

Moderation Appeases Corona Impact

Mohammad Masud Rana*
Taniya Nashin**

Abstract: Different discourses are occurring in societies, keeping in mind the impact of the Corona Crisis. In addition to anxiety and fear, there is also a variety of practices centered on joyous celebrations, can be seen. Moreover, in the contemporaneous write-up, we also found an attempt to find out a theoretical framework for understanding the Corona issue. In this article, we will try to understand the above issues in the substantial context of Bangladesh. Above all, the central aim of this article will be to shed light on how to identify the prior issues socially, especially in the current context of Bangladesh, and how the genuine sense of moderation can play a significant role in this regard.

1. Introduction

Humans are social creatures, and we all know that. In our social life, where there is joy, there will also be anxiety and fear. In the midst of all this, people have been living their social lives for ages. However, structuralist theorists such as Levi-Straussⁱ might have thought that this joy, anxiety, and fear would be equally prevalent in all societies. However, in many cases, it would be unreasonable to look at the thinking of people of all societies in this way. Because there is no reason to imagine that the corona infection and the anxiety and fear created by it will work at the same pace in all societies. Maybe that is what the World Health Organization probably wanted. But, the reality is that every society has its intrinsic thinking on this issue, which is far different from one another. It seems inconsistent to me to think that the people of Bangladesh, its environment, and its surroundings should all be like Europeans or Westerners. Realizing this, Franz Boas, the father of American anthropology, was able to speak of the importance of cultural relativismⁱⁱ in the study of culture, even in the West. In this article, we would like to look at the anxieties, fears, and joys that centered on the Corona infection in the light of relativity.

In this article, we will try to show the discourses are related to joy, anxiety and fear, the process of its formation, the practices related to those, and the theoretical perspective in understanding the corona situation in the social reality of Bangladesh. All in all, we will shed light on how to identify those issues socially, especially in the current context of Bangladesh. And try to show how the genuine sense of moderation can play a significant role in this regard.

* Associate Professor, Department of Anthropology, Jahangirnagar University, Savar, Dhaka-1342.
E-mail: masud@juniv.edu

** Lecturer, Department of Business Administration, Victoria University of Bangladesh, 69 Panthapath, Dhaka-1205. E-mail: taniyanashin.vub@gmail.com

2. Corona: Joy, Anxiety, Fear, and Moderation

At the beginning of the corona infection, there was a real PPE crisis in Bangladesh. Then almost all of us said, because there is a PPE crisis, will the service providers stay at home without serving! Does it go with the professionalism of the service providers? Our sense of justice has awakened in this way at the beginning of the crisis. And we all know the result, many front line fighters, especially the doctors and policeman, had sacrificed their lives at the beginning of this pandemic. One of the police working in Wari Police Station said *"During Corona Doctors got respect and recognition, but what did we get?"* If the eminent sociologist Durkheim had survived, he might have viewed their death as an inescapable consequence of altruistic suicideⁱⁱⁱ. We have also seen this issue in a similar vein. Of course, we have expressed many regrets about this issue through social media. Around the same time, another event caused quite a stir, and that was the announcement of the reopening of small and large factories and garments on a limited scale. We have also seen various anxieties centered on this incident. As a result, we have fetched small and big businessmen, including garment owners, like villains in society. We don't think it is okay for society to make someone a villain overnight. Rather we think, in the reality of the society of Bangladesh, it is a matter of urgency in many cases to keep small businesses, including garments open. Even workers are satisfied that garment factories are open. One of the garments worker said, *"It's better to die in office than die from hunger."* In our opinion, letting these institutions open keeps the wheel of our economy moving and ensures our necessary food supply. As a result, we may be able to save ourselves from Durkheim-directed anomic suicide^{iv}.

Some people may say that we understood the need to open a food manufacturing company, but what is the need to open shops on Eid! In our view, these are feelings of joy. Moreover, opening shops are generating profit and joy at the same time. During Eid ul Azha, 2021, one of the sellers of Chawkbazar said *"If the government had opened shops just 15 days we may have sold out all the products."* Though sellers were not fully satisfied but still were able to achieve both profits because a man lives in hope, and he knows that death is inevitable. So, it is human nature to want to live and enjoy life until the last moment of his or her breath. Therefore, the issue of opening a shop can be understood without going into complex financial calculations. There seems no harm in spending some time happily at home rather than a miserable death. We think what is needed is a sense of moderation. This is because nothing excessive is good, whether it is a celebration of joy or transmission of fear. Nowadays we have heard that if people live, businesses can do and people can enjoy their life. But we would say that just living with anxiety and fear is another form of death. Here we have to think about which one we will give importance to life or death. We know it is not easy to choose between the two.

