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An Amazaghin doctor, artist, poet and philosopher

From the Editor

Change



New York march for Climate Change action,, September 2014

Despite the uncertainty on many fronts, humanity has finally started to come of age. Our rampant, systemless and unconscionable exploitation of the planet's resources has been officially recognised as anti progress and anti sustainable. Perhaps if the systems related to extraction of the planet's resources had been proper ones, i.e. one where we left no pollutants we may have been able to successfully work through these issues facing humanity collectively but proper management and usage of vital resources has been sadly lacking.

The people of the planet have spoken to the UN and the UN has given the people their backing, initially to stop use of fossil fuels in favour of the many green energy options, but we do hope it will extend to proper management of all resources and all systems on the planet and to the cleaning up of the mess. This obviously requires some major input by business and a re-think on how business should be conducted.

As roof thatchers, whalers, and witch doctors have found or are finding themselves redundant in the modern business world so must we all use our intelligence and ingenuity to find better systems of management. I am sure we all can.

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Strategic Knowledge Sharing: Culture Acting as an Inhibitor

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1. Introduction

Knowledge management has been employed as a strategy across multiple industries and sectors (Sitkin and Bowen, 2013). In virtually all cases, the starting point for the organizations seeking to benefit from a KM strategy - is that of knowledge sharing (KS). Beyond low-value tacit knowledge, how viable is it to expect that individuals will freely share their truly valuable tacit knowledge, given the competitive nature of most developed societies, and the rather explicit ways in which cultures reward individual contribution?

This paper investigates how culture (national and organizational) acts as an active barrier to fostering a safe environment that inspires and promotes employees to share their tacit knowledge with others. On the contrary, even those firms that successfully establish a culture conducive to security and even teamwork, other incentives for employees, managers, and executives, promote and reward individual contribution, thereby undermining the very culture of collective knowledge sharing they articulate they wish to instill.

2. Knowledge Management (KM)

Knowledge Management (KM), as a recognized concept, is generally attributed to Ikujiro Nonaka, and his 1991 publication in Harvard Business Review, 'The Knowledge Creating Company'. Knowledge management has been employed as a strategy across multiple industries (Sitkin and Bowen, 2013); from consulting, engineering, education, technical support and CRM, to even heavy industry and the oil/gas industries. There are many definitions applied to KM, but for this paper, rather than bias the proceedings by adopting a particular definition or definitions, the author prefers to allow the seminal literature make the case for organizations pursuing KM strategies.

Swan et al (1999) maintain that KM is about managing

'the intellectual and social capital of individuals in order to improve organizational learning capabilities, recognizing that knowledge, and not simply information, is the primary source of an organization's innovative potential.' (p. 264)

Alavi and Leidner (2001) propose that

'Knowledge is a broad and abstract notion that has defined epistemological debate in Western philosophy since the classical Greek era. In the past few years, however, there has been a growing interest in treating knowledge as a significant organizational resource.' (p. 107)

McCampbell, Clare, and Glitters (1999) state that,

'in an economy of uncertainty, the only sure source of lasting competitive advantage is knowledge'. Successful companies are those that consistently create new knowledge, disseminate it widely throughout the organization, and quickly embody it in new technologies and products.' (p. 172)

2.1 Knowledge

Knowledge is information and 'know-how'. Yet, not all information and 'know-how' needs to be captured by an organization, as it does not represent a valuable resource. In our 'post-capitalist' era (Drucker, 1993), the kind of knowledge that has the potential to translate into competitive advantage, is that knowledge which is applied to existing knowledge (Uit Beijerse, 1999), thereby increasing organizational learning/knowledge, and can further add value to organizational technology, innovation, and/or products.

Alavi and Leibner (2001) purport that ‘

The knowledge-based perspective postulates that the services rendered by tangible resources depend on how they are combined and applied, which is in turn a function of a firm's know-how (i.e., knowledge). This knowledge is embedded in and carried through multiple entities including organization culture and identity, routines, policies, systems, and documents, as well as individual employees (Grant, 1996a; 1996b; Nelson and Winter, 1982; Spender, 1996a, 1996b). Because knowledge-based resources are usually difficult to imitate and socially complex, the knowledge-based view of the firm posits that these knowledge assets may produce long-term sustainable competitive advantage. However, it is less the knowledge existing at any given time per se than the firm's ability to effectively apply the existing knowledge to create new knowledge and to take action that forms the basis for achieving competitive advantage from knowledge-based assets.’ (p. 108)

Having the ability to distinguish between information and knowledge is followed by an organization being able to identify from where knowledge comes. Davenport and Prusak (1998) identify five sources of knowledge (Anand and Singh, 2011, p.929):

- i) Acquired knowledge comes from outside the organization.
- ii) Dedicated resources are those in which an organization sets aside some staff members or an entire department to develop knowledge within the organization - usually for a specific purpose e.g., research and development.
- iii) Fusion is knowledge created by bringing together people with different perspectives to work on the same project.
- iv) Adaptation is knowledge that results from responding to new processes or technologies in the marketplace.
- v) Knowledge networking is knowledge in which people share information with one another formally or informally.

Furthermore, there is a clear distinction as to how we classify knowledge i.e., knowledge types (Sanchez, 1996): namely tacit knowledge and explicit knowledge. Tacit knowledge is knowledge which a person has, but may not be easily communicated to others. Polanyi (1966), who defined the concept, expressed that ‘we know more than we can tell’. His famous example is that ‘we can recognize familiar faces, but are unable to explain the process of recognition’. Innate abilities would also be classified as tacit knowledge. For example, Pele may be able to teach mentees technique and give them tips on good soccer strategy, but can he explain - in retrospect - the mental and physical processes that enabled him to make an incredible play on the pitch? Most likely not. This is a result of keen perception, insight, athletic genius, as well as other factors.

Explicit knowledge, on the other hand, is usually based on replicable behavior, process knowledge, best practices, logic, etc., and therefore can be explained, observed, and/or

analyzed effectively - and therefore relatively easily replicated. This is the type of knowledge many organizations seek to understand, learn from, and harness as value added. Nonaka (1991) describes explicit knowledge as being ‘formal and systematic’ i.e., there is a repeatable and clear method behind the knowledge.

‘The typical business [of the future] will be knowledge-based, an organization comprised largely of specialists who direct and discipline their own performance through feedback from colleagues, customers, and headquarters. For this reason it will be what I call an information-based organization. (Drucker, 1986, p.3)

2.2 Knowledge Sharing

A partner at one of the most reputed management consulting firms once purported to the author that broadly speaking, there are only two approaches to KM strategy that have shown to be successful:

- i) Knowledge sharing
- ii) Knowledge creation

She went on to say that the latter has its roots in the former. Whether it be Marconi attempting to upgrade the efficiency of its CRM, Jaguar seeking to minimize the time required to create a car panel, the US Navy employing state-of-the-art techniques for designing battleships, or Tufts University developing a KM system for its schools of medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine, a common required element is the fostering of a knowledge sharing (KS) environment, where knowledge is shared amongst community members (i.e., a KS culture).

3. Culture

According to Blanchard and Bowles (1998), organizational culture, broadly speaking, is ‘the way things are done around here’. More specifically, the author would describe corporate culture as being the shared behaviors, beliefs, symbols, understandings, and assumptions subscribed to by the employees within an organization. Tom Tierney, a former managing partner of Bain and Co. says,

‘A corporation's culture determines how people behave when they are not being watched.’ (Hindle, 2003, p. 55)

Like national cultures, organizational cultures are created over time. Leadership sets the direction and models the behaviors, values, beliefs, etc. that are desired, but it is ultimately up to the employees to emulate and cement the culture into place.

Organizations wishing to implement a KM strategy normally commence with knowledge sharing activities as the precursor, thus requiring change within the organization - including the culture (Kotter, 1996). Change experts such as Kotter (Harvard Business School) have been professing for years the difficulty associated with leading change within organizations.

3.1 Leading Transformational Change

'Over the past decade, I have watched over 100 companies try to remake themselves into significantly better competitors... These efforts have gone under many banners: total quality management, reengineering, right sizing, restructuring, cultural change, and turnaround. But, in almost every case, the basic goal has been the same: to make fundamental changes in how business is conducted in order to help cope with a new, more challenging market environment. (p. 59)

Regarding successful transformation efforts, Kotter goes on to share:

'Well over 50% of the companies I have watched fail in the first phase [of the 8-phase transformation process]' (Kotter, 1995, p. 60).

People - as a rule - do not like change. On the contrary, the vast majority of people experience extreme levels of discomfort, actively seeking out to create comfort zones for themselves. Typically, company executives make decisions concerning the implementation of KM systems, and their desire to establish a KS culture, based on the need for the business to be competitive; a financially driven decision.

This they articulate time and time again to employees; the mantra that, "We need to become more competitive in the marketplace, and a KM system supported by a closely-knit, knowledge-sharing culture will underpin the turnaround that is needed." "So what?" is the reaction of the average employee? 'I'm happy with the way things are.'

Such reactions should not be viewed as 'dissension', they are, at worst, a subconscious safeguard of the employee's comfort zone, and, at best, a lack of understanding as to why change is needed. Kotter (1996) identifies 'complacency' as being the number one obstacle to transformation in the initial stage.

'Transformation is not possible unless hundreds or thousands of people are willing to help, often to the point of making short-term sacrifices. Employees will not make sacrifices, even if they are unhappy with the status quo, unless they believe that useful change is possible.' (Kotter, 1995, p. 63)

Kotter (1996) goes on to state that successful change is led by a clearly communicated vision, within which, it should be clearly articulated what benefit(s) employees and other stakeholders will obtain for supporting the change effort i.e., 'What's in it for me?'

3.2 The nature of the Change

As mentioned previously, transformational change is usually catalyzed by competitive need, or, in some cases, new strategic direction. That said, reengineering processes, implementing 6 Sigma process controls, adopting a TQM 'philosophy', becoming more 'customer-centric', introducing

a new product (or product line), are all ambitious endeavors, but, like as not, do not challenge the socialization and belief system of employees at a fundamental level e.g., cultural norms, values, beliefs, and socialization.

Francis Bacon (1561-1626) proclaimed that, 'Knowledge is power.'

'Knowledge is power, and when embodied in the form of new technical inventions and mechanical discoveries it is the force that drives history'. As such, knowledge is a 'resource' - or perhaps more correctly termed - 'an asset' - of potentially immense value to the organization - not to mention the individual. Knowledge is essentially created by individuals (Grant, 1996a, 1996b). The majority of knowledge is 'tacit' in nature, and it is trapped in the minds of people, and as such, lacks the articulation of explicit knowledge (Polanyi, 1966). Moreover, these individuals, or gatekeepers, of this treasure trove, have a context (as does their knowledge: Lave, 1988). That context is culture (Holden, 2002).

Hofstede's seminal work in the area of cross-cultural comparative studies, whilst limited by the fact that he drew his entire population from one multinational corporation (IBM), still contributed significantly by drawing attention to the differences between peoples from diverse regions and nations in regards to the following four original dimensions identified by Hofstede:

i) Power Distance - the extent to which a society accepts that power in institutions and organizations is distributed unequally.

ii) Uncertainty Avoidance - the extent to which a society feels threatened by uncertain or ambiguous situations.

iii) Individualism - a loosely knit framework in a society in which people are supposed to take care of themselves and their immediate families only. Collectivism, the opposite, occurs when there is a "tight social framework in which people distinguish between in-groups and out-groups; they expect their in-group (relatives, clan, organization) to look after them, and in exchange for that, owe absolute loyalty to it.

iv) Masculinity (with its opposite pole, femininity) - this dimension expresses "the extent to which the dominant values in society are assertiveness, money and material things, not caring for others, quality of life and people.

More generally, Hofstede (1980) discussed the importance of national culture in the context of management, for the following reasons (although not limited to these points only):

i) Political reasons: Nations are considered political units, which are rooted in history. They have their own institutions, legal systems, educational systems, labor and employers' association systems and their specific forms of government. Thus, the nature of firms, the use of, for instance authority and wage systems, and their relations to public institutions as

well as to other firms are highly dependent upon the political context.

ii). Sociological reasons: Nationality or “regionality” has a symbolic value to citizens. People perceive national and regional differences to be real, and the differences should therefore be considered as reality.

iii) Psychological reasons: Our thinking is partly conditioned by national culture factors. This is an effect of what is commonly known as “the socialization process” i.e., early life experiences with one’s family, later educational experiences in schools and experiences from work organizations, which are not the same across national borders and thus lead to differences in what people value, e.g., what people see as “good” or “bad,” and “right” or “wrong”.

3.3 Case: The United States and Russia: A Comparison

From Table 1, it is clear to see that the national cultural ‘profiles’ of the United States and Russia differ dramatically, based on Hofstede’s paradigm (Hofstede, 1993). Elenkov (1998) explained Russians’ aversion to sharing information with ‘outsiders’ based on their high scores on the dimensions of ‘power distance’ and ‘uncertainty avoidance’. The United States, on the other hand, scores low on these two dimensions - yet, Americans are not inclined to be necessarily eager to share tacit knowledge they consider to be of high value. Is this really the cultural root of the problem i.e., levels of ‘power distance’ and ‘uncertainty avoidance’?

The author has many years of experience living/working in both the United States and Russia. Through his comparative-cultural research, professional consulting experience, and general interactions and observations, the author finds that individuals within both countries reach the same end - information hoarding, and a reticence to share valuable information freely - via different means (i.e., the cultural elements leading to such behavior), but ultimately, for the same underlying reasons:

i) Recognizing that knowledge has value (and power), and as such should not be freely shared; but if shared strategically, is the key to being valued and receiving privileges;

ii) reaching the understanding as to the asymmetric distribution of knowledge (the privileged have access to knowledge, and the gifted and talented generate that knowledge);

iii) comprehending that the knowledge one chooses to share should be with only those in influential positions (the more valuable the knowledge, the more stratified the audience of the knowledge should be); and,

iv) realizing that it is usually through trial-and-error, individuals discover the key element of trust, and sharing knowledge only with those influential individuals with whom they identify as being trustworthy.

Table 1: Culture Dimension Scores for Ten Countries

(PD = Power Distance; ID = Individualism; MA = Masculinity; UA = Uncertainty Avoidance; H = top third, M = middle third, L = bottom third among 53 countries)

	PD	ID	MAS	UA
UK	L	H	H	L
Germany	L	H	H	M
Japan	M	M	H	H
France	H	H	M	H
Netherlands	L	H	L	M
Hong Kong	H	L	H	L
Indonesia	H	L	M	L
West Africa	H	L	M	M
Russia	H*	M*	L*	H*
United States	L	H	H	L

*estimated value based on personal impressions or imperfect replications (source: adapted from Hofstede, 1993)

Russia was under communist rule for the better part of a century. The Soviet Union highlights the points above. Broadly speaking, the Soviet culture consisted of the privileged and the underprivileged. There was nothing in-between, although there were different levels within these two strati. The privileged had access to knowledge - yet shared it - sparingly, and with purposeful strategic aims in mind. The Soviet Union was a police state, where as much as 10 - 20 % of the population (depending on the source of the statistic) were connected with the security/intelligence agencies e.g., the militia, KGB, FSK, etc., if not officially, at least as an informer or 'snitch'.

