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An Assessment of Cultural Changes in Rural Society in Gopalganj District of Bangladesh

Sayda Mahmuda¹, Md. Majnur Rashid¹, Zubaidur Rahman²

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ABSTRACT

The study was undertaken to assess the extent and pattern of cultural change in Gopalganj district of Bangladesh. To this end, primary data were collected from the rural people from Gopalganj Sadar, Tungipara and Kotalipara upazila of Gopalganj district. A multistage sampling technique was used in selecting the respondent. Five-point Likert scale was used to evaluate the attitudes of the rural people towards cultural changes in the study area. Descriptive statistics, tabular as well as graphical techniques were used in analyzing the data. Result found from the descriptive statistics indicates that majority of the respondents were within the age group of 31-40 years whereas 21% respondents fall within the age category of 51-60 years. In regards to educational background, it is found that majority of the respondents completed their primary education and 17% respondents completed higher secondary education. Regarding the occupational status of the respondents, it is seen that 39% were involved with crop production whereas 16% were livestock farming. The empirical results show that 34% rural people strongly agree and 47% agree with the idea that there is a recreational change in rural society. In terms of the food habit changes, it is observed that 24% of the respondents strongly agree that the pattern of food habit has changed in rural society whereas 3% strongly disagree in this regard. Findings of the study show that 43% of the respondents agree that there is an occupational change in the rural society, and 11% were strongly agree with the statement. With respect to the changes in the communication pattern in rural society, the present study shows that 23% of the rural people agree and 59% strongly agree with the view that communication pattern has changed in the rural society. In the past, Jatra pala, radio and puthi path were the dominant source of recreation whereas facebook, you tube, mobile phone and colour television are found as the main source of recreation at present. In regards to the occupational pattern of the respondents, it is found that crop production and paid labour were the principal occupation of rural people in the past whereas at present mobile and servicing related business, computer and accessories related business, fast food business, poultry farming, internet outsourcing related occupation is found as dominant.

INTRODUCTION

Cultural change comprises various changes occurring in any branch of culture including material and non-material, art, science, technology, philosophy as well as changes in the forms and rules of existing social organization in a society. Cultural change usually describes some internal and external factors leading to change in the cultural pattern of societies. The nature of cultural change is not static rather than it is dynamic. Changes in one area of culture may influence the other areas of culture as cultures are integrated. Cultural change is considered as cumulative in its nature where large new factors are added with the existing and fewer items are lost. Whenever a change is incorporated with existing culture, new need emerged which sometimes indicated as complementary and even sometimes substitutes with the original culture. Multiple factors are responsible for conducting a cultural change in a society such as philosophical ideas, technological advances and diffusion. Cultural change shows the modification of a society through innovation, invention, discovery, or contact with other societies (Johnson, 2001). Raghunath (2017) concluded that cultural changes are the functions of three elements which are invention, discovery and diffusion. Furthermore, industrialization, urbanization,

modernization, and globalization have contributed to significant changes in the culture of the world. A cultural lag is created between the traditional society and the modern society due to modernization, industrialization and urbanization, globalization (Pealeu et al., 2020). Besides, it is on-going issues of debate among the sociologists that whether people willingly adopt cultural changes or they are forced to adopt the new dimension of culture occurred in society due to globalization. The present study has provided a new insight regarding the debate. In the light of the above statements, this study tends to answer the following research questions:

- i. What are the socio-economic characteristics of the rural people in Gopalganj district of Bangladesh?
- ii. What are the extent of cultural change in the study area in terms of recreation, food habit, occupation and communication?
- iii. What are the patterns of cultural change in Gopalganj district?

Objectives

The general objective to this study is to discuss the scenario of cultural change in the study area. The specific objectives of the study are as follows:

- i. To show the socioeconomic characteristics of the

¹ Department of Sociology, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Science and Technology University, Gopalganj-8100, Bangladesh

² Department of Economics, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Science and Technology University, Gopalganj-8100, Bangladesh

* Corresponding author's e-mail: mahmuda.bsmrstu@gmail.com

rural people in the study area;

ii. To assess the extent of cultural change with respect to recreation, food habit, occupation and communication in the study area;

iii. To present the pattern of cultural change in the study area.

