister worked for thirty years as a bureaucrat of the government of Bangladesh and held position in International Agencies.¹⁷⁹ Now in charge of the Ministry of Finance, he negotiates policy prescriptions with the WB and the IMF. Although he is apparently critical of the private sector, since he

¹⁷⁵ It implies the Ministry of Finance, Establishment along with the Ministry of Textile and Jute

¹⁷⁶ Field notes, mainly collected from the Deputy Manager Administration BJMC, 14th March 2011

¹⁷⁷ One of the Senior Economists at national level of the WB made the comment: *It took us two years to sell the concept of PPP to this government.* I recorded it instantly as a field note.

¹⁷⁸ Similar rank as Deputy Minister and also Member of the Parliament

¹⁷⁹ It is a trend in Bangladesh. Bureaucrats work in deputation in the WB, the IMF, the Asian Development bank or in the UN

claimed that *the private sector of Bangladesh is not efficient, acts 'spoon fed' and continually asks for government incentives.* (Interview#43). But he affirms that ownership of the government-owned mills will be restructured accordingly under the PPP concept. According to him:

The mills will be converted into holding companies. Under the PPP concept, the government will provide the equity, the management will be recruited, and the mills will be functioning as private sector concerns, but will remain accountable to the Ministry and thus to the Standing Committee of the Parliament. (Interview #43).

The Minister assumes that the holding companies approach is rationalistic. It means less liability for the government. He further suggests that under the PPP mode entitlements and equity of the employees will be distributed according to legal doctrines. However, decisions regarding lay-offs or retrenchments would remain with management. The governance structure would remain with the state. However, the formation of a 'cell' called PPP under the Prime Minister's Secretariat appears confusing to the Chairman of the Privatisation Commission. Particularly he thinks when already there is an institution for conducting privatisation. This is the only conflict of interest I observe between the agenda of restructuring pursued by the Minister of Finance and the Chairman of the Privatisation Commission. (Interview #45).

The Finance Minister clarified issue regarding participation or inclusion of the works in the management under the PPP mode of restructuring in the following way:

BJMC Board may take the workers' representative because workers are now very cautious and they are professional's people and participation is now widely discussed everywhere (Interview #43).

The Minister outlined the concept, and the Secretary of the Ministry explained the plan to me. According to the Secretary, mills under BJMC are now supposed to produce at optimum level, and later BJMC will gradually take over the closed privatised mills since the government has a substantial share in those mills. However, the Secretary considers that right now, mills in the private sector are flourishing and those mills should not face competition from the SOJMs. Hence, the Secretary expressed:

We want the owners to absorb all those SOJMs. The current government policy (there had been no policy at that time ?) suggests that SOEs cannot take us that far if they are state owned and will be transformed into holding companies. You know the government is not a good businessman. (Interview #40).

Hence it appears certain that the mills are going to be restructured under the PPP mode. The Secretary further suggests that about the mechanism of union under the PPP mode will be designed with the help of the Ministry of Labour¹⁸⁰.

Also I gather that currently the Ministry is negotiating with the government of Sudan on payments for exports of jute goods from several years ago. Instead of money, the Ministry is now asking the Sudanese government for an allocation of land under lease for cultivating cotton as a measure of support for the garment industries. This substantiates the workers' presumption that there are exchange products (*Badli* workers, FGD#21, discussed in Section 4.2). Interestingly I again heard the comment that '*Government is not a good businessman*' from the Secretary of Foreign Affairs at a Seminar in Melbourne¹⁸¹ in response to my question about whether the Business Consulates of the High Commission offices of Bangladesh can promote bilateral trade of jute products. But he mentioned the supportive measures the Foreign Ministry undertakes for facilitating the bilateral agreement for the garments industry. It appears that the idea that 'government is not a good businessman' has an impact on the mind-set of the bureaucrats.

On the contrary, the Chairman of the Standing Committee of the Parliament of the Ministry, and the local MP, the veteran partisan political agents, reminded me the mandate of the current ruling party and the Constitutional declarations that states that state ownership is the most preferred mode of ownership. The Chairman of the Standing Committee of the Parliament of the Ministry commented:

BJMCs' mills will remain under state ownership. [...] Yes PPP is another mode, if we think about such mode of ownership substantial share will remain under the government. Our major policy is reopening closed mills. The objective of our government is to ensure whatever declared in the Constitution.

(Interview # 44).

¹⁸⁰ Interview 40

¹⁸¹ 28 September 2011, The Secretary gave a Seminar, in the School of Management, RMIT University

5.5.6 Formation of Commission and its' Report:

I mention in chapter 1 that the government formed the Commission by the selective members of the Alliance. Before initiating discussions regarding the formation of the Commission, and its report, we have to discuss about the formation of Alliance. According to Alliance members, the Alliance assimilates various factions that represent professionals, jute mills' workers including the following: members of the JPC; owners' factions for instance the Chairmen of Bangladesh Jute Spinners Association, the Bangladesh Jute Mills Association, and the Bangladesh Jute Association; retired bureaucrats as owners of the mills; experts in jute; and representative of the workers and the JPC, — the Representative of TUC, and the Member Secretary of the Alliance — the representative of local organisations concerned with workers' rights — Representative of INCIDIN Bangladesh (Interview #48, 49). The Commission is a replication of Alliance headed by the President of the Alliance¹⁸². The President of the Commission is a renowned economist of the country. I find his perspectives regarding the ownership of the mills are aligned with the perspectives I collected from the bureaucrats.

The Commission also includes state officials at the Joint Secretary level of four relevant Ministries—Textile and Jute, Commerce, Agriculture and Finance—and the Chairman of BJMC. The Commission integrates the policy influencing and policy forming factions and thus the highest policy recommending body has been formed.

Analyses of the Commission Report reveal the feature of integration that are of interest to the various factions. It recommends the following: that a National Committee be formed that comprises members of all interest groups including selected representatives of jute cultivators of various regions; and that BJMC should be restructured as a public limited company, which would supervise and monitor the government-owned mills and deal with the international market. Yet, the Commission Report did not mention anything about workers' representation on the State Level Committee. But the Report recommends that the workers' rights must be protected according to the ILO Conventions and the process delineated in the Bangladesh Decent Work Country programme, 2006–2009¹⁸³. Reflecting

¹⁸² Interview 47

¹⁸³ Discussed in Chapter 2

on the cited issues related to workers' interest, I recall the discussion I had with the representative of the TUC, who represents the workers 'category in the Commission. He expressed his scepticism about the quality of the report of the Commission in regard to whether it could incorporate the views of the workers of the mills.:

I am a retired worker of the Latif Bawani Mills,¹⁸⁴ and have been involved with TUC¹⁸⁵ and the Communist Party of Bangladesh for forty years. I don't have an email account and I don't know how to operate it. The Commission opened an email account and has asked us to give our views; as well peoples have been asked to send their views through email. Is it going to work? (Interview #48).

5.5.7 The draft Jute Policy 2011

The Ministry accepted the draft Report of the Commission as final. Based on that the draft Jute Policy 2011 has been prepared and uploaded to the website of the Ministry for further comments. The draft Policy 2011 discussed in Chapter 1, Table 1.1, here I focus on the constitution of the National level Committee for the Sector. The Committee will consist of thirty five members, comprising bureaucrats of the relevant Ministries, the Governor of the Central Bank and managing directors of the Nationalised Commercial Banks, representatives of the private and privatised jute mills, peasants' community and experts in and researchers of jute. There is a proposition for establishing cooperatives for jute. The draft Jute Policy 2011 further suggests that during privatisation, workers' interest will be the issue of concern. However nothing has been mentioned in the policy about the inclusion of workers' representatives and organisations working on human rights or on the environment in that National Committee. So the questions remains as to who will protect the workers' interest during the restructuring period and how will this be done. Are these the same bureaucrats and state agents who will be responsible for defining the restructuring process?

5.5.8 Experience and inspiration: SASF November 2011

I presented the findings of this study at the SASF. It was attended by workers including union members of jute mills of Khalishpur, and Khalishpur Jute Mills¹⁸⁶, members of the

¹⁸⁴ Government-owned mills located in Dhaka zone

¹⁸⁵ Trade Union of the Communist Party Bangladesh

¹⁸⁶ The Peoples' Jute Mills is now functioning as Khalishpur Jute Mills. The WB put condition that leased or privatised mills or government owned but closed down mills cannot be reopened in previous names.

JPC, Alliance, journalists, and professional bodies. Independence of the mill as an entity, its financial autonomy, workers; representation and participation in the Enterprise Board, and in the procurement process were discussed as major findings of the research, and highlighted in the national level daily newspaper (Please see the Appendix G). As a part of the fieldwork I visited BJMC and Platinum Jute Mills (Discussed in section 4.4). In BJMC I found most of the Directors contract had been renewed for two more years. The Director of Research and Quality Control asked me to send a copy of my findings and papers to the Minister. As the assigned contact person of my research, he stated: *'he [Minister] should know, [...] he will appreciate it or it may give him new ideas'* (Constructed from field notes, 27th November, 2011).

Concluding remarks

This section first, portrays how the community would like to see the sector, the mills; BJMC, and the Ministry — as the prime policy-making institutions. Second, there is discussion about the mode of ownership of the mills. Also it comprises views of the policy makers — the executives, bureaucrats, and the peoples' representatives. Along with their perspectives, the collected comments from the members' of the JPC, and the Alliance/Commission, both at local and central level have been merged here. This constitutes the perspectives of the involved civil society organisations, as these factions play a vital role in the policy formulation process. Regarding the mode of ownership of the mills I find, the state mode of ownership is the desired mode of ownership of the mills by the community. Neither they have ideas about the PPP as a mode of restructuring, nor do they prefer the workers' mode of ownership of the mills. But the discussed aspired governing and management mechanism by the community suggests their inclusion should be mandatory into the system of management, which comprises having access to information, and conducting discussions or dialogue with the management and policy makers. The section also focuses on how the community defines the content and coverage of their entitlements, which constitutes their capability aspect. And their representation and participation in the management process of the system. An effective union as a collective body is also appeared essential. Equally, I find that the perspectives of the Commission/Alliance members representing the workers and the local level organisations working on human and labour rights, and the local MP and the Chairman of the Standing Committee of the Parliament of the Ministry are aligned with the community about the aspired mode

of ownership issue of the mills. However, the bureaucrats and the Finance Minister suggest that the mills are going to be restructured under the PPP mode. On the issue of PPP as well as about the entire restructuring issue of the mills, and BJMC the silence and ambivalence of the executives is apparent.

In case of realisation aspects of the aspired restructuring and management approach, the emerged consciousness and collectivity of the community are considered as enabling elements. Along with this, the policy of the current ruling political party regarding the sector is also conceived as enabling element. Based on their experience of crisis, the community identify that WB policy has influence on the operational aspect of the mills. Moreover they emphasise on the roles of the ruling class including the bureaucrats, as they find their roles manipulative and responsible for the construction of crisis in the mills. Therefore the community possess suspicion about their role. Indeed there is a clear demarcation between the perspectives of bureaucrats and the aspired aspects of management described by the community

5.6 Conclusion

The first section illustrates the current re-emergence of the sector and the mills, and the internalisation of the community about the significance of the mills and its survivability in their lifeworld. This section also discusses the identified conditions of the survivability of the mills by the community. Based on experience the community discussed how the conspiracy of the mills' executives, bureaucrats, the politicians and the ruling class constructed crisis in the mills, and that helped in implementing JSAC for the last 20 years. Also, this section contains the findings regarding the community's resistance in 2007 against the government's decision for finalisation of JSAC. The third section of this chapter explains how JSAC impacted the lifeworld of the community. And within the context of the re-emergence of the sector and the mills in section 4, I discuss the aspired restructuring and management approaches of the community and how they define their entitlements, as well as the perspectives of the policy makers regarding the mills. The next chapter comprises a discussion of the theoretical positioning of this study based on empirical evidence presented in this chapter.

Chapter 6: Discussion and analysis

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6.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss and explain the collected perspectives within the lens of the conceptual framework of the research. The theoretical analysis considers the issues of rights from the perspective of capability as argued by Sen. Issues raised that pertain to the survivability of the community and the mills, and the involvement of the community in management, suggests that the community aspired to having access to deciding their entitlement framework provided by the mills and the functioning aspects of the mills. This can ensure the wellbeing of all. It connotes the notion of the rights based approach of Sen. He argues that issues related to the survivability of the people and their wellbeing are issues of human rights (Sen, 1999c, 2004a).

The previous chapter provided the perspectives of the major actors — the community. I discuss issues related to the survivability of the mills, the implications of the JSAC for the mills, the economy and the community and how the community would like to be involved in the management of the mills. I merge the perspectives of the community with the collected perspectives of the members of JPC, Alliance and Commission. I also include the perspectives of the executives, bureaucrats and elected political agents. They constitute the category of policy makers and have a role in ensuring the survivability of the mills.

The narrated perceptions of the participants are basically my interpretations of findings, but have been authenticated by the actors through the participatory learning workshop. The gathered perspectives inform critical reflection on the conceptual framework of Sen's right-based approach that underpins the study. In line with Sen's proposition, the constitution of the country sets the context, whilst the declarations in the UDHR, ICESCR and ICCPR form the basis of the concept of human rights on a global level. Thus, the cogency of the explored concepts is grounded in all those national and global level assertions of rights, and in Sen's exegesis.

The collected narratives explain how the market-centric restructuring process based on efficiency arguments has severely affected the community through the construction of crisis over the last 20 years. The narratives explore how during the caretaker government under the imposed state of emergency, the perpetuated crises had been intensified leading to dispossession and deaths, and how this crisis was resisted by the community. Within this post-movement context I explore the concept of a potential for rights-centric

restructuring and management. Firstly, consider the historical, social, cultural and political conditions of the emergence of Bangladesh and its economy from the perspective of critical political economy. The core-periphery stream of this discourse informs us that during the decade of 1970s Bangladesh could be perceived as a comprador state. Within this context in the era of neoliberalism, the discourse of globalisation illustrates that legitimising the conduct of market makes the country a neo-colonial state (drawing from Harvey, 2003; Banerjee, 2008). Similarly, I focus on the country's legal, cultural and political practices that contribute to the formation of social factions of ruling class, middle class, civil society and working class as a community. The role of trade unions and the workers are discussed by drawing from the conceptual framework of critical political economy and subaltern studies. Based on these two perspectives, I analyse the anatomy of the failure of governing mechanism of the SOJMs and roles played by the involved factions. I examine what in reality forced the community to accept the JSAC. However, the resistance of the community during the finalisation phase of the JSAC in fighting for their right to a livelihood and identity as jute mill workers are an indication of citizenship rights as argued by Sen (Dèrzè & Sen, 1989, 2002). In the context of a post-movement scenario this can also be explained from the perspective of critical management studies as indicative of micro-emancipation (Alvesson & Willmott, 1992).

This chapter is divided into three sections:

The first section discusses the social and economic significance of the functioning mill through analysing the collected perspectives. From these, we can trace the essentiality of the survivability of the mills. In the context of the current re-emergence of the mills, the sign of interdependence of capital and community is evident in the collected narratives. The community also narrated their historical account of the emergence as an occupation-based community – the jute mill workers or *Chat Kal Shrramaik* – and its significance in their lives. Aside from these, this section deals with the process that destroyed the mills. It discusses the pursued policy of JSAC, the relations that the community had with the mills, and what drove the community to demonstrate against the decision of the state regarding the finalisation of the JSAC.

The second section discusses the community's explanation of their perspective of rights as workers of the SOJMs and as citizens in relation to the constitution. This is discussed within the context of the significance of functioning mills based on their conceptualisation

of rights. I discuss the content and coverage of rights and also consider Sen's arguments on rights from the perspective of capability. I examine and argue whether the collected perspectives regarding rights and the right to be involved are constitutionally justified and contextually relevant.

The major theme of the third section is whether the rights-centric management can be realised. This is discussed in the context of the emerged sensitisation of the community in regards to protecting the functioning of the mills. I add the perspectives of the policy makers and the proposed policy measures, and thus argue the process of realisation of rights-centric restructuring and management. In conclusion the research questions are revisited in light of the collected perspectives.

6.2 Khalishpur and emergence of an occupation-based community: Socio-economic perspective of the functioning mill and its sustainability

The historical account of the emergence of Khalishpur as an industrial town was gathered from the community. They explained how the Muslim refugees from the state of Bihar along with migrating Bangalis from the state of West Bengal in India had settled down and had been employed in the mills. In addition to these groups, people were drawn from nearby districts since the South-west corner of the country is prone to river erosion and cyclones. Indeed, the collected perspectives of the community illustrate the urbanisation process and the emergence of an occupation-based ghettoised community, as well as the implications of functioning mills for the locality. This suggests an evolution of a wage-based industrial labour force in an agrarian society and the interdependency of the community and capital. The dilapidated buildings of the Labour Welfare and the Workers' Community Centre suggest the golden days of the mills in the decades of the 1960-70s. I was told that through those institutions, projects such as population control, welfare and improvement of the well-being of the working class community had been conducted. This hints that looking after the well-being of the workers was one of the aims of governmentality of that period. In parallel, the contemporary billboards of BRAC and ASA — the leading microcredit-based NGOs — point to the implications of neo-liberalism. Indeed, I found that the entire workers' community is tied up with the credit program of those NGOs.

The demographic features of the employees of the Platinum Mills reflect the features of the community of the entire Khalishpur. It includes Bangali, Bihari, and Hindu and

Muslim workers. Yet, during the liberation war of 1971 there had been riots in Khalishpur between Bangali and Bihari workers. However, after the liberation war no communal riots took place in Khalishpur between either Hindu and Muslim or Bihari and Bangali workers.

After the liberation war the community conducted massive demonstrations in Khalishpur in 2007 against the decision of the caretaker government to close down the mills. The community suggests that the current Khalishpur is the outcome of the re-emergence of the mills. It is linked with the emergence of a global demand for jute products, and their voting rights as citizens under a democracy. Their resistance against the decision to close down the mills during the caretaker regime obligated the current ruling party to give an election mandate to reopen all closed mills. The linking of the local economy, such as the jute economy with the global economy and along with the sensitisation of the community as electoral agents, are the guiding threads of this discussion.

The working class community comprises the major actors of this study. Analysis of the working class community of the Platinum Mills reveals the following: Since the inception of the mills, the *badli system* has been the initial way to become involved with the mill. Aside from Bihari, Bangali, Hindu and Muslim classifications based on ethnicity and religion inherited from the colonial capitalism (as argued by Sen.1999,2005), the current globalism created heterogeneity among workers in terms of *badli* and permanent through perpetuating the *badli* -workers status as *badli* . In addition there is heterogeneity in terms of rural origin. The workforce is also gendered. The features of the *badli* -workers category indicate that with the legacy of crisis of implementation of the JSAC, working in the jute mills has been perceived as a source of regular employment and is considered comparatively well paid. Considering the geographical location of Khalishpur, all these mills have been a source of employment for the victims of river erosion and current victims of recurrent cyclones¹⁸⁷. In addition, the intergenerational aspect forms another basis for factions, including the faction of retrenched workers from closed-down SOJMs and privatised closed-down mills.

Since the inception of the mills in the colonial era, the union leader and *sardars* work as jobbers to manage the employment under the *badli* system. Therefore, strong localism plays a vital role. Legal recognition, identity cards and basic provisions were enunciated in LLB: 2006. But the reality of the recruitment process is that employment opportunities

¹⁸⁷ Aila of 2009 and Sidor 2007.

depend on the pursued policy¹⁸⁸ of the government. The findings suggest that the way the *badli* -system works, with *badli* -workers waiting at the entry point over the years, has become a part of this culture because of the construction and perpetuation of crisis. As a result the entire *badli* workforce is fragmented. They are alienated, floating-but-free individuals who possess only their labour in exchange for survival (Drawing from Marx 1976/79, Engels 1956/65). Hence, how *badli* -workers identify their existence determines their level of involvement and commitment about the operational mode of the mills.

For the workers, *A permanent job is like having a piece of land* illustrates that over the past 50 years the attachment of a peasant community to the land has been transformed by having a permanent job in the jute mills. A permanent job suggests a secured life and the possibility of achieving whatever they aspired. The data suggests the permanent workers consider their acknowledgement as jute mills workers — *Chat Kall-er Shrramik* as their identity. Generally, the jute mills workers are recognised as unskilled workforce. Therefore, the workers relate the significance of a functioning mill in their life with their incompetence to work in other industry. In addition, the functioning mill implies a source of employment for their children. The narrative of the community illustrate that a generation loop has been constructed for the more than 50 years.

Within this context the majority of the female workers of both permanent and *badli* are deserted or widows of the permanent workers. They do not consider their job as a mode of empowerment in the social context; rather they feel they are socially looked down upon.

Mainly the union leaders and *sardars* play the role as jobbers. This is the influential and economically well off group of workers and they have a rural base. I find a faction of permanent and *badli* male workers families live in their village homes, and the large portion of their income is sent to the family. This signifies the functioning of the family depends on their income. Considering all aspects I find mostly female workers both *badli* and permanent as the category reflects the features real proletariat (drawing from S. Sen, 1999).

Apart from the issue of the need to survive and thus implicating the essentiality of the mills, I observe a deep attachment of the community with the mills. First, through kinship the workers are appointed and settled down.

¹⁸⁸ Circular 50 % of the workforce of the mills must be under *Badli* system.

Second, the mills and its exerted cultural practices have shaped up the evicted peasantry community into a semi-urbanised industrial workers' community. The daily siren of the mills, shift system— its practices, *hajira*¹⁸⁹, *mojuri*¹⁹⁰— the discourse of the mills, the built-up environment, and along with it are the non-working aspects for instance celebrating *Durga Puja*¹⁹¹, arrangement of *Jatra*-traditional local cultural theatre, celebration of National Victory day and annual sports all indicate a blend of traditional and urbanised cultural practices. These have been established as the culture of the mills. In the case of *badli* workers who are the first generation of rural-to-urban migrants, this industrial culture is another experience and cultural transformation takes time. Yet, recruitment through social connections and peer guidance also facilitate the formation of solidarity as a community among *badli* -workers and permanent workers. This fosters a sense of locality based on the shared feelings of belongingness towards the mill as well as towards Khalishpur. A deep emotional bond is grounded here between the mills and the community.

Thirdly for both permanent and *badli* categories of workers, exposures to union culture and in the case of permanent workers, their direct involvement with the union has added another dimension of shaping up consciousness — as working class community jute mill workers — *Chat Kal Shrramik*, although the union role has been deteriorating in the last 20 years.

The socio-political, geographical and economic significance of the functioning mills are evident from the above discussion as the mills are the source of survival for the people of this locality and the entire region. Also, the findings indicate the play of political economy in the case of privatisation and privately established mills is another factor. Lack of capacity and commitment of the owners in terms of managing the operation and transferring capital by mortgaging the mills, are the identified traits of the owners of the privatised mills by the participants. In addition, the absence of a union or dominance of the owners on the union, alongside the alignment of the law enforcing agencies with the owners, are identified as causes that foster a lack of accountability in those mills.

¹⁸⁹ Daily attendance

¹⁹⁰ Wages

¹⁹¹ Festival of the Hindu community

As a result the community acknowledges the SOJMs must be considered as the social service sector not just as business concerns that generate employment. Therefore, the policy regarding the SOJMs must treat the mills and the jute sector from a socio-economic and justice perspective, as it combines the peasant and working class communities. Hence, the SOJMs, along with the entire sector are the fulcrum for poverty reduction and for designing the strategy for development of the country.

The community has experienced the oppressive role of the state in terms of legitimising the market over the last 20 years. The market as an institution appears as a distant issue in their narratives, and places around the world where their produced products are sold by the BJMC. The community relate the cause of their distress to the interests of the ruling class as *owners*. The functioning of the SOJMs depends on the interest of the ruling class, and this determines the strategies of the political agents as legislatures and role of the bureaucracy.

The collected perspectives explain that the process of destroying the mills became severe during the caretaker regime. The interim government seized the *badli* workers' identity cards, introduced more lowcost labour force in the form of the daily basis workers and intensified the dispossession by the violation of the right to be paid wages on due time, in order to make the workers starve, and thus dispossessing them of their right to life. The children of the marginalised categories of workers had to leave school and the situation forced them to join the workforce. The situation also drove female members of permanent workers' families to become sex workers, trading off their dignity for survival. All denote dispossession of a life that the community has built over 50 years, a process of dislocation of an occupation-based urbanised community, totalising the aspects of deprivation of capability of the working class community and to such a degree, the process of restructuring indicates the annihilation process of identity as *Jute Mill Workers — Chat Kal Shrramik*. It exemplifies that a right to life has been subjugated in order to establish the right to private property.

The community considers the caretaker government and its construction are illegal and a ploy. For instance it patronised an ad-hoc committee in order to diminish the union image. It formed a Welfare Committee for the mills and included the leader of the *badli* -workers. These actions excluding permanent workers from the process of management and including the representative of the *badli* workers have resulted in creating doubt and

suspicion between *badli* and permanent workers. Dismantling the structure of the mills, its permanent workforce, union politics and union all imply a destruction of the institutional structures, which have concrete existence, and if required could be made accountable to the workers (drawing from Harvey & Swyngedow, 1993; Harvey, 2003). Whilst the community perceives the interim government itself was illegitimate, so were its constructions regarding the mills. This government bypassed the rules of the constitution regarding the duration and its primary responsibility of conducting fair election within three months. The question has emerged among the community as the citizens of the country about the role of the state and about the policy makers.

The community has experienced change in the regime has impact on the functioning of the mills so political willingness or thus, state commitment is required. The community perspective connotes that the state legitimacy is grounded in ensuring livelihoods and wellbeing of the people. According to the discourse of the community, in order to maintain the social order there has been the evolution of this ghettoised community as jute mills workers since colonialism. Therefore, running the mill is the responsibility of the state in order to ensure the social order. Indeed, the state needs to take its role – and that is the parental role – of looking after its people.

The historical, social, political, economic context and current conditions of the Platinum Mills and Khalishpur can be explained from drawing from the perspective of subaltern studies, the critical political economy and rights based approach of Sen. The exegesis of subaltern studies (Chandravarkar, 1994, 1998; Sen, 1999) suggests that the industrial approach of the peripheries depended on the world economy and therefore, informal and sporadic ways of recruitment of workers became a practice. Regarding the formation of working class Chandravarkar (1998) informs us about the evolution of ghettoised community and its dynamics with the union as a social and political unit in unity. Alongside recognition of unskilled or semi-skilled workforce of the formal sector is another capitalist construction because the pattern of functioning of the mill, as well the historical legacy of jute mills suggests that the production system does not require an efficient workforce (Haan, 1999; Sen, 1999). The working class community of the Platinum Mills reflect those stated features discussed in subaltern studies. I find in case of the *badli* workers, a group of workers go back to their villages during the harvesting time for working as daily wage farm workers. Also I find among my participants both

permanent and *badli* categories of workers, some of them retain their families back home. The lack of capability to afford to bring their families to Khalispur is considered as the cause. They send major portion of their income to home. Therefore the rural linkage of the migrant workers were not always because of emotional reason; there was economic reason too (Chandravarkar, 1998; Sen, 1999). My findings regarding the constitution of the working class community of the Platinum Mills help me to build the argument that communal riots during the colonial period were the outcomes of the political constructions of colonialists. It cannot be identified as an expression of deeply grounded cultural communal consciousness of the working class community. Thus the study adds in the postcolonial studies of CMS regarding the constitution of the working class consciousness.

The analysis also substantiates the arguments of Chatterjee (2004) about the grounding of the concept of the community. I stated in chapter 1 that the *badli* -workers, the household members of both *badli* and permanent categories of workers and the vast community's dependence on the functioning mills constitutes the concept of the community. Chatterjee (2004) argues the bonding of the community is grounded in sharing the lifeworld, including even watching the TV or video together. This also typifies features of the community I gather in the case of the community of the Platinum Mills. According to Chatterjee (2004) the community constituted by its moral content is the part of the political society, and as a part of the political society the community play role in the process of democratisation under the democracy. Drawing from Chatterjee (2004) I find in the gathered narratives that the politics of democracy is in the interplay of vast multitudes. Linking the current approaches of the government (discussed in Section 1) for revival of the sector with the outcomes of the resistance of 2007, the community of the Platinum Mills tend to establish their rights as citizens. It reflects the arguments of Chatterjee (1998, 2004) that the regarding the functioning of the community as a part of the political society with the governance mechanism under democracy.

The community has come to realise that they are empowered in making the political agents accountable to their electorate and they regard the current initiatives of the government for reviving the mills as outcomes of their resistance. It indicates that the community links their civil political rights as citizens for the realisation of their economic and social rights (Derzè, & Sen, 1989, 2002; Sen, 1999) which is categorised as citizenship rights (suggested by Kabear, 2003, drawing from Sen). However, there is no grand statement

from the community regarding any ambition to take over control of the mills or about complete liberation of the community. But based on citizenship rights, the community calls for establishing their right to participate in the management practices of the mills, which they consider that they own because the mills are state owned. I consider that the community aspirations are representative of the CSR concept of micro-emancipation (C.F. Alvesson & Wilmott, 1992). Consequently, current changes in the governing mechanism of the mills signifies the states stance towards the SOJMs and can be explained by taking the process perspective of change in organisational aspects (drawing from Tosuka & Chia, 2002).

Working in the mills is an issue of survival – a need. Drawing from Bagchi (1994), here the political economy of the functioning mill is grounded. Considering the arguments of Banerjee (2008) the politics over the lifeworld of the people involved with the SOJMs can be categorised as necrocapitalism (2008). The restructuring process was aimed at destroying the built relations of the community and the mills, their identity as the formal workforce of the jute mills and their lifeworld. From a CMS perspective, abolishing institutional structures; for instance, the trade union through which workers place their agenda, and the state-owned mills through which state meets its constitutional obligation to provide the right to work; is read as a core aim of globalism. However, this study highlights the significance of those structures in terms of strengthening the legitimacy of the state towards its people. In considering the stability of the institutional frameworks of the state, the mills, and the right to be employed as a permanent worker and to be associated with union, the community discusses rights-centric restructuring and management. They suggest the changes they desire in the organisational practices of these stated institutions.

6.3 Defining rights and aspired restructuring and management: Community in relation to mill and state

6.3.1 Rights and its contents: Recognition, representation and identity

It is evident from the narratives of the community that capability determines the quality of living. The community considers *entitlements are always fair claims*, and everybody understands his/her –well-being. The concepts regarding rights have evolved as a relative

concept with respect to the changes in the operational aspect of the mills. Similarly, issues of basic capabilities (argued by Nussbaum, 1997) for ensuring existence have been organically evolved. These are considered as *Najjyyo paona*, meaning basic entitlements. Hence, the natural moral ethical values related to the existence are grounded in the collected comments. Drawing from Sen (1999c, 2004a), these are categorised as basics of human rights, and these are the elements that constitute basic capabilities. Consequently, declarations of the Constitutions, and exposure of ILO conventions constitute the paradigm of rights of the community. The community defines their involvement with mills by their existence. While globalisation has changed the normal work culture of the mill, as well as the trust has been built between the mills and the community. Arguments regarding efficiency have constructed temporary aspects in the entire mechanism of governance structure, management system and in the approach to distribution of entitlements. Thus legitimising the market has created instability and insecurity and within this context the community has expressed their rights and their relations with the state and the mills.

For that reason the claims for entitlements start with a secure job and a stable working environment — having a functioning mill. The evicted peasant community considers a permanent job in the same way as a piece of land — a source of secured life — and it is considered as an entitlement. Taking the constitutional declaration as the basis, the workers define the coverage, content and the quality aspects of their provided entitlements. Elements of basic entitlements are considered the right to have shelter or dwellings, proper living wages, medical services and educational provision for their children. These are entitlements provided through the mills by the state and constitute the capability framework of the working class community of the SOJMs. The workers count constitutional declarations as the floor for contemplation of their received entitlements. So, at the end the voice regarding entitlements of the workers echoes the basic issues of rights. This is discussed in the table below:

Table 6.1: Rights and its elements

| Categorisation of rights | Elements of rights and capabilities |
|---|---|
| Natural rights and basic elements of entitlements | Right to work, right to life, right to food, shelter, treatment and education, secure job in the mills for offspring. |
| Perceived rights as the workers | Stable working environment, secured work, proper living wage, payment of wage on due time, retirement benefits and payment of getting the retirement benefit timely, proper living space, adequate medical facilities and quality education for the children, provident fund facility, effective union, right to receive capacity development training, access to information, participation, inclusion, right to be recognised, and right to have quality education for the children, mills provided housing facilities. These indicate the elements of internal capabilities pertaining to the state of the workers. |
| Experience of life that caused emergence of issues of rights since 1991 | Recognition, functioning mill, duly payment of wages and retirement benefits regularly, and timely revision of the wage scale, right to borrow or withdraw facility from the provident fund, right to have facilities like the public schools in the mills' school, housing provision of the mills, arrangement of dowry by the government and allocation in the budget, effective union representation — representation of the female workers in the union, representation of the union members in the Enterprise Board, right to participate, right to have identity and exist as jute mill workers, and right to have secure job in the mills for offspring. |

The conditions of emergence of issues of rights are the consequence of subjugation of basic entitlements because of the pursued policy of the state — JSAC that aimed for establishing rights to have private property. The table shows the experience of the last 20 years sets the context of conceptualised elements of rights and basic entitlements. Hence, legitimising market approach through implementation of the policy by the state causes capability deprivation of the citizens.

The narrated issues of rights indicate the issue of existence of the community and also the emotional bond that the community possess with the mills. Thus, it constitutes the central capability framework of the community of the SOJMs (c. f Nussbaum 1997, p. 287). Analysis of the stated issues of rights does not only indicate the material wellb-eing, rather

the assertions of rights specify why the mills are valuable in the locality, why the community's inclusion is required in defining its sustainability, what they consider as their rights/basic entitlements and why they value these as rights. Conceptualisation process and elements of human rights derived from the collected perspectives of rights of the community suggests *rights* need to be envisaged from the process perspective. Referring again to that comment of the community, *a permanent job is like having a piece of land to the farmer*, I draw the line of arguments that a permanent job in the SOJMs denotes the source of entitlements and combined capability. This establishes the intergenerational equity of the community over mills and a way to acquire what they aspired. Therefore, in the assertion of rights of the community both the process and outcomes are intertwined (Sen, 2004a) and it can be argued that the collected perspectives of rights reflect the agency of the community (drawing from Sen 2004a, Nussbaum 1997).

The constructed crisis because of implementation of JSAC for the last 20 years has created scarcity in terms of the quantity and quality aspects of basic entitlements. Within this context the ineffectuality of legal doctrines and the lack of commitment of the bureaucracy have caused disruption of the governance of the mill. The anomalies of the governing system are reflected in the distribution of basic entitlements. The union has been converted into an agency that negotiates entitlements issues of the workers with the management of the mills. Kinship creates the basis of distribution of entitlements, along with it localism; social networking and financial ability to pay to the union leaders and management are other conditions of having access to the entitlements.

Moreover, the community is highly stratified in factions by gender, race, religion and localism. So announced entitlements by law is not the end. Furthermore, the workers have deep distrust about the bureaucracy. They perceive this faction as ruling class agents. Therefore, inclusion of media has relevance to them in disseminating information regarding the state provided entitlements. Also it is a process of accessing the entitlements. Drawing from the rights based approach; media inclusion can be argued as an indication of wider public participation in the distribution process of the entitlements (as suggested by Dèrzè & Sen, 1989; Sen, 2004a).

Indeed, the analysis of the findings indicates the essence of neoliberalism lies in rationalising its economic efficiency discourse through advocating cost reduction against the entitlements of the workers. Thus, it creates a contested domain of entitlements and

hence, fragmentation among the working class community. For instance, under the *badli system*, the current status of *badli* -workers can be classified as ‘perpetually temporary’, in a situation where by law under the *badli* system, there is no fixed ratio of *badli* and permanent workers. Within the current context of re-emergence recruitment of huge numbers of *badli* workers are thereby further reducing options for getting work on a regular basis in the mills. On the other hand having regular work in C shift puts both permanent and *badli* -workers in a contested domain. Hence, almost all *badli workers* engage in multiple occupations. There is intensification of insecurity and trauma among workers regarding their survival, irrespective of their status and identity as either *badli* or permanent. Discontent is also grounded in the staff appointed under a ‘daily basis’ regarding their limited employment and lack of legal recognition compared to *badli* -workers. Hence, the system – the bureaucracy and the ruling class through the enactment of policy, law and practices – create and perpetuate a culture of uncertainty, contestation and as a result causes capability deprivation. All work for subjugation of claiming rights.

Analysis of the union role reveals that in its formation there has been always the dominance of the influential category of the workers. Co-option of union in petty corruption with management is a usual practice. Union leaders have to face election every two years for electing as CBA. Given the current situation, the minority categories of workers by region, race, gender and ethnicity feel more vulnerable. They are systematically deprived of achieving the required capability since the union leaders do not trust them. Moreover, the union and management are in nexus and so corruption of the corrupt management remained / remains unchallenged at least for the last 20 years. However, the recent evidence suggests the emerged sensitisation among the community about the significance of the survivability of the mills might have induced the union leaders, or the union leader might have realised also the consequences of the functioning mills. So they collectively confronted the corruption of the mills’ management regarding the procurement raw jute (discussed in the section 5.5).

