

INDIVIDUAL RESEARCH PAPER

ON

BANGLADESH–MYANMAR RELATION: PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES

By

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DECLARATION

I BA-8523 Captain Mst Sanjida Alam, hereby confirm that this research paper entitled **"Bangladesh–Myanmar Relation: Prospects and Challenges"** is the result of my own research work, except for quotations and citations which have been duly acknowledged. This research is conducted as a partial fulfillment of the Junior Command and Staff Course-58, under the supervision of Major Shah Mustafa Faisal, psc, BIR Sponsor Directing Staff, School of Infantry and Tactics, Jalalabad Cantonment, Sylhet. I further declare that this report has not been submitted previously by me or any other person for any other purpose.

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Jalalabad Cantonment

April 2017

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PREFACE

This research has been undertaken as a requirement to the partial fulfillment of Junior Command and Staff Course-58. The topic addresses a very contemporary issue: **"Bangladesh–Myanmar Relation: Prospects and Challenges"**. In many forums this topic is being discussed and highlighted. Several research works was also carried out onto this subject. Being an avid reader, the researcher studied few related books and publications on the topic; that triggered her interest of digging deeper into the subject.

While carrying out the research, researcher was supported by many willful and enthusiastic minds. The researcher owes a lot to them. The assistance provided by Nusrat Jahan Koley, Assistant Professor, Department of Geography and Environment, Shahjalal University of Science and Technology (SUST), Sylhet and her thesis student Md. Shahparan deserves a special mention. The researcher is in debt to all who she, formally or informally, talked to and consulted in connection to the research. The researcher is hugely indebted to the sponsor Directing Staff Major Shah Mustafa Faisal, psc, who was invaluable in his suggestions, yet offering a lot of flexibilities. Finally, the researcher is grateful to the Almighty Allah for keeping her capable both mentally and physically to finish this work.

ABSTRACT

Bangladesh and Myanmar are two neighboring country have a historical connection and relationship. These two countries had a good transport network, trade and commerce relation and also shared common heritage and culture in many aspects. This relationship was later hampered by various socio-economic and political reasons. Myanmar's long run military rule, separation from the rest of the world, lower economic activities were the main reason for it. The relationship between Myanmar and Bangladesh was characterized by both prospective and challenging. This study attempted to find out this challenges and prospects of bilateral relationship. Data were mostly collected from secondary sources along with a questionnaire survey among university students which were later analyzed and integrated with secondary data. This study found that Rohingya issue, illegal drug smuggling, border dispute, ethnic conflict and insurgencies in Myanmar are major challenging factors for the relationship. But the recent change in governance system of Myanmar, the modernization of their army and peaceful settlement of maritime dispute are the positive indicator for the relationship between two countries. Some other future prospects of relation including trade, commerce, connectivity, agricultural and energy co-operation will also triggers the regional development. On the other hand both the country has a large number of people living beside the coastal area who are subject to coastal flooding, cyclone and other disaster. Both countries can work together to mitigate the risk of natural disaster and to cope with the adverse situation. By reducing the existing challenges and ensuring the best use of prospective sector both Bangladesh and Myanmar can be benefited through a sustainable bilateral relationship.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	TITLE	PAGE
Preface		i
Abstract		ii
Contents		iii
List of Figures		v
List of Maps		vi
CHAPTER ONE	**INTRODUCTION**	
Statement of the Problem		1-2
Importance of the Research		1-3
Objectives of the Research		1-3
Research Question		1-3
Research Hypothesis		1-4
Research Methodology		1-4
Organization of the Report		1-5
Limitations of the Research		1-6
Summary of the Chapter		1-6
CHAPTER TWO	**REVIEW OF LITERATURE**	
General		2-1
Rohingya Conflict in Myanmar		2-1
Geopolitics Between Bangladesh and Myanmar		2-2
Geographical Proximity of Bangladesh and Myanmar		2-3
Bangladesh-Myanmar Bilateral Relationship		2-4
Economic Relations		2-5
Existing Challenges		2-6
Research Gaps		2-6
Summary of the Chapter		2-7

CHAPTER THREE	**FUTURE PROSPECTS**	
General		3-2
Future Prospects		3-4
Summary of the Chapter		3-9
CHAPTER FOUR	**NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES MANAGEMENT**	
General		4-2
Natural Resource Management		4-2
Environmental Issues Management		4-7
Summary of the Chapter		4-10
CHAPTER FIVE	**TRANS-BOUNDARY ISSUES AND RELATIONSHIP**	
General		5-2
Trans-Boundary Issues		5-2
Regional Relationship		5-7
Summary of the Chapter		5-7
CHAPTER SIX	**CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**	
General		6-2
Conclusion		6-2
Recommendation		6-3
ANNEXES		
Annex A		A-1
Annex B		B-1
Annex C		C-1

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE	TITLE	PAGE
Figure 3.1	Public Perception on Relation Build Up	3-4
Figure 3.2	Desired Sector for Co-Operation	3-5
Figure 3.3	Driving Factors for Relation Build-Up	3-5
Figure 4.1	Potential Sector for Combined Development	4-2
Figure 4.2	Potential Sector of Natural Resource Management	4-4
Figure 4.3	Scope of Environmental Issues Management	4-7
Figure 5.1	Major Trans-Boundary Issues of Bangladesh and Myanmar	5-2
Figure 5.2	Respondent's Perception on Possibility of Problem Solving	5-3

LIST OF MAPS

MAP	TITLE	PAGE
Map 3.1	Map of Bangladesh	3-2
Map 3.2	Map of Myanmar	3-3
Map 3.3	Maritime Boundary Dispute	3-7
Map 3.4	Connectivity Map	3-9
Map 4.1	Map Showing EEZ	4-3
Map 4.2	Map Showing the Affected Area of Cyclone Mahasen	4-9
Map 5.1	Map Showing Area of Rohingya Conflict	5-4
Map 5.2	Map Showing Illegal Drug Trading Route	5-5
Map 5.3	Map Showing Insurgency Prone States of Myanmar	5-6

CHAPTER-I INTRODUCTION

Chapter Objectives:

- To state the research problem, questions, limitations and assumptions

- To determine the objective, purpose and hypothesis of the research

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

1. Bangladesh and Myanmar, two close neighbors, have geographic and cultural linkage historically (Yesmin, 2015) with a common historical and political legacy (Yousuf & Rahman, 2013). They share about 271 kilometers of land border, of which around 150 Kilometers lie in hilly areas, as well as a maritime border (Kumar, 2016). In the past, their relationship has been marked by tensions due to border disputes, the migration of Rohingya refugees to Bangladesh and illegal drug smuggling which make troubled the entire range of cooperation. Though the political and economic relationships among the countries of the sub-region of south eastern Asia have been strengthened since 1990s, the ties between Burma (Myanmar) and Bangladesh have often been disrupted by the Rohingya issue.

2. The Rohingyas, a Muslim minority group residing in the north western part of the Arakan (Rakhine) state in Myanmar; have not been recognized as a national minority by the state since 1974 when the Ne Win government denied their citizenship officially. With the growing geo-political importance of this region Bangladesh-Myanmar relation got a new momentum. It is observed that Bangladesh-Myanmar relations have meandered through phases of cooperation and conflict. Conflict in this case is not meant in the sense of confrontation, but only in the sense of conflict of interests and resultant diplomatic face-off (Kumar, 2016).

3. On the other hand, Myanmar's long run military rules, restrictive economic policy and the isolation from the rest of the world for a long time also hindrance the bilateral relationship. A relationship established between the two countries immediately after the independence of Bangladesh. The present relationship between the two countries is likely to be maintained in future through political understandings (Kumar, 2016).

4. The recent modernization of Myanmar Armed Forces and some political and military actions of Myanmar compelled Bangladesh to draw a new strategy with Myanmar. The recent changes in government system and the peaceful settlement of

maritime dispute opens the new possibilities between the relationships of two countries. At present besides air connection, there are no road links or passenger shipping links, though historically these links were there. It is imperative that, a road link between these two countries is in progress (Rahman, 2014). Being one of the neighbors, Bangladesh has a great chance to grab the opportunities, to bolster its relations with Myanmar and to take the benefit of Myanmar's recent economic liberalization.

Importance of the Research

5. This research will try to figure out the prospects of a meaningful bilateral relationship by optimizing existing challenges. Relationship between Bangladesh and Myanmar is progressive. It is expected that this research will enrich the existing data bank as well as it may be act as a guideline for policy makers and future researcher. It is also expected that, it will be helpful to understand the present status of relationship between two countries in the regional and sub-regional context and its future prospects and possibilities.

Objectives of the Research

6. The broad objective of this research is to find out prospects and challenges of Bangladesh-Myanmar relationship. The specific objectives of the research are as follows:

a. To assess the future prospects in terms of bilateral trade, commerce and connectivity.

b. To analyze the feasibility of combined natural resources and extreme environmental issues management.

c. To assess the trans-boundary issues and Regional as well as Sub-Regional relationships.

d. To provide some suggestions for overcoming the challenges of Bangladesh-Myanmar relationship.

Research Question

7. These types of the primary and secondary research questions will be tried to solve through this research.

a. **Primary Question.** What are the prospects and challenges of Bangladesh-Myanmar Relationship?

b. **Secondary Question.** Following secondary questions have been formulated:

(1) What are the future prospects of Bangladesh-Myanmar relationship in terms of bilateral trade, commerce and connectivity?

(2) How the combined natural resources and extreme environmental issues can be managed?

(3) How to solve the trans-boundary issues and what is its role in Regional and Sub-Regional relationship?

(4) How to overcome the challenges of Bangladesh-Myanmar relationship?

Research Hypothesis

8. "Effective steps of both the government of Bangladesh and Myanmar for mitigating the existing challenges will ensure a highly favorable bilateral relationship between Bangladesh and Myanmar."

Research Methodology

9. A multi-disciplinary, participatory and interactive method was followed to conduct this research.

a. **Data Collection.** After finalizing research proposal, Data were collected from both primary and secondary sources.

(1) **Source of Primary data.** A questionnaire survey was conducted among 50 respondents who all are the students of Shahjalal University of Science and Technology, Sylhet.

(2) **Source of Secondary data.** Secondary data were collected from available books, article, research paper, newspaper and some other online resources.

b. **Data Analysis.** Collected data were analyzed by using SPSS, Microsoft office excel and other software package. Arc-GIS software was used to prepare the related map of the studies.

Organization of the Report

10. Outline of the paper with brief focusing points of the content of the chapters are mentioned below.

a. **Chapter-I (Introduction).** This chapter highlights the background information, importance, objectives, research methodology and limitations of this research. This chapter also represents a brief summary of findings by reviewing available books, documents, publications and articles on this issue.

b. **Chapter-II (Literature Review).** This chapter focuses on the discussion of findings from various literatures on this issue.

c. **Chapter-III (Future Prospects).** This chapter focuses on the future prospects of bilateral relationship in terms of trade, commerce and connectivity.

d. **Chapter-IV (Natural Resources and Environmental Issues Management).** This chapter includes the feasibility analysis of combined natural resources and extreme environmental issues management.

e. **Chapter- V (Trans-boundary Issues and Relationship).** This chapter deals with the trans-boundary issues and regional as well as sub-regional relationships. It will help to understand these issues and to know about the challenges and prospects of relationship.

f. **Chapter-VI (Conclusion and Recommendation).** This chapter provides some suggestions for overcoming the challenges of Bangladesh-Myanmar relationship. These suggestions are expected to regard as a guideline for policy making and strategic planning. This chapter also summarizes the whole research and represents the conclusion and recommendation reflecting the result and analysis.

Limitations of the Research

11. This research is a short duration study on Bangladesh-Myanmar relationship. Most of the data were collected from secondary sources along with some primary data collected through questionnaire survey among the university students.

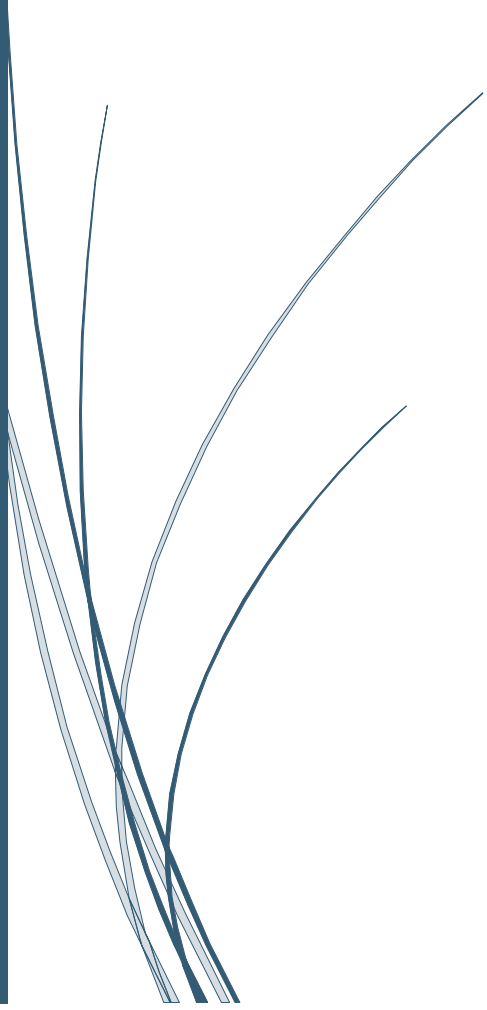
Summary of the Chapter

12. From the above discussion it is stated that, the relationship between Bangladesh and Myanmar is important for both the country which has a potential future for the development of existing situation. Co-operation from both sides can ensure a friendly and prospective relation between the two countries. So it is high time to come forward and to take necessary initiatives to strengthen the relationship and to foster the regional development.

CHAPTER-II REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Chapter Objectives:

- To carry out review of literature



CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

General

13. To know the background information and previous data of a specific research field, it is regarded as a prerequisite to study about the relevant topic, which is generally known as literature review. The most important aspect of literature review is, by this process research gaps can be identified and there is always a chance to develop previous research work by implementing new methods. To conduct this research properly several previous paper, report, journal, were reviewed on Bangladesh-Myanmar relationship.

