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Minority Discourse and Social Exclusion: A Study on the Ahmadiyya Community in Bangladesh

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ABSTRACT

This paper explains the structure of discourse propagated by the traditional religious authorities and its role in creating social exclusion of the Ahmadiyya community in Bangladesh. Utilizing the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) method, the study expanded on the relevant literature and purposively reviewed and examined eight videos about Ahmadiyya and anti-Ahmadiyya speeches collected from different YouTube channels. The study also included the discursive analysis of eight in-depth interviews with individuals from the Ahmadiyya community who lived in the Brahmanbaria district of Bangladesh and were influenced and affected by the dominant discourse. Results revealed that the construction of in-group, defamatory, and derogatory discourses cultivated a culture of social hatred and social ostracism against the Ahmadiyya community and homogeneity within the community. Thereby, the Ahmadiyya community was excluded from social participation, economic facilities, and political protections, though they partially excluded themselves following their cult. Finally, the paper recommends ideology construction, reformation in social relationships disregarding the majority-minority wall, and standard state regulation for cultural development in the behavioral aspects among the people of Bangladesh.

Keywords: Ahmadiyya community, Bangladesh, discourse analysis, religious minority, social exclusion

INTRODUCTION

The social vulnerability of religious minorities is an outcome of different social relationships in different communities that are influenced by ideological propaganda generated by the local majority. Comparative to other marginalized groups, religious groups are deprived of two forms of freedom: the freedom of religious belief and the freedom of access to minority rights (Ghanea, 2012). Because of such kinds of deprivation, religious minority groups exist in precarious positions perpetuated by social vulnerability biases and physical and mental threats (Lennox, 2010). These problems are rooted in intense pressure for coordination or absorption. Therefore, historical and contemporary social realities connect social injustices, such as depriving legal protection and violating natural rights, to marginalized inequities (MacLean, 1944).

The Ahmadiyya, one of the sects of the Muslim community, has been one of the most active and controversial movements within the Muslim world ((Connley, 2016).). Since 1889, the Ahmadiyya's inception in British India has become increasingly precarious with the growth of conservative attitudes (Connley, 2016). Many countries perceive the Ahmadiyya community as a symbol of religious and cultural diversity, promoting pluralism and tolerance as safeguarding liberal culture with political democratization, decentralization, and liberal voices (Van Bruinessen, 2013; Van Klinken, 2007). However, a few Asian countries witnessed outbreaks of violence against this religious minority. For instance, on March 3, 2023, criminals attacked and vandalized several houses belonging to the Ahmadiyya community in the northern part of Bangladesh as a response to the community's protests ("Ahmadiya houses", 2023). Furthermore, the intensification of hostility toward the Ahmadiyya religious minority has led to increased incidents of violence and intimidation. Furthermore, the proliferation of discriminatory laws and regulations against the Ahmadiyya community has prolonged this situation, perpetuating acts of violence, intimidation, harassment, and discrimination against this minority (Connley, 2016). Additionally, the Ahmadiyya community of Bangladesh has faced severe troubles, vicious attacks, discrimination, and threats from the majority of the non-Ahmadiyya Muslim community. According to The New Age report, on March 1, 2023, two Ahmadiyya members were killed, 150 houses were set on fire, and several hundred others were looted and vandalized during a clash that significantly affected the Ahmadiyya community ("2 killed in deadly clash", 2023). (As part of employing various strategies, the religious majority attempts to exclude Ahmadiyya from visible religious spaces and institutions by arranging processions, street rallies, and hatred campaigns

against Ahmadiyya (Kabir, 2016). These decisions impact the Ahmadiyyas of Bangladesh, causing hazardous experiences including conflicts, terrorist attacks, civil unrest, and human rights violations. In March 2023, The New Age reported unknown criminal activity resulting in about 125 Ahmadiyya houses being torched and vandalized at Panchaghar ('Ahmadiya houses', 2023; Mahmud, 2023). Unfortunately, Ahmadiyyas have experienced this form of oppression for several years (Connley, 2016). However, the increased backlash through contemporary discourses surrounding outcomes, processions, and campaigns against the Ahmadiyya have increased the vulnerability of this community. Therefore, this study's design explains the nature and role of religious discourses and the social exclusion of the Ahmadiyya community in Bangladesh.

LITERATURE REVIEW
Religious Minority and Discourse of Ahmadiyya Community

The term 'minority' conveys a broad meaning and an emotional appeal, depicting its qualities with social, cultural, and political aspects (Van Amersfoort, 1978). Gleason's (1991) reference for 'minority' indicates a difference from a larger body's group or predominant section in one or more characteristics regarding ethnic background, language, culture, or religion. Among different minorities, religions are an underrepresented group who are victimized by legal constructs, ignoring social and cultural diversities (Levine, 1996). The majority sees the practice of dominating the minority as a control of the rising social class for the exclusion of marginality, persecution, and discriminatory bias against religious minorities (Lennox, 2010). Thereby, Ahmadiyya Muslims have often been the target of discrimination, violence, and hate campaigns, which increase the communities' global vulnerability (United Nations, 2021).

History of Ahmadiyya Muslims

In 1908, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad established Ahmadiyya six years after the death of its founder, a section of Islam divided into two factions, Ahmadiyya Kadian and Ahmadiyya Lahore (Irawan, 2017). The Ahmadiyya Lahore claims that Ghulam Mirza, the founder of Ahmadiyya, is merely a sacred and holy man of God without having prophetic status and that Muhammad is the seal of prophethood (Saeed, 2007). In contrast, the locals of Ahmadiyya claimed themselves to be Muslims, focusing on the fundamental difference. At the same time, Muslims believe that Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was a promised reformer, an 'Imam Mahdi,' who was born again 'Kadian' from India in 1835; this belief stands against the majority of

Muslims (Butt, 2019). Therefore, a majority of believers protested against the Ahmadiyya movement.