Within this context the notion of acknowledgement is embedded in the formation of the concepts of rights and entitlements suggested by the community. So, all factions of workers have expressed recognition as rights in different ways. Recognition is a constitutionally declared right and it is widely acknowledged. On this issue the emerged question is whether such acknowledgement tends to homogenise the created

fragmentations of the colonialism – Hindu–Muslim, Bangali–Bihari, *Mojur*-workers, and middle class *Babus* – based on the posited equality of rights declared in the constitution (drawing from Chandravarkar, 1994; Chatterjee, 1998, 2004). Within the created context of prevalent social disparities, and the political, legal and cultural hegemonic domination of the majority, the second emerged question is whether it is possible for the marginalised categories of workers to exercise their rights? Are they capable in acquiring what they aspired?

My evidence suggests, the marginalised categories of workers for *badli*, female, Bihari and Hindu workers concerns of capability are being constrained because of the lack of the legal entitlements, social prejudice, political and cultural factors. In case of the *badli* workers their paralegal status as expressed in legal doctrines and the set practices of institutions decide the social exchange mechanism for them with other agents. *Badli* workers cannot avail themselves of legal measures when they are exploited and in negotiating with management and trade union leaders. For example, the mill authority can cancel *badli* - workers' cards at any moment without giving any reason, often they are paid less than the nominated rate, and in the case of female *badli* workers they are sexually harassed. Similarly, according to the law *badli* workers cannot form an organisation and they cannot be legally approved as an individual or as a member of a collective organisation such as a trade union federation. Hence, it is a deprivation of human rights. The process first subjugates the right to be associated. Secondly, the process indicates the suppression of the right to express or freedom of expression of their agenda and thirdly, the annihilation of combined capabilities that are required for functioning of their lives and aspirations.

In the case of female workers getting appointed as permanent was an outcome of struggles and was not systematically provided as a right. They work extended hours and the sign of bearing the responsibility of the family, the psychic cost and moral consequence of working in such an environment can be traced. Hence the female workers consider marriage the best solution for their daughters. So demand for government allocation for the arrangement of the dowry is considered as an entitlement. Female workers raised the demand for a place for them to say *Namaz*¹⁹² to the management too. The analysis of this statement raises questions such as whether the demand of a place for *Namaz* is an outcome of justifying morally their reality of working in this industrial culture or an indication of

¹⁹² Prayer

their conformity with the issue of social surveillance through religion for the working class women argued by Ong (2010). Also, this could be an attempt at establishing equality with the male colleagues. The male workers have a space for saying *Namaz*. However, their male colleagues raised the need for a strict policy focusing on the women workers of the jute mills. Indeed, the country lacks proper policy focused on its women workers. Similarly, very nominal issues of rights and entitlements regarding the female workers are covered by the LLB2006 (discussed in chapter 2). Constitutionally the social-moral ethical stance of women is highly regarded and the Convention against elimination of all discrimination against women has been ratified 20 years ago. In reality for the female *badli*, employment options are less for alternative work and furthermore, lack of formal recognition makes them more vulnerable. Practices set by the system require the *badli* women workers to pay to those who can provide them what they are entitled to; so in order to be in a regular job schedule they are used sexually. The entire employment practice indicates a severe 'feminisation of accumulation' (Hartsock, 2006).

Bihari and Hindu workers do not trust the system. Concerned issues that influence their process of attaining the basic entitlements are related to their identity in terms of ethnicity and religion. The ethnic identity separates the Bihari and the Bangali workers' community, but religion is the basis of integration. On the other hand, from 1988, Islam is the state religion. During the second army regime the amendment regarding religion in the Constitution was done. Hence, the capability concerning practice of religion is preserved for the Bihari community, since it is constitutionally determined. The political context of Bangladesh suggests the army had ruled it for 15 years. Again, later under the democracy, for 12 years the conservative Islam oriented four party alliances ruled the country. In addition, the last army backed caretaker regime has continued for two years. Now considering the extremely uncertain political context, the prevalence of the constitutionally declared state religion, and when evidence indicates that under the neoliberalism the state acceptability is rested in establishing the conduct of the market by depriving the rights of citizens. Thus, the classification and fragmentations exploited and substantiated by the governmentality during the colonialism are still pursued as tactics of control by the ruling class. Therefore, Hindu workers' silence during interviews is understandable and is an indication of the deprivation of entitlements in terms of their freedom of expression.

Analysis of stated arguments implies that an issue of identity has emerged because of the deprivation of entitlements. As a result the claim for recognition in the collected perspectives echoes an urgency to be noticed in the dynamics of governing mechanisms of the mills that comprises the political process too — as ‘workers of the jute mills’. All categories of workers through the issue of recognition want to establish their identity as jute mill workers. Based on their political entitlement and political identity as citizens, they first want to re-establish their identity as the workers of the SOJMs and so this identity will ensure their capability of claiming other rights.

Inclusion into the system is identified as the mode of recognition. For instance voting rights as citizens of the state hence, inclusion of them into the political system, is a form of recognition of Bihari workers living in *Khema*¹⁹³. Their option for going back to Pakistan had placed them living in the *Khema/Camp* as ‘stranded Pakistani’ for 40 years. In 2008 before the ninth parliamentary election this group of Bihari workers were registered as voters and their rights as citizens have been established.

Similarly, a group of senior female workers are in conflict with the issue of ideology. They consider settling down their daughters through marriage is the reach of aspired achievement. However, the statements of Pakhi — the leader of the permanent workers, Rani — the leader of the *badli female* workers,— and other female workers illustrate the deconstruction of the social ideological pattern. A demand for the aspired space of the female workers in the power quantum is embedded in their narratives. For this reason, the female workers want to be recognized first through membership of the collective bargaining agency, and then by having the ability to voice their issues; this is how they express their desire for inclusion. They also want to be promoted as *Sardar* as supervisory roles become essential for existence. Moreover, it is an indication of recognition for their contribution. The practice and discourse suggest the female workers are involved with unskilled work: *we work in the same grade, grade -1 as helper for 16 years*¹⁹⁴.

The union members want official inclusion in the Enterprise Board and at the policy level board as elected representatives of the workers. It is sign of recognition of the union as a part of management of the mills. Hence, recognition is seen as an element of their identity, which has been annihilated during the last 20 years.

¹⁹³ Camp .Bihari community living in the Khema or camp had wanted to go back to Pakistan after the liberation war of 1971.

¹⁹⁴ FGD, #12, 14

In *badli* - workers narratives, recognition is epitomised by a formal contract. They are not formally recognised but want the right to be associated with the union and to vote for union leaders. This is also a form of recognition and inclusion and also for protection that is more vital for the female *badli workers*. Balancing the so-called *safety and security of being a women* and issues of survival are all intertwined. Bearing the moral consequences of working in the mills is their everyday struggle. They need the union for protection, so voting rights are important in making the union leaders accountable. Recognition and inclusion connotes rights of the individual categories of the workers, as well as rights of an individual.

The narratives of the community suggest that their survivability is inherently linked first with the right to be recognised and secondly is the right of the workers to be associated with an organisation or forming an organisation. According to Sen (2004a, p. 343-345) recognition is the primary approach of the route to the realisation of rights and it drives for active agitation. These are categorised as political entitlements in the realisation process of rights, (Sen, 2004a, p. 345). Based on experience the workers consider unions as the only mode of placing their agenda and way of inclusion with the mills. Therefore, participation through associating with the union and participation of union in the management has been uttered. All imply a process that can ensure accountability of the governing system and its actors, and the process that leads to ensuring rights (Sen, 1999c, 2005b). This is elaborately discussed in the next section.

6.3.2 Aspired restructuring and management mechanism: Does it indicate rights-centric management

The collected narratives regarding the aspired restructuring begin with reinstating the glory of the sector. The suggested reform starts with placing the sector under the central planning system of the government and considering it as the Jute Economy. The current measures have brought back stability in the operational aspect of the mill and in the lifeworld of the community. But those measures are temporal. The experience of crisis and the makeshift approach of management for mitigating the crisis of the last 20 years have caused deep mistrust in the mindset of the community about the entire system. The current measures of the government are appreciated, but the community wants changes and must have concrete structure.

The urgency of the comprehensive plan and policy is reflected in the collected comments. The coordination of resources for restoring the jute sector in terms of technological renovation, production plans, expanding the market internally and externally, and the development of human capacity by introducing jute-related courses at tertiary level – that is as a whole bringing sustained changes – are the responsibility of the government. This implies that the concept of sustainable mills and sector are grounded in conducting the restructuring from the perspective of the socio-economic and justice. As I mention earlier the sector is a vehicle for poverty reduction and development. Therefore, the community clarifies where the liability of the legitimate government is grounded in. Indeed re-establishment of the government authority is reflected in the findings regarding the aspired restructuring.

Analysis of the gathered perspective indicates that in order to ensure the consistent application of the policy it has to be formulated through consultation with all categories of the involved and interested actors. Consultation is perceived as a precondition for establishing ownership of the involved key level actors over the policy. Furthermore, consultation means creation of dialogic situations and wider participation. Certainly it is assumed that through the process of involvement of the actors concerned issues of the actors will be prioritised. Yet consistent implementation of the policy is the primary requirement to create a sustainable condition and therefore the community demands for open mandate from the ruling political parties and from the bureaucrats and key members representing the civil society. Open mandate means commitment of consistent application of approved policy. The community considers this commitment is required more for the latter categories of actors – the bureaucrats and the members of the civil society. They form the interim government and the elected government ensures their accountability through the election mandate. But experiences of severity of 2007 drive the community for such solutions for the actors of the interim government or precisely for the undemocratic regime.

Democracy for the people of Bangladesh had not been imposed as a governing system. The people of Bangladesh had to fight for the democratic system from 1975-1990. Nevertheless, under the democratic system the community involved with the SOJMs had to suffer severely, because of the agreement of JSAC with the global policy regime. This has been portrayed vividly in the narratives of the community. The deep mistrust about

the politicians and the policy makers has been grounded in their mindset and reflected in their narratives. That spirit led them in defining the roles of responsibility and directives of the state. This illustrates what commitment people aspired from the state as an institution and from the policy makers. The assertion of the community marking the legitimacy of the state is grounded in establishing the accountability and responsiveness of the system to them as citizens. Hence, it points out the community's approach of institutional reforms start with the reformation of the pattern of the states' conduct to make it people-oriented.

The community unequivocally considers that the sovereignty of the SOJMs is an essential condition for establishing its accountability. It has to be restructured as an independent entity like a *Pan-biri*¹⁹⁵ shop. According to the collected perspective of the community, systematic accountability is the fulcrum of sustainable organisations and it is grounded in balancing the approaches of centralisation of policy and planning with decentralisation of management, supervision and overall governance practices. The analysis of the findings regarding restructuring of the governance mechanism of the mills denotes involvement of the more local level actors and local elected bodies like the ward commissioner, mayor and the local MP on the Enterprise Board. The political entitlement is the basis of such a proposition because local elected bodies are accountable to the people of that locality. The findings also discuss inclusion of representatives of the local organisations working on environment and labour rights, and representation of jute cultivators' on the Enterprise Board. This implies an approach so the scope of participation can be broadened, and hence the governance mechanism of the mill can be strengthened.

The local economy is dependent on the functioning of mills and therefore, the mill as a space, is a shared responsibility of the Ministry, state and local bodies. Thus, the collected comments regarding the restructuring of the mills suggest effective use of existing multi-layered institutional structures of the government. Through the institutions the actors responsible for managing local economy inevitably become involved. The discussed reform measures by the community are entirely based on their political entitlement as citizens, whilst unanimously all categories of actors suggest that the mills should not be used as a political pawn. Analysis of the discussion of the community indicates involvement of the local and central elected governing body in the every sphere of institutional reform measures. Indeed, involvement of local level elected bodies on the

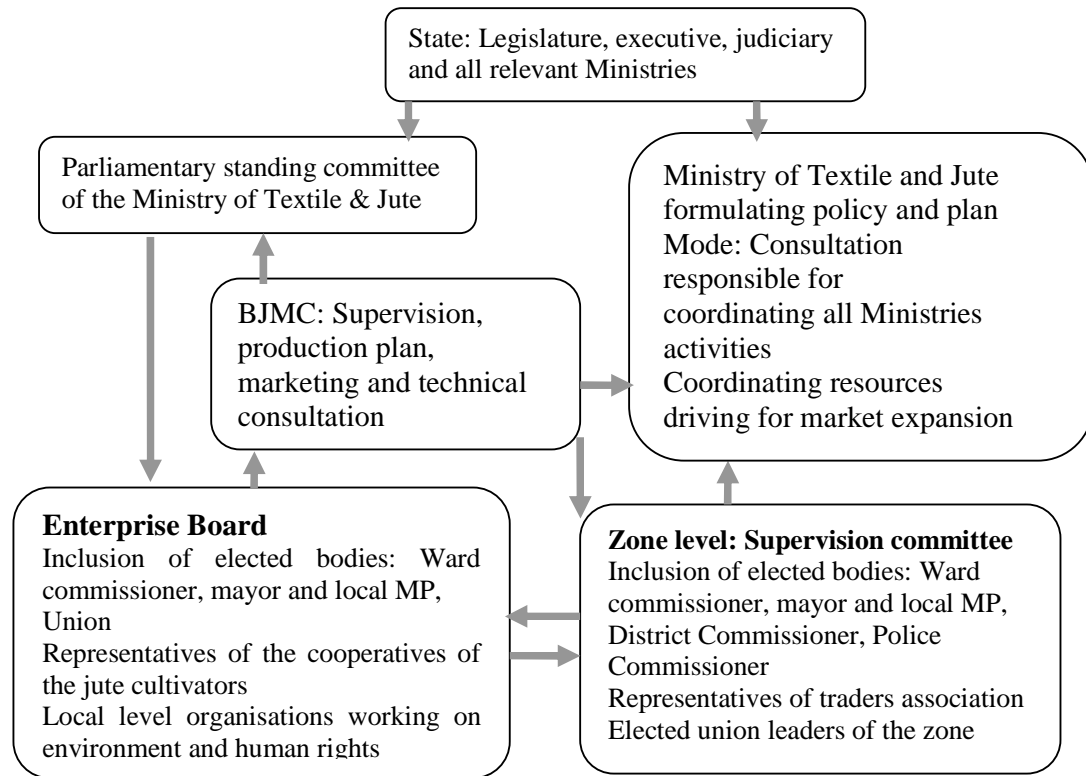
¹⁹⁵ Pan is Betel. This has to be chewed with Areca nut. *Biri* is cheap cigarette. The pronunciation in Bangla is *biri* while it mostly known as *bidi*

Enterprise Board of the mills entails an approach of establishing accountability of the bureaucracy towards the peoples' representatives. In one way it may minimise corruption of the mills' executives and the bureaucrats. In addition it implies indirect accountability of the system to the community because the elected local representatives are accessible to union leaders and to the people directly: *we caste vote for them, so we went to see the Munnujan Sufian*¹⁹⁶ (stated by the leader of the *Badli* -workers). Decentralisation of the mills' authority appears essential in the findings. Consequently, the suggested strategy of the reform takes the mills out from the clutch of the bureaucracy and places it at the local context.

A second discussed approach for reform suggests that a governing committee of the SOJMs at zone level be formed. For this reason, the approach of governing takes a consolidated shape because along with the local elected agents in that committee inclusion and participation of the District and Police Commissioner, representatives of the local business associations and traders' have been uttered. The inclusion of the direct agents of administration apparatuses implies peoples' trust on the repressive disciplinary apparatuses for controlling the corruption of the executives. Apart from that, it denotes a process of placing face-to-face the executive division of the governments and the governing authority — the elected body — on the issues of the functioning mills. The people suggested reform for governance of the mills is multi-layered: the local — the mill and zone and the central — the state. Suggestions regarding making zone office more effective and thus forming a collective approach in governing technology BJMC's mills. This signifies how the community internalises the context and their experience. For this reason they come up with the idea of making effective use of public sector institutions but due to the marketisation propaganda, utmost utilisation of this structure remains unnoticed.

¹⁹⁶ The local MP and the State Minister of Labour

Figure 6.1: Aspired structures of institutional reform and restructuring: Decentralisation and centralisation



Furthermore, for the functioning of overall management and governance, majority of the community insists that the mills must be accountable to the Standing Committee of the Parliament of the Ministry through BJMC. The independent entity identity of the mills helps in establishing the accountability of its finances and thus, the executives can be accountable and responsible. In the current policy, BJMC does not clearly indicate where the responsibility of the executives is rested. The Standing Committee of the Parliament of is constituted by the peoples' representatives and hence, its accountability is ensured towards the people. The role of BJMC as a corporate body is framed in managing market, production planning based on forecasted demand, supervision, and providing technical advice when the mills require.

Narratives regarding involvement with the management have been placed in the context where the lack of formal modes of communication between workers and executives has been identified as the major cause of disruption of overall management system. Analysis

regarding the aspired theme denotes the following: First – development of the aspired involvement with the mills has to be initiated with the creation of scope of dialogue, formally as well as informally. The community never feel themselves alienated from the mills while they remain unnoticed because of the dynamics of the system. Hence, establishing the right to have information is considered as a process of accessing information for the individual's well-being . Similarly, formal recognition of the existence of the workers is the first step of inclusion into the system. The dialogic situation through arrangement of formal meetings quarterly or half-yearly with the senior management, BJMC officials, having information about the mills through publishing Bulletin, and finally informal interaction all have been suggested as approaches of involvement and considered as tactics of supervision.

Second – Review of the comments on the entire governing mechanism of the mills reveals that only union as an institution has accountability through election. The finding states *Union looks after us [...] through election, union is accountable to us* (See chapter 4, section 4.4). The community knows union is corrupt but it is their platform. Union can interact with management as an elected body, and it is a legally approved institution. The community compares and internalises union activities of the SOJMs with the union of the private mills. Based on this, the workers' community including *badli* -workers of the SOJMs conclude the workers of the SOJMs are comparatively in a better situation and protected because of union. Hence, union is a platform that can equate power through mediation, can generate work culture and can establish the workers' equity over the mills. Union as the basic unit provides the spaces to be included into the system suggested by the female workers. Therefore, in the collected perspectives of the workers there is reiteration of the demand for a '*worker-friendly union*'. Within this context, union is perceived as the key element of integration with the management and therefore participation of the union leaders in the Enterprise Board as elected representative of the workers is considered as a right.

Review of the collected perspectives of the union leaders uncovers the fact that the union members are aware about the law of having active participation committees in the mills.¹⁹⁷ While a right to participate is subjugated and the trend of informal consultation with the management prevails as practices of participation. This approach appears as the union

¹⁹⁷ This right has been declared in the Industrial Ordinance 1969.

leaders suggest — a privilege provided to them in expressing workers' opinion by the management. Consequently, union and workers both consider unions' inclusion, representation and participation in the management specifically on the Enterprise Board is not a privilege; it is the right of workers. Formal inclusion of unions in the management process is considered as an approach of establishing its accountability to the workers

Further analysis of the findings reveals that within this context union leaders aspired for reformation of union activities and their narration regarding the formation of committees zone-wise by the elected union leaders indicates union wants to mobilise collectively. Hence, this implies a collective voice is stronger in terms of establishing the equity of the union as representatives of the workers in having equitable access in the budget plan. Indeed, the major responsibility of that committee is grounded in making management more responsive and responsible. Finally, all decisions can be consulted with the workers by conducting a 'gate meeting'. Certainly, union wants to be perceived as the representative body of the workers because it belongs to the mills. The analysis regarding union involvement illustrates how union — the basic institutional structure of the workers as a unit of the governing system of the mills — can be integrated, effectively interacts and presents a consolidated voice to the bureaucracy.

The analysis of the findings denotes representation and participation are both the major reasons to be included on the Enterprise Board. It implies information will be flowed in two directions. In one way the community will come to know what exactly management is planning about the mills, and also they can exactly voice the 'real' picture of the mills — *The industrial affairs cannot be secretive* (Chapter 5 , Section 5.5).

Moreover, the discontent of the community about the customary committee representation of the workers' at the national level is evident. The number and the process of selection of the representatives do not denote that the policy making or the governing body wants to know the exact situation of the workers. Rather, by selecting their own partisan union leaders the political parties in power balance interests of the dominant group and interests of their working class community. Hence, the data discloses activation of SKOP is an essential condition for establishing its right to select representatives of the workers for those committees.

Representation implies recognition and a way to voice the exact fact. It seems vital for establishing the existence — *the jute mills workers*. Certainly we find the reach of the aspired governing mechanism and demands for the working class community's representation in the Standing Committee of the Parliament of the Ministry. As another condition, the media must be included in the meeting of the Standing Committee of the Parliament. This suggests a wider public participation through dissemination of information. But the question is why? Experience of betrayals by the partisan union leaders, conspiracy of the bureaucracy and political agents, and the possibility of subjugation of rights are the causes. Therefore, the community considers wider participation through media will be supportive in establishing rights and enduring justice.

Within this aspired industrial reform the desired mode of ownership is the state mode of ownership suggested by the majority. In line with it the community wish to see committed people in management. The management has to be transparent and must have systematic order of functioning where promotion, specific career path and scope of vertical integration are maintained.

There is a question among the workers whether participation through representation on the Enterprise Board, policy level board or the national level committee may be notional. Dominance of knowledge of the management or bureaucracy is inevitable. However, for encountering that dominance of the bureaucracy involvement of related and interested actors is an effective strategy. This indicates a challenge towards the power relations, and transformation of those relations.

Suspicion prevails about the continuation of the democratic system and how long this political construction will be sustained as overall governance mechanism. While the structure of the Ministry and its bureaucracy seems inevitable for the functioning of system, so union leaders involved with workers' association of the BNP prefer mill should remain accountable to the Ministry.

Interestingly regarding the governing and ownership mechanism I notice that the profitable aspect of the Ship Yard¹⁹⁸ after being handed over to the Naval Force of the country, invokes to one group of workers particularly workers associated with the ad-hoc Committee formed in 2007 for handing over the ownership of the mills to the army. Army

¹⁹⁸ Ship manufacturing outlet of the government

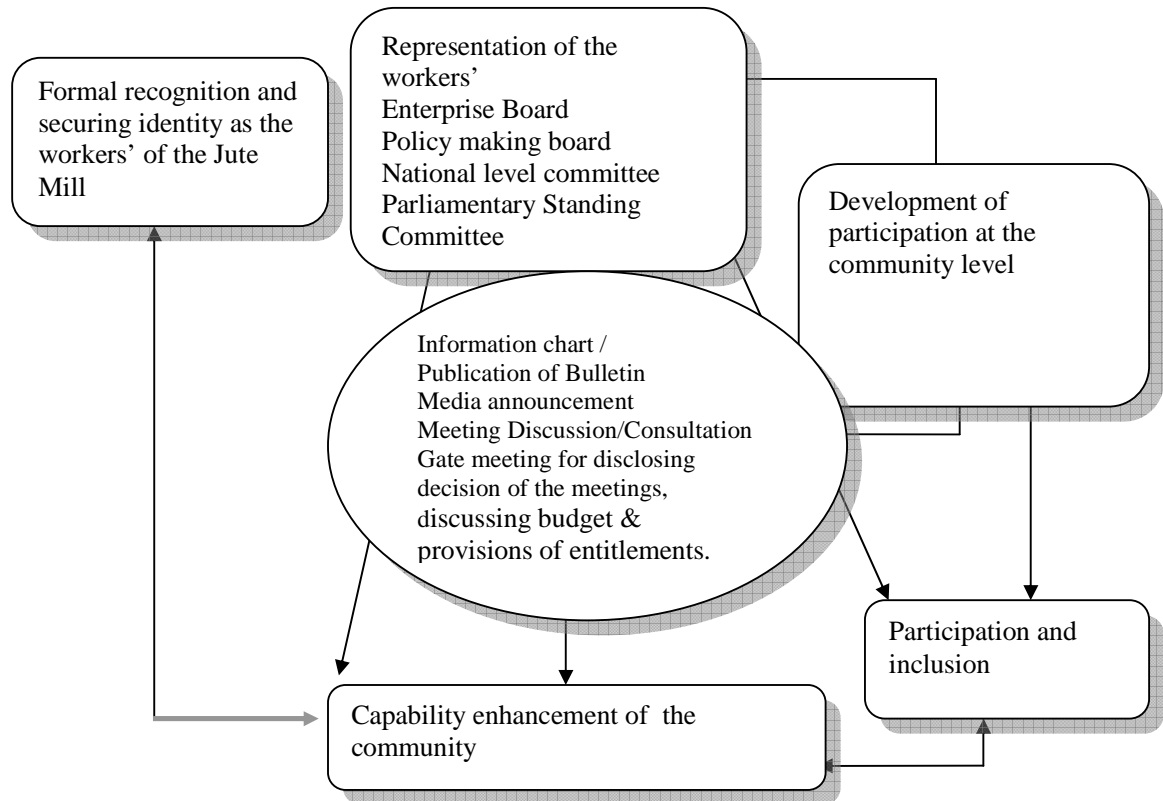
indicates discipline, another dominant notion. So, involvement of army in management is perceived as the best solution. While in reality historical accounts of BJMC suggests it has been under the Chairmanship of the civil army bureaucracy most of the times from 1975-2008, but could not tackle the crisis. Then why they have such fascination to work under army management and governing system? The dynamics of union politics discussed in Chapter 2 and 4 suggest how a patron–client relation has been formed between the union leaders and the political parties or faction in power. Publicizing popularity is an essential condition of the politics for the despotic and also for the democratic regime in Bangladesh (discussed in chapter 3, section 3.3.3). Based on this strategy the economic interest, that is restructuring of the mills, had been conducted. Similarly, it is evident in the narratives that a patron-client relation exists between union leaders and factions of workers. Hence, formation of a client group of workers and their tendency to be aligned with the dominant faction is typical. This explains the context of the acceptance of the hegemony of army bureaucracy and management to some individual workers and indicates how the cultural and political practices frame the hegemonic relations between the dominant and dominated in a postcolonial state.

Discussion regarding the workers mode of ownership appears perplexing to the community. Union also is not interested because they have witnessed the legacy of those mills that have been handed over to the workers (discussed in chapter 2, section 2.3 and chapter 4, section 4.5). The fact is, the bureaucracy did not directly transfer the ownership of the mills to the workers (Sobhan, 2010). The mills had been handed over with the conditions, along with over accumulated liabilities of the entities to the workers (Sobhan, 2010). Also it is evident that the community’s opinion about PPP has not been formed yet. Hitherto the community has not witnessed this model. The collected narratives suggests once the mills ownership goes to others – even under the workers’ ownership – identifying the centre point of governance where the liability and responsibility are grounded seems confusing to the working class community.

The analysis of perspectives of the community regarding aspired restructuring and management starts with how their equity can be established over the mills, directly through union participation and indirectly by the representation of the elected bodies. The elected political bodies have accountability whilst caution has been provided to them and to their union leaders that *mills cannot be used as political pawns* (Chapter 5). Undoubtedly in the

collected narratives the issue of governance has been emerged organically. This implies that the community views governing technology as a comprehensive approach. The aspired restructuring framework of the community is diametrically opposite to the conducted restructuring of the SOJMs by the JSAC as prescribed by the WB and the IMF under the banner of neo-liberalism. For instance, closure, privatisation or transformations of the mills into EPZ – all illustrate the fragmented economic approaches under various disjointed governance mechanisms. Indeed, one of the fundamental features of neo-liberalism is that it never allows the visualisation of the economy as a whole (Ong, 2006). As a result the centre of governance acts diffusive.

The extent and form of inclusion counts every existing institution and makes those institutions responsible and actors accountable ultimately to the people. The people primarily denote the workers who own the mill and indicate the community belongs to that locality – Khalishpur. In addition, the analysis indicates that those stated forms of participation – recognition and inclusion – the community believes could ensure the sustainability of the mills. And the sustainability of the mills is intrinsically connected with the survivability or existence of the community. Thus, drawing from my collected findings that *issues that are directly related to the basic issues of rights of the workers; on those issues they have the right to decide and participate* (Chapter 5, Section 5.5 Interview #49); and from Sen (1999c, 2004a) that issues related to survivability are issues of human rights. I conclude that the narrated aspired restructuring of the governing system and approaches of management of the mills by the community can be considered as rights-centric restructuring and the rights-centric management.

Figure 6.2: Aspired inclusion and participation

The suggested changes at the institutional level in the governance mechanism illustrate transformation of power based on political entitlements. Assertions of the community for the institutional reforms through involving the actors of multi spheres are aimed at making the political agents committed towards their legitimate conduct as elected state agents. Thus, the community wants to ensure their economic and social rights. Indeed the rights-centric reform measures are not only aimed at securing the right to live and livelihoods and enhancement of the quality of living, but also imply a process of creating equity of the community over the resources of the state. It is evident in the narratives that the aspired involvement of the community indicates that the state is seen as a shared space of all classes of the people – ‘the owners’ and ‘the workers’ class. That space has to be shared through the mills for the working class community of the mills. Hence, the community defines their relations with the state based on their citizenship rights and thus, their rights

over the mills. I would posit that how this relationship is conceived by the community illustrates the emergence of their critical consciousness and capability in terms of visualising the reconfiguration of the power base. As such, I would argue that the notion of micro-emancipation is exemplified in the community's expression of aspirations.

I summarise the analysis here and consider their implications by revisiting the entire governance failure of the SOJMs. Corruption among unions, the mills' executives, bureaucrats and political agents is a reality. Accepting this as reality, the community narrated their desired governance. This aspired governance mechanism illustrates how effectively the existing democratic governing system can be utilised and can be made more accountable. Despite facing challenges of crisis, embedded mistrust about the governmentality, still the community has trust issues on the government ownership. They feel that the mill under the government ownership means — *In government mills, [...] we all are owners.*

Certainly, there is discontent about the union among the community. However, the existence of the union under the state mode of ownership is certain and this gives a feeling of confidence to the workers. Union leaders are accessible and through election, union can be made responsible to its basic responsibility — ensuring rights of the workers: *union looks after us.* The union is essential as an institution in the context of industrial culture and practices of the SOJMs. At the same time, the state as an institution is responsible for looking after its people. The democratic system provides political entitlements for making the state accountable to its basic responsibility. If it fails, then by demonstration a scope of negotiation can be created. Drawing from Sen (2004a, 1999c) this is the route to legislation of rights under the rights based approach.

It is also evident that the community discourse of reform and restructuring does not negate the market. Neither can their assertions be interpreted as against the discourse of globalisation. The core value of governance, according to of global discourse of governance (UNDP, 2000) emphasises creating the culture of accountability and responsibility for ensuring human rights. If required, the national law can be reformed (UNDP, 2000). Evidence of the rights based projects implemented by the NGOs under the provided guidelines of UNDP and IDAS are looking for bridging the gap of governance through raising awareness of citizenship rights (elaborately discussed in Chapter 2, section

2.3). Hence contextual evidence is there for realisation of the rights-centric restructuring and management.

Finally, based on the principles 7, 15 and 13¹⁹⁹ of the Constitution (discussed in Chapter 2) the highest legislations can be argued that the rights-centric restructuring and management deliberated by the community is aligned with the constitutional declarations. The cautious community affected by JSAC narrated their views of their aspired involvement with mills and thus with the state as conscious citizens. The industrial and the political cultures have shaped the views and the capability of the community for imagining such institutional structure. The appealing justifications of such reforms are grounded in the narratives and aims to secure the existence and enhancement of the capability of the working class community.

6.4 Realisation of rights centric restructuring and management

6.4.1 Legitimate claim of the people, and the perception of the actors who govern

It is evident from the findings that the workers consider that the current profitable aspect of the mill is linked with their effort, and thus they pose a challenge to the constructed notion regarding them: that the *workers of the government-owned mill do not work*. Again they take pride in being acknowledged as the *jute mills workers of the government mills*. In the current context, the emerged sensitisation among the community that the mills must remain functioning is an indicator of the most optimistic aspect. Unequivocally, the community considers that the willingness of the government is the major factor in initiating changes regarding rights-centric restructuring and management. Elementary reforms, for instance, inclusion of the union members in the Enterprise Board, and accessible information, can bring sustainable changes and can be initiated by the executives of BJMC and the Ministry.

Now, the question is whether the policy making bodies — executives, bureaucrats, and centrally elected political agents, that is, those who hold institutional positions — are at all concerned about bringing about changes that can lead the way towards rights-centric restructuring. Apart from these categories, the positioning of Jute Commission appears

¹⁹⁹ Principle 7: People are the supreme sovereign power of the state. Principle 15 & 13 suggests state is responsible for managing decent employment and state mode of ownership is the highest preferred mode of ownership of an entity.

betwixt and between policy-influencing and policy-making factions. The failure of the efficiency discourse drew the middle class for the first time to be in alignment with the agenda of the working class. But when the Alliance was constituted, it took a comprehensive approach as the owners of the private and privatised mills also joined. I mention earlier that the current democratic government formed the Commission, by the selective members of the Alliance, and it was headed by the President of the Alliance. Hence the process indicates that the Commission became the major policy recommendation body. The governing authority provided that entitlement to the Commission. Yet, it had to accommodate the interest of all groups. So, conflicting views are evident among the Commission members. The analysis of perspectives gathered from the Head of the Commission / Alliance is reflected in the recommendations of the Commission Report, whilst the perspectives collected from the representatives of Trade Union Centre and INCIDIN Bangladesh representing local organisations working on human and labour rights are different and in alignment with the perspectives of the community particularly on issues like mode of ownership of the mills, and the inclusion, participation and involvement of various categories of actors in management.

I analyse the collected perspectives of the policy makers, along with the draft Commission Report accepted by the Ministry, for the draft Jute Policy 2011. The analysis reflects the dominance of ideological views, how these are linked with the economic interest. Similarly it suggests how political views become shaped, even now, when the implications of JSAC as a policy measures on the SOJMs and lifeworld of the community are evident. In addition the conflicts in terms of interests and the desire for dominance among these multi-layered institutionally powerful and responsible actors are also evident. The table below gives a summary of the analysis of their collected perspectives.

Table 6.2: Reflection of ideology, economic and political interest:

| | Ideological reflection | Value Economic | Value: Democratic practices | Preferred mode of ownership |
|---|---|--|---|---|
| Peoples’ representatives Veteran Politicians ²⁰⁰ | State mode of ownership. This is constitutionally declared and an election mandate. | Reform from socio - economic perspective | Legitimate role of the state and politicians. Alignment with the constitutional declarations. Constructive changes required consciousness, and it can be generated through participation. | Mill under state mode of ownership. Participation of related actors in the governing mechanism |
| Retired bureaucrats, now as peoples’ representatives ²⁰¹ | Market centric reform, privatisation is inevitable. | Efficiency | Privatisation is inevitable. But the supervisory role of the government has to be strong. | PPP is the desired mode of ownership. |
| Bureaucrats | Government is not a good businessman. | Efficiency | Government concern is grounded in under the PPP mode. | Same as above |
| Executives of BJMC Directors /Board members of BJMC | Industry management is secretive. Inclusion of Local elected bodies denote political manipulation Informally union participation is maintained Working as directors in | State mode of ownership. | State has a role | BJMC must be autonomous. Mills must be under the government ownership. |

²⁰⁰ Current local MP/ State Minister of Labour and the Chairperson of the Standing Committee of the Parliament of the Ministry of textile and Jute

²⁰¹ The Finance Minister and the Chairman of the Privatisation Commission²⁰¹.

| | Ideological reflection | Value Economic : | Value: Democratic practices | Preferred mode of ownership |
|--|---|--|--|--|
| | the state owned enterprises is an issue of pride. | | | |
| Newly appointed executives, including the executives deputed to the Platinum Mills | Appearance of the state enterprises is archaic. | PPP sounds trendy. Technological update in terms of communication is vital | PPP implies alignment with the current global context. Because the WB has suggested this approach. Job is secured in the state owned enterprises. | PPP must be the mode of managing the mills. But ownership should remain with the government. |
| Commission members President of the Commission ²⁰² and review of the Commission Report | Market centric reform is inevitable A national level committee for the overall governance for the sector has to be centrally established. Inclusion of all key actors in that committee, and exclusion of the | Privatisation | But workers interest has to be protected/ Subjugation of the workers' agenda regarding the sustainability and ownership of the mills | Converted into Public Limited Company. |

²⁰² Please see the appendix E

| | Ideological reflection | Value Economic | : Value: Democratic practices | Preferred mode of ownership |
|---|--|--|---|------------------------------------|
| | workers' category. | | | |
| Representatives of the Trade Union Centre and INCIDIN Bangladesh ²⁰³ | State mode of ownership. Policy and planning has to be done centrally Decentralisation of the mills' ownership | Reform form the socio-economic perspectives. | Legitimacy of the state lies in creating the conditions of the rights centric management. | State mode of ownership. |

²⁰³ Their views have been incorporated with the views of the community and I discuss elaborately in the previous section

On one hand, the myth of the market, its inevitability, the commodity form of the labour force, and the disempowerment of the working class community, and on the other hand, the creation of consensus through raising the issue of protection of the workers' interest during privatisation are reflected in the collected perspectives of actors and in the recommendations of the Commission Report. The views provided in the table are discussed below.

There is trend of retired bureaucrats becoming involved in politics. Hence their hegemony over the policy-making process and implementation and through them the hegemony of the global policy regime over the country's policy remains unabated. It is evident in the collected perspectives that this category of retired bureaucrats now as elected MPs and Ministers negotiate the agenda of the global policy with the national political bodies²⁰⁴.

Evidently there is ideological alignment between the retired bureaucrats and the current bureaucrats. Ideological domination is a corollary. This is historically linked and is produced through cultural practices. The donors' agencies undertake projects in the name of capacity development initiatives for the bureaucrats (discussed in Chapter 2). Hence conformity with the global order is inevitable for the bureaucracy, so their response is: the Government *is not a good businessman*. Their collected perspectives indicate that Private-Public Partnerships (PPPs) and management by the private sector are their aspired restructuring mode. PPP is the current propagated idea of privatisation by the WB. The bureaucracy's inclination for encouraging the private sector is candid.. This raises the question about what are the attributes of the SOJMs that bureaucrats find challenging for the private sector jute mills. Do the challenging factors include the workers' rights to receive living wages, and the right to be protected and so to be associated with union? Indeed the community suggests that the working condition in privately established mills lacks all these aspects. Hence, as the community suggests the bureaucracy as an agent of the ruling class in the end serves the interest of the owners' group and remains aligned with the policy of the WB (as discussed in Chapter 4, section 4.3).

