

## Present Scenario of Human Rights Violation in Bangladesh

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### ARTICLE INFO

*Keywords:* Human Rights, Human Rights Violation, Human Rights in Bangladesh, Human Rights Violation in Bangladesh, Types of Human Rights Violation

*Received :* 09, May

*Revised :* 11, June

*Accepted:* 22, July

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### ABSTRACT

Different national and international bodies are concerned about human rights violations in Bangladesh. The study has tried to discover the scenario of human rights in Bangladesh. Data have been collected from the National Human Rights Commission Bangladesh (NHRCB) from 2011 to 2021. Human rights violations are increasing in the country. On average, yearly, disposal and non-disposal cases are 56.7% and 43.3%, respectively, of total complaints at NHRCB. Due to human rights violations, less than 31% of incidences are filed as complaints at NHRCB, while more than 69% of events are not filed. Marder, women violence, rape, child rape, and kidnapping are the top violence types in Bangladesh. As the present government of Bangladesh is already under pressure for human rights violations, analysis based on government data may underestimate the actual scenario. So, further studies are required based on data from the non-governmental organization to get a better picture of human rights in Bangladesh.

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## INTRODUCTION

Human rights are the fundamental possession of human beings required for living with dignity in society. It is universal, and it has no boundaries, no religions, no ethnicities, no languages, no nationalities. Human rights belong to the natural rights, rights of food, education, work, health, and liberty, of human beings thoughtless of nationality, sex, ethnicity, race, color, religion, language, and other similar statuses which are fundamental elements for making life worth (United Nations, 2023). There are thousands of organizations throughout the world working for human rights. The central point of these activities is the United Nations (UN). The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights is primarily responsible for practicing human rights activities entering the world considering the human rights policy.

In present Bangladesh, human rights are not satisfactory. Different national and international bodies are concerned regarding the violation of human rights in current Bangladesh. Human rights in Bangladesh are interrupted by police due to corruption, cultural impunities, and the militarization of police (Uddin, 2022). Sometimes, the Rapid Action Battalion (RAB), a special branch of Bangladesh police, abuses its power and causes extra judicial killing as a name crossfire which is an interruption of human rights (Kamruzzaman, et al., 2016). The capacity of human rights organizations does not suit the range of the difficulties they faced and the depth of the issues they illuminate (Andersen, 2019). The judiciary should be more effective and efficient in Bangladesh to protect the human rights of citizens bringing a criminal prosecution against law-and-order enforcement bodies as some members of agencies are engaged in extra-judicial killing (Hossain, 2017).

In Bangladesh, human rights are interrupted through overtime duty, extra responsibilities in the workplace, less vacation, and sexual harassment. Human rights of women garment workers are being violated from nine aspects, such as forced labor, sexual harassment, maltreatment of supervisors, sanitation problems, safety problems, maternity leave problems, child labor, job insecurity, and associational rights, in different garments throughout the country (Basirulla & Tasnim, 2023). In Bangladesh, various multinational companies and their suppliers do not comply with labor rights in the workplace according to their public disclosures on human rights (Islam, et al., 2020). Forced marriage, cultural malpractices, and lack of justice are the primary factors for the high sexual violence against women in Bangladesh (Banarjee, 2020). Human rights and religious-based violence are accompanied by narratives of police malpractice, judicial failings, discrimination, oppression, and incitement (Chaney & Sahoo, 2020).

## THEORETICAL REVIEW

According to the constitution of Bangladesh, the country is a democratic one. A free, fair, credible, and competitive election is mandatory for a democratic country, but the election in present Bangladesh is polluted. The tenth national parliamentary election in Bangladesh held on January 5, 2014, was just a drama of the ruling party Awami League as the opposition allied force boycotted, and 153 parliament members out of 300 were elected without

any vote. Political violence occurred before, during, and after the 10th national election in Bangladesh due to a lack of meaningful democratic government, political goodwill, negligence, and domination of ruling parties over the opposition (Mollah & Jahan, 2018). The most recent, the 11th, national election in Bangladesh held in 2018 was also controversial. Different international agencies like European Union, the UN, and foreign ambassador in Bangladesh have raised their concerns regarding the 11th national election in Bangladesh. The voting date, December 30, 2018, of the 11th national election in Bangladesh, is a litmus test for democracy as the presence of violence, mass arrests, and the opposition's allegations of state coercion (Aljazeera, 2018).

