

Occupation, Income, Education and Modernization among the Horijon Community of Bangladesh: A Sociological Profile

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ABSTRACT

The present article, based on empirical data, attempts at revealing the occupational, educational and economic (income) status, including both intra and inter-generational mobility; and also to measuring the influences of these three variables, if any, in making the low-status respondents-the Horijon/ Shebok community/caste (caste is defined here structurally after D'Souza) of a Bangladesh city, Chittagong. Here modernity levels of the respondents (Horijons) have been measured using the subjective approach related to the behavioral perspective. In doing that, data are collected using mainly two methods, the social survey, and observation. Data are collected from the elder members, both male and female, over 21 years, of the households (a group of persons who take their meal from common kitchen and live under the same roof, unless the exigencies of works prevent them from doing so). Data are collected using mainly social survey and observation also. This community, viewed from any dimension, is a homogeneous one, pursuing low-status occupation, physically segregated and popularly known as Methor/Shebok and occasionally as sweeper.

Keywords: occupation, education, modernization, caste, community, perpetuation of position, mobility

INTRODUCTION

Bangladesh is a country where different religious communities are living side by side with their own cultural identity indicating a plural society. Here each religious community is stratified on the basis of ethnicity, occupational prestige status, caste and social class including power, level of living style, exposure to mass media but the nature and forms and also the modes of expression of status differences between the strata/ethnic/caste groups and classes vary from one to another, which is peculiar to each community. The present Hindu community, which is also a caste group as defined structurally (D'Souza, 1969:35; 1981) belongs to the one of the four major *Varnas of the Hindu society* namely, *Shudra*, which was thought to be created from the feet of the *Adi-Purush* (God) but this notion is neither empirically testable nor verifiable as well. Therefore, it was rejected by the sociologists (Leach, 1960; D'Souza, 1969, 1981; Jain, 1975; Sohi, 1977; Ali, 1992a, 1992, 1993, 2011) based on empirical data. It needs to be noted here that the Hindus are traditionally divided into four *Varnas* and each is further divided into innumerable *jatis* which are called caste groups viewed from structural perspective. Occupation (Taylor, 1968:8), particularly its prestige status, income create social hierarchies so is educational status (Durkheim, cited in Ali, 2013; Taylor, 1968; D'Souza, 1981; Jain, 1975; Sharma, 1979). In such realities, we have dealt with four variables namely, occupation, education and income, and modernization. At the same time, here an attempt is being made at measuring the influences, if any, of the first

three variables on modernization, viewed from subjective perspective, of the respondents—the Sweeper/*Horijon/Shebok* community.

METHODOLOGY

With a view to obtaining necessary data an ‘Interview Schedule’ consisting of both structured and unstructured questions was prepared and the same was pretested for making necessary additions and omissions. The *Horijons* (name given by Mahatma Gandhi), of Bangladesh are popularly known as sweepers/*Mathors/Sheboks* living in 4 physically segregated colonies having population differing in size such as, in *Firingi Bazar*, 42 households are there with 300 hundred population; in *Bandel* colony 2000 people are living in 250 households; in *Jhautola* colony as many as 79 households are there with a total population of 700 and in *Motherbari colony* 700 hundred people live in 120 households. From the total households of 4 colonies data are collected randomly from 300 respondents, both male and female, over 21 years. After each interview, the ‘Interview Schedule’ was edited on the spot for making necessary corrections, when needed. Observation was also made as and when required. A code design was prepared to transfer data to code sheets and the same (data) were coded manually and transferred to code sheets for preparing necessary tables. In the analysis process, simple percentage was used as this community is a homogeneous one living in 4 fixed physically isolated colonies, where others cannot live, of Chittagong Metropolitan City, Bangladesh.