The rest of the study is articulated as follows: after introducing the issue in section 1, section 2 describes the literature review of the study. Theoretical framework is presented in section 3. Methodology of the study is discussed in section 4 whereas results obtained from the study are explained in section 5. Section 6 ended with some conclusion and policy recommendation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The section highlights the previous studies on cultural change conducted in different countries and with different research methodologies. A research study conducted by Gogineni et al. (2018) showed that industrialization, urbanization, modernization and globalization have contributed to significant changes in the culture of the world with more in the non-Western third world. The study also indicated that social psychology, family psychology and family relationships drastically transformed the family and individual psychology. Johnson (2001) operated a study on the role of television in rural life and its influence on various social, economic and political processes. He used data from two remote villages in the mountains of Western Maharashtra. Result obtained from the study indicates that village audience is an active and vibrant participant in the use of media which has ramifications for development both at the village level and beyond. Inglehart and Baker (2001) found that economic development is linked with the systematic changes in basic values. They used data from the three waves of world value surveys which includes 65 societies and 75 percent of the world population. Results obtained from the study indicate that economic development is associated with shifts away from absolute norms and values. The broad cultural heritage of a society leaves an imprint on values that endure despite modernization. Pelealu et al. (2020) conducted a study on the impact of agricultural technology on cultural change in rural society using phenomenology approach.

The major findings of the study indicate that technology became a main factor of social change. In addition, technology accepted by people through continuous socialization and make people interest to using technology and causing culture change. Ghosh (2011) conducted a study with an aim to investigate the impact of contemporary globalization on economy, society, culture and politics. Findings of the study show that globalization is not a unidirectional process and there are several contrary trajectories which have generated opposite reactions. The process of globalization is, therefore, much broader, complex, and multifaceted. Raghunath (2017) conducted a study on globalization and its impact on Indian culture. The impact of

globalization is great on India's culture. India has a rich cultural background and pride of its culture is famous in all over the world. Result of the study indicates that culture has also spread its impact globally. Ojua et al. (2013) investigated some of positive and negative cultural practices as well as showcases and they looked at how these cultural heritages in attitudes and behaviors affect the overall progress of the people and society from the Nigerian perspective. In many parts of the country, people embark on certain practices because they are ignorant of the basic information about the better way of doing things. Pannilage (2016) examined the factors which have impact on local culture in rural society of Sri Lanka. Study found that globalization has significance influence in the process of construction of local culture in Srilanka. Petkovic (2007) conducted a study on traditional values and modernization challenges in forming urban and rural culture. Results obtained from the study show that intertwining of urban and rural culture, the modern and traditional, the global and local, is the main characteristic of our social-cultural reality in which modern and traditional social values have interfered. Alonso and Gonzalez (2016) investigated how rural restructuring in the 1990s is a deeply penetrating process inclusive of both economic and cultural dimensions of social life. They collected data from 422 rural households. Findings obtained from the study show that people's opinions and perceptions of recent land use changes are influenced by economic and cultural logic.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Cultural Adaptation theory

The theory of cultural adaptation refers to the process and time it takes a person to assimilate to a new culture. It is not always an easy transition. How would you feel if you could no longer read signs because they were in a different language? What would you do if the clothes you owned were considered unacceptable to wear in public because people of your gender dress differently there? What if you were always expected to eat with chopsticks because Western utensils were unavailable? Given the right amount of time, would you be able to adjust to these differences? Living in a new culture can be jarring and very difficult to process, especially if it is drastically different from your own. A person that is being introduced into a new culture can feel a variety of different sensations. For example, one may feel frustrated because she or he cannot communicate or become angry because certain cultural norms do not make sense. In some cultures, spitting in public is considered bad manners. How would you feel if you ended up in a culture where spitting in public was okay and done by everyone? It may make you feel uncomfortable when the people of that culture think nothing of it. Cultural adaptation theory offers an explanation for these emotions. This model included four different stages: the honeymoon stage, the culture shock stage, the recovery stage, and the adjustment stage.