Till 2008 the directors of BJMC were the deputed bureaucrats mainly from the Ministry or army. Therefore analysis of the collected perspectives of the major executives or the current directors of BJMC reveals that their reality is constructed and dominated by the

²⁰⁴ The local MP and the State Minister of Labour expressed their ignorance about PPP and emphasised on the government ownership over the mills.

bureaucrats, and hence a conflict of interest in terms of domination over the mills is reflected. Patriotism and the prospects for jute sector had inspired these directors to join BJMC 30 years back. Also it is evident that JSAC did not affect the middle class executives of BJMC, they were demoralised. In the current context, when the WB is pushing the policy of PPP, the directors are relying on the emerged sensitisation of the community for protecting the mills and keeping the mills functioning under the state mode of ownership. On the other hand, to the newly appointed executives of BJMC the privatisation in the new package of PPP appears attractive. The Finance Minister, the top bureaucrats, and above all the WB discuss about PPP, and hence they aspire that the mills must be restructured under the PPP mode. Yet, it is evident that the newly appointed executives do not have clear ideas and cannot imagine what should be the relations between BJMC and the Ministry, or what should be the mechanism of management and the governing system under the PPP. The fact is the concept of PPP as a restructuring mode is new. Still there is no evidence of its application. Since the security of the job is essential, and the job is more protected under the state mode of ownership of the mills, therefore according them the mills must be under the state mode of ownership.

Review of the comments of the veteran politicians shows alignment of their views with the community's proposition. Analyses denote first, upholding the commitments of the constitutional declaration and election mandate are considered vital. Second, to ensure changes are sustainable inclusion of actors, and communication among all level of actors are important. Such measures are significant for raising consensus and consciousness about the implications of the functioning mills' and its societal impact are suggested as features and outcomes of management practices. Third the mills must be accountable to the Standing Committee of the Parliament of the Ministry.

Crystallization of arguments regarding the PPP as a mode of restructuring highlights the following: silence of the community, silent resistance²⁰⁵ of the directors of BJMC, ignorance of the newly appointed executives of BJMC or their alignment with the proposition of the dominant group, propagation of the policy prescription of the WB by the Finance Minister and the bureaucracy. Reflection of strong stance regarding grounding the government's stake under the PPP as mode of restructuring is evident in the narratives of the veteran political representatives. Also we find PPP is accepted as a mode of

²⁰⁵ The directors and the Chairman did not utter a single line regarding the PPP as mode of restructuring

restructuring if the shares of the mills are sold to the interest groups such as organisations working on environment, human rights and labour rights, according to the collected comments of a member of the Commission/ Alliance . So the analysis portrays there is no strong resistance against the PPP mode of restructuring, but the interests of the major actors need to be protected.

It is evident that the sustainability of the mill has emerged as a cross-cutting issue, whilst the suggested approaches of sustainability of the entity are diverse. Within this context, views regarding participation or inclusion of the workers in the management reveal first, under the PPP— the desired mode of ownership of the mills; the bureaucracy accepts participation of the workers' representatives in the management. According to the Finance Minister participation as a management technique is currently discussed. Indeed participation is a condition of good governance propagated by the donors (UNDP, 2000). So, adapting this technique indicates an adaptation of the donors' proposed policy measure. Participation is linked to the issue of well-being of the actors. If the well-being issues are attended to, there is a possibility of higher productivity. So participation on one hand suggests co-option and an indicative of alignment with the donors' agenda item and ultimately may help in managing the workforce. Such arguments are evident in the CMS by Hardy (1998), Hardy and Clegg (2006), and Mir and Mir (2005) for more governable employees.

On the other hand, the image of unruly union leaders allows the executives to summarily dismiss the rights of the workers' representatives to be in the Enterprise Board. The cultural dominant desire to display a sophisticated attitude in the Board is stronger than concern for the survivability of the entity and the participation of its actors. Secrecy in managing the mills is important to the executives and has to be maintained, particularly when management practices include lay-offs and retrenchment of workers. Therefore in the collected narratives of the executives, participation must remain as a provision, so the authority can exercise this strategy when it is required. Once participation becomes formal, it would be categorised as a right. Consequently, the perception of having an active union in the mills induces the executives to discard arguments regarding activation of the participation committee.

For the marginalised categories of workers — for instance if we consider *badli workers* — recognition of their existence as the workers of the mills is participation. Their emerged issues of rights —the right to be associated through membership of a union or formal recognition of *badli workers*' organisations—has been discarded or subjugated. The possibility of political manipulation in the mills' has been raised as an issue of concern; but accepting the perpetuation of *badli* workers under the *badli* system does not conflict with their ethical stance and appears as a natural practice. Indeed, the legal doctrines (the LLB 2006) create the classification of permanent and *badli* workers, through the provided rights and entitlements. Thus the control mechanisms are imposed. Practices exerted by the governing system of the mills normalise the entire process. Also there is evidence that when required practices of the government can curtail *badli workers*' declared limited rights and entitlements in the law. The creation of daily basis workers by the interim government back in 2007 is an example. Hence this illustrates how in peripheries, repressive state apparatus such as the army — takes over the power sets the norms, and validates the process for supplying more low cost labour force²⁰⁶.

On this issue of recognition and thus participation female workers are more deprived and marginalised. Evidence suggests that during the time of the interim government majority of the current *badli* female workers were employed under the daily basis system (discussed in Chapter 5, section 5.4). Now, if their demand for representation and participation in the CBA is not preserved, this implies their right to work in a proper working environment is subjugated. Based on the reality of their lives, the mills appear as a space on which they can depend for their survival. There is no provision for the female workers to be re-ruralised. On the other hand, there is evidence that suggests these women are usually being trafficked to the Middle East countries²⁰⁷ (INCIDIN Bangladesh, 2002, 2005). The appropriation of labour is gendered (Hart stock, 2005) no doubt. At the same time the essence of temporariness of the life itself under neoliberalism — the continual migration, internal or external — is another feature of life that adds more vulnerability for those female workers. Analysis of the evidence implies the situation of the *badli* workers both male and female can be conceptualised as 'perpetually temporary' and hence they use the metaphor to describe their life as a 'floating raft'.

²⁰⁷ The study conducted by INCIDIN Bangladesh during the phase put period of Multi fibre Agreement of WTO.

²⁰⁷ The study conducted by INCIDIN Bangladesh during the phase put period of Multi fibre Agreement of WTO.

Participation implies initiating dialogic condition in managing the mills . However, the commodity form of labour is grounded in the mindset of the governing authority — the bureaucrats and executives. The failure to ensure human rights fails to raise any sensitisation. But legally having an active participation committee is a mandatory condition for the mills, and its functioning must be supervised by the Ministry of Labour (discussed in Chapter 2). Also participation has emerged as a condition of the sustainability of the mills, and has been suggested by the legislators. But the law in itself—the LLB 2006—is in conflict with the constitutional declarations and the ratified fundamental conventions of the ILO. For instance freedom expression and association are rights under the constitution and according to the ILO convention, while the LLB 2006 does not provide those rights to the *badli* .

Technocratic consciousness of the bureaucrats determines the management and governing approach. And state legitimatises the constructions either through despotism or by the popular image. Hence we find in one way, the technology of participation of the involved actors has been maintained. That is indeed evident in the formation of the Commission. Nevertheless, in the Commission Report and in the draft Jute Policy (2011) that incorporates recommendations of the Commission, nothing has been mentioned about inclusion of workers' representatives in the proposed national-level committee for the sector. The workers' interests will be protected during the implementation of privatisation, is all that has been mentioned. Such policy proposition implies that the well-being of the workers will be safeguarded, but participation is not a right. This proposition also reflects an attempt to balance the interests of all actors. But does it really balance? The inclusion of workers' representatives in the Commission suggests that the technology of inclusion into the process of the policy formulation has been maintained. However, under the democratic system, the technologies of participation such as inclusion into the policy formulation process can be conceived of as a double bind for communities such as jute workers – a process of depoliticisation on the issue of rights (Chatterjee, 2004). Indeed the process does not ensure the rights of the working class community— right to participate in the management process — that is to become the member of the national level committee of the sector. Therefore being the active actors of the SOJMs —the working class community has been deprived of the right to participate in the policy formulation process of the sector and the mills. So, inclusion in the Commission does not give the assurance

that all actors irrespective of their social position can enjoy similar rights under neoliberalism (Ong, 2006). Under neoliberalism, the global discourse of rights has made rights an institutional discourse (Randeria, 2005). It is evident that the criterion of inclusion reflects that right as citizens has gradation (Ong, 2006).

In parallel, governing and management approaches of governmentality illustrate how in reality practices deviate from the legal norms because of the JSAC. Hence, this indicates the ineffectuality of law in reality. The discussion illustrates power does not rest with the elected political representatives—the parliamentary bodies. However, the majority of the participants aspired that the mills have to be accountable to the Standing Committee of the Parliament. This is the role the community aspires from the elected representatives and from the state. This is an assumed and aspired feature of the governance under democracy. Whilst, the analysis of the collected perspectives of the intuitively responsible actors suggests in reality aspirations of the community is constrained by the functioning of the governmentality. The governing mechanism is part of the governmentality. And in reality its function is not confined only with the peoples' representatives, parliament and legislations — the way the community aspired. The governmentality includes the executives and the polity. Also evidence suggests the political context of Bangladesh reflects the features of perpetual temporariness. The next section discusses those conflicting issues that cause scepticism in the community about the realisation of rights-centric restructuring.

6.4.2 Conflicting regime and legitimacy of the state

In the collected perspectives of the community, their experience of JSAC, and their aspired involvement with the mills are intertwined. The experience as a concept is relational. Hence this reveals that changes in the regimes— either it is democratic or despotic, even changes in the political parties in power under democratic regime — BAL or BNP, the overall role of the governmentality, 'dominance of the WB' and its policy over the governmentality —all these factors have a role in deciding the mode of functioning of the mills. The mills are a lived space to the community, and these elements construct the reality of their life-world. The community internalises the social relations they come across through the mills. Crystallisation of their perspectives regarding realisation of the rights-centric restructuring highlights the juxtaposition of different regimes—political, economic,

legal and institutional—that affects the functioning of the mills and their life world. The analyses are discussed below.

The political context of postcolonial country is always unpredictable. Over its 41-year history, Bangladesh has been ruled for 17 years under the army regime. Analysis of the collected comments suggests the following. Bringing civil-army bureaucracy into power in the name of a caretaker government in 2007 was inevitable in order to finalise the JSAC program. However, in neoliberalism under its discourse of globalisation the despotic regime is the political solution for market-centric reform, such clear conclusions cannot be drawn. The four party Alliance led by BNP—the first democratic government of the country has been identified as responsible for dismantling of the Adamjee Jute Mills, and concurrently initiating of the context of severe crisis in the mills from 2004-06. As a result, the analysis of the collected comments denotes that disappearance of the working class community from the broader social scenario has usually been conducted during the tenure of the BNP.

The functioning of the democratic mechanism of the country basically revolves around two mainstream political parties: BAL and BNP. The review of the collected perspectives of the community reveals that people mark the distinction between the two mainstream political parties by the conditions of these parties' emergence, and also how these parties accommodate the functioning of the interests of different factions. BNP originated as an army-oriented party, and therefore this political party is identified as the platform for coalescing factions of vested interest—mainly businessmen. The response for the current ruling political party BAL is: *If Awami League is in power we can have two square mills.* Although BAL in the previous tenure from 1996-2001 conducted privatisation the workers of the government-owned mills still recall its role as the ruling party of the post-independence government, as they found that nationalisation of the mills went in their favour. BAL party emerged as a political party from the grass roots. Historically, culturally and politically it had and still has to accommodate various interest groups—the nationalists ruling class, middle class intellectuals and trade union leaders. The appointment of the current local MP of Khalishpur as the State Minister of Labour has been appreciated at the local level. As a veteran labour leader, she has been involved with labour politics, mainly with jute mill workers, for almost 30 years. The community believe they can rely on her and trust her for mediating their issues with the government, including the bureaucracy, on

their behalf. As a result in the findings we can locate how frequently the union leaders and leaders of the *badli* workers referred to her as their point of reliance: *we are her voters; she has to listen to us*'.

However, we find mistrust is embedded about the role of the political parties in the collected perspectives of the community. The dominance of the ruling class in the political parties and in the parliament is evident and the reason of the mistrust is rooted here. In their defined term the ruling class indicates first, the owners' groups. And then the politicians and bureaucrats are included, as agents for pursuing the interest of the ruling class. The ruling class agenda determines what should be the policy regarding the mills. The trading of the raw jute is one of the features of the entire jute sector. This feature of the sector appears threatening for the jute manufacturing sector and for the SOJMs. Historically the vested-interest group—raw jute exporters—have dominance over the governing mechanism of the mills. As a result the temporary measures for the re-emergence of the sector are appreciated but suspicion prevails about the government policy. The dichotomy in the system of governmentality is grounded in its mechanism. In reality the government had signed an agreement with the WB, while the political party currently in power has taken positive measures for the revival of the SOJMs in accordance with their election mandate.

The policy of the WB is perceived as another issue of conflict. The approach of implementing JSAC and the current propagation of the concept of PPP are indicative of the sovereign power of the global policy regime that dominates the constitutional declaration regarding the position of the SOJMs. Relocation of jute manufacturing industries to India raises question, making it clear to the community that there is always a market for jute, and in reality the system ensures the objectives of global capital.

The draft Jute Policy of 2011 outlines a huge plan and schemes for the sector. But the source of financing is not clear. The public limited company and PPP have been recommended as modes of ownership of the SOJMs in the draft Jute Policy of 2011 and in the Industrial Policy of 2010 (Parvin & Mostafa, 2010). These two approaches of ownership indicate the direct conflict with the constitutional declaration about the state's preferred mode of ownership of the state owned enterprises. In addition, the Policy 2011 is based on the Report of the Commission. Inclusion and participation of the Alliance members as representatives of civil society in the Commission or in the policy formulation

process has been maintained. This is an indication of creating a scope where peoples' opinion can be collected. But in the end we find through the recommendation of privatisation of the mills, the legitimization of market is highlighted in the Commission report as well as in the draft Jute Policy of 2011. Yet, this reveals the process of coalescing power, in the contested domain of interest (drawing from Gramsci, 1988). Eventually the process upholds the interest of the market and hence the right to private property. The ruling class subordination is inevitable to the hegemony of global capitalism in the context of a post/neo colonial state like Bangladesh (drawing from the theory of centre and periphery). Also this indicates the subjugation of the civil society to the doctrine of the market centric restructuring. Thus the ruling class, tend to believe that their power is derived through legitimising global policy.

That is possibly the reason why the partisan union leader—the Vice President of the Workers' league²⁰⁸—secretly informed me during the interview about the PPP mode of restructuring. Promoting the ruling class agenda through the partisan union leaders is the trend under the democratic system (discussed Chapter 2, section 2.3: the process of dismantling and collapse of the Adamjee Jute Mills under the democratic regime). Access to entitlements and its distribution to the workers depend on their nexus with the union leaders. The election-based union works based on parochialism and so fragmentations among the community is evident. It is suggested that this has crippled the process of initiating movements on the basic issues of rights. So the PPP as a mode of restructuring may not face resistance.

Also we find how the caretaker regime at a later phase strategically played with the paralegal status of *badli* workers — with the people that are considered as the part of the political society. The legal doctrines created a separation between permanent and *badli* workers, and because of JSAC, the *badli* system has been perpetuated. The system certainly benefits cost wise and politically the governing authority for imposing the repressive economic policy. During the time of care taker regime, in 2007, all political parties and trade union leaders had to go to underground. Under that created exceptional situation, the inclusion of the leader of the *badli* workers in the constituted Welfare Committee of the mills can be interpreted as an institutional recognition. However, such token representation of the destitute community illustrates how the despotic regime takes

²⁰⁸ The workers wing of the BAL

advantage of their ambivalent position and validates the regime and its' atrocity. Hence during the caretaker government regime terminated more than 500 permanent workers (Report of Factory Inspector).

However, crystallisation of the above two incidences indicate there is no way we can draw clear cut assumption based on the evidence of the restructuring of the SOJMs that the civil society works for negotiating the agenda of the ruling class and thus the agenda of the global capital under the democracy. Similarly we cannot suggest that the dynamics of relations between various elements of the political society with the governmentality in the context of the postcolonial states are always associated with the process of the politics of democracy. Or when this issue is survivability it can work for reaffirmation of the undemocratic regime (Considering Chatterjee, 2004). Since in one hand the Commission Report and the role of the partisan union leaders epitomises the role of the civil society in the domain of democracy. On the other hand the perspectives of the representative of the workers' — the representative of the TUC, the representative of INCIDIN Bangladesh in the Alliance / Commission, and the perspectives collected from the local level members of the JPC are aligned with the perspectives of the community about the rights centric restructuring. So heterogeneity and fragmentation in the composition of the civil society is evident and hence there is no single conclusion we can draw about the civil society's conformity with the agenda of the ruling class as well as with the global order. Similarly inclusion of the leader of the *badli* workers in the Welfare Committee does not indicate the power takes the advantage of deprivation and ambivalence of the people — the faction of the political society. It is evident in the findings that the *badli* workers the major constituting element of the community rejects the constructions of the interim government.

These interpretations lead us to draw from the arguments of Chatterjee (2004) regarding the formation of the community based on the content of moral claim as a part of the political society. And in case of the community of the mills the moral claim is grounded in the cause of their survivability that is linked with the mills' survivability. The issue of need and bonding of the community are grounded in —the right to live and livelihood. However evidence suggests, *badli* workers, — the deprived category of the workers, but majority in terms of number; along with them the female permanent workers —deprived and marginalised category emphasise that for them: *all roads are closed*. Moreover, there is a vast community of the Platinum mill that comprises 40000 people. This is the

sensitised community that resisted the market-centric restructuring in 2007. Hence the comment is: *if it is privatised then not even a fly will be around Khalishpur. People will have to beg in the streets instead of being here.* Therefore all participants irrespective of their status as permanent or *badli* and their identity in terms of gender, ethnicity and religion are united on one issue, as they narrated: *we resisted it once; we will resist it again.* The analyses of these comments indicate that the agency of the community. The agency is to ensure the survivability or existence and to restore the identity as the workers of the government owned mills. The dispossessed jute community— constitutes their ethical content (drawing from Chatterjee, 2004). The analysis also shows that issues of rights are determined in a contested domain.

However, there have also been examples of community-led restructuring in Venezuela and Argentina. We find the facilitative role of the state in the case of Venezuela, in terms of financial support, and reforms in the constitutions for the establishment of these factories. In the case of Argentina, local government has taken a facilitative role, but at the national level the state is silent. Indeed the concern issue is the dynamic of class mechanism and what would be the outcomes. The role of the ruling class, civil society and their alignment with the government perhaps become a factor in terms of deciding the future of the recovered factories. Therefore the silence of the state raises doubt about the future of the recovered factories, since state initiative is required in terms of legal reform and capital investment in recovered factories. However, whatever the role state plays, indeed the recovered factories management or restructuring mode is an evidence of democratic practise and a sign of politics of the governed under the democracy (Drawing from Chatterjee, 2004).

Reflections on the collected perspectives regarding the Platinum Mills —the SOJMs and the contextual evidence of the recovered factories have raised the following questions. What legitimises the state role as an institution: legitimising the legitimate demand of the people or legitimising the code of conduct of the market? On the issue of rights-centric restructuring is the state going to be a facilitator or will it remain neutral? Based on the collected narratives can we infer that the state's role has been departing from fulfilling its constitutional obligations?

These questions lead me to go back to the collected comments regarding the community's experiences of JSAC. Analysis suggests that the state never takes a neutral role, when the concerned issues are establishing market-centric reform for establishing the right to private property. The fact is the politics of the governed and the governmentality at the local level is in relation to global capital (Chatterjee, 2004). Approaches for finalisation of JSAC and the overall functioning of the caretaker government illustrates the paradoxical position of commitment regarding democracy and democratisation process of the global institutions. UNDP, IDAs as institutions uphold the idea of inclusive democracy and good governance, and exert practices of ensuring good governance through their funded civil society organisations, mainly by NGOs at the local level²⁰⁹. Evidence suggests that the government ruthlessly attempted to quash the movement of the starved workers protesting for their right to a livelihood. In parallel, the same regime enacted upon the Right to Information Act 2008 and ratified the UN Convention against Corruption. Under this Convention, freedom of expression is a provision. Drawing from Sen (Dèrzhè & Sen, 2002) we know that the right to information, and freedom of expression are indicative of accountable, responsive, inclusive democracy and provide the basis of political entitlements for the realisation of economic and social rights. But the reality of the workers of the SOJMs of Bangladesh was diametrically opposite. Yet, the undemocratic regime expressed its alignment with the agenda of good governance and inclusive democracy of the global policy regime (UNDP, 2000). On the other hand, the undemocratic government fulfilled the agenda of civil society organisations and thus managed recognition. The approach of seeking validation and recognition of the undemocratic regime by using the agenda of the civil society reveals under neoliberalism how popularity is derived from the funded NGOs of the donor agencies.

I state earlier the paradoxical position of the global policy regarding good governance and rights at the local level. Indeed this locates the gap and lack of governance at the global level of the global policy regimes. The issue of governance of the global policy regime remains obscured as always. The evidence suggests both the global discourse of rights and economic reforms in the name of development and sustainability and good governance protect the market mechanism of restructuring at the local level. Changes in regime appear

²⁰⁹ The Right to Information Act was the agenda of the *Manusher Jonno* Foundation. This organisation is a local donor agency. Their organisation is an initiative designed to promote 'human rights' and 'good governance' in Bangladesh, and DFID is its major donor. Similarly creating pressure on the government for ratification of the UN Convention against corruption was the agenda of Transparency International Bangladesh.

in alignment with the demand of globalism denote that sovereignty and democracy as overall governing modes are fluid and abstract in the case of a nation state like Bangladesh. Hence fractured sovereignty, and fragmented governance mechanism are realities in case of Bangladesh (c.f . Ong, 2006, Banerjee, 2008a).

6.4.3 Does multiplicity of voices matter?

It is also evident in the current context that the functioning of the mills is not limited to within the mills, Ministry and BJMC. After 2007 the premises has been extended, the workers of the mills are now multiple linked the JPC, local organisations, and media are partners, and an organic network has been evolving. The evidence suggests that the community is organised with multiple links and collectively committed to the survivability of the mills and its governance mechanism. These are linked with their won survivability. Indeed the participation of the JPC in the SASF is an evidence of linkages of the local agenda of the workers regarding the issue of their survival, and the development and sustainability of the SOJMs with the global agenda of ‘globalism from below’. It indicates the widening of the scope and space of the issues of survivability of the mills and the jute community. This also suggests another aspect of sovereignty.

The World Social Forum (WSF) is considered as a platform of the deprived and marginalised multitudes. WSF defines what should be and what exists as the realities of globalisation (Santos, 2006). It makes an attempt of enquiring the process of globalisation in finding out what was there and has disappeared (Santos, 2006; 2008). Thus the WSF place the alternate approach of globalism from the perspectives of rights and justice (Santos, 2006, 2008). Also the WSF can be argued as an alternative approach of establishing global governance in the absence or in the presence of rhetoric of governance of the global policy regime by the people (Ali, 2012). The representation of the JPC not only means voicing of the dispossessed community of the SOJMs, but also exemplifies the right of the dispossessed community of the government owned jute mills to ask for the responsive accountable globalisation process for the community of the SOJMs of Bangladesh.

6.5 Conclusion of the section

Crystallisation of the entire discussions denotes survivability constitutes the basis, the concept of citizenship rights is the fulcrum and the state mode of ownership is the desired mode of ownership. The basis of aspired involvement has cultural connotation and practices. Historical evidence suggests that the jute mill workers of the government-owned mills were not a silent working class community. Their collective participation in the liberation war of 1971, and their fight against army government with the student front for the democracy have been cited as evidence. Hence, the resistance of 2007 has historical roots. This reveals the cultural notions of this working class community's collectivity and agency (c.f. Escobar, 1988). The aspiration of the community regarding rights-centric restructuring is not only evolved as a socio-economic issue, but also such enunciations of aspiration mark the cultural practices of the jute mills. I mention earlier the jute mills workers of the government owned mills suggest an evolution of an occupation based community. They have their own culture and they know how to interact with the state apparatuses for placing the agenda item. Although the internal and external migration is a feature and this challenges the Sen's argument regarding the political entitlement under democratic system for the realisation of economic and social rights. But it is evident in the findings that the community believes in this entitlement.

Parallel the realisation aspects of the rights centric restructuring signify five major points. First, the political entitlement of the community is the fulcrum in establishing their right to livelihood and can lead to rights-centric restructuring. The realisation of the community of their role as electorate is an indication of the sovereign power of citizens. Here the implication of the political society lies in. Second, there is mistrust in the community about the entire system. It is evident that the community neither trusts the union leaders, the political parties that occupy power, nor the bureaucrats and mills' executives. Third, it is also evident that power does not rest with the elected peoples' representatives, while this attribute of the representative democracy has been uttered by the majority of the participants. That is what they aspired from the democratic regime. Fourth, conflicted regimes in terms of political, economic and legal aspects, but tend to pursue the global agenda for the economy —development and sustainability. Fifth, the collective stance community is evident for protecting the mills and its ownership.

Considering the fragmentations, parochialism and union's submission to the agenda of their political parties, incongruities, and scepticism, some of which are related to the workers' themselves, I think the described aspired involvement of the community with the restructuring process denotes how the community relates themselves with the mills and with the state—the institutions they have been involved for the last fifty years. Scepticism prevails in the mind-set of the community. However, hitherto, there has been no privatisation by the government. Drawing from my gathered narratives and Roy (2001, p.86), I argue that a civil war everywhere in everyday life of the people is another governing technology of the people for their survival, under neo-liberalism. The culmination of all those features—the constitutional declarations, evidence of the application of the rights based approach to development, the legal stance for the global law of the country, the industrial culture in the government owned mills and the emerged critical consciousness of the community—suggests that the study provides a contextually relevant critical analysis about the role of the state as an institution, as well as an actor.

This study contributes to extending understanding of Sen's proposition of the rights-based approach to development in the context of the industrial sphere. The survivability of the community depends on the functioning of the mills and hence, in line with Sen, the right to livelihood is considered as a human right. Considering the human toll and social cost of market-centric restructuring, as argued by Banerjee (2008) in the context of the postcolonial or neo-colonial state, the study contributes an alternate approach of industrial restructuring suggested by the community. Thus, the study also confirms its location in the CMS as it represents the narratives of the community affected by the market centric restructuring and asks for justice. Aside from this argument, the study poses a challenge towards the unchallenged market-centric restructuring suggested by the WB and the IMF; and pursued in Bangladesh as well as all over the world. Consequently, the discourse of rights-centric restructuring and management includes and talks about the well-being elements of the community, but these are notlinked, with productivity and profitability aspects of the mills.

The study suggests conceptualisation of access by the community has multiple aspects. First, it is linked with the capability to derive well-being. Second, it connotes their power to decide. Therefore, conceptualisation of entitlement is not only confined with entitlements of the basic provisions that determine well-being as well as capability. The

discourse of rights of the community indicates that legal entitlements in terms of recognition and representation are vital. These are important aspects of legal entitlements but also indicate the politics of identity for survivability in the context of economic development of neo-liberalism. These entitlements ensure and protect the identity as the workers of jute mills. Alongside, based on this identity, the workers define the power/knowledge relations with the bureaucracy. The social setting of the SOJMs, Bangladesh and resistance of the jute community against the JSAC imply what is the inherent regime of truth. The study points out that the subjectivity of the workers as the *Chat Kall Shrramik* (Jute mill workers) is considered empowering by them. This is the addition of this research, if I consider Banerjee's (2011) exegesis that asks for further research in the context of a post movement scenario of the postcolonial states. Although such subjectivity may be criticised as it indicates that the workers do not possess the consciousness of social transformation of their condition. But within that regime of truth their assertion to be recognised in the broader social, political and economic context in terms of taking part in the policy making process is an indication of micro-emancipation. In line with this, constituted changes in the current management practices and governance, for instance, inclusion of the civil society in the policy formulation process indicates the process perspective argued in the domain of CMS.

Within this context the study contributes aspired involvement and engagement aspects of the community. It is argued that inertia or 'inability' is reflected in the attitude of the critical scholars, '*to take on broader and a more explicit political agenda*' by Mir and Mir (2002, p. 108). Their arguments suggest that the discourse of critical scholars of management has the following limitations: It reflects only the academic perspective, where discussion of power and subjectivity only considers the disciplinary perspectives, and also the discussions lack a historical grounding (2002, p. 119). Categorising these factors as limitations of CMS, Mir and Mir (2002, 2013) urge that an endeavour needs to be taken for 'imagining new organisational' mechanisms that could give practical solutions and that can also represent the voice of the disempowered categories of actors. Within this argument of CMS, in particular in the context of the postcolonial states, the study signifies, first, aspired organisational aspects and management mechanisms. Second, this study demonstrates that the subaltern can speak. They speak about their rights. Rights-centric management is an imagined institutional mechanism of the community. The community voice indicates that their aspired rights include economic, legal and political entitlements

and that this equates with equity. It is evident that the community has rejected the current pursued policy of the industry and its created socio-economic situation. Rights-centric management proposes an alternative theoretical framework of management, one that looks for work place democracy, but within the practice of democracy as the governing technology of the state.

Chapter 7: Conclusion and limitations

Chapter Contents

7.1 Conclusions

7.2 Suggestions for the policy makers

7.3 Limitation, implications and way forward

7.1 Conclusions

Rights to livelihood, the right to be recognised as ‘jute mill workers’, the right to retain the identity—an occupation-based industrial workers’ identity — rights regarding basic entitlements provided through the mills, and the right to be involved with the mills which implies informed engagement are discussed as elements of rights-centric restructuring as well as its features. The mills emerged as a space — a source of living and a space to be involved with the governance mechanism based on political entitlements..

The discussions regarding the realisation of the rights-centric restructuring based on the experience of market-centric restructuring of the community highlight the following points. First, the heterogeneity in legal framework—the conflict between the constitutional declarations and the LLB 2006 about the issues of rights and entitlements —is highlighted. This also epitomizes that confirming the protocol of global law regarding rights and workers’ rights are not mandatory requirements for the country; while economic policy measures regarding restructuring have to be followed and implemented. In parallel, the deviance of global international legal doctrines of right, and notion of good governance from practices are found at local level — if we consider the case of restructuring of the SOJMs. Dichotomy in the role of the global policy regime is evident. The propagation of inclusive democracy and good governance for the local level are suggested, but the global governance of global regimes appears diffused

Drawing from the discussion we find the regulation of the market derives its control mechanism from the political constructions. Thus the strategy of governing the mills is designed and this is based on the interplay of the governing authority. The analysis of the evidence indicates that the demand of the community is suppressed by those who secure institutional positions. In reality the institutionally empowered actors work for confirming the extraction of low-cost labour. Hence law and law enforcement bodies’ work for satisfying the demand of the market. The perpetuated exceptional situation in the mills has substantiated the irrelevance of the legal doctrines and its implications. This is evident that depriving workers on the issues of their basic human rights does not create any sensitisation among the policy makers. Hence according to Banerjee (2008) management by expulsion, subjugation and extraction are features of governance in the context of post/neo-colonial states.

Right to life is a natural right. For the community of the mills that had been once evicted from the peasantry, right to life has been translated as right to livelihood. So, this is an inalienable right. The discussion signifies how that community has been urbanised, and how functioning of their lifeworld revolved around the mills—*the Chat Kall Shramik*. But in the context of the postcolonial state under neoliberalism, the value of the labouring power equates with their existence (Drawing from Marx, 1970/77). Abolishing the working class community as a formal workforce at any cost is the policy, and we find the death of workers from starvation and suicide as evidence. The position of Bangladesh as a nation state, issues of its sovereignty and the dynamics of its political context: function for the validation of such decision (c.f Banerjee, 2008, Agamben, 1995).

Drawing from Chatterjee (2004) I reiterate the same question about whether capital and community is antithetical or interdependent. The collected evidence suggests mutual dependence between the community and the capital: *Here everybody's lives are interlinked and totally depend on the working of the mill. It works as a chain with multiple links but every link is important for the survival of this locality*. Aside from socio-economic need there is a deep cultural bond between the mills and the community. The interdependency of the capital and community is historically constructed in the case of the postcolonial states (drawing from Chandravarkar, 1998; Chatterjee, 2004).

Within this context Sen asks for the expansion of human capability from the perspective of rights so that potentiality can be realised and globalisation can be benefitting (Sen, 1999c). In reality both global discourse of rights and economic reform in the name of development and sustainability have created fractured citizenship rights at the local context. Also has created the technology of depoliticising the mechanism of ensuring the rights of the citizen argued by Ong (2006). For instance: the formations of the Commission, acceptance of the recommendations of the Commission Report are the signs that suggest that the technology of participation is and has been maintained. But the end result of the entire process denotes that the governmentality actually performs its role of ensuring whether well-being is maintained. The outcome of the Jute Policy of 2011 for the workers is protection of their interest when the mills will be privatised. It can argued that regime looks for its legitimacy not through ensuring right to participate in the process of governing mechanism but by ensuring the well-being of the citizens. Thus it shows in reality, the postcolonial states' rights are constructed in a contested domain (Escobar; 1992).

The evidence of restructuring of the SOJMs under the JSAC and the initiation of democracy initiated since 1991. Internalising the collected perspectives of the community regarding the rights centric restructuring within the context of democracy as a political practice, which gives them the political entitlement, I conclude (c.f Chatterjee 2004, p.4) that the democracy can be perceived now as the politics of the governed in the context of the postcolonial states like Bangladesh.

Also, evidence indicates the limitation of the concept of the civil society in the day today formation of the state mechanism; since *badli* workers and the community cannot be a part of the civil society. Evidently the study illustrates the community as an element of the political society based on the political entitlement as ‘voters’ took part in the discussion of rights centric restructuring. Discussion has relevance in the CMS literature particularly in the domain of postcolonial studies as it indicates a theory-praxis engagement Mir and Mir (2013, P. 98) The discussions have brought forward, first, those issues voiced by the community and regarded as essential for their survival. Second, this illustrates their aspired involvement with the governance system, and hence that involvement means informed engagement with the process of management. Furthermore, based on their political entitlement, the community explained what role they aspired from the state, for ensuring the survivability of the mills.

Furthermore, the study illustrates that the institutional structure of the state organisations—local, zone and central level have potential, but the community discussed how the potentiality of that structure can be used. Finally based on political entitlements, the community wants to see the responsive and accountable governing mechanism in the mills and in its related bodies.

In chapter 1, I state that shifts in the policy measure of managing the SOJMs, private mills and the sector, and my study have been proceeded together. I reflected on the contextual evidence of market-centric restructuring in 2007, and the application of rights based approach by the development agencies in building up the capacity of the citizens in claiming their rights, and thus creating a provision of their engagement in the policy formulation process (discussed elaborately in chapter 2). Based on that I developed the research proposal in 2009 and formulated my research questions as follows:

- First: What are the elements of and necessary conditions for implementation of a rights-centric management approach?
- Second: What would constitute a contextual framework of rights-centric management for the jute sector of Bangladesh?
- Third: What are involved and affected actors' perceptions of possible and desirable management approaches for implementation of such a framework?
- Fourth: What are involved and affected actors' perceptions of constraining and enabling elements for such possible and desirable management approaches?

Sen argues that the capability is entwined with the concept of agency (Kabeer, 2003; Sen, 1992). People must have rights to access the opportunity, which implies here the right to be involved with the restructuring process and management of the mills. On one hand, the capability of the people can be enhanced if the systematic accountability of the mills to the people or to the workers is ensured. On the other hand, the system can be accountable if the major actors—the workers—have all information about the mills, can participate and are consulted in the policy formulation process. Hence, the dialogic situation is important for integration.

Chapter 2 provides the accounts of the contextual and historical background of Bangladesh. It discusses its critical economic problem. Thus, it reflects on the urgency for development and sustainability in both the government and NGOs policies and practices²¹⁰ through the application of rights based approach to development. The review of the contextual evidence of the rights based approach finds its silence regarding the rights of the workers in the context of application of efficiency centric industrial restructuring (Parthasarathy, 2005). On the other hand the community-led restructuring is evident in the context of Latin America in the name of management of the recovered factories. In line with this contextual evidence, we find the narratives of the critical management studies bringing, arguing and substantiating the voices of excluded: regarding their agency, mechanism of dealing with the institutions that includes state too; their resilience and its expression in (re)construction of their identity in the context of restructuring of the economy in the name of development and sustainability (Banerjee, 2011). Within this discussion of CMS, we find Mir and Mir (2002, 2005 & 2013) ask for further study by applying social theories; assuming that such an approach may bring effective infusion of

²¹⁰ For instance Poverty Reduction Strategic Paper of the country

theories and praxis. Here the contribution of this study is grounded specifically in the domain of CMS. The study considers the rights-based approach to development – the social theory. Based on that it explores aspirations of the community on whether, and how, they would like to be involved with the development of alternative organisational mechanisms and governance. Having discussed those contextual and conceptual issues based on the narratives of the community, the study considers the declaration of rights of the citizens in the constitution as the core of the study.