Now we will talk about the reality of Bangladesh in light of the current situation. At present, some people are enjoying giving gifts or help, while others are packing their sugarcane by looting relief or help. Such extreme contrasts are nothing new in our society. One of the doctors working in Dhaka Medical

Hospital said, “Unawareness and callousness of people towards Covid-19 are increasing the number of patients.” So without hesitation, we have to find a way to solve it. All that is needed is to make the larger population a partner in the government's central plan. And this can also be done through the presence of things like joy, anxiety, and fear. In our opinion, the easiest way to spend these corona times sublimely is to awaken a sense of moderation in ourselves. Crisis times can be spent more efficiently if we can awaken the mindset of observing things like joy, anxiety, and fear in the light of true moderation. And it will be easier to deal with the situation with tolerance.

Not only excessive joy is not pleasurable, but also excessive anxiety and fear cannot be desirable to us. In other words, we have to bring moderation in all spheres of our life. And we think it's more important to awaken this sense of moderation between the "middle class and the upper class" than the general public. We, the middle and upper class, when we see people on the streets, when we see crowds with Eid shopping, when we see congestion of public vehicles on the streets, we often criticize it through social media and seek redressal. We think we are behaving like this because by doing these, we find happiness. In reality, we are sitting at home and enjoying almost all the facilities effortlessly with some exceptions. On the contrary, we are reluctantly sitting at home and making silly statements. But this is us who are sitting at home and buying all things in-home delivery. We can say increase the lockdown because we have that opportunity to stay at home and earn money. But are we thinking about all those day laborers and hardworking people, those who live hand to mouth? Many people may think that is why they are giving grants, and the government also is giving loans or gifts. We agree with everything, but the reality is also not unknown to us. We know they were not born with the luck to work from home or office. They have to go out at least in pursuit of a livelihood. And we all know that gifts or succor will not reach them properly. So let's not discuss this debate anymore. Tell us, is there any way for these people to survive without getting out of the house? We have multiple houses or rooms; we can observe home quarantine. Moreover, we have access to almost all means of entertainment, so we have the opportunity to share our joys, anxieties, and fears. But people who have to stay 8-10 people in a small room, those who do not have the minimum opportunity for entertainment; how will they express their joy, anxiety, and fear? Do we even think of it? In case of these are not considered seriously, ordinary Bengalis will die of bloating, if they cannot express their feelings of joy, anxiety, and fear, and this is a big fear now for them.

How long will people stay at home? It is easy for us to observe this ritual religiously because we are getting money by doing work from home at the end of the month. But in the case of the general public, it is nothing but a fantasy. A small business owner living in Gopibagh, Dhaka shared “Before Corona I used to live at a four-room flat with my family. After the Corona crisis happened I live in a single-room flat with my family.” So we cannot say that they are not aware of the Corona crisis, which is not in the case. We are trying to get rid of it by imposing our understanding on others. In Michel Foucault's words, in the form of the

interplay of knowledge and power^v, we are governing in many cases. Conversely, if we said that, we are the most unaware. Because as much as the general public is using diversity to deal with this situation, are we able to do that? We would rather impose our opinions on the masses and try to bind them with a certain hegemonic structure^{vi}. This in no way brings benefits, at least not in our social system.

There is a proverb in Bengali that *"too much courtesy, too much or full of craft."* It is necessary to think about whether we, the privileged people, are falling under this proverb. One of the job holders who enjoyed home office said, *"Corona Pandemic should sustain longer so that I can enjoy my time with family."* How absurd is this statement? We are regularly shopping for necessary things with the help of our subordinates (ex: watchmen, housemaids, drivers, doormen) without going out of the house ourselves. And sometimes saying that today the weather is very hot, so turning on the air conditioner and sleeping comfortably. Cannot believe it, one can understand how logical the words are only by looking at the sales of online, mostly electronic goods. Besides, there is another saying in Bengali that "too many cooks spoil the broth." The real reflection of this proverb is what we see on online platforms these days. We are indulging in demonic pleasure, ensuring unwanted use of online platforms, and again creating an empire of anxiety and fear, this is expressing the mentality of not having a minimum sense of moderation. As a result, problems are becoming more concentrated in the society. The adverse effects of which are causing trauma in many people. Can you imagine, we are enjoying sitting at home and also creating an empire of anxiety and fear? So tell us in the truth, who needs to awaken a real sense of moderation?