Rohingya Conflict in Myanmar

14. This is a burning issue for the relationship between Bangladesh and Myanmar. The Rohingyas are the Muslim ethnic group residing in the Buthidaung and Maungdaw townships of the northwestern part of the Arakan State, Burma. This area, which is adjacent to the Naf River as boundary from Bangladesh, is known as Mayu region. They live there as the majority together with the Buddhist Arakanese and Burmese (Razzaq & Haque, 1995).

15. Though the naming of "Rohingya" seems to have come about only recently (around the beginning of 1950s), the Muslims in Arakan have a long history since the beginning of the Mrauk-U dynasty (1430-1785) of the Arakan Kingdom. The history of the Rohingya minority in Rakhine dates back to the early seventh century, when Arab Muslim traders settled in that area. According to Yegar, the Muslims who had resided in the area since the days of Mrauk-U dynasty and the Muslims from Chittagong who immigrated into Rakhine in the 20th century were integrated and comprised the present Rohingyas (Yegar, 2012). During the Burmese post-independence period, the Rohingyas' claim of separate ethnic identity was recognized by the democratic government of Premier U Nu (1948-1958) (Rahmatullah, 2012). They have not been recognized as citizens since 1962 when the new military rule took over the country. They were simply omitted from the periodic national census.

16. The two exoduses occurred in the following circumstances. The first one (1978), which happened four years after the enforcement of the 1974 Emergency Immigration Act, was a reaction against an operation carried out by the Burmese immigration officials in northwestern Arakan (Banglapedia, 2006). This was called Operation "*Naga Min*" (Dragon King), which was an organized census started from May 1977 in the areas where the government considered that many illegal immigrants were living. In February 1978, many Rohingyas abandoned their houses and fled across the Naf River towards Teknaf and Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh. Although Burmese government in May 1978 declared that 35,590 people, all Bengali, fled leaving 6,294 empty houses behind them, the results of the *Naga Min* operation in Arakan in actual led to 200,000 to 250,000 Muslims refugees fleeing into Bangladesh. The second Rohingya exodus occurred between April 1991 and May 1992. The numbers of the refugees this time rose to over 250, 000. In February 1992, corresponding to the strong request of international assistance given by the Government of Bangladesh, UNHCR started a broad relief operation in 20 camps along the road between Teknaf and Cox's Bazar. In April 1992, the Governments of Burma and Bangladesh signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on setting the terms of the repatriation program and allowing limited involvement of UNHCR (Banglapedia, 2006).

Geo-Politics between Bangladesh and Myanmar

17. Geo-politics in this region is also important for both the country and also have a direct impact to other neighboring countries. The Arakan state of Myanmar situated in the Bangladesh Myanmar border. The Naf River is dividing this state from Bangladesh. So the geographical location of these two countries made the Rohingya debate more vulnerable. As Arakan state of Myanmar is the neighbor of Bangladesh thereby exoduses can easily come to Bangladesh. This has occurred three times while two times they were allowed to come but last they were pushed back. Besides that, with the growing importance of Bangladesh and Myanmar in the international arena the Rohingya issue takes a new shape in recent times. This issue is no more bilateral issue between Myanmar and Bangladesh. The keen interest of this region made the issue more complicated. Americas growing interest in the Asia Pacific Region also fuel the fire in the Rohingya perspectives. Two regional powers India and China is also the player of this game (Banglapedia, 2006).

18. Since the Independence of Myanmar, India and China having closer ties with Myanmar and in the recent time it has increased rapidly due to the increasing energy shortage in these two countries. Both of them are energy deficit country due to their rapid economic growth. China has already established itself as the world's number one economy superseding America through its industrial growth. So as the energy deficit country both of them are interested in Myanmar for its Gas and other natural resources. For this geostrategic reason India and China is not creating any pressure on Myanmar in the Rohingya issue. America launches his Pivot to Asia strategy in 2011 as a part to deter the Chinese power and gain the economic benefit from this region. In this process America will include new partners to implement its strategy. Myanmar is one of the new allies of this policy of America. So for its national interest America is increasing ties with Myanmar. Obama's policy towards this region is a part of maintaining America's hegemony in the world. President Obama started his second term with the visit to Myanmar. Where, he reiterated his focus on the Asia Pacific region. With the new equation of global power America is more to implement its policy. Some analysts also claim that America itself fostering the Rohingya issue and not interested to take any measure. It is using the Rohingya issue as the platform of Military Intervention in the south East Asia. Because America is concern about the Chinese rise as a regional power and its influence in the Asia pacific region. So America is finding a scope to intervene in the region. This view is mostly cited by the Indian Analysts who argues about the America's willingness to solve the Rohingya issue. All these indicate the geopolitical reality of Rohingya issue. India, China as well as America have their national interest in this region. The growing power rivalry in this Asia Pacific region makes this issue more complicated. In this respect it can be said that the Rohingya issue is also a growing concern in bilateral relation between Bangladesh and Myanmar (Banglapedia, 2006).

Geographical Proximity of Bangladesh and Myanmar

19. Bangladesh and Myanmar is two neighboring county located as the south and south East Asia. Myanmar has borders with other four countries including India. The North East region of India shares Border both with Bangladesh and India (Mantoo, 2013). Despite her small size, Bangladesh does have certain geographical advantages that make her important to regional and extra regional powers which may drag her into a complex

strategic scenario created due to rivalries between big powers. Bangladesh may be seen as a key player in strategic game plans of India, Pakistan, the U.S.A and China (Mantoo, 2013).

20. Myanmar with its size and huge natural resources has potentials in this region. The growing interest of Myanmar due to its geographical location and resources established it as one of the key player in the strategic game. It has become the attraction for superpowers in the international politics. Bangladesh, which being regarded as a bridge between SAARC and ASEAN, also has enormous geographic advantages for its proximity to Myanmar and other South East Asian nations to promote interregional economic, political and security cooperation (Mantoo, 2013). Once connected via Asian Highway and Trans- Asian Railway, the South and South East Asian nations will be using Bangladesh and Myanmar as the main transit point to increase economic interactions among themselves.

21. Bangladesh and Myanmar being located at shores of Indian Ocean and Bay of Bengal increased its importance. Bangladesh and Myanmar has sea area in which lies valuable marine resources such as hydrocarbon, fishes etc. (Rahman, 2014). Its well-developed sea ports offer economic and military opportunities because land locked countries like Nepal, Bhutan and also India can use the port facilities to increase trade with its land locked North East region while other South East Asian countries like Laos and also China can use the same facilities to increase interregional economic interactions. The unique geographical location of Bangladesh and Myanmar make them the core of International Politics. Both Bangladesh and Myanmar is hugely benefited due to their geographical location which is continuously increasing the significance in different aspects (Rahman, 2014).

Bangladesh-Myanmar Bilateral Relationship

22. Bangladesh-Myanmar bilateral relations have a great significance in Bangladeshi foreign policy. Myanmar is the next door neighbor of Bangladesh. Bangladesh shares land border, maritime boundary, river, political and economic issues, and many other things (such as culture, religion etc.) with Myanmar (Rahman, 2014). The geo-strategic location of Bangladesh and Myanmar signify that without establishing strong bilateral relations both countries will suffer in many ways. National interests will also be hampered. Both

Bangladesh and Myanmar need to solve bilateral problems (such as Rohingya refugee issue, land border management, illegal trade and trafficking, small arms and drug supply etc.). Recently Myanmar opens up its door to international community. At present, High Officials have visited Myanmar for this purpose. Eastern and Western countries are showing their interest to Myanmar. It is the greatest changes of Myanmar foreign policy. Bangladesh should take this opportunity (Rahman, 2014).

Economic Relations

23. There is a good chance to strengthen economic relationship between Bangladesh and Myanmar. The major areas of economic relations between Bangladesh and Myanmar could be trade of readymade garments, pharmaceutical products and agricultural goods. Together with emphasizing on the changing dynamics, Yesmin examined the prospects of broader economic cooperation between the two neighbors. Given the foremost debated matters, her study mentioned the core challenges on bilateral economic relations and, at the end, concluded with policy recommendations towards developing new opportunities and minimizing the existing challenges (Yesmin, 2015).

24. BCIM-EC (Bangladesh, China, India, and Myanmar Economic Corridor) grouping includes two large emerging developing countries and two LDCs which need to be recognized. Important initiatives have already been set in notion towards closer cooperation involving BCIM members under the ambit of the aforesaid RTAs (Rail Tia Associations). SAFTA (South Asian Free Trade Authority) and BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation) have chartered ways to establish free trade zones (in BIMSTEC-FTA, services area also included). Indeed, both of these groupings mention about cooperation in non-direct market access areas (preferential treatment through concessional tariffs) such as customs harmonization, investment promotion and trade facilitation. There are ambitious plans to transform the FTAs (Free Trade Area) into customs union. As far as economic cooperation under the rubrics of BCIM is concerned, the idea is to accelerate the cooperation between the four member countries, by drawing synergies from the other aforesaid groupings. However, the major focus and point of departure and what gives the BCIM grouping its distinctive features is that the grouping aspires to build a growth triangle covering the region of Bangladesh, Myanmar, NE states of India and Southern Chinese province of Yunnan. The analysis has

pointed out, the NE and Southern China are soft under bellies of India and China respectively (Rahman et al., 2007).

Existing Challenges

25. Challenges of Bangladesh-Myanmar relationship is characterized by some issues hindering the development process. It is a matter of regret that Myanmar is far near neighbor of Bangladesh. Lack of connectivity (people to people, state to state, Government to Government, road link, air and rail way etc.), lack of knowledge about Myanmar, misunderstanding and mistrust, information gap, long time military rule and restrictions in Myanmar are the main obstacles to establish a cooperative and strong bilateral relations between Bangladesh and Myanmar. Now Bangladesh needs to take Myanmar as a country full of potentials. It is the national interest of Bangladesh to establish strong friendship with Myanmar based on diplomatic, strategic, economic and social considerations (Rahman et al., 2007).

Research Gap

26. This chapter reveals that, there are lots of issues between Bangladesh and Myanmar including but not limited to Rohingya conflict in Arakan state, geo-politics of south Asia and southeast Asia to gain the benefit from the recent economic liberalization of Myanmar, geographical proximity and Bangladesh, China, India, Myanmar Economic corridor (BCIM-EC). By reviewing these available journals, articles and scientific papers it is found that, Researchers paid their more attention on insurgencies in Myanmar along with economic development. But there is a lags of quality research to address some other important issues like drug trading and boarder dispute, natural resource management and the prospects of marine Blue economy. To fulfill this knowledge gaps, this study paid attention on bilateral relationship, trans-boundary issues and the prospects of marine blue economy after the successful settlement of maritime dispute between Bangladesh and Myanmar. On the other hand, most of the research mainly focuses on secondary sources of information for their analysis rather collecting data from primary data source for in depth study. This study tried to integrate secondary data sources with primary data which were collected through questionnaire survey.

Summary of the Chapter

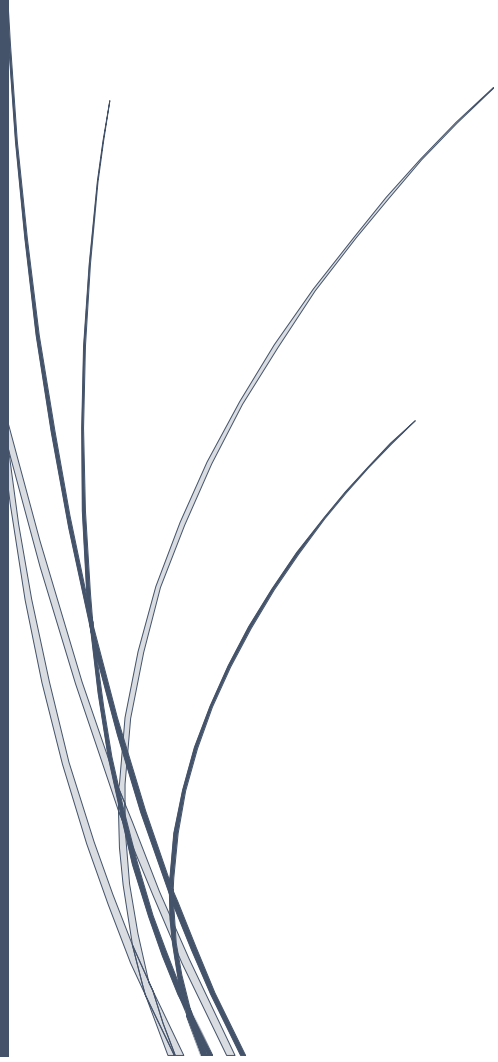
27. Bangladesh-Myanmar relationship is important for both of the countries. By reviewing the above documents, it is clear that, bilateral relationship between Bangladesh and Myanmar is meaningful for both the countries which mostly depends on the negotiation and the management of the existing challenging issues. Both country can work hand to hand to make sure the best use of their proximity. They can work together in areas like combined natural resource management and disaster management as both of the country has a significant number of population living along the coast. The exposed sea territory can be used in combination to manage maritime resource and to enhance the prospects of Blue economy. This relationship will surely help to minimize the existing challenges between Bangladesh and Myanmar and to flourish the potentiality of economic development for both sides. This will also trigger the regional development in wider scale as these countries are part of some influential regional organization like SAARC and ASEAN.