Age and Sex

In view of these we would like to have some background of the respondents. One can see from table-1 that relatively greater numbers of the respondents are in age group ranging from 31 to 40, followed by age group falling within 41 to 50 years and 51 to 60 age groups respectively. Among them, one can see preponderance of male respondents

Table 1. Age and sex of the respondents

Age	Frequency	Percentage	Sex	Frequency	Percentage
21-30	44	14.7%	Male	190	63.3%
31-40	88	29.3%	Female	110	36.7%
41-50	82	27.3%	-	-	-
51-60	68	22.7%	-	-	-
61+	18	6%	-	-	-
Total	300	100%	Total	300	100%

(63.3%) as compared with their female counterparts (36.7%). As far as marital status (table: 2) are concerned data revealed that only 2.7% are unmarried; 86.7% are married and 10.7% are widowed but among them none is separated and divorced. As we know, once among the Hindus widow remarriage was prohibited strongly and the social values was so deep rooted that wives used to die live with their dead husband known as *Sati Daho* (*abolished by Lord William bentinck 1829-1835*); the social reform movements led by *BrahmoSamaj* and due to incorporating fundamental human rights and laws in the constitution there has been a positive change in the marriage system where the widows are getting married but these are

not still accepted by the society in general. Till today, strong values are working among the Hindu widows, particularly among the elders, to sacrifice their life in *Chitta*(cremation ground where the dead bodies are cremated) with their dead husbands.

Table 2. Marital status of the respondents

<i>Marital Status</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Unmarried	08	2.7%
Married	260	86.7%
widowed	32	10.7%
Divorced	00	00%
Separated	00	00%
Total	300	100%

Occupation

Occupation, particularly its prestige status is universally accepted as an empirical indicator in studying social structure, stratification and inequalities as well. It is such a variable that can be empirically defined; testable and verifiable also. Moreover, one can hide many attributes but not his/her occupational role as it has to be performed in public and there is high amount of consensus among the respondents in grading the occupations in status hierarchy (Rogoff, 1953; Warner et al., 1960; D'Souza, 1961, 1981; Ali, 1992a, 1992, 1993, 2011). In addition to these, occupation is a very complex variable having several sociological elements such as, culture, structure, career, mobility, education, recruitment, remuneration, status, prestige and control including others (Taylor, 1968:10).

Table 3. Occupations of the respondents

<i>Name of Occupation</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Government Job (Shebok)	246	82.0%
Private Job	24	8.0%
Business	08	2.7%
House Made	04	1.3%
House Wife	04	1.3%
Self-Employed Worker	05	1.7%
Day Labor	09	3.0%
Total	300	100%

We have already pointed out that occupation can be defined scientifically, therefore in the present study occupation is defined after Taylor as “That specific activity with a market value

which an individual continually pursues for a steady flow of income; this activity also determines the social position of the individuals”(Taylor, 1968:8). Data furnished in table:3 clearly indicate that 82.0 percent are ‘sweeper’, still pursuing their traditional low-status occupation, while 8.0% and 3.0% are doing the similar kind of job--cleaner(traditional) not in City Corporation but in private sectors and drawing more salary; also getting more status as compared with their sweeper counterparts working in Chittagong City Corporation. One can also see the changes in the traditional occupations of the respondents during their life time as they are engaged in non-traditional occupations such as, business, house maids in wealthy families, day laborers and other occupations of low-status. In our definition of occupation ‘house wife’ is not recognized as ‘occupation’ as they are not earning cash/ or kind from their jobs directly but are doing different household activities/works from dawn to dusk. In general, their activities are not treated as ‘economically profitable’ one but the respondents argued that though they do not have direct income but they contribute to family budget indirectly doing manifold activities of the households and helping their male counterparts having economic value. As a result, this category of women is included in the ‘occupational’ list. This does indicate visible gender inequality, one of the major characteristics of traditional society with a peculiar social stratification having the features of both caste and class. Similar observations are also made among the sweeper/ *Shebok* community of Chittagong city by Imam Ali (2005) and Tasneem Imam (2013). One can observe homogeneity among the respondents as all of them are not pursuing the occupations of their fathers.

With a view to revealing the intra-generational occupational changes data are collected which indicated 89.3% could not make any change as they had no previous occupation while only 10.7% did. In other words, occupational mobility among this community is very insignificant which a normal phenomenon in a caste stratified society is with rigid social structure based mostly on the principle of ascription. Similar observations are also made by Imam Ali, among Muslim-Hindu communities of different villages of Bangladesh (Ali, 1992, 1993, 2011) and Jain(1975) and Sohi(1977) in two different villages of India.