Consequently, a constitutional amendment passed by the National Assembly of Pakistan in 1974 declared Ahmadiyya as non-Muslim, and referring to Ahmadiyya as Muslim is a criminal offense (Saeed, 2007). The political formation of the discourse against the Ahmadiyya has increased the exclusion of this community. From negative labeling to dissociated perspectives, the Ahmadiyya community is treated as non-believers, anti-religious, animal-like, and outcasts that are repeatedly massacred by group members in their society (Irawan, 2017). Therefore, the grievances, miseries, exclusion, and vulnerabilities experienced by the Ahmadiyya community have been extensive and far-reaching.

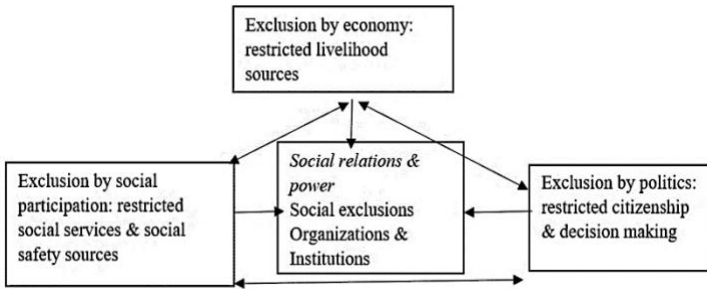**Social Exclusion of Ahmadiyya Community: Asian Scenario**

The term 'social exclusion' refers to the social relations and organizational barriers that impair the attainment of livelihoods in human development and equal citizenship (Beall & Piron, 2005) (Figure 1). A specific analysis of social exclusion highlights the inequality in employment, wage earrings, and equal working relations that deny freedoms for economic activity for fundamental, political, economic, and social functions (Thorat, 2005; Ziyauddin & Kasi, 2009). This social exclusion has multiple dimensions and divides the process into four dimensions: exclusion from adequate income or resources, labor-market and service exclusion, and exclusion from social relations (Richmond, 2002). In Figure 1 on the 'Concepts of Social Exclusion' a reference to societal identities and institutional regulations highlights the caste system of discrimination that isolates and deprives some groups based on group language, ethnicity, and religion (Beall & Piron, 2005). Those forms and dimensions of social exclusion and social vulnerabilities reflect social norms for the Ahmadiyya community. Unlike many ethnic and religious minorities, problems amongst the Ahmadiyya community are commonly seen in Asian countries where the Ahmadis make up larger populations.

Worldwide, the community has branches in more than 190 countries, with an estimated membership of 160 million; in Britain, there are over 90 branches of the community across the country that are working for their rights and privileges (Exploring Surrey's Past, n.d.). An analysis of the Indonesian Ahmadiyya communities reveals biases predicated by politicians and alleged religious leaders (Connley, 2016). As a result, Ahmadis live in a hostile environment of stigmatization by movement and adversity through media reports for which Ahmadiyya are devalued and seen as inferior in society.

Research conducted in Lahore (Pakistan) highlights that Ahmadiyya members face accusations of negligence from state institutions and mainstream society, which are exploited in forums of hatred by the general public (Naveed et al., 2014).

Figure 1

Concepts of Social Exclusion Adapted from Beall and Piron (2005)


Note: Social, economic, and political exclusions are interlinked (Beall & Piron, 2005)

   Alongside politicians from a few Asian countries, anti-Ahmadiyya narratives promoted ingrained discrimination directed at violence against the community (United States Commission on International Religious Freedom [USCIRF], 2018), which has resulted in heightened vulnerability and frequent unsecured incidents. Eventually, these communities excluded religious identity and their permission to perform a Pilgrimage to Mecca (Ahmed, 2014). In these environments, the Ahmadiyya community lives with restrictions, panicked by despair and threats of insecurity causing security threats and social isolation in many Asian countries (Saifullah, 2008). In Figure 2, titled 'Conceptual Framework of Interconnection between Religious Minority, Ahmadiyya Status, and Social Exclusion' the status of religious minority, the status of Ahmadiyya community, and different exclusions of Ahmadiyya community are associated.

   In Bangladesh, the Ahmadiyya religious communities faced intermittent attacks, psychological violence, and aggravated deprivations for more than two decades (Khan, 2014). According to the 2022 Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) Census Report Muslims represent (91.04%) of the population, while Hindus are at (7.95%), Buddhists (0.61%), Christians at 0.30%), and other religious populations are at (0.12%) (BBS Census, 2022).

Figure 2

Conceptual Framework of Interconnection between Religious Minority, Ahmadiyya Status, and Social Exclusion.
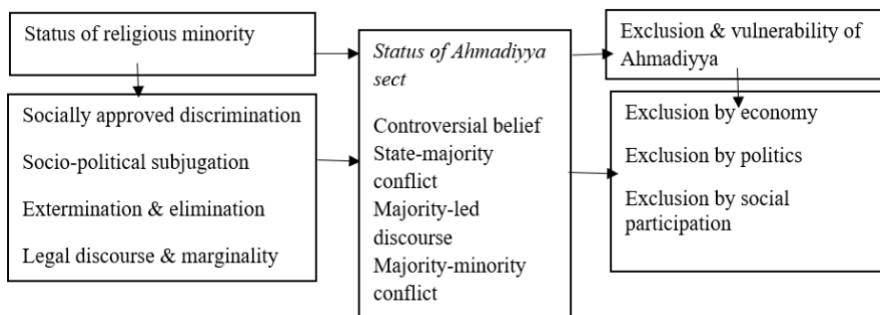
Since the early 1900s, the Ahmadiyya community has experienced continuous growth. Presently in Bangladesh, the Ahmadiyya community comprises approximately 100,000 members (Human et al., 2005). Despite being considered Muslims, they are positioned as external to the religious majority, leading to marginalized issues of religious discrimination. Unfortunately, the Ahmadiyya are not accounted for in the census report. Alongside this identity avoidance, the Ahmadiyya community faces restrictions on freedom of movement and security.