CHAPTER-III

FUTURE PROSPECTS

Chapter Objectives:

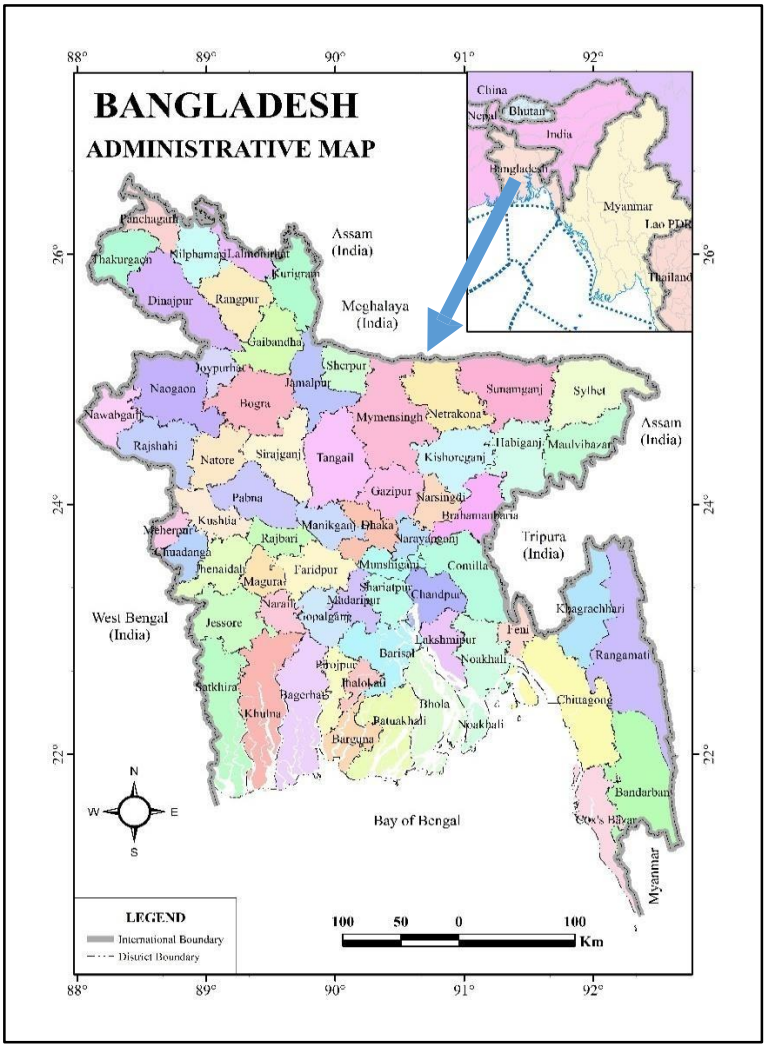
- To assess the future prospects in terms of bilateral trade, commerce and connectivity.



CHAPTER THREE: FUTURE PROSPECTS

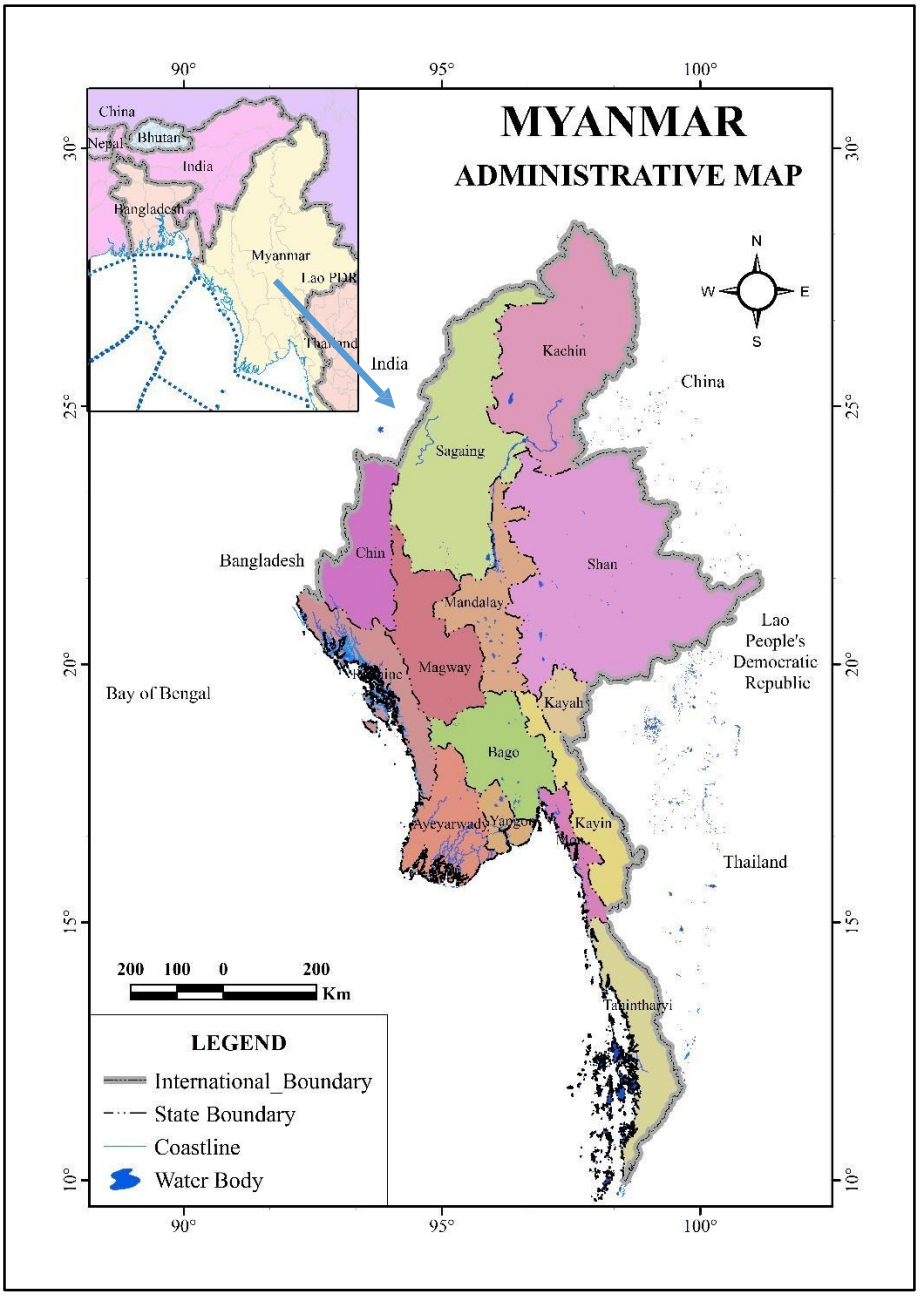
General

28. Bangladesh is a low-lying, riverine country located in South Asia with a large marshy jungle coastline of 580 km (360 mile) on the northern littoral of the Bay of Bengal. Straddling the Tropic of Cancer, Bangladesh has a tropical monsoon climate characterized by heavy seasonal rainfall, high temperatures, and high humidity. Natural disasters, such as floods, tornadoes, and tidal bores affect the country yearly. Bangladesh also is affected by major cyclones, on average 16 times a decade. A cyclone struck the southeastern coast in May 1991, killing 136,000 people. Cyclone Sidr struck the southwestern coast on 15 November 2007, affecting not only the coastal districts of the administrative division Khulna but also about half of the tropical forest Sundarbans (Banglapedia, 2010).



Map 3.1: Map of Bangladesh.
Source: LGED, Marine Regions (December, 2016).

29. Myanmar, officially the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and also known as Burma, is a sovereign state in South East Asia bordered by Bangladesh, India, China, Laos and Thailand. About one third of Myanmar's total perimeter of 5,876 km (3,651 miles) forms an uninterrupted coastline of 1,930 km (1,200 miles) along the Bay of Bengal and the Andaman Sea. The country's 2014 census revealed a much lower population than expected, with 51 million people recorded. Myanmar is 676,578 square kilometers (261,227 sq mi) in size. Its capital city is Naypyidaw and its largest city and former capital city is Yangon (Rangoon) (Wikipedia, 2014).



Map 3.2: Map of Myanmar.
Source: Diva-GIS, Marine Regions (December, 2016).

30. In the era of globalization, bilateral relationship is regarded as an important factor for development. As a neighboring country, historically there was a good connection between Bangladesh and Myanmar, which later hampered due to various social and political reasons. Rohingya issue, illegal drug smuggling, border dispute, ethnic conflict and insurgencies in Myanmar are major challenging factors for the relationship. But the recent change in governance system of Myanmar, the modernization of their army and peaceful settlement of maritime dispute are the positive indicator for the relationship between these two countries. Some other future prospects of relation including but not limited to trade, commerce, connectivity, agricultural and energy co-operation will also trigger the regional development. This chapter focuses on the discussion on future prospects of bilateral relationship between Bangladesh and Myanmar in terms of trade, commerce and connectivity which will foster the development process of both countries.

Future Prospects

31. All the people interviewed opined that, the relationship between both the countries should build up in a constructive way for the betterment of both countries. This positive attitude for relationship is considered as a prospective factor in recent times, which will ensure the development process.

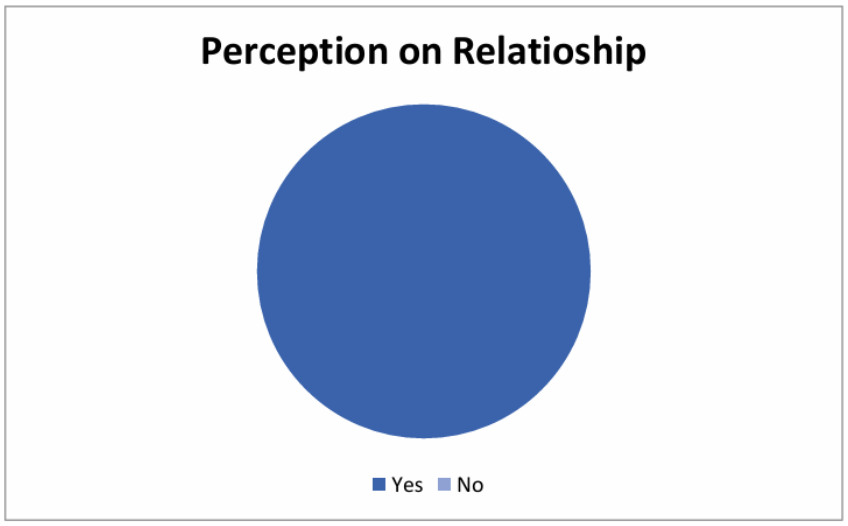


Figure 3.1: Public perceptions on relation build up.

Source: Field Survey, March 2017.

32. Maximum people (60%) want to build up a relationship in terms of trade and commerce where all the people interested to enhance the connectivity. Some (40%) people also interested to develop relationship for energy purpose.

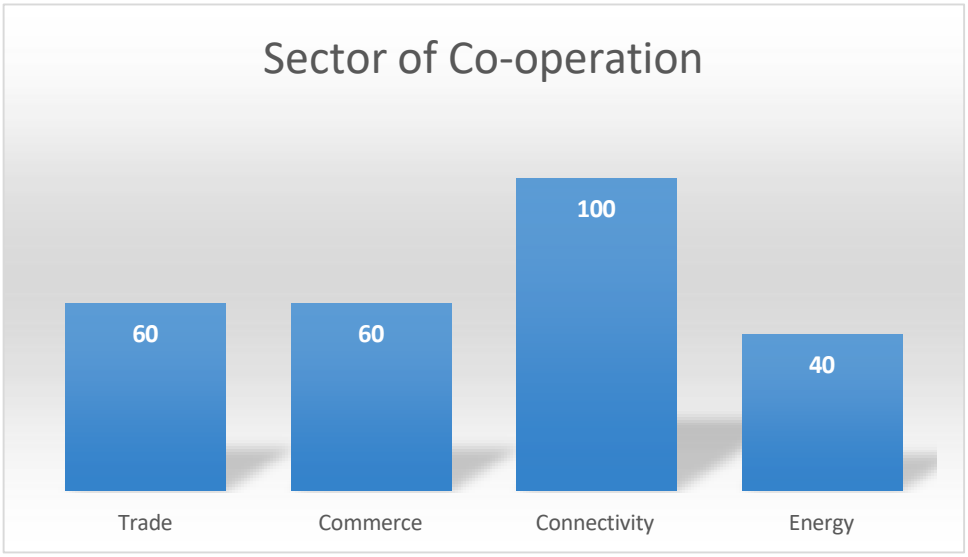


Figure 3.2: Desired sector for co-operation.
Source: Field Survey, March 2017.

33. Political stability in both the countries and recent development of armed forces of Myanmar is considered as beneficial for the relationship. The peaceful settlement of maritime dispute is also considered as another important factor that driving the relationship.