The system functioned on the basis of the party gathering and hoarding huge amounts of information, which was translated into 'knowledge' - as needed and desired. The average Soviet citizen was either a snitch, or was being spied on by snitches. Soviets did not know who was an informer and who was not. Given the communal nature of their society, there was a level of fear and paranoia. A Soviet learned not to share thoughts, ideas, (i.e., knowledge) with anybody other than those closest to them, and only in locations of security e.g., one's own apartment, a secluded park, forest, or other safe haven. That said, one could still fall victim of bogus information. Those employed officially and unofficially to assume the roles of informants were expected to produce regularly. The inability to share new knowledge resulted in punishment, loss of status/rewards, or even becoming the victim of the very apparatus for which they worked (i.e., the object of bogus information and spying).

There is an old Japanese proverb, 'The nail that stands the tallest - gets hammered.' This saying epitomized the Soviet society. One didn't want to appear different, or share original ideas or thoughts, for fear that one day, you would be labelled 'different' in the most negative of ways - 'an enemy of the people'. This was a brand one rarely could remove. The safest strategy was to join the masses, and keep quiet.

By contrast, in American society, being an individual and having novel ideas is embraced, promoted, and tolerated. People making the most outlandish and inaccurate claims hide behind their constitutional right to 'free speech'; something Russia doesn't pretend to have even today. Knowledge is power. But there is a status quo in the United States as well, and knowledge creation, development, control, etc., is at the heart of American society. Democracy values and even serves the individual - but not at the ultimate expense of society.

Unlike the Soviet Union or even the Russian Federation today, individual Americans are awarded privileges based on their citizenship alone. This is the difference between being a member of a democratic nation as opposed to an authoritarian police state. However, privilege, like in the Soviet Union and Russia, is gained through social stratification. Knowledge is still power, and trust is still a key to recognition, and Americans know this well. The ultimate

trust is in the environment itself. Like Soviets, Americans will also only share information within a safe and secure environment, assuming - like a Russian (or Soviet) - there is no greater value to be obtained - by hoarding the knowledge.

3.4 Reward and Stratification

Enter the contradiction. Within most developed societies (including Russia and the United States), there are varying strati. Higher stratification translates into monetary reward, privileges, recognition, opportunities, authority, and ultimately belonging to a more selective and elite group. Individuals may or may not consciously seek stratification. Their objective may be to earn more income, progress in their career, or seek to assume a leadership position - with no underlying interests in power, grandeur, etc. Recognition and promotion may simply be a reward for good service to the organization. Whatever the motive, individuals are identified, rewarded, and promoted based on systems/processes that identify 'value added', which, ultimately, can be reduced to representing a contribution based on knowledge.

Examples include: pay - scales, bonuses for high-performers, commissions for salespeople, generous remuneration for CEOs (some might call excessive). Value is placed on those who are deemed to add value well above-and-beyond the norm. Chief executives who move from one company to another can dramatically influence the value of both organizations - through their share prices; which communicates that the market has expectations for the future performance of both companies (positive or negative).

The point is that whilst organizations have figured out that one of the few remaining opportunities to achieve sustainable competitive advantage may be the knowledge locked within their employees' minds, to a great extent, our professional, organizational, and national cultures socialize employees to hoard their most valuable knowledge - rather than freely share it within their organizations. Kotter (1996) mentions in his 'leading change' process the importance of 'aligning the practices of the organization with its transformational 'vision' - including removing any barriers that do not align/support the corporate vision. But how does one remove a gargantuan barrier like culture, which acts as such a powerful force in socializing individuals? It can't.

4. Summing up

The horizon shows no signs of the business environment becoming any less competitive. On the contrary, both companies and markets are following a trend of internationalizing (i.e., Globalization). As such, organizations are finding it increasingly difficult to identify a source for obtaining a competitive advantage - let alone a sustainable one.

If we are living amidst a global 'economy of uncertainty' (McCampbell, Clare, and Glitters, 1999), then perhaps the organizations of the future will, by-and-large, be 'knowledge-based'

(Drucker, 1988), with only their 'know-how [collective knowledge] that fosters and generates further technology and know-how, being the valuable asset or distinctive competency upon which a sustainable competitive advantage may be achieved (McCampbell, Clare, and Glitters, 1990; Uit Beijerse, 1999; Swan et al, 1999; Alavi and Leidner, 2001).

But, that requires collective knowledge sharing (KS). Whilst being both attractive and seductive, the belief that employees are going to open up and share their most valuable tacit knowledge is not only naïve, it goes against the very socialization processes of virtually any developed country one can mention. Regardless of cultural differences e.g., Hofstede, Trompenaars, etc., knowledge is power, and the more valuable the knowledge, the higher people construct barriers to freely sharing valuable knowledge with others. For employees, any valuable tacit knowledge they have represents their 'VIP ticket' to becoming one of the privileged (or at least more privileged).

As long as societies operate on the basis of privileged versus underprivileged, individuals will hoard their real nuggets of knowledge until they are convinced there is a safe environment and real value to be gained by sharing it; at which point they will be highly selective as to the audience. This is not going to change anytime soon, as it is fundamental to our cultures and socialization - on several levels. The Soviet Union was based on a communist ideology of 'equality' and a 'union of workers'. Yet, some were digging ditches and working in factories, whilst a select few of their 'comrades' lived in the lap of luxury; now Russia has changed the game to capitalism, so that the privileged can benefit from even more stratification above the masses.

As Kotter (1995, 1996) points out, transformational change is extremely difficult, and people will not support the change without seeing clear benefit to themselves. Change initiatives fail more-often-than-not, and certainly ones that go against the fundamental conditioning of national, professional, and corporate cultures are destined to fail irretrievably. KM and KS are invaluable concepts and contributions to both industry and academia, concepts that have much to offer the business world - once we have established cultures that cultivate 'sharing' rather than 'hoarding', 'community-mindedness' over 'personal gain', and nurturing/rewarding 'employees en masse' as opposed to grooming 'stars'. This is not communism or socialism - just good sense.

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The Development of Social and Environmental Reporting Research on Bangladeshi Organizations: A Postcolonial Critique

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Introduction

In the developed countries, the research on social and environmental accounting was introduced in the early 1970s (Mathews, 1997). In 1997, the veteran scholar in the field of social and environmental accounting, R. Mathews, published a paper that contained a summary and analysis of the research conducted over twenty five years. He highlighted that it was a silver jubilee for social and environmental accounting research. So, it can be said that research in this field has more than 40 years of history. Starting from the paper of Mathews (1997), up to now, some other review papers on social and environmental accounting literature were published. Some of the other well-known papers include Owen (2008), Parker (2011) and Islam (2010). Among these papers Islam (2010) emphasized on the social and environmental accounting research on developing economies.

After 1970, for many years the researchers mainly concentrated on the social and environmental reporting practices of the companies of the Western developed countries. The practices by the companies of the developing economies got less attention from the part of the researchers up to the early 2000s (Islam, 2010). After that a good amount of literature focusing on social and environmental disclosure practices in the developing countries can be found. Perhaps Islam (2010) is the only research that analyses the current state of the research on the social and environmental accounting and reporting of the developing countries. As this is the only article describing the current state of the social and environmental accounting research from the context of the developing countries, extensive research on this issue on a particular country might add more insight into this matter. This article can be considered as an extension of the work of Islam (2010).

Abstract

This article depicts the chronological development of research on social and environmental accounting practices of the companies of a developing country - Bangladesh. The research identifies that research on social and environmental accounting from the Bangladeshi perspective started in 1996. From then up to 2006, the research was mostly small scale and methodologically simple. It is mainly from 2007 the researchers having Western university affiliation, became interested in conducting research on Bangladesh. From then a development in terms of content and methodology can be noticed. The article concludes that the main contributors in the development of research in this area are the scholars affiliated with the Western universities. Local Bangladeshi researchers, because of their 'colonized' mentality, just followed and imitated the Westerners in terms of the methodologies and other aspects of research.

Key words: Social and environmental accounting, accounting research, Bangladesh, Post-colonialism.

The objective of this article is to investigate the development of social and environmental accounting and reporting research from the context of a developing country- Bangladesh. The article analyzes the development of this kind of research from the point of view of postcolonial theory.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows. In the next section, the development of social and accounting research from the context of Bangladesh is discussed in chronological order. Then a postcolonial critique on the nature of this development is presented. It is to be mentioned here that this article is not a literature review. It is only focused on the pattern of development of social and environmental accounting research from the context of Bangladesh. Though this research presents with the findings of the previous research, the main focus was on the scope and methodology of these articles.

Social and Environmental Reporting Research in Bangladesh

In order to analyse the development of the social and environmental reporting research on Bangladeshi companies, different online databases and library materials were consulted. The related articles in the online databases of Emerald, ScienceDirect, Springer, Routledge and Taylor and Francis were collected. Some other articles were identified through a search in Google. As most of the local journals of Bangladesh are not available online, a library search in one of the universities of Bangladesh was conducted. It was found that from 1996 to 2014 (up to the month of April), 42 articles on social and environmental reporting of Bangladeshi companies were published. This research considered only the journal articles. Books and other materials were ignored.

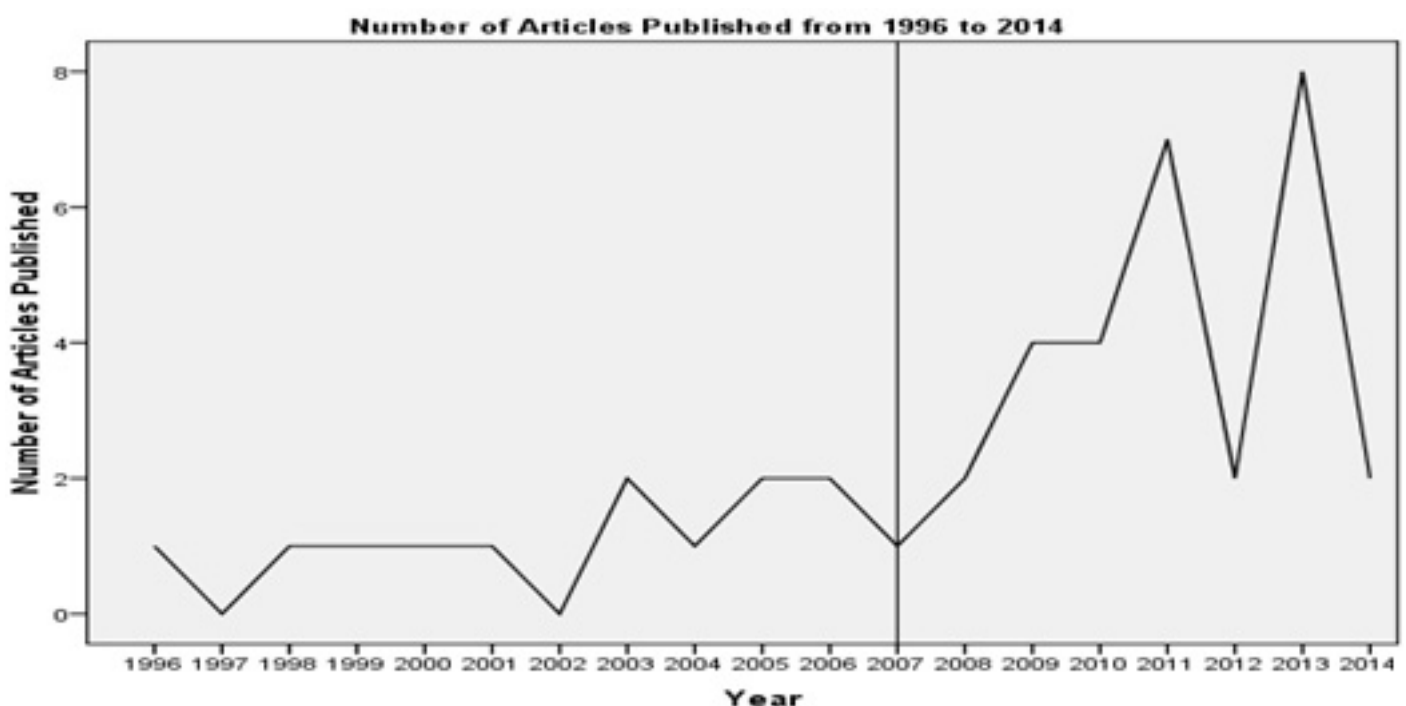
This research divides the total time period of 1996 to 2014 into two phases. The first phase can be termed as the introductory phase that ranges from 1996 to 2006. Most of the studies within this time period were simpler in terms of content and methodology. Other than a few exceptions, most of the research was published in the local (Bangladeshi) journals. The period of 2007 onwards can be seen as the growth stage of social and environmental reporting research on Bangladeshi organisations. The number of publications increased and these were published in some high rated journals. The researchers also adopted relatively rigorous and innovative methodologies. Figure 1 represents the number of articles published within these two phases.

Introductory Stage (1996-2006)

From the literature search it was found that the first research on the Social and Environmental reporting practices of Bangladeshi companies was published in 1996. From this information, it can be easily understood that research on Bangladeshi companies started long after the introduction of social and environmental accounting research on the companies of Western countries. It means the Bangladeshi companies felt the need for social and environmental reporting much later than the companies of the Western economies. That is why the researchers also started researching this topic much later.

Through the literature search it was found that a total of 12 journal articles were published in this period. Most of these are empirical articles. Out of these, 8 articles were published in several local academic and professional journals. Four articles were published either in the journals outside Bangladesh or were presented in international conferences. Short summaries of these articles are presented here.

Figure 1:



From the Bangladeshi context, the first research was Chowdhury and Chowdhury (1996). They concluded that some progressive companies in Bangladesh voluntarily provide some information in relation to the social and environmental issues.

After that, Bala and Habib (1998) conducted a study on the practice of financial reporting to the employees. They concluded that the level of disclosure was at bare minimum scale. They also commented that even the mandatory disclosure under the Security and Exchange Rules was breached. This research mainly highlighted the financial reporting issues.

Belal (1999) conducted a very short study on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) disclosure practices in Bangladesh. In this study, he found that 90% of the companies in the sample presented with some environmental disclosures. 97% of the sample companies disclosed on employees. Some ethical disclosures were done by 77% of the companies. The study can be considered as exploratory and thus lacks detailed findings on the CSR practices in Bangladesh. Mainly descriptive statistics were used for the presentation of data.

Imam (2000) in a study on 40 companies listed in the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) concluded that the majority of the companies did not go for any kind of corporate social performance reporting in the year of 1996-97. Though some well performing companies went for some disclosures, these cannot be considered as sufficient for discharging social responsibilities. This study was also limited to describing the data on the basis of descriptive statistics.

Belal (2001) conducted another survey in the CSR reporting practices in Bangladesh. This study also went through a content analysis of the annual reports in respect of social disclosures. The study attempted to focus on the socio-political and economic context in which the companies go for these disclosures. This study considered annual reports of 30 companies as sample. Among these 30 companies, 28 were listed companies. He found that all companies included in the sample went for at least some social disclosures. This small canvas study covered only 15% of the total listed companies.

After this, some researchers tried to concentrate only on the environmental issues and not social and environmental reporting together. Khan and Hossain (2003) conducted a very simple and short research on the environmental reporting practices in the annual reports of the manufacturing companies of Bangladesh. The study considered the annual reports of 15 companies listed in the Dhaka Stock Exchange from the year of 1999 to 2002 as samples. The study concluded that Bangladeshi manufacturing companies are reporting on the environmental issues mostly in a non-financial manner, i.e., in the form of narratives. They mainly report this issue in the Directors'/ Chairman's statement in the annual report. Out of these 15 companies only one company went for financial reporting. It reported 'environmental expenses' under 'Administration expenses' in the financial statements. This is one of the first studies focusing on corporate environmental disclosure in the context of Bangladesh. This study also used descriptive statistics to present the findings.