3. Theory and the Context

Let's move on to the theory, anthropologist, and Marxist economist David Harvey point to Western countries in his critique of neoliberalism^{vii}. But we think the tide of neoliberalism is still flowing, even in the delta of Bangladesh. As a result, here in Bangladesh, garments are opened to a limited extent. We are reluctant to see this as a bad precedent; we hope you have understood the point in the previous discussion. Profits can be moderate, but if you want limitless profit out of it, the problem will get worse. On the other hand, sociologists and anthropologists Bruno Latour wants to say that the Corona situation has shaken the whole social system, and he has blamed some people for it^{viii}. Conflicts among these mighty people are nothing new to us. So at the moment, we think there is no need to worry too much about this issue. Because Bangladesh has been flattering those special people, we mean countries, from almost her birth. Furthermore, we hope society can effortlessly grasp what we want to mean with those words.

David Harvey has brought social structure to the fore in understanding the Corona situation, and in this context, he has sought to emphasize local-global communication.^{ix} Bangladesh is not out of global communication, but hardly expect that it will bring about a radical change in its social structure. So at this

time, more attention should be paid to our internal social structure. A mother of a three-year-old child shared the negative impact of Corona. The mother shared *"During Corona Pandemic I tried to maintain social isolation strictly. Many of my relative mocked me. Still, I maintained social isolation strictly. Now, when my child sees any stranger she quickly hides her under the dining table. This breaks my heart, social isolation made my child afraid of people."* We believe that if we can awaken the sense of moderation (which is dormant in our social structure) in a social system, we will be able to retain the old social structure even amid the Corona Crisis. Many people think that Covid-19 has brought a negative impact on all perspectives of our life, but we think it is not factual in all cases. We have already noticed many positive aspects of Corona during this period. For example, the mortality rate has decreased a lot compared to other times. Moreover, Covid-19 has delivered unusual environmental benefits: cleaner air, lower carbon emissions, and a respite for wildlife. Now the big question is whether we can capitalize on this moment or not. If we want, we can match the Corona with our greater emotion of joy. Variations in vision can also help alleviate anxiety and fear in many cases and can be a stimulant to boost our morale. Michel Foucault's biopolitics^x brings to the fore the awareness of state power over the biological and political bodies of the people, which many writers have taken seriously to explain the present Corona situation. But we do not see the effectiveness of Foucault's concept in the context of Bangladesh. It is not the case that the people of Bangladesh, especially the ordinary people, are paying close attention to the country. The reason is that people are generally quite aware of their country's capabilities. As a result, the ordinary people are not sitting idly by in that hope that the state will do everything for them in this situation. They are ready to create a new infrastructure of knowledge and power in their own way. To the ordinary people, the power of survival is a must, and the source of this power is nothing but their morale. We hear about herd immunity^{xi} through the World Health Organization these days. The IEDCR^{xii} of Bangladesh is also bringing this issue to the fore. But the reality is that the key to this herd immunity is morale. We have noticed that the presence of that morale has appeared in the masses since the beginning of the Corona period. And this kind of morale previously appeared in diverse forms among the people of this country in various movements. So it could be said that if IEDCR pays more attention to the indigenous knowledge in dealing with the changed situation, then maybe it will be able to go one step further in tackling the problem and show its acceptability to the common man.

4. Conclusion

In society, People with this strong morale are the ones who are restlessly engaged in the life of struggle. Those, who are constantly called unconscious, law-breakers, are the genuine holder of strong morale. One of their comments is quoted here. A van driver cum vegetable seller says to his buyer (who is a housemaid); *"Do you know who was affected with the corona virus? Those who have fled their homeland to a country like America, and those who live in six-storied, ten-storied houses in our country, who stayed at home for fear of the virus they will get corona disease. This disease will not catch you and a man like me. Even if it does, we will*

be able to overcome it, Insha'Allah". This comment might be a reflection of the thoughts of many. But we would not say to have excessive morale or faith. Rather, we would like to awaken a sense of moderation in our stream of thought. He or she must think that the virus will not be able to subdue him or her, but at the same time, he or she will take the necessary steps to prevent the infection of the virus. If it is possible to create this situation in our society, then it will be easier to deal with the present Corona crisis. The emergence of new variants of Covid-19 is shocking us. We are getting used to the Corona crisis, but unfortunately, it seems everlasting. In this circumstance, we should instill a sense of moderation in all walks of life.

Notes.