Noticing the organized hate campaign against the Ahmadiyya community by the anti-Ahmadiyya groups, Amnesty International (2004) urged the Government of Bangladesh to ensure the safety and security of the Ahmadiyya community. Similarly, many online and print newspapers, including websites, reported that since 1994, the Ahmadiyya community of Bangladesh experienced several attacks and threats by anti-Ahmadiyya groups. Scholarly references on protests and several incidents of attacks included looting against the Ahmadiyya community from March 1995 to April 2018 and include:

• March 1995 - Office Building in Jamalpur (Human Rights Watch, 2005)
• April 2003 - Two Villages of Ahmadiyya in Kushtia and Khulna (Human Rights Watch, 2005)
• October 31, 2003 - The Ahmadiyya mosques in Jessore (Human Rights Watch, 2005)
• April 17, 2005 - The Ahmadiyya centers in Sathkira (Ashraf, 2005)
• April 2018 - The Ahmadiyya mosque in Madarganj of Jamalpur district ("Ahmadiyya mosque", 2018)

According to the report from the Daily Star, a more devastating case is the 2015 attack—a suicide assailant exploded a bomb, killing himself and

others during Friday prayers, targeting the Ahmadiyya mosque at Chalkpara village of Sayedpur district (Ali, 2015).

Most alarming is the July 9, 2020, Ahmadiyya condemnation in Ghatura village -this UK-based human rights activism during the COVID-19 pandemic situation in Bangladesh arose amongst the anti-Ahmadiyya group, resulting in a disinterred dead body of an infant child from Ahmadiyya parent in a local graveyard in Suhilpur Union, Brahminbaria ("ARTICLE 19 condemns", 2020). Recently, on March 3, 2023, criminal attacks and vandalization of several Ahmadiyya homes in the Panchaghar district resulted in protesting an annual congregation of the Ahmadiyya community ("Ahmadiyya houses", 2023; "Tense situation", 2023). In Table 1 (Newspaper Reports From 2003 to 2023 Covering Offensive Cases Against Ahmadiyya) incidents referencing Bangladesh Ahmadiyya community living conditions highlight the devastating vulnerabilities of social exclusions.

In Table 1 (Newspaper Reports From 2003 to 2023 Covering Offensive Cases Against Ahmadiyya), information on the Ahmadiyya and society neglected by the majority influence hate-speech from anti-Ahmadiyya groups. Many hate speeches are available on YouTube also. However, Bangladesh did not enact laws against the community following the liberal agenda of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (such as education, health, gender equality, etc.) which remained the conflict between anti-Ahmadiyya and the community.; thereby, these situational controls changed in the political regime.

Theoretical Underpinnings

Discourse strategies perceived as discriminatory increase resistance against the religious minority. In the context of Critical Discourse Analysis, an assessment of social and political issues such as human rights, social security, and social justice revealed investigatory powers of abuse, social inequality, injustice, and discrimination (Irawan, 2016). The CDA asserts a connection between discourse, cognition, and society (van Dijk, 2009). In particular, it explores the complex relationships between text, conversation, social beliefs, power, society, and cultures (van Dijk, 2006). To highlight this interconnectedness, Van Dijk (2006) refers to the CDA's assumption that power - abuse results in inequality within social and political discourse. In line with Van Dijk's idea of cognitive process, text or discourse-immanent critique aims at discovering inconsistencies, self-contradictions, paradoxes, and dilemmas in the text-internal or discourse-internal structures, and the socio-diagnostic critique aims at demystifying the manifest or latent

persuasive or potentially manipulative character or discursive practices. (Reisigl & Wodak, 2009).

Table 1

Newspaper Reports From 2003 to 2023 Covering Offensive Cases Against Ahmadiyya

Major offensive incidents against Ahmadiyya community in different areas of Bangladesh	Major offenses (Period)	Source of the news report
Demonstration threatened to paralyze the country if the government failed to evict the Ahmadis from Nakhalpara mosque by January 3, 2004.	Giving pressure to Govt. (December 19, 2003)	The Daily Star, 2003
A mob led by the K.N. (brandishing sticks, machetes, and darts) attacked Ahmadis in Joytidrianagar of Satkhira district injuring twenty-five people	Cruel attack by mob (April 17, 2005)	The Daily Star, 2005
A suicide bomber detonated an explosives belt during the Friday Prayer at a mosque in a remote northern village of Rajshahi city.	Suicidal attack (December 24, 2015)	Daily Star, 2015
Villagers of *Fularpar in Jamalpur* district had converged on the mosque and began attacking them with sticks, injuring around 20 people and causing extensive damage to the newly built mosque.	Eviction process (March 30, 2018)	Daily Star, 2018
After spreading rumors at Kandipara in Brahmanbaria town, Ahmadiyya mosque and houses were under attack by the protesters	Rumor & brutal attack (January 15, 2020)	New Age, 2020
A three-day-old Ahmadiyya infant's dead body was exhumed from the grave and thrown into the road in Brahminbaria by the anti-Ahmadis protesters.	Highest brutal exhuming (July 9, 2020)	Bangladesh Post, 2020
2 killed, 150 houses were torched**,** and several hundred others were looted and vandalized during the clash.	Brutal attacks, looting, and murder (March 1, 2023)	New Age, 2023

Note: Newspaper reports covering different offensive incidents against Ahmadiyya community by "Ahmadiya houses", 2023; "Ahmadiyya mosque", 2018; Ali, 2015; "ARTICLE 19 condemns", 2020; "Anti-Ahmadiyyas' Ultimatum", 2003; and Ashraf, 2005.