The study of Bala and Yusuf (2003) can be considered as the first extensive study on the corporate environmental reporting practices in Bangladesh as they took all the listed companies in the Dhaka Stock Exchange under consideration. They found that only 10.4% of the companies reported on environmental issues in their annual reports. The study also deserves credit as it included an opinion survey. They found that one of the prominent reasons for not reporting any information in relation to the environmental issues is the nonexistence of compulsion on environmental reporting. The focus of this study was also on environmental disclosures only. The presentation of data was done through descriptive statistics.

After Bala and Habib (1999), the issue of corporate reporting in relation to employees and human resources was again highlighted by Hossain, Khan and Yasmin (2004). They investigated the status of voluntary disclosure on human resources in the annual reports of 40 Bangladeshi companies listed in the Dhaka Stock Exchange. This was also a content analysis research and the analysis was done through descriptive statistics. The study concluded that though the disclosure related to human resources is not mandatory, some companies are reporting on this issue. The study also included a questionnaire survey that investigated the users' perception on this issue. The majority of the respondents mentioned that this kind of disclosure is essential in decision-making. The main limitation of this study was that the number of respondents in the questionnaire survey was only 38.

Hossain, Salat and Amin (2005) highlighted the status of Corporate Social Responsibility reporting of Bangladeshi companies. By conducting a content analysis of 75 companies listed in the Dhaka Stock Exchange, the authors came to a conclusion that the level of CSR disclosure is limited and inadequate. Descriptive statistics were used to present the findings of this study.

Islam, Hossain and Haque (2005), by applying Wilcoxon rank sum test and Mann-Whitney U test found that the companies producing environmental disclosure and the companies not going for environmental disclosure significantly differs in terms of sales revenue and employee size.

Bose (2006) conducted a case study on the environmental accounting and reporting practices of Petrobangla, a company dealing in the fossil fuel sector of Bangladesh. The author concluded that the company did not disclose much on the environmental initiatives to the stakeholders. From the Bangladeshi context, this can be considered as the first study applying case study method.

The study of Hossain, Islam and Andrew (2006) can be considered as the first study examining the determinants of corporate social and environmental disclosure in Bangladesh. The authors used an unweighted disclosure index. They found that in the case of Bangladeshi companies the variables like the nature of the company, presence of disclosure in the annual reports and net profit margin were significant determinants of CSR disclosure. Before this no other study made an attempt to identify the determinants of CSR disclosure.

Summary

This section summarizes the main features of the research articles of this introductory period (1996-2006). The main characteristics of the research are described here.

Content analysis of only annual reports: Most of these articles used content analysis method. The authors conducted content analysis of the annual reports of the companies. The contents of web sites and stand-alone sustainability reports were not considered by the researchers as within this time period web based reporting and sustainability reporting did not have that much popularity in the Bangladeshi corporate sector.

Not much focus on any particular sector: Other than Khan and Hossain (2004) and Bose (2006), the other researchers did not focus separately on any particular sector. Khan and Hossain (2004) focused only on the manufacturing companies. Bose (2006) focused on the fossil fuel sector. All the other researchers focused on the Bangladeshi companies in general.

Focus on both social and environmental reporting: The researchers focused on both social and environmental disclosures of the business organizations. Out of these 12 articles 6 concentrated both on social and environmental reporting. Two articles focused on employee reporting and human resource issues. Four articles concentrated only on environmental reporting.

Absence of theoretical explanations: None of the researchers of this time range explained their research on the basis of any theory. Even the research published in the international journals did not focus on the theories.

Simple methodology: Other than Islam, Hossain and Haque (2005) and Hossain, Islam and Andrew (2006), the other research was mainly based on descriptive statistics. Some research included questionnaire surveys. These survey results were also analyzed through descriptive statistics. No research applied qualitative methodology. Use of panel data was not seen during this period.

Dominance of Bangladeshi researchers and local journals: Most of the research was from Bangladeshi origin. The research was mainly published in the local academic and professional journals (8 out of 12). The two Bangladeshi journals that played a crucial role in the introduction of research on this issue are: The Bangladesh Accountants (the Journal of Institute of Chartered Accountants of Bangladesh) and Dhaka University Journal of Business Studies.

Islam (2010) in his research commented that the articles that are published in the local journals of the developing countries are mostly the replications of the articles published in the renowned international journals. From the context of Bangladesh this tendency was also common among the researchers of this introductory phase. Most of the research was small-scale and less rigorous in nature.

Growth Stage (2007 onwards)

From 2007, the research on social and environmental reporting on Bangladesh started to appear in the mainstream international accounting journals like Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal and Critical Perspectives on Accounting. Moreover, 2007 onwards, new methodologies and theoretical explanations were introduced by the researchers in this field. Along with the researchers of Bangladeshi origin, some internationally famous academicians in this field came up with their research.

While searching the literature, 30 journal articles that were published in 2007 onwards were identified. This section describes the development of the research on social and environmental reporting on Bangladesh from 2007 onwards for each year separately (also see Appendix-1).

2007:

One of the first detailed qualitative works on the status of CSR reporting by Bangladeshi companies is that of Belal and Owen (2007). The article was published in Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal. The researchers conducted 23 interviews of senior managers of 23 multinational, domestic and public sector organizations in Bangladesh. This study mentioned stakeholder theory and promoted engagement-based studies. The study found that the parent companies and the international buyers are the main pressure groups that influence the managers to go for corporate social reporting. But the authors also found that the standards and codes that are followed in this kind of reporting are mainly Western and these do not have much meaningful impact on the local stakeholders.

Though this was the only work on this issue this year, it indicates a remarkable development. Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal is an important journal that has contributed significantly in social and environmental accounting research (Mathews, 1997). Moreover any interview based qualitative research has not been done before. This research, for the first time, introduced the application of theories in the social and environmental reporting research on Bangladesh. So, this study has had a major methodological and theoretical contribution.

2008:

In the year 2008, another important article was published in the same journal - Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal. Islam and Deegan (2008) also investigated the motivations behind corporate social reporting. They applied both the legitimacy theory and the stakeholder theory in this study. The authors conducted content analysis of the annual reports and also interviewed senior executives of the reputable organizations (mainly garments sector) in Bangladesh. They found that human resource and community based disclosures dominated in the annual reports. On the contrary, environmental disclosures got less importance. Like Belal and Owen (2007) this study also finds that multinational buying houses were the main pressure group for social and

environmental disclosure in the clothing industry of Bangladesh. Western consumers, ILO, UNICEF, US government, NGOs and media play as important pressure groups.

Rashid and Lodh (2008: 211), in their quantitative study, investigated 'the influences of ownership concentration and the imposition of regulation on corporate governance' on the social disclosure practices of Bangladeshi companies. This can be considered as one of the first detailed regression analysis based quantitative studies on corporate social disclosure in Bangladesh. The study found that though ownership structures have little influence on corporate disclosure, 'the regulation on good corporate governance can significantly influence such practices' (Rashid and Lodh, 2008: 212). The authors concluded that regulation is the main motive of corporate social disclosure for the Bangladeshi companies.

These two papers had a remarkable contribution in the research on social and environmental reporting on Bangladeshi companies. Though the methodology of Islam and Deegan (2008) was similar to that of Belal and Owen (2007), legitimacy theory was used for the first time in this research in the context of Bangladesh. Rashid and Lodh (2008) also highlighted the impacts of some new independent variables like ownership concentration and corporate governance regulations on social and environmental disclosure.

2009:

From the literature search, four journal articles that were published in 2009 were identified.

Islam and Mathews (2009) focused on the social reporting status of a renowned Nobel Prize winner micro finance institution - Grameen Bank. This research is different in a sense that it did not focus on any conventional organisation from the corporate sector. The authors applied legitimacy theory and media agenda setting theory in this research. In 2001, The Wall Street Journal published negative news on Grameen Bank. The researchers, by analysing the contents of the annual reports (from 1997 to 2005) of Grameen Bank, found that after the news the community poverty alleviation disclosure increased significantly.

Khan, Halabi and Samy (2009) highlighted the state of CSR reporting of the banking companies of Bangladesh. The study applied mixed method. First they analysed the contents of the annual reports of 20 banking companies and then they conducted a questionnaire survey to understand the users' perception on CSR reporting. The study concludes that the extent of CSR reporting of Bangladeshi banking companies is not satisfactory and the users expect more CSR disclosure.

Sobhani, Amran and Zainuddin (2009) conducted a study to reveal the practices of corporate social and environmental disclosure in Bangladesh. They selected annual reports of 100 companies for content analysis through stratified sampling technique. This study mainly used descriptive analysis to present the results. They found that the level of disclosure improved over the last 10 years. In this study it was found that

all the companies disclosed on human resource issues. Other than that 47% of the companies disclosed community issues, 23% disclosed the consumer issues and 19% disclosed environmental issues. The authors concluded that from a global perspective, this disclosure level is low.

Azim, Ahmed and Islam (2009) investigated the corporate social reporting practices of the listed Bangladeshi companies. By analysing the annual reports of the companies it was found that banking companies go for more social disclosure. The social disclosure of the Bangladeshi companies is mostly qualitative in nature. Most of the social disclosures are located in the director's report. The findings of this study are presented mainly through descriptive statistics.

Among these four articles the works of Islam and Mathews (2009) and Khan, Halabi and Samy (2009) introduced new dimensions in the social and environmental reporting research on Bangladesh. In terms of its objectives and theoretical orientation Islam and Mathews (2009) is remarkable. Firstly, it introduced the application of media agenda setting theory in the context of Bangladesh. Secondly, for the first time, the effect of a particular event (a negative news report) was identified.

Though methodologically the work of Khan, Halabi and Samy (2009) was not that innovative, for the first time research was done on the social and environmental reporting practices of Bangladeshi banking companies.

2010:

Khan (2010) again focused on the corporate social disclosure practices of the Banking companies of Bangladesh. The paper examined the influence of corporate governance components on corporate social disclosure. This quantitative study applied a multiple regression method. It was found in the study that the non-executive directors and the existence of foreign nationalities are significant determinants of corporate social responsibility reporting of the private commercial banks of Bangladesh.

Khan and Khan (2010) focused on the human capital disclosure practices of 32 top Bangladeshi companies (both in manufacturing and service sector). It was found in this study that Bangladeshi companies are disclosing the human capital issues like 'employee training, number of employees, career development and opportunities that firms provide, and employee recruitment policies' (Khan and Khan, 2010: 329). The study presented the findings mainly through descriptive statistics.

Belal et al (2010), in their research, investigated the environmental and climate change disclosures of Bangladeshi companies. This is the first research that used the term 'climate change disclosure'. The study conducted a content analysis of the annual reports and web sites of 100 largest Bangladeshi companies based on market capitalization. The study found that the level of environmental disclosure of Bangladeshi

companies is low and the companies mainly disclose the positive news. This study presented its findings through descriptive statistics.

Perhaps Ali, Rashid and Islam (2010) can be considered as the only study that focused on the applicability of environmental accounting in Bangladesh. This study is mostly theoretical in nature. The study concluded that Bangladeshi companies do not go for environmental accounting and the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Bangladesh (ICAB) and Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) should take enough initiatives to introduce and implement this practice.

The main development of this year was that Belal et al (2010) included the discourse - 'climate change disclosure' in the context of Bangladeshi companies.

2011:

Seven research articles published in 2011 were identified through literature search. In this year, for the first time research on the social and environmental reporting in the context of Bangladesh was published in the famous journal - *Critical Perspectives on Accounting* (Belal and Cooper, 2011).

The research of Sobhani, Zainuddin and Amran (2011) attempts to identify whether there is a relationship between religious values (Islamic values) and sustainability disclosure. In order to fulfil this objective they conducted a case study on an Islamic bank. They conducted the interviews of managers. It was found that Islam was an important force in the corporate social disclosure practices. Some other factors that were responsible for this kind of disclosure are the regulations from central bank, several environmental movements, corporate culture and institutional awards. The researchers used institutional perspective in this research.

Rouf and Harun (2011), by applying regression analysis investigated the relationship between ownership structure and voluntary disclosure in the annual reports of the Bangladeshi corporations. The annual reports of 94 listed companies of Bangladesh were analysed. They used the agency theory in this research. A disclosure index (the dependent variable) was developed on the basis of 68 voluntary disclosure items. They found that the extent of voluntary disclosure is positively associated with institutional ownership.

Rouf (2011), in his quantitative research, by applying content analysis, identified the determinants of corporate social responsibility disclosure practices of Bangladeshi companies. The author used ordinary least squares regression model to identify the determinants. The study found that the proportion of independent directors, board leadership structure, board audit committee and return on equity are positively related to the extent of social disclosure. It was found that size of the firm was negatively related to social disclosure.

Belal and Cooper (2011), in their qualitative research, investigated the absence of CSR disclosure in Bangladesh. They

conducted 23 semi-structured interviews of the senior corporate managers. The interviews mainly focused on three issues: child labour, equal opportunities and poverty. The study identified the main reasons for non-disclosure and these are: scarce resources, profit focus, absence of legal requirements, lack of knowledge and awareness and the fear of negative publicity.

Khan et al (2011) investigated the corporate sustainability reporting of the commercial banks of Bangladesh. Twelve major commercial banks were taken as samples. The extent of reporting was measured in line with the guidelines of Global Reporting Initiatives (GRI). Five areas of sustainability were taken into account. These are: 'environment, labour practices and decent works, product responsibility, human rights and society' (Khan et al, 2011: 347). It was found in this study that Bangladeshi commercial banks report extensively on the social issues. Issues like product responsibility and human rights get neglected. Descriptive statistics were used to present the results of the study. This is the first study that used the term sustainability and used GRI measures as standards.

Islam and Islam (2011) conducted a case study investigating the environmental disclosure practices of an oil and gas company - Niko Resources Limited. The authors applied the legitimacy theory and the media agenda setting theory jointly in this paper. In 2005, there occurred two major blowouts in the Niko gas fields in Bangladesh. These blowouts got huge media attention. It was found that because of the negative media coverage, Niko incorporated non-financial disclosure within a standalone report. Because of the regulatory requirements, Niko also disclosed environmental contingent liabilities. This study is similar to Islam and Mathews (2009) in terms of methodology as it is also a case study based on events that got negative media coverage.

Islam and Dellaportas (2011) investigated the perceptions of Bangladeshi Chartered Accountants on the practices of social and environmental reporting. A questionnaire survey was conducted on 55 respondents. The survey results highlight that the accountants have 'positive attitudes toward corporate social and environmental accounting' (Islam and Dellaportas, 2011: 649).

The main advancement of this year is that Sobhani, Zainuddin and Amran (2011) applied institutional approach in their research. Another important advancement was that for the first time Khan et al (2011) used the discourse of 'sustainability' and used the guidelines of Global Reporting Initiatives (GRI) as a benchmark.

2012:

The amount of research declined in 2012. Only two journal articles on the social and environmental disclosure practices of Bangladeshi companies could be identified through literature search.

In research on the sustainability disclosures in the annual reports and web sites of the banking companies of Bangladesh, Sobhani, Amran and Zainuddin (2012) found that social issues are disclosed more in the annual reports than the web sites. The reporting pattern is unstructured. In general, the Islamic Banks disclose more than the conventional banks. The annual reports and web sites of 29 banks listed in the Dhaka and Chittagong stock exchange were analysed.