Cultural Diffusion Theory

The process of diffusion involves the spread of cultural elements - both material artifacts and ideas – from one culture to another. George Murdock has estimated that about 90% of the contents of every culture have been acquired from other societies. Some social scientists and anthropologists like, Kroeber, consider diffusion as the main source of cultural and social change. Anthropologist Linton’s classic illustration can be cited here to make it clear to what extent cultural borrowings- that is- diffusion takes place in every society.

Linton writes our solid American citizen awakens in a bed built on a pattern which originated in the New East but which was modified in North Europe before it was transmitted to America. He throws back the covers made from cotton domesticated in India, or linen domesticated in the Neat East, or silk, the use of which was discovered in China. He takes off his pajamas, a garment invented in India: and washes with soap, invented by the ancient Gauls. He then shaves, a masochistic rite, which seems to have been derived from either Sumer or ancient Egypt. The coffee that he sips with pleasure every day is a product of coffee plant which was in the beginning an Abyssinian monopoly. He smokes cigars or cigarettes. This smoking habit he has borrowed from the American Indians. Similarly, the American uses or is benefited by many more

such things, practices and habits which he borrowed from other peoples and cultures long back. Diffusion is one of the main sources of cultural and social change. The most outstanding contemporary social change – the spread of the modernization process around the world – represents the diffusion of industrialism from the less developed societies. Each culture accepts elements from other cultures selectively. Material artifacts that prove useful are more readily accepted than new norms, values and beliefs. Innovations must also be compatible with the culture of the society in to which they diffuse. For these reasons, white settlers in America accepted the Red Indian’s tobacco and not their religion.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Selection of the Study Area

The study was conducted in Gopalganj district purposively. After selecting Gopalganj district, three upazilas including Gopalganj Sadar, Tungipara and Kotalipara were selected randomly. Then, the researcher selects two unions randomly from each upazila and a total of six unions were selected. From each union, two villages were selected randomly using simple random sampling technique. Finally, 25 respondents from each village were chosen randomly using Fishers’ random number table. The rationale behind the selection of these study areas is

Table 1: Selection of the Study Area

District	Upazila	Union	Village	Number of Respondent
Gopalganj	Gopalganj Sadar	Gobra	Sonakur	25
			Ghonapara	25
		Borasi	Charpathalia	25
			Bedgram	25
	Tungipara	Patgati	Gimadanga	25
			Gouhardanga	25
		Kushli	Nilpha	25
			Bashuria	25
	Kotalipara	Hiran	Majhbari	25
			Tarashi	25
Kalabari		Kaliganj	25	
		Shimulbari	25	

that the Gopalganj district has a rich cultural background where different cultural aspects as well as religious people live together over the past few decades.

Sampling Technique and Nature of Data

A multi-stage sampling technique was used to select 300 rural people from three upazilas of Gopalganj district. In this study, district was selected purposively whereas upazila, unions, villages and respondents were selected randomly. The present study was conducted mainly based on primary data. However, some secondary data were also collected and used in this analysis. These secondary data were collected from various government and non-

government organizations such as various journals, newspaper, books.

Methods of Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics such as mean, frequency distribution, maximum, minimum and percentages were used to analyze the socio-economic characteristics of the sampled respondents. Likert scale was used to assess the rural people’s attitude on cultural changes in the study area. To apply the Likert scale a series of items were compiled that expressed a wide range of attitudes, from extremely positive to extremely negative. Each item calls for checking one of five fixed alternative expressions such as strongly

agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 2: Socio-economic Characteristics of the Sampled Rural People

Variables	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Age Range		
20-30	36	12
31-40	105	35
41-50	75	25
51-60	63	21
61-70	21	7
Gender of Household Head		
Male	177	59
Female	123	41
Marital Status		
Single	27	9
Married	219	73
Widowed	42	14
Divorced	12	4
Year of schooling		
No formal education	27	9
Primary education	126	42
Secondary education	84	28
Higher secondary education	84	17
Graduate	12	4
Religion Status		
Muslim	174	58
Hindu	126	42
Occupational Status		
Crop production	117	39
Livestock farming	48	16
Fishermen	33	11
Teaching	6	2
Housewife	69	23
Transport worker	9	3
Mobile servicing	12	4
Salon (Hair Cutting)	6	2
Household size		
1-3 persons	147	49
4-6 persons	96	32
7 and above	57	19
Earning Members in family		
1-3	171	57
3-4	102	34
5 and above	27	9