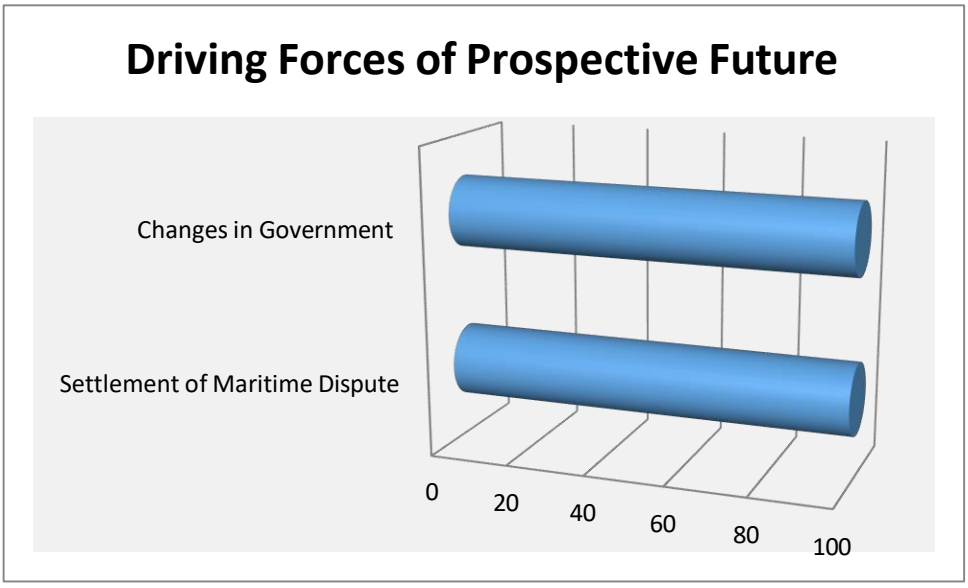
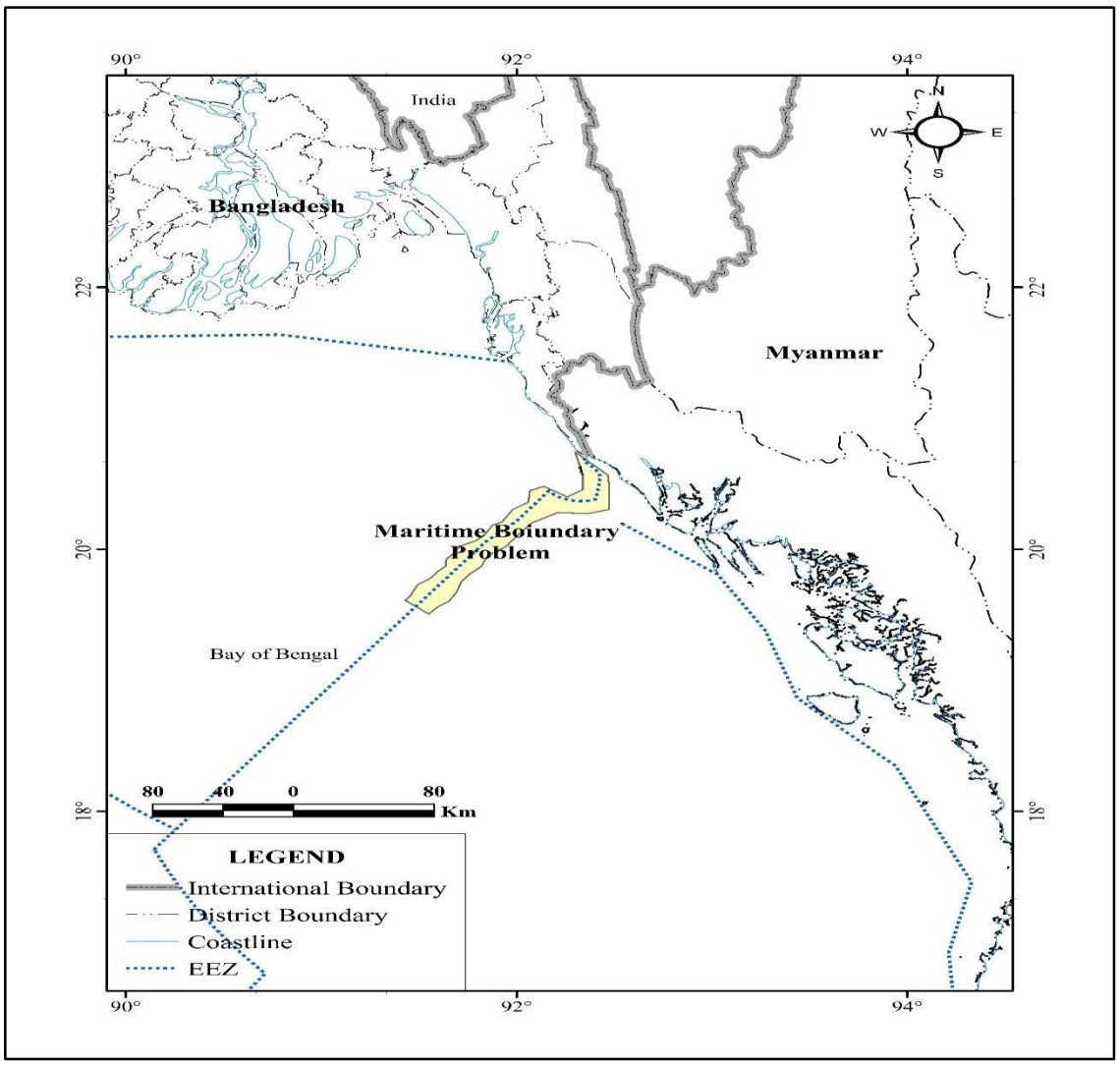


Figure 3.3: Driving factors for relation build-up.
Source: Field Survey, March 2017.

34. The prospective sector for bilateral relationship and their associated causes are discussed below,

a. Political Stability. The long run military governance in Myanmar was the main hindrance for global connectivity. The recent modernization of armed forces and the election which brought to NLD led semi democratic government in power is a turning point for governance system. Bangladesh Foreign Secretary met Myanmar's State counselor Aung San Suu kyi and conveyed as Bangladeshi Prime Minister envoy a massage that, Bangladesh wants to forge friendship, good neighborliness and close cooperation with neighboring Myanmar in all areas of common interest. Suu Kyi also emphasized that there should be frequent engagements between the two neighbors. She expressed her firmness sincerely when she said that no issues and incidents should distract the willingness of frequent engagements and increasing cooperation between the two countries. She feels that both neighbors should face all challenges jointly (Foizee, 2016).

b. Solution of Maritime Dispute. The peaceful settlement of maritime dispute in 2012 is also considered a positive factor for the future relationship. There was a hostile relation between both the countries for the disputed maritime boundary dialogue with Myanmar from 1974, it did not succeed due to Myanmar’s reluctance for bilateral solution of the dispute. Nevertheless, between 1974 and 1986, a series of eight rounds of bilateral negotiations was held to delimit territorial water, exclusive economic zone (EEZ), and continental shelf. The second period of six rounds of negotiations had taken place since 2008 to 2010. The negotiation process was once more failed for Myanmar’s denial to the existence of any formal agreement with Bangladesh on maritime delimitation. After these failed bilateral attempts, the government of Bangladesh presented the issue in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) on December 13, 2009 for the peaceful resolution of the dispute. Subsequent to these initiatives, the Hamburg based International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) declared a judgment on the demarcation of maritime boundary between Bangladesh and Myanmar on March 14, 2012 (Bhattacharya, 2012).



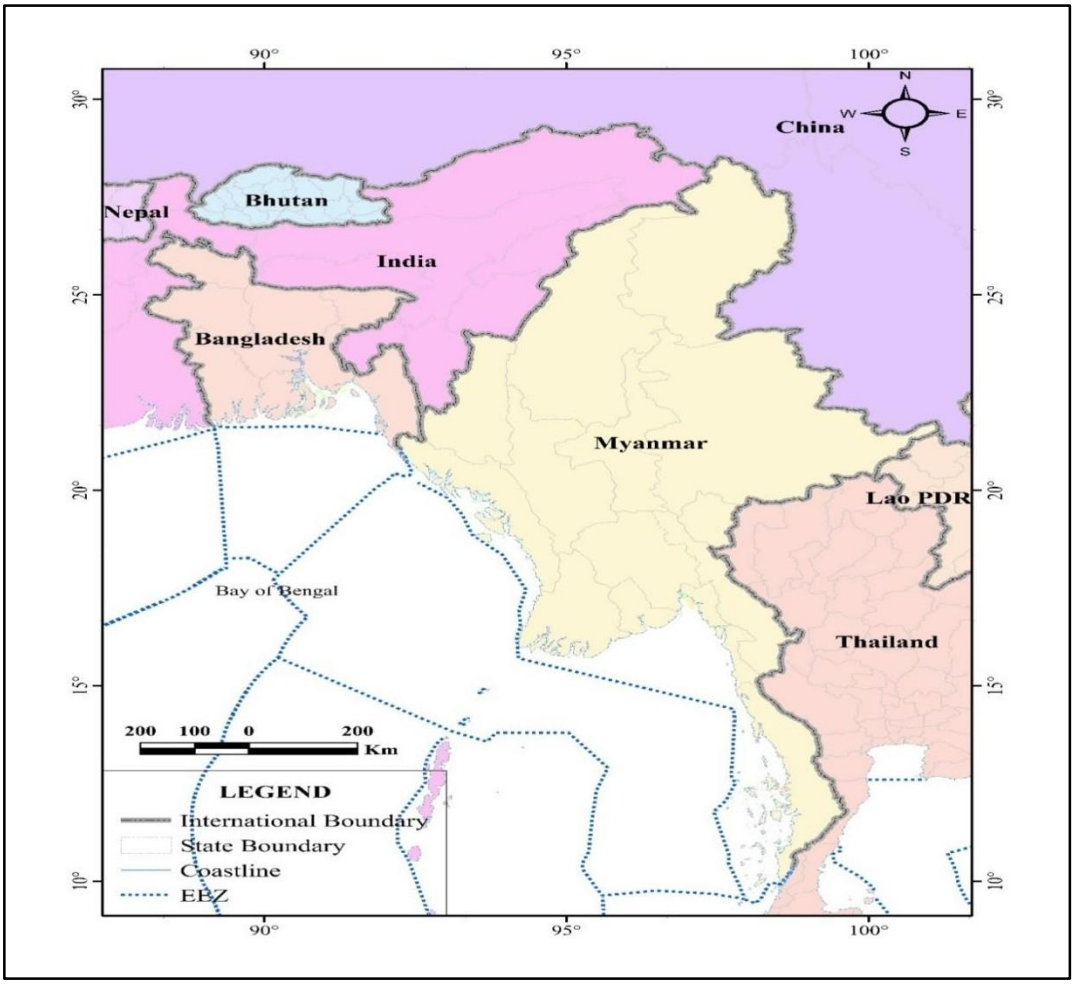
Map 3.3: Maritime Boundary Dispute.

Source: MapCruzin, Marine Regions (December, 2016).

c. <u>Trade and Commerce</u>. There is a vast scope for the bilateral relationship between Myanmar and Bangladesh in terms of trade and commerce. There are a number of areas where the two countries may cooperate and work together; the key area being the improvement of existing trade relations, which is not in good shape at the time being. Bangladesh has lot to gain from the improving trade relations with Myanmar. Since the international community, the West in particular, is depressing Myanmar through withdrawing the economic sanctions imposed on the country and intra-trade for Myanmar would increase by many times from the current scenario. With comparatively sizable population, beautiful tourist favored atmosphere, vast natural (including energy) resources and a reasonably positive attention from west, Myanmar is

the appropriate destination for any country to invest and make huge profit. The fact is Bangladesh is the next door neighbor of Myanmar which makes Myanmar the appropriate-most trade partner for Bangladesh.

d. <u>Connectivity</u>. Another scope for co-operation is the proposed economic corridor among Bangladesh, China, India, and Myanmar that is famously addressed as Bangladesh, China, India and Myanmar Economic corridor (BCIM-EC). The BCIM-EC initiative intends to connect the relevant countries through a network of railways, air ways, roads, and waterways. It is supposed to connect china's Kunming (Yunnan province) to India's Kolkata through Myanmar's Mandalay, Bangladesh's Dhaka and Chittagong and India's northeast. An important economic dimension of the relationship is to develop connectivity between the two countries. At present besides air connection, there are no road links or passenger shipping links. Historically these links were there, but remain disconnected for decades. It is imperative that the link will be re-established soon. The Myanmar government has at last given permission for our survey team to visit Myanmar and do the needful. This must be taken up early in order to have the connecting road established. 25 km should be done in 2 years if our government is keen. From the Myanmar side at the end of 25 km there is another stretch of 100+ km that needs to be upgraded. Encouragement for donors especially Asian Development Bank is important to take up this project (Uddin, 2014). This can link up with Yangon as well as with Kunming in China through Myanmar's internal road links. The Asian Highway controversy is a different issue, as it would simply be senseless for any international traveler to take a roundabout way through North East India to link up with highway inside Myanmar. The following map (Map 3.4) is showing the connectivity between India, Bangladesh, Myanmar and China through Thailand.



Map 3.4: Connectivity map.
Source: Diva-GIS, Marine Regions (December, 2016).

Summary of the Chapter

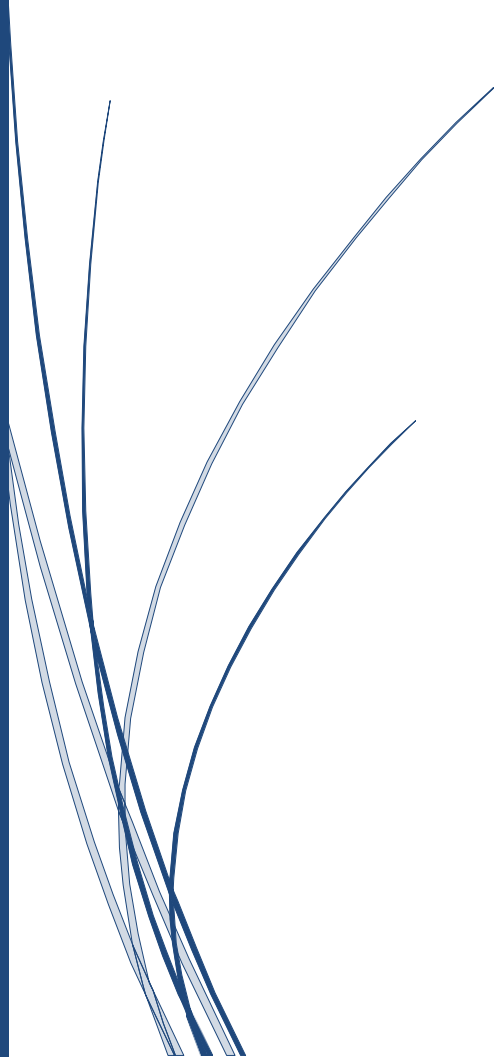
35. This chapter focuses on the discussion of the future prospects of bilateral relationship between Bangladesh and Myanmar in terms of trade, commerce and connectivity. This study shows that, after the recent changes in government in Myanmar and peaceful settlement of maritime dispute between Bangladesh and Myanmar, people are now willing to build up a meaningful relationship. Both the country can cooperate in bilateral trade of goods and services, international commerce and connectivity through road, rail as well as air. From the above discussion it is clear that, there are still lots of chances to build up the bilateral relationship for both the countries. Effective steps and responsible attitude from both sides can ensure the best use of the prospective sector for establishing the mutual cooperative relationship within two countries.

CHAPTER- IV

NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES MANAGEMENT

Chapter Objective:

- To analyze the feasibility of combined natural resources and extreme environmental issues management.



CHAPTER FOUR: NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES MANAGEMENT

General

36. There are plenty of natural resources in Bangladesh and Myanmar along with a wide range of environmental issues. So, natural resource and Environmental issues management is both challenging and prospective for Bangladesh-Myanmar relationship. This chapter includes the feasibility analysis of combined natural resources and environmental issues management. The survey showed that, maximum respondents opined that both the countries can work for combined environmental and resource management, where all of them agreed about that of disaster management. These are described below.