Ahmad (2012) focused on the environmental reporting practices of Bangladeshi companies. The study conducted a content analysis of the annual reports as well as interviews (with the help of structured questionnaires) of 40 chief accountants and senior accountants. The study finds that the accountants of Bangladesh felt a strong need for environmental reporting. The companies only disclosed the positive news in a qualitative manner. The respondents identified legal problems (like lack of provision for environmental disclosure in the companies act, the national environmental action plan, security exchange commission etc.), organisational problems (like unavailability of policies, lack of support from management, lack of qualified accountants and conflict with business motivation) and individual level problems (lack of knowledge, training and favourable attitudes of the accountants) as the main obstacles for environmental reporting.

2013:

Eight journal articles on social and environmental reporting practices of Bangladeshi companies were identified from literature search.

Momin (2013) examined the perceptions of corporate social disclosure in the Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) in Bangladesh. The researchers conducted semi-structured interviews on the executives of NGOs of both Bangladeshi and foreign origins. The respondents mentioned that the disclosures of the NGOs lack credibility. The main causes of this lack of credibility are the weak stakeholder relationship and lack of consciousness about corporate responsibility disclosure. The respondents mentioned that 'actions' should be given more importance than 'words'. Non-managerial stakeholder approach was applied in this research.

Momin and Parker (2013) conducted interviews and documentary reviews in order to identify the motivations behind the CSR reporting of multinational corporation subsidiaries in Bangladesh. They applied legitimacy theory and neo-institutional theory in this research. The research suggests that the CSR disclosure of the MNC subsidiaries of Bangladesh is limited mainly to the employee information. The authors concluded that this situation actually reflects the overall CSR reporting situation in Bangladesh.

Arif and Tuhin (2013) conducted their study on the listed banks of Bangladesh. They investigated the voluntary disclosure of non-financial information in the annual reports. With other items (48 in total), they included 7 employee related items of information and 5 social disclosure items of information. Annual reports of thirty banking companies listed in the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) were taken as sample.

In a multiple regression analysis it was found that company characteristics like age and size are significantly related to voluntary disclosure.

In the article of Islam, Salim, Choudhury and Bashir (2013) the researchers have identified the challenges of corporate social disclosure by Bangladeshi companies. They mentioned that the companies are facing difficulties in CSR reporting because it is voluntary and there is a lack of understanding in this regard. This is mostly a theoretical research.

Choudhury and Hamid (2013), in order to investigate the status of corporate environmental reporting by the textile mills, conducted interviews of the executives of ten textile mills. The interviewees emphasised on issues like waste management, waste water treatment, gas emission, energy efficiency, land use, tree plantation and environmental monitoring systems. The research also reveals the motivations behind environmental disclosure. The pressure from the foreign buyers came as the most important cause behind environmental disclosure. Other causes also include the pressure from the Ministry of Environment, international organisations, local NGOs, civil society, affected people, academicians and media.

Siddiqui (2013) introduced a new dimension in the social and environmental reporting in Bangladesh. He worked on the possibility of biodiversity accounting in Bangladesh. It is to be mentioned here that this research does not focus on the corporate sector. Rather it promotes the applicability of Jones' (2003) natural inventory model in case of the world's largest mangrove forest -Sundarbans- situated in Bangladesh. The author used archival data to 'produce a natural inventory report' for this mangrove forest. Though this research is not related to the corporate sector, it can be considered as an important document for public sector accounting.

Kamal and Deegan (2013), through content analysis, investigated the social and environment related governance disclosure of the textile and garment industries in Bangladesh. They found that in case of social and environmental disclosure general corporate responsibility disclosures get more importance than the governance related disclosures. The study applied legitimacy theory. The authors found that even after huge demand from the international community the governance disclosures fall short of expectations. The study used descriptive statistics in presenting the findings. This is the first study that distinguished between general social reporting and governance related social reporting.

Khan, Muttakin and Siddiqui (2013) examined whether there is any relationship between corporate governance and the level of social responsibility disclosure of Bangladeshi companies. They applied legitimacy theory in this research. The study found that 'public ownership, foreign ownership, board independence and presence of audit committee' have positive significant relationships with corporate social disclosure (Khan, Muttakin and Siddiqui, 2013: 207). The study used panel data of 135 companies listed in Dhaka Stock exchange from 2005 to 2009 and conducted a regression analysis.

Three articles should get special attention in this year. The first one is Momin (2013). This article highlighted on the social and environmental reporting practices of the NGOs in Bangladesh. The second important article is Momin and Parker (2013) that focused on multinational subsidiaries. The third important article is Siddiqui (2013) that introduced biodiversity accounting and reporting in the context of Bangladesh.

The article of Khan, Muttakin and Siddiqui (2013) can also get special attention for its rigorous use of panel data.

2014 (Up to the month of April):

In 2014, up to the month of April, two articles have been published.

Muttakin and Khan (2014) conducted a quantitative research (applying multiple regression analysis) to identify the determinants of corporate social disclosure in Bangladesh. The authors applied institutional theory in this research. The study was conducted on firms listed in the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) from 2005 to 2009. A total of 580 firms' year observations were used for the analysis. A disclosure index (the dependent variable) was developed on the basis of a 20 item checklist. The researchers found that corporate social disclosure had positive significant relationships with export-oriented sector, firm size and types of industries. Family ownership had a negative relationship with CSR disclosure.

Asaduzzaman, Hamid and Afrin (2014) conducted an empirical study on the corporate environmental reporting practices of Bangladeshi non-financial companies. The study was divided into two parts. First, the authors conducted a content analysis of the annual reports of 44 companies and found that 61.63% of the companies went for some kind of environmental disclosure. These disclosures are mostly qualitative in nature. Second, they conducted a questionnaire survey on the accountants. The respondents agreed that there is a need for environmental disclosure. The authors concluded that the environmental reporting practice of the Bangladeshi companies is not yet satisfactory. The study used descriptive statistics to present the findings.

Summary

The main developments of this growth stage (2007 onwards) are summarized here.

Methodological development: New methodologies were applied in the research on social and environmental reporting on Bangladesh. Some interview based qualitative research was done. The quantitative research also became more rigorous. In much research multiple regression analysis was used. This was relatively uncommon in the introductory stage (1996-2006). Some studies included panel data. Other than concentrating just on the annual reports, the researchers concentrated on the web sites also. Case studies on single organisations were also conducted by the researchers.

Application of theories: In the introductory stage (1996-2006), no study applied any theory to explain the social and environmental reporting practices in the context of Bangladesh. After 2007 there was a development in this regard. In this stage there is evidence of the application of theories like stakeholder theory, legitimacy theory, agency theory and institutional theory.

International publications: According to Mathews (1997) journals like 'Accounting, Auditing and Accountability Journal (AAAJ)' and 'Critical Perspectives on Accounting' had a significant role in popularizing social and environmental accounting research. After 2007, Bangladesh based social and environmental reporting research was published in these two journals. Some other important journals that published articles on this issue are Australian Accounting Review and Journal of Business Ethics.

Focus on different sectors: Unlike the introductory stage (1996-2006) when most of the articles focused on the social and environmental disclosure practices in general, from 2007 onwards researchers were concentrating on specific sectors. The banking sector got huge importance from the researchers. Researchers also focused on NGO sector, multinational company subsidiaries, textile mills and garments sector and fuel and gas sector.

New issues and terminologies: From 2007 onwards researchers coined discourses like 'sustainability', 'biodiversity', 'climate change' and some others in their research.

Analysis

If the chronological development of the social and environmental reporting research on Bangladesh is analyzed, it can be understood that the growth in this kind of research occurred mainly when Western scholars along with the Bangladeshi scholars affiliated with Western universities jointly started to publish articles in the internationally reputed journals. Before this, there was a crisis of novel methodology and rigor. Even if the articles written after 2007 (in the growth phase) by the Bangladeshi scholars with local university/education institutions affiliation are scrutinized, it can be seen that most of these are mere replica of the articles published in the Western journals. This situation can be explained and analyzed through postcolonial theory.

According to Sarkar (2012:67): 'colonialism is the act of occupation by a foreign country'. The occupied areas are called colonies. The area where Bangladesh is situated, before 1947, was a part of a British colony. After that from 1947, it became a part of Pakistan. At that time this area was known as East Pakistan. In 1971, Bangladesh became an independent state through a liberation war. Though the British left long before, many of their traditions, teachings and practices are still considered as valuable in Bangladesh.

Postcolonial theory is 'centrally concerned with examining the mechanisms through which the colonizing powers

persuaded the colonized people to accept a foreign culture as 'better' than their own indigenous methods' (Klages, 2006: 153). Postcolonialism deals with the culture, practice, knowledge, politics, economy and other aspects of the countries that were once colonized. Postcolonial theories examine the 'colonial relationships' in terms of the several components of the state and the society. Colonialism does not only have political and economic impacts rather it also has some social, psychological and cultural impacts on the colonized nations. According to Shamsul (2005: 39), the colonial masters:

"... were adamant about trying to transform 'traditional societies' of Asia into 'modern ones' in the image of the Western model."

The colonial masters try to create and popularize discourses that put thoughts in the minds of the locals that their culture, behaviour, education, dress, social systems, political institutions and others are inferior and if they want to be developed, they have to accept the characteristics and qualities of the colonial masters. Said (1977) in his argument of orientalism also highlighted this fact. According to him, the knowledge system produced by the Westerns injects the thoughts in the mind of people that they (Westerners) are superior to the others.

Because of this an inferiority complex gets developed in the minds of the colonized people (Tyson, 2006: 421):

"Many of these individuals tried to imitate their colonizers, as much as possible, in dress, speech, behaviour and lifestyle. Postcolonial critics refer to this phenomenon as mimicry, and it reflects both the desire of colonized individuals to be accepted by the colonizing culture and the shame experienced by colonized individuals concerning their own culture, which they were programmed to see as inferior."

The British people kept the area of Indian subcontinent under their control for almost 200 years. Over these years, the local people of this area were under the system of a mental programming of thinking their own culture and practices as inferior.

Tyson (2006) mentions that the colonizers follow the process of 'othering'. 'Othering' refers to 'the colonizers' treatment of members of the indigenous culture as less than fully human' (Tyson, 2006: 427). That is why, 'mimicry' takes place. The colonized people start thinking that the practices and methods of their colonial masters are the best and that is why that should be followed. They start imitating what is practiced by the colonial masters.

In order to change the mindset of the 'others' or the colonized people, the colonizers imposed many things on them. One of the common practices was to change the education system. According to Shamsul (2005), one attempt that the British took in order to change the ideology of their colonized people was to conquer and change the 'epistemological space'.

They gained knowledge about the natives as well as tried to change the education system of the natives.

The first university of Bangladesh - University of Dhaka - was established in the British period. The first Vice Chancellor of this university was a past employee of the University of London. Over the years this university, along with the other universities in the country, followed the Western teaching materials in order to build the local human resources. As a result, the human resources of the country, in many ways, were shaped by Western thoughts. For example, the university level accounting education in Bangladesh is highly based on Western reading materials. Even the local textbooks are somehow considered as the replica of the Western books. The Western university degrees of the university teachers are still regarded as highly valuable. That means, they want to become like the Westerners. They think that the Western practices are the best practices.

The main accounting body of the country is the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Bangladesh (ICAB). Recently this accounting body adopted the syllabus of Institute of Chartered Accountants of England and Wales (ICAEW) as a result of the development initiatives of the profession.

The effect of this colonial mental programming can be found in the research arena also. The research trend on social and environmental reporting practices on Bangladeshi companies can be explained by this.

It can be noted that the research on social and environmental reporting in Bangladesh started after almost 25 years it was first introduced in the Western world. At the beginning, for almost 10 years (Up to 2006), the research articles were produced mainly by the local Bangladeshi researchers. The research was mostly of small scale and lacked innovation in terms of methodology and content. It is only from 2007 when the Bangladeshi researchers (mostly affiliated with Western universities) joined hands with the renowned Western researchers (like David L. Owen, Craig Deegan, Martin Reginald Mathews and Lee D. Parker) on social and environmental accounting, the research developed both in terms of content and methodology. Even after 2007 (the period termed as the growth period in this article), the works of the local Bangladeshi researchers (affiliated mainly with Bangladeshi educational institutions) were not innovative. Most of these were mere replications of the research conducted either by the Western scholars or the Bangladeshi scholars affiliated with the Western universities. The research conducted by the researchers affiliated with Bangladeshi institutions applied similar methodologies and theoretical explanations in their research. The content of the research also was highly influenced by the research conducted by the researchers having Western university affiliation.

Another important finding in this context is that there is almost a complete absence of any kind of theoretical/conceptual/normative research on the social and environmental reporting in Bangladesh. Even the standards that were used to measure the extent of social and environmental reporting

practices are Western products (for example, GRI and Jones' model). The academic literature produced by the Bangladeshi local researchers could not produce a single guideline for social and environmental reporting considering the needs of the stakeholders of Bangladesh. It seems that they wait for the Westerners to prescribe something that they will be able to replicate or implement. This clearly reflects the postcolonial mimicry attitude of the researchers of this once colonized nation. Because of long nurtured colonized mentality they consider the Westerners as superiors and try to be like them. That is why they do not take any attempt of any kind of innovations in their research. Appendix-1 presents with the main developments in this kind of research after 2007. It can be seen from this table that all of these main developments were introduced by the researchers affiliated with the Western universities.

Conclusion

The objective of this research was to identify the chronological development of the social and environmental accounting research on Bangladeshi companies. It was found that though some Bangladeshi researchers started conducting research on this topic from 1996, the main growth in terms of contents and methodology could be seen only after 2007. Before 2007, the research can be characterized as small range, methodologically simple and less innovative. It was found that from 2007, when the Bangladeshi researchers (affiliated with Western universities) joined hands with the internationally renowned Western researchers, novel and innovative contributions were initiated. The local researchers of Bangladesh are mostly depending on the methodology and contents of the research conducted by the researchers affiliated with Western universities. Most of the research conducted by the local researchers is mere replication.

This research has limitations. The main limitation is that even after rigorous search of the literature there remains the possibility that some important research might have remained untraced.

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Appendix 1: Development in the Growth Period (2007 onwards)

Year	The Main Developments
2007	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Publication in Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal (Belal and Owen, 2007). 2. Interview based qualitative research (Belal and Owen, 2007). 3. Introducing theories to explain phenomena (Belal and Owen, 2007). Stakeholder theory was used.
2008	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The use of legitimacy theory (Islam and Deegan, 2008). 2. Looking at the impact of new variables like ownership concentration and corporate governance regulations on social and environmental reporting disclosure (Rashid and Lodh, 2008).
2009	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Media agenda setting theory was applied (Islam and Mathews, 2009). 2. The effect of a particular event on the level of disclosure was examined for the first time (Islam and Mathews, 2009). 3. Social and environmental reporting of the banking sector was examined (Khan, Halabi and Samy, 2009).
2010	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction of the term 'climate change disclosure' from Bangladeshi perspective (Belal et al, 2010).
2011	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Institutional approach was introduced to explain the status of social and environmental reporting from Bangladeshi context (Sobhani, Zainuddin and Amran, 2011). 2. Introducing the term 'sustainability' and the guideline of GRI (Khan et al, 2011).
2012	No specific improvement.
2013	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Social and environmental reporting practices of NGO sector (Momin, 2013). 2. Social and environmental reporting of multinational subsidiaries (Momin and Parker, 2013). 3. Biodiversity accounting (Siddiqui, 2013). 4. Extensive use of panel data (Khan, Muttakin and Siddiqui, 2013).