Source: Field Survey, 2019

Socio-economic characteristics of the Rural People in the Study Area

It is found from Table 2 that majority (35%) of the respondents were within the age group of 31-40 years whereas 7% respondents fall within the age category of 61-70 years. In addition, 25% respondents were within the age category of 41-50 years. Among the respondents, 59% were male while 41% were female. Regarding marital status of the respondents, result revealed that 73% of the respondents were married while 9% of the respondents were single. Education has categorized as no formal education, primary education, secondary education, higher secondary education and graduate level.

Study found that only 9% respondents were illiterate but majority of the respondents completed their primary level (42%) and 17% respondents completed higher secondary school. Among the surveyed respondents, 58 were found as Muslim whereas 42 were Hindu. Regarding the occupational status of the respondents, it is observed that among 300 respondents, 39 were involved with crop production whereas 23% were housewife. In addition, 16% and 11% respondents were involved with livestock farming and fishing activities, respectively. Table 2 describes that 49% respondents had a family size ranges between 1 and 3 persons whereas 19% respondents had a family size ranges between 7 and above. In addition, 32 percent workers had a family size ranges between 4 and 6 persons.

In case of earning members in the family, it is observed from Table 2 that 57% respondents had 1-2 earnings member in their family while 34% household head reported that they had 3 to 4 earning members in their family.

Scenario of Cultural Change in the study area

This section describes the scenario of cultural change in the study area. Five Point Likert scale has been employed in analyzing the scenario and extent of cultural change in the study area. Scenario of cultural change has been investigated with respect to four aspects such as recreational change, food habit change, occupational change, and change in the pattern of communication.

Extent of Recreational change in the Study Area

Table 3 shows the extent of recreational change in the study area and it is found that 34% strongly agree with the idea that there is a recreational change in rural society

Table 3: Responses of the Rural People with Respect to Recreational Change

Response	Number of respondent	Percentage
Strongly agree	102	34
Agree	141	47
Neutral	48	16
Disagree	9	3

Source: Field Survey, 2019

while 47% agree and 16% respondents were neutral in this respect. In contrast, 3% respondents disagree that there was no recreational change in the study area. Figure 1 shows the responses of the rural people in terms

of recreational change in the study area. It is found from Figure 1 that 47% respondents showed agree view with respect to recreational change while 3% showed disagree response in this connection.

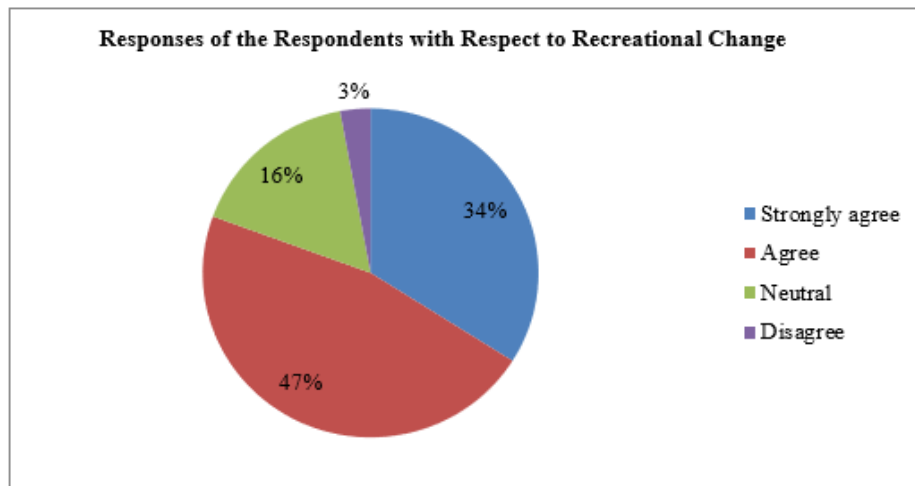


Figure 1: Responses of the Respondents with Respect to Recreational Change

Extent in the Pattern of food habit change in the Study Area

Table 4 illustrates the responses of the rural people with respect to changes in the pattern of food habit in the study area. It is found from the study area that 24% of the respondents strongly agree that the pattern of food habit has changed in rural society whereas 57% agree. Furthermore, 6% of the rural people disagree that the

pattern of food habit has changed while 3% of the respondent strongly disagree with the statement.