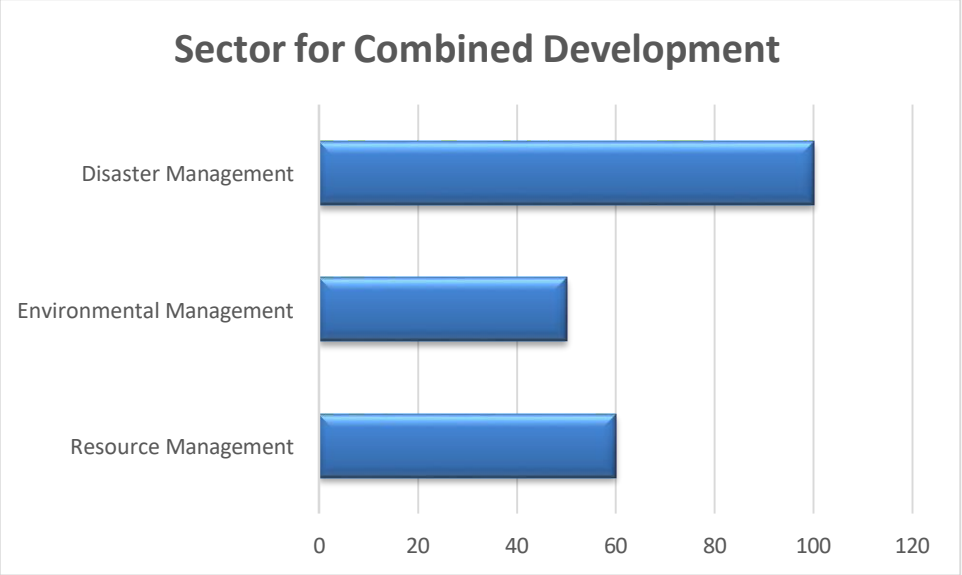


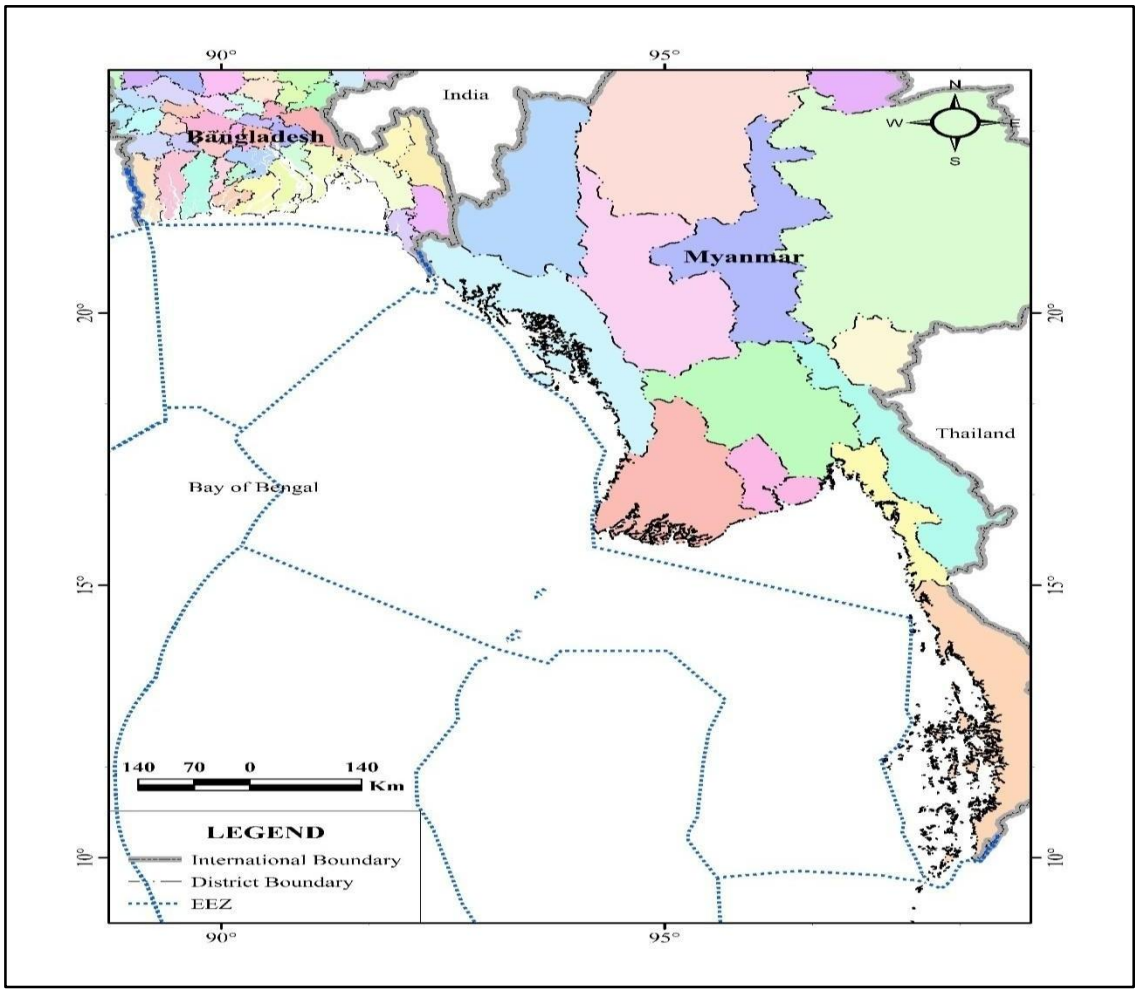
Figure 4.1: Potential sector for combined development.

Source: Field survey, March 2017.

Natural Resource Management

37. Lack of economic expertise resulted in its failure to pass a law that would have helped develop the economy. Recently, the civilian government of Myanmar halted construction of a 4,000-megawatt coal-fired power plant in Dawei and planned a site of the country's first and biggest special economic zone in order to accommodate environmental issues. In addition, Myanmar is working very hard to develop SEZs (Semi Economic Zone) to attract FDI into the region. Myanmar is also considering Export Processing Zones and sub-trading zones together with SEZs. It is known that

incentives to investors are allowed in the form of income tax exemption for 5 years and 50 percent of taxes for the next 5 years 50. Two SEZs are reportedly in the works, one near the commercial capital Yangon and the other in Kyaukphyu, where the China-Myanmar pipeline starts. Additionally, a deep-sea port is nearly finished. Alongside the SEZs, Bangladesh can explore cooperation in the fields of solar energy and biogas projects. The prospects of EEZ is also high.



Map 4.1: Map Showing EEZ

Source: Diva-GIS, Marine Regions (December, 2016).

38. This study found that, Maximum (90%) respondents opined, both Bangladesh and Myanmar can work in a combination to manage fisheries and energy resource. On the other hand, about 80% opined that, agriculture is also another high potential sector of co-operation where 70% considered the management of maritime resource. These sectors are discussed below.

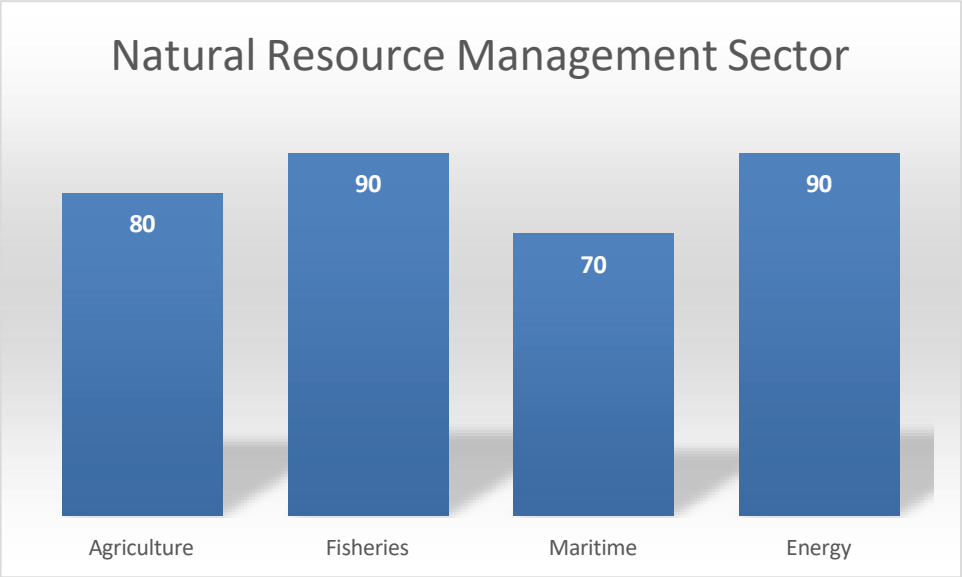


Figure 4.2: Sector potential of natural resource management

Source: Field survey, March 2017

a. <u>Agricultural Resource</u>. Bangladesh needs to increase its investment basket in Myanmar in sectors such as agriculture, energy, pharmaceuticals, information technology, ready-made garments and hotels. Contract farming can be a new area of cooperation considering the vast scale of arable land in Myanmar. In addition, only 12% of the total land area in Myanmar is under cultivation and the liberal policy of leasing out land offers a great opportunity for Bangladesh to introduce contract farming with Myanmar. According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Myanmar, foreign investors are allowed to use up to 50,000 acres of uncultivated land under the current land regulation for agricultural purposes (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Myanmar). In fact, considering the future food security of Bangladesh and its sole dependence on India, contract farming with Myanmar could be a good alternative. Under the contract, Myanmar farmers can offer their land and labor, while Bangladesh entrepreneurs may provide knowledge and necessary supervision, supply of required inputs, furnish a buy back guarantee ensuring recovery of cost of production and provision of profit for the farmers, which would be mutually, agreed upon. Having a geographical land area of more than five times than that of Bangladesh, but yet producing the staple, rice, at lesser quantities than Bangladesh has opted the economy to search for full-scale assistance and the expertise of agriculture from Bangladesh. A recent proposal has been put forward by Myanmar seeking Bangladesh cooperation to expand its agricultural production. This proposal developed because of the new policy adopted by

Myanmar to increase rice exports in the face of the new democratic regime. The Bangladesh government has agreed to help Myanmar in the agricultural sector, although several rounds of talks would have to be initiated for the cooperation to be realized.

b. Fisheries Resource. More than 90 percent of the global catch of hilsa is shared between neighboring countries Bangladesh, Myanmar, and India. The hilsa fish (called llish in Bengali) is one of Bangladesh's staple foods and supports the livelihoods of three million people in Bangladesh alone. But hilsa migrates across the Bay of Bengal and more than 90 per cent of the global catch is shared between neighboring countries Bangladesh, Myanmar, and India. Increased demand across the three countries for hilsa is putting pressure on the species. Fisheries resources across the Bay of Bengal are being degraded and overexploited at an alarming rate. One of the rare examples of both mismanagement and restoration of fisheries using an economic incentive-based mechanism in Bangladesh's most important single-species fishery: hilsa. Government officials, scientists, and members of civil society groups from the three countries came together to work out the most effective ways to respond to these findings and manage a plan for better sustainability of the hilsa fishery. This will build on the work of the Bangladeshi government to find the right economic incentives for fishermen to fish sustainably and keep their livelihoods.

c. Maritime Resource. Government of Bangladesh has stepped up efforts to develop a blue economy following the settlement of its maritime disputes with neighboring India and Myanmar. Bangladesh’s recent activities to enlarge the maritime economic activities assume significance as the substantial part of the country’s foreign trade is conducted through maritime shipping. Besides, Bangladesh is one of the promising countries in the arena of ship building and ship breaking. According to an estimate, the country contributes 24.8% of global growth in the industry of ship building and breaking. Some Bangladeshi observers maintain that in ports like Chittagong and Narayanganj, there are huge opportunities to expand the industry. China has already shown interest in helping Bangladesh to build a deep-sea port in Sonadia.

d. Energy Resource. Myanmar is endowed with various natural resources including gas, limestone, timber, and varieties of marine products. According to the former foreign minister of Bangladesh Dipu Moni, a company in

Myanmar was interested in setting up a 500-megawatt hydroelectric plant in Rakhine state to sell electricity to Bangladesh (*The Daily Star*, June 12, 2009). Such opportunities should be utilized. In addition, the present government of Myanmar welcomes foreign investors to invest in their energy sector. The country is greatly suffering from shortage of electricity but there is an option to establish a hydroelectric power plant in the hilly region of Rakhain state of Myanmar. This stalk was initiated in the previous JTC (Joint Trade Commission) meeting. But because of Bangladesh's sloth in negotiation, it already lost the first preferred hill which was taken by Malaysia to do the same. Considering the energy-scarce situation where 87 per cent of the power plants in Bangladesh are running on natural gas, a source which is fast depleting, the government should seriously consider exporting electricity from Myanmar, not only from India. The cross-border power trading will not only kick-start the strong bilateral link between Bangladesh and Myanmar but will also greatly assist in solving the electricity shortage of the nation, at least partially. Bangladesh should immediately consider power trading with Myanmar with a stern outlook. This is because a private Myanmar company has already leased land for the set-up of power plant and another firm have already expressed their interest in setting up a hydro-electric power plant. Both the projects would be initiated in the state of Rakhine with the primary intention of exporting electricity to Bangladesh. Since Bangladesh is still importing urea fertilizer, the government may explore the idea of importing gas from Rakhine, for production of urea fertilizer which can be re-exported to Myanmar. It has been suggested by the BMCCI that the construction of a gas pipeline from Rakhine to Chittagong can be undertaken by a private sector-led consortium of investors from Bangladesh. Myanmar‘s energy sector have been expanding in the last couple of years since its export of natural gas to Thailand in 2004. Gas is the single-most important source of income for Myanmar and one-third of Myanmar’s FDI is also consumed by the gas and oil sector. It has been reported that Myanmar has potentials to generate revenue of USD 800 million from the Shwe gas field only, with expected revenue up to USD 3 billion a year. It was presumed that the A-1 Block Shew field gas reserve would serve primarily the Indian market via and overland pipeline through Bangladesh to Kolkata. However, disputes regarding conditionality between Bangladesh and India led to a standstill. In 2005, Myanmar signed a MoU with Petro-China

regarding an overland pipeline through Myanmar to Kunming. Since Myanmar has already come to an agreement with China regarding export of gas from the existing gas fields, Myanmar President U Thien Sein assured Bangladesh that Myanmar would export gas to the latter given that new gas fields in the territory are discovered. After opening to the world market, Myanmar is being considered as one of the prime energy hubs in the South Asia region where India is displaying a keen interest to take advantage of its natural resources. The proposal for a gas pipeline from Myanmar to India through Bangladesh territory was first tabled in 1997 by the Dhaka-based private firm Mohona Holdings. This 900 km, one-billion-dollar pipeline was meant to transfer an estimated 5 billion cubic meters of gas from the Swe field off the Bay of Bengal through the Rakhine State in Southern Myanmar, from where it would turn east to enter the Indian state of Tripura. The pipeline would then enter Bangladesh at Brahmanbaria and traverse the country till it exited at Jessore and terminated at the Indian state of West Bengal.