Chapter 3 discusses the research context: the imposition of the JSAC, its consequences and how the jute community of Khalishpur has resisted it.

Chapter 4 gives an account of how the study has been conducted. I worked for development of an empirical account regarding the community's aspiration and aspired involvement with the mills. The collected narratives of the community denote both the experience of market-centric restructuring and aspiration of rights-centric restructuring. So the dialogic relations are the major approach (drawing from Imas & Weston, 2012) that went beyond interviews and focus group discussions and includes informal chat throughout my duration in the field. The involvement of the researcher has a critical role; by ethnicity and nationality I belong to Bangladesh.

In Chapter 5 the empirical accounts of the community start with the positioning of the SOJMs as a means of development and thus, the community signify why the survivability of the mills is essential. Within this context the workers define their rights based on the state-provided framework of entitlements distributed by the mills. It is initiated with the right to be recognised as the workers of the SOJMs, the right to represent in the policy formulation and in the decision-making process, and the right to be informed to make effective choices in the process of achieving capability. It denotes the access of the community to have the basic provisions and all are crucial in ensuring their survivability and meeting the sustainability aspects of the mills. This highlights the need of comprehensive reform measures through consultation with the workers as key actors. Sovereignty of the mills as an entity is an essential condition to establish the accountability of the mills. Inclusion of the local elected bodies into the Enterprise Board implies establishing the ownership of the locality, because elected local actors are accountable to

the community. The perspectives and analysis of the actors have been further presented and authenticated in the participatory learning workshop.

Chapter 6 discusses emerged issues of rights, and the aspired involvements taking the constitutional declarations, and Sen's conceptual apparatuses on rights as the basis. Since the survivability of the community is intrinsically linked with the survivability of the mills, the collected comments regarding aspired involvement of the community with the management are conceived as rights-centric restructuring and management. The constitutional declaration, incorporation of Sen's notion of rights based approach in the development paradigm by the UN, the measures for the revival of the sector by the current democratic government and the sensitisation among the people about the implications of the functioning mills are all considered as enabling factors.

Consequently, there are external and internal aspects that are categorised as constraining factors. In the case of internal factors, the ideological positioning of the policy makers generates differences and hence, the findings reveal the divide between the elected political representatives as policy makers and the bureaucrats on the issue of the ownership of the mills. Indeed the ideological manifestation of the bureaucracy is in reality an alignment with the policy of the WB regarding the jute sector for Bangladesh. The recent propagation of the WB on the PPP as a mode of restructuring is an example of ideological subjugation of the bureaucracy. The policy of the WB plays a critical role and is perceived as always contradictory to the interest of the people. This implies against the functioning of the SOJMs. Therefore, the inconsistency between the state stances declared in the constitution and the role of the actors responsible for managing the state apparatuses is grounded in here. Thus, the crisis of legitimation of the state has emerged (drawing from Ball, 1990). Parallely, the political legacy suggests political construction itself has the feature of temporariness, but works for establishing the economic code of globalism. The state declared emergency period because of army intervention in 2007, worked for pushing the agenda of the JSAC extremely. Because raw jute export is profitable, the hoarding aspect of raw jute is another reality and identified as a factor that denotes the ruling class intentions for trading economy and their interest. As a result, the weak law enforcement agencies are a corollary and all could play roles in obstructing the process of realisation of rights-centric restructuring and management.

Revisiting the research questions illustrates that neither productivity-efficiency, nor corruptions which have been propagated by the global policy regime for the last 35 years are concerned issues to the community, (discussed in chapter 2). The discourse of the community takes the constitution as the fulcrum. They consider themselves as citizens. They know that under the constitution, citizens are the supreme authority of the republic and the mill is the state-owned entity—the highest preferred mode of ownership of an entity according to the constitution—and state is responsible for creating employment²¹¹. The community's perspectives on their aspired restructuring and management indicate that for decisions that affect their lives the community should have the power to decide. Parallely, according to the constitution, mills are state-owned entity the highest preferred mode of ownership of an entity according to the constitution.

The framed rights-centric management is based on rights and equity. For instance, the female workers claim their own rights of recognitions and representation. *Badli* workers ask for collective or individual recognition by law. Indeed the community aspires for emancipation from existing exploitative and discriminatory management practices. This also includes union activities. Their desired mode of ownership is the state mode with an effectively functioning union and official involvement of union is the suggested condition of its affectivity. The government role is perceived as the role played by the head of the family. Thus, the legitimate role of the government has been defined. The community unequivocally has propositioned against the market-based reform, as well as they do not want the bureaucratic impositions on management of the mill—the way it works now. The mill is an entity; a means of achieving aspired issues and secured life to the community. So their identified framework of management of the mills and its sustainability aspects is grounded in value. Hence, it considers accountability is the pivot of the structure.

This also reveals that the community's position is not opposed to the market, nor is they opposed to globalisation. The core value of governance according to the global discourse of governance (UNDP, 2000) emphasises creating a culture of accountability and responsibility for ensuring human rights, and is aligned with the rights-centric management and restructuring or rights-centric governance explained by the community. Analysis of the collected perspectives of the community indicates that the market appears a distant place where their produced product is sold. People identify that marketing aspects

²¹¹ Principle 7, 15 and 13

depend on intervening the internal market. Linkage of the jute procurement of the mills directly with the jute cultivators has been suggested through forming the cooperatives of the cultivators. Thus, the corruption of the governing actors can be challenged. A technological intervention aspect is also discussed but has to be done consciously. Retrenchment of the workers is not accepted. The defined mode of sustainability implies that having access to information implies integration with the system and can be strengthened through participation. These are the prerequisites of the rights-centric management. BJMC's role is also defined as the supervisory and consultative body. The analysis of the perspectives regarding the necessary conditions of rights-centric restructuring defines that the mills are conceived as the basic structure of exercising and securing democratic rights, and it is possible through ensuring participation in managing mills. But the government has to play the central role in terms of investment, management and ownership. Based on these discussions, necessary conditions and implementing elements of rights centric management are derived, categorised and placed in the box below.

Chart: 7.1: The necessary conditions and elements of the rights-centric restructuring and management

- Conceptualise the sector as a national sector and jute economy
- Develop a comprehensive policy and central plan through consultation with all actors
- Consistency in policy application process
- Policy implementation process should be free from political influence, so compliance is required with the formulated policy from all ruling parties and members in future can occupy the advisory roles in the interim government
- Widening information base
- Workers have right to participate in decisions that impact on their lives
- Disclosure of information by the mill management to the actors
- Effective coordination has to be developed by BJMC. It should link the production plan with the demand of the customers, manage bulk export, as well as establish a linkage with the cultivation of jute
- CBA and BJMC need to have regular communication
- Justness in equity distribution
- Sales proceeds has to be transferred to mills' account
- Mandatory budgetary allocation for procurement of raw jute
- BJMC should conduct informal discussion with the workers
- Meeting between CBA members and management should be formal and agenda has to be announced to the workers as well as outcomes of the meeting
- Reactivate participation committee
- Regular supervision by BJMC officials

The realisation of the aspired restructuring and management depends on the culture of

policy formulation process of the country. The ideological positioning of the governmentality focuses on 'catching up' with the pace of globalisation and therefore, mills are supposed to be restructured under the PPP mode. The experience of the restructuring process denotes domination, suppression of rights, and equity of the community. However, this is also evident that if the claim of the community for the survivability becomes suppressed, organically the resistance will be emerged. Within this context the study makes an attempt to present the interests of the diverse groups, and thus highlights where the scepticism is located.

The findings suggest that the issue of functioning mills is not confined under the grip of the mill management, the BJMC and the Ministry. The community is now linked with this issue nationally and regionally through participation in the SASF. The contribution of local level organisations has been acknowledged by the JPC. The JPC takes official support for conducting research on the jute mills in order to place their agenda on the mills, and the sector, to the national and the global audience. These are categories as factors that constitute the optimistic aspect regarding the realisation of the rights-centric restructuring and management.

Having discussed the necessary conditions, elements and realisation process of rights-centric restructuring and management, the next section deals with policy implications of the research and it is followed by discussions regarding the limitations, implications of the research and the way forward.

7.2 Suggestions for the policy makers

According to Sen, provision regarding basic capability is a social choice, as issues these are linked to human rights. Therefore, this has to be decided collectively through dialogue (1999, 2004; 2005a). Based on Sen's propositions, inclusivity is the fulcrum of the policy formulation process on the basic issues of capabilities of the conducted projects under the rights based approach to development (Kabeer, 2003; Kabeer & Kabir, 2009; Arivind, 2009; Yamin, 2009). Therefore, democratic regimes and their apparatuses; for instance, a free press, media and access to information; are argued as conditions for creating a process that can ensure equity in the policy formulation process (Derže, & Sen, 1989; Sen, 1999). Creating dialogic conditions is the responsibility of the state (Sen, 1999). Informed participation of actors in the process widens the scope of accountability of the system,

(Sen, 1999, 2004). Introducing the Sanskrit word *Swakriti*, meaning recognition, Sen argues that recognition must be the foundation of the democratic process—the indicator of political pluralism (Sen, 2005b). Review of above arguments regarding the policy formulation process from the perspective of a rights based approach to development indicate the following features: (i) dialogic condition has to be created (ii) inclusivity has to be established (iii) information has to be more accessible because informed participation suggests empowerment, and (v) inclusion and recognition imply pluralism.

Indeed the exclusion of the marginalised community in the policy formulation is categorised as the major weakness of the process in the case of Bangladesh (Sobhan, 2010). The trend suggests policy measures only address the interest of a handful of affluent people, and causes unjust governing system. Within this context, under the democratic government initiative of the formation of the Commission by the members of the Alliance for the policy formulation process is a positive approach. Evidently the Alliance accommodated various interest groups on the issue of jute. In the end reflection of various ideologies and the dominance of market-centric solutions are evident in the Commission Report, and the same goes with the Jute Policy 2011.

Analysis of the draft Jute Policy 2011 suggests the following gaps. First: the policy encompasses the entire sector and asks for formation of a national level committee for the sector. This also includes the farmers' representatives, but nothing has been mentioned about the representation from the workers' side (The Ministry of Textile and Jute, 2012). Hence, exclusion of the workers' representatives in the core body of the policy formulation and implementation raises questions (i) whether the Jute Policy 2011 will be owned by all categories of actors, and (ii) whether its recommendations are going to be consistently implemented. Second: the Jute Policy 2011 enunciates that there will be reform in management approaches of the SOJMs. But nothing has been proposed regarding what types of reform measures are being considered (The Ministry of Textile & Jute, 2012). Again, excluding the workers' category from the provision of dialogue and discussions regarding reforms of the SOJMs makes us sceptical whether concrete reform is possible in the management of the mills.

However, I stated earlier that the SOJMs have a traditional industrial culture. The workers have exposure of union and moreover, they are individually conscious about their issues of

rights and the workers are aware about the legal enunciation of having participation committee at the factory level (discussed in chapter 2 and 4). So the environment and culture of the mills can accommodate rights-centric management. Concurrently, analysis of the collected findings suggests that a comprehensive policy is essential for ensuring the sustainability of the sector and the mills, and has to be formulated through consultation with the major actors. So consultation implies voicing, participation, inclusion and recognition as actors. All are critical components for realisation of the rights-centric restructuring and management. The policy implications are discussed below:

First: the functioning mill denotes right to life and livelihoods. Drawing from Sen, I argue that the workers including the dependent community on the mills as major involved actors have the right to decide the sustainability aspects of the mills, and have the right to participate in deciding the restructuring process of the mills. It is their basic human right, and furthermore mills are state owned²¹².

Based on this argument and analysis of the collected perspectives of the members of the Commission and the political representatives we can also draw this conclusion that even if the mills are restructured under the PPP mode again the workers as major actors have to be consulted.

Second: under the constitutional declaration, the state is obligated to provide work and ensure the basic of entitlements for its citizens. Basic entitlements imply issues that constitute the basic capability by all categories of workers — permanent workers permanent, *badli*, female, Bihari and Hindu. The quality of basic provisions or entitlements can vary, but as the workers of the SOJMs, the workers consider they have rights to access the best services in public education and public hospitals

Third: the study suggests that in alignment with the constitutional declaration, the state-mode ownership is the desired mode of ownership of the mills. But a comprehensive central plan and consistent application of that plan is required. It must involve the public sector service agencies involved with the mills' functioning, such as the Nationalised Commercial Banks, and the Power Development Board responsible for the electricity supply. Coordination of all involved public sector agencies is essential. If procurement is

²¹² While we find the recovered factories of Argentina and Venezuela had been privately owned (discussed in chapter 2).

ensured through timely releasing of cash and the supply of electricity, then the production process cannot be disrupted. The production planning, marketing and technological innovations are the responsibility of the state and must be provided at mill levels by the BJMC (p.19).

Fourth: coordination and communication is required in all spheres. The community demands their meaningful participation in the process governing mechanism, for instance inclusion in the management and the policy formulation process. Hence, an active participation committee at the factory level is suggested under the IRO 1969. In the case of formation of the committee at national level on the issue of the mills and on the workers' rights, the number represented in all approved categories must be equal.

Fifth: the community asked for institutional reforms at mill level, zone level and central level. The local elected bodies understand the spill over effect of the functioning mills in the locality. So there must be inclusion of key actors at the local level and there must be a change in the policy of the local administration and local elected bodies. The zone office structure of the BJMC has to be reactivated in order to take part in such a decentralisation process (p. 19, 20).

Sixth: inclusivity through having the information about the entire operational aspects of the mills and demand for the announcement of the community consider entitlements of the workers through the media as rights. Moreover, the community claims that media must be present in the meeting of the Standing Committee of the Parliament. These claims have relevance and legal stance. Bangladesh enacted a Right to Information Act in 2008. It is worth mentioning access to information is considered as a mode of establishing accountability and a strategy of encountering corruption under the UN Convention against Corruption. The country also ratified this Convention in 2007.

Seventh: effective worker-friendly union is the highest cited demand. The union must work as a surveillance body for making management accountable. So it must be formally included in the management of the Enterprise Board, and be included in the budget process. Here lies the significance of effective trade unions in the mills. Participation Committee is supported by the Industrial Relations Ordinance 1969.

Eighth: the right to be recognised is declared in the constitution. The female workers consider their representation in the union as a right. The female leaders have ruled the country for the last twenty years. Also, the Parliament holds 30 selective seats for female representatives. However, female workers are not particularly focused on formulating laws and policies (see the Jute Policy 2011, the Commission Report, and LLB 2006). Neither have we found initiatives for the development of female workers' leadership in the industrial sphere.²¹³ Therefore, the female workers' demand for selective representation in the union and to be promoted as *sardars* has relevance. They perceive it as an essential condition for making their working environment supportive of women. The female workers demand for allocation in the budget for the arrangement of dowry for their daughters' marriage. If state fails in providing work for its citizens, cannot have a safety-net program for its citizens survivability and in combating dowry system; then in this context, demand for the arrangement of dowry has implications. The country has enacted upon the Convention against all discriminations against women.

Ninth: the right of association is declared in the constitution and also in the ILO conventions. Legal recognition is important in order to be recognised and to place the demand agenda. So *badli* workers want to be unionised or they demand formal recognition of their Committee. Legal enunciations have lost their relevance to the *badli* workers. According to LLB 2006, they must be appointed as permanent workers after spending one year as *badli* workers, while in reality they have been working more than 16 years as *badli* workers²¹⁴. Again, basic provisions provided to the *badli* workers are less compared to the received entitlements of the permanent workers. So they are deprived in terms of capability as long as there is no change in the policy in terms of providing basic entitlements to all categories of workers. Formal recognition can also strengthen their commitment and feeling of belongingness to the mills.

Tenth: the people desired for decentralisation of the administrative structure, and like to see the BJMC and the Ministry in a facilitating role, and demand mills to be transformed as an independent entity. Thus, the mills can be perceived as a local resource by the local elected bodies. The elected politicians for instance the Ward Commissioner, local MP and Mayor are accountable to the people of their locality, and their inclusion is must. The community emphasise on their identity as electoral agents and hence, as citizens. Thus,

²¹³ Not even in the ready-made garment industries, where women workers are the majority

²¹⁴ However this is not clearly stated.

they put more focus on their civil and political rights. The community considers formation of a supervisory committee at the zone level through including the local administrative actors such as the District Commissioner and Police Commissioner for supervision, so the corruption of the mills' executives and union can be minimised.

Eleventh: the capacity development initiative of the workers is also important along with the introduction of technological innovations. Since balancing modernisation and renovation of the mills is crucial for its survivability, in line with this enhancement of the workers' technological skill is considered vital. But retrenchment is not accepted as an implication of the policy regarding the capacity development.

Twelfth: I discuss earlier that the community considers relocation of the jute industry to India implies there had and has been always market for the jute goods. Also jute is regarded as an eco-friendly natural fibre. Within this context implementation and consequences of JSAC, raises question among the community about the authenticity of the WB, as a policy making institution. The question is where the accountability of the global policy regime is grounded. The emerged concern regarding the accountability of the WB implies the WB as a policy making body has to be accountable. This is the last policy implication of this study.

The defined process by the community for ensuring the sustainability of the mills and aspired involvement approaches with the mills is constitutionally approved; and can be incorporated in the policy. The entire study has policy implications and it deals with the issues of rights of the workers not only from the collective aspects but I also consider their individual aspirations.

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Appendix A

Status of Ratification/Accession of Principal Human Rights in Bangladesh

| No | Convention/Covenant | Ratification/ Accession |
|----|--|----------------------------|
| 1 | Abolition of Forced Labour Convention 1930 (No. 29) and 1957 (No. 105) | 22 June 1972 |
| 2 | Freedom of Association and Protection of the Rights to Organise Convention 1948 (No. 87) | 22 June 1972 |
| 3 | Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention 1949 (No. 98) | 22 June 1972 |
| 4 | Equal Remuneration Convention 1951 (No. 100) | 22 June 1972 |
| 5 | Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111) | 22 June 1972 |
| 6 | ILO Abolition of Forced Labour Convention (No. 105); | 22 June 1972 |
| 7 | International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination(7 March 1966) | 11 June 1979 |
| 8 | International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid (30 November 1973) | 5 February 1985 |
| 9 | Convention on the Rights of the Child (20 November 1989) | 3 August 1990 |
| 10 | Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women(CEDAW) (18 December 1979) | 6November1994 |
| 11 | International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (16 December 1966) | 5 October 1998 |
| 12 | Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide(9 December 1948) | 5 October 1998 |
| 13 | Convention on the Political Rights of Women (31 March 1953) | 5 October 1998 |
| 14 | Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages (10 December 1962) | 5 October 1998 |
| 15 | Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (10 December 1984). Bangladesh is yet to ratify to optional protocols including Article 22, allowing for individual complaints procedure | 5 October 1998 |
| 16 | International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (18December 1990) | 7 October 1998 |
| 17 | International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (16 December 1966) Bangladesh is yet to ratify two follow up Optional Protocols to ICCPR on the abolition of the death penalty. | 6 September 2000 |
| 18 | Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict (CRC-OP-AC) and Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children child prostitution and child pornography (CRC-OP-SC). | 6 September 2000 |
| 19 | Optional Protocol of the Convention on the Elimination of All | 06 September |

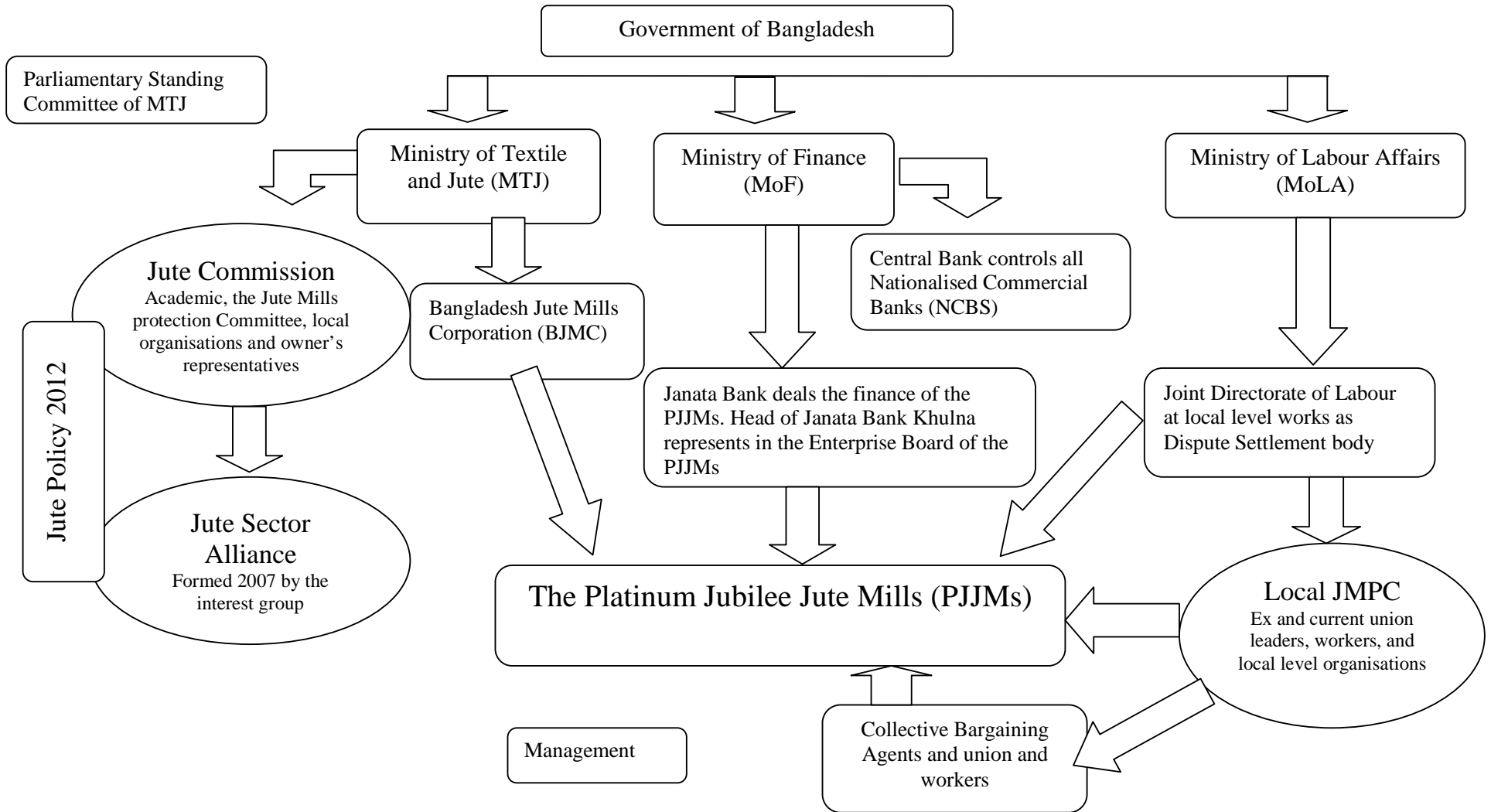
| | Forums of Discrimination against Women | 2000 |
|----|--|---------------------|
| 20 | ILO Convention on the Worst Forms of Child Labour (No. 182); | 12 March 2001 |
| 21 | United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCC)* | 27 February 2007 |
| 22 | The Right To Information Act, 2009** | 29 May 2009 |
| 23 | International Convention Against Apartheid in Sports (10 December 1985) | |
| 24 | Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (28 July 1951) | |
| 25 | International Criminal Court (ICC) | |

Source: Common Country Assessment Bangladesh (2005, pp.78-79).

* www.ti-bangladesh.org/UNCAC-IACD07.pdf,

** <http://www.bdpressinform.org/>

Appendix B: Institutions currently involved in looking after the mills: Combined policy implementing and policy influencing factions



Appendix C: Circulars and others from 1972-2010

- Presidential Order 27
- Complete liquidation of BJMC— concerning issues of JSAC. For example circulars regarding Set-up, voluntary retirement service, golden handshakes (Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation)
 - Reduction of excess capacity of state owned jute mills, loom capacity and closed down
 - Privatization and leasing
- Recruitment of workers, and *badli* workers
- Labour implications: wage fixation, retrenchment, managing redundancy,
- Disposal: Rules for disposing, conditions for tender and bidding, tendering process and disbursement policy
- Displacement of machinery
- Finance: restructuring debt, loss financing, access to working capital
- Training for the workers
- Procurement of raw jute

Appendix D: The Life world of the community of the Platinum Mills



Entrance of the Platinum Mills

The Platinum Mills



8 November 2010: The CBA Election

The Platinum Mills



The Labour & Welfare Office



The Administrative Office

The Colony and Kacha houses: Mills' provided housing facility



***Badli* and female workers' living place and household members**

The South Asia Social Forum



Participatory learning workshop rights centric restructuring and management



Participation of the Jute Protection Committee



Appendix E: List of actors' interviews and FGDs

| A Local level | Categories and actors | Interviews |
|----------------------------|--|-------------------|
| A1: Mill level actors | Senior Managers | |
| | The General Manager or Project Head | 1 |
| | Head of Jute | 2 |
| | Head of Security | 3 |
| | Head of Production Mill 1 | 4 |
| | Head of Production Mill #2 | 5 |
| | Head of Engineering Section | 6 |
| | Mills' appointed Doctor | 7 |
| | Head of Finance | 8 |
| | Head of Export | 9 |
| | Head Master of the school of the Platinum Mills | 10 |
| | Service Boro Babu | 11 |
| | Head of Wages Section | 12 |
| | The Assistant Secretary | 13 |
| | The ex-president of CBA (2008-2010) | 14 |
| | Leader of Ad-hoc Committee | 15 |
| | Leader of <i>badli</i> workers | 16 |
| | Female Leader Pakhi and Rani | 17 |
| | Female Leader Anwara | 18 |
| | Female permanent worker | 19 |
| | Permanent worker | 20 |
| | Household member of Bihari worker | 21 |
| A2 :Members of JMPC | The Vice President of the workers front of the current ruling party/ ex-union leader of the Platinum Jubilee Jute Mills | 22 |
| | President of the Workers' Federation of the Workers' Party of Bangladesh/ex-union leader of the Platinum Jubilee Jute Mills | 23 |
| | Ward Commissioner of Khalishpur | 24 |
| | President of the Youth Forum of the Workers' Party of Bangladesh and the Convener of the <i>badli</i> workers of private, privatised mills and government mills. | 25 |
| | Representative of Rupayan | 26 |
| | Retired Manager of the Mill | 27 |
| | Local woman activist | 28 |
| A3: Related actors | Mayor | 29 |
| | General manager of Janata Bank | 30 |
| | Director : Joint Directorate of Labour | 31 |
| | Factory Inspector | 32 |
| | Representative of Jute Directorate | 33 |
| | Journalists | 34 |
| B Central Level | Supervisory, execution and policy formulation bodies | |
| B1 BJMC | Chairman of BJMC | 35 |
| | Director Marketing | 36 |
| | Director Research and Quality Control | 37 |
| | Controller of Audit and Finance | 38 |

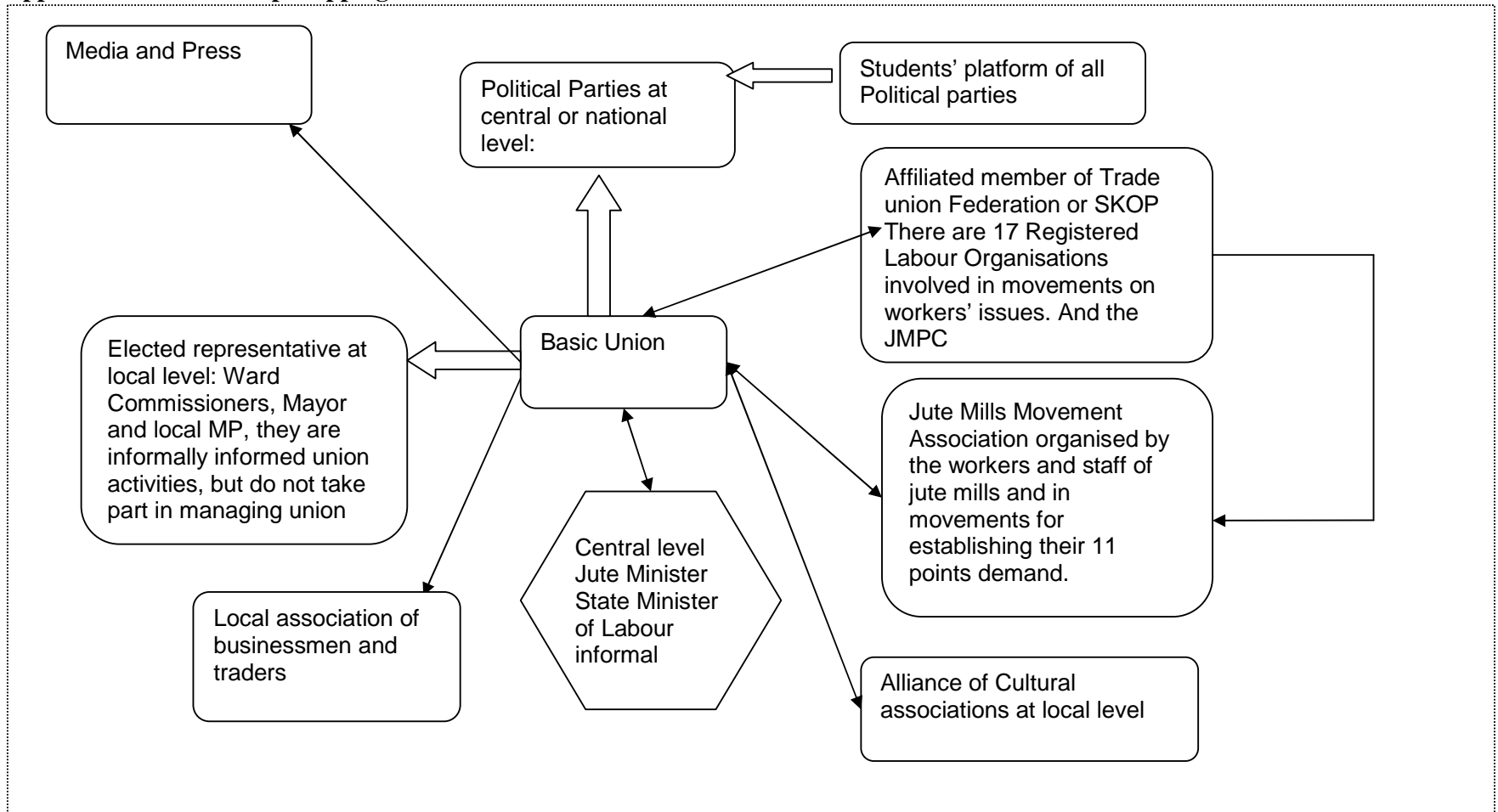
| | | |
|----|---|----|
| | Planning Director | 39 |
| B1 | Ministry of Jute | |
| | Secretary | 40 |
| | Joint Secretary | 41 |
| B2 | Elected policy actors | |
| | Local Member of Parliament and State Minister of Labour | 42 |
| | Minister of Finance | 43 |
| | The Chairman of the Standing Committee of the Parliament on the Ministry of Textile and Jute | 44 |
| | Chairman Privatisation Commission | 45 |
| | Ex Member of Parliament of the locality | 46 |
| B3 | Members of civil society: Alliance members selected as members of Jute Commission | |
| | President of the Alliance and the Commission | 47 |
| | The member of Trade Union Centre (TUC) of the Communist Party of Bangladesh representing the JMPC. | 48 |
| | The Member Secretary of the Alliance, representative of Integrated and Community Development in Bangladesh (INCIDIN Bangladesh) | 49 |

Focus Group Discussion

| Categories and actors | FGDs |
|---|------|
| Elected members of the CBA | 1 |
| Permanent workers | 2 |
| Permanent workers | 3 |
| Permanent workers | 4 |
| Permanent workers | 5 |
| Permanent workers | 6 |
| Permanent workers | 7 |
| Permanent workers | 8 |
| Permanent workers | 9 |
| Permanent workers | 10 |
| Permanent Workers | 11 |
| Permanent female Workers | 12 |
| Re-appointed permanent female Workers | 13 |
| Permanent and badli female workers | 14 |
| Permanent and badli female workers | 15 |
| Jamadars female non clerical staff : Schedule caste Hindu community | 16 |
| Badli female workers | 17 |
| Bihari workers | 18 |
| Badli workers | 19 |
| Badli workers | 20 |

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Badli workers | 21 |
| Badli workers: Handling section | 22 |
| Household members of badli workers | 23 |
| Household members Bihari | 24 |
| House hold members permanent workers | 25 |
| Household members Hindu workers | 26 |
| Non clerical staff: ML SS | 27 |
| Non clerical staff : Orderly and Staff | 28 |
| Non clerical staff: Cleaners or Jamadars Schedule caste Hindu community | 29 |
| Clerical staff : Upper Dealing Assistants | 30 |
| Security guards | 31 |
| Junior officers | 32 |
| Total | 33 |
| Discussions in Cha –pan stalls, shops selling vouchers for cell phones | |

Appendix F: Relationship mapping Union of the Platinum Mills



Appendix G

‘Workers’ demand equitable inclusion in Management of State Owned Jute Mills

Staff Report the Daily *Prothom Alo*, 20th November 2011

Leaders of the SOJMs have made management responsible for the loss in State Owned Jute Mills (SOJMs) of the country. Quoting from a research work conducted during the last caretaker regime, they said, the workers are responsible for only 1.7% of loss, while the management bodies are responsible for 98% of the loss incurred by the jute mills.

In this context the former trade union leader of the Peoples’ Jute Mills demanded workers ‘inclusion and participation in the management which they mentioned would make the jute mills more economically viable as the workers would engage themselves into work, consider the mills of their own.

Demands of the workers came out in a Seminar organized at Education and Research Department of the University of Dhaka yesterday as a part of the 5 day long South Asia Social Forum.

Khaled Hossian, the General Secretary of the Jute and Jute Sector Protection Committee addressed at the seminar emphasized the importance of the sector for the country as 150 million people are involved with it that includes the cultivators and the manufacturers too. He said that government goodwill is required to run the SOJMs. He criticized the heinous propaganda that government and non-government agencies have been conducting for decades that due to the workers’ alleged corruption and inertia for more performance jute mills have been incurring loss. He further added that workers would not accept the move, which is being emerged and discussed to bring the jute mills under the purview of public private partnership.

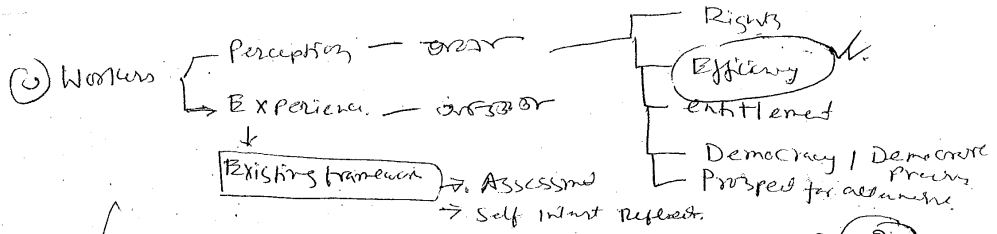
The former President of Peoples’ Jute Mills and the trade union leader Mr Faridul Haque commented “*the Jute sector received 35% subsidy soon after the country’s independence but it gradually reduced to a 5% by 2007. However, the current government has increased the subsidy by 15%*”.

Workers' leader of Khalsihpur Jute Mills Abdul Majid further added 'jute mills cannot be a loss making concern if the person related to both workers and management take decisions after a joint consultation'. He called for ensuring unhindered supply of electricity, and procurement of raw materials during the season.

Fahreen Alamgir has been conducting a research on rights-centric industrial restructuring in case of SOJMs of Bangladesh in RMIT University of Australia. Presenting the findings of the study Fahreen said, "*People think the ownership of the mills has to be rested with the government. However there should be a scope of equitable and equal participation of the workers in managing mill, in particular the workers demand their active and informed participation in procurement of raw jute and replacement of machinery*". Fahreen also recommended based on the study that mills should be an independent entity and finically autonomous.

AKM Masud Ali - the moderator of the Seminar and the Executive Director of INCIDIN Bangladesh concluded the session saying that workers' require political consciousness for implementing the rights-centric management. According to him : *When the policy of the state is not a part of its philosophy then there will be trend of changing in policy when there is a change in the government and that has happened in case of our jute sector.*

Appendix H: The Questionnaire in Bangla and the sample Interviews and FGDs



- ১। আজ থেকে পাঁচ/দশ বছর পর এই মিলের ব্যবস্থাপনা পদ্ধতি কেমন দেখতে আপনি আগ্রহী।
- ২। এই আকাজিত ব্যবস্থাপনাকে কার্যকরী করতে চাইলে মিল পর্যায়ে এবং রাষ্ট্রীয় পর্যায়ে কি ধরনের তাৎপর্যপূর্ণ পরিবর্তন প্রয়োজন।
- ৩। এই পরিবর্তন বাস্তবায়নের জন্য কি ধরনের উদ্যোগ নেয়া দরকার এবং বিবেচনার বিষয়গুলো কি কি হতে পারে।
- ৪। কারা সত্যিকার অর্থে এই পরিবর্তনের পদক্ষেপ নিতে পারেন।
- ৫। বর্তমান প্রচলিত ব্যবস্থাপনা পদ্ধতি এবং আপনার কাজিত ব্যবস্থাপনা পদ্ধতির মধ্যে পার্থক্য আছে কি? থাকলে কোন কোন ক্ষেত্রে এই পার্থক্যগুলো চিহ্নিত করা যায়। এই পার্থক্যের কারণ হিসাবে আপনি কোন বিষয়গুলো চিহ্নিত করেন? এর মধ্যে কোন গুলোকে আপনি কার্যকরী ভূমিকা রাখতে সাহায্য করবে বলে মনে করেন? কোনগুলো সীমাবদ্ধতা হিসাবে মনে করেন।

Personal need / demand

- Management Legal rule
- Management goal
- Practical Rule and goal

Mgt goal or Personal goal > কোন বিধি মত বা চাহিদা

Trade Union , FGD#1

I have been working here since 1969 and some of us from 1985. We all have specific work place in the mills. In order to be involved with the Union activities we need to be involved with the mills as a worker or staff according to the New Labour Law of the country that has been in practice since 2006. Therefore any outsider we mean anyone outside the mills cannot involve with the trade union politics- so as long as you are in service.