Therefore, comprised of text analysis as descriptive, discursive practice analysis as interpretative, and social practice analysis as explanatory, which denotes study on (a) discursive practices, events, and texts, and (b)

wider social and cultural structures, relations, and processes (Fairclough, 1995). In this process, critical discourse analysis requires ideology critique that focuses on the deep understanding of the distorted set of social meanings, set of social beliefs, intersubjective meanings, perpetuating epistemic injustice, and social domination (Mahmud & Zaman, 2022; Sankaran, 2020;). Eventually, ideology critique was applied in studying the role of discourses about the Ahmadiyya community, who are the victims of contemporary discourses.

Moreover, the literature review suggests that there is minimal study about the minority grievances of the Ahmadiyya community in Bangladesh, and there is no comprehensive study about the critical discourse analysis of the Ahmadiyya community, including the opinion and talk analysis from YouTube videos and interviews. Regarding the research gap, the study deals with two significant questions following the objectives of exploring the role of discursive and discriminatory discourses in the social exclusion of the Ahmadiyya community for analysis to include:

1. How the discursive and discriminatory discourses about Ahmadiyya were constructed by the anti-Ahmadiyya protesters in Bangladesh?
2. In what manner do the discourses about Ahmadiyya contribute to the enhancement of social exclusion of the Ahmadiyya community in Bangladesh?

METHODOLOGY

Research Method

To study the role of discourse amongst the Ahmadiyya in the social exclusion of the Ahmadiyya community in Bangladesh's social setting, the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) method was used as the most significant research method. This method analyzes texts, talks, speeches, opinions, and propaganda against the Ahmadiyya community as grounded in the critical realist paradigm, which comprises three levels: the empirical level of common-sense understanding, the actual level of social fact, and the original level of explaining social events (Fletcher, 2017). Moreover, the ideological condition and the communicative instruments, including churches or mosques, schooling, and mass media, contribute to delivering ideas on social facts and events that can sustain domination over the minority group (Althusser, 2006).

Considering the method of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), the underlying problems such as discrimination, exclusion, prejudice, and psycho-social vulnerabilities vary within the Ahmadiyya community and, therefore, critically analyzed within the texts, contents, opinions, and talk

analysis to perceive realities of the Ahmadiyya community. Since anti-Ahmadiyya religious groups have formulated discourses about Ahmadiyya from dominant ideologies approached through mosques, seminars, and public meetings from traditional preachers-persecuted as disseminated on YouTube channels. The majority of believers are easily influenced by the provoking speeches which are delivered on different social and political fields including mass media as well as YouTube channels that have networking power to reach voices of anti-Ahmadiyya sermons. Therefore, local people are physically and verbally aggressive against the Ahmadiyya community due to the media discourse represented by YouTube channels -this, along with the exclusionary representation in the YouTube response section, increases victimization against the Ahmadiyya community, a critical aspect that requires explanation.

Sampling and Data Collection

This study uses Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to assess the discursive opinions disseminated by popular YouTube channels and the opinions of the experienced members of the Ahmadiyya community. (Creswell & Clark (2017) reference Bulling's model for in-depth interviews for qualitative research. Therefore, this research study conducted fifteen in-depth interviews, of which the most relevant were eight interviews, five from Ahmadiyya and three from local non-Ahmadiyya, which included demographical information for both genders and various ages. A minimum of six in-depth interviews were included in this study to analyze six from the Ahmadiyya community and three from the local people (non-Ahmadiyya) for persons living in the Brahminbaria district. The respondents were selected from the Vadhughar village and Kandipara in Brahminbaria district, of which three respondents were from Vadhughar, three were from Purbapara of Kandipara (East zone), and the other two were from Pashcimpara (West zone). In Table 2 (Distribution of Sample Size), information on orienting provides an analysis of the discourse contents selected on YouTube related to the discursive presentation of the religious minority and Ahmadiyya community denoting religious speeches while those are anti-sectarian thoughts.

Comparatively, this discourse analysis assesses anti-Ahmadiyya speech and Ahmadiyya speech and responses available on YouTube channels by Ahmadiyya members. To find relevant YouTube videos, the researchers gauged keywords such as 'Ahmadiyya speech in Bangladesh,' 'Anti-Ahmadiyya speech in Bangladesh,' and 'Debates about Ahmadiyya. Additionally, from March 1, 2019, to February 5, 2020, subscriptions for relevant videos between reviewed content for the first to the last stage oriented

to the talks and speeches against the Ahmadiyya community and their rights In the second stage, an additional subscription monitor content from September 15, 2023, to September 15, 2023 The subscribed YouTube channels consisted of sixteen channels with a review of forty-five video speeches about anti-Ahmadiyya propaganda and speeches for Ahmadiyya created by traditional religious preachers from Bangladesh. All reviewed audio and video content included the use of the purposive sampling technique for conducting interviews based on specific characteristics considering hegemonic speeches and any type of speeches about the Ahmadiyya community. In this process, eight circulated video speeches were selected which are :

- Alor Poth,
- Islamic Voice
- Islamic Tune
- Life Media BD
- Jahid Media
- Moha Shushongbad
- Spark Public
- Muslim Identity