Environmental Issues Management

39. Countries like Bangladesh and Myanmar, which are the major victims of climate change with the worst victimization still awaiting, may work together in order to address the issues related to the global environmental deterioration.

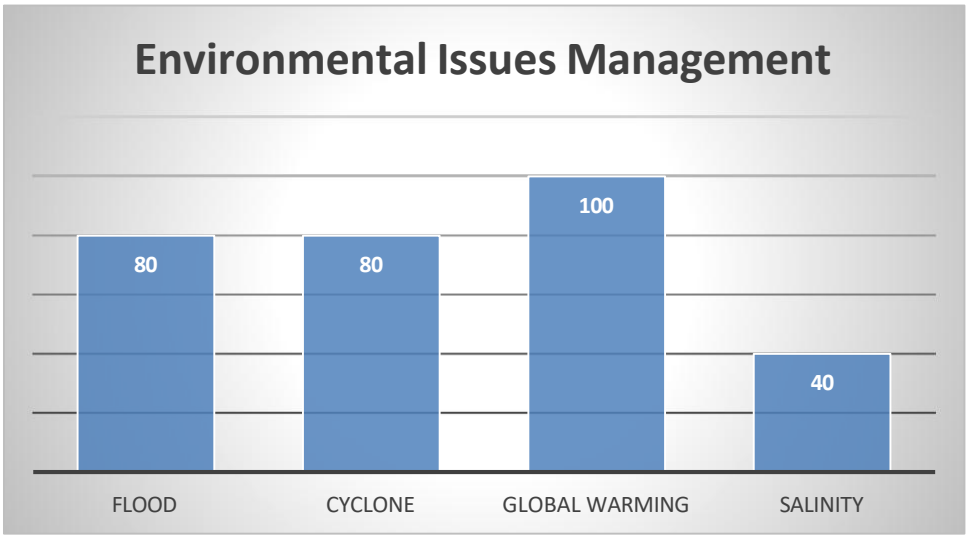


Figure 4.3: Scope of Environmental issues management.

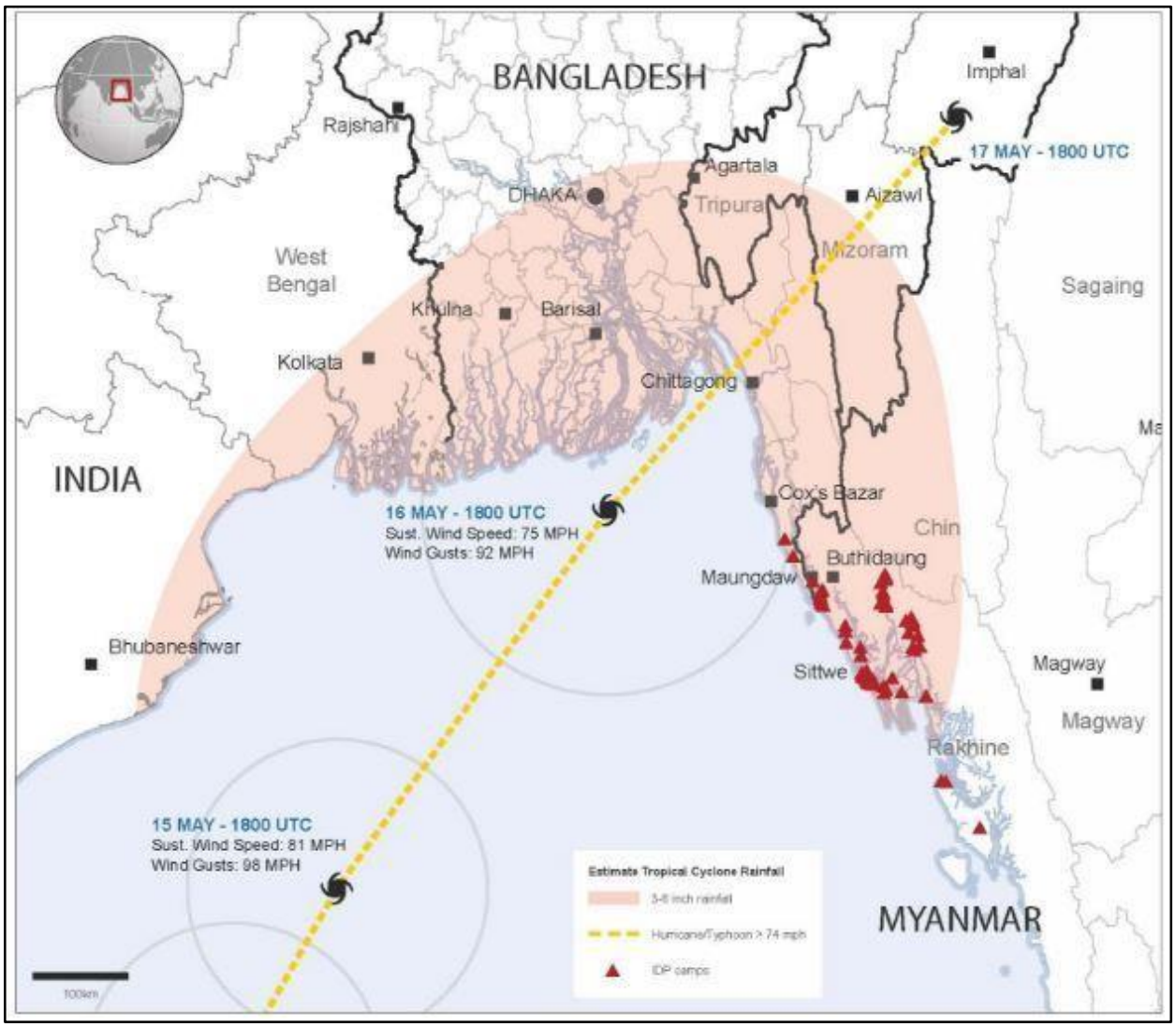
Source: Field survey, March 2017.

40. This study found that, the entire interviewed person believed that both the country is vulnerable to global warming and associated climate change events. To mitigate the risks of global warming both the countries can work together. On the other hand, about 80% respondents opined that, in terms of coastal flooding and cyclone, an effective management plan could be fruitful for both sides. Few people (40%) also considered the possibility of co-operation for salinity management.

41. Besides the major problems of poverty and illiteracy, Bangladesh and Myanmar's vulnerability to environmental deterioration is very alarming. With flat and low lying landscape, the coastal areas of Bangladesh and Myanmar are highly vulnerable to floods and storms. Among the major impacts of the environmental deterioration – particularly of the global warming – the increasing rise in sea level every year has been the most alarming one so far, with the possibility of submerging 68% of 'flood prone' Bangladesh under water by 2030 (a prediction made in 2007 by the UK Department for International Development). From the 4th assessment report published by the International Panel on Climate Change or IPCC, it appears that a substantial portion of 'flood prone' coastal areas of Myanmar is predicted to be submerged under water by 2050.

42. A substantial portion of the total population of Bangladesh and Myanmar live in the coastal areas, where majority of the population are affected, directly or indirectly, by coastal floods or tidal flows, salinity, tropical cyclones, erosion of riverbank etc. With the rise of sea level "even by a meter", Bangladesh and Myanmar could lose a substantial percentage of their total landmass under the sea water, turning millions of inhabitants living in the coastal areas of Bangladesh and Myanmar into climate refugees. The scope and scale of migration produced by the impacts of climate change will be extensive, although it will not always be easy to draw direct connections between environmental changes and the conditions that cause specific individuals to move. Indeed, such migration will often appear to be economic, as livelihoods and everyday living conditions are made increasingly difficult. Vulnerable and poor populations will be among the first to be displaced; whether people are driven to move by persecution or by economic desperation, the impacts of climate change will both help to generate and increase susceptibility to these conditions. A reduced ability or capacity to adapt will also mean that many will be forced to migrate to survive. For example: In May 2013, a tropical cyclone named Mahasen hitted Chittagong coast of Bangladesh and caused

immense suffering to the people of northeast Bangladesh and Rakhine state of Myanmar (Map 4.2). The highest impact, surge and rainfall were at the Chittagong and Cox's Bazar areas of Bangladesh but were also a great effect on Rakhine state where a huge number of people living along the coast line. Like this almost all other cyclone also affected the coastal areas of Bangladesh as well as that of Myanmar. As both the country has a common ground of suffering, there is a high chance to develop coping strategies for the adverse environmental situation and natural disaster. For example: both countries could be benefited from comprehensive disaster management project, adaptation options for people who are vulnerable in terms of agriculture due to saline water intrusion (OCHA, 2013).



Map 4.2: Map showing the affected area of Cyclone Mahasen;

Source: OCHA (May, 2013).

43. The migration that climate change will induce cannot be addressed through the independent actions of states working exclusively within their own borders. States still need to address displacement domestically, as a great deal of migration triggered by the impacts of climate change will be internal. Nonetheless, regional cooperation is required. Thailand hosted multilateral discussions regarding people fleeing across the Bay of Bengal, although no long-term solution emerged. While these discussions are an important step, more is needed: regional cooperation cannot only be reactive as such crises emerge-it must also become an ongoing process that takes into account our changing climate. There is increasing foresight surrounding these changes and their impacts.

Summary of the Chapter

44. This chapter includes the feasibility analysis of combined natural resources and extreme environmental issues management. There are some common environmental issues like coastal flooding, cyclone, salinity and other disaster which means a great harm to the coastal people of both countries. There is also some natural resource which could be managed jointly like gas, fisheries and other mineral resources. This study found that, there is a high potential to manage these resource and environmental issues in combination with both the countries which will surely be beneficial for both the parties. A holistic approach for sustainable resource and disaster management can ensure the best use of resource securing and coping strategy for the need of future generation.

CHAPTER-V

TRANS-BOUNDARY ISSUES AND RELATIONSHIP

Chapter Objective:

- To assess the trans-boundary issues and Regional as well as Sub-Regional relationships.

CHAPTER FIVE: TRANS-BOUNDARY ISSUES AND RELATIONSHIP

General

45. There are lots of trans-boundary issues between Bangladesh and Myanmar which are characterized by border tension, illegal drug smuggling, human trafficking and others. This chapter deals with the trans-boundary issues and Regional as well as Sub-Regional relationships between these two countries. It will also help to understand these issues and to know about the challenges and prospects of relationship.

Trans-Boundary Issues

46. The entire respondent identified Rohingya issue as the major trans-boundary problem between Bangladesh and Myanmar, where most (80%) of them also considered illegal drug trading as the second major problem. Around 60% respondents opined ethnic conflict in Myanmar as matter of concern where 50% indicated to the boundary dispute between Bangladesh and Myanmar.

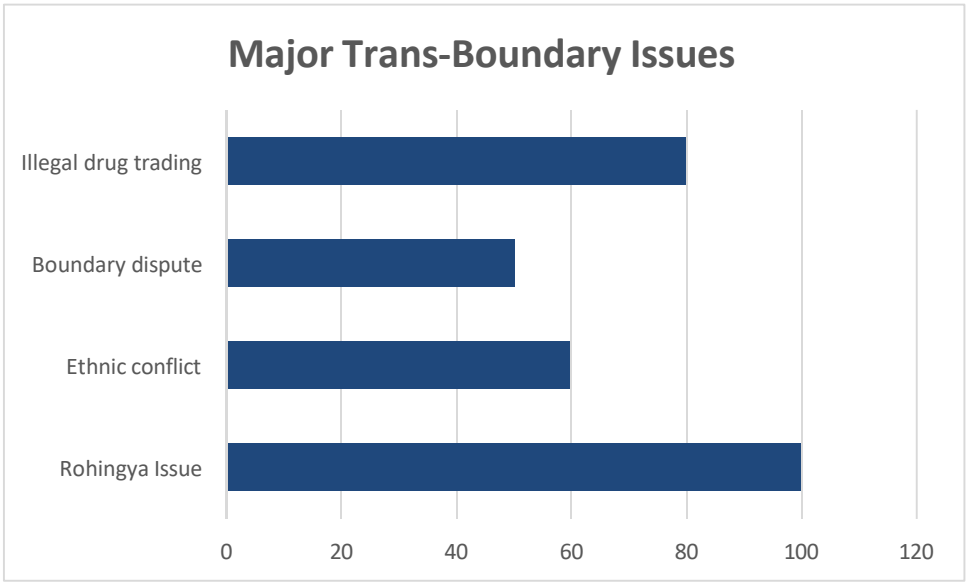


Figure 5.1: Major Trans-Boundary Issues of Bangladesh and Myanmar.
Source: Field survey, March 2017.

47. They identified these issues as challenges for the betterment of relationship between Bangladesh and Myanmar, which should be overcome by proper policy guidelines and effective steps. All the respondents opined that, if both the government works cordially most of the problem can be solved in a co-operative way (Figure 5.2). A

brief discussion on the major trans-boundary issues between Bangladesh and Myanmar is given below.