Economic and Financial System in Middle East - An Examination

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The financial systems in MENA countries have not been highly vulnerable to the crisis due to their limited integration with global financial institutions, but the impact of the global recession on the real economy was significant in many Arab (MENA) countries. The growth rate for 2009 was lower in all MENA countries compared to year 2008 with the exception of Qatar and Yemen. The MENA region grew at 3.3 per cent in 2009 down from 5.5 per cent in 2008. Arab countries were expected to have lost at least \$2.5 trillion as a result of fallen market capitalization, bank assets, oil revenues and losses incurred by the sovereign wealth funds (SWF)(1).

With the onset of the financial crisis, Dubai's real estate market declined after a six-year boom. The economic crisis took a heavy toll on property values, construction and employment in Dubai. Home prices dropped 50 per cent from their 2008 peak. Countries in the region have taken measures to mitigate the impact of the crisis on their economies. Several countries, including Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, have adopted expansionary fiscal policies to boost domestic demand.

Several GCC countries have taken steps to ease credit conditions. Kuwait, for example, has cut its benchmark discount rate, while the Saudi Arabia Monetary Agency lowered the repo rate and reduced the reserve requirements. In the United Arab Emirates, the Central Bank has tried to alleviate liquidity bottlenecks by providing short-term facilities to banks and the Government has declared its readiness to protect national banks from credit risks.

The Arab economy is predominantly an oil economy. The aggregate GDP of Arab Countries by the end of last century was around \$600 billion.(2) During 1970-85, Arab per capita gross domestic product(GDP) grew at an annual average rate of 3.5 per cent elevating the Arab World to middle income status. But from 1985 onwards, GDP per capita declined by 1.5 per cent annually to the extent that more than half of the per capita gains made earlier were erased(3) The countries in the region have a narrow production base since a substantial fraction of the aggregate output is produced by a small number of sectors. These economies are quite vulnerable to exogenous externally influenced shocks associated with terms of trade fluctuations as they heavily rely on export revenues from primary products. Changes in government

spending and the money supply play an important role in determining aggregate domestic demand across countries of the Middle East. Unemployment rates in the MENA region, which encompasses the Arab world, are among the highest in the world.

Business cycle fluctuations in the MENA countries are much more volatile than in Asian regions. In the beginning of the 1980s, inflation in the Arab region showed a declining trend culminating ultimately in price collapse. However, at the end of 1985 the situation changed rapidly. The inflation surged extremely fast and became more volatile till the mid 1990s, primarily on account of geopolitical tension like the Iran-Iraq war, Gulf War 1990-1991. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, inflation has declined from double to single digits, reflecting improvements in the terms of trade and stronger demand management policies.

From early 1980s to mid 90s the inflation rate was much lower in average in Gulf countries than in other regions in MENA. However by the late 2000s, the inflation differential between these regions became small. Since 2002, GCC countries have faced increasing inflationary pressures. During 2004-2007, Qatar and the UAE were recording high inflation rates among their GCC peers. Increase in oil prices played a big role in increasing prices of other goods and commodities.

Central banks in the Arab countries operate with various degrees of autonomy from their respective executive authorities (including Ministries of Finance).

In a MENA region burdened by skyrocketing budget deficits, countries in the Maghreb (Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia) and the Mashreq (Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, and Yemen) are lost in a vicious circle of arbitrary policy decisions. They suffer from weak institutions and have limited resources to allocate to potential packages for recovery.

GCC governments have embarked on a process of unprecedented fiscal expansion in light of the global slowdown, declining oil prices, lower export receipts, dwindling stock prices, lower levels of remittances and FDI. The greatest fiscal expansion was in Saudi Arabia while Kuwait was among the most conservative. Countries like Saudi Arabia and Oman with larger populations face more spending pressures.

In most Arab countries the legislative branch approves the government budget and its economic plan. Ministries of Finance usually prepare the budget with input from various government entities. They are also responsible for recommending and executing the tax policies of their particular countries.

Central banks of most Arab countries regulate and supervise commercial banks and other financial institutions that may be privately or publicly owned or both. The nominal anchor for monetary policy for all GCC is the dollar peg. The exchange rate arrangements in Arab countries are categorized into two main groups. The first group includes countries that follow pegged exchange rate regimes (where the local currency is either pegged to a single currency, or to currency composites-standardized as in the case of the SDR or other weighted composites formed from the currencies of major trading or financial partners). The second group involves countries adopting more flexible forms of exchange rate regimes (other managed or independent floating). The Gulf countries barring Kuwait have pegged their currencies to US dollars.

The Dubai Financial Market (DFM), Saudi Stock Exchange (Tadawul) and Damascus Securities Exchange in which previously issued stocks are traded, are some of the best-known examples of secondary markets in Arab region.

The Casablanca Securities Exchange, Tunis Stock Exchange for stocks and the Dubai Mercantile Exchange for Oil futures contract are examples of organized exchanges. Egypt Stock Exchange, Dubai International Financial Exchange (DIFX) and Istanbul Stock Exchange are important over the counter markets in the Arab region. Kuwait Stock Exchange, the Middle East's second largest, is mulling launching an over-the-counter market in 2011 mainly for troubled listed firms.

Money markets in most Arab countries are shallow and most trades take place between banks and central banks and not between banks. Treasury bills are short-term obligations issued by a government and represent one of the most popular money market instruments because of their marketability, safety and short-term maturity (typically three months). They are attractive as investment instruments for a number of reasons: there is no default risk per se, they are highly liquid and they benefit from a well-developed secondary market. Treasury bills are also used to mop up excess cash from the banking sector and help the government to borrow from

banks to meet its budgetary shortfall. Treasury bills are sold at a discount to their face value.

Saudi Arabia started to issue Treasury bills in November 1991. Weekly issues have maturities ranging from one to 12 months. The Central Bank of Kuwait started to issue Treasury bills in 1987. A 91 day Treasury bill scheme was introduced for the first time in Oman during June 1987. Bahrain has issued 91 and 182 day Treasury bills to date.

US Commercial paper market is the largest in the world. In Jordan, commercial papers are offered in denominations of JOD 100,000 and placed with large institutional investors, insurance companies and pension funds. In 2008, Global Investment House successfully managed the \$20 million commercial paper issue for Middle East Complex for Engineering, Electronics and Heavy Industries PLC (MEC).

Capital Markets in the Arab Region

Arab Capital markets primarily cover three traditional modes of financing - Banks, Equity and Debt markets. Capital markets in the region were informal during as late as 1980s; however, they have grown rapidly in the past decade on account of higher financing needs due to large investments in infrastructure, petrochemicals and real estate. Consumer and bank commercial loans to consumers and businesses are made principally by banks but, in the case of consumer loans, also by finance companies.

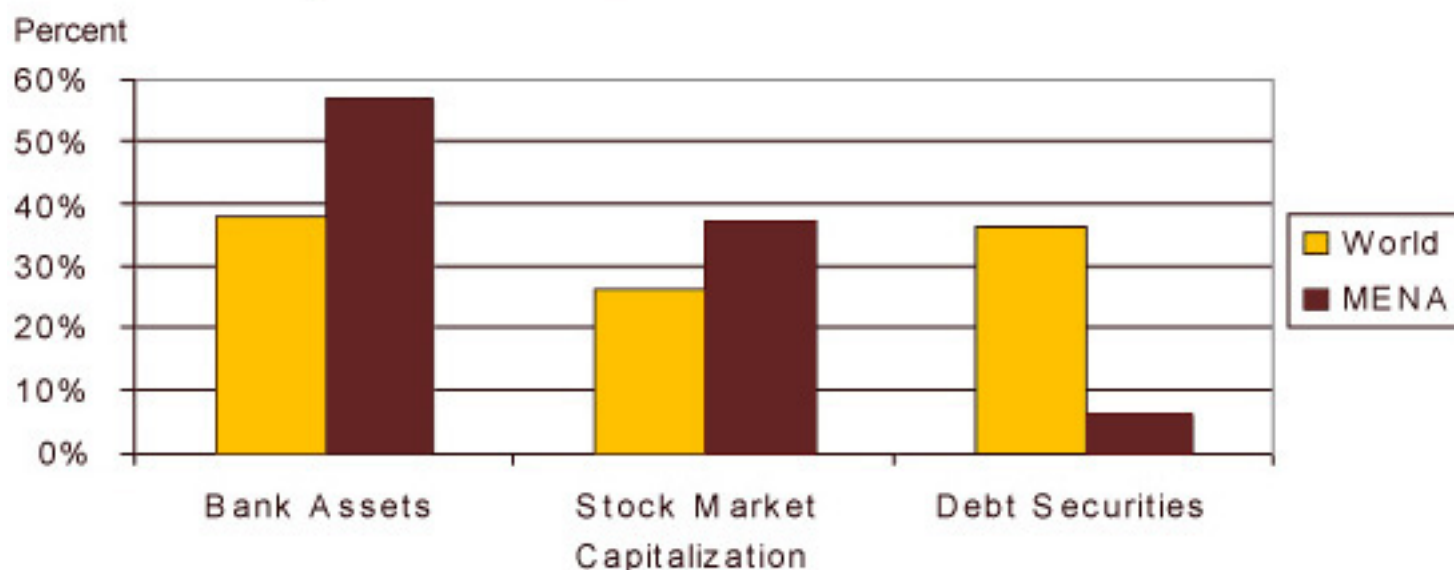
Bank lending has always been the predominant source of capital in the Arab region. However, the share of bank lending in the capital market has reduced since the past five years. Bank lending accounted for 66.8% (US\$1,628.2 billion) of the total capital in the Arab region (US\$2,435.9 billion) in 2008 compared to the 79.8% (US\$869 billion out of US\$1,088.8 billion) share in 2005.

There are stock markets in Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Sudan, and Tunisia; and in the GCC including Abu Dhabi, Bahrain, Dubai, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman, and Saudi Arabia. The markets, however, are still smaller and less active than the developing countries' stock markets. There are 1468 listed companies in 14 Arab stock markets. Amman Stock Exchange has 250 listed companies whereas Egypt Capital market and Kuwait Stock market have 220 and 215 listed companies.

Table 1: Treasury bills Instrument issued by Non GCC Arab Countries

Short Term	Egypt	Morocco	Tunisia	Jordan	Lebanon
	T-Bill-Discount	T-Bill-Discount	BT CT Discount	T bill discount	3,6,12
	3,6,9,12 months	13,26,52 weeks	13,26,52 weeks	6 months	months

Capital Market Structure World and MENA



Source: IMF Global Financial Stability Report 2010.

In the Arab region, Egypt and Kuwait both witnessed early capital market development. Egyptian Stock Exchange is the oldest exchange in the Arab region. Kuwait Stock Exchange was established in 1962. Saudi Arabia's Tadawul, is by far the largest and most speculative regional stock exchange in GCC. According to IMF Global Financial Stability report 2011, Arab capital market accounted for just 1.1% of the global capital market size in 2008. In the year 2008, 161 IPOs amounting to US\$ 70.6 billion were raised in the Non GCC Arab region. In GCC region alone 89 IPOs were raised in 2008.

The market capitalization for the GCC markets stood at \$750.2 billion in 2010. The Saudi market constituted 47 per cent of aggregate market capitalization of the GCC stock markets followed by the Kuwait market with its capitalization accounting for 17.16 per cent.⁽⁴⁾

The Arab bond market is primarily classified into conventional bonds (fixed income securities) and sukuk (Islamic bonds). Sukuk have evolved as the preferred route of securing funds by many corporates as well as governments in the Arab debt market. The main reason for the sukuk's popularity in the Arab region is its compliance with the Shariah principles. Conventional bonds worth US\$61.5 billion and sukuk totaling US\$11.3 billion were issued in the GCC region during 2009.

Debt Market in the Arab region

Historically bank lending has dominated the capital market activity in the Middle East region. Equity markets had also emerged as an attractive source of financing in the Arab region over the last decade. The share of stock market capitalization in the total capital market size in the Arab region grew from 14.6 per cent in 2005 to 26.8 per cent in 2008. The volatility in equity markets during the economic recession of 2008-09 compelled many corporate entities to seek additional options of long term financing. Moreover many regional

governments resorted to diversification into non-oil sectors as a part of growth strategy due to the oil price crisis in the 1980s and 1990s. According to MEED, US\$23.9 billion worth of bonds were estimated to be issued in MENA in 2010. Qatar led with US\$7 billion worth of bond issues, followed by Dubai (US\$4.3 billion).

The Arab Countries have not yet developed a sophisticated bond market. The bond and sukuk markets of the region lack the salient features of a well-developed debt capital market like credit rating, transparency, market making and a broad spectrum of institutional market participants. The Saudi market is the largest debt market in the GCC region. The Saudi Government had retired much of its external debt and denominated government bonds which it had issued during the nineties.

Convertible sukuk and bonds like the issues of Al Dar and Danagas were able to attract stock market oriented investors. The sukuk market in the Middle East is dominated by UAE with 69 per cent of all issuance and is focused on logistics and real estate. The Arab region accounted for 40 per cent of the total value of US \$ 19.15 billion worth of global sukuk bonds issued in 2009.

The Dubai government sold US\$1.25 billion worth of bonds in October 2010. Emaar Properties, the UAE's largest property developer, raised US\$500 million through the sale of convertible bonds. Qatar Islamic Bank (QIB) sold US\$750 million of Islamic debt in 2010.

Qatar, Bahrain and Abu Dhabi have issued Eurobonds in recent years. In the case of Eurobonds in international currencies (conventional and sukuk, mainly USD) accumulated bond issuance has risen ten-fold from 2003 to 2006 to about \$80 billion. In GCC, the percentage of corporate bonds issued in comparison to GDP equalled 3.2 percent in 2007.

Comparatively the ratio was 112 per cent in US and 10 per cent in China. Bond issues by the way of Euro Medium Term Notes (EMTN) program have become a popular source of financing in the Arab region.

Dubai pioneered the Asset Backed Securities (ABS) market securitizing mortgages from the Palm Jumeirah project in 2005 followed by another deal with Tamweel in 2007. Bond Issues in the form of Euro Medium Term Notes have aided many Arab Countries to tap the European bond market.

Some of the regional bond markets also witnessed crisis during 2009. In November 2009, Dubai based, Nakheel Development's massive US \$ 3520 million sukuk default affected the global debt market and led to high CDS spread in the region. Arab debt markets are less developed and underrepresented in global bond indices compared to other developing regions. Non GCC Arab regions like Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco and Tunisia have government bond market with a minimum size and greater potential for market development.(5)

Bank lending has always been the predominant source of capital in the Arab region. In 2010, bank, equity and debt financing accounted for 66.8%, 26.8% and 6.4% of the total capital market activity in the Arab world. There are about 500 Arab banks of which 81.5 % are commercial banks, 11.5% are Islamic banks while the rest are specialized banks.

The Arab region accounts for only 1 % of the world market share in insurance. In the Arab region, non-life contributes more than 80% of the total premiums, unlike in other parts of the world, such as Asia and Europe where life insurance accounts for over 60% of overall market share. However the situation is changing with the growth of Islamic life Insurance products (takaful) and compulsory insurance. Saudi Arabia witnessed 68.9 % growth for life premiums in 2009.