Income

Income is an important variable in studying social structure of any community including social stratification and inequality as well. But it is difficult to collect real data as the respondents usually do not disclose their income due to personal security and fear of income tax officials. Sometimes they do not have any idea about their real income as it generates from both cash and kind; also they occasionally do some private/ contractual jobs for raising family income. Keeping these realities in mind we tried to obtain reliable data on income of the respondents which(table;4) indicate that most of the respondents, presenting 60.0% of the total respondents, are in ‘low income’ group followed by ‘medium’ and ‘high’ income groups respectively. While 14.7% have ‘very low’ income but one is in ‘very high’ income category/group.

However, these income are not generated from salary of the respondents receive from their occupations but they do extra private jobs that they have to pursue for meeting the growing multiple needs of the family members and also to cope up with price inflation. Here we need to show the income of the respondents in terms of US\$. That is, 1 \$US Dollar is equal to BDT(Bangladesh currency) 78 as of 15-5-2015. However, the average income of the respondents in terms of BDT.7, 333/ and USD is 92 indicating relative lower income of the respondents which is reflected in their houses, household articles and amenities, in their total way of life in general.

Table 4. Monthly income of the respondents

<i>Range of Income</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Very low (BDT) 1000-5000	44	14.7%
Low(BDT)5001-10000	180	60%
Medium (BDT) 10001-15000	64	21.3%
High(BDT)15001-20000	12	4%
Very high (BDT) 20000+	00	00%
Total	300	100%

Occupational Likings

For different reasons, such as, higher income, higher status, hardship of the jobs, and death of father, psychological dissatisfaction, people change in their occupations. In some cases there are changes in occupations where people partly or sometimes people as a whole change their traditional occupations (Ali, 1992, 1993, Basu, 1962). In fact, two other tendencies are working among the respondents -- to pursue their hereditary occupations and to take up non-traditional occupations having the desire to go by the traditional values and the modern values-- higher income and status. With a view to knowing the occupational likings of the respondents data are collected that (table:5) that do indicate that 63.0% are interested in the present occupation city corporation while 13.0% have shown interest in business that can yield more profit that their present jobs. The other reasons are: freedom of work, comfortable work place, less job hour but among them, economic solvency (41.4% high status (12.5%) are more important than others.

Table 5. Occupational likings of the respondents

<i>Name of Occupation</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Government Job(Shebok)	189	63.0%
Private Job	30	10.0%
Business	40	13.3%
Teaching	02	0.7%
Singing	05	1.7%
Others	10	3.3%
No Choice	24	8.0%
Total	300	100%

Those who have not shown interest in changing their occupations have pointed out many factors in support of their answer. The points they mentioned are: traditional values to pursue parental occupations, job satisfaction (as they can do the total work needed to finish the product), lacking the art of pursuing non-traditional ones, low level of education, of these, traditional values and inability to pursue other jobs and lack of motivation are the three most important reasons for not making any change in occupation. It has to be noted that due to structural inequality some groups including the present one, are not allowed by the rigid social structure based on exploitation to make occupational and other changes to the upward directions. As a result, they are in the same position over the generations, known as inter-generational perpetuation of position, as the social structure is largely based on the principle of ascription, where scope for mobility is limited and the available scope is higher among the higher castes as compared with the lower ones (Ali, 1992, 1993, 2011, 2013a).

One thing needs to be mentioned here that the respondents (63.0%) have opted for the present one they pursue not for their love but in a caste stratified society working on the principle of ascription, they have accepted it as their fate which was pre-determined by God. But some of them, learnt from their experiences said: "God is not unkind to us, our low-status positions are socially determined". In fact, in a rigid social structure, society creates better positions for some and hurdles for others so that they are in the same positions over the generations, known as inter-generational perpetuation of position (D'Souza, 1981). The present community—sweeper (*Horijon / and in Bengali, Shebok*) is an example of this type. Imam Ali has also observed similar trend among the sweeper community of Chittagong City (2005) and Nililaqkingma has also found 'changelessness' among the sweeper community of Dhaka city (Nilima, 2015, *Suiper Shamprodayer Artho-Samajic Paribartan; Ekti Samajtattic Gabesona* (in Bengali), Gazipur: National University).