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- ⁱ The French structuralist theorist Levi-Strauss is one who speaks of the psychic unity of mankind. "The psychic unity of mankind" states that all human beings, regardless of culture or race, share the same basic psychological and cognitive make-up; we are all of the same kind. For details, see Lévi-Strauss, Claude (1966). *The Savage Mind*. Illinois: University of Chicago Press. p.219.
 - ⁱⁱ Cultural relativism is the idea that a person's beliefs, values, and practices should be understood based on that person's own culture, rather than be judged against the criteria of another. It was established as axiomatic in anthropological research by Franz Boas in the first few decades of the 20th century and later popularized by his students. For details, see Boas, Franz (1887). *Museums of Ethnology and their Classification*, *Science*, Vol:9. Pp. 589.
 - ⁱⁱⁱ French sociologist Emile Durkheim treated suicide as a social fact, explaining variations in its rate on a macro level, considering society-scale phenomena such as lack of connections between people (group attachment) and lack of regulations of behavior, rather than individuals' feelings and motivations. Durkheim believed that suicide was an instance of social deviance. Social deviance being any transgression of socially established norms. Altruistic suicide corresponds to too much social integration. This occurs when a group dominates the life of an individual to a degree where they feel meaningless to society. In other words, Altruistic suicide is a sacrifice of one's life to save or benefit others, for the good of the group, or to preserve the traditions and honor of society. For further details, see Calhoun, Craig J. (2002). *Classical Sociological Theory*. Wiley-Blackwell.
 - ^{iv} Anomic suicide occurs when one has an insufficient amount of social regulation. When the social system fails to properly control or manage people's hopes, aspirations, and behaviors, people isolate them-selves from social life and tend to commit anomic suicide. Anomic suicide is common in situations where society is undergoing major changes or the individual is experiencing a highly stressful situation, which leads to feelings of confusion and disappointment. For further details, see Allan, Kenneth (2005). *Explorations in Classical Sociological Theory: Seeing the Social World*. Pine Forge Press.
 - ^v The Knowledge-power relationship is Foucault's major contribution to postmodernism. Power and knowledge entail one another. Knowledge ceases to be liberation and becomes enslavement. Foucault examines the discourses of madness, clinic, sexuality, and punishment from the perspective of the power-knowledge

relationship. The power is exercised through surveillance, monitoring, and other forms of regulation of people's lives. The history of all social institutions is the history of power relations. Power originates from knowledge. It is the knowledge-power relationship which controls and governs the society in the postmodern age. For further details, see Foucault, Michel, 1926-1984. (2008). *The history of sexuality*. Penguin.

- vi Hegemonic infrastructure refers to maintaining power without the use of force or the threat of its use. Gramsci used the word in a unique sense. Gramsci pointed to the cultural processes by which the ruling class upheld power and sought the consent of those in power. Moreover, Gramsci greatly expanded this concept, developing an acute analysis of how the ruling capitalist class – the bourgeoisie – establishes and maintains its control. For further details, see Anderson, Perry (November–December 1976). "The Antinomies of Antonio Gramsci". *New Left Review*. (100): 5–78.
- vii Harvey treated neoliberalism as a political project carried out by the corporate capitalist class as they felt intensely threatened both politically and economically towards the end of the 1960s into the 1970s. They desperately wanted to launch a political project that would curb the power of labor. Moreover, he argues that neoliberalism is a form of political economy that strives to accomplish only one mission: to restore the class power of the global economic elite. For details, see Harvey, David (2005). *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. Oxford University Press, USA.
- viii For further details, see <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jun/06/bruno-latour-coronavirus-gaia-hypothesis-climate-crisis>
- ix For further details, see Harvey, David (2020). *Anti-Capitalist Politics in the Time of COVID-19*, JACOBIN, Pandemic Politics, Issue 37, USA.
- x The French philosopher and sociologist Michel Foucault's concept of biopolitics was derived from biological power and extended the concept of state power over both the physical and political bodies of the people. Foucault describes biopolitics as a new technology of power, observed in a different dimension, which has a different range and which uses very different tools. Foucault's biopolitics acts as a controlling tool over a population, which Foucault referred to as "a global mass." For further details, see Foucault, Michel (1997). *Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975-1976*. NY: St. Martin's Press. p.242.
- xi Herd word means people. Immunity is the ability to fight disease. When the body of most people in society develops the ability to fight a particular germ, either through vaccination, or through bacterial infection, and others begin to benefit from it, it is called herd immunity.
- xii Institute of Epidemiology Disease Control And Research (IEDCR) is a Bangladesh government research institute, under the Ministry of Health, responsible for researching the epidemiological and communicable diseases in Bangladesh as well as disease control. The institute was the first Covid-19 testing site in Bangladesh following the COVID-19 pandemic in Bangladesh. It had been given the task to carry out epidemiological surveillance during the pandemic. For details, www.iedcr.gov.bd. Retrieved 31 July 2019

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