The UAE and Saudi Arabia are the two biggest markets in the Gulf region with a 75% combined share by 2015, while Qatar is expected to register the fastest growth at a CAGR of 30% between 2011 and 2015.

In Arab Countries like Saudi Arabia pension funds have diversified their investment portfolios to include investments in Shariah-compliant products. Today in Arab states, we find various forms and names for retirement programmes such as government retirement programs, pension funds, provident funds and social security programs.

According to Lipper data, in the year 2010, there were 956 primary mutual funds domiciled in the Arab region. Approximately 41% were invested in equities and 24 % in bonds while 19 % were mixed asset funds invested in both equities and fixed income. The rest (13%) were either money market funds, real estate funds or guaranteed/protected funds.(6)

Regulation of Financial System in Middle East

Many MENA countries, such as the GCC countries, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, and Tunisia, have strengthened banking supervision and regulation; they have established up-to-date procedures to collect prudential information on a regular basis, and they inspect and audit banks. They have taken steps to conform to international Basel standards by increasing capital adequacy ratios and reducing nonperforming loans. About 89 % of Arab banking assets were expected to be covered by Basel II by the end of 2009. GCC have witnessed marked progress with respect to development of regulatory institutions. Saudi Arabia's Capital Market Authority and Dubai Financial Services Authority are important regulatory agencies in the Middle East region.(7)

Regulatory bodies in Saudi and UAE

Since its creation in 1952 and the promulgation of the Banking Control Law in 1966, SAMA has enjoyed broad regulatory powers of licensing banks, approving their activities and taking prompt corrective action when required. SAMA was empowered to make rules, regulations and guidelines for banks in all areas including capital adequacy, liquidity, lending limits, credit and market risk, etc. Also, it has powers to conduct both on-site and off-site supervision. Until the enactment of the Capital Market Law, SAMA also acted as the regulator of the stock market and operated the electronic stock exchange. SAMA has a dual role of providing central payment and settlement services and for the oversight of these systems. Over the years, SAMA has used its broad supervisory powers effectively to ensure that the Saudi Banking System continues to enjoy a reputation for soundness and stability in the international financial markets.

The Central bank of UAE direct monetary, credit and banking policy and supervise its implementation in accordance with the State's general policy.

The DFSA is the independent regulator of all financial and ancillary services conducted through the Dubai International Finance Centre (DIFC) a purpose-built free-zone in Dubai. The DFSA's regulatory mandate covers asset management, banking and credit services, securities, collective investment funds, custody and trust services, commodities futures trading, Islamic finance, insurance, an international equities exchange and an international commodities derivatives exchange.

The DFSA issued its Hedge Fund Code of Practice, the first of its kind to be issued by a regulator. This Code of Practice ("the Code") sets out best practice standards for Operators of Hedge Funds in the DIFC (i.e. Operators of both Public and Private Domestic Hedge Funds). These are designed to address risks inherent in the operation of Hedge Funds and are set out under nine Principles.

Table 2: Regulatory Agencies in Arab Countries

Arab Countries	Regulatory Authority and Supervisory Agencies
Bahrain	Bahrain Central Bank
Egypt	Egypt Central Bank
Iran	Central Bank of Islamic Republic of Iran
Jordan	Central Bank of Jordan
Kuwait	Central Bank of Kuwait
Libya	Central Bank of Libya
Morocco	Central Bank of Morocco
Oman	Central Bank of Oman
Qatar	Qatar Central Bank, Qatar Financial Centre Regulatory Authority
Saudi Arabia	Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency
Syrian Arab Republic	Central Bank of Syria
Turkey	Central Bank of Turkey , Banking Regulation and Supervision Agency
United Arab Emirates	Central Bank of UAE, Dubai Financial Services Authority

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Abu Dhabi Investment Authority (ADIA) - documenting the story of one of the world's largest sovereign wealth funds

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Abstract

The surge of interest in ADIA in recent years has increased their interest in documenting and recording their history. The national centre for research and development has recently become the United Arab Emirates national archive centre having the largest documentation in the GCC. As an extremely private, reserved and fast growing sovereign wealth fund, ADIA offers unique new challenges to NCRD. This study analyses the methods being used in this project. Apart from collecting, saving, and digitising all existing documents from the company's 36 year history, a considerable amount of documentation will be based on oral interviews with past and present employees. These oral history interviews will considerably enlighten many and answer important scholarly questions on the founding, evolution and growth of the largest sovereign wealth fund in the world today.

Key words: Oral History Interviews, Sovereign Wealth Fund, Business History, National Centre for Research and Development, Abu Dhabi Investment Authority.

Documenting the history of a sovereign wealth fund can be a very tricky business. It is one thing to document SWFs history in general. A variety of institutions and researchers have done this, especially during the last few decades, drawing on different perspectives.⁽¹⁾ But when it comes to documenting and securing the story of a specific sovereign wealth fund one comes upon quite different problems. Overall we can point to some basic questions: Has the organization significant documents worth saving? Have relationships and agreements even been recorded for future generations to understand? Or have such documents been disposed of because they do not represent any real value and are therefore seen as non-valid, space-consuming or possibly obstacles to embracing new visions or agreements for future investment? 'With such explosive growth in the region ⁽²⁾ my interview with ADIA enlightened me further on progress.

National Centre for Documents and Research: a collection of corporate history

Since its establishment, the National Center for Documentation & Research has been a unique organization: archives from several countries are housed under its roof in what may be regarded as the earliest and the richest collection of foreign archival source materials concerning the Gulf region. By virtue of its strategic position as the link between the sea route to India and the overland route to Europe, the Gulf region came directly into the orbit of European influence in the 16th century. The Portuguese traders were the first Europeans to establish settlements there, and were followed later by other European traders from Britain, Holland and France. During the period of rivalry that ensued, the Portuguese lost their ascendancy, the French did not succeed in maintaining their foothold, and the Dutch predominance gradually came to an end by 1766, leaving Britain's position in the Gulf practically unchallenged by other European powers.

Viewed in this historical perspective, it was only natural that volumes of documents were amassed comprising commercial correspondences and political dispatches by these four countries. These documents, along with material from official sources in Germany, India, Iran, Japan, Russia, Turkey, USA and the Vatican, cover an impressive range of subjects relating to the area over a period of five centuries, and provide unique and invaluable sources for the study of the history of the entire Gulf region.

The National Center for Documentation & Research has started implementation of a comprehensive Archive Management System for the digitization and subsequent processing of archival material. The main benefit will be for the user, as it will be easier to navigate and find resources. The NCDR became the UAE's national archive in 2008 after Federal Decree number 7. Zayed University is one of its partners allowing academics access in the hope that archives will one day in the not to distant future, be available in the NCDR.

One of the largest SWFs

The history of ADIA began with the vision of its leader and founder of the United Arab Emirates; Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan in 1976, just five years after the UAE formed a federation.



ADIA was created in 1976 with a core mission of securing the prosperity of Abu Dhabi's future generations at a time when survival of a small population in harsh lands was still a concern. Sheikh Zayed wanted to prudently invest Abu Dhabi's financial assets with a sound investment strategy focused on long-term creation of value with the most diversified portfolio of holdings across asset classes, geographies and sectors. The original concept and mission remains the same today. The company was very successful and after investing its first petrol dollars mainly in Emirati businesses creating networks within the country, often having an ADIA member on the board of directors which is the case with Abu Dhabi National

Oil Company, the largest producer of oil in the Middle East. ADIA then expanded in the GCC forming agreements with Kuwait and Qatar Investment Authority which is still the case today with an agreement to buy Marriott Hotels Group worth around \$973m, following investments within the MENA region. ADIA broke into the US when it took a major role in bailing out major financial institutions, particularly Citigroup. CFIUS controls what ADIA can do in the US. In the 36 years since its formation Sheikh Zayed has brought ADIA from its first petrol dollars to what is often referred to as the largest SWF in the world with considerable state petroleum revenues and Joint Ventures. Today ADIA invests in all the international markets - equities, fixed income and treasury, infrastructure, real estate, private equity and alternatives (hedge funds and commodity trading advisers - CTAs). ADIA's global portfolio is broken down into sub-funds covering a specific asset class. Each asset class has its own fund managers and in-house analysts covering it. At the time it was novel for a government to invest its reserves in anything other than gold or short-term credit. Even today, investment in short-term paper remains the strategy for the vast majority of countries so ADIA remains unique today with approximately \$880bn worth of the world's estimated \$4.2tn SWFs worth.

Company Culture and Values

Understanding the UAE and ADIA is impossible without understanding the life of Sheikh Zayed and his deep religious faith, his vision, his determination and hard work, his generosity at home and abroad, and the way in which he devoted his life to the service of his people and the creation of a better world. He is to the UAE what George Washington is to the US, the founding father figure. Born around 1918 in Abu Dhabi, Sheikh Zayed was the youngest of the four sons of Sheikh Sultan bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Ruler of Abu Dhabi from 1922 to 1926. At the time Sheikh Zayed was born, the emirate was poor and undeveloped, with an economy based primarily on fishing and pearl diving and on simple agriculture in scattered oases inland. In 1970, recognizing that Abu Dhabi was embarking on a process of rapid development, Sheikh Zayed formalized the consultation process and established the National Consultative Council, bringing together the leaders of each of the main tribes. A similar body was created in 1971 for the entire UAE: the Federal National Council, the state's parliament.

ADIA culture is conservative, secretive, bureaucratic and patriarchal today. Despite around 80% of its assets being administered by external managers many of those are passively tracked. ADIA does not disclose or intend to disclose quarterly reports let alone any strategies for the future, however, as of 2012, they have started publishing an annual report on their website. The board of directors has full control over the fund and today it is composed of a chairman, managing director, and other board members, all of whom are senior government officials appointed by the Ruler's Decree. It is one of very few organizations that are not required to adhere to the Emiratization laws allowing it total freedom and as such the authority does not set any internal limits. This often prompts external host countries to set limits for a variety of political reasons.

A unique level of privacy in corporate history

Privacy is of the upmost importance to ADIA. Unlike other countries in the region such as Egypt, Kuwait and Qatar who have publically announced their investments, ADIA attempts to minimize public interest and access to their investments and does not currently have official archives, yet, business and country history is of great importance to this organization. It is believed that much of this privacy is valid and due to a desire to maintain political stability. The US for example expressed its concern that ADIA may use its assets for political reasons and subsequently limits the percentages of their investments; an example being Citi at 5%. Recently with both economic and political unrest within the Middle East, privacy is seen as a priority and low risk, growing economies that are not required to provide transparency are highly desirable.

Looking for information from the past

Limited paper documentation is available along with such strict privacy regulations for the benefit of the countries political status and security. As ADIA was founded after the federation, the only real known sources prior to that are those of Sheikh Zayed, his journals, now available in NCDR. These mostly document Abu Dhabi, there is little on the rest of the Emirates. The main goal of this paper and the start of this project is to collect, save and digitize existing documentation of ADIA's investments, relationships and evolution through a variety of media sources: photos, film, publications, internal and external interviews, documents and annual reports. Recorded or written oral history interviews with a range of employees will be an important component. Sources in academic research from various disciplines in connection with ADIA during its 36 years of existence will also be documented.

Oral history interviews

To fill out the large gaps where historical gaps are missing or unavailable, documenting will be heavily based on semi-structured oral history interviews with ADIA members much like the information in this paper. This preserves the silent knowledge, relationships, agreements and experience of past and current employees and will sanguinely provide significant insight into ADIA in addition to their annual reports.

Looking for the history and focusing on the future - how can the archives of NCDR be used?

This project is estimated to take three to five years and be continuous. The rights to all the materials in the prospective archive will remain that of ADIA and the government. One of the chief aims would be to enable the company access to its own history going forward. In addition it may be accessible to academic researchers (subject to permission by ADIA). Possible links with other partners such as the International Archives Council (IAC) may be able to provide access to researchers in the future through research secretariats who have the authority to give qualified answers to specific questions without revealing secrets and at the same time preserving the need for confidentiality.

Summary

With such a surge in the level of public and political interest in sovereign wealth funds. ADIA, recognizes the importance of building a clear understanding of who they are, what they invest in and why, in order to maintain the strong, trusted relationships they have built with governments and regulators around the world over the past 36 years. It appears at this point that ADIA is unlikely and unable to start archiving documents at this point in time for access. However, they are willing to allow interviews which can be documented, as an important first step, with more acceptance of interviews in the recording of business history. The evolution and history of ADIA should soon open up future research opportunities as well as provide a better understanding of the history behind this SWF that soared to number one in the world.

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A view from Pakistan: Recurrent flash floods in areas surrounding Nullah Lai, Rawalpindi, Pakistan

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Introduction

Nullah Lai, also called Nalla Lai is a rain water fed natural stream flowing through the city of Rawalpindi. Every year during monsoon season (July to September) it floods after heavy rains in its catchment basin in the Margalla hills in Islamabad. It has a catchment area of 234.8 km², extending from Margalla Hills in Islamabad to the twin cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi. [1] This stream / Nullah passes through different localities of the twin cities and turns steeper with many cascades finally entering in the Soan River, which is a tributary of the mighty river Indus.

Background

Monsoon rain is an every year usual and expected feature in most of Pakistan, especially in Rawalpindi. The Lai Nullah Basin receives heavy rainfall averaging 500 mm in the monsoon season, which normally leads to heavy flood discharge. During the last 60 years (1944 to 2004) a total of 19 flood events

had occurred.[1] Extreme flood years were 1981, 1988, 1997 and 2001, the latter having been the largest among the recorded events. On July 23, 2001, an unprecedented rainfall occurred over Islamabad-Rawalpindi resulting in 620 mm of rain in a span of about 10 hours. [1]The intensity and amount of rainfall caused the water level of Nullah Lai and its tributaries to rise. The flood had caused the worst damage in Rawalpindi. A total of 74 human lives were lost, about 400,000 people were affected, 742 cattle head perished, 1,087 houses were completely and 2,448 partially damaged. Estimates indicate a damage/loss of more than USD 0.25 billion to infrastructure, Government and private property.[1]

Flash flood in Nullah Lai, September, 2014:

On this 4th September, continuous heavy rain started in the twin cities. A flood warning was issued on 5th September. 286 mm rainfall was recorded in Rawalpindi and 278 mm in Islamabad just in one day. This rainfall inundated several

low-lying areas. The water entered several homes located near the Nullah. The water level in Nullah Lai touched the maximum point of 18 feet at Katariyan and 11 feet at Gawal-mandi - the two most dangerous points of Lai in Rawalpindi because of very close proximity of population density along its banks. The water level in Soan River broke the record of 22 years.

Major factors that aggravate recurrent flash floods in Nullah Lai:

This type of flood is seasonal. The situation could be very well anticipated mostly 10 to 12 hours before it happens but unfortunately action starts after the damage. When the water level starts rising in the initial stage children start swimming and enjoying without thinking of more water that is coming from the catchment basin. The following are the main aggravating factors of flash floods.

- The meteorology department predicted less rainfall for this monsoon season. As usual, the prediction turned out false in the first week of September and there was very heavy rain on 4th and 5th September.
- The flood commission does not take necessary steps to handle the flood situations.
- Lack of will to solve and address such situation on part of both the local residents and government.
- Absence of local government of people's own representatives.
- Encroachments along the banks of Nullah Lai throughout its course by local residents and land developers.
- Because of improper waste disposable and poor sewerage system of the city, people dump solid waste, human and animal excreta in Lai.
- No pre monsoon season cleaning and excavation of dumped solid waste in Lai Nullah to widen and deepen it.
- Non cooperative behavior of residents towards flood warnings. At many times, police and army have to be called in for forced evacuation of local residents.
- Non availability of reservoirs or small dams to store this rain water during monsoon. The government does not have any policy to work on this aspect.