Educational Status

In conducting social research on any issue, be it social structure, social stratification, inequality, population or modernization, policy formulation, planning education is an important social variable that attracted special attention from theologians, philosophers, sociologists as well having diametrically opposite opinions/conclusions. However, we are not going to get into involved in the debates with each other on the role of education, positive or negative, but trying to reveal educational status of the respondents, their fathers and mothers relating it to the social structure.

In the present article, we considered only the formal education that can be measured scientifically but not denying the role of informal education. Data furnished in table-6 indicate that only 28.7% respondents have no formal education, just uneducated; 51.3% have primary education (up to class 5) which in the new National Educational Policy 2014 is named as PSC (Primary School Certificate); 14.7% have pre-secondary education (up to class 10). Data further indicate that 3.0% and 2.3% have SSC (Secondary School Certificate) and HSC (Higher Secondary Certificate) levels of education respectively but none is in 'graduation' level. This low level of education can be related to the social structure that has differential educational systems for different castes and classes creating educational inequality between different sections of the society and these trends have been depicted in studies conducted by Imam Ali in Bangladesh (Ali, 1992a, 1992, 1993, 2011) and D'Souza (1968, 1980); Jain, (1975); and Sohi (1977) in India.

Table 6. Educational status of the respondents

<i>Level of Education</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Uneducated	86	28.7%
Primary	154	51.3%
Pre-Secondary	44	14.7%
S.S.C	09	3.0%
H.S.C	07	2.3%
Graduation	00	0%
Total	300	100%

One can also see from data(table:7) that among respondents' fathers and mothers 75.0% and 96.0% are uneducated; among the fathers 19.3% have primary education while among the mothers the corresponding figure is 3.3% showing that literacy rate is visibly higher among the respondents as compared with their fathers and mothers. Further, literacy rate is very low (4.0%) among the mothers as compared their fathers (25.0%) and sons(28.7%). This trend is not difficult to understand taking the traditional social structure where girls/females are still treated as liability while the sons/males as asset. From their childhood the female children are socialized to accept the lower positions in and outside the family and this values are so deep rooted that they have no other option but to accept that. But nowadays, policy of the pro-liberation government of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina(2015) has given special attention to educate both the boys and the girls equally distributing free books on the 1st January so that both can contribute to building a nation based on the principle of equality and achievement, which is, still absent in our society that can be seen among the marginalized communities like the present one.

Table 7. Educational status of the respondents' parents

<i>Level of Education</i>	<i>Fathers</i>		<i>Mothers</i>	
	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Uneducated	225	75%	288	96%
Primary- Pre-Secondary	75	25%	12	4%
S.S.C- Graduation	00	00%	00	00%
Total	300	100%	300	100%

Gender inequality with respect to education can also be observed from the attitudes of the respondents (table:8). Imam Ali also observed this trend among the different religious communities both in urban and rural areas of Bangladesh (Ali, 1987, 1992, 1993, 2011, 2013) also by Sohi, (1977) and Jain (1975) in India. In a stratified society, opportunities are

unequally distributed among people belonging to different ethnic, religious, caste groups including social classes where educational opportunities and achievements are largely determined by parental socio-economic status. That is, in a country like Bangladesh, education is still a dependent variable but gradually it is becoming more open to all sections due to pro-people policy of the pro-liberation government. In a traditional society with a peculiar social stratification where elements of castes and classes exist side by side education tends to be like this--unequal. That is parental attitude for giving higher education is greater for the sons than the girls indicating another kind of gender inequality.

The parents have different social standing in the society with different nature, levels and forms of education. These differential attitudes(table:9) of the respondents indicate that 66.0% have shown interest for secular educational institutions for their children but at the same time we can see from data that only a few (5.0%) have opted for religious education for their children. In other words, to them one should have both types of education so that they can be successful in this world and other world also after death. In marginalized communities who are, viewed from any angle, enjoy low-socioeconomic status, neglected also by higher ones, and cannot think of better opportunities for their children as this has been manifested in respondents' responses. As 56.7% preferred Bengali medium of instructions for their children and some of them (9.3%) have opted for English medium without understanding the real costs of such education; in fact this is their simple wish, but not a realistic plan.