Mostly we all work in workshop and engineering sections but the Assistant general Secretary works as tally clerk.

Our whole working mode can be perceived from two aspects one as a worker of the mills and other as representative of the workers or as a CBA member. You are talking to us as because we represent workers we will discuss our role and responsibilities as CBA members.

As we are a part of management and we try to maintain the production level. We work through dialogue with the management. Work as a CBA member is totally different. PJJ Union is a union for workers and staff in a short way PLATINUM Employees Union. We consider our works are ensuring workers' rights according to the labour laws provided and accepted by the government, monitoring application of labour laws in the mills, and resisting and protesting against any types of discriminations against the workers' rights particularly illegal and inhuman deeds and finally protecting workers' rights. Finally our objective is to protect and ensures the sustainability of the institutions.

To us workers' rights and our responsibility means once the government announces the new wage scales for the workers our duty is to supervise if that announced wages are being distributed without any distortions and discrepancies in case of payments. It also includes the issue of provident fund and gratuity. Like all these mills had been in lay off and there were huge dues that had to be paid to the workers. Now most those dues have been paid but we had to watch the mode of distribution so there would be discrepancy in practices and in the process we are more vigilant in case of paying back of the PF fund and gratuity. We need to be vigilant and voice our issue to the government about in which sectors they need to finance just now as well as remain vigilant about the flow of money and about its spending pattern.

However when the current government has come into the power we did not have to initiate any sort of activities for ensuring our entitlement or Dabi dawa deyar dorkar hoi nai. During the regime of consecutive previous governments we did broom procession, procession wearing Kafon (specific dress codes a dress out two peaces of cloth. The dead body is wrap by these two peaces of cloth before it is buried) and Khora procession (Khora: plate made of clay by which people usually have rice). Believe us Apa (sister) we even pulled out Kachu (English) and started our procession. We did against Khaleda Zia or during her era because her Finance Minister described it as a Dustbin. We begged along with our children through standing at the road side or at the corner of the street. Generally we organsied all those processions or movement when our wages had been due for 24 to 26 weeks and staff had not been paid off salary for $\frac{3}{4}$ months, when the workers spent their days after days in starvation. They appealed to the government, they had only one

demand that: first they required that workplace so they needed to remain to be employed – his/her workplace and also for the payment of dues or arrears.

Now the current government is financing all state owned mills. Whatever we consider as our entitlements we are receiving it in due times. We don't need to ask for it. We don't get any opportunities for doing procession, meeting or rally ☺. They are all so supportive The Prime Minister, The Minister of Textile and The Chairman of BJMC.

What they did they reduced the size of the mills or downsized through reducing the loom numbers like they just stopped functioning of 100 machines out of 500 hundred machines and then downsized or stopped running of 100 looms once, anyway they did all these types of downsizing for years. Through such initiatives or process they have reduced the size of the mills. Besides we have a set up and they also have also downsized that setup, and one fine day they announced lay off and then closing down of the whole mills. That is the process. In this process once they reduced its size they started retrenchment drastically or rigorously terminating people and lay off . I had been laid off for 18 months. Through these they reduced the number of workers. Then the Caretaker government restarted operation but did not finance. There was another issue we never had jute stored no part or the part of machinery no supply of ingredients. So at one point of time during that regime we started protest and they instantly announced lay off. Workers became scattered some of them went back home. This was the time when we the workers worked as daily wage farmers in the rural areas, as a rickshaw pullers, we looked for and worked in various professions. We just want to live so we accepted and tried every profession. Whatever the workers used to possess they sold it jewelry, watches, blankets. Now the current government has paid back all arrears and now we are working.

Our main problem used to be or still is purchasing raw jute during the buying season and getting finance from the bank at the right moment. Like we have to pay 25% interest to it I mean we have to pay back 4 bar not understandable. Now the current government has totally cancelled the interest payments as well as the government has put an hold or froze the loan amount too. And then they have assured us through paying back our money of the Provident Fund . Previously the company had to draw money from that accumulated fund. So the provident fund became totally nil. Now the current Jute Minister has promised that the government is going to provide 200 cr taka to BJMC only for financing all accrued payment in terms of PF and gratuity So that provident fund will reactivate again and we can draw loan or borrow out of that fund. So the bottom line is we faced many crisis and had been through crisis period for years. Now the current government has provided us many facilities , now the only issue that is left is new wage scale . But we have already got Wage Commission and our leader Motaheruddin is the member of that Commission. Now there is no due payment all has been paid. What we have done or we do we have duly distributed all arrears and back payment starting from paying back wages, retirement benefits that is paying PF and gratuity to the retired workers. Before all those money provided through BJMC to the mills, mills spent it for its current purpose, people who took retirement in 1999 they had not been paid off and those people now have received their money. We have almost finished paying back retirement benefit to the retired workers ...almost we have cleared dues up to 2007. If there is no union in the jute mills it is impossible to run the mills. I don't know whether any enterprises exist without union. In Platinum we have got employees union. We don't know about other enterprises but for the jute mills having an effective Union is a

precondition. We work for ensuring rights of both the permanent workers and badli-workers .

According to the constitution of the country workers have some designated rights which can be said as their basic entitlements and state is obligated to fulfill those entitlements – we work for that. At the end our dharma (purpose of life) and karma is same working for and ensuring workers’ rights.

We the CBA members have a question to the BJMC and to the government that we have got set up and the money we have received from the government that needs to be utilized for running the mills. And out of that money what I will receive through selling output we have to give 20% to the government. This 20% may be given back to the mills but we have to pay it to the treasury as a reassurance that ok we are performing and that is our contribution towards the state.

Now my capacity is I mean mills was encapsulated to produce 72 ton daily but now it can produce 60 to 62 ton per day. But for producing 72 ton per day we need reinitiating that full setup which has the capacity to produce 72 ton each day. But we haven’t received that full-setup while BJMC keeps recruiting people at officers and managers level but their salary has to be and will be paid out of this production. Through producing 61 ton mills faces challenges to maintain its current workers now they are sending all new officers . They have basic like 25 thousands taka. So we are producing unit and our responsibility lies in meeting the target production but we are deprived of having or enjoying any extra facilities. Recruiting officers and managers we consider this initiative as a burden for us. Where there is a Deputy Manager already in that section now the administration has appointed and sent a new DGM his basic salary is 25800 taka and a new Security Officer has also been appointed. His basic salary is 25000 taka. How we will take and carry such load on us. Monthly we have to earn 55 to 60 thousands and yearly 7 /8 hundred thousands in order to pay their salary. So if this remains as a trend certainly the scope of possibility will be narrowed and we will face obstacles. Now at the current context mills is still incurring loss in order to meet the requirement of paying salary to those unnecessarily appointed managers and officers.

Yes there are a large number of Badli workers have been recruited but all machines are not functioning. That is the cause we are asking for establishing that full setup. While the mills are running under capacity has to earn or realize its functioning for paying off those officers and managers recruited badli workers are just remain idle. All machines are not functioning or there is no initiative for operating all those machines.

Role is wage commission we have our representative there. Sardar Motaher Uddine , Ray Romesh they are representing. There are three members from the workers’ side, usually it is consisted by bureaucrats. You know Bashar schedule, Mannan schedule they were all central level leaders So they discuss and decide the minimum wage level. Minimum wage implies the lowest amount of wages that is required for ensuring the living of a person. And it has been decided through examining and reviewing the market price of necessary commodities. Now 40 taka is per Kilo rice and oil requires 100 taka per liter. How many KGs of rice a workers’ family requires it was the process before. Now the government reviews the lowest amount of salary of a staff and the lowest amount wages of workers, comparing and reviewing all those they calculate and decide the wages scale, they just add 400 taka and upgrade the scale, they don’t want to extend their tasks. But it should be

decided through reviewing the market price of necessity commodities. We want the lowest wage scale has to be decided be considering how much a family consists of five members require for maintaining that family. Thus the package of wages needs to be determined previously (who knows when) it used to be decided by the buying capability of 3 Mon rice per month by a family. Besides that what requires to have 3 mon rice all had to be added like lentils, oils , salts and others. In addition there is an issue of medical treatment doctor's visit and cost of medicine it should include too. Mills provide some of these facilities and thus the whole package of wages is usually calculated like medical benefit, transport cost, a fee for technical skill, fee for working at night and basic wages. We don't get any kind of support or facilities for children education. Yes they can study in Mills School up to class ten without and that education is free of cost. But we have to buy books additional books that are not provided by the Education Board as well as school does not also provide the uniform which is a necessity item for attending school particularly for the very poor families of the workers. While in government schools they get free books and there is a provision of allowance for the students or provision of refreshments.

In case of medical benefit we have doctor appointed by the Mills and he gives the prescription, we have to buy the medicine. But the medicine has to be provided by the mills. Necessary medicine used to be distributed from the medical unit of the mills before but has been stopped during the regime of Ershad. We should again initiate that process.

Apart from all when a person comes for a work we mean the workers they also require a living place. These mills have been established 50 to 60 years ago. Colonies or living places that were constructed soon after the establishment of the mills are now in abandoned conditions and announced as abandoned buildings (Paritakto) and the authority provided notice to the workers to leave those buildings. But still they are living there. If you don't see by yourself you it is like staying under the tree. Previously the cost of electricity and its maintaining cost used to be the Mills' responsibility, now we are paying for all those facilities. Like mills deduct the housing cost from my salary not draws the money from the Companies' own accounts. In the past there was trend based on complain and submitted report the Authority /company used to undertake refurbishment of the buildings and quarters. Now presently we don't get any facilities such as electricity, water and yearly refurbishment or restoration. Sometimes we wonder that the roof top may fall upon us and there is no grill in case of most of the windows of those buildings. But our question is we can put this item into the yearly budget we can reach at a point that next year budget has considered the maintaining costs of these buildings. So in one year we can go for restoring and refurbishing old constructions and structures the next year we can have a budget for constructing new building. Thus we can conclude that the process has been initiated. But there is no such item in the budget, Mills do not have the right to put such item as budget according to the provided framework of submitting budget by the Mills to BJMC by the BJMC. But it used to be the practice before.

Those issues need to be included in terms of calculating our lowest wage scale and it requires our participation in the discussion. Whatever you say TU/CBA as a part of the management or as a representative body of the workers upholding the interest of the workers and the mills whatever if we combine interests and concerns of all those issues are discussed and are being discussed. But there is no action in reality; these issues have never been realized. All are just discussed issues and their significance ended on the table (2times by the President). We have regular discussions with the management. We send letter to the GM if you think that we require a discussion with him.

For an example soon after the election we had an introductory meeting with the management and in that meeting on the very first day we raised the issue of restoring, refurbishing of all those quarters. We told them we want a secured life. Now we are living with tensions.

Budget is done by the management. But we are not discussed. Yes as a part of management our opinion should be taken into consideration. For an example Mukul Talikdar he used to be the GM once of these Mills and brother of the former disaster Minister, he returned hundred thousands of taka to BJMC but did not take initiative for repairing or refurbishing all those buildings. We raised questions and asked him, 'why did you do it? In order to be promoted, you returned that money; it is a credit shows your performance as an efficient GM. It was a trend and happened numerous times in the past. You don't have any idea about it.

We never look into records and files of the top level. They tell us like, 'yes, we had asked these five items from the BJMC but they did not approve it.'" Besides, our period of tenure is limited only for two years even if gets approved or if we want to raise all those issues in reality those issues are kept at noise level – like yes , ok we are initiating a process... but time passes away.

There is huge possibility and we are looking into it positively. The current situation, context and the election manifesto and elections promises of the current ruling party are the basis of our hope that ensures the sustainability of the mills. However, this current government or the ruling party will be in power for the next three years. We can see only these three years and you are confident that within these three years mills definitely will reach a more promising position.

Now question is when there will be change in the government we mean change in terms of the ruling party? That we can't predict now. Why as a part of the management, CBA-we are performing our role and WITH 100% commitment and we will do it. But the issue is or the primacy if the government's willingness. The current ruling party is willing to bring changes in this sector and has expressed its inclinations through providing proper/adequate funding. That is the major cause of reaching such a position of possibility. You don't need to talk to CBA just ask any general workers s/he will provide you the same response that mills are now performing very good. In the past, during the regime of Khaleda Zia and care taker regime the production level was 7 ton, now our production level almost 63-65 ton. After the vacation of Eid it reduces to 63 ton , basically mills are producing 65 ton. Now you think the level of production 7 ton and current level of production 65 ton. What are the causes behind such consequences certainly the ruling party's willingness and shows the CBA's commitment toward the management. We are confident that if this ruling party remains in power more than 10 to 15 years then this institutions will more prosperous. We would like to see that , would like to take this institutions to that level.

But when the government changes we cannot predict that context what will happen to this sector, how that government will run these mills? The BNP as a ruling party has proved that running mills is its mandate. We suffer always during the regime of BNP believe us. We the workers always suffer during ist regime. You know, when during BNP's regime we had our Eid Jamat on the street with the Khora and this year we had our Eid Jamat on our premises, field that blogs to the colonies and to the school of the Mills. We performed

Qurabani we had that ability of financing buying buffaloes and performed that ritual. So we are optimistic that the upcoming next three years we will be in peace the way we are now and the mills will also remaining functioning as it is now.

Based on our general sense we understand that we have a regular budget. We mean that the government has a regular budget item under the budget head of the industrial sector. So there is a provision of purchasing raw jute as a budget item. That amount of money needs to be circulated timely. But it usually is provided after the season and the owners of the private mills they could buy during the buying season, where as we had to buy after the season at higher price like 2400- 2600 taka per mon. Fixation of purchase price is an obstacle. The current government did not follow that policy. So we have stored raw jute and we could buy that jute at prevailing market rate. That is one of the pre-condition that can take the mills to our desired functioning level or profitable level. The President- Mills is making profit now (content and satisfaction in his voice)

We need funding for purchasing raw jute because BJMC deducts money from our earnings. We have already told you- these mills area or zone it is conceived and has been conceived as a space created and has its demarcation through boundaries that indicate that some people live here. Some the lower class people of the society they live Gondibodhdho an isolated community life here- and that had been the objective of establishing these mills and colonies here. Government used to provide subsidy even during the regime of the British government in order to remain it functioning. Later we see during the British regime 2 mills were established out of the earning of the previous established one. They could construct and constructed 5 go down out of the output of or surplus of the one mill. Now if we want to reach that position we need government financing and may be government needs to provide subsidy too. Once this sector had received 35% subsidy and that was also one of the cause of its sustainability. Now under the BNP regime after imposing the New Labour Law 2006 the amount of subsidy was provided to this sector. It has to be done for the workers class community of the country. If we really want and expect that sustainability of this sector and such initiatives will definitely bring positive impact for the society such as – there will be an opportunity of employment in this sector so the amount of street violence, incidents of extortions will be reduced. That these people will remain here and as a government it is our responsibility to look after the sector, people working here- it is process of emplying people source of employment. Overall it is an issue of consciousness and requires an extensive planning. The current government has already showed their performance and inclinations but if any ruling party comes into the power and flows the policy of the last ruling party then it is impossible ...

Now suppose the GM does not have the authority to sell the finished goods of 5 million taka. Sales and export are entirely s BJMC's authority and responsibility. During BNP's regime our final and finished products that got value like not less than 26 thousands cr taka got totally stuck by the authority of BJMC, we mean BJMC had stopped processing sales and drove the mills condition towards a loss making concern. They sell our products and out of that money they finance loss of other mills. Mills have two types of selling- local sales and central sales. In case of central sales money comes through selling centrally is saved in their accounts because central sales is conducted by the government we mean by BJMC. So we assume that government or state keeps that fund in their accounts but there is a policy requirement that the entire sales money has to be returned to us when we need that money. What is practice or prevailing practice my money like 26 thounsads cr taka that we acquired through selling our finished products is going to financing deficits of

other mills. So you see my hand my functioning hands get stopped or faces obstacle. We don't get anything from that output. Such as when I need money I don't get money so I cannot be able to purchase raw jute during the buying season , my workers and staff remain unpaid and instantly my mills starts facing challenges and going to collapse. For an example , ' I have got two sets of clothes , I wear one set and keeps the other one for the next day. Now if my wife gives it to someone then if my one set gets dirty tehn what I will wear . I have to wear gamcha /towel'. Now BJMC as the authority keeps our money and finances other mills deficit and our mills is now wearing towel like me.

Money come from local sales remains here but it is limited amount. What we intend to imply that our money should be given back to us immediately after the sales. Once we know our capacity we can draw our plan like the way we manage our household. We know the source and total income so we can plan our expenditure and then we can plan what I am going to do this year, next year or after 3 years. As a part of the management we CBA and management can coordinate and set our plan- we can prioritize our tasks , budgets heads according to that priority and can also review the process and find out gaps in our planning and in tasks. Now when our money is in other peoples' custody again there is no possibility of acquiring this money in time of need then all planning and effort become futile, go into vain.

Drawing plan is easy, we can do it with the management as we already have told you but plan remains as plan on the planning table if we don't have ...It is agrrebale that all mills belong to BJMC and BJMC has the right to keep money it earns through seliing centrally (Secretary) but if another mills incur loss then then money we have earned that goes for financing that loss it is unbearable – in other way round our mills are going to be destined to collapse. For an example, in the past our money used for financing AJM. We provided 18 cr taka in the past for deficit financing of AJM but we haven't got it back. BJMC told us and keep telling all other mills all mills constitute my family. One small issue that is the prime issue that if only if we could buy raw jute during the buying season we can earn profit. Let us clarify it- if purchasing is not profitable how we can earn profit through selling. What does it imply – I will buy jute during the buying season, why at that time purchase price is low, and strength of jute also remains good. But what we see the owners or shippers they buy thousands of mon jute. But they do not store this jute properly. And we all BJMC mills we are in such a situation, that we don't have time to see the quality of raw jute at that time. I have to buy and meet the production target I am buying the same product now which was 10 taka oer kilo now I am buying paying that shippers 15 taka per kilo, moreover the quality of that jute is not upyo the mark, That is the reason why the Mr secretary told you that if mills cannot incur profit by purchasing wjow it can earn profit through selling. So if we get our money back timely and can buy raw jute or store our go down during the season then we can run the mills properly. This year now the per mon jute is sold at 2000 to 2400 taka and we bought per kg jute by paying 1500-1600 taka; I don't have run the mills. Only through selling raw jute now I can earn more and pay salary wages for our workers. Now we do not have any accrued payment, no dues only purchasing raw jute and meeting the production target. The government has already Most of those previous problems have been solved. Now if we purchased say by 10 taka when the price of raw jute is 15 taka per kilo, the difference is our profit, now the question manufacturing arises then it make it more profitable. Now if they release our money timely... we already pay BJMC 5% of our each sales proceeds –how it runs then. It is the policy and practice. Now it is normal that we will sell our finished goods. But the rule is entire export or sales have to be conducted by BJMC. There is no scope of doing it by

ourselves. BJMC communicates with the importers or foreign buyers. We don't want to do it – what we require only the cash before the buying season of the raw jute. Managing buyers is entirely BJMC's responsibility we don't want to poke our nose in this issue.

We want our money back BJMC provides money to any mills which is facing deficit, money that we earned through our production (4times). It is BJMC's money no amount all mills are under BJMC but this policy practice is not a good practice. Making up deficits of any mills or other mills by our money and when we require funding then we don't get it timely. It is trend BJMC draws money from the sales fund and gives it to other mills.

No we want mills under the state ownership under the management of BJMC but we want our sales proceeds back to the mills as soon as possible. Yes we want our income and expenditure will be at our disposal. We will be responsible for earning the money and we should be responsible for spending it. Now the only objective is buying raw jute during season and maintaining target production level. Now the only way mills could collapse is if the mills management and CBA execute coordinated vandalism and corruption. Government has Moukuf all dues now... listen those who work as management they remain here 2/3 years, sometimes less than a month. The existence of these mills or its functioning is not that important to them. But for us we will remain here. We have been working here for more than 40 years, we don't have transfer, we do not have promotion. Say the previous GM he bought jute by paying 1500 per ton but showed 3000 taka per ton. The previous Finance Manager, Jute Officer and the GM all three have been dismissed. They had been involved with such money extraction process for more than 3 years and have enhanced their (akher guchano). We have tackled this problem. They bought jute from Dawlatpur but made voucher and showed that the jute was bought from Char Mugria. We called the Minister of Jute and the State Minister Labour Munnujan Sufian directly from our cell phone and lodged that complain. We submitted our report, asked the journalists to take photos and flushed that news in the local newspaper and finally asked BJMC to send the enquiry team for investigation. We could not do anything like this during the regime of BNP.

Besides purchasing raw jute there is another source of extracting money is buying spare parts of the machines. We have participation but that is nominal in case of purchasing raw jute and spare parts. We want our full participation in local procurement. What happens in case of purchasing spare parts suppliers usually import those required items either from Thailand, China or Japan that is the policy. Practice is instead of importing those parts and machinery from those countries they buy it from Gingira or 'made in Gingira product' (local brand) they supply to the mills but put a tag that says made in Japan and asks that rate. Now how long this Nokol machinery will work and last.

We want CBA's participation and meaningful participation in terms of running the mills and it has to be done officially. If only if we can participate in case of purchasing raw jute and procurement of machinery as a member of CBA we can give mandate that we will help the mills in earning its income and there will be no dues and accrued items.

We frequently have discussions with the Jute Minister that the government has once provided the necessary financing for starting everything from zero, it cannot finance for the second time- how many times government will provide the required funding (everybody together with sigh). Now with this money we can run the mills and can earn profit and through this mills can achieve its sustainability. But management and CBA have to play their assigned role.

It implies we require an honest CBA and honest management. CBA can be honest and there is a provision of selecting CBA members by the workers through the election. But the mill management they are not elected, according to the practice they are selected by BJMC. This power solely belongs to BJMC.

Now you see tehya re sending young officers both level as junior officers or senior managers. They don't have any training and they're supposed to teach managing Jute Mills at our expense we mean we have to earn their salary. During Pakistan regime we used to see mills had trained professionals. Now how come a Manager worked in Rural electrification Board can understand a jute mills operation procedure all on a sudden. For an example you –you have come here , spending days in the mills, talking to us and review each issues and every pros and cons of management. Now your understanding about the functioning of mills and mills management and a person worked all along in REB and suddenly has got a job here his/her understanding about the mills management cannot be similar. No practical knowledge...

So mills require expert, skilled honest officers for the effective functioning. How we can increase the level of honesty? If we complain to BJMC about any issues or anybody' role BJMC has to consider that complain and should send an investigation team we need action based on our reported complain.

Now if you once visit the floor you will find 30 new officers have been working. They are all newly recruited. They don't look like officer. Yesterday I (President) entered the mill 31 floor I found one person sitting on a chair and now working. I asked him why you are not going back to your work. He seems very angry, he expressed his anger I also raised my voice. I am the president of PJJ employees Union, officers they also show me respect. Now who the hell is he- That was my attitude? Then I was told that he was newly recruited junior production officer . then I compelled to swearing which I don't want to say in front of you but uttered , ' how these people have been recruited and from where'. Now it is their issue but has to be trained people who will be sent to the mills have to be trained on jute manufacturing. They can a graduate from the National university but has to have knowledge about the manufacturing of jute goods and machinery. If you don't know how to cook how can you expect that your maid will be a good cook. Besides if you don't know how to pill of and make pieces of vegetables you cannot cook good vegetables. So batching is the most important issue. They have to understand how make a good batch what are the requirements of ingredients for having good batch and the proportion of those ingredients. If the proportion of batching is good then there will be good production –no doubt. And then filing of batching it requires proper amount of steam if it gets more steam than the requirement there will be a possibility of being damage of that batch so there is a measure for all ingredients and steam, everything. Suppose I bought a cotton Punjabee , I need to put it into (Mar) and if it is white I need to put into blue shade so it will look more shiny.

Now the machines do not have pin then how can we have good production. That is another issue, yesterday 5 of us entered the floor to supervise. We found 270 looms have been out of order because there was lack of Noli dekhte hobe. So what was the consequence production process was hampered. I called GM, then GM called the Production Manager. We discovered the cause. It is spinning side frame remains out of order because there is a mess inside the mess. Badli workers work mainly in C shift and they don't know how to

keep it clean. They are not trained. So we gave him suggestion that – see if the Headmaster is on leave or left the school, then the school has to run and usually the senior teacher takes the responsibility of an acting Headmaster of the school. You have to make acting head of each section in your night shifts and that acting head should be permanent workers who work in A and B shift. They are bound to be responsible because they are permanent workers. Anyway he has agreed but who listens. He will be soon transferred to other mills, but all of us we will remain here.

Now the President: if mills survive I will survive along with my family. Don't take it otherwise suppose you, you have come for couple of days. And you will leave for me I cannot leave this place I belong here. Existence of these mills determines my existence. During the regime of the caretaker government I had to leave this place because of the search Warrant of the Police, but the offers they remained here, received salary and spent time with their family members. But I went to underground I mean I had to hide. Certainly my feelings and aspiration that I possess for the proper functioning of these mills cannot be equal or comparable with the feeling that an officer possesses for its proper functioning.

Certainly the whole working environment has been improved comparing to the past, we have been working and trying to bring positive changes phases by phases. Yes we admit that still provisions for drinking water and toilet facilities need much more improvement and there should be a canteen for the workers too. In the past we had a canteen and that used to be managed by the management. They used to serve dish like Biriani too. Workers could have asked for refreshment inside the mills, they did not have to go outside for having tea or food during duty hour. Now a person has got the contract of running this canteen. And the workers need to go outside for having something.

We had a loom for carpet weaving. Now it has been transferred to a mill located in Chittagong. We would like to see our future no doubt, we would be happy if this school is transformed into a Polytechnic Institute of Jute technology. But the prime concern is BJMC role. It needs to be proactive we mean we have to use our full capacity, our all looms and machines with the required capacity of human resource, then we can be assured that we can be able to incur profit every month. Yes we are incurring profit now but then it will become a regular phenomenon and then we can bring changes. We can do whatever we would like to do by that surplus. BJMC does not ask us that we have to give hundreds of millions of taka to them. We know how much we gain from sales and thus we can calculate our surplus. We have the cost figure that we can calculate through observing the level of production in each mill. Then we get the information regarding sales from the management or from the marketing department of BJMC. Thus we can figure out how much we earn in this month. We get the monthly account of sales and costs of the goods sold, we mean if we ask then they provide us. Thus we also know how much it costs to produce this item and what is the demand level of that product in the market. But if management takes initiative and provides all these information then the workers will be more motivated to work. There should be a combination of three issues –participation in jute purchase, procurement of machinery and having full information regarding cost of goods sold and about sales proceeds.

It can be transformed into a regular practice and policy. Indeed the sales is conducted by BJMC, even the mills management often does not have idea about the sales of mills products. On the other hand management never keeps its records clear like if the production level is 65 ton they will show production is 62 ton. Then if it declines to 60

then the management adds that surplus ton with it and shows it to BJMC. So the records are not that transparent and clear, now. Union knows the cost of goods sold and it is a practice, we have to know if we have to be union workers. But if management discloses these required information regarding production, cost of production and total sales after three months / one month through a meeting or discussion between union and management then it will be a positive move for the effective functioning management. Then we can now in which item we incur profit and in which item we incur loss. But the items are not produced by our own decision. Usually we produce goods what BJMC wants us to produce based on the demand they accumulated from the international market.

Now we can call Munnujan Sufian directly (2 times) , but if the BNP government comes into power again we will wrap blanket and initiate procession with khora. We don't want to follow this path anymore. Conducting movements and dabi aday is not our profession. We want to live a peaceful life with our children and family normal life and our responsibility is to uphold the working environment and ensuring security and safety for all workers. We don't want those days back.

2 times when Awami League is the ruling party we lead a peaceful life but when the BNP government is in power we are not allowed to lead a normal life. We prayed for Hasina in our Eid Jamat; why not? During this Eid 10 refrigerator and 50 colors television entered into these colonies all have been bought by the workers, general workers. What we did during BNP's regime we had to say Eid Jamat on the street with Khora. Now we ask you to be observant and to look into the party structure of these two political parties. If you see the BNP structure and members, you will find that most of the owners of the private mills belong to that party comparing to Awami League. So, when they come to the power they want that state owned mills should be destroyed and take such measures.

Mills should be the under state ownership. If we want to make changes BJMC has to take initiative. If BJMC takes an initiative and asks the mills management that it is your responsibility to let CBA informed about the cost and sells of the products and you have to have a meeting with CBA every month. Then we can discuss with the workers re our loss and profitable items, total cost and total sales we can give them details and ask them to be cautious about production. If we don't know we cannot communicate anything. If GM takes such initiative then GM will be transferred.

Corruption if there is any complaint lodged and BJMC takes rapid action –there will be no corruption then. So enquiry and monitoring will remain with BJMC. Audit cannot be the compliment of enquiry and monitoring. Thief knows how to make accounts and keeps record, thief knows it. So audit never can identify grand level corruption.

BJMC can take all those initiatives. But BJMC should be under the Ministry. But there are some people in BJMC who are not honest. But some people are expert and honest.

Policies are not formulated through taking our consents. It runs the way it wants, they do not hold any meeting with us. Usually the President and Joint Secretary as a team we go for meeting. We have meeting with the State Minister of Labour,/ with the Minister of Jute

or with BJMC. But whatever we want to state to BJMC we say that through the Minister of Jute.

What we want to say BJMC in its position if distributes our money that we earn through central sales timely; so we can purchase raw jute in due season. If they give us correct planning, correct directions and observe the process how a mills or this sector should run we will return them production. We don't anything we just want a good working environment, spending our days without tension and work. However, we also have experienced loss because of BJMC's lack of expertise (Gafiloti). But BJMC should be under the Ministry. BJMC works under the direction of the Minister of Jute always, so any changes in its structure has to be decided by the government or the Minister.

Mills were privatized for loss we mean they showed loss but on the other hand they did it for their gain. It is obvious number of owners of private mills and entrepreneurs are more in BNP if we compare this number to Awami League.

Secretary- I had meeting with the Minister for 50 times, I have never gone to any college what I have told you based on my experience.

Those who were undertook the government's responsibility they were bureaucrats. Now those who were bureaucrats and took the responsibility of managing mills, they made it a loss making concern. It was indeed a construction because no jute mills can ever or can never run under loss. You see these mills which used to produce 7 ton during the regime of the last consecutive governments now it is producing 63-65 tons. So much obstacles, crisis, lack of so many things required for production, still there are problems that we already discussed we cannot claim that mills is in its blooming positions but last month we have incurred profit. Now we can say and we are proud to say that Jute Mills or this sector is a profit making sector. But those who are capitalists we mean those who were industrialists they thought like take an example of Duranta Jute Mills which had assets that may cost around 100 to 200 cr taka. Even ok we do the valuation correctly it the market price of Duranta Jute Mills assets cannot be less than 50 cr taka Those bureaucrats valued all its assets at 3 cr taka and those industrialists purchased it by 3 cr taka. So what are the consequences a straight loss to the government's treasury, retrenchment of thousands workers, and caused unemployment. As an industrialist I am not honest I had and have connection with the bureaucrats and I am doing tender baji through this I am buying 10 cr assets by 2 paying 2 cr. It is a ploy and such Chokranyo eventually drove the path of drastic privatization.

How they are functioning better than us? See in our mills one worker received daily 160-190 taka and in Akij Jute Mills a workers receives daily 60 to 80 taka, they have more capital comparing to us. Just go and evaluate their performance, whether they are running successfully. Under private ownership mills are not functioning efficiently or effectively, how can we assert that? Review their wage scales and pay scales, the benefit packages they provide to the workers, And compare our situation our pay scale for the executives and officers, wage scales for the workers and then we are bound to accept the wage scale set by the Wage Commission and then compare their earning level and capacity and our earning and capacity of production!

Finally we hope and we optimistic that if the government guides us perfectly what we intend to mean if they do proper planning, give proper guiding, provide working capital timely and finally if their determination of issues are properly constructed, and give us proper supervision and that is if the flow of supply of raw materials and ingredients are there will be no issue of incurring loss anymore.

Yes definitely our movements back in 2007 provided a signal to the current ruling party. They came with a very constructive election manifesto and mandate. It reflects what we wanted from them. They got the message that if they do not run those mills, do not do proper supervision, they would face the same challenges like the previous ruling parties. Certainly such context forced them to give that mandate we mean election mandate that they would run all state owned mills and industries.

That time in 2006-2007, there was nothing; there was no supply of raw material – raw jute, nothing no material for processing the goods, dues of wages, salaries, we could not say that a working environment prevailed that time, no work let alone environment. You know that time 70/80 of our workers have been freed last month. They were arrested because of firing the Police Box, the workers initiated that movement out of hunger, they had been starved days after days, hunger and starvation led them to take such severe actions, we did not plan it and it was not our decision. You know always a spontaneous movement out of hunger takes such a severe shape that sometimes it goes beyond the control of the leaders. We were helpless and that time BDR, Army and Police they conducted Brushfire. They arrested and raid the workers beat them and then threw them in to Jail. People who became free last month it had been 3 years they remained in the jail. Yes they have been freed now in the ear of the current ruling party.

Allied force, you know allied force was constituted by three forces Army, RAB and Police. When Police failed they brought Army as a force and then we faced that Allied force. We faced RAB, forces with different uniforms, some had uniforms like the Police, some had uniforms like the Army and some had uniforms like BDR. I was standing at my veranda and my quarter was on the first floor. When they were just about to push the trigger I slipped away and took a shelter behind a wall. (Torikul Bhai).

Role of TU in the owners' mills or private mills; they just work as agents of the owners. They don't work like us. Their CBA is not as strong as opurs and they do not work for upholding the rights and entitlement of the workers.

Now the way you are working and asking such detailed questions and want to know the situation. I am hopeful and we are all happy and we think you will come here one day and will be appointed as the Secretary of this sector. We pray for you and we will be happy. Listen if you think about the poor, Allah will be happy about you and Allah will do well to you. Please write something that will ensure the mills sustainability. Follow that line in writing report so that overall good can happen to this sector. You can visit these mills 10 times whenever you want and ask us anything whatever you need to know. From these colonies and out of the income of their workers' parents there are many magistrate, secretaries now in the society, but they don't think, they don't care for their families, and parents. They don't come and don't take attempt to see how their parent are living, spending days. With the help of some bamboos thus they manage the roof top not to be collapsed upon them, these people are really poor.

There are many workers in these mills who have been working as Badli workers for more than 20/24 years. Still they haven't been appointed as permanent workers. Since the appointment of permanent workers is usually conducted based on the effective set up, they haven't become permanent workers till now. If the government gives an order then they will be appointed as permanent workers.

Now the discussion with the Public Relations Secretary and another member of CBA

Both of us we worked at least 12 years as Badli workers and then we have been working for 10 years as permanent workers.

There was not and there is no recruitment of workers- there is an English word for this I have forgot. I am the secretary Public Relation of the current Employees' Union of PJJ. I did my masters in Management under the National University. You know this is a government mills, it has got its policy and there are decision makers and policy makers, they prefer and keep the process of recruitment stopped. Of late when they face movements, and they are under the pressure of the workers discontent, movements and resistance then they agree and go for appointing them as permanent workers.

Badli workers receive same wage level according to the wage scale determined by the wage commission. But they are not entitled to enjoy some of the extra benefits such as yearly increment, medical leave and earned leave and finally no retirement benefits. They just receive the wages provided by the Wage Commission and that the initial level of wages set by the board. So now they receive 2450 taka as wage packages for a month. Besides they are allowed to have housing facilities and they receive bonus based on their Hajira (presence) or duty they performed that is if they have Hajira for 90 working days then they will receive half bonus and if they worked for 180 days then they will have full bonus. Now in the mills the number of permanent workers are 3560 and number of Badli workers are 4000, no number of permanent workers are now 3200. But we have vacancies and if we would like to run the mills full-fledged then we require at least 5000 workers, if only if the authority wants to start the full-setup.

Yes we work for the Badli workers and on their demand too. Although they do not have voting power or rights but as I told you earlier we the CBA of state owned mills always work for ensuring the overall rights of the workers of all level. Besides we also look after the working conditions, supply of raw materials over all environments. TU under the private owned mills work for the interest of the owners we have never found that they are working for ensuring the demand and entitlements of their workers. They never take any plan of action for resistance or struggle against any decisions that hampers workers' rights.

Currently in the mills number of badly workers three times more than the number of permanent workers. There has been recruitment of the lay off and terminated workers during the caretaker regime. Now if the government announces the new wage scale then we will work for ensuring it effectively that is our current agenda item. It is our regular duty and work, because having a Wage Commission and new wage scale is a regular task and government has to do it in every five years. This comes under our regular responsibility. Our agenda to the current government is clear – timely flow of cash during the buying season of jute, ensuring proper working environment through timely payment of wages, and for meeting the target production level they should provide us the proper

setup and permanent workers according to that setup. And then provide us our d basic entitlement or rights , medical cost and safe and secured living place.