Figure 2 shows the responses of the rural people with respect to the changes in the pattern of food habit. It is found from Figure 2 that 57% respondents showed agree sign with respect to food habit change while 6% reported disagree response in this connection.

Table 4: Responses of the Respondents with respect to Change in the Pattern of Food Habit

Response	Number of respondent	Percentage
Strongly agree	72	24
Agree	171	57
Neutral	30	10
Disagree	18	6
Strongly disagree	9	3

Source: Field Survey, 2019

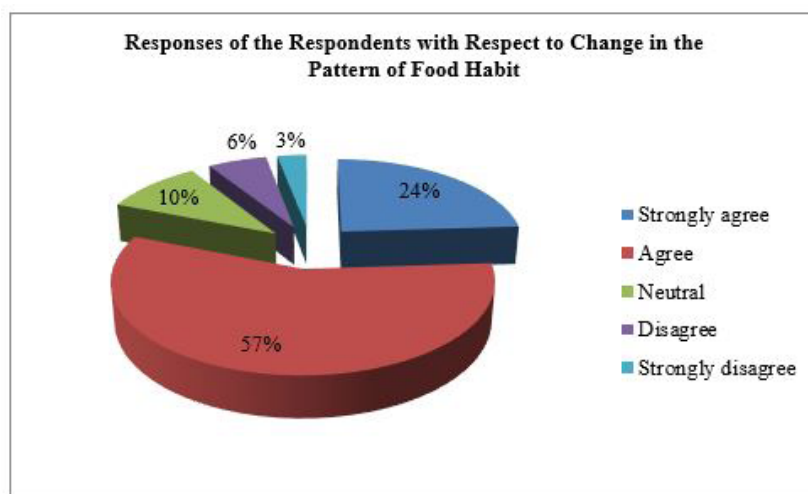


Figure 2: Responses of the Respondents with Respect to Change in the Pattern of Food Habit

Extent of Occupational change in the Study Area

From table 5, it is evident that 43% of the respondents agree that there is an occupational change in the rural society, 11% strongly agree and 19% of the respondents disagree while 14% of the respondents strongly disagree with the statement.

Figure 3 shows the responses of the rural people with respect to change in the occupational pattern. It is found from Figure 3 that 43% respondents showed agree view with respect to occupational change while 11% reported strongly agree response in regards to the view that there is an occupational change in the study area.

Table 5: Responses of the Respondents with Respect to the Change in the Occupational Pattern in the Study Area

Response	Number of respondent	Percentage
Strongly agree	33	11
Agree	129	43
Neutral	39	13
Disagree	57	19
Strongly disagree	42	14

Source: Field Survey, 2019

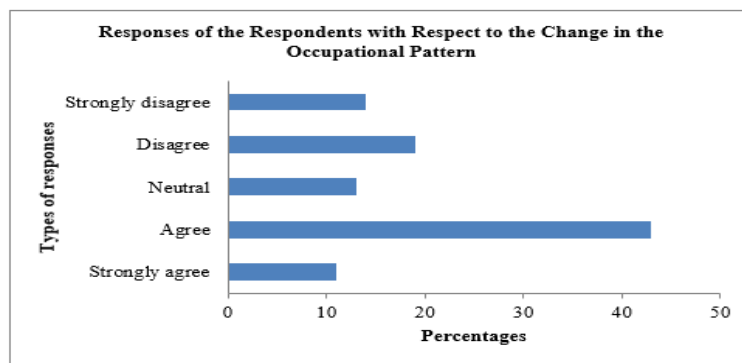


Figure 3: Responses of the Respondents with Respect to Change in the Pattern of Food Habit

Extent of change in the Communication Pattern the Study Area

Table 6 shows that 23% of the respondents agree that communication pattern has changed in the rural society,

59% strongly agree and 6% of the respondents disagree that communication pattern has changed.