Table 8. Educational levels preferred by the respondents for their sons and daughters

Level of Education	Boys		Girls	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Uneducated	08	2.7%	34	11.3%
Primary	14	4.7%	20	6.7%
Pre-Secondary	47	15.7%	40	13.3%
Higher Secondary	26	8.7%	18	6.0%
Graduation	47	15.7%	32	10.7%
Post-Graduation	58	19.3%	44	14.7%
Any Stage of Education	100	33.3%	112	37.3%
Total	300	100%	300	100%

Table 9. Respondents' preferences for educational institutions and mediums of instructions

Educational Institute	Frequency		Medium of Education	Percentage	
	Frequency	Percentage		Frequency	Percentage
Religious	15	5.0%	English	28	9.3%
Secular	198	66.0%	Bengali	170	56.7%
Both(Religious & Religious)	68	22.7%	Both (Bengali and English)	68	22.7%
No Opinion	19	6.3%	No opinion	34	11.3%
Total	300	100%	Total	300	100%

Occupation, Education, Income and Modernization

We would like to note that modernization has been defined by sociologists emphasizing on one or other factors. Generally modernization refers to a process where traditional societies are transformed in to modern one changing the structure and the functions of the institutions associated with it. Considering the various perspectives of modernization it can be said it can be viewed from two dimensions: subjective and the objective. The subjective approach takes into consideration the behavioral patterns of the individuals and the institutions pertaining to them. On the other hand, the objective criteria emphasis on the possession of cultural artifacts depicting rationality and their rational use for economic development of the people. In this study, individual's modernity has been measured using subjective approach, considering some social situations such as, equality, civic responsibility, rationality, universality and specificity. The responses obtained from the respondents are given different score from 1 to 5 depending on the nature of questions. The score varied from minimum 8 to 40 which is the maximum one could obtain. In such situations, the total score was divided into 5 modernity categories such as, (i) highly traditional(score:8 Only); (ii) Traditional(score:9 to 16); (iii) somewhat modern(score:17 to 24); (iv) Modern(score:25 to 32); and Highly modern(score: 33 and above) on the traditional modern continuum(Sharma, 1978) for measuring the modernity levels of the respondents. Here attempts have been made to measuring the influence of occupation, education and income of modernity levels of the respondents accordingly tables are prepared.

Table 10. Occupation and modernity levels of the respondents

Occupation	Highly Modern		Modern		Somewhat		Traditional		Highly Traditional		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Government Job	01	0.4%	69	28%	155	63%	21	8.6%	00	00%	246	100%
Private Job	00	00%	10	41.7%	14	58.3%	00	00%	00	00%	24	100%
Business	00	00%	05	62.5%	03	37.5%	00	00%	00	00%	08	100%
House Maid	00	00%	01	25.0%	03	75.0%	00	00%	00	00%	04	100%
House Wife	00	00%	02	50.0%	02	50.0%	00	00%	00	00%	04	100%
Self-Employment	00	00%	04	80.0%	01	20.0%	00	00%	00	00%	05	100%
Day Labor	00	00%	04	44.4%	05	55.6%	00	00%	00	00%	09	100%
Total	01	0.3%	95	31.7%	183	61.0%	21	7.0%	00	00%	300	100%

We have already pointed out that occupation, particularly; its prestige status determines the social position of the individuals in the context of the total society within and outside the society. Therefore, occupation is almost recognized as an empirical referent and indicator universally in studying social inequality, stratification and social structure as well. Here attempts have been made first to see the relationship between occupation and modernization. One can see from data (table:10) that among the respondents only 0.4% are highly modern but self-employed respondents are more modern (80.0%) as compared with those pursuing government and private jobs including 'business'. To see the association between education

and modernization data are collected and furnished in table:12 which indicate that among the uneducated respondents, 20.9% are modern but 10.5 % are traditional. On the other hand, among the relatively higher educational category (HSC) 14.3% are modern but none is traditional showing some amount of positive association between occupation and modernization. Table:11 constructed from 10 also indicate a positive association between occupation and modernity. In doing that the 5 modernity categories are broadly divided in to three types such as, (i) modern (highly traditional+ traditional); (ii) somewhat modern and (ii) traditional (traditional highly traditional) throughout the analyses.