We just want the regularity in the process of providing us of those stated issues and mills should be under the state ownership. Badly workers will be appointed as permanent workers according to the setup. Now we have already sent papers regarding this issue t to BJMC and Badli workers they also have submitted their charter of demand and also have announced and have gone for plan of action. And we have been assured that by January /February 2011 the government will take some positive measures on this issue. If it not happens then we will for further discussions on this issue of making badly workers permanent as well as announcing new wage scale as soon as possible, we mean making Wage Commission effective. We have our President and Secretary both of them as a team along with the other presidents and secretary of other mills they will go to Dhaka and will have meeting with the Chairman of BJMC. It is regular process, then respectively they held meeting with the Jute Minister or held meeting at ministerial level. Then through discussion they reach consensus and take decision. If the discussion brings positive results then it is good. When the discussions do not go in our /workers' favor then we come back and draw the plan of action for showing our discontent through initiating meeting , procession and others forms of resistance.

You raised one question why government went for privatization?

Now my personal view: After the liberation war Bangabondhu went for nationalization of all mills and industries. But those who were responsible as executives for supervising those mills and industries they did hoodlum. So whenever they faced lack of cash they went for borrowing from the bank and placed either the go down as pledge or sometimes they took measures like closing down or lay off for asking money from the banks. So we have accumulated borrowing with interest. Now what happened in reality after selling finished products we used to egt 75% of that sales proceeds and 25 % used to be deducted by the banks as their interest and installment. With this 75% amount of money we could not manage to purchase raw jute and materials and then to pay our salaries, wages. These were the cause of our bad debt. At one point the banks also took a strong position that they would not give us any loan and then the problem of loss making venture has been initiated. And the government also noticed it that in this sector and in all those mills there was only loss. So government lost its interest in running them as well as when they asked for money from the World Bank they have also imposed some conditions that have to be met such as that government cannot provide financing towards any loss making concerns and those concerns should be handed over to the private owners. Whoever came into the power does not matter either headed by Ershad, Khaleda Zia, former Awami government and lastly by the caretaker government they performed that responsibility, they just handed those loss incurring ventures to the private owners. The government gave us loan and we had those provisions but no loans had been provided by the government without any conditions too. Today I have seen in the daily Newspaper that the year AJM was closed the WB provided 3 thousands cr taka to India for establishing new Jute Mills –stated by the current Jute Minister. He knows and he has that information so he spoke of it. So the WB and the IMF want to close down all mills and industries of our country and transfer those set up to other countries.

The reason is regionalism and there is an issue of lobbying and grouping. And there is an international conspiracy. Because of this conspiracy all our industries are collapsing or

have been collapsed and they have arguments for establishing same mills and industrial set up in another country. For an example if two brother keep quarreling then definitely it gives power to another person to perform the advisory role on them. So if there is no an argument or complications between two of you how I will be dare to close to you and give my advices. Since there were consistent crisis in our mills, payments of wages had been due, there had been consistently conflicts and movements between the workers' and the government and consistently deficit in production level and there had been consistent loss in mills, the government expressed their lack of interest or inertia for taking any measures for mitigating the emerged crisis, so... . The ruling parties of that period had remained busy in occupying and maintaining that occupied chair (godhi), they did not have any plan for running the state owned enterprises. Why only CBA , we are also workers we work under management, we are not that empowered to say whatever we think correct or right, or if we see their failure or their faults in managing the system. Numerous CBA members were terminated in the past. The practice is officers and managers they hold the main power, they can easily transfer 1 hundred thousand taka from one source and they can show that they have spent this amount for another items. CBA or trade union leaders they can only raise voice if anything goes against the workers' rights, or when unlawfully they terminate workers but CBA cannot say anything when they purchase raw jute and procures spare part and machinery. We say what we are entitled to say if there is consistently due wages. But purchase, procurements and sales all belong to the domain of the management; we don't have any role there. The government has to evaluate and provides importance towards the role of TU and CBA members and should take notice what they raise as a list demands and concerned issues that require immediate attention if government wants back this sector and the state owned mills as a profitable concern / of if they want to perceive it as a business ventures.

Yes now we can give a call directly to the cell phone of the Jute Minister or the State Minister of Labour but if the Parliament members are the representatives or directly represent the owners group then how our raised issues could will be taken into account. Same goes with the Standing Committee of the Parliament, who are representing there?

They are the representatives of the owners and they will definitely voice their issues. Owners visit them with briefcases full of money and get things done which uphold their interests. They ask them not to supervise effectively state owned mills, ask them for the fixation of purchase price of raw jute of the BJMCs' mills during the buying season. When the buying season will be over and the market price of jute becomes double then they ask they start discussions with those policy makers and ask them to fix another price now for buying raw jute from them and then they fix that rate higher than the rate fixed and circulated by BJMV to mills for purchasing raw jute. This was the system.

Yes we came to know through the newspaper that the government has formed a Jute Commission to formulate an overall policy for this sector. The government knows how they will run these state owned jute mills they never want our statements or opinions. Our role is limited within the mills premises. Certainly we want that a team consists of 4/5 members of each CBA will of each mills will have a review meeting will discuss in detail what can be done for running the mills efficiently. The meeting can be held zone wise and then based on the findings of that meeting a framework of planning can be formulated. Such meeting will be taken place regularly and should be regular part of the management functions it can be held once in month / every four months- like how much they spend for purchasing the raw jute? Where are they exporting those finished goods? What is the

current challenge? Of course we want workers representation in in everywhere and that is the way we can initiate transparency in the process. Anyway GM or the project head he doesn't even listen to us. If we want say anything he gives us Dhamak he bashes us. It implies we cannot get close to him then how can we raise all issues. There is a play of power and we are dominated by that power.

The other person: in that case I think those who are coordinating and managing the whole country they should be committed and should be honest. All information should be available like Citizen Charter. What are the issues of rights possessed by the workers and the rights of a CBA member, all should be known to all. How to place an issue, who should place it , like a member cannot go directly to the GM and cannot provide him advices. We work as a committee of 25 people and we headed by the president and the secretary as our representatives they can place any issues related to workers' well-being. It can be placed in written form or in the meeting. But there should be a policy about the conduct of placing workers' issues (and code of conduct for the CBA members and management too).

Now based on the discussion with the President and with the Secretary along with the members of management a final decision can be taken on any issues, a planning can be designed and then it can be submitted to BJMC. We do not want to carry the burden of loss and do not want to participate in stealing. We want our sector profitably running. You won't find that any general workers are involved with politics inside the mills. There are workers involved with Awami League, BNP or Jatiya party but all involvements or engagement is outside the mills premises.

Right to have work we consider is the basic workers' rights. We are the citizens of this country and we want state to provide us work, since state has already provided that mandate. Then we want food, clothes and shelter from the state. We want work, state has already provided that, and then now state has to see that whether the appropriate working constitution is prevailing. We want security of our work we need guarantee and regularity of all those elements that constitute our entitlements. We want state will provide us all these as they are now doing it. Now this current government emotionally or in order to prevent any sort of resistance from this sector shows its interest and keeps it functioning and has also provided funding but what will happen after three years. So in order to ensure this flow and give it a proper regular institutional shape we have to have planning, ensured flow of working capital and a proper management structure. We want to live by doing business. So mills management and CBAS members' will sit together and collectively decide what should be the policy for running the mills. Then it will be submitted to BJMC , zone doesn't have any role it only supervises production level. It is true we can only finance an enterprise once but now if management and CBA together distribute that money between them then what will be the end result. So government has to do monitoring. It should review the balance sheet, profit and loss account we mean the earning and expenditure. If there is a loss then there should be a process of accountability and then there should be exemplary punishment.

Yes we have incurred loss but it was the consequence of accumulated causes of 40 years. One was recurring interest on loans and other was political reason, such as president Ershad would come and Open University of Khulna so PJJ had to be closed for the whole day. No production mills had to bear the cost of such events.

Audit team gets managed by the mills management. We need expert and honest people in management and they have to promise before sending here if mills where he is going to be deputed incurs loss he will be accountable for it and if cannot provide any reasonable cause for such loss he will be terminated.

CBA members are managed too. But you know if the management is honest, they don't need to manage CBA members. CBA does not have power to be involved with corruption but when they come to know that this officer or manager does corruption or takes bribe then they first raise that issues and they become involved with by taking their portion out of it. We know the system of our country. People who headed the Anti-Corruption Commission they became involved with corruption later, they were supposed to arrest or put into trail those dishonest politicians and bureaucrats.

Workers representative according to the system are not involved with any monetary issues of the mills, now management has to be responsible and honest. So development at managerial level is the current task.

So we would like to see an honest, expert capable management that can work with the current changes at global level. As a part of the management as CBA member we will support that management in terms of functioning the mills.

I am a workers' representative, I have been elected for two years. This year people gave their verdict for me if 10 of my constituency lose their job, I may not be elected next year. He is the Assistant Secretary last year election I lost my candidacy by one vote and he won. This year both of us contested in different position and both of us won. Of course as workers' representative I will express my opinion and we all want based on discussion and consensus mills should function.

We see ourselves in the management body of these mills. If the government wants to keep workers representative in mills management board they can create that post. Say my issue, I joined as a worker when I just finished high school. Then I have done my masters in Management from the National University. Due to some family reasons I could not leave that place and could not search for job in other sector. If I had that age limit I would have compete for the managerial post or officers' level position and could place myself at the management level. I have that expertise, knowledge that has been blended with my experience of working at real factory level. I think in mills more capable candidate are there to represent in the mills management among the workers, they are more capable than me. If they can take part in mills management , we can give assurance that mills will run more efficiently.

We had a cooperative but it has been closed. We could buy daily necessities from that cooperative at cheaper rate. But that Coops did not have the facility of providing us loan , the Crescent Jute Mills has got such functioning workers' Cooperative.

No we do not want to run the mills as a cooperative. Such mode is a way of transferring the responsibility of incurring loss and profit straight way upon us. We do not want to take that responsibility. Then they would say since the mills are functioning under the workers' authority, it incurred loss and then there would be a cause for not upgrading the wage scale because of incurring loss and because it had been under the workers' management.

If it is under BJMC but functions by us then I will have to take the responsibility of sales finished goods to foreign buyers or countries such as China, Japan, Nigeria, Iraq, Iran. But it has been observed that because of the foreign policy of the ruling party whoever comes into power we usually destroy our relationship with that country so there are evidences because of that we lost our market. While I am losing my market because of the current foreign policy of the government but through giving it a shape of cooperative we have already made me the owners of these mills. but I cannot take the responsibility or consequence of your stand point towards that country.

This will happen. The previous Hasina government had handed over dew mills under the workers' ownership but they could not show any performance. Sales and purchase remained with the bureaucrats or with the management so those mills could not survive. If I become a owner I will be an owner how can I work as workers' representative then I will see only owners' interest.

No we do not want workers' ownership we prefer state mode of ownership and but our participation. We know under workers' mode of ownership we will not get full support of the government they will impose the responsibility of profit and loss upon us and the government will become less responsible. I cannot sell jute because of the government's policy, cannot provide wages to my workers. The mode of management of the government changes depends on who comes into the power. Different ruling party has its own mode of policy of running the system and the state owned mills. But the owners can adapt and take various strategies. They give 80 taka wages daily and then they appoint their own representative for selling in different foreign countries. They buy jute by 2000 taka per mon but they show cost of purchase 4000 taka. So apparently it seems their mills are incurring loss. Through those figures they suppress the voice of their workers and employees, while we are showing the exact cost of purchase of all raw materials. Through taking such strategy they are exploiting the cheapest asset of our country that is human resource if you can work in this payment then work or you can leave the place. But they can appoint their representative by paying more who can communicate with those buyers, they can provide those representatives any kind of facilities which we cannot provide to our appointed representative. We cannot go that far what they can do ... hope you understand our limitations.

Second phase discussion 15 January 2011

These people have just come here; they need time to learn how to work in jute mills. Now they have new recruitment advertisement it came out on November 13, in response to their last advertisement BJMC received 18 hundred thousand application and asked for 300 /200 taka as a money order as bank draft to be attached with the application for processing up those application forms and then they have cancelled it. Now this advertisement of recruitment that starts from recruitment of General Manager, Deputy General Manager, Manager to MLSS, I there is a possibility that advertisement is going to be abandoned. I assume that possibility, recruitment at mills level like recruiting mills staff, employees, junior officers, and drivers should be rested with the mills. It should be mills' responsibility; otherwise the word 'local' or 'local level' does not hold any meaning. It used to be conducted locally before now in order to recruit their own people, people who belong to their party they are depriving local administration for conducting such responsibility. It was not the trend before. Yes recruitment was stopped for many years but there were some sporadic recruitment when Mr Mosharraf was the Chairman of BJMC- I think Mr Manik and Asad they have been recruited that time. Yes that was 1996, we

observed last recruitment. Now mills do not have the empowerment of recruiting driver, staff let alone junior officers what mills can recruit it can recruit workers only, but only badly workers

How can we communicate those to BJMC, we rarely have meeting with them. If we have then only The President and the General Secretary go there and represent us and they cannot voice all those issue, firstly they cannot get that opportunity and they do not have that much capability to say something in an organized manner. BJMC officers and managers they visit mills when they have got work here to do and on the basis of demand, if management requires their assistance they can ask them to visit the mills.

Yes there is an Enterprise board and board meeting has never taken place timely or regularly. According to policy board meeting should be held in every six months (hesitation and ask for confirmation of this information) or 3 months. However, this board is constituted by the people of BJMC. No they did not ask us to be there as workers' representatives. Yes they should ask the President and the Secretary of the Union to be there as our representatives. Anyway this type of meeting had been stopped for 10 years. Last meeting we had a meeting for promoting some people and this board meeting approved that promotion.

No they did not ask us when they promoted some people, the management did it autocratic way. We were still in power here we mean CBA of that period but our activities I mean that was the time just before the CBA election, so this is a period when we usually become less active in performing our responsibility, since new CBA is going to be elected. Although according to the policy and TU law the old CBA will duly handover their power to the newly elected CBA and till then that former CBA should work as an acting CBA. But still norm is we try to remain less effective. This was a promotion case of Lower Divisional Assistant to Upper Divisional Assistant, there are some senior staff for whom promotion had been due for many years. But the process of selecting them was not fair anyway then through the board meeting some of the problems have been addressed. Those who had good ACR mark they have been promoted.

In every two years in November and then from October the CBA of that time becomes less active. This sort of measures such as ignoring CBA and then promoting people or set the time line of meeting in November so there do not have to ask or they do not have face pressure for including the President and Secretary in the board meeting is a ploy and indicates Obomullayon. And that meeting held after 15 years.

They did not held any meeting with us. We told them whether VBJMC conducted this promotion or through the Enterprise Board we need to ensure and we want our participation.

We know every mill should have a participation committee, we haven't said anything. We just finished CBA election. But we have asked them whatever measures you take in case of managing mills please let us know and inform us. You can promote people but the list should have been communicated to us. We might have some suggestions and recommendations.

Adhoc Committee as we know that elected committee CBA has a definite tenure or term when it gets over but there is dissatisfaction on many issues among the workers or

discontents. So the management can make an Adhoc Committee for that transitory period . Now under the pressure that time in 2007 mill management formed a Committee called Adhoc Committee for the time being for three months to look after the workers' issues and other issues that could emerge in running the mills. This Committee is also responsible to conduct the election and then hand over the power to that elected body, it is their mandate they give to the institution. If they fail to perform their responsibility then after three months their administrative power is gradually reduced. (Shithil)

Now that Adhoc committee they had been ruling for many days, after the election they became silent. It is just like our Care Taker government as this body is constitutionally responsible for conducting the free fair election and then hand over the power to the elected body after three months. Our that period was the regime of the Care Taker government as you know that government stayed for 2 years and same happened here. They had been in power when the care taker government has ruled the country. Unelected Adhoc Committee ruled with the support of the unelected care taker government. They led the mills (Matabarri), created problems and they worked against the interest of the workers or collective interest of the workers. They did not have any experience of running a union they did not how to manage a union. For an example during that period at the time of Eid / festival came, the workers were allowed to take advance because workers' had due payments which remained accrued payments. But government announced that they could ask for advance and they declared that opportunity. Now badli workers were also entitled to get advance, previously the rule was in order to apply for advance that badli worker had to take signature from two permanent workers. What does it imply that if that Badli worker leaves mill then these two permanent workers will be liable for paying back that money to the authority or will have to work for him. They provide the guarantee of getting that money back or same amount of duty will be performed by that badli worker. In their time they provided money there is one case Adhoc Committee paid 8000 taka to a badli worker and many other badli workers but did not take signatures of guarantee of his paying back that amount from any two permanent workers. Besides, that worker was not entitled to receive such a large amount of money as advance. There are numerous cases such this where they have proved their immaturity of handling workers issues.

Badli workers they have already announced their plan of action and they are acting accordingly on their issue of employing them permanently. They had a meeting with the State Minister of Labour and the Member of Parliament of this area, they have discussion with different professional groups, workers of Khulna zone they showed protest under their banner and had perform a token strike . It is true they want to and they put pressure upon us for heading their issue or helping them to move forward because we have a registration number. We have constitutional approval, legal recognition so our voice definitely much stronger than their voice and it can be extended. We do our responsibility. We all have communicated this issue to the Chairman of BJMC, State Minister of Labour and to the Minister. They have told us that within January /February 2011 they would initiate the process. So what does it imply they will initiate the process may not be drastically but the process will be started to appoint them as permanent workers.

According to us zone office does not perform any role . What we understand that their responsibility lies in supervising , monitoring all mills under the zone. They do not perform their responsibilities at all . This zone office I think is a sort of obstacle for the proper functioning of the mills. For an example if we make any complain towards the Chairman of BJMC he delegates that responsibility to the Zonal level officer and asks

tehm to give him a report on that. Aonce we had made a complain and based on that Zone had to visit the field and submitt that report but there was no action. If this is the output of zone then we do not need zone. BJMC is enough if they can monitor directly that is fair enough. No the structure of BJMC should be reduced. As I told you earlier in the past we had 77 jute mills so they distributed all mills under zone for better supervision and monitoring. They we had efficient officers and they had the capacity to take appropriate policy for the functioning of the mills. Now only 7 Jute Mills are functioning under this zone , so zone has lost its significance. Such measure also reduces extra pressure upon BJMC of earning money to run the zone. Now they deduct 5% from our sales proceeds, then they can ask less money from us. BJMC it is Central hub of jute mills it has to be more strong and we are there to provide required financing to make it a stronger. Whatever we will do will do for jute mills. Now our current Chairman he is very expert on jute issue. He used to be the GM of PJJ and got gold medal because during his time. He knows everything about Jute Mills (Chat Kall) all pros and cons so he knows what to be implemented, when and how. But again he is Hindu by religion... (Amta hesitation) so he is weak inside. He may not implement some of his intended actions, perhaps his religion ...he hesitates in taking decision /action

It could be, possibility, everybody has limitations, but he has the quality serious quality (capability) , what is the use of talking this . Abu Osman he was the Chairman of previous regime of Awami League and then during the regime of BNP what we found they were not selected to do a role of Chairman from the family of Jute Sector. They did not have idea about jute and jute mills. They sent team for supervision and monitoring and team members they did not have idea about jute plant. They took a piece from cutting side and asked from where you got this height of jute; so short.; from which country we had imported this sort of jute. They did not know that just has to be cut into pieces. So if such person becomes chairman of BJMC then you know how can you expect, you planted banana tree and you would expect mango ...it is not possible.

So we need expert people in BJMC but the domain of BJMC needs to be defined and narrowed. But it has to do monitoring, it is their prime responsibility and ha sto take proper decision timely.

State level we have the Jute Minister once he used to work in Jute Mills and then for representing us we have labour leader like the State minister of Labour. She used to and still she represents the entire Jute Mills of Khulna zone. They have direct experience of working in this sector. If they place anything to the Prime Minister even the OM does not have that power to dump or deny their appeal. They have acceptance that level of acceptance to the government to those Secretaries and to the Cabinet we mean to the government level.

The Ministry should be under the jurisdiction of the Secretary. the Standing Committee of Jute of the Parliament does not have any power to make the Ministry accountable. It is empowered by the functioning of the Parliament or the Ministry. We mean the Parliament, if parliament thinks and finds that there a reform is needed, then it can assign SC but SC does not hold supreme authority. No SC does not have any power to provide any decision or any right, they can do investigation and can place recommendation report. That is all. They do not get power if they want. They are empowered , while the Ministry has all power to take any kind of decision. Moreover if there is Parliament then we can have SC of Jute , but Ministry is forever. It was/has been and will be there always. Yes all these

Jute Mills were under its domination as prisoners. Now the shackle has been broken and thrown out. Let me tell you : in this regime even the farmers could not finish gathering and piling up jute (Pat Krishoker hate ashbar age) we received money for buying raw jute, you understand.

You know what happened in the time of BNP government, in case of previous Awami League regime and during the regime of care taker government no funding . (4/5 times). If there is no gain in purchasing a raw material how can we expect we will have profit out of the produced finished products.

Ok if this Jute Minister and the State Minister of Labour do not remain in power then by the ploy of those bureaucrats the darkness will fall upon this sector. But certainly we have the that power to raise/ initiate any movements at any time. If they go for such drastic actions or take measures that will drive the mill to previous situation , you don't know, we didn't see, perhaps we had been in the foreign country then what we did. In our entire Khulna zone we will raise another movement then. When all workers are united the way they had been united in 2007 they put fire to Police box everything turned into a dust (Dhula hoye gache). (Emphasize reiteration).

This movement will again emerge if only if the government changes their policy toward this sector and takes wrong un expected decision.

Private Ownership same reply as before. Level of wages, humiliation and degradation as human being.

Under workers ownership!?? it could be but again it becomes difficult to run the mills for one or two people. Mills those have been handed over to the workers' by Sheikh Hasina in her last regime we don't know how those mills are functioning now? I mean their performance. It is impossible, we know so many opinions will be generated from so many people , an institution needs at least ½ persons to run or lead that institution but if that decision makers extends to 1000 then it will arise misunderstanding among themselves and then the institution will suffer and at one point it will be closed. And we have a culture that is the culture of looting assets and wealth that we inherit. We will only think about ourselves and will maximize our own benefit and will never ever think what will be the overall good or betterment for the people, for the workers. If the board members are elected and we have the right to recall them again it cannot function. Like providing the ownership to a private owner , it doesn't matter who are the owner one owner or hundred owner so there is no difference between private ownership and workers' ownership too. Now if there is profit or loss responsibility goes to the workers, while they cannot have the controlling power. For this external environment or external factors will be responsible as well as internal factors and environment. Every body will think he is the owner of these mills so , s/he has to be listened. They are general workers they only understand that they have to work fro 8 hours nothing more than that. If he is told that he is worker he may not be interested in working for 8 hours. He will think ok I am the owner of this place of space so I have to give some privileges to my kith and kin. And if mills administration has to provide all facilities to all then there will be no discipline and the structure will definitely collapse like that Adhoc Committee. In addition suppose workers' ownership as we understand that government will have 40 % of the share or 49% and the workers will have the rest of the share. Now after receiving that shares I will assume myself as the owner of these mills. Now I will start thinking suppose or undermining others capability I mean I

would like to substantiate my point of view. Ok you are a postgraduate and I am a graduate , it doesn't matter. I started working 20 years ago and I have been involved with the politics , so I am correct and my decision is the correct decision. Then there is localism which is very common. Consider these mills as a family , a family cannot function if it does not have a guardian as well as a ship needs a captain. Mills also requires direction and leadership and commands so that everybody can follow that commands. So either the state mode of ownership will prevail or there will be private ownership but we are against private mode of ownership because they exploit workers and employees. They show loss and takes away money from the business. Now we are 95% happy and satisfied under this mode of ownership. The mills were about to be destroyed it has been in a collapse condition now the current government has taken a massive initiative for bringing back its previous glory.

Yes it was under the state mode of ownership before but that time there was no supervision or monitoring system. If they had implemented their plan and had regular monitoring then we did not have to face such challenges in our life. They gave money but the time was not appropriate for receiving that funding, no monitoring. Product that we produced we could not sell. Now in our country we have the PM, boarder Defense Guards, Army and Police but if the government wants that there is no binding in case of exporting or entrance of any products, no imposition of legal bindings –then do you expect that the country will be in peace. In the past there were Ministry, Minister, Secretary and BJMC but primacy is government will and its attention. The practiced policy was not at all good for the overall sector. Then again buying raw jute and other

I would like to tell you a story. When there was state of emergency then the management of these mills drew a plan and developed a setup for running the mills and sent it to BJMC. At that time many people had been lay off and now those people have been re-appointed. Now if there was no provisions in the current setup for reappointing them , it is impossible to make them reemployed. We have all machines still they are here since the period of inception. Those machines have not been removed from their place, in this context what is the logic or reason for revising this setup and downsizing it. They down sized setup in response to that also human resource but machines are here. Those machines may costs thousands cr taka value but these have been treated as scrap but people who could use those machines they have been downsized or removed. Then how can you say that it was a good planning or indication or an appropriate planning. Now some people have again reappointed , some of the looms are now working but still there are some areas where we do not have proper human resource. These people have either retired, or died or they have resigned. Now we have deficits in terms of human resource and have to make it up. For an example we did not have adequate number of officers. Now they have recruited or they are recruiting 4/5 officers and sending them to mills. Who are paying for them , their salary? We have to pay them we mean we have to produce and sell them and then we can pay salary for all those officers. Now in this month mills may have receive a bills which will be 5 hundred thousands taka more than its previous months bills. But these people did not have any contribution in production of output. They came and started working and receiving salary. Now if you fill up the workers quota then we can use their labour power and mills can produce more and can spend 10 taka more. In reality workers quota remains as usual but officers quota has almost filled up. I find this as a gap in their planning. They should start working for implementing full setup along with full workforce. If your machine requires 6 hands and you provide it 2 hands then how can you expect full level of production or target production. It is not an approach of consistent planning.

It does not matter how many people are employed. The main objective and mode should be of the state that it is my family and I should have an objective that I have to run my family and have to include all my family members, I will look after them I have to maintain their food, lodging and other costs, then if I can save something or can think of saving BHORON POSHON. We all want that our mil should meet the target level of production. We wake up at 5 am and 5.30 am and straight way we visit mills and floors. GM has asked us to work and we work with the workers so they work with high motivation. We have increased the level of production of these mills from 55 ton to 63 ton, why? If we can incur profit, we can make mills sustainable. Jute sector is a manufacturing sector and a fall under the category of large industrial sector and provides employment, government will run this sector. But only the policy makers of the government know how they are going to design the sustainable policy for this sector. They will provide the policy we will give them back through working.

What we mean we can sustain and this sustainability means sustainability looking after all those include in our family. Now if the government does not have any policy for how they will capture the current foreign market but ask me to give more production, then ...my owner is the state. Now to understand the demand of the international market we have BJMC. Their objective should be more attentive and give us direction so we can produce a quality product which is acceptable globally. I presume our products definitely meet the level of international demand. We are not able to meet their demand requirement I mean they require more supply, there is no finishing products inventory. All are transported instantly. Another issue if industry manufactures industrial products out of raw material that industry receives 15% subsidy , we mean if the end product is made our of an agricultural raw material. Our jute industry is an industry based on agriculture it should receive that kind of treatment. Then again British period level of subsidy received how many mills and go down had been constructed out of that subsidy and profit as well as colonies and quarters.

The government should think of if I give 35% subsidy does not matter they will remain here in this boundary area and will not be involved with any anti-social activities. If these people get scared to everywhere they will become involved with many antisocial activities, terrorism and law and order situation may collapse.

Now the current government provides 15% subsidy to the agricultural sector but in industrial sector they are not providing any subsidy. On the other hand if the private owners run this sector or mills they receive subsidy. We have heard once that the government announced some sort of subsidy facilities towards the owners of jute mills but anyway we have to collect more correct information if we are going place a demand on this issue.

Our amount of loan was 2200 -2000 cr taka. We had a long movement on that issue. If government provides us 1 cr taka bank deducted 25% taka. Now if that money circulates 4 times through mills and banks it seems entire money was supposed to be finished by that time. Now these are all accumulated loss and crisis and government has taken positive measures we did not have to pay any interest or installments on bad debt.

They have taken entire responsibility now we want a policy with new indications so based on that we can work. We want to see BJMC is completely free of political influence as an institution or Corporation it should be free from political influence.

BJMC will be fully a autonomous organization. It will be separated and will be empowered. It will have a policy and it will run by that policy. It should be stated in the policy when raw jute has to be purchased. We do not want money from them. If they give us cash credit once , give us the total money that has been determined as budget figure in this financial year 2010-2011 , we can run the mills out of this money and we can be sustainable. Mills functions under the state mode of ownership, mills generate employment government has to notice all these issues. And timely payment of our retirement benefit then there will be never ever any loss in the mills. Sometimes government wants asks us to pay for the workers retirement benefits.

No there is a law for using musk inside the mills but we never enforced that law, because then management will have to buy musk, extra cost on mills. If we ask mills to pay us all our constitutionally approved entitlement such as medicine or even primary health care treatment it will definitely increase the cost level. We used to see in the past there had been a long cue of the workers from the morning in order to take medicine from the dispensary. Now we have that total structure we have dispensary, doctor, nurses and matron but do not have the provisions of receiving treatment. We cannot ask mills have been in crisis under pressure now. We have been trying our best to reduce all previous dues and pay back money to the workers that have been due to them for many years.

The Leaders of Badli Workers (Interview #16)

Usually in the past when a permanent worker went for retirement routinely that post had been occupied by a Badli worker. Suppose he left in January, within a month a circular had been sent to the mills for filling up that position. I started working here from 1994 and I observed from 1994 to till 2006 there had been a regular process of appointing B workers as permanent workers , I watched mill took such initiatives 3 times. One group of people they have finished their 12 service periods, another group have spent 9 service periods and then in 2006 there was another initiative for appointing workers as permanent. Mill management along with TU ignored the policy and started appointing workers of finishing side like for appointing permanent workers need assessment of every section starting has to be done and should be considered — from Jute Department till to finishing sections. During that last phase of permanent process what we saw they initiated the process only in finishing sections. They and conducted it at 3 am in the morning, it raised antagonism among the workers. It was 2006, PJJ was supposed to make 216 workers permanent and in entire Khulna zone 1186 workers were supposed to be permanent. You know at finishing department is a production side and here the rate of wage is higher. Such huge gap in wages became evident later. But all mills in this zone such as PJJ, The Crescent Jute Mills, The Peoples' Jute Mills and Star Jute Mills followed the same process. When we came to know about that ploy, we formed committee against such practice.

Anyway in 2007 after 1/11 those people had been laid off and retrenched under the policy of Last Come First Out , they just worked for 9 months. According to them we have to downsize the number of workers. Only from one section they just down sized most of those newly recruited people.

That time they canceled our work and gate pass as Badli workers and only provided works to the permanent workers. We had 26 weeks due wages and they did not even bother about it..no wages no money no bonus it was a crisis period, no disciplines, no rules and regulation situation was totally out of control. We had our Eid Jamat on the street. We started movement and went for drastic actions, thus one of our colleague he was a badli-worker in the Crescent Jute Mills was killed by the Police. His death brought some changes in the context; the authority paid us some of our dues. They had announced lay off , however, gradually they started its functions . They did not take us back to work and our gate pass as badli workers was canceled too and asked us to work on daily basis. We had been put into a pressure and asked us to work for 100 to 110 taka on daily basis. ‘If you are not interested to work you can go’. They made us work just like a Joan (industrial Reserve Force). We did not receive our wage according to the policy approved as badli workers or according to the labour law 2006 it is like no work no pay, they did it Unlawfully.

Because of emergency regime ... the active members of TU went to underground. They had to as they were involved with corruption always. After 1/11 CBA had to stop all its activities. What I did, I start coordinating movements and gathered workers of entire Khulna and Zessore zone and formed a committee. We launched our drastic movements and action. We had been arrested too. At one point Chairman of BJMC of that period Ataul Islam visited Khulna I cried I begged him I touched his feet and asked him to give us back our Badli- gate pass. He started dialogue with us He declared Badli- gate pass you will never get back. Again we launched our second phase of actions which brought the Industrial Advisor to visit Khulna. At Khulna Circuit House we had a meeting with him. That Emergence of movement period rate of output had been like 24/30 ton daily when we went for protest and movements the rate of production declined to 6 to 9 ton in each mills of entire zone. I told him that only through engaging badli- workers the level of production could be increased. Badli- workers are comparatively young, they are motivated and skilled. He assured us ‘ok I will keep my words and will give back your gate pass but I will observe the level of production for one month, then I will take all those decision’. He made that commitment in front of every one there was administrative force, media. I accepted that challenge and asked my colleagues to withdraw our own- strike and we joined the mills. Within one month we increased level of production to 45 ton. After the one month we wanted to contact him officially but could not make it. Then we again gave a challenge that we would initiate movement again. Then we were communicated that the Advisor was coming on Friday. We had a meeting with him and he said , ‘ Ok I will give back your gate pass but only half of you will get it’. He formed a committee consisted of 8 members and I was one of the member of that committee. We had a discussions and based on that on the 1st of June 2008 we received our replaced gate pass as badli workers of these mills. A circular was sent that only those who were under duty and work rooster on the daily basis they would receive the gate pass as badli workers. So we got back to work. Now later there has been election and the context has been totally changed. We have observed that entire environment of Jute Mills has changed, However, by that period many workers and employees have left this sector. That time a circular known as circular for Golden Handshake caused many employees, staff and workers to

take retirement. People found themselves unpaid for 30 weeks so they were scared and left the place. They took the benefit of GH because when mills remained laid off it was perceived as a better decision, it gave them an opportunity of taking lump sum amount of money at a one moment. There were many workers they did not want to go for retirement but they were forced. Management that time took the advantage of Care taker regime and forced them to go for retirement by saying , ' we don't need you to run the mills'. They observed that those people used to have nexus with the leaders. “ Ei batashe tarao ei khomota dekhaise”.

Now mills has started receiving raw material, spare parts, and other things that are required for functioning of the mills. All our dues have been paid off. Only 20% medical arrear we have not got it. And a new wage scale. There is overnight change in the policy of managing this sector. Obhabobio changes when the current ruling party formed the government. If we work hard this sector can be sustainable. Even I saw in the local newspaper yesterday that last month PJJ has made 53 lak taka profit and the Crescent Jute Mills have made 1 cr 16 lakh taka profit. It is unbelievable. Local paper I read, it is true the local journalists they received that information from the mills management. All mills are gradually now running profitably other than JJI. Now our only hope that we will be a permanent workers. But still we have not seen any sign of it. We have worked out on our agenda of making us permanent workers. We have already met many people and professional groups and have visited many offices but still nobody listened to our agenda. We have met the MP of this area who is the State Minister of Labour . The President of Jute Mills Workers' League Mr Motaher he used to be the CBA leader of these mills before .He has got a party office near to the Mills , where during evening he sits. The current CBA of these mills are connected with him. Now people who were terminated during 1/11 , they left the place looking for other jobs. Now once they have visited and seen those such as at evening time how the whole place turns into a festive mood, and then timely payment of wages . At one point we were told that the Head of the Worker (Moha Guru) through staking some benefits from the terminated workers has started lobbying for them we mean has been working on the issue of re-appointing them. We have seen their re-appointment. This is indeed painful for us , while mills are in full functioning mode now appointing us as permanent workers phase by phase should be the agenda item instead of that we have found that all those people who were terminated or do not have the capacity to work , about to reach their retirement age and finally have received money , they have joined again. This issue has raised agitation among us and we have come on the street again but we remain at work too. We have taken one decision we will never ever hamper production process. So remain on duty we arrange meeting, rally and human chain. When we saw now there was no move I announced that we would go for strike in from of my own eyes I am watching how terminated workers not the retrenched workers I am talking about terminated workers have rejoined. And involved with activities those were against mills are being appointed. People who lost job, got money flew to European countries as migrant workers have come back and joined as workers again. Workers who did vandalism and broke the GM car and not involved with the production are joining too. We came to know some people are involved with it, through taking the monetary benefits took the Minister too into this plan and has influenced BJMC for taking such decisions and for sending such circulars. Now this is the current problem in the mills which is Dana bedeh utche emerging as a crisis. But badi workers they have been working and they have become experts but now those workers who were terminated they have become out of skill. But it seems management does not bother about the skill and un- skill workforce. Now we who have been working for 20 years still remain as badli workers. Committee for

Badli workers have been formed many years ago, they just have one demand , one plea when we will become a permanent workers.

No as badli workers we do not get any kind of facilities. Our committee does not have any registration number too we do not have any institutional recognition. We are never officially invited or asked to take part anything related to the mills. If anything special, special time if there is emergency then we are asked. Management is not supposed talk to us, CBA will ask for explanation.

We get wages when we have duty and we get medical benefits. We can visit the appointed doctor of the mill but I will have to buy the medicine. If I am injured, during my duty hours then mill management is responsible to pay me something. I will get preliminary treatment from the mills clinic. Our wife and children can also visit the Mills' appointed doctor do not have to pay visit fees. Yes some of our workers send their wife in Mills' clinic their wife delivery their children here. We can send our children to mill's school and we do not have to pay fees. But in case of medical treatment for any reasons they prefer to send us to 250 bed hospital.

We do not have retirement benefit, We will have to work and we can work until we have the capacity for working.

Total number of 20000 baldi-workers in this Khulna zone , if any circular comes for appointing them as permanent workers and 5/6 thousand workers becomes permanent then we know we can a process has started. Then every year in due process at least 100-200 employees will be retired and those posts will be fulfilled if the circular still prevails. That was the process before.