Due to the climate-inducing dangers, approximately 32% of the coastal communities in Bangladesh are affected every year which hampered the basic rights, rights of food, housing, and clothing, of Bangladeshi people (Naser, et al., 2019). Failing to deal with the huge number of displaced people due to climate-induced shock may lead to humanitarian crises in society. The interruption of human rights may be caused by climate change or the hand of humans. This study only deals the human rights violation cases due to human beings. National and international stakeholders may know the current human rights situation in Bangladesh from this study and might take action to improve the human rights conditions in the country.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The present study has been conducted based on secondary data collected from the website<sup>1</sup> of the National Human Rights Commission Bangladesh (NHRCB). Annual reports on human rights incidences in Bangladesh from 2010 to 2021 have been uploaded on the website. In accordance with the website, the latest annual report is "Annual Report- 2021". The year-wise data on human rights violated cases filed as complaints at NHRCB have been collected from page 33 of the annual report-2021. According to the annual report 2021, the number of human rights incidences filed as complaints in a specific year is the sum of the pending complaints of previous years and newly received complaints in that year. For example, the complaints number in 2021 is the sum of the pending complaints from 2011 to 2020, and the recently received complaints in 2021. The complaints numbers are divided into two groups, one is disposal cases while another is non-disposal cases. Disposal cases are the finished cases, and the non-disposal cases are undissolved complaints, so the cases are rolling to next years until dissolved. For example, a case may be filed in 2015, but it may show in 2021 if it is undissolved till 2021. Non-disposal cases are the pending cases of previous years.

The month-wise type-wise human rights violation number of 2021 has been collected from the annual report of 2021, page number 51. The NHRCB has collected the type-wise monthly violation number from the online version of the 16 popular daily newspapers<sup>2</sup> in Bangladesh from January to December

in 2021. These violation numbers may file or may not file as complaints at NHRCB.

### RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Figure 1 presents the year-wise human rights violated cases filed as complaints, disposal cases, and non-disposal cases at NHRCB from 2011 to 2021. In Bangladesh, in 2011, the complaints, disposal, and non-disposal cases at NHRCB were 297, 285, and 12, respectively. The complaints, disposal, and non-disposal cases turned at 1271, 972, and 299, respectively, in 2021. Cases go through ups and downs situation through the years.



Figure 1. Human Rights Filed Cases at NHRCB from 2011 to 2021

The highest number of incidences occurred in 2018 with 1534 cases for complaints, and 1080 cases for disposal. On the other hand, the highest, 801, number of non-disposal cases occurred in 2017. Descriptive statistics of complaints, disposal, and non-disposal cases from 2011 to 2021 have been represented in Table 1. The average yearly complaint number, cases filed at NHRCB due to human rights violations, is 1001 in the country. The annual average disposal case number is 567, 56.7% of complaints, while the mean non-disposal case number is 434, 43.3% of complaints

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Filed Cases of Human Rights Violation at NHRCB from 2011 to 2021

Descriptive Statistics	Complaints	Disposal Cases	Non-disposal Cases
Observation #	11	11	11
Maximum Value	1,534	1,080	801
Minimum Value	297	285	12
Range	1,237	795	789
Sum	11,008	6,239	4,769
Mean	1,001	567	434
SD	373	253	259
CV%	37	45	60

The Standard Deviation (SD) of the study says that the year-wise variability of the complaint is higher than the disposal and non-disposal case. The above analysis shows the aggregate picture of the filed cases at the NHRCB due to human rights violations in Bangladesh from 2011 to 2021 based on the data collected from the government organization.

Table 2 contains the distribution of type-wise month-wise human rights violation numbers in Bangladesh in 2021. These numbers are collected from the online version of 16 daily newspapers in Bangladesh. All violations are classified into 13 types. The highest violation is caused in the form of murder. The average monthly murder was 112 in 2021 while the maximum incidence was caused in April 2021. Among 13 types of violations, the highest frequency of the top 5 violations, murder, violence against women, rape, child rape, and kidnapping, appeared in April.