Table 11. Occupation and modernity levels of the respondents

Occupation	Modern		Somewhat		Traditional		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Government Job	70	28.5%	155	63%	21	8.5%	246	100%
Private Job	10	41.7%	14	58.3%	00	00%	24	100%
Business	05	62.5%	03	37.5%	00	00%	08	100%
House Maid	01	25%	03	75%	00	00%	04	100%
House Wife	02	50%	02	50%	00	00%	04	100%
Self-Employment	04	80%	01	20%	00	00%	05	100%
Day Labor	04	44.4%	05	55.6%	00	00%	09	100%
Total	96	32%	183	61%	21	7%	300	100%

Education, a sociological variable, is conditioned by the social structure and operates in the social structure; further it can change the social structure making it more scientific and pragmatic educational policy supported by political authority. The sociologists and the social scientists are divided in assessing the role of Education. One group, with data came forward with the thesis that education makes a man modern through a proper socialization. While the others argue that education negates creativity, creates conditional men. Therefore, there has to be a 'De-schooling society'. However, this is not the article to duel with roles of education but only to see the association between education and modernization. Studies conducted by scholars have shown that education promotes modernization fostering necessary values needed; negates it.

To see the association between education and modernity levels of the respondents data are furnished in table: 12 that indicate, among the uneducated respondents only 0.4% is modern but self-employed persons are relatively more modern (80.0%). Further, among the relatively higher educational group (HSC) 14.3% are modern but none is traditional showing a positive association between education and modernization. Tables: 13 and 14 are constructed from table: 12 that also give us a clear idea about the modernizing role of education among the respondents of this community. Educational levels in table:13 are divided in to three categories (uneducated; primary-pre secondary and SSC- graduation).

Table 12. Education and modernity levels of the respondents

Level of Education	Highly Modern		Modern		Somewhat		Traditional		Highly Traditional		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Uneducated	00	00%	18	20.9%	59	68.6%	9	10.5%	00	00%	86	100%
Primary(1-5)	00	00%	48	31.2%	96	62.3%	10	6.5	00	00%	154	100%
Pre-Secondary(6-10)	00	00%	19	43.2%	23	52.3%	2	4.5%	00	00%	44	100%
S.S.C	00	00%	6	66.7%	3	33.3%	00	00%	00	00%	09	100%
H.S.C	01	14.3%	4	57.1%	2	28.6%	00	00%	00	00%	07	100%
Graduation	00	00%	00	00%	00	00%	00	00%	00	00%	00	00
Total	01	0.3%	95	31.7%	183	61%	21	7%	00	00%	300	100%

Table 13. Education and modernity levels of the respondents

Level of Education	Modern		Somewhat		Traditional		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Uneducated	18	20.9%	59	68.6%	9	10.5%	86	100%
Primary -Pre-Secondary	67	33.8%	119	60.1%	12	6.1%	198	100%
S.S.C-Graduation	11	68.8%	5	31.2%	00	00%	16	100%
Total	96	32%	183	61%	21	7%	300	100%

Table 14. Education and modernization among the respondents

Levels of Education	Modern		Somewhat		Traditional		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Uneducated	18	20.90%	59	68.60%	9	10.50%	86	100%
Primary(1-5)	48	31.20%	96	62.30%	10	6.5	154	100%
Pre-Secondary (6-10)	19	43.20%	23	52.30%	2	4.50%	44	100%
S.S.C	6	66.70%	3	33.30%	0	0%	9	100%
H.S.C	5	71.40%	2	28.60%	0	0%	7	100%
Graduation	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Total	96	32%	183	61%	21	7%	300	100%

Income and Modernity

With a view to assessing the association between income and modernity data are collected that indicate (table: 15) among the 'low', 'medium' and 'high' income groups 30.4%, 34.4% and 50.0% respondents are modern. At the same time, not a single respondent from 'high' income group is traditional while among the 'low' income group the corresponding percentages are 8.0 indicating a positive association between income and modernization as far as the respondents of this community is concerned. In other words, as the income increases modernity also increases more or less correspondingly.