In Table 2 (Distribution of Sample Size), the available YouTube selection consisted of hate propaganda against the Ahmadiyya community. However, in the three videos, favorable findings for the Ahmadiyya community highlighted the Ahmadiyya members, leaders, and their speakers. For this reason, a selection of five videos on anti-Ahmadiyya speech and three on Ahmadiyya speech was completed. While listening to the video speeches, researchers transcribed and translated Bengali content into American English. Besides the discourse analysis of these speeches, religious preachers in the study included a discourse analysis of responses and opinions for a qualitative interview assessment. The Dhaka Tribune reports that approximately 10,000 Ahmadiyya live in the Brahmanbaria district; at the same time, another 3,500 reside in Kishoreganj, and another 3,000 reside in Mymensingh district of Bangladesh (Mahmud, 2017Population and Housing Census-2022 report that the Muslim population rate in Bangladesh is 91.04% ("Census 2022", 2022), on the other hand, Dhaka Tribune reports that 100,000 Ahmadiyya people or 1% of the total population are living in Bangladesh (Mahmud, 2017).   This information denotes that the Ahmadiyya community (compared to the majority believers is a minority community in Bangladesh, which is characterized by a culture of homogeneity while the majority excludes them due to the difference in belief system. Regarding these features, we planned

to collect informative responses from the victims of the Ahmadiyya community that would be effective for analyzing the effects of discourse upon the community.

Table 2

Distribution of Sample Size

Data collection method	Name of the study area	Number of the interviewees	Gender (Age)	Identity
In-depth interview	*Vadhughar*	2	Female (40), Male (76)	Ahmadiyya
	Vadhughar	1	Male (35)	Non-Ahmadiyya
	Kandipara (Purbapara)	2	Male (80), female (40)	Ahmadiyya
	Kandipara (Purbapara)	1	Male (38)	Non-Ahmadiyya
	Kandipara (Pashcimpara)	1	Female (42), Male (32)	Ahmadiyya
	Kandipara (Pashcimpara)	1	Female (25),	Non-Ahmadiyya
Data collection method	*Video channels*	Number of videos	Time of video subscription for data collection	Sampling technique
Video analysis of YouTube channels	*Alor Poth*	1	11 March 2019	
	Jahid Media	1	12 March 2019	Purposive
	Islamic Voice	1	18 March 2019	
	Islamic Tune	1	1 February 2020	
	Life Media BD	1	5 February 2020	
	Moha Shushongbad	1	12 September 2023	
	Spark Public	1	13 September 2023	
	MuslimIdentity	1	15 September 2023	

Note: This Table shows 6 study areas located in Brahminbaria from which in-depth interviews were conducted with 8 respondents of both Ahmadiyya and non-Ahmadiyya individuals. Also, the Table appears 8 video channels including subscription date and identification of the sampling technique.

All participants were selected following a purposive sampling technique for a face-to-face interview based on claims of being severely affected by the dominant practices of the local Banglasdesh majority. During the field visit, we engaged in conversations with both local Ahmadiyya and non-Ahmadiyya individuals, allowing us to identify both the most vulnerable individuals within the community and those who hold anti-Ahmadiyya sentiments.

The names of the respondents were anonymously presented implying qualitative data. Interview data collection was completed in two separate phases; the first phase began July 16, 2017, and continued to July 20, 2017, and the second was from March 15, 2019, to March 18, 2019. The tap recorder transcribed the respondents' voices and provided written transcriptions for conversion into American English. Taking support from the literature review on news reports about the criminal incidents against the Ahmadiyya community, the responses of the interviewed data were analyzed critically.

Techniques of Data Analysis

Researchers explained the accomplished data through the thematic analysis to indicate critical themes such as discursive defamatory discourse about Ahmadiyya, discriminatory discourse about Ahmadiyya, Ahmadiyya discourse, and different dimensions of social exclusion (economic, political, and socio-relational exclusions). During the discourse analysis, researchers described the derogatory speeches and practices against the rights of the Ahmadiyya, specifically the propagated language structure of blaming and labeling rhetoric and derogatory and hyperbolic language, to understand the relationship between discursive discourse and the practical patterns of exclusionary discourse. Furthermore, the discriminatory Ahmadiyya discourse supported the practical roles of persuasive language, reinforcing language, emblematical, and exaggerative language, which were used against the Ahmadiyya people. Lastly, the interviewed data was examined for the effects of hegemonic discourse against the community on social relations, livelihood opportunities, access to securities, political participation, and language structure of the speeches of traditional preachers. Researchers critically analyzed the discursive presentation of language and its relation to the practical experience of social exclusion based on field experience, participatory observations, and recorded speeches.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Construction of Discursive Discourse

At first, the discourses of Ahmadiyya speech available on YouTube channels have been approached, and then the discourses of anti-Ahmadiyya speech from YouTube channels have been explored. The speeches show that Ahmadiyya and anti-Ahmadiyya preachers are constructing favoring, defamatory, and derogatory discourses. In favoring Ahmadiyya, a YouTube, *Moha Shushongbad*. (n.d.) (channel broadcasted the following views,

> There is no basic difference and no basic problem between Ahmadiyya and non-Ahmadiyya Muslims because we all follow all pillars of Islam. We know a verse from Hadith says that when the earth will find no people to bear real belief when the world will be disastrous, …then it will be necessary to unite Muslim Ummah and Allah will send the proposed Messiah Imam Mahdi to rescue us. Thereby, we believe that Mirza Golam Kadiani came down to earth as a follower of the last prophet and as the Imam Mahdi as the promised rescuer.

The purpose of statements that referencing the Ahmadiyya people as calling everywhere '*kadiani'* focuses on the birthplace of the founder named Golam Mohammad Kadiani and local origin. More importantly, the Ahmadiyyas are presented negatively by the traditional religious leaders in the yearly (public gatherings) '*Mahfils'a yearly gathering.* The most common '*fatwa'* in this regard is that the Ahmadiya are not Muslim, they are '*kafir'* (disbelievers), and their beliefs are full of '*firkas'* (diversions from religion) ('kafir', 'firkas'—these words are used by the local people against Ahmadiyya community to label them negatively). Another YouTube channel on focuses on the traditional religious preaching against Ahmadiyya as stated by a preacher (Alor Poth, n.d.)