Table 2. Distribution of Type-wise Monthly Human Rights Violation Number in Bangladesh in 2021

Type of human rights violation	Jan-21	Feb-21	Mar-21	Apr-21	May-21	Jun-21	Jul-21	Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Mean
Murder	129	114	175	234	193	38	42	144	63	71	85	61	112
Women Violence	34	22	61	148	90	64	50	73	49	31	23	21	56
Rape	50	38	65	104	45	42	51	58	33	50	23	39	50
Child Rape	27	13	36	83	40	26	15	40	21	19	28	13	30
Kidnapping	13	5	16	32	24	26	13	29	13	19	6	21	18
Child Murder	24	10	18	30	44	10	4	21	11	6	11	15	17
Disappearance	12	4	10	18	24	14	8	19	25	17	6	5	14
Death of Labor	10	4	15	25	11	7	62	8	10	2	5	3	14
Complaint against LEAs	10	1	5	21	16	15	9	33	13	9	16	3	13
Child Torture	9	8	16	26	30	7	6	7	12	8	5	12	12
Extrajudicial Killing	0	4	12	2	2	1	2	4	4	2	8	6	4
Acid Attack	1	2	3	0	0	2	1	2	6	3	1	1	2
Corporal Punishment	0	0	8	3	0	0	0	1	1	0	3	0	1
Total	319	225	440	726	519	252	263	439	261	237	220	200	342

The average monthly violation number was 342 in 2021. As a single month, the highest number of incidences, 726, occurred in April, the second highest number of cases, 519, occurred in May, and the third highest number of events, 440, occurred in March. Almost 41% of incidents happened in 3 months from March to May, so this period might be considered as the violence season in Bangladesh. However, further studies are required associating the monthly distribution of violations of other years to make a decision regarding the violent season in Bangladesh because decisions based on a single year of data may be misleading.

In 2021, the number of incidences was 4101, but the number of filed cases at NHRC was 1271 which is 31%. Due to human rights violations, 31% of cases are filed as complaints at the NHRCB while 69% of cases are not filed. However, the actual filing case will be lower than 31% because the incidence number 4101 is collected from the 16 daily newspapers, so the true incidence number must be greater than 4101. Different national and international bodies are raising their voices against the government and various governmental organizations of Bangladesh due to human rights violations, so data made by the governmental organizations might be manipulated. The USA imposes sanctions on the RAB, a special branch of Bangladesh police, due to human rights violations (Human Rights Watch, 2022). The present government of Bangladesh is trying continuously to limit the activities of human rights organizations in the country (Uddin, 2022). However, it is clear from the analysis based on government data that the incidences associated with human rights violations are increasing gradually in Bangladesh.

The economy of Bangladesh is growing moderately as its GDP growth rate is above 6% (Manik, 2023). Bangladesh is doing good economically, but its humanitarian performance is not satisfactory. Future Bangladesh may fall into a humanitarian crisis due to this paradox. To ensure sustainable development in the country, the policymakers of Bangladesh should promote human rights activities. In the national budget allocation, the country allocates nearly 6.0% to the social security and welfare sector (Manik 2023). The budget allocation for social security and welfare programs should increase to improve the human rights situation in the country. Furthermore, government and different governmental institutions of Bangladesh should work based on ethical grounds rather than the political ideology of a specific party to avoid the probable humanitarian crisis in future Bangladesh.

## CONCLUSIONS

Although Bangladesh is showing satisfactory performance in economic growth, its humanitarian activities are unsatisfactory. Human rights violation is increasing gradually in Bangladesh. The NHRCB is the organization of the Bangladesh government responsible to protect human rights throughout the country. The annual average disposal and non-disposal cases are 56.7% and 43.3%, respectively, of total complaints at NHRCB. All cases of human rights interruptions are not filed as complaints at NHRCB. Less than 31% of cases are filed as complaints while more than 69% of cases are not filed as complaints at NHRCB. This study is conducted based on the secondary data collected from the NHRCB. As the present government of Bangladesh is already under threat due to human rights interruptions, government data might underestimate the actual human rights situations. The major limitation of the study is the analysis conducted based on the government's data. Further studies are required based on the data of non-governmental organizations like Ain o Salish Kendra, Odhikar, and Democracywatch to get a better picture of the human rights situation in present Bangladesh.

## ADVANCED RESEARCH

This research still has limitations so it is necessary to carry out further research on this topic.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This research has no funding sources. However, the author is thankful to NHRCB to publish data regarding the human rights situation in Bangladesh online.

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