Table 15. Income and modernity levels of the respondents

Income	Modern		Somewhat		Traditional		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Low	68	30.4%	138	61.6%	18	8%	224	100%
Medium	22	34.4%	39	60.9%	03	4.7%	64	100%
High	06	50%	06	50%	00	0%	12	100%
Total	96	32%	183	61%	21	7%	300	100%

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The sweeper/*Horijonor Shebok* (in Bengali) community in general trace their origin from one of the four *Varnas* of the Hindu society namely, the *Shudra* thought to be created from the feet of the *Adi-Purush* (God) but this notion related to the origin of four *Varnas* has been rejected having no scientific validity, as this is not empirically testable and verifiable as well. This community is at the lower echelon of the society mainly for their low--status occupation, also low socioeconomic and political power, certainly not by 'ritual status', which was once thought to be the cardinal to Hinduism but is a dependent variable. There can be valid discussions about the caste characteristics of this community as people known them generally as sweeper or occasionally *Horijon* but in Bangladesh, the former elected Mayor of Chittagong city, A. B. M. Mohiuddin Chowdhury renamed them as *Shebok* meaning a person rendering services to the people. This has created a sense of honour among the sweeper community but it could not enhance their social status what Srinivas termed as *Sanskritization* (1952, 1962). For that one has to understand that by changing the 'ritual status' one cannot raise one's social status to the higher direction rather the process is a reverse one (for more, please see, Leach, 1972, D'Souza, 1969, 1981; Ali, 1992, 1993, 2011, 2013). This is a community having a homogeneous character with a common way of life with a strong sense of belongingness; it is also a caste group viewed from structural perspective (Leach, 1960, D'Souza, 1969, 1981; Ali, 1992).

The members of this community is homogeneous in terms of occupations as 82.0% are pursuing traditional occupation, while others are doing a little bit different jobs but these are also mostly related to sweeping the roads, cleaning garbage, roads and drains. Almost 90.05 had no previous occupation; only a few had but these are directly or indirectly related to their traditional occupation, having relatively lower status. As far income is concerned most of the respondents (60.0%) are in 'low' income group earning only \$USD 92 monthly. With this meager income they cannot lead human life but animal living only which was manifested in

their level of living style. The *Horijons* are conditioned by the social structure in which they live in and mostly have shown their interest in their hereditary/traditional occupation. The reasons are manifold: security of job, traditional values and habit of pursuing the present occupation, lacking skill to pursue other non-traditional occupations and low literacy rate. But on the other hand, respondents who opted for a change in occupation mentioned many factors such as, higher status, enhancing income, to free themselves from social stigma generated from their low-status occupation, as others call them sweeper, or *horizon or methor* (in Bengali).

Literacy rate among the respondents is very low (71.3%) but it is higher as compared with their parents. From data it was also found that literacy is relatively lower among the mothers of the respondents as compared with that of their fathers indicating gender inequality which is inherent in a social structure like ours. Moreover, the educational preferences for sons and daughters shown by the respondents also indicate gender inequality. This trend was also observed by Imam Ali among the Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists and the Christians (Ali, 1992a, 1992, 1993, 2005, 2011, 2013). In an exploitative social structure educational opportunities are higher among the higher caste/classes/strata and this has been manifested in respondents' educational status; also among their attitudes/preferences to educational levels for sons and daughters where preference to higher education was visibly hitherto male than the female children, one of the dominant characteristics of the traditional society with.

Data are collected to see the association, if any, between occupation and modernity that revealed some amount of positive association but not very visibly distinct. This trend can be explained taking low-status occupation the respondents and their low social position in the context of the total society. Data also revealed some amount of positive association between education and modernization; also found a positive association between income and modernization.

Thus to conclude, this community is at the lower level of the society as they are pursuing low-status occupation and is mostly guided by the principle ascription that goes against the constitutional equality of Bangladesh. Same trend was also observed among the respondents with respect to education and income. In such unequal situations, for making a democratic society based on the principle of equality and liberty and secularism some kind of short and long term policies including 'special provisions' on priority basis have to be made/created not only to enhancing the status of this community and the other groups at the same social level but also to establishing as '*Sonar Bangla*', a dream of the father of the nation, *Banglabandhu* Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. The findings of this article can be generalized for other *Horijon* communities of Bangladesh as they are also homogeneous, pursuing low-status occupation, having low socioeconomic status, socially neglected and living in physically isolated colonies.

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