Figure 4 depicts the responses of the respondents with respect to the change in the pattern of communication.

Table 6: Responses of the Respondents with Respect to the Change in the Pattern of Communication in the Study Area

Response	Number of respondent	Percentage
Strongly agree	177	59
Agree	69	23
Neutral	36	12
Disagree	18	6

Source: Field Survey, 2019

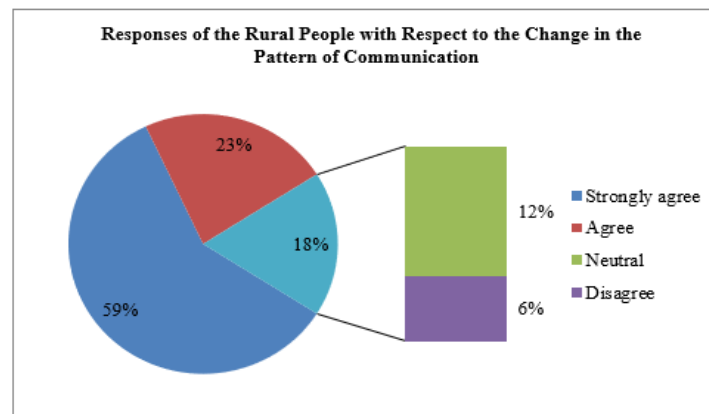


Figure 4: Responses of the Rural People with Respect to the Change in the Pattern of Communication

It is obvious from figure that 59% rural people showed strongly agreed view and 23% rural people showed agreed view with respect to pattern of communication in the study area. In addition, 6% respondents were disagreeing with this statement

Pattern of Cultural Change in the Study Area

Pattern of Recreational Change in the Rural Society

While interviewing the respondents, it is found that television (Black and White), radio, Jatra pala, Puthi path, kissa, village fair, and circus were the main source of

Table 7: Recreation Change in Rural Society

Source of Recreation in Past	Source of Recreation at Present
Television (Black and White)	Mobile phone
Radio	Computer and Laptop
Jatra Pala	Colour Television
Puthi path	Cinema Hall
Kissa	Internet browsing
Village Fair	Facebook
Circus	You tube
Visit to relatives house	Birthday celebration
	Marriage anniversary celebration
	Outing with friends and relatives

Source: Field Survey, 2019

recreation in rural area in two or three decades ago but at present mobile phone, computer, laptop, colour TV, internet browsing, facebook, you tube are regarded as the major sources of recreation of rural people in the study area. Majority of the respondents in the study area agree that radio and puthi path were the dominant source of recreation in past whereas facebook, you tube, mobile phone and colour television are the main source of recreation at present

Pattern of Food Habit Changes in the Study Area

Table 8 portrays the pattern of food habit change in rural society in Gopalganj district. Findings showed that traditional food like rice, fish, pulse, meat (cow and goat), homemade wheat bread and tea were the major food item in past while at present foods like Chinese fast food, soft drinks, coffee are the dominant food item in the study area. In addition, some traditional foods are also available in the study area.

Table 8: Food habit changes in the rural society

Traditional Food Habit	Modern Food Habit
Traditional meal, Homemade bread, Fish, Rice, Potato curry, Meat (Goat and Cow), Pulse, vegetables, Tea	Chinese fast food, Tea, Coffee, Noodles, soft drinks, roast, soup, Nan rooti as well as traditional meals

Source: Field Survey, 2019

Pattern of Occupational Change in the Rural Society

Table 9 represents occupational change in Gopalganj district. It is apparent from the table that farming specially crop production and paid labour were the principal occupation of majority of rural people whereas

at present there have been an occupational change in the study area. Now, people are found to engage themselves in diverse occupation like mobile and servicing related business, computer and accessories related business, fast food business, poultry farming, internet outsourcing.