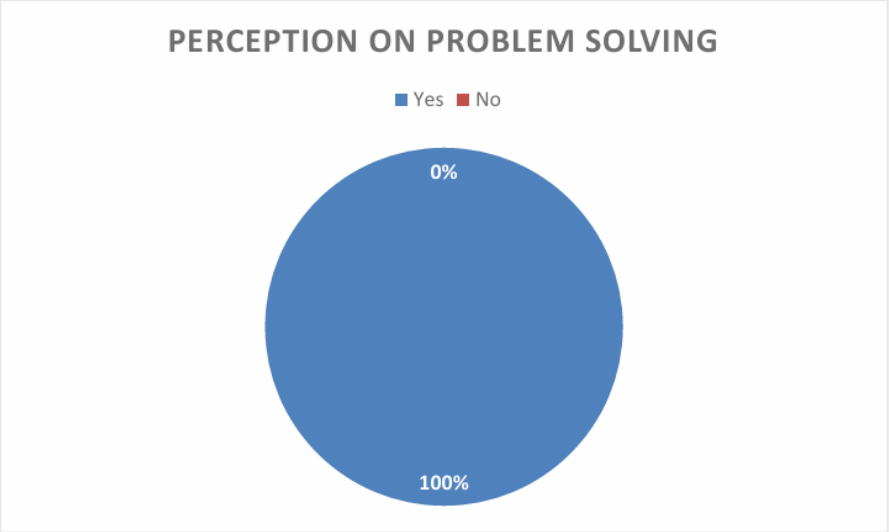
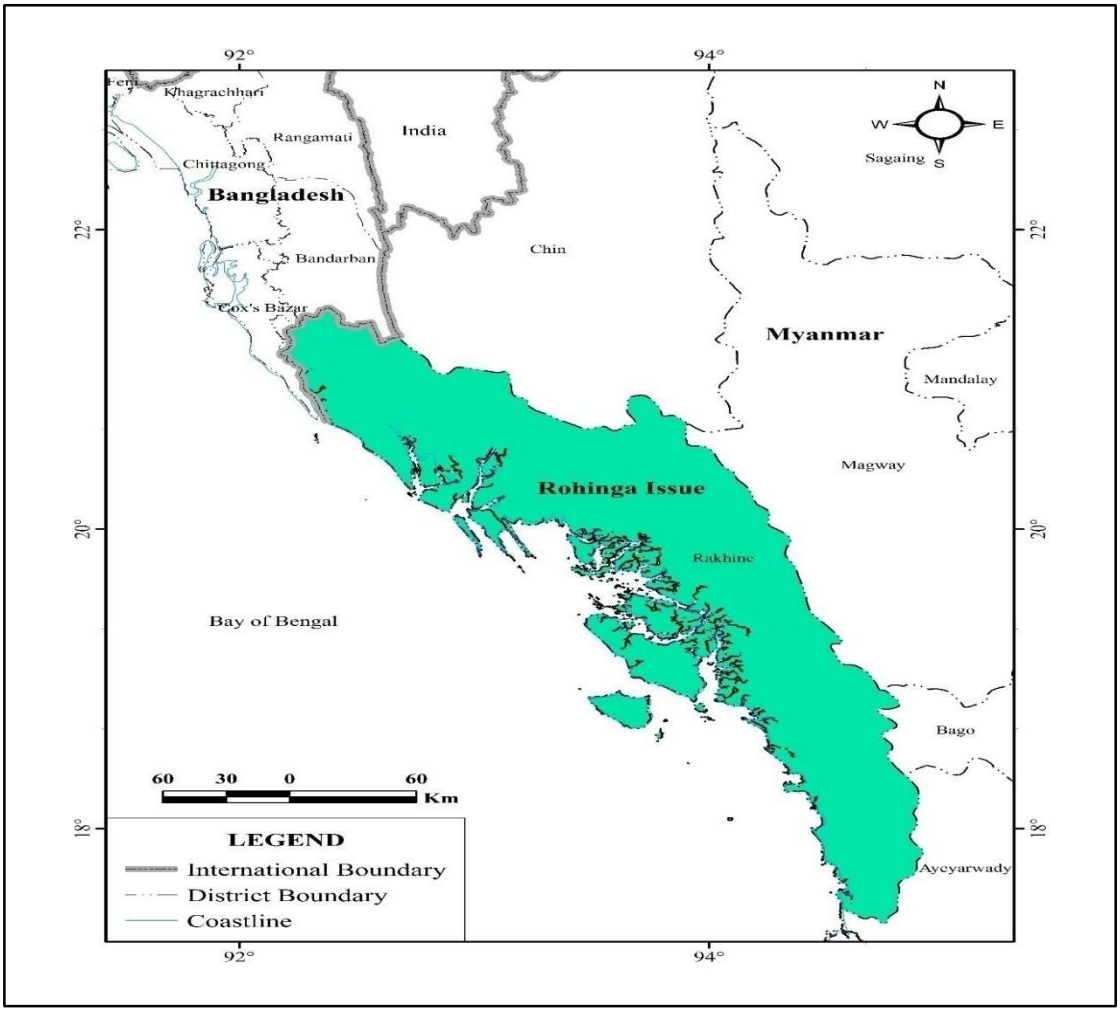


Figure 5.2: Respondent's perception on possibility of problem solving
Source: Field survey, March 2017

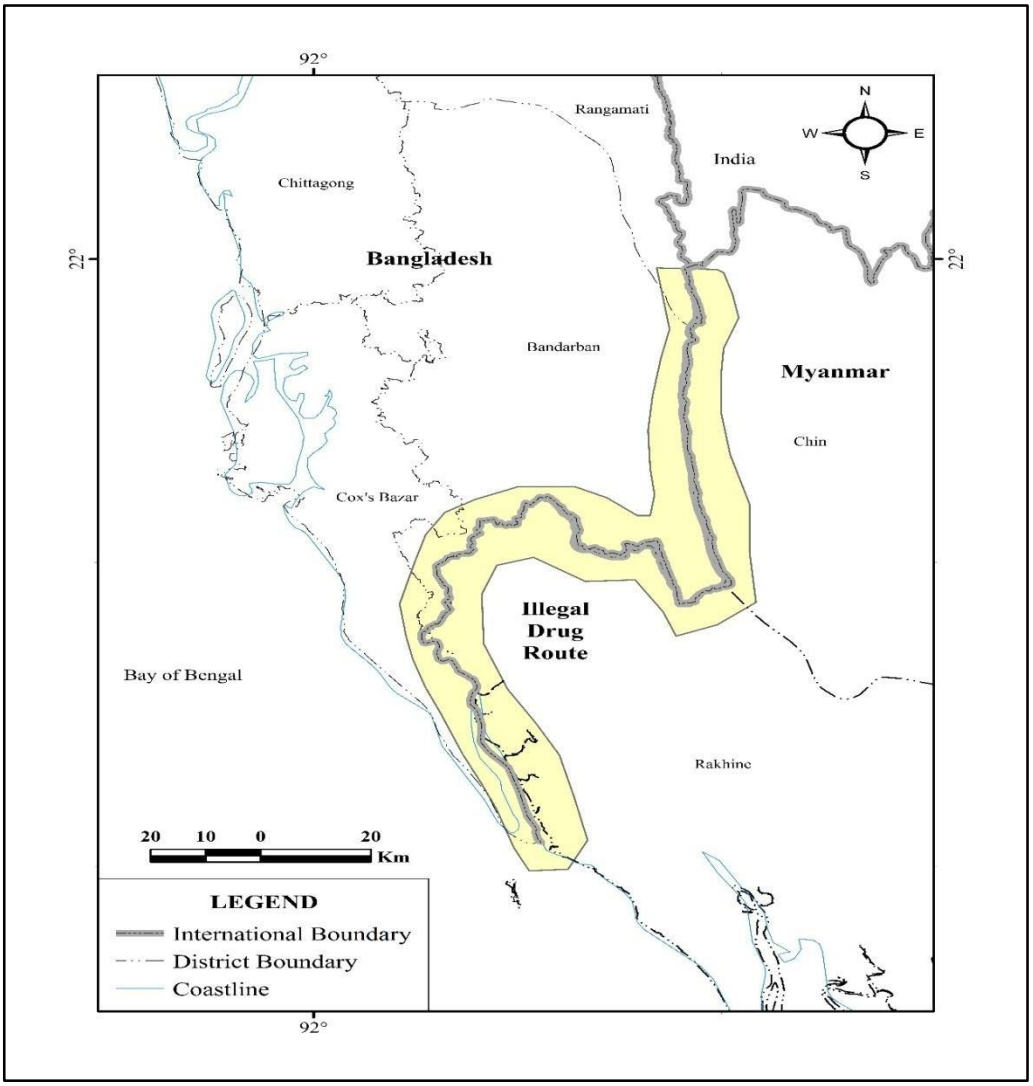
a. **<u>Rohingya Issue</u>**. The first is of course the movement of Rohingyas across the border to Bangladesh. These persons who have crossed over in the past continue to temporarily live in refugee camps in bordering Cox's Bazaar district of Bangladesh. The Myanmar authorities have shown great reluctance in accepting these persons (about 23000 officially) as their citizens. On the part of Rohingyas here, they are reported to be alarmed at the internal situation across the border and are not happy to be sent back as they think they would be persecuted. In the latest effort by Bangladesh, the honorable Foreign Minister during her last visit to Myanmar again raised the matter. The Myanmar authorities have asked for an up to date list of these refugees so that they can scrutinize and see if they are their citizens. Such exercise has been done many times in the past. Due to this hesitation, Bangladesh is quite fed up and wants a quick resolution, so that relationship can move on to the next higher level. The Rohingyas are in a way drain on the national resources of Bangladesh. Yet Bangladesh cannot just push them back as it would be inhuman in the face of the uncertainties in Myanmar. Reports of fresh influx of Rohingyas are also anticipated due to difficult political situation in these states.



Map 5.1: Map showing area of Rohingya conflict;
Source: Sedac Earth Data, (December, 2016).

b. <u>Illegal Drug Trading</u>. The evolution of drug trafficking in the golden Triangle has forged new transport routes in the region and has brought abandoned routes back into service, such as those previously used by communist guerrillas. Bangladesh's long and porous borders have made the country vulnerable to trans-border smuggling. Drug trafficking mainly heroin, opium, phensidyl, pathedine or other psychotropic substances like methamphetamines and precursor chemicals like acetic anhydride-poses a real challenge to the nation. A host of factors have contribution to Bangladesh becoming a lucrative narco-transit-zone for the transnational drug trade. Easy access to international air and sea links, and modest detection and interdiction capability are responsible for large-scale drug trafficking activities in the country. 'Yaba' currently one of the most popular forms of methamphetamine abuses in

South Asia, including Bangladesh. 'Yaba' contains a mixture of caffeine and about 30 percent methamphetamine. Law enforcement agencies have reported large seizures of 'Yaba' tablets in Bangladesh. This drug is smuggled in Bangladesh from neighboring countries such as Myanmar. According to UNODC, 1.2 million methamphetamine tablets originating in Myanmar were seized in Bangladesh in 2007.

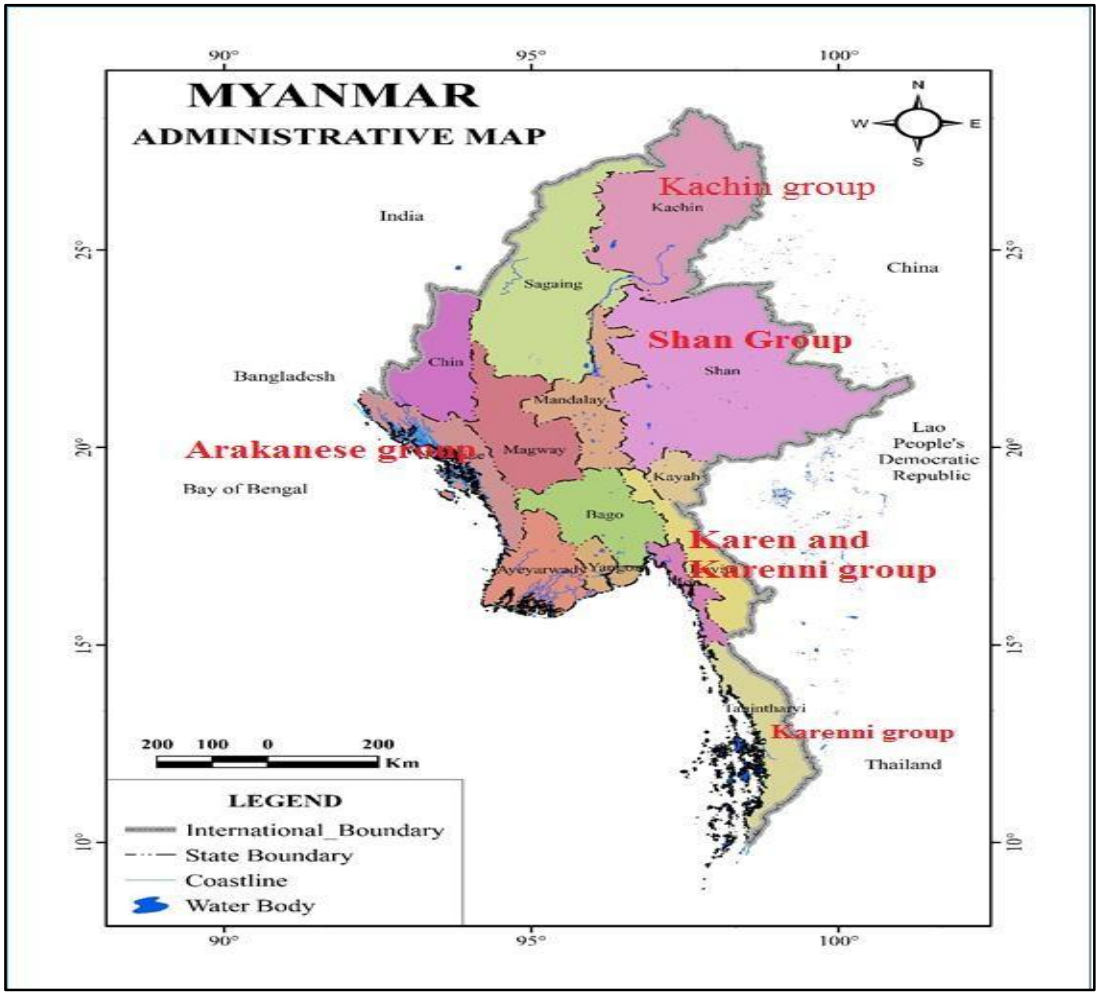


Map 5.2: Map showing Illegal drug trading route

Source: Nature Earth Data (December, 2016).

c. **<u>Ethnic conflict and Insurgencies</u>**. Among many insurgent groups in Myanmar, the notable ones are: the Kachin insurgents in the north of Myanmar, the Karenni insurgent in the east of Myanmar, Karen insurgent in the south and southeast of Myanmar and the Arakanese in the west of Myanmar. The

Arakanese insurgent and other small insurgent group in Shan state, who are, likely to be aided by the Kachin insurgents, would perhaps be the major challenge for the uninterrupted use of the proposed BCIM-EC route within Myanmar. Myanmar has been at armed conflict with these insurgent groups for decades. That is why Myanmar's government has repeatedly tried to reach cease fire agreement with the insurgents and attempted to work for peaceful settlement. Insurgencies in Myanmar have the potential barriers to the trade between Bangladesh and Myanmar as both (i) the commercial consignments from Bangladesh to Myanmar (vice versa) and (ii) the Bangladeshi future business interests in Myanmar may well be under attack from insurgent groups unless the Myanmar's government takes appropriate initiatives to neutralize the conflicts.