Now we are happy we are content about the ruling party's activities. Yes we have been watching new officers have been recruited, staff are appointed as permanent employees, new security officers and guards have been recruited, terminated and lay off workers have been re-appointed then why not the badi workers!!?/ Because they belong to the party. out of sheer disappointment we may again gather on the street (Raj path). I as a President of Baldi-workers ignored my duty hours I mean I ignored my earning went to BJMC, Ministry to meet the Chairman and the Minister with this plea.

We work 8 hours for the President and GS of Badli workers association there is no escape from work. We just get 30 minutes refreshment break.

Under all BJMC mills this month has announced as month of production till 28 December. CBA leaders have been asking all workers ' it is production month no worker can ask for leave now'. I as a president I tell my workers if I don't search for work and do not visit mills on the 29th of December, none will give my presence and my wages for that day. For badli workers every day is Production day and every month is production month. If we have duty , we have Hajira and we will receive bills. If there is jute , parts and mills will function and bali-worker will work.

Badli- workers are required when the permanent workers are on leave. According to the Labour law badli-workers should be 25% of total permanent workers. Many workers go for leave or become sick and mills require badli-workers more than it is approved in the labour law. But now when the current ruling party has come to the power due to various

reasons they have provided another circular for more badli-workers. Now in many mills number of badli-workers is more than the number of permanent workers. In our mill the same situation prevails. In my section there are place for 300 workers now there are gate pass of many badli workers which is more than 600. So we see after working three days consecutively even workers like me who has been working for more than 20 years are told , ‘ baba can you go for rest for the rest of the week , so I can employ another baldi-worker’. But we used to get work every week days before. They have ignored the law and instead of taking 25% badli workers according to the law they have recruited equal number of baldi- workers. So we cannot work 6 days. They did not care about the law. It was a government decision. But in providing gate pass there is a process of earning money. CBA leaders they use this device as their source of earning money. There are huge number of unemployed people all over Bangladesh they just understand they are going to be employed in state owned enterprises, it is just they have to pay minimum 4000 taka. It is a business to some employees or staff and to the leaders.

Now there are so many badli-workers we have to look for alternate jobs. For example he is my GS he works 3 days as Cable operator and 3 days in the mills. I do

We do not do election. This is an informal committee and we have gathered on our issue. But our unity makes the leaders and CBA cautious; they look us in different way. For example during this Eid festival the government announced that all badli-workers are entitled to receive 1000 taka as advance payment. It was observed that 145 of my badli-workers due to some misunderstanding between zonal office and mills management were not entitled to receive that money. I attempted and became successful to make the Labour Officer understood that why they were entitled to receive that money. CBA asked the Labour Officer and Labour Office to spend this fund in different sector and also put pressure on them to cancel their gate pass. CBA wants to keep us under pressure but when we have mouth we will speak and the context makes me to say something and thus I become leader , I don't want to become a leader. . Sometime they take such aggressive action for an example I had discussion with the GM about this advance issue he told me I know them if there is money in my mills certainly they will receive that money, but do not create any unruliness inside the mills. CBA leaders consider such activities as our over smartness. In such cases we have to come back ask forgiveness to them. CBA did not take part into this issue , but GM through discussing with me and us solved the issue.

“ I do not want to become a leader rather my situation drives me to say something that which eventually make me a leader.’

Permanent workers are sympathetic to us, somehow they are related to Badli-workers. But not entirely we are in good relations, their category and other category is different. But the leaders are different. They think once we have one committee as officially recognized there is no need of another committee. We always say that those who are the representatives of the permanent workers they are also our representatives. But they do not take us simply and do not give us proper respect; we mean they do not consider us. Because they think they are officially selected and elected, recognized body of the entire workforce so any workers do not have right to form any other committee. Since we are not voters so

They are not sincere and true trade union. If they are the true representatives of the workers any kinds of workers they will definitely give us proper respect. Nepotism, localism, working as agents, partisan attitude, and corruption are common elements among

them. Believe me during last election in November, I met a workers he had been moving around like for 100 taka , because due to election he earned 1900 taka, if he could manage 100 taka, he would visit his village home for celebrating Eid vacations. Now you think if a voter a general workers has received 1900 taka then how much money those leaders have spent for this election or usually they spend and for whose interest they spend such amount of money. Those leaders are like us like you and me they are employed people of BJMC. Where they get such flow of money, can you imagine how much money he will earn in his two years tenure? I can give you another example: Sohrab he was the general secretary of the Crescent Jute Mills. He emerged during that 1/11 issues we made him leader because of his courage. It was the time when as usual CBA leaders went to under ground. They are not the real leaders if they were they did not have to hide. So he contested the election and became GS. He used to smoke Bidi Sonali bidi now he wears suits and smokes Benson. Can you imagine how much he earned within these two years? There is a saying that even a treasury of the King reaches its ends but I think if a person once become a CBA leader money he accumulates it never gets finished. He lost during November's election by 700 votes , can you imagine? However, he lost against such a candidate whose lebas (attires) is different, he wears long Punjabee and people might have thought he may be honest as he is so religious. Who knows how he will act? If anyone ever becomes the CBA leader in the mills he cannot stop eating-up things we mean corruption and bribery.

If there is anything unfair or illegal or any corruption it always comes out and flash by badli-workers not by them – lower quality of jute we inform first, like we feel blockages in spinning sections if the quality of raw jute is bad, it also hampers meeting the target. We raise this issue, when we raise such issue they threat us what is your authority for raising such issues, just keep silent. We cannot voice our issue or any complains to the management, they won't let us sit with us the management. But when we raise voice what happen as a consequence they take some measures on their positions and we can see the changes in the working environment. We can give a call to GM but we have to do it secretly if CBA leaders come to know it, they will ask explanations from him.

The current GM is very capable person, his supervision and monitoring should be noticed. Often I feel like giving thanks to him but I cannot come close to him but I feel scared if anyone sees.

I (President) am from Rajbari Pangsha , GS I am from Pirojpur Barisal. In this zone I mean here in mills mostly people are from Faridpur and Barisal. We seldom visit home, they expect something from us. My wife knows my issues how we face challenges to meet the daily expense from one Thursday to another Thursday. But we left home 20 years ago, how can we make them understood that what we are doing? They do not understand badli-workers and permanent workers, they think we are working and employees of state owned jute mills , in the end they think I am a government employees. My mother, my nice and nephews, brothers they expect I will bring something for them, it is not possible for us to make them all happy. So it is better not to visit them when we cannot meet their expectation. They think we have been doing something very respectable we would like to
....

We do not send money to home, we do not have to but other baldi workers they have to send money regularly. My father died my mother lives with my brothers and she will be happy if I can send her money. So sometimes I have to send . But I keep contact with them daily through cell phone. We know how we spend our days only by earning 3 days

out of 7 days, based on it we have to pay rent, pay for daily livings and for our children's education we can not meet our ends and meets.

Think about you ; your parents gave you such a good education, do you think they look for your money. But if you send them money they will be happy they will feel proud.

So when we cannot meet the primary demand of our own family how can we fulfill expectation of our sisters and brothers if we have a permanent job for 6 days 8 hours then the issue would be different.

We are not entitled to have any retirement benefit; we won't get it we do not have any future if anything happens to us. If there is a accident when I am working in these mills and because of that accident I loss my fingers I can ask for compensation like 12% (I do not get this calculation) but if I die nothing my family will receive. According to the labour laws if permanent workers die their family will receive basic salary of 36 months. Sometimes when a badli worker dies during we raise money form all and send that money to his home.

We do not have any cooperative.

Yes we were involved with that workers' movement back in 2007, we think our movements and actions gave a good lesson to the current ruling party and so they become so attentive and they are monitoring state owned mills. But we are disappointed by some of their activities. I went to see the Jute Minister I had a discussion with him for two hours I wanted to make him understood our situation, I had and have one appeal that please appoint us permanent workers, but I am not happy about my experience of meeting him. Wherever we go we have only one agenda item, like now when we received a phone call that a person sent by BJMC wanted to talk to you we though instantly that you are from BJMC and we would discuss this issue with us. Our 1/11 movements shook the whole society you see AJM was closed but our movements has made a change in their mind-set. We have made them understood to the MPs of this zone and to others that and we found that indications in their election manifesto. In addition what through my activist activities and meeting them through listening their discussion specifically I have understood from the message of the PM that if they run large industries it means there will be more employment and thus the unemployment problem can be reduced . now in the current world market jute goods has high demand you can observe if you visit mills that how they are sewing sacks , they cannot finish their tasks in assigned time.

We want BJMC under the state mode of ownership. We never look for works in Private Mills. In a private mills they pay me 110 taka per day and they pay you we mean who will work as managers or officers 25000 or 22000 taka salary. Now in six days my total wages comes 660 taka , while per kilo rice costs 40 taka how can I manage a family consists of 3 person we have got one kid with this earnings per week. Here in State owned jute mills per week our wages comes 1061 taka and the lowest level of wages we receive is 2400 taka. In private mills still they follow that wage scales which had been announced in 1995 they pay 560 taka per week to their workers. By that time our wage scales have been revised many times. I get my minimum basic wage as bonus too.

Certainly we have a plan or we provide them the guideline of how to appoint us as permanent workers. According to current labour law if a workers works more than 90

working days in an enterprise he has to be appointed as permanent workers. We have been working for 20 years or more than 20 years and still we don't know whether we will be appointed as permanent workers. What is use of having such labour law when its effectivity is zero. (2nd time). Then we have serial number on our gate pass according to a number which indicates my seniority of working here as badli-workers. Based on their provided serial number, they can start appointing us as permanent workers. Now if the provide a circular that 2004 set up will be effective and based on that they will initiate process of making workers permanent then what we understand from our experience that at least 600/700 badli-workers will be appointed as permanent workers, then through the gradual process like every 200 people will be retired and 200 workers can fulfill those positions. But we will know that the process is initiated. Now how many workers are working now as badli-workers according to last week 3773 but you got from the office that actual number is 3402, because there is another corruption here. Already they have canceled many gate pass, because Audit has raised its objection. Notice has come out in the notice board the mills management along with the CBA leaders in nexus approved so many gate pass now they have realized that , ' shorbonash has been done'.

We work with only one hope and aspiration that we will be employed as permanent worker one day here in state owned enterprises. Now why can't we see such dream if this management, this CBA and workers are working and making 53 hundred thousands taka profit then we do not need to make mills privatized. Workers they never give Faki. Now we never see electricity disruptions that period it had been hours after hours we remained idle no work, no electricity. These are all state owned enterprises our asset why there will be no electricity because of un-paid dues, we have to look from this perspective- if such environment prevails we all put our effort and state runs those mills it will bring prosperity for all.

We have discussed , I have pointed out all concerned issues and positive aspects whenever I have the opportunity to discuss our issues with anyone powerful. I had discussion with the GM, DC < Police Commissioner, State Minister of Labour, Jute Minister , BJMC officials, in Press Club with the media , we have not seen any effect of our discussions no actions. Now only the PM is left and this is my last destination to raise our issues. After 1/11 we all badli-workers of 7 functioning jute mills of this zone we have reached a point or you can say we formed our space and have one agenda item and have been working on one agenda item. We will raise our issue to the PM will giver her 7 days and then we will go for action.

We want see management is efficient we receive our weekly wages timely there should be rules and regulations and it will be effective and flowed. In the past if there was a marriage of a daughter of any permanent workers he would ask for loan and smoothly he could arrange his daughter's marriage. Now the permanent workers cannot get their own money from the PF there is a long cue . I do not show negligence in my duty , I have to report to my sardar on how much I have done. If I show my negligence then I will be punished. My Sardar is reportable to his supervisor so there is no scope for a worker to show negligence in his duty. If the monitoring is strong workers can never neglect their responsibility. We need effective administration.

Now if it happens this monitoring is done directly by the Ministry it will be more effective. Even this year we have seen government has provided financing for purchasing raw jute but still we find quality of jute is not that good. Now in reality what happen if the

Minister needs any information he asks the Ministry and then the Ministry asks BJMC, BJMC gives a call to zone office and asks see what is happening in PJJ. Zone office – it is like few people are sitting in a jungle and BJMC- a large structure people sit there building has got AC and from there they ask for information. They get thousands of thousands of taka salary I need to have approval letter to visit that place, being a worker of the mills I have to sign the record before entering that office. Now if the Ministry does this monitoring directly then we do not need that many layers and will see many big big peoples' post will be ... (redundant). Why do we have Ambassador all over the world and that one Ambassador is enough. Now here we have one export officer and that officer works under the Marketing Director of BJMC, .. extra hands. Now this export officer will do my export and money will directly come to my bank. Mill will provide its report of profit and loss directly to the Ministry we don't need so many big posts. Because Ministry remains and the Secretary always prevails so this structure is enough for monitoring mills' performance. The ruling party gets changed but the Ministry and Secretary they always remain they are forever. Now because of so many layers of management Audit at one gets stuck and becomes meaning less. Besides they do audit at surface level and BJMC officers they visit you will get the smell of good food from the outside of the Guest House, they also have to visit Sundarban at the end when they leave they leave with a brief case full of money. The so called CBA leaders will not say these issues to you we disclose those facts. Now if mills functions under the Ministry automatically we will see that many hands or posts will become redundant and automatically cost will become less than the current cost of running state owned jute mills.

In 2007 if you'd visit you would have seen all the businessmen, traders, and Executive Directors of small local NGOs would sit here on Thursday. Badli workers they did not have work and the permanent workers they just used to give their hajira. Based on it they used to receive their weekly bills . As soon as they would receive that wages bill they sold it by 40 to 60 % discount to them. So when the current government paid back all due payments money went to those capitalists. We badli- workers (laugh, chuckle) we pulled rickshaw the easiest task and profession rickshaw pullers, some left the place and have not come back. They have found work in the Garments industry or kneating companies. Those who have land or their families have something in villages they have gone back to their villages. I met one rickshaw puller in Dhaka, he embraced me and wanted to treat me I told him , ' brother I am very happy seeing you here . Now I have to go , I have to meet the state Minister Munnujan Sufian to raise our appeal for employing as permanent workers. Again laugh Yes she listens to us. Indeed a plan of action was done out of rage by the badli-workers and at one point I asked for strike. Then she asked us to meet her. She was the member of Parliament of this area we worked for her during ...she told us , ' , mills have just initiated functioning if we go for strike now the Cabinet may not take it as a positive stance and they will be discontent'. She assured us and asked us to come Dhaka and meet her and she assured us that she would arrange a meeting with the Jute Minister for us.

It is true in 2007 there were many organisations, NGOs and individuals came and want to help the workers. I worked as a volunteer of such initiatives. Later I had to hide as Police within one week destructed this soup-kitchen set up established by them. Police just observed for seven days and then destroyed it. Although they had to close that soup-kitchen initiative but they continue their support for a long time, they used to provide support for education of the workers children. Now we do not see them any more.

Yes we used to see the activities of Commission for Surviving Jute Mills but now they are not seen any more. In this area when Munnujan Sufian had her first meeting as MP and as a State Minister she had it under its banner. Even I am a badli-worker I got an opportunity to express my opinion there and at time the Minister was on the stage. I place my agenda and it brought everybody's attention. Local CBA leaders they did not take it simply and asked explanations from the Commission. Then the advocate Firoz who was the Convener of the Committee told them, 'it was entirely our decision, whom we will ask to give speech.' He helped us a lot during that movement time, help means not financial help. He supported like he took part in discussion, provided us suggestions and placed our issues and include us any discussion. There is another person like him Jahangir Alam Shibuj, he is the President of Youth Unity and member of the Workers' Party and coordinator of 14 parties here in Khulna. He keeps telling us, "if you do democratic movements I will be with you always. He usually provides us suggestions.

As a worker I have one issue I will provide my labour and will take my weekly wage. I do not want that all those big bureaucrats should not get that many facilities. But I think BJMC is a large administrative unit and it has to be downsized. If we become permanent then there will be a provision of raising voice and in order to be a leader I will raise voice for mismanagement. We as badli- workers we have many issues to speak up and demands to place. I am not a permanent worker that after retirement he will get back to his village with 7 lakh taka, we will stay here. For me mills are my everything where we will go if mills gets closed. So I can survive and thousands of workers can survive.

I have one dream one aspiration one statement one belief make us permanent. We cannot say anything about any issues about the quality of raw jute or they threat us as a badli-worker you do not have right to say anything. We can say we are prepared to give our 8 hours labour and we will have my wages weekly that is all. But once we become permanent workers then we can raise our voice on if see mismanagements and misdeeds in case of purchasing raw jute or lack of ingredients or any ONIOM. Now you can raise a question whether I will remain such vocal. No, I can't give you any word like this, I may go with the flow. But even as Badli workers we have experienced life that nobody has that opportunity to have such experience. Badli gate pass my identity card in order to get it back I had to pose my life into a challenge. During 1/11 the Police force took us to railway track and forced us to lie down there and asked the Police Assistant Commissioner his assistant to run the train over us. That Police Commissioner said, "how dare they are conducting movements and terrorism in Army regime. "you don't know me. I ordered brush fire and killed terrorists in cross fire in Rajshahi'. I just asked him, 'Sir in Rajshahi who died in cross fire they were not like us starved workers of state owned jute mills.'

Nobody try to understand our positions. There is an organization which is also support organizations Of Pat Kal bachao Anadolon Shongram Porishad for the jute workers but it is always supervised by the representatives of the ruling party, now by the Jute Mill Workers League when BNP is in power then Nationalist Party for Jute Mills Workers. Nobody does proper evaluation of jute workers.

There had been a seminar by Pat Shilpa Rokkhka Committee about SOJMs, there I raised a questions that, 'we have been spending two days and have had good food and discuss so many issues. But I would like to know who will implement those issues? I know you are discussing those concerned issues but won't implement'. There were representatives from different sections of the society.

Till now we had two meeting with the management we had asked for those meeting , sort of we had put him under pressure and asked for meeting. The outcome of the meeting is the current C shift that runs from 10 pm to 6 am mostly by the badli-workers. Because of many badli-workers there are 30 workers under one Sardar. Machines are very old we require new machines and new looms. Sometimes we take parts of machine and give those parts to ex-Bihari workers and they tell us, 'once we used to run that machine and could have a cup of tea when the machine was in functioning mode'. Now machine on which I work it can process 100 bobbin . But because of bad quality of jute and old machinery only 40 to 60 bobbin are effective per machine in these mills. These machines have to be replaced. We try our best but still we cannot run them smoothly- quality of jute is bad, then ingredients like oil, soap management does not provide high quality products. During 1/11 I told the Advisor that ' ' If you give advices and recommendations the officers of BJMC in front of you agree but will not implement that as actions. If you take care of the mills then it will definitely function effectively'. He asked my how it could be done. Then I suggested him to form a Committee a committee by taking representatives from all sections'. He formed a committee from the representatives of all forces and they would visit the mills every month and they would review each and every issues of the mills 'nara pore gagche' attentive.. He took representative from Police, RAB, Magistrate, then representative of the workers and the GM. When that committee used to give a round every body in the mills used to be fully attentive in their work. I was a member of that committee. I watched when they used to give monthly visit , many people became frightened. Many officers took leave. When the committee visited the mills they management used to offer them good food : oranges and apples. The Chief of the Committee used to visit with a stick, he told to the GM that why he had made all these arrangements and used to ask me , ' Ok we cannot have this it is not under the rule, bhai you are workers representatives you can have it '. This committee was abolished after 1/11. It never worked like Committee comes from BJMC for monitoring or doing some enquiry. Before they arrive the management does shopping and buys good food and then before leaving they take the brief case with cash. This is common issue and we have seen such incidents thousands time – (mockery).

Once we were students and used to study that jute is the golden fiber of Bangladesh. Then we came here to work and found what. Now everybody wants survival and sustainability of the mills. Then I have a question to the nation that every one is enthusiastic and wants survival of mills; if survival of mills and its sustainability is the major issue then people who already spent 25/23 years in these mills and left it; what is the reason of re-appointing them instead of appointing the young generations? Even what is the point of bringing back people from Europe and re-appointing them; when the young people have become depressed and they have become? We will do everything for the survival of these mills but those who left job if they get re-appointment is it fair or those who have been working here but not get opportunity to work as permanent workers recruiting them is logical , now how men will fight with these machine and only young generation can do this.

Training, impossible!! We have to learn work first for 4/5 weeks by spending our own money. When I will properly learn my work then we can officially join. No organization or any NGOs provided us training. We need training, now time has changed, technology is getting updated, and we have to keep our pace with that . We need a seminar like how to take care of your health for the workers, and then how to love your work place and how to look after machinery. As I told you Bobbins are not fully functioning so we are not giving

optimum level of production. But I receive 8 hour wages. Why? Because of machine, then the newly recruited employees or officers they are younger to us, don't know any thing. They need training more than us. Now machine that workers are running they cannot even tell name of the parts of that machine. They are new while those old employees who have been working many years in the mills they are so expert even when they would cross the machine they could diagnosis the problem; while they are graduate from various textile technological institutes but studying is one thing but practical knowledge. Knowing name of the parts and how it will function it is important to know. They are young and supervise but no knowledge about the machine. Our old workers can detect the problem through the sound that the machine makes.

Female workers: Five participants. Mixed group Badli & Permanent (FGD#14)

I am the leader among badli female workers. My name is Rani, Official name Selina Begum. Morijina is my associate. When we established association of baldi workers then the senior (murubbee) have decided to make me the leader of the female badli workers and Morjina as my associate. Permanent female workers they have such recognised leader. However, Pakhi used o lead the issue of permanent female workers in the past. She also took part in the election but could not win. Among them Anawara and Pakhi they contested in CBA election but of them lost. It is difficult to say how many votes they received as a CBA candidate. They also received votes from the male workers too. Anwara contested in 2007 but Pakhi we can't remember which year she contested in CBA election. Pakhi took it seriously and she became less active in terms of leading or voicing women issues, as she did not receive votes of all female workers. That time mills female workers were more than now because many of them retired and died. Now the number of permanent female workers is less in comparison to 1995-96. Both Pakhi and Anwara work as breaker.

I am Rani, I work in grade 1 as time rate worker. My home district is Barisal. In fact my home district is Noakhli but my mother is from Barisal. We never went to Noakhali and my father bought a piece of land in Barisal so we prefer to say that we are from Barisal. When our father died both me and my brother came here for work, the labour officer of that period was my brother of my Grand Father. He had helped us in having a gate pass as badli workers. It was 15 years old then. I have been working here for more than 26 years. I got married once but now divorced. I don't have any children. I am helper or most us work officially as a helper but we run machine. They don't let us to do work of helper. It requires more energy we need to move pile (gait) of raw materials, so the male workers do those jobs they do it as humane .. manobotar dik theke. We run machine. We receive 165 taka per day, no hang on 197 taka per day. I have an adapted son he calls me ma (mother). I have a nephew if I become a permanent worker I will admit him in the School of PJJ.

My name is Nahar. I work in preparing section in grade 2 and she has been working for more than 23 years s badli female workers, the wage rate per day for grade 2 is 190 taka. I am from Barisal too. I am piece rate worker.

Sheuli is my name. My home district is Barisal. I have been working here for 22 years. I work as a helper in grade 1 in Batching section. I have four children. When I first joined I used to have one child now I have become a mother of four children.

I am Ranu Begum. I work as Piecerate worker in the finishing side My grade is 3. I have been working for more than 10 years. We do not receive wages in fixed basis but at least I need to finish 32 packs per day and receive 25 taka for each bundle. My home district is Faridpur.

I am, Asia I also work in the finishing section as Piecerate workers in grade 3. I have been working for more than 12 years. I am from Sirajganj , I am the only worker from Sirajganj. I did not any one here, since I didn't have option left I had to come here in search of work, my husband died in a road accident.

Protiva I came after Aila²¹⁶ with my husband. There was no way to work as agricultural worker.

Their condition:

It does not matter whether we are married or if we have husbands. We are all helpless women. Either our husband has died out or they have left us for another woman. So we have to work as there is no way to look after ourselves and our children. We are all destitute women.

Sheuli : my husband died as a Fitter and he admitted (literary translation) or he supported me to have a gate pass (an identity card as badli worker of the Mills). When my husband dies Pulin Bbau a Hindu Manager told that this girl had to have a gate pass otherwise how she would survive with 4 kids. With the help of my colleagues and supervisor in the mills I also could be able to arrange the marriage of my daughter. We don't have the facility like PF or gratuity so we have to look for , I mean ask for financial contributions if any wants to contribute.

Nahar: I came with my neighbour. She did not take money from me in helping me to get a gate pass or this work. Gradually: No it is the fact. It is the process which requires you to pay minimum 3/4000 taka for acquiring a gate pass.

Another woman has got three sons. Two of them are working as badli workers in these mills, while her youngest son is physically challenged and he works in a shop. She kept asking me if I know any organisations that have plan or scheme for supporting the physically challenged person.

Since none of them have husbands so their income is the main source of earnings in their families.

Living, working condition:

It takes minimum 500 taka per month for renting a place. Renting a room now costs 1000 to 1200 taka including electricity. Electricity bills increases every year so does the rent. Besides, landlord puts thousands of conditions. Suppose I come back at 10 pm if I have duty in the second shift which starts from 6 pm and finishes at 10 pm, I have to take food in the candle light or I have to use lamp. Two days ago I got back at 10.15 pm my daughter wanted to fry an egg for me and switched on light and the land lord took her to task. My son is having exams next month even then he has to finish his studies by 8 pm. After 8 pm there will be no usage of electricity.

²¹⁶ Aila was the second [tropical cyclone](#) that caused extensive damage in [Bangladesh](#) in May 2009. .

One participant: I had to increase 100 taka as I have got cable TV, my son works as mechanic in electrical shops. So he brings TV that requires to be fixed up and then we can watch TV.

Anyway there was another participant who does not have electricity at home.

We don't claim house from the mills as we are not permanent workers. Rani: I have my own house. I have got it from a Hindu man he used to be the landlord. He is old and not married. Government took away his property so at one point he gave them to me by writing. I have submitted it to the court and now I live there with my mother and my brother's family also lives with us.

Some of us we send our children to the school of PJJ. But the cost of education is increasing. We haven't bought the required ... books are provided by the government now. But we have to buy note books, exam books all. Mills do not provide those materials.

One of the participants sends her daughter to Madrassa.

We don't have place to go. We left our village as chinnomul we lost everything because nodi bhagon. Now Khalishpur is our only living place. We are not involved with any other organisation. Rani: I pay 10 tata per week to CTC a city corporation organisation it helps in having paka toilet.

How can we be involved with any micro-credit programs we don't have money to offer them in return. We don't have regular job.

When we need money we take loan through paying interest (sude taka nei). We pay 100 or 200 taka interest for 1000 per week.

Now it is impossible to get the opportunity to work for 3 days in every week. But we need to come every day to see if they need badli workers. It also happens very often that we have started working and then the permanent worker comes and we have to be off. Those of who work in A shift that starts at 6 am, we come at 4/5 am and remain seated in front of the mills. We keep worrying and that is the part of our life. There is always a possibility that the management may engage their people or other people instead of us in our position. In fact that is the major cause for why we even don't search for other occupation. Besides, we have to be on time at the work place. There is no certainty that we will get work every alternative days or every two days after. Or we are told ok we may go now come after 2/3 days. This can give us a provision for working in other areas or in other occupations. We are not properly evaluated. Even we don't get regular work in C shifts, while C shifts is supposed to be run by us. Permanent workers are doing overtime duty in C shift. We are all poor, so we need money they may have relatively secured life. But we are in the same boat, they have families, children. On the other hand we those who work on fixed rate we cannot work for overtime or in C shift. We have the right to work only in one shift. Because only the production side has C shift

Sacking side female workers: In order to earn at least a decent level of money we have to come in by 5.30 am, and we leave at 10 pm. Our families depend on our earnings. We don't have a life; sometimes we wonder is this called life

Badli-permanent Issue:

Now we have been working here for more than 10 years. We have never left this place. Even when the mills had been laid off for nine months. We had been here; we worked as domestic household workers. We had first received a card as casual worker. We had been remained as casual workers for five years. Then we received a card as badli workers. During Fakruddin regime we were appointed on daily basis, the rate used to vary from 90 to 105 taka per day. We used to receive 100 taka per day. Then we again initiated a movement to get back our card as badli worker. Then during Sheikh Hasian's regime we have been returned our identity or have been again appointed as badli workers, so we do not work as daily wage labour. We have suffered all those. To be precise they have returned the same gate pass that they cancelled during Fakruddin regime. However the serial order of that gate pass they did not maintain. Here lies our current agony. As you may have heard that a circular has been sent to mill that according to the current set-up 30 % of its vacancies will be fulfilled by appointing badli workers as permanent worker. What is the game now those who left the mills that time have started to come back and now they are asking for that old serial and can occupy a position before us? Do you think it is legal? It is our right because we have been here it doesn't matter when they have received the gate pass or whether they are senior in terms of having gate pass. Important issue is they have been away for 4/5 years, now how they become, 'first senior'.

We can be made permanent workers according to serial. In the circular it has been stated that based on seniority but who knows. If they follow the strict procedure and policy then 10 badli female workers should become permanent workers. Anyway we don't know the exact number of female badli workers.

Our life is a raft on the flowing water

Now every day we are in doubts, agony that we will face in the end. If the management is bribed by those then we won't be recruited as permanent worker. We dream that we will die as a permanent worker and my dead body will go to my village by the mills car.

Opportunity of working in private mills:

Dear, it is not that worth (poshai na). No security or job and less money, this is a government owned mills, we are secured. The Peoples' Jute Mills used to run by an owner. They have closed it. Our family depends on our income and there is no way we can depend or trust owners that they will keep the mills functioning. Under the private ownership we have to work more but the payment of wages is low. Besides in the SOE mills there are some fixed policy such as we enter when it is 6 pm and we finish our shift by 10 am. Again we start our second shift at 2 pm and finish it by 6 pm. But in private mills there is no rules and procedures. Workers have to work for whole day and in humiliating environment. In 2006-2008:

When there had been layoff then the whole Khalishpur was full of RAB officials. We worked in their houses. We spent our days and nights with the hope that one day mills would again start its operation. We suffered a lot but we didn't send our children to anywhere.

Rani: I used to sell three piece (Salwar suits), blouse piece materials from house to house feriwala.

Another participant: My son used to pull van rickshaw so I got someone to share.

Another participant: I have only one daughter I raised her and now I got her married but I didn't let her work.

All: we have experienced many incidences here when the women of Khlaishpur industrial zone had to (ijjot literary meaning dignity) stand on the roads and on the street to sell their only valuable possession their dignity.

During Movements:

We all participated in the movements. We were badli beaten by the police. On our back we still bear the scar. We were thrown into the train after they finished their bashing up us. The adhoc committee was good in terms of leading the movement that time. We all wore the piece of cloth (Kafoner Kapor) and did procession along with the male workers. We planned to go for suicidal action. Anyway at one point the police and RAB obstructed us. Jashim a badli worker was killed by the police that time. We did procession with his dead body. We used to stay outside at night. Those who had young sons none of the mothers could sleep at night in entire Khalishpur. Police used to invade every house in the colony and abruptly bashing up people even women. It was inhuman and beyond our language to depict what they did to us.

Working Condition:

We just have one female toilet. It is easier for those who work in the finishing sections to use that toilet. But for us it is very far. The toilet is located outside the floor not within the premises. At night shift we don't dare to use it. It is dirty. They don't clean it. But still the management can appoint a security guard that side of the mills. Now many young boys and girls have been recruited as badli workers. So the environment is somehow quite high-spirited because of their presence we mean they are mode of relation is different. We work as brothers and sisters, but we know the current generation. It will be better for us if the management sets another toilet for the female workers, who work in batching section.

For us we have to face eve teasing when come to mills for work. It is a customary practice of the guys in Bangladesh to say something to the girls or women.

We don't get support from our family nexus. We left our family many years ago. Now our neighbours and colleagues with whom we have been living, sharing our tensions and sufferings are our family members, our relatives. We help each other like we feel we are a member of a large family. The reality is crisis and poverty cannot let you to maintain your relations with your family members. As we have been living in the same area in the same community we are now family.

Current working condition:

The mills has been performing very good now. The production is good. Our only demand is giving us proper schedule of work such as at least work in every alternate day then we can survive with our families. If they take initiative to operate all machines then we can be able to work the way we expect. What to expect we just want to see a properly functioning

mills with its existing capacity, regular work schedule at least three alternative days in a week and process of appointing us as permanent workers based on seniority and serial.

There is another issue that we would like to see that wage commission is functioning. It has been formed but still has not been proposed revised wage scale. In order to survive in this market we have to have the ability to buy our daily subsistence and it requires a revision of our wage scale.

In addition certainly we want to see our hospital with proper equipment and facilities. Now as badli worker we don't receive any medical facilities from the mills. We just get a medical allowance. If we go to the doctor of the mills he gives us prescription. But we have to buy the medicine. Even we can only avail this facility when we have become sick on duty time but other than that a badli worker does not have any right to get medical facility.

School of our mills is good but there is no fan in the class room. It is really difficult to be attentive and to study during the summer if there is no fan.

We would like to see that all those dilapidated buildings have been renovated; we are living in a better quarter. We can acquire those building when we will be appointed as permanent workers we know. Yes we all know that if mills run better if the production is high then all those problems will be solved.

We want to see mills are performing its best because of it survives we will survive with our children. We don't want that our children will remain uneducated. We want then educated and we also want then to manage a job here. If I will die or we die and any of my children is capable and above 18 will be appointed in my position or in a helper position according to the system. Besides we want to see them in better position too.

Believe us: if mills remain closed the whole Khalsihpur becomes shattered. It is an industrial city mills and factories are its heart. Upon our income all those shops such as tea stall, and stall, bazars, supplier of fish, stationaries, vendors of vegetables, grocery shops depend on the earnings of us. When mills are closed, we don't have money to buy their shops are closed too. It is a chain with multiple links but every link is important for the survival of this jonopad - locality.

Ok, machines should function, we mean closed machine and looms. But it requires technological enhancement of all apparatus. It is also important that the quality of jute will be maintained. We don't get good quality of jute as well as supplies of ingredients are not up to the mark. We mean oil, blotching powder, or powder of the seed of tetul/tamarin and others.

But the management of the mills should be accountable to the Ministry will be good. We mean that all initiatives and arrangement should be done by the Ministry directly. We are simply a general mass our ideas are not that sharp as an educated person. But what we realise that in jute mills even each and every brick sucks and wants money what we intend to say that there is corruption everywhere and sphere.

We receive only the one third of the collected raw jute to give production and the rest are being taken away by the syndicate. This corruption can be controlled by the Ministry.

Ministry has to have two tire supervision and inspection. One is regular inspection through the process it will ask the accounts how the money has been spent and scrutinise all sections and sub sections. Secondly they will give unannounced visit for inspection to see what sort of jute has been bought. So there will be official supervision and unofficial and unannounced supervision. BJMC is another thief so we think Ministry will be a good solution to do the supervision. For an example: a machine is not working. If we complain an engineer comes examines it and then says ok it has become out of order and then he leaves. We remain idled. If the Ministry people pays their unofficial visit they can interrogate why this machine has not been repaired.

Role of TU/CBA: CBA is fine. But we don't have power to vote them as we are badli worker. We would like to see them in the leadership role but a pressure has to be there from the top level.

We consider this right to vote as a deprivation we caste all kind of votes only we don't have to caste vote for selecting our leaders. Once we have that influence whatever we say will have some impact. We will have our proper evaluation. We can command and ask something. We have been working here for years. Nobody has ever listened to us or have time to listen our problems. This is the first time in our life we are saying all these to you and this is the first time we have come to Head office of the mills and have the opportunity to visit this board room. We are not allowed to talk. We don't have that opportunity. TU people they don't listen to us if we want to say something, management they never talk to us. We get instructions from the Sardars or time keepers. Sometimes we think if the GM once sits with us if he once listens to us then he could be able to run these mills more efficiently. We don't have any space in this mill we don't exist. We are like a boat we remain floated like a boat. Our tongues get dried for uttering 'sir, sir thousands time. We are nowhere.

There is no female Sardar. We think we require a female Sardar because she will naturally understand our problems more intensely. We do not have an opportunity to speak if we want to say something they "dapor(threat) dei" they take us to task and start swearing. In this issue there is no difference between a permanent female worker and a badli female worker. Can we tell everything to a male Sardar.

Ownership:

Why government wanted to give closed and give the ownership of the mills to a private owner we have never thought about it. But we will not accept such decision anymore. If it happens again we will resist and our situation will be live or let die together. An owner is the king in his mills if he wants he can ask us to leave the plant and then close it, he is not accountable to anyone. It is true that the mills were about to close in the regime of 4 party alliance and was announced to be closed by the caretaker government. But they were not successful and here lies the core issue of why we want that mills should remain as SOJMs.

Now in this regime of Sheikh Hasina , mills are functioning and in production, we are working, earning and have the ability to have at least two proper meals (Dal & bhat means dal and rice) every day. It is reality indeed that reopening or functioning of all these mills are the cause of our survival or the survival of the poor like us. We can't go back from

where we have come from; there is nothing left there for us. These mills once used to provide its workers medicine, soaps and many other things necessary for our living.

Even we don't think the mills will run effectively under the ownership of the workers too. The difference of owner and workers even remain in the mind-set of the workers who will become the member of the board. Look at CBA if a worker becomes a board member even elected he won't look after my problem or listen to it. It is our nature. As a powerful worker I will think now it is my turn I will serve my interest. On the other hand government is like parents. If our parents are in the right direction and gives us right direction we may spend our days in hardship but still we will be happy, because keep us happy is their objective.