> Among the four-basic false *Firkas*, belief in Kadiani is the most dangerous thing. ………We knew that before the final declaration of the end of worldly life, 30 'dazzals' (great devils) would announce themselves as the prophet…. Golam Kadiani is one of them.

Those statements implies that the Ahmadiyya were defamed by the words 'dangerous', '*firka*', and '*dazzal*'. That means this community was viewed as dangerous with regard to their 'false' or 'deviated' beliefs since the majority of believers thought that the belief of Ahmadiyya was different. By pronouncing the metaphor '*dazzal'*, the Ahmadiyya community was perceived by the majority as a precarious group. As approached in a public space by a traditional leader which is broadcasted by a channel (Islamic Voice, n.d.)

Mirza Golam Kadiani…. this *beyadob* (idiot) claimed himself as a prophet…then proclaimed as Imam Mahdi…then Isa Masih. This *beyadob* died after falling into the toilet like Farao's death who died after drowning in the river.

This practice of using insulting and labeling intersect common belief with pervasive delivery for an audience or public gathering to influence for cultural hatred, intolerance, and mob-angry against the religious minority (Connley, 2016). When the founder of the sect 'Ahmadiyya' was insulted with the word '*beyadob*'(idiot) for the cause of a 'false'/ 'distinctive' belief in Golam Muhammad Kadinani as an '*Imam Mahdi*', the audience instantly became enraged against the community. Further, the metaphoric word '*toilet*' in connection to the leader's death would produce a high degree of social hatred against the minority sect. While preachers from the community showed that the founding leader of Ahmadiyya faced a death case, similar to the historical monarchic ruler Farao; that could easily soar hatred toward the Ahmadiyya sect. When one of the non-Ahmadiyya males was asked 'do you think Ahmadiyya is anti-religious?', he stated

I have heard they are '*kafir*', they are not Muslim and believers. I think they are '*kiddani*', foreigners; I know that they have no right to live with us since they are false Muslims. Our *Hujur* (preacher) said, they are '*kafir*', don't meet with them, don't talk with them.

Many speeches made by traditional preachers are not only insulting but also attacking and oppressive. As approached in the public gathering (Islamic Tune, n.d.)

Once our leader advised me to put a hand over my head that- 'would you please promise- in every field of speech you must say against the Ahmadiyya. Then I promised. He said to me… the main cause of this promise is that in our country many of the ministers of Govt. don't understand how they are *kafir* or disbelievers.

From these statements, it would be assumed that the oath of delivering a speech against the Ahmadiyya might constitute a dominant discourse that highly influenced the majority of believers. The oath of delivering a speech, in this context, is grounded on a few motives such as convincing people to accept the Ahmadiyya as *kafir* considering them as an out-group. Delivering undocumented propaganda with a false image had been a strong instrument for the formation of discursive discourse against the Ahmadiyya sect. The '*Islamic Tune*' (n.d.) channel presented the discursive knowledge in such a way that

> If the *Kadiani* are not declared as Kafir…the number of illegal children will increase, even if anyone of us makes a marital relationship with the *Kadiani* family….it will be an illegal marriage…. rather this relationship is as same as fornication, and the children will be bastard. Thus…we can say they are the most imposter and pretenders.

Those statements, as part of the anti-Ahmadiyya movement, show a discursive presentation associated with the discriminatory and exclusionary discourse that is enriched with linguistic propaganda. Different exclusionary words were used in this speech such as 'illegal marriage', 'fornication', 'bastard', 'imposter', and 'pretender', among those words; bastard and imposter are uttered frequently The speech proves that Ahmadiyya is not only a separate group but also an anti-religious and anti-social group. It was proclaimed that those who were '*kafir*' or disbelievers must be socially excluded in the sense that 'believers' should not make marital relationships with the Ahmadiyya members.

That means making marital relationships with this sect is 'illegal'; the husband-wife relationship seems to be fornication and the offspring of this family is meant to be illegal children. In our cultural practice, the metaphoric words 'illegal marriage' and 'bastard' are the most neglected terms. Moreover, the words 'bastard' 'imposter', and 'pretender' seem to be throwing kerosene into the fire. Therefore, the purposive motive for using neglected words was to instigate hostility and cruelty against the most underestimated sect.

Another linguistic technique of producing a discursive attitude is the process of hyperbole or delivering an extravagant statement. This was approached by a preacher, that the *Life Media BD* (n.d.) channel broadcasted,

> From tomorrow, whoever will go to a shop …. must talk against *Kadiani* saying that Mirza Golam Kadiani was a '*kafir*' and he drowned in a toilet, and whoever follows them they are also '*kafir*'. If anyone goes to the fish market…talk against Ahmadiyya… then you will say what is the rate of the fish.

Those statements prove that the contiguous and regular practice of labeling the Ahmadiyya as *'kafir'* with hyperbolic nature must reinforce the local people to make Ahmadiyya socially excluded and oppressed. That means the anti-Ahmadiyya linguistic system of hyperbole can be powerful to accelerate social exclusion and social eviction of the Ahmadiyya community in society.

Discriminatory Discourse as Reflected in Social Exclusion

The discursive discourse turns into discriminatory discourse when the prevailing discourse about Ahmadiyya can cause different social exclusions like economic, political, and socio-relational exclusions.

Socio-relational Exclusion

Recursive blaming against the Ahmadiyya results in socio-relational exclusion which was mentioned by a young male from the Ahmadiyya community, as stated

> My son and daughter could not continue school education in peace, since other students always neglected my kids uttering "*Kaiddany, Kaiddany*" while seeing them on the road or the field, or at school.