What is the solution?

With proper planning and due anticipation, it is very much possible to avoid / lessen harmful and destructive effects of these seasonal flash floods. Since my early childhood, I am a witness to destruction caused by Lai in Rawalpindi. Things have not changed much and still after seventy years, there is no planning to address these issues. There is also no accountability of peoples responsible for mismanagement and mishandling of these seasonal floods.

Pakistan army is the main institution that plays the most vital part in rescue operations and helps every victim without fear of risks to their own lives. Their boats and helicopters remain busy round the clock until the operations are over. Rescue 1122 is also an emerging institution that provides dedicated free volunteer rescue and relief services to flood victims.

Recommendations for future:

Experts expect more severe floods in 2015 and 2016 due to climate changes in local, regional and global levels. Pakistan has a climate change policy but there is no minister to implant it. If we intend to prevent and reduce the losses of lives and properties, we have to undertake the following measures with full will and commitment;

- 1) There is an urgent need to work out policies to address the urban flash floods.
- 2) The radar system of meteorology department needs upgrading to avoid false predictions.
- 3) Capacity of flood commission needs to be enhanced for playing a more proactive role.
- 4) Pre monsoon cleaning of Nullah Lai to deepen and widen it so that it could accommodate more flow of water.
- 5) Establishment of a proper system of disposal of solid waste, human and animal excreta through people's elected local representatives. There should be strict legislation for illegal disposal of solid waste, human and animal excreta in Nullah Lai.
- 6) The most important issue of illegal encroachments along the banks of Lai should be addressed through people's local elected representatives. It is not an easy issue and needs strong political will and legislation.
- 7) The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JAICA) gave a grant of \$5.5 million to set up a high tech flood early warning system on the Lai Nullah. Educating the local communities through their local elected representatives to respond timely to flood warning alarms is of the utmost importance. People do not bother to respond to these alarms and it is usual practice to call army and police for forced evacuation.
- 8) Safety first: Immediately after rain, there is always hazard of electric current from fallen polls and naked wires. Immediate action to shut off power and restore the normal situation can prevent loss of lives.
- 9) Risk of diarrhea, dengue, malaria, other fevers like typhoid and skin infections should be prevented by timely vaccination of humans and livestock as well as prompt treatment.
- 10) Building of reservoirs or small dams to store this rain water during monsoon. This will give added benefit of power generation if used wisely.
- 11) With a definite and well planed system it is also possible to decrease carbon emission and increase forest plantation on the banks of Nalla Lai and alongside the small reservoirs.

12) The most important and environmental friendly initiative should aim to keep this stream clean by avoiding dumping solid waste and human and animal excreta. There was a time when this stream was clean and people use to swim in it. This is still possible.

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Photo Essay



Flood 2014



Encroachments along Lai



Flood warning station



Waste dumps along Lai

Insight into and Impact of Abu Dhabi Municipality on Abu Dhabi City: An Interview with Abdulaziz Al Kindi, Senior Contract Manager

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Introduction

Abu Dhabi Municipality emerged as the Department of Abu Dhabi Municipality and Town Planning in 1962. The vision of Abu Dhabi Municipality is to provide modern infrastructure and outstanding municipal services for a promising capital (2011). Abu Dhabi is the U.A.E capital city. It is a common misconception that Dubai is the capital however, with Abu Dhabi Investment Authority currently ranked the No 1 Sovereign Wealth Fund in the world, it is clear where the wealth really is, in Abu Dhabi.

Through a unique interview with Abdulaziz Al Kindi, a Senior Contract Manager, we gain insights into the current structure of the organization in addition to the true impact of the municipality on the capital city.

Organizational Chart of Abu Dhabi Municipality

Abu Dhabi Municipality emerged as the Department of Abu Dhabi Municipality and Town Planning in the 1962. The first municipal board for Abu (?Dhabi) City was appointed in 1969 under the royal decree and 'Al Sunni Banga' was appointed as the first manager. The board was charged with the responsibility of offering comprehensive services to the public and ensuring proper planning and development of Abu Dhabi City, with maintenance services, regularized road networks, lighting works, sewerage, establishing public markets in different areas and launching of the Agriculture Development Plan. Since its inception, the Abu Dhabi Municipality has devised major objectives, including various projects' implementation targeted at developing modern city infrastructure such as road networks, drainage systems, and modern means of transportation, bridges, and development project consolidation. In addition, the municipality has been increasingly moving towards achieving the goals stipulated in the development plans. The priority of Abu Dhabi Municipality is to establish a suitable living environment for the

Abstract

Abu Dhabi Municipality was established in order to develop the infrastructure of the city of Abu Dhabi and turn it into a modern city. Abu Dhabi Municipality was established in order to develop the infrastructure of the city of Abu Dhabi and turn it into a modern city. Abu Dhabi Municipality has several sectors and each sector is in charge of numerous projects and activities. Through an interview with Abdulaziz Al Kindi, we gain a unique insight into the municipality, it's structure and impact on Abu Dhabi City such as environmental awareness, creation and renewal of urban structures, transportation, road safety, demolition of illegal accommodation, agriculture control, and improving housing projects.

The report provides a worthy blueprint for other regional municipalities installing systems and structures.

residents of the Abu Dhabi City by establishing modern amenities (Department of Municipal Affairs, 2013).

Vision

The vision of Abu Dhabi Municipality is to provide modern infrastructure and outstanding municipal services for a promising capital (Abu Dhabi City Municipality, 2011).

Mission Statement

The mission of Abu Dhabi Municipality is to provide the residents of Abu Dhabi City with a healthy, quality living environment through innovative planning, improved infrastructure, and enhanced municipal services (Abu Dhabi City Municipality, 2011).

Sectors of Abu Dhabi Municipality

Municipal Infrastructure & Asset Sector

The municipal infrastructure and asset sector consists of three major divisions, including the parks and recreation facilities division, municipal roads and infrastructure division, and the infrastructure and services coordination division.

Functions of the Municipal Infrastructure and Assets Sector

- To plan the development and prosperity of Abu Dhabi City to be one of the top five global capitals that provides the highest standard of quality services.
 - To maintain operation, safety, and service levels to ensure that approximately eighty-five percent of the road network in the city meets the global standards that have been set for scale service roads.
 - To achieve equilibrium between infrastructure and greenery to keep up with the growing population density by augmenting the rate of green area per capita.
 - To prepare controls and programs to acknowledge, develop operations, and maintain management projects.
 - To develop and train national staff in the arena of operation, design, implementation, and maintenance.
 - To adopt current technological science in irrigation and agriculture to minimize maintenance and operating costs, and to optimize water and minimize environmental degradation.
 - To institute a database for road asset management to predict future service needs and maintenance requirements, thereby reducing public expenditure.
- The functions of the Municipal Roads and Infrastructure Division include:
- To prepare a consolidated budget and master plan of infrastructure and road projects.
 - To maintain local road networks to a level that meets the highest excellent standards and quality.
 - To ensure the highest levels of road safety for all road network users.
 - To recommend new projects that can improve roads and bridges network performance, to conduct primary studies as well as economic feasibility and technical studies, and to follow up improvement and development projects undertaken by service providers.
 - To prequalify consultants and contractors to authenticate their competencies with regard to accomplishing various projects, and to endorse supervisory personnel and staff at site
 - To organize reference terms to invite the participation of consultants in new projects, obtain the necessary approvals, and to bring together the list of consultants to be invited.
 - To review and audit design plans and reports that consultants submit during the successive design phases, that is, initial, primary, and final, from all the perspectives of engineering, including materials, roads, traffic, sewage, traffic, and lighting.
 - To follow up with consultants and contractors at construction and maintenance stage to ensure that there is conformity between contracts and projects, and to prepare periodical reports about projects being studied as well as the statistics needed by senior bodies.
 - To manage maintenance and operation contracts of traffic systems and light signals in Abu Dhabi City.
 - To supervise the removal and demolition of visible aspects that disfigure the general appearance of Abu Dhabi City

Municipal Infrastructure & Asset Sector



Process of a new project:

Abdulaziz Al Kindi explained how new projects are set in motion. According to his answers, the process is explained below:

There are three main parties involved in the process of a new project:

1. Clients
2. Consultants
3. Contractors

Abdulaziz explained that they must first generate an idea of the project and identify the required budget. He illustrated that every department proposes a budget to the main management, which is a committee who then proposes to the Executive Council. The proposals are then studied and determined before providing the funds.

After that comes the tendering process, which is finding a consultant to work on the design of the project and to supervise the operations performed through the project. With the tendering process, the client tries to find the best consultant with the lowest price and the best design.

After choosing the lowest bidder from the consultants, the chosen one must finish the final design needed for the project, then prepare all contractual documents needed for the contractor. After the final design and the tender documents are done, they will be used to ask for contract bidders who present their technical and financial reviews, which will then be revised and scored to find the best bidder. After the contractor is chosen, the contract will be signed between the client and the contractor allowing him to start working on the project.

The consultant is also responsible for estimating the cost of the project and to supervise the operations done by the contractor. However, not all contracts indicate that the consultant who designs the project does the supervision; there are some contracts that hire one consultant to design the project and another one to supervise the operations.

Support Services Sector

The functions of this sector include the following:

- Devising strategies to provide all the required services to the municipality
- Supervising quality and performance across the various divisions of the sector

The divisions of this sector include accounting, technical planning, legal affairs, facility and security, human resources, and procurement divisions. The functions of the procurement division include:

- Conducting tender contracting and limited methods of procurement together with other projects within the municipality
- Organizing procurement processes for all affairs in the municipality
- Coordinating procurement activities within the division
- Checking specifications of purchased items
- Gathering information about specific items, maintain suppliers' list, and establish strong relations among them to seek appropriate quotations.
- Negotiating with suppliers and contractors after committee approval
- Studying and analyzing purchased items based on price, quality, and terms of delivery to ensure coordination within the division.
- Receiving applications from various divisions, studying them, and providing all information and data regarding suppliers and materials.
- Issuing purchase contracts and orders
- Supervising and updating contractor and supplier list
- Setting up the annual plan for procurement

The procurement division provides several services, including supplier registration with ADM, rice purchase from ADM, rice distribution cards, tenders participation, and selling of disposable materials through tenders.

General Manager Division

General Manager Offices are as follows:

1. Investment Office
2. General Manager Office
3. The Marketing and Corporate Communication Office
4. Project Management Office
5. Internal Audit Office
6. Advisors Office

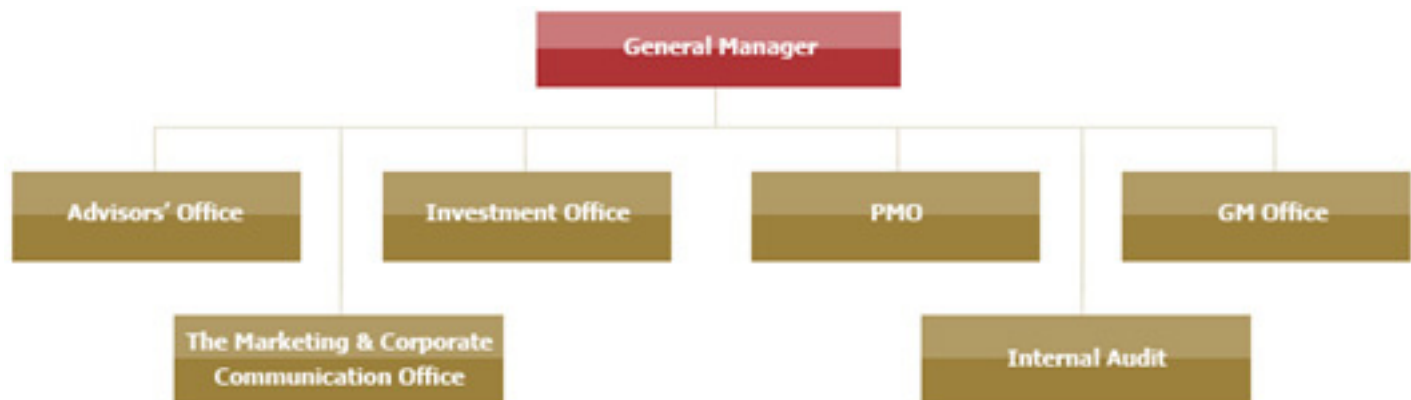
The general manager's office performs the following functions:

- Directing development of long-term and short-term plans, policies, and objectives
- Ensuring effective implementation of the municipality's mission and vision
- Coordinating the alignment of the work of various sectors with set objectives, policies, and goals
- Monitoring the performance of financial and strategic plans based on established objectives and ensuring that there is identification and implementation of action plans as appropriate

Support Services Sector



General Manager Division



The Municipal Services Sector



Strategic Planning and Performance Management Sector



Town Planning Sector



- Directing as appropriate to ensure that outputs and results are achieved based on the operating budget
- Ensuring that there is proper planning and delivery of municipal services to all citizens
- Coordinating the development and maintenance of infrastructure and assets of the municipality, as well as proper planning within the municipality
- Representing the municipality in all executive level meetings as well as external organizations and departments

The Municipal Services Sector

The Municipal Services sector consists of the following divisions:

1. Community Services Division
2. Customer Services Division
3. External Service Centers Division
4. Public Health Division
5. Lands & Real Estate Division

The functions of the municipal services sector include the following:

- Supervising property and land management, including allocation and registration
- Supervising high service level activation to ensure successful community services
- Leading the establishment of comprehensive services centres by providing integrated municipal government services
- Using indirect service channels to supervise service provision
- Supervising quality control programs in services

Strategic Planning and Performance Management Sector

The Strategic Planning and Performance Management sector is composed of the following divisions:

1. Corporate Excellence Division
2. Financial Planning Division
3. Strategic Planning Division
4. Performance Management Division

The functions of the planning and performance management sector include the following:

- Developing the municipality's strategic objectives
- Overseeing the development of the five year strategic plan and detailed annual plan of the municipality
- Overseeing the municipality's development and formulation of financial projections and plans
- Improving policies, procedures, and implementation mechanisms as well as development frameworks within the municipality through supervision
- Supervising communication plans and public relations within the municipality

Town Planning Sector

The Town Planning sector consists of the following divisions:

1. Spatial Data Division
2. Urban Planning Division
3. Construction Permits Division

The town planning sector performs the following functions:

- Detailed planning, managing processes, division of urban uses, and issuance of relevant rules and policies
- Managing spatial data establishment, distribution, updating, and maintenance
- Issuing building permits
- Managing segments and paths of various service lines

Recently Completed Projects

The following completed projects are stated in Abu Dhabi Municipality's websites:



1. Al Mafraq Multi-Layer Interchange Project

The project is vital in Al Mafraq area and Abu Dhabi.

This bridge made a huge difference in Al Mafraq area. This singular intersection will be replaced with a multi-layer intersection to make the traffic flow smoothly. Abu Dhabi police estimated that 24 thousand vehicles pass by every hour. The project costs about 830 million DHS. According to engineer Abdullah Al Shamsi, Acting Executive Director of Municipal Infrastructure and Assets Sector: *"The Project comes in the context of the Municipality's multiple contributions and pioneering projects to develop the city in keeping with the economic & social drive, improve the quality of services in the capital and renovate roads and infrastructure sector."*



2. GPS Reference Station Network Project

Geographical data reference

The geographical data reference provides the Abu Dhabi Municipality with accurate data that will help them develop the Emirate of Abu Dhabi. Municipality of Abu Dhabi City, Dubai Municipality, Al Ain Municipality and Western Region worked hard to complete this project as early as possible to start working with it and make use of it to develop the UAE. This project took eight months to be completed and is now operational.