Table 9: Recreation Change in Rural Society

Traditional Dimensions of Occupation	Modern Dimensions of Occupation
Farmer	Mobile phone and servicing related business
Paid labour	Computer and accessories related business
Fishermen	Fast food related business
Tailoring	Poultry farming
Housewife	Freelancing
Teacher	Teaching at home
Transport worker	Internet outsourcing
Mason	Mobile banking
Grocery	
Carpenter	

Source: Field Survey, 2019

Pattern of Communication Change in the Rural Society
 Table 10 presents pattern of communication change in the rural society considering the ancient and modern forms of communication.

It is evident that face to face communication, hand written letter were the main forms of communication in rural society in past. At present, mobile phone and facebook has become the dominant way of communication in rural society.

Table 9: Pattern of communication change in the rural society

Ancient forms of Communication	Modern forms of Communication
Hand writing letter	Mobile Phone
Messenger bearer	Electronic mail (Gmail, email, Hotmail etc.)
Post office	Facebook, Twitter, Whatsapp
Face to face communication	Messenger
Letter send by Pigeon	Video call
Telegram	Imo

Source: Field Survey, 2019

CONCLUSION

The main objective of the study was to identify the extent and pattern of cultural changes on rural society. Descriptive statistics like frequency distribution, maximum, minimum was used to describe the socioeconomic characteristics of the respondents in the study area. In addition, to evaluate the attitude of rural people on cultural changes, five point Likert scale was applied. Results obtained from the study show that 35% respondents were within the age group of 31-40 years whereas 7% respondents fall within the age category of 61-70 years. In regards to educational background, it is found that only 9% respondents were illiterate whereas 42% respondents completed their primary level and 17% respondents completed higher secondary education. Regarding the occupational status of the respondents, it is found that among 300 respondents 39% were involved with crop production whereas 26% were housewife. In addition, 16% and 11% respondents were involved with livestock farming and fishing activities, respectively. The empirical results obtained from Likert scale analysis show that 34% rural people strongly agree and 47% agree with the view that there is a recreational change in rural society. In terms of the food habit changes, it is found that 24% of the respondents strongly agree that the pattern of food habit has changed in the rural society whereas 57% agree in this regard. Furthermore, 6% of the rural people disagree that there is a change in the pattern of food habit in the study area. Findings of the study show that 43% of the respondents agree that there is an occupational change in the rural society, 11% strongly agree and 19% of the respondents disagree while 14% of the respondents strongly disagree with the statement. With respect to changes in communication pattern in rural society, the present study indicates that 23% of the rural people agree and 59% strongly agree with the view that communication pattern has changed in the rural society. In the past, Jatra pala, radio and puthi path were the dominant source of recreation whereas facebook, you tube, mobile phone and colour television are found as the main source of recreation at present. In regards to occupational pattern of the respondents, it

is found that crop production and paid labour were the principal occupation of rural people in past whereas at present mobile and servicing related business, computer and accessories related business, fast food business, poultry farming, internet outsourcing related occupation are found as dominant. With respect to the pattern of communication change in the rural society, it is evident that face to face communication, hand written letter were the main forms of communication in rural society in past. At present, mobile phone and facebook has become the dominant way of communication in rural society.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings obtained from the study, the following recommendation can be made for the study:

- i. Since, the present study showed that 24% of the respondents strongly agree with the issue that the pattern of food habit has changed whereas 57% agree in this regard. Thus, rural people should be made conscious about the bad aspects of fast foods which is dominated item in the modern food pattern. In addition, steps should be takes so that local foods do not disappear.
- ii. It is found from the survey that 43% respondents showed agree view and 11% respondents asserted strongly agree view with respect to occupational change in the study area and the modern occupational activities are technology and skill oriented. Therefore, rural people need to be trained so that they can use the modern technology efficiently.
- iii. As 59% rural people strongly agree and 23% agree with the view that the pattern of communication has changed over the time period where ancient forms of communication has replaced by the modern forms of communication like mobile phone, email, facebook, twitter etc. Thus, the rural people need to be made aware of the advantages and disadvantages of modern methods of communication and also to ensure that their personal security is not compromised.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interests regarding the publication of this paper.

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Author Contributions

Sayda Mahmuda: Conceptualization, Introduction, Literature review, Methodology, data analysis and supervision.

Majnur Rashid: Theoretical framework, Data collection and conclusion.

Zubaidur Rahman: Data processing and estimation. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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