This response showed that the children of Ahmadiyya were so excluded and neglected that they felt an identity crisis in their living place. Also, the degree of hatred was intensified after announcing oaths in public gatherings. This form of oath declared a manifest movement against the Ahmadiyya community in Bangladesh which was closely linked with the development of discriminatory and oppressive attitudes against the Ahmadiyya community. A housewife (age 40) from the Ahmadiyya community responded,

> The local teachers are reluctant to teach our kids for our membership, and even non-Ahmadiyya students are reluctant to get any educational help from Ahmadiyya teachers. We always feel social hatred and social distance from others in our local area.

Similarly, a day laborer from the Ahmadiyya said,

> When I demanded my wage from the owner, the man attacked me and used rough language. As I am an Ahmadiyya, I always encounter bad behavior from the majority, and I have earned very little.

Above the statements depict the status of demarcation and social segregation imposed by the locals of the anti-Ahmadi group. For example, the school-going kids faced verbal attacks, and the Ahmadiyya members suffered more from the practice of social negligence and restrictions from marital relationships (Richmond, 2002). In this connection, an old man (age 62) from Ahmadiyya mentioned,

> I was a village doctor…. At once my dispensary was vandalized by the protesters. They labeled me '*Kaiddany Doctor'* saying that the medicine, which Ahmadiyya doctors provide, has no power to recover from the disease.

Even the cult of Ahmadiyya promotes otherness in terms of religious practice. For instance, an Ahmadiyya member (age 45) pronounced the practice of dis-assimilation through a video channel as represented

> I was part of the Ahmadiyya community. There are three approaches to Mirza Golam Ahmed: one is he is a reformer; he is a prophet not like the prophets who bore Allah's verses and he had characters that I looked up to as a role model. Within that cult we are discouraged from mingling with Muslims completely...it was very very scary for us to go off our mosques. One time I wanted to pray at another mosque, but I was scared about what they would think about me, and would they find me as Ahmadiyya? Ahmadiyya is a homogenous community, and even Mirza Golam Ahmed said 'you cannot make such a relationship with other Muslims which is practiced in the Ahmadiyya community' (MuslimIdentity,n.d.)

Economic Exclusion

In many cases, the majority of locals expropriated the wealth of the Ahmadiyya people, even the blind followers or criminals murdered, and tortured the Ahmadiyya member using local weapons and suicidal blasts. One of the female members of the Ahmadiyya community stated

> My husband was an employee of an organization named '*Jubo Unnayon Karmashala'*, but after marriage, he was suspended from his job only for the cause of making the marital relationship with us. Now we have to face huge suffering due to the loss of earning opportunities, and we cannot afford basic needs.

Similarly, another case of economic exclusion was portrayed by an adult Ahmadiyya male in such a way

> One of my sons-in-law was an employee of a company. He got pressured by other employees to give up his job. Due to being an Ahmadiyya member, the office told him that either you cut out his belief, or he should resign from his job…then he resigned.

In the process of social exclusion, using words of blaming was one of the powerful instruments in social practices that enhanced economic exclusion for the community.

Exclusion by Political Protection

In the political arena, a different way of linguistic expression was used in many of the speeches in public gatherings, by which the presenter could exert pressure on the political authority. A public speech of a traditional preacher was disseminated by the YouTube channel (Jahid Media, n.d.)

Those who support the *Kadiani* will be attacked with shoes in a brutal way (…then the audience shouted with a loud voice) …..if the parliament members support the Ahmadiyya… …we want to say stop your support, otherwise, we will arrange a large gathering in Dhaka.

In line with the statements, a listener of the local area (adult male) said,

I usually subscribe to YouTube for listening to religious speeches. I listened that *hujur* said Ahmadiyya must be banned in the whole country, they should not get state protection.

The arousal statements using harsh and loud voices against the Ahmadiyya community indicated pressure against the religious minority. The stressing words 'stop support', and 'must be banned' signaled that the Ahmadiyya sect must be prohibited by the political authority ('Anti-Ahmadiyyas', 2003). As an effect of this kind of dominant discourse, several attacks were held in the mosque where the Ahmadiyya performed praying, even some of the mosques were besieged and vandalized since they were treated as non-Muslim while the Ahmadiyya thought themselves Muslim. Ahmadiyya, thereby, realized that they were not politically safeguarded. As approached by a vulnerable Ahmadiyya adult that

Our insecurity is not only for now but for a long time. In 1987, almost 20 persons attacked me with hard sticks and destroyed my house, then I filed a case in court. I did not get a positive result from the court. The majority see us not as people, they tell us '*kafir*'.

A non-Ahmadiyya local male in such justified this devastating situation was that

'Kadiani' are not Bangladeshi, they cannot participate in political activities. Why they will be allowed to give vote….they should go back to Pakistan or India, we cannot tolerate them, why they were given national ID cards?

These responses prove that the Ahmadiyya failed to live with economic security, unsafety, and political rights because the local people thought of them as anti-religious and thereby anti-social. This pressure might enhance political exclusion and violation of political rights as well as civil rights if the community lived with their 'Muslim' identity. This kind of 'othering' strategy was developed by continuous preaching, propagation, demonstration, and agitation operated by the hegemonic majority (Kabir, 2016). A female member of Ahmadiyya pronounced the problematic issue which Spark Public broadcasted. (n.d.):

I belong to the Ahmadiyya Muslim community. We believe that the Ahmadiyya community is known for peace, love, and unity...showing

the true meaning of Islam. We believe that the last prophet is the law-bearing prophet and the Messiah just came to revive Muslims. However, the main reason for my father's move to another country was in pursuit of religious freedom because he did not get opportunities to live in his native country.