Map 5.3: Map showing insurgency prone states of Myanmar.

Source: MapCruzin, Open street map, (December, 2016).

d. Boarder dispute. As some part of the border aren't precisely delimited yet makes problem frequently followed by the tension among border security forces. This is also regarded another important issue of trans-boundary problem. Some boarder area of Bandarban and Rakhine state near the Sangu-Matamuhuri reserve forest isn't delineated which resulting tension between border security forces and sometimes used as a hiding ground of insurgent groups.

Regional Relationship

48. Both Bangladesh and Myanmar are playing important role in different regional organization like SAARC, ASEAN, BIMSTEC and BCIM-EC. Bangladesh is the founding member of SAARC and Myanmar has an influential role in ASEAN. The presence and stand in these bodies helping both countries to strengthen tie with other neighboring countries and to solve various bilateral as well as multilateral issues.

Summary of the Chapter

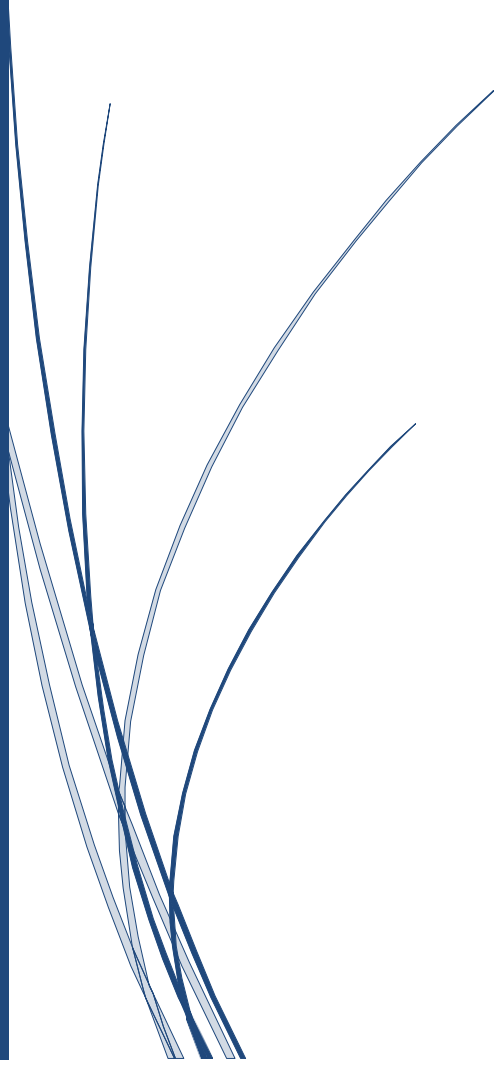
49. This chapter focuses on the trans-boundary issues and regional as well as sub-regional relationships. It tried to understand existing trans-boundary issues like Rohingya problem, Illegal drug trading, and insurgencies in Myanmar as well as boarder dispute which is a real threat for the relationship. From the above discussion it is stated that, the relation between Bangladesh and Myanmar is characterized by these issues which hindrance the development process of both the countries. To build a meaningful bilateral relation, these issues should be solved or minimize at the optimum level for the betterment of both Bangladesh and Myanmar. It will help to understand these issues and to initiate government policy planning to solve these problems.

CHAPTER-VI

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

Chapter Objective:

- To provide some suggestions for overcoming the challenges of Bangladesh-Myanmar relationship



CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

General

50. This chapter summarizes the whole research and represents the conclusion and recommendation reflecting the result and analysis. Some meaningful recommendations are provided in the chapter as per the findings of the study. This chapter provides some suggestions for overcoming the challenges of Bangladesh-Myanmar relationship. These suggestions are expected to regard as a guideline for policy making and strategic planning.

Conclusion

51. Bangladesh and Myanmar, two close neighboring countries which have a significant role in south and Southeast Asia. There was a connection between these two countries historically. Though the relationship is important for both of the countries but a few progress was experienced in the past. The long run military rule in Myanmar was one of the major barriers for the relationship. After the peaceful succession of military rule by National League for Democracy (NLD) led semi-democratic government, open a new door for the improvement of relationship between two countries. Another notable barrier of the relationship was maritime dispute between Bangladesh and Myanmar. After the peaceful settlement of this dispute both countries are willing to enhance their relationship.

52. Some prospective sector of Bilateral Relationship between Bangladesh and Myanmar were identified during the study. Bangladesh can be benefited by taking the advantage of recent economic liberalization of Myanmar. Myanmar could be a potential destination for Bangladeshi readymade garments products, pharmaceuticals and electronics. In returns, Bangladesh can import agricultural products from Myanmar. Trade and commerce can be initiated both in land and maritime ways. Another prospective sector of the relationship is connectivity. By joining Bangladesh, China, India, Myanmar Economic Corridor (BCIM-EC) both countries can develop their trade and commerce with other neighboring countries.

53. Bangladesh and Myanmar has a plenty of natural resource which is beneficial for both of the countries if it can be managed in a proper way. For example, cooperation in

agriculture sector or in gas exploration at Bay of Bengal will be prospective for both sides. Besides these, Bangladesh and Myanmar has a significant number of population living along the coastal belt who are affected to the coastal flooding, cyclone, salinity intrusion and other natural disaster. A holistic approach for combined natural disaster management will be beneficial for both countries.

54. Along with prospects of the relationship between Bangladesh and Myanmar, there are also some other challenging issues. Rohingya conflict is the main hindrance of the Bilateral Relationship between these countries. Another important challenge is illegal drug trading and human trafficking through the border which also affecting the relationship. The non-delineated boundary in some part of the border is sometimes creating border tension between Bangladesh and Myanmar. Moreover, insurgencies in various ethnic community of Myanmar are also a great threat to the BCIM-EC and all other development initiatives.

55. Political and economic reforms of Myanmar bear significance for Bangladesh. The amicable solution of Rohingya issue will trigger the development of existing relationship. Both countries can explore untapped potentials for the betterment of bilateral trade, commerce and connectivity. So it is high time to come forward and to take necessary initiatives to strengthen the relationship and to foster the regional development.

Recommendation

56. Followings are the recommendation for the enhancement of the existing relationship between Bangladesh and Myanmar:

a. Political and economic reforms in Myanmar are applauded by the international community. So both Myanmar and Bangladesh should work closely to make the best use of political stability and recent economic liberalization of Myanmar. Bangladesh needs to strengthen the relations with Myanmar, considering political, economic and strategic interests for the betterment of existing relations. Thereby Bangladesh can adopt multilayered and multi-faceted political and diplomatic cooperation and also adopt three-fold diplomatic approach like the combination of political, economic and public diplomacy.

b. A sustainable relation in bilateral trade, commerce and connectivity is important for the economic development of Myanmar and Bangladesh. Proposed BCIM-EC could be a best option to initiate this development process through the improvement of existing trade route and connectivity. Besides land trade, Bangladesh and Myanmar has a great opportunity to develop maritime trade as both of the countries have exposed sea territory. Both the countries should work on the development of inter connectivity for economic and trade development which ultimately facilitates the relationship between two countries.

c. Bangladesh and Myanmar should work jointly to the coastal disaster management because both countries have a large number of populations living along the coast. Joint initiative is also needed for both the countries to manage and to ensure the best use of natural resources including agricultural resources, mineral resources and maritime resources.

d. Rohingya conflict is a burning issue for the relationship between Bangladesh and Myanmar. Rapid Solution of Rohingya conflict will foster the relationship between these two countries. Bangladesh should raise this issue in international community and Myanmar should create a trustworthy peaceful settlement of this conflict by providing the citizenship to the Rohingya people. Moreover, Myanmar government should also work cordially for the sustainable development of the country providing basic rights to its citizens and peaceful settlement of insurgencies of Myanmar. Besides this, Border security force of both Bangladesh and Myanmar should work jointly to prevent illegal drug trading. Two countries can cooperate in border security and can conduct special operation jointly to arrest the drug dealers. Border dispute should be solved through joint border commission and this commission also can sit on a regular interval for the betterment of border situation.

e. Communication and connectivity should increase among the citizen of both countries for mutual respect and well-being. Besides, more research should be conducted on Bangladesh-Myanmar relationship to increase the data availability and to help the policy planning process. A combined approach is needed to foster the relationship enhancement process which will integrate all other activities into a single umbrella.

Jalalabad Cantonment

April 2017

SANJIDA ALAM
Captain
Student Officer

TOTAL WORDS (ONLY MAIN CHAPTERS)

Serial	Chapter	Word Count
1.	Chapter I	1047
2.	Chapter II	2370
3.	Chapter III	1494
4.	Chapter IV	2475
5.	Chapter V	1112
6.	Chapter VI	1000
Total		**9498**

Annexes:

A. Questionnaire.

B. Data analysis of questionnaire survey.

C. Photographs of questionnaire survey

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ANNEX A TO
IRP-PF/8523

QUESTIONNAIRE

BANGLADESH–MYANMER RELATION: PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES

[All the information will be used for research purpose only]

1) Respondent Profile:

- Name-
- Age-
- Sex-
- Occupation-
- Affiliation-

2) Do you think that the relationship between Bangladesh & Myanmar should develop?

□ Yes □ No

3) If yes, which sector(s) is prospective for the relationship?

□ Trade □ Commerce □ Connectivity □ Energy

4) Why you think that the relationship between Bangladesh and Myanmar is prospective?

□ Changes in Government □ Settlement of Maritime Dispute

5) What ate the potential sector(s) for combined development?

□ Disaster Management □ Environmental Management □ Resource Management

6) Which sector(s) is/are potential for natural resource management?

□ Agriculture □ Fisheries □ Maritime □ Energy

7) Which environmental issues could be managed by combined effort?

□ Flood □ Cyclone □ Global Warming □ Salinity

8) What are the Major Trans-Boundary Issues of Bangladesh and Myanmar?

□ Illegal drug trading □ Boundary dispute □ Ethnic conflict □ Rohingya issue

9) Do you think these problems could be solved by bilateral relationship?

□ Yes □ No

10) Recommendation for the Betterment of Existing Relationship,

……..
.....

Thanks for your co-operation

ANNEX B TO
IRP-PF/8523

DATA ANALYSIS OF QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY

1) Do you think that the relationship between Bangladesh & Myanmar should develop?

Response	**Number**	**Percentage (%)**
Yes	50	100%
No	-	0%
Total	**50**	**100%**

2) If yes, which sector(s) is prospective for the relationship?

Response	**Number**	**Percentage (%)**
Trade	30	60%
Commerce	30	60%
Connectivity	50	100%
Energy	25	50%
Total	**50**	**100%**

3) Why you think that the relationship between Bangladesh and Myanmar is prospective?

Response	**Number**	**Percentage (%)**
Changes in government	50	100%
Settlement of Maritime Dispute	50	100%
Total	**50**	**100%**

4) What ate the potential sector(s) for combined development?

Response	Number	Percentage (%)
Disaster management	50	100%
Environmental management	25	50%
Resource management	30	60%
Total	**50**	**100%**

5) Which sector(s) is/are potential for natural resource management?

Response	Number	Percentage (%)
Agriculture	40	80%
Fisheries	45	90%
Maritime	35	70%
Energy	45	90%
Total	**50**	**100%**

6) Which environmental issues could be managed by combined effort?

Response	Number	Percentage (%)
Flood	40	80%
Cyclone	40	80%
Global Warming	50	100%
Salinity	20	40%
Total	**50**	**100%**

7) What are the Major Trans-Boundary Issues of Bangladesh and Myanmar?

Response	Number	Percentage (%)
Illegal drug trading	40	80%
Boundary dispute	25	50%
Ethnic conflict	30	60%
Rohingya issue	50	100%
Total	**50**	**100%**

8) Do you think these problems could be solved by bilateral relationship?

Response	**Number**	**Percentage (%)**
Yes	50	100%
No	-	0%
Total	**50**	**100%**

ANNEX C TO

IRP-PF/8523

PHOTOGRAPHS OF QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY

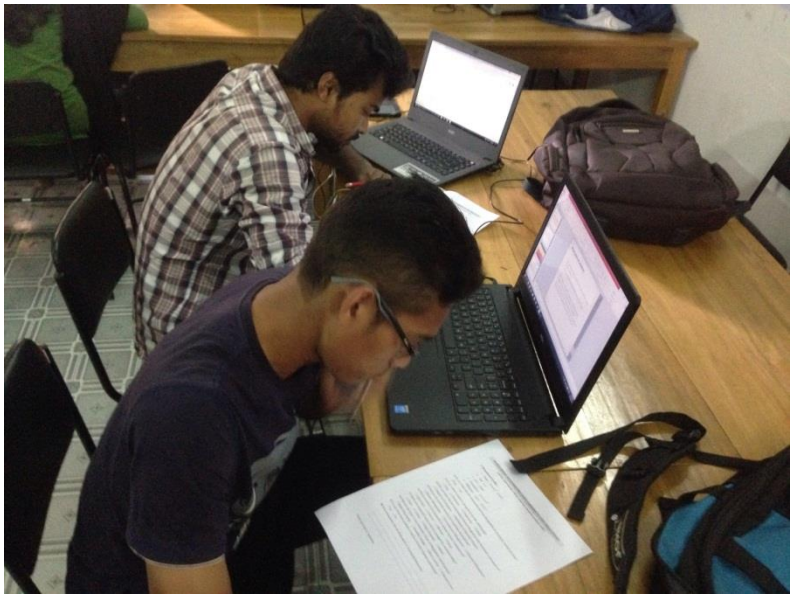
BANGLADESH–MYANMER RELATION: PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES

[All the pictures will be used for research purpose only]





Pictures: Questionnaire Survey from the Students of SUST







Pictures: Questionnaire Survey from the Students of SUST

AUTHOR'S BIO DATA

Captain Mst Sanjida Alam, AEC was born on 07th December 1986 in Chuadanga district. She joined Bangladesh Military Academy with 38th BMA Special Course in July 2012 and was commissioned on 26 December 2012 in the Army Education Corps. She held various regimental and instructional appointments. At present, the officer is undergoing Junior Command and Staff Course-58 in the School of Infantry and Tactics, Jalalabad Cantonment, Sylhet.



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