Listen loss figure could be huge , there may be high corruption all are there but still government will run it. Government can never ask me to leave the place and can never lock the gate of the mills, even if it fails to provide my wages for more than six months.

It is true that mills is profit making concern we mean it should be. We are unfortunate, we now mills never incur loss even if we work for 6 hours instead of 8 hours. Mills incur loss when we use inferior quality or jute . Loss is constructed (Loss to hoi kolome) it is constructed by the pen not by our hand. The management , agency in charge and those they are responsible. Trust our words if they provide us even c grade jute with the superior quality of ingredients require for processing it we can produce more and good quality of products. Thus the mills can incur profit.

Corruption is everywhere. This issue of making badli workers permanent through overriding the seniority because they are bribed is also corruption. Powerful persons they show their influence like , “ my people will be the first to be appointed as permanent workers. Thus I demonstrate my power or influence. They are mainly officers or it usually takes place from the top level.

We are certain that all these at least can be checked if the Ministry takes the responsibility. If government wants can stop corruption in 8 hours. If once Sheikh Hasina announces or instructs that there will be no corruption in jute mills and in case of recruitment. It will instantly stop. She will send the Inspection Committee and they will give the report.

Basic Entitlements:

First to be appointed as permanent worker according to the seniority basis, second: receive our wages slip in due time every week, and in the production side we have some problems we need to work more than 16 to 18 hours to receive our minimum wage, even now if there is any problem if we remain as off duty we will get the minimum pay slip, we will have right to vote, we will have leave provisions. These are our basic entitlements.

One participant ant commented: 23 years I have been waiting to see myself as a permanent worker. I would like to see my dead body will be carried by the mills van to my village. I would like to spend days without tensions and worries and like to have a proper meal every day.

The major issue is our voting right. Once we will have that right we will receive proper honour from our colleagues and a proper evaluation of our work from the management.

As badli workers we do not have power or strength. If two pans (hari) are empty then where we will get strength.

Mills will not be closed again if Sheikh Hasina is in power. Her father If Hasina does not remain in power that is the issue that makes us more worried. Then again corruption (here play of power to dominate them) will be there that is the cause of our despair. She is in power o we could have some rice with dal. We don't understand politics we understand "petniti" (politics is rajniti in Bangla pet niti means policy of stomach). If in the next regime again mills go back to previous situation definitely we will be on the street again. For us every road is already closed. We cannot go back there is no road back for us. There is no provision for alternative work so how we will survive with our children. Mill is our future our source of earnings, our strength.

Fire in the godown:

There are various reasons. May be the quality of purchased jute is low or the management has not bought the required amount of jute. There could be conspiracy too so the mills cannot perform well. Whatever the reason is it happens at top level.

International conspiracy: they cannot think that far.

Anyway if mills survive Khalishpur will survive that's all for us, that's all we understand.

One participant: Son in law of my eldest daughter is now working as badli worker. In their language: I admitted him here as badli worker or through my recommendation.

Listen: if mills had not been functioning we would not have come here, with whom you would talk.

Aspirations: Rani: I wish if I become a permanent worker I will contest in CBA election. I know by the grace of Allah I will get all votes of the female workers. CBA doesn't want female leadership. Women are also human being that is one of the issues which has never been considered in the spheres of the jute mills. Even we work so sincerely we don't smoke like the guys , we don't frequently leave our working place , we never avoid or ignore our work but we never get what we deserve. Women are deprived, exploited and victim of violence.

Once I will be a permanent worker I will have the right to talk to every official about my problem. I cannot tell my problems to anyone.

Who can take the decision and can bring necessary changes: The Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. We believe her and we believe whom she will select as representative of looking after our issues. She is our Ma (mother). Ma will decide.

What we can do: we buy whatever we want to buy for our children. When we receive our wages in every week we buy good food like sweets on our way back to home. Every Thursday they know we receive our weekly wages so at home our children also expect that Ma will certainly bring Today.

Badli Workers, FGD #20

Common issue: Timely purchase of raw jute, supply of materials and parts timely and quality should be maintained. Supervision should be strong so everybody's under the surveillance and it can be detected who is not doing his duty.

Number of participants: 5

Humtun Kabir, he is local has been working here since 2004 in grade #2 as breaker and fitter.

Nurul Alam: lives in PJJ Colony, has been working from 2009. Wanted to finish his education but due to poverty could not finish it. Father is a permanent worker of PJJ. My grandfather used to work here and then my uncle, now I am working as a badli in the spinning section.

Batil Matobbor: Works in grade #2, home district is Madari Pur I appointed here by my Maternal uncle.

Abdur Rahim: My father had died in the liberation war of 1971 and after three or four months my mother could not accept that shock drove mad and died. I was a kid then and had been raised by my elder siblings. I finished school final and then my sister brought me here and admitted me into these mills. She is a permanent worker.

Nurul Islam: My father used to work here and dies in 2002 as a result I was offered this job. I started working here and in 2004 I had an accident and lost my arm. Mills bore my entire medical cost and treatment cost. But I did not get compensation. CBA leaders advised me not to claim that money and they would look after my issue. They told me if I had taken the money then I would have announced as unfit for work. So out of humanity CBA members asked me to remain silent. Now I work as badli-staff I get my hajira (literary meaning everyday presence but here is implied as wages received for receiving duty) as a helper. I work here or in the floor as staff orderly.

My home district is in Norile. My Uncle is now working here. I live in PJJ's quarter. Although we are badli workers and we are not entitled to have living space. We live in shared accommodation 4/5 people, "Living by gathering". in one room and that room is normally allotted to a permanent worker. We have to pay him rent.

Yes as badli-workers we receive insurance facilities if there is any accident in the working place.

Although my father is a permanent worker we came here in 2003/4 when BNP government announced lay off .

We are married and we live here with our family. We need to go through a permanent worker to admit our children in PJJ's school. He/she has to sign the application as a father of a kid of any badli-workers.. We seldom visit our village home, we want to but you know it is costly going home we have to count the transport cost ...only during Eid holidays we visit there. We do not possess land so no support from home like 10-20 kilos rice or lentils, maslas, nothing is sent from home.

Nurul Islam my grandfather used to possess some land. But a Hindu person grabbed that land by taking a tip soi (thumb print) from him on a paper. He told him that he would set up a piling tendering woods shop and re required his sign.

Now many badli-workers have been appointed, what we intend to say as a badli-workers that there should be ration that counts available machine, number of permanent workers and based on that number of badli-workers have to be employed. Now we do not get regular work 3 days in a week for those who are senior badli-workers. Nurul Alam and for Rahim: we last got a call for duty the week after Qurabni Eid (almost 2 months and that time permanent workers might not return from their village home so they were asked to give a duty). Now in one section if there vacancies for 10 people mills can recruit 15 but not 50 persons for 10 posts. Now the way mills are functioning we optimistic and pray for our current Prime Minister but the circular and how it will be implemented..

Mills are now functioning very effectively. Signal of efficient or running very good means to us we are getting our wages every week and timely. At one point of time couple of years ago mills were about to close down. Now we are badli-workers if they appoint us permanent workers we will become fully satisfied. We think if they employ proper skilled persons in every stages mills definitely functions smoothly and efficiently and in fact it has been functioning effectively when the current ruling party has come into power. Now we have only one demand that is the demand (Praner dabi) that appoint us as permanent workers according to our seniority. When we work on the same machine we mean when we run the machine at one point the machine and we get adjusted. Now as badli workers we have to work on different machine whenever we get duty. It hampers our momentum and also level of production. New people they are not properly trained up and then know how to run a machine. So when we start our work it takes time clear jam and makes it smoothen for functioning. Again as badli-workers we cannot have specific machine so we have to work on which machine is available today. We cannot have and ask for a fixed machine too, that is the reason we have told you earlier that there is synchronization between man and machine and if it gets disrupted...

The circular suggests that only 30% of the vacant posts have to fill up. Now if there are 10 vacancies in my department then only 3 will be occupied but what about other 7 posts. Process and then we are tensed so few posts... some people who have money can bribe and become permanent workers.

What we want now, you know a circular for appointing us as permanent workers has been sent that the authority and management will follow this circular accordingly under the provided rules and regulations they will appoint us permanent workers. It requires honesty and sincerity. We are doubtful about it. Now we have jute we need timely supply of parts and machinery and proper attention that rules are implemented accordingly. We have been thinking and we are tensed that if some people bribe them and become permanent then...

As a badli-worker we want all kind of facilities that are available to the P workers such as medical facilities and education facility for children. We get medical benefits only the treatment but not the facility like medicine. Yes our family can also have this facility. But no we did not bring our wives here during their delivery time ...

If we have any problem we try to raise it by CBA leaders. We consider them as our leader too we are involved with them. But we consider CBA leaders as our guardian. Yes we have our leader and we do canvassing during election for that leader, we do campaigning and asking vote for them Alas we do not have the right to cast our vote, we will fill fully satisfied if we have the right to vote. We want our right to vote as a worker of the mills.

Now badli-workers and their numbers need to be under a proper regulation. There should be a policy about the number of badli-workers. Then at least we can survive even as a badli-worker rest of our life. Now our life is at risk we are always keep on running. The policy of recruiting us we mean they should employ badli-workers when permanent workers are on leave or they take leave. Now if the system requires 200 and but has got 1000 then you understand what can be the situation. We have to consider the capacity and interest of the mills.

Our gate pass gets cancelled for three reasons; first every gate pass contains a date it has been registered and then there is another date when it gets expired, so it is our responsibility to renew the gate pass, 2ndly if someone has not been on duty for 3 /4/5 months but has renewed his gate pass timely then it is fine but if he forgets then it gets cancelled, and finally if anyone does anything illegal, or had done something punishable then gate pass gets cancelled too.

We pursue or get the gate pass through our brothers/relatives or CBA leaders. There is a form we have to fill up that form and submit 2 copies photographs all have to be done through the leaders. So termination and approval of gate pass as badli-workers all are conducted or done by the CBA leaders.

Yes we have tried. Nurul Alam I have tried to work in Peoples' Jute Mills when it ran by an owner. But in private mills they give less Hajira. Wages. There is a process of making a badli-worker as a permanent workers in due time but we prefer working here. Batil: I have been working for 19 years but I never tried to work any private mills. During crisis period I worked as a rickshaw puller because of lower level of wages. Private Mills are good for who owns it they become rich over night for us ...workers do not have proper recognition or valuation.

It is fact that mills under private ownership are functioning efficiently. We understand it is functioning well because everything raw jute, spare parts and machinery are available every thing is there ready and prepared, no corruption and quality of materials are good. SJOMs they give proper recognition to workers if anything goes wrong or we do something bad there is a provision for making up that and provision for punishment but we do not have to leave the job- in private mills," Chakri out-leave the job". Here loopholes are there once upon a time if any thread got split machine remained stop and that had to be fixed first. Now May be in the machine there is not adequate threads for spin but machine remains functioning. In private mills whatever you want materials, medicine mal medicine or spare parts all are available just in moment. If we can have such system and renovates our old machines then ...

No mills should be under state owned not should be provided to under private owners- we just have to be more motivated. Why we say no if you and you are intelligent you can find out that in private mills mostly local people are employed and they are Amlabadi(support Bureaucrats literal translation) and they support capitalists. They have land, they cultivate that land and get rice and other necessary livings out of that; they live in their own house. So they can afford it. In our mills we have come from different places, we have left our village because nothing has remained how can we afford working and maintain our family by that wages. We have come here in search of w it or because of poverty we cannot

maintain our family by such lower level of wages. If mills under private ownership it will be great loss to us because owner will pay us 105 taka per day and 3 days by 105 it is difficult to survive. And termination is easier in owners' mills. Now if BJMC really monitors and proper guidance and plan then all those mills will certainly run effectively. We do not neglect our work and if we do anything unfair and against mills then I will be punished but mills should be under the state.

Government gave it to private owners because of loss and corruption was the major cause for privatization. We need to be honest but if there is corruption how can mills incur profit. Batil: I think it is a bad decision indeed. If I have a headache can I chop my head. Now the same government, same management running all SOJMs but mills is profitable. Same people, same management then how can mill make profit now. We are small people but we think Corruption was one of the or is a cause for loss. If it can be reduced then mills will earn profit. Mills belong to us and these mills need such direction and supervision that these mills are considered our assets. We want Ministry to be directly responsible for mills. We are workers we do not have and cannot provide misinformation we do not deal with record those who work by pen all corruptions, misappropriation they do through their pen. Now we need good planning, initiative, coordination and monitoring. There are some sections and some people are working in those sections which are not that visible so you may not notice but those people do not have the capacity to work but they are working. Monitoring should be strong so that they can notice all loop holes lies in the system.

If they give responsibility to zone office it is better we can talk more in detail, BJMC is also good for monitoring. Batil I want mills should be under Ministry. BJMC should come frequently and should be skilled persons in BJMC and they should discuss with all level of employees. We are involved in production then when they will come they should also talk to us.

There has to be a discussion. If there is a problem they should talk to us like you. The way you are now talking to Badli-workers, similarly those who come for monitoring from BJMC they should also talk to us and listen to us. The mills need proper policies, rules and regulations. There should be a system that in absence of government and BJMC, the mills could run on their own. ... Changes of government means there may be a change of policy so there should be a concrete policy.

Supervision and monitoring should be strong so sometimes they should give threat to CBA and management.

Under workers mode of ownership it makes the whole process complex and indiscipline. There will be arguments on who knows best and understands better ...one should be the supreme authority. We do not think it will be a good decision mills should be under the state mode of ownership. But mills have been functioning under BJMC's but there has been loss now we want mills should be reportable directly to the Ministry. But BJMC should be in supervisory role or monitoring role.

Workers' representative in the Enterprise board will be a good decision. Batil: I have a doubt who will be the representative there. Someone as a worker should be there because this gives an opportunity of considering all aspects. But who will be there and how many from which category? Batil: I think one representative is enough but he has to be selected by all.

Rahim/ Nurul alma: Badli-worker can never come here or represent at this level. So it is an issue of permanent workers but there should someone here so information can be available to us.

Production level is very good now. But for proper functioning of the mills we need expert people in every sector. When materials are under assorting then we have to be careful and then it is processed we need proper material for processing like if it requires 5% oil then we get 2% oil and the rest is water. And there is negligence such as many machines are just closed. Then there are many Sardars and officers their relatives are working and they are so empowered. They do not work properly and nobody tells them to work. So every machine has to be under function and every body should work.

2007 that time we worked outside. Batil I worked as helper in small micro-bus and also workers as daily wage labour in the agricultural firm (Kishan disi). I am a worker of another closed mill that is News Print Mills. When it got closed and started working in Peoples' Jute Mills. Peoples' was functioning hajira was 130 taka per day. Rahim: 2007 most of the mills were closed. I worked as piling labour for setting up electric poles and at night I worked as rickshaw puller. Nurul Alam I worked in garments.

When there was crisis I am talking about 2007: why workers had to face such toll and inhuman treatment. I want to say one issue if they are guilty they should be punished. But workers are not at fault or they did not do anything wrong then... we were all involved with this movement. At one point of time one of our brothers had been killed.

Batil: no my wife is not involved with any samiti.

Rahim: my wife is a member of Grameern samiti and Nurul Alam: my wife is involved with BRTB. She stays here but BRTB sends money there.

Nurul Islam: my wife is involved with ASA.

Humatyun Kabir: I used to be involved with BRAC. I took loan 60000 by two instalments in each instalment 30000 taka and wanted to do business. But incurred loss and spent this money for living. Then I had to sell land to pay them back. The rate of interest is 15%.

I wanted to take loan Now I am involved with two samiti one is ASA and Udayan.

Yes we have loans, so cause we have to take loan from samiti .

Batil: I have loan not with any samiti 10000 taka.

Nurul Alam: we had to take loan because of arranging sisters' marriage and asking loan from samiti is the only option.

Ad-hoc committee: when AC was in operation that was the time of severe crisis. They tried their best to support us and they have become the leader later after election. No not in our mills in Star Jute Mills mostly member of Adhoc Committee selected in the next election. AC was formed during Fakruddin regime and at the end of BNP's regime. Ashraf, Harun Matiar Munshi and there was another person they worked as AC.

We really feel honoured as a worker of state owned mills and there are other people who live moreBut we are working in state owned mills we are working under the government organization. But problem is elsewhere, a permanent worker can do shopping on credit. They can feed their children better , even if I want to buy sweet I need to have that money I cannot buy it on credit but they can from a shop if that owners known to them.

Batil: even it is difficult to arrange a marriage of a daughter of a badli worker. My daughter reads in class eight and by the grace of Allah she is so beautiful like a rose. Allah might think that I work badli- so he wanted to help me I do not have to spend that much money for arranging her marriage. The government should provide funding for the arrangement of the marriage of the badli workers daughters.

Humayun: how we feel when we see that even after working half an hour Sardar comes and tells ok you can go now today you don't have to work anymore.

When we visit our villages they know we work as badli-workers and tell us ,” ja beta , what is this so many years you have been working as badli-worker and still now work as badli-worker’. Now when they see we visit village stay there for a long time and buys rice for daily living they come to know we do not do something good.

NI: We are the most vulnerable people of these mills. We do not have land that we can cultivate, we came here and have left village only for living. Now when we are in the city and cannot maintain families and starve for half day then what is the meaning ...

I want to say that this practice of remaining people as badli-workers for a long time if that practice can be stopped, badli when becomes off duty if any alternatives can do for them and provide them all those facilities that Pp workers receive

CBA we would like to see them efficient and responsible. They will follow the policy, rules and regulation and provides work to the people according to the serial.

NI: our leader they look after us and try to solve our problems. We want such leaders.

Batil: I think members of TU and CBA leaders need to be downsized. Any CBA leaders in any mills they do not work. So if that numbers can reduce then the production level will be high. We cannot say everything to everyone now here we are saying everything. But we have to be careful.

In case of TU on nay issues thy become divided and then start asking where is the home district that is the way they function.

If we get work for 2 days the remaining days we are off and remain idle. We do not know how if functions like I want my son to get admitted into the school, but I do not know whom should I ask for it.

Our demand maintaining the ratio of the B workers and P workers. We have another demand that mills should provide the cost of arranging marriage of our daughters.

We do not get work regularly and if our officers, Line Sardars, relievers managing us properly and they are ambiguities how they run it; after working more than half an hour they ask us to be off.

Appointing us as permanent workers we consider our rights. For Badli workers there should be something in the budget under that head. If I face any accidents then BJMC or mills should bear the cost of it. If badli- falls into sick we think mills should take that responsibility. These all we consider our rights too.

Only governments can do and take all actions.

When a person gets retired at the same time that position will be occupied by an badli-workers based on seniority he will be appointed as permanent worker.

Yes what I think that AL is in power we the poor can still spend days and can have two meals proper meals. But when BNP government or care taker government come into power then we are in severe crisis situation.

NI: it is not government's responsibility. All governments want to run its SOE smoothly but it is negligence or unwillingness who are dealing with management and records. All corruption is conducted through pen (Kolomer durniti).

We do not want it and do not want to see that phase. But now how mills are functioning we think mills will run properly and there is a bright future.

But if anything happens like that we will launch another movement certainly. If we starve and our children starve then we have to launch that movement. If we find anything wrong we will launch another movement. For us all roads are already closed. There is no alternative work. [...] Previously we had thought we were alone but now we do not think we are alone anymore.

When there was liberation war I came to know many stories from my mother that we had spend days in starvation. To a child like me who needed milk she gave me her tongue to suck if such situation comes we have to be on the street.

Mills should be accountable directly to the Ministry and all can be done by the government. BJMC will do supervision. We have been working here we never have come here, today only for you we mean you invited so we entered to this Board room and building. But we think even GM or those who come from BJMC they should talk to us. They can do enquiry even without demand and can talk to us.

We do not get any facilities or relief from any institutions or organizations, we also know from BTV that government has many initiatives and project for supporting people but... this is only announcements in TV. But in villages we find there are government initiatives like any one can draw 50 thousands loan for house building.

NI: I went and asked for loan under Youth Development project manages by the government but they just took my application. If I had been associated with any leader then I would have got it by one day

We appreciate our female colleagues.

HK/Batil/ NI/ R: wife does not work. We have children and they have to look after them

NA: my sisters have learnt sewing and she is going to take it professionally. We appreciate our female colleagues, we work together they have to come because of poverty and it is needed. We have heard that there had been fire in Latif Bawani go down and cost loss like 50 cr taka and in the Crescent Jute Mills. We do not walk around go down it is not allowed and we have been told. So we are all at alert. We should be careful and not do any harm to the mills. It is national assets it belongs to all If mills function my children can work here or my brothers, my relatives.

If raw jute is wet when it is stored then jute which is piled at the bottom it gets hot and heat raises through chemical reactions. A gas is formed there and then it causes fire. But there are bad people they can also do it.

Finance Minister: interview # 43

What is happening now? This sector has faced a very crisis period and it is always a small part of an internal trade but it stopped in the decade of 1970s. Then it shifted to carpet bagging cloths but it also substituted by the artificial fibre. When Bangladesh had become independent it once achieved the highest level of export from jute in 1973-74. While the market was declining we didn't go for product diversification or differentiation. Look at Thailand they did very good through Kenaf and then they have found that Jute has market they have thrown it away. Our entrepreneurs lack such creative ideas. Our entrepreneurs lack of creative ideas. Our private sectors are also spoon fed, if anything happens they come to the government and the government had to and have to provide subsidy. And the Jute sector was under the government sector and became loss making sector. So our development aid agencies wanted to reform the sector. By that time the concern for the environment has brought back its significance and some private entrepreneurs have become also interested. Once the government sector use to have 77 mills now there are at least more than 77 or 75 mills under the private sector, and now the government owned jute mills are 19 /23 or something like that. I can't remember the figure. Now it will be totally under the private sector management, it is no longer a government organisation and will be registered under the Companies Act. BJMC will become a holding company. The one opened yesterday or day before yesterday under the name of Khalishpur Jute Mills Ltd. It is a mode of that what we have been working on now PPP. Under PPP we are providing equity not supposed to be budget anymore. They will receive cash credit from the Bank at initial stage we will support not more than 20 to 3 years. We should better talk to the Chairman of BJMC , he is a very competent fellow. He has designed the plan of restructuring under PPP concept. They have made a plan for 23 plans or 26. Government will have a presence. PPP concepts the government will have a stake. Government will provide the equity and the management will be recruited the way market functions.

We have taken steps already we have taken all debt as our responsibility through creating securitising bonds. And the process should initiate in clean slate. Now in various places the workers have been shade off and they should not come back. But not will be reopened under the same name such as Quami Jute Mills, Peoples' jute Mills are now functioning as Khalishpur Jute Mills . This is a public relation issue. And those who have received golden handshakes cannot come back again. Golden handshakes have been provided with having a mindset that you could look for other jobs and business.

There are product differentiations and different products have come into the market. Now Hessian is not important while those products that can suck the water under the stone and pebbles have demand in the international market. Product diversification is very important. APhold c kaje lage jute amra ekhno jai nai. Now for the product diversification requires new technologies in jute manufacturing. Private jute mills do not come to em for begging money.

Yes these 19 mills will remain with BJMC but there may be retrenchment. But, it is BJMC's responsibility. Now for the labour in the labour law there are certain entitlements have been announced. In the governments sectors CBA has become a nuisance. They are just a clerk but have cars lead a life like a millionaire because through corruption. There are CBA leaders who are not even employees. Many rules we did not follow, now once they will be under the private management. Like in one organisation there should be one CBA but there are multiple CBA in many SOEs BAL ,BNP and others. These changes are difficult to make but will be structured under the private sector. Private sector means private style of management. Not Public sector management. Holding company will be highest body and every plan will be accountable to it. In a way it used to exist like EPIDC. EPIDC used to provide equity but the management had to be managed by the private sector. So after the Liberation war we did not have other option left other than nationalised it. Nationalisation was a compulsion and also fitted with the social political context. And then it denationalisation initiated in 1982 and 35 jute mills were denationalised. But at that time the settlement package was not appropriate so they had to take the burden of debt.

Holding Company will be accountable to the Ministry of Jute and then the Ministry will be responsible and accountable to the Standing Committee. That will be the governance structure very distant governance structure. They can give directions but nothing more. We won't finance for BMR they will do it. We have provided the equity. I asked them to give me five year business plan. They had to detail out their plan, what will be the condition of the business, marketing, human resource, employment policy, and they had to give me the plan of BMR. A five year business plan comprises everything. Based on it we have provided them equity and Khalsipur is the first experiment.

When BJMC will go for PPP then the board members combination will have to change. Now still there are 16 mills under BJMC but when they will go for PPP with the leasee then the composition of the board has to be changed. Enterprise board of the mill but in case of BJMC board may take the workers representative because workers are now very cautious and they are professional's people and participation is now widely discussed everywhere (global level?)

AJM has been done and now it can be renovated. It was the prescription and agreement with the WB but even through restructuring program was not successful. It was decided that 4000 employees would be relieved but soon after releasing that 4000 employees they were reemployed again. I don't know the exact number. AJM was profitable and it was sold out properly. Its machinery was very good not terrible worn out. New investors used to buy old machinery but AJM parts and machinery were not sold out in a proper way. A nee investor wanted to buy its equipment but did not get the opportunity. And lately used to be sold out in a joler dore. Now AEPZ is functioning well. We had a meeting with them yesterday they told us," there is no space in AEPZ now. We are really short of EPZ space'. We have announced that we are not going for EPZ and we are going to open the domestic market and there is no charm in it. See Garments why this industry has been flourished

beyond EPZ because EPZ has lost its attraction because of globalisation. I think by 2015 or by 2020 there will be no justification for EPZ. We are now mostly concerned of economic zone, because, we don't have land. German wants EPZ but we don't have land. It has become a problem in the West Bengal but they have less population. We have human resource but do not have land. Our density is over a thousand per sq kilometre. It is impossible to draw a plan for coal.

We have said we will not close any mills or plan without making an alternative plan. Holding companies concept makes it less liable for the government. Entitlement and equity will be distributed according to the legal doctrines and within the social safety network. Lay off or retrenchment is their responsibility. Only people who have received golden handshakes can be reemployed.

Ex-President of the Platinum Mills 2008-10, Interview #14

I joined PJJ in 14 years back in 1996, since my joining I have been involved with the Trade Union movement. I am and have been actively involved with the National Workers Federation. In 2008 I became a member of Basic Union I was the President of that CBA. Our home is located in the Housing Complex. Although I used to work as Badli-worker under time rate I took transfer to Weaving department in order to become a PW.

I did not have to hide during the care taker regime. I had been involved with the movement actively because I was not involved with the basic union that time. Few labour leaders had to hide out that time. Yes it is true that time most of the workers sold their salary slip to all those amla- amla implies petty bourgeoisies at more than 60% discount rate. I think some of the employees of the mill were involved with this business too. Generally outsiders who are millionaire they did this business.

In order to keep mill functioning TU has an important role but its role has to be transparent. A system has to be designed that can ensure its transparency. Transparency is one thing that is required in its actions and operation, besides, CBA members need to do advocacy or negotiation (hammering) with the management regarding the ongoing problems because they are directly work at the floor level they know the problem lies in the existing system in the lay out. So if TU works along with the management through consultation runs the mill, it will run profitably.

Our main task is looking after the problems and issues of the workers like if a worker gets suspended, or gets charge sheet then we start negotiation. But what I consider as our major responsibility what we did when we first took over power in 2008 we had to manage the optimum level of output with the minimum resource, that time level of production was 14 tonne whereas currently the level of production is 60-65 tonne per day. Our main task is coordination our task is not selecting contractors through bidding it is entirely management responsibility. But management gets transferred when anything goes wrong but we cannot be transferred. Accountability is the most important things, which need to be initiated into the system and it can be ensured through creating a provision of participation of the CBA members in terms of managing the mill like their adequate and entitled fully informed participation in case of procuring raw jute, parts and machinery in case of all procurements. The trend is management talk to us when they need to implement any resolutions or they need to manage workers. Apparently it seems management listens to TU members, it is not true. Basic union has got 25 members and according to the law we

acquire power structurally through the election. Now if one party asks for transparency and the other party that is management still lacks transparency in its operation then it won't work. But if at least TU becomes transparent in its action the total effort can bring 60% transparency in overall management.

I am content and satisfied what I did as a President of this mill; I had meeting couple of times with the current government on how to make these public sector jute mills sustainable. My mills received more funding in comparing to all other mills during my tenure. I think the span of activities of the basic union should be more expanded, union should play active role in policy making process of the mill. I think its involvement and engagement should be institutionally broadened. If union members are officially formally involved with the procurement then only we can ensure accountability of the system partially. Because what I have observed whenever we are asked about any misdeeds, corruption and practises we just deny that we are also a part of it. We can straight away deny our responsibility that we have been informed about it before; not only we keep mentioning that we always remain unaware about any sort of procurement to the workers. We have a life outside the mill, I mean all of us we are involved with political parties we also deny those facts towards our party members too. But our official involvement can make us more responsible and can create more accountability among us as a member of the union. It will create a space no way I could be able to deny that I was not asked about it before or not informed about it. Apparently it seems we are informed about the decision of the management no it is not true direct formal involvement will create more responsibility in us and as public sector jute mills can earn more sunam(proshongsha). For an example if management procures some chairs by 5000 taka it submits receipts that shows this chair costs 10000 taka. Out of this extra 5000 taka, management distributes 3000 taka among the officials involved with it, 1000 taka they give to the local journalists to manage them so this information will never flush and 1000 taka to CBAs. Now if a union member becomes involved with such procurement directly then his accountability towards the workers can be directly established he has to have answers for all questions that could be asked regarding this issue. Our role is limited we do not have any role outside the mill to play, but management they can be transferred to other mill. I think the Ministry of Jute and Textile should think about such initiative which means a participation of the workers' representative in order to ensure transparency in actions that leads to accountability of the entire system. One circular from the Ministry through BJMC is enough to establish such mode- they just have to mention that in every ongoing and upcoming projects of the mill, mill management has to involve formally 1 or 2 CBA members and thus those members become legally responsible towards the workers. Certainly there is a possibility that both CBA members and management can form a syndicate and can do corruption but I do not have option to be transferred, I have to work here and I have to think about whether I will contest in next election.

Apparently it is fine but you know our country if Awami League is in power then its agents try to create problem for the agents of other political parties, particularly everything is now divided into two blocks you have to be either involved with BAL or BNP.

Our mills require BMR you know in case of Indian Mills they do renovation in every 10 - 12 years and accountability these two are essential for ensuring sustainability of our public sector jute mills. Accountability can be ensured towards the workers and thus to the state. But how can we make it there is no official discussion between management and union,

although we have decided that every month we will have official meeting but ...if any problem arises then we are invited to a discussion. If it becomes formal, official then it will be a practice and union members will feel responsible to make the workers updated about the outcome and could be able to ask the union members what they have discussed in the last meeting so the entire system will get a shape and space can be created. It does not matter whether it is under a private ownership or government ownership in any way such regulations regarding official discussion between the management and union members should be initiated.

I think as a President I took part to some extent in the decision making process , when we got the power only one fourth of the machines used to be in operation we had to ask for activating all machines , now all most all machines are operating. But still we have discontent we did nit get what we had asked. Transparency I told you if management is transparent ...

They do not ask our demand while they prepare budget but it is trend we submit our demand in March. They do not listed what we ask but sometimes they try to put some of our agenda items like renovating some machinery or operation of some machine. I admit it is their regular duty but we have to ask for it. Our gain at least some people can be recruited and can work.

We think about workers' [participation fully knowing participation in planning budget and other crucial issue and we are capable enough to do those jobs. In the past many of us used to be promoted to officers' positions there used to be career path for the workers to become officials.

No I don't think I have got whatever I wanted ... we are uneducated people we just know how to operate a machine and people demand is unlimited but still I think revised wage scale should be announced at same time when government usually provides pay scale to the officers.

Privatisation is a matter of government policy and suggested by the WB. But I think mill should not be privatised. All mills under private ownership give 560 taka weekly wages to the worker which is indeed ... human rights it is also ...Labour law. But if we want sustainability of the public sector jute mills we have to initiate dialogue among the members of trade union, bureaucrats and policy makers. I also think there should be workers' representation in the standing committee of the Parliament so our voice can be directly heard there. It is true that we have workers representation at national level if we consider the structure of the Wage Commission and Jute Commission but those representatives used to lead before. Now they are not involved with the Union as they have retired from their job. How can they suggest the best possible ways for making it sustainable at the current context certainly they know the functioning but they don't know the context? So representative from us have to be selected and should be involved with all those committees, because we are the actors now or stakeholders so we will look for its sustainability. Because, if we can ensure its' survival then we can survive too. So government should include some young trade union members in those committees. Besides in a country like Bangladesh if you notice if any committee is formed 5 representatives will be from the bureaucracy, 5 members will be owners' representatives and 3 will be selected as workers' representatives, how can they negotiate ... their representation becomes ornamental? It doesn't matter how logical I speak there; besides whoever comes into power I mean the ruling party they select members from its labour

wings all those workers' representatives belong to the ruling party of that period and thus government implements whatever they want. You know all labour leaders are involved with partisan politics ... yes there is solution. Government can also select representatives from federation of TU I mean SKOP, In Bangladesh at least there are 18 registered trade unions, government can easily ask at least 2 or 3 veteran labour leaders out of those registered trade union, besides there are many Trade Unions which are not even that active so it is an easy task to select representatives from the SKOP.

Anyway what I want is in short I want to see transparency in management's actions and accountable system and as well as I want to see transparency and accountability in basic unions' actions too.

No, BJMC never asks for workers' representation in designing regulations and policy for managing the mill. I think it should be taken into consideration because it is another way of creating space of participation that eventually ensures systematic accountability.

Mills should be under the government ownership but government should look for ways to increase the accountability of its employees. Labour leaders are all elected, so in one way they are accountable. We all live at the same quarters of the colony I mean at same premises, workers can see our life style, we are entirely involved and engaged – here we live, our children attend mills' school, we celebrate our family level occasions in the community centre of the mill ...so no way labour leader will become isolated,

Democratic practices should be initiated by the management. Mill management has to initiate monthly regular formal meeting with the basic union and let the workers' know what we have discussed there and agenda of the meeting too. Such practise only management can initiate and since it is a public sector jute mills so government I mean the Honourable Minister can take such initiative and send a circular to all mills to make it a practice. Nothing can be done if the Ministry and the Minister do not want. So if they are willing to bring such changes ...I mean before sending such circular Minister can talk to us, he could invite designated labour leaders from all jute mills under the government ownership and then can discuss the issue. It is important for the survival of the entire working community involved with the jute and for the economy of the country. You see when Bangladesh government took initiative to close down all mills, right at that moment the WB and the IMF funded India to establish jute mills, so it indicates there was always and there is market for jute products. Then why they wanted to close down our mills, in particular mills under the public ownership, it should be mentioned that labour cost is higher due to their wages level in case of India comparing to the wage level of the workers working in Bangladesh.

There is difference in terms of managing the mill; government is more committed now... as usual. But I am not certain what will be the situation when there will be change in state power. It is possible to construct loss again. You know we have got a huge amount of structured loan and other types loans too, currently these loan accounts are ineffective, since the government has taken a decision to keep these loan accounts inactive. That is the reason the mill is now earning profit but if the next government wants to imposes that mills have to pay back all incurred loans with the interest every month then it will become impossible for the mill to earn profit... the amount of instalments that we are supposed to return to the Bank on each month is almost more than 10 million taka!!

Mills under the workers' ownership- it will become impossible for the workers' to keep up its functioning because of political influence. All of us are involved with the political party and there are recommendations from different groups that we have to follow. Certainly mills under the private owners have to listen to influential people or people who are involved with the politics. That is the reason they still could pay 560 taka to the workers while a worker of a public sector jute mills gets at least 1100-1200 taka per week, and hence they disobey government's announced living wage as well as all legal doctrines including the constitution too. We have to take support from the government, for an example last month one incident took place in one of the public sector mills of Chittagong. The MP of that region wanted to enter into mills' premises, there were some issues but the mill management did not allow him to enter and you know the Jute Minister has looked after that issue; he has taken the entire responsibility.

I think in a country like Bangladesh whatever we get are not enough but still I am content with it, our children can attend the mill provided school but only medical treatment it is not at all adequate, we should be provided with the cost of the treatment the way it used to be given before. Besides, if any accident happens somehow through the vehicles of the mill that injured worker can be sent to the hospital but we do not have ambulance. We used to have ambulance before but due to lack of proper maintenance for the last 10 years these cannot be ...I had raised this issue once to the Minister, while we had meeting with him, he also gave order orally to the BJMC officials for taking immediate steps for renovating all those vehicles but still I haven't seen any initiatives for repairment of all those vehicles. Now the current CBA members may raise this issue again. But I don't know or I will never whether they have raised it because they are not bound to disclose what they discuss with the Minister. Yes sometimes we inform the general workers the outcomes of the meeting through arranging a gate meeting in front of the mill. But still this is not a practice.

I was involved with the 2007 workers' movement. At that time I saw many workers used to work as rickshaw pullers or worked as daily wage workers, sometime I found some of the girls of our neighbourhood at unusual time at unusual place ... you know what I mean.

Scep/ constraining element Mill the way it is functioning now, it will be difficult to make it again as a loss making concern but you don't know – policy is the critical issue. If the government policy is making it a loss making concern then, if government can mowkuf all default loan in case of Shrimp sector then why it can be done in case of our sector.

I agree now CBA officials are managing leave application, submitting PF loan application on behalf of the workers, the problem lies in else where. It has been more than a decade mills did not run properly so some complexity have been cropped up but it will take time to regulate all those issues. While we were in power we asked the management to make it a practice that general workers would deal with their applications with the management if that application has been drafted according to the provided guidelines.