With the role of the hegemonic majority, thereby, many Ahmadiyya members were evicted from their living places, the brutal attack injured many, and many lost their earned property. Alongside the threat and losses, a few of them were killed after the brutal attack, and the hostility was so severe that the protesters used sticks, machetes, and darts to hit them, and even threw suicidal bombs that seriously injured the members of the community ("Ahmadiya houses", 2023; "Attacker killed", 2015). This brutal, nasty, and inhuman act is the result of discursive discourse constituted by the anti-Ahmadi protesters in public space by which people learned that any kind of relationship with the Ahmadiyya is prohibited, and even the dead body was barred from the graveyard (see "ARTICLE 19 condemns", 2020; Ashraf, 2005). Thus, it is confirmed that the discursive and ideology construction of discourses (Fairclough, 1995; Van Dijk, 2006) about Ahmadiyya generated the discriminatory discourse that resulted in a wide range of social exclusions like economic exclusion, exclusion by politics, and social participation.

CONCLUSIONS

The study intended to understand the extent of social exclusion of the Ahmadiyya community in Bangladesh for the role of discourses constructed by the traditional religious preachers, using the critical discourse analysis (CDA) method. The findings of the study reveal that the Ahmadiyya community as a religious minority has experienced different forms of discourses by the conventional religious authority and majority believers who always treat the Ahmadiyya as a socially excluded community in Bangladesh.

The primary reason behind the status of the Ahmadiyya is the minority position and their belief that contradicts the beliefs and practices of the majority believers. Though the Ahmadiyya confess that they are following the same fundamentals of Islam with less difference as in-group discourse, the total belief structure instigates the conflict between minority and majority and between majority and state to the extent that the majority is putting pressure upon the government to confirm the total status of social exclusion. As part of this process, the Ahmadiyya community has to face defamatory discourse created by traditional religious speeches, such as using languages of blaming (kaiddani), labeling (kafir), and rhetoric (dazzal). Furthermore, this community is always affected by the discursive discourse, which is

colored by derogatory language such as persuasive (propaganda), reinforcing (pressurizing), emblematical (language of hatred), and hyperbole (shouting against Ahmadiyya for banning) type of language (Table 3).

Table 3

Discursive Discourse and Its Effects on Different Social Exclusions

Discursive discourse	Language structure	Discriminatory discourse reflected in social exclusion
In-group discourse	Favoring: Ahmadiyya as a follower of basic Islam	Religious homogeneity and distance from the majority
Defamatory discourse	Blaming: *kaiddani, one-eyed* Labeling: *kafir* Rhetoric: *dazzal*	1. Exclusion by social participation: neglected in the schooling of children, social communication, cooperation by the local majority 2. Exclusion by economic conditions: evicted from job, living with the least wage, restriction from earning. 3. Exclusion by political protection: Exhuming, looting, threat, murder, and attack as sign of destruction and unsafety
Derogatory discourse	Persuasive: Promise for propaganda Reinforcing: 'Marital relation' as illegal Emblematical: Child-birth as fornication Hyperbole: Shouting & pressurizing for banning	

Source: Summary of findings developed by authors

As an effect of the role of defamatory and derogatory discourses, the Ahmadiyya community is not only living with vulnerabilities but mostly with different forms of social exclusion. Firstly, they are excluded from social participation; for example, the children of the Ahmadiyya community are neglected in schools by the teachers and local students, and they cannot pursue social communication and cooperation with the majority of believers in their local areas. Secondly, the community is excluded from economic facilities such as job opportunities and earning accessibility, so many of them were evicted from their jobs, and they have to live with the lowest wage rate.

Thirdly, the Ahmadiyya is excluded from political protection, thereby, they have been suffering from rigorous attack on mosques and homes, looting, harsh threats, brutal murder, and even the exhumation of infant baby that proved the extent of their social exclusion and vulnerabilities. That means, the rising social exclusion and vulnerabilities of the Ahmadiyya

community cannot be separated from the texts, talk, opinion, power, and culture (van Dijk, 2006), as well as from the in-group, defamatory and derogatory discourse about the Ahmadiyya community. However, Ahmadiyya itself follows in-group religious practice discouraging religious assimilation which increases minority-majority distance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In this regard, the recommendations of the constitution of Bangladesh Article 41.1 show that every citizen has the right to profess, practice, or propagate any religion, and every religious community has the right to establish, maintain, and manage its religious institutions (Legislative and Parliamentary Affairs Division, 2019). Also, Article 27 confirms that all citizens are equal before the law, and under Article 34 (5), no person shall be subjected to torture or cruel, inhuman, or degrading punishment or treatment. In this regard, governmental safeguards for the rights of religious minorities necessitate ensuring community development in the local areas of Bangladesh. Unlike the banning of Ahmadiyya by the Pakistan legislation, Bangladesh has no law against Ahmadiyya, which is a sign of minority protection by the government of Bangladesh. Besides the national constitutional rights, Sustainable Development Goals (SDG, Goal 3.5) focuses on strengthening the prevention of substance abuse and SDG Goal 4 highlights ensures quality education and learning opportunities, while Goal 3 SDG Goal 11 addresses good health and well-being, and sustainable community life (United Nations, 2015).

The states are responsible for ensuring protection, security, and legal justice regarding the rights, including the economic and mental well-being of the vulnerable Ahmadiyya community. More importantly, religious preachers from both majority believers and minority believers should arrange inter-dialogue platforms in order to improve inter-religious communications and cultural development in local areas of Bangladesh. Furthermore, constructive ideas and lessons should be included in the formal educational curricula to enhance the cognitive quality of living with multi-social groups that would generate a harmonious environment in favor of community well-being for minority and majority believers. More importantly, many mass media programs covering print and electronic media on the issue of enhancing respect for minority people should be scheduled. The study feels that further studies of quantitative data analysis through survey questionnaires and qualitative studies with ethnographic studies are needed to generate the empirical grievances of the religious minority group.

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