3. Electronic building permits system

The main purpose of the new Building Permits e-System is to save hours of valuable time waiting in queues. It also saves the effort of the client to wait for a long period of time to complete paperwork. Creating a username and a password and logging in can allow you to use the electronic building permit system. While the client is logged in they will be eligible to use it and the municipality will handle the rest after they receive the order of the client.



4. Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan Mosque

It is one of the valuable landmarks in Abu Dhabi. This mosque was funded by His Highness Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan, may he rest in peace. The mosque has broken a lot of records with their hand made carpet, dome and chandelier in both diameter and height. It is one of the symbols that the UAE is famous for.



5. Sheikh Zayed Bridge (3rd Crossing)

The bridge was created by Zaha Hadid and was designed in a remarkable way, featuring creative artistic methods. It is expected that this bridge has a lifespan of not less than 120 years and it handles wind speed of 160 KM/h.

Current Projects

Abdulaziz describes the current projects, listed below:



1. Mohammed Bin Zayed City Project

Mohamed Bin Zayed City is one of the emerging cities that Abu Dhabi Municipality is willing to complete. Abu Dhabi Municipality has a vision to build a city that is completely different from standard living. To reach their goal in making this city achieve most prestigious services and the best living standard, the city will include a number of iconic and tremendous residence buildings. The city will be holding 349 gigantic residential towers. While the city holds approximately 5.8 million square meters, it is expected to hold nearly 85,000 population. Mohamed Bin Zayed city will be one of the social aspects that the municipality is willing to complete. The city will allow its inhabitants to have a royal lifestyle with the best services that they can find. Adding to that the city will hold a very promising and remarkable working environment.

2. Sheikh Zayed Street & Tunnel

Sheikh Zayed street & tunnel will be developed to make the traffic flow in a very easy way thanks to the vital structure and the artery of traffic movement. Sheikh Zayed Street & tunnel will help Abu Dhabi city to provide to the people a very high quality of transportation services. To complete the project and achieve it, three government departments: Municipality of Abu Dhabi City, Abu Dhabi Urban Planning Council and Department of Transport worked together.



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4. Road Maintenance Projects (Ongoing)

a) Mainland

a. Area 1, 2 and 3: Yas, Mohamed bin Zayed, KCA, KCB, Musaffah Industrial, Musaffah Commercial, Bain Al Jesrain, Officers City, etc..

b. Area 4, 5 and 6: Shahama, Wathba, Baniyas, Al Rahba, Al Falah, Shamkha, Shawamekh etc..

b) Island

a. All areas

Overall Responsibilities of Abu Dhabi Municipality

According to Rafi (2013), Abu Dhabi municipality performs the following responsibilities:

Ø Land Identification

Under this role, the municipality is responsible for documenting and recording territory allocated public housing, residential land, commercial land, industrial land, public utility, agricultural land, and land trade following adoption.

Ø Land and Real Estate Transactions

Under this role, the municipality is responsible for buying, selling, and recording based on court ruling, temporarily customizing the territory, decoding booking land, recording booking land, recording booking owner, recording irreversible and donations, decoding booking owner, and recording inheritance and estates. It is also responsible for registering industrial land, recording leases, recording purchases and sales, registering and redeeming mortgages, modifying mortgage data, changing mortgage value, withdrawal of land, and commanding records.

Ø Public Services

Under this role, the municipality is responsible for certificate property and ownership coupon, land housing waiver, completing transaction during the transition from employee to customer site, ordering a copy of real estate and land documents, and modifying ownership data or name. It is also responsible for certifying scheme site, certificate search, property valuation certificate, community services, book parks visits, book and visit beach, booking visit venues, and servicing community and sports activities, public health, servicing morgue, and servicing recreational and cultural activities. In addition, it is responsible for setting a diseased body for burial, transferring the deceased from the morgue to the cemetery, providing supervision, and guidance during burials, and supervising matters of security in the cemetery.

Ø Certificates of Veterinary Activities

The Abu Dhabi Municipality is responsible for issuing health certificate for licensing veterinary clinics and hospitals, pharmacy license, health certificate for pet trade license, trade cattle, and sheep, and health certificate for license slaughterhouse management.

Ø Roads and Infrastructure

The Abu Dhabi municipality is responsible for providing letter of no objection for the establishment of a temporary ramp, demolishing a building, constructing a temporary fence, putting up the crane, and for installing awnings for cars.

Ø Traffic Services

The Abu Dhabi Municipality is responsible for traffic light signals and programs, and traffic engineering studies.

Ø Transportation and Loading

- The municipality is responsible for permitting transfer of waste drilling and the demolition of waste to designated areas, permitting download of materials from quarries.
- The municipality permits the extension of services, including permit for sidewalk upgrade, asphalt cutting, bank guarantee release for workload earthen quarry materials, spatial data, map requests, maps based planning, base maps, and maps satellite imagery.
- The municipality is responsible for data requests, including data based planning, data base maps, data aerial photos, coordinating points within the piece, and ground control points.
- Public services, including preview earth quarries, and delivery to all corners of the earth, replacement of documents, coordinating corners, participating in the system network stations cadastral (Surveying/Surveys and maps).
- The municipality is responsible for building permits, including licensing of new apartment building on vacant land, building new business license on free land, licensing industrial building new free land and new facilities on vacant land, permitting new development project establishment on free land, and license procedure for adding a building under construction. It also permits the establishment of an amendment to an existing building or an umbrella within boundaries of the coupon, an outer gate on the street, a makeshift tent within or outside the boundaries of the coupon, car garages outside the boundaries of the coupon, installation of tower crane, and retaining wall drilling, and installation. It also licenses an existing building, a fence to an added land, development of deep foundation, décor, comprehensive building maintenance, work and settles filling, and demolition of a building.

Ø Architectural Credits

The municipality is responsible for adopting architectural plans for the construction of a new commercial, residential, industrial, facility, development, and structural system; amendment to existing building, building under construction; introducing in addition to the existing building, building under construction; and initial development project.

Ø Structural Funds

The municipality is responsible for adopting structural plans for constructing new residential, build a new business, industry, facility, development; amendments to existing building,

building under construction; introducing additional building, building under construction, and ad banners.

ø Inspection

The municipality is responsible for inspection of foundation, temporary fences, tiles, pickets, building completion, and technical report regarding building architect to the owner.

ø Public Services

The municipality is responsible for temporary fence and building completion certificates, contractor and consulting firm registration or data modification, and adoption of change and consulting firm that oversees the construction project.

ø Contractor Change

The municipality is responsible for license renewal, canceling building permit request or building permit, submitting a project plan for study and accreditation, reporting of land status, adopting matching architectural plans for actual construction, extending work hours at construction site, documents or plans from archives, and gardens and parks. The municipality also permits service extension, green space removal, a sub-point line that connects rainwater drainage, pumping ground water, transmission line irrigation or rainwater,

ø Violations and Fines

The municipality imposes fines on detriment of green spaces due to construction works. They also pay fines for damaging the green spaces due to road accidents.

Other Activities

- Other activities of the municipality include review and audit, and approval of plans for new city designs, consulting firm standard specification, notice issuance to start work, requesting material civilian approval, and releasing security deposit for drainage work.
- Urban Planning: the municipality adopts land sites, allocates residential, commercial, industrial, farms land, as well as land for development projects, and break marine.

Impact of Abu Dhabi Municipality on Abu Dhabi City

Abu Dhabi City and the associated urban environments are increasingly experiencing rapid growth illustrated by increasing trade, population, traffic movements, and vehicle ownership. This section will discuss the positive impact of Abu Dhabi Municipality on Abu Dhabi City.

Environmental Safety and Awareness

Abu Dhabi Municipality is involved in "Our Parks" campaign to create awareness on recreational facilities and public parks. The main objective of the campaign is based on the municipality's commitment and social responsibility. The campaign

involves students from schools affiliated to Abu Dhabi Education Council, and park visitors. The campaign embodies the strategy and mission of Abu Dhabi Municipality that aim at enhancing environmental awareness, and parks and recreational facility appearance as well as advancing the attitudes and values that can conserve and protect the components of the park from various distortions. This campaign embeds the spirit of social responsibility among students so that they can protect the parks and recreational facilities' public properties, and informing them of the best utilization of the venues by refraining from making barbeques except in designated places. In addition, the ADM counsels the students on the necessity to maintain park cleanliness by ensuring that they drop trash in designated containers, communicating with visitors and students to acknowledge the services and facilities required in parks. They also diffuse environmental culture and conserving parks through establishment of workshops. The objective of ADM is to ensure a smart civilized appearance of Abu Dhabi City (Department of Municipal Affairs, 2013).

The campaign is undertaken within the framework of the objectives of the municipality to promote community outreach in preserving and protecting recreational facilities and parks with its community-based initiative targeted at leveraging sports, recreational, cultural, and environmental aspects across the segments of the community. It is a continuation of community services management plan involving community members with the municipality to protect utilities, recreational facilities, and installations, with focus on public parks. It also reinforces a culture of park frequenting due to their positive bearing on urban and modern appearance of the city to increase environmental awareness on the positive practices of maintaining park cleanliness with their natural elements and components, including trees and plants. It also focuses on educating park visitors on the best way to dispose of barbeque remnants and waste. These aspects include key components of the environmental education and awareness approach supported by the Municipality of Abu Dhabi City (Department of Municipal Affairs, 2013).

The Municipality has also organized various workshops that aim at teaching children the methods of growing plants and flowers, and impart proper environmental preservation practices among them. The campaign also entailed workshops on drawing and coloring and highlighted certain elements that disturb public gardens and parks. In addition, the Municipality has plans of activating educational and recreational programs, associating the principles of communal, familial, and individual responsibility to protect urban facilities, maintain gardens, and develop and utilize them as places of natural and attractive sites for other community-based programs. These objectives are the foundation upon which the Municipality of Abu Dhabi strategy is built, that is, to provide superior services based on community involvement (Department of Municipal Affairs, 2013).

Coordinating Infrastructure and Construction Projects

The Abu Dhabi municipality has a huge role in physical infrastructure in Abu Dhabi City. However, this role is associated

with recurrent problems of time and cost, which overrun their development projects in the construction industry (Benson, 2006). The delays and cost overrun are also catastrophic to the nation and the industry, and may lead to unfavorable effects with regard to national economic growth, including holding back industrial development and causing financial losses (Halloum & Bajracharya, 2012; Odeh & Battaine, 2002). At micro level, cost overruns and delays can result in arbitration, dispute, total abandonment, and litigation (Koushki, Al-Rashid & Kartam, 2005). In addition, it can lead to contract termination, stressful acceleration, and loss of productivity (Arditi & Pattanakitchamroon, 2006).

Abu Dhabi Municipality is responsible for infrastructure development in Abu Dhabi City. It plays a major role in the initiation of several projects that are vital for development and advancement of Abu Dhabi City. Some of these projects include electricity network, water supply and sewerage, highway construction, and communication cabling (Halloum & Bajracharya, 2012). However, Halloum and Bajracharya (2012) through their review demonstrate that improper assignment of roles and responsibilities or inadequate coordination among involved parties can have negative impacts on the targeted duration and cost of the project (EHSMS, 2009). Therefore, they suggest that authorities need to insist on clarifying the roles and distributing the responsibilities of all parties clearly in the initial project phases. In addition, there is need for authorities to promote proper sharing of knowledge among stakeholders and appropriate coordination among the parties involved. Consequently, such measures are likely to reduce the negative impacts associated with the projects. The ADM should focus not only on proper technical initiation but also on ensuring continuity of appropriate technical practices (Halloum & Bajracharya, 2012).

Creation and Renewal of Urban Structures

Abu Dhabi Municipality also works in collaboration with other partners to create and renew urban structures, including the development of Abu

Dhabi central market. They have worked in conjunction with selected specialty consultants to tackle the unique environmental challenges and deliver construction drawings in accordance with the aggressive construction timetable to facilitate infrastructural development (Halvorson, Viise & Fenske, 2008).

Transportation Information Management System (TIMS) and Road Safety

The Abu Dhabi Municipality roads directorate acknowledges the need to develop well-structured accident data gathering, management, and analysis for the Abu Dhabi City (Grosskopf et al., 2012). TIMS is a key component of accident management. The traffic police of the ADM is responsible for accident recording, accident location referencing, data/information exchange, data storage, analysis, and reporting. The accident information is useful and can be used for enforcement, engineering, and education. The ADM is responsible for accurate collection and management of accident data as a primary means of improving road safety in Abu Dhabi City (Khan, AlKathairi & Garib, 2011).

Demolition of Illegal Accommodation

The Abu Dhabi Municipality plays an active role in the "clamp down on illegal bachelor accommodation" initiative. ADM is working in collaboration with the police to enforce residential laws, which restrict the number of people to three people per room and forbid makeshift partitions subdividing rooms. The initiative was in response to complaints from residents following extensive investigation by the municipality. Apart from involving inspectors in checking for unlicensed additions or partitions in villas, the initiative also educates the public on environmental and health risks associated with illegal subdivisions of housing (Al Subaihi, 2013).

ADM also demolished abandoned or unoccupied buildings, including commercial buildings, villas, and government offices that were undermining the beauty of Abu Dhabi City or presented safety hazards. Prior to the commencement of any demolitions, the municipality conducts inventories of disfigured

or abandoned buildings, commissions a consultant to prepare a condition report prior to alerting the owner of the building to demolish the structure or carry out maintenance works (National Staff, 2011). The initiative aimed at relocation of the bachelors to residential quarters fitted with all means of security, comfort, and suitable lodging provided with all facilities, including transit means, mosques, and shopping centres to serve the Abu Dhabi City residents (Al Subaihi, 2013).

Improving the Sustainability of Low Income Housing Projects

The Abu Dhabi Municipality is increasingly focusing on improving the sustainability of low-income housing projects. They have focused on ensuring a construction process that is timely, cost effective, of high quality, durable, cheaper to maintain, user friendly, and with good indoor environment (DSSCB, 2000). They aim to achieve continued improvement and annual reduction in the time and cost of the project. Improving sustainability of low-income buildings can be achieved through assessment of the performance of the buildings to identify any faults or deficiencies and take measures that enable the municipality to enhance the performance of new projects in Abu Dhabi City.

The municipality is involved in assessing building performance in the City of Abu Dhabi. Assessing and measuring generally requires processes of checking reviewing, monitoring, and evaluating long-term and short-term the direction and progress of departments, organizations, projects, divisions, groups, functions, and individuals. This ongoing process aims at identifying the strengths, and weaknesses of projects and strategies for improvement. Consequently, corrective measures are adopted to overcome the weaknesses and improve performance (Bassioni et al., 2004). Assessing building performance has some benefits. In the short-term, it allows for better understanding of the performance and functionality of the building and comparing it against the stated criteria during the design. They may also enable the identification of problems before improvement efforts are implemented. In the mid-term, the

use of data collected in the assessment stage provides a source of knowledge for planning of new buildings that meet the city requirements. In the long-term, it helps in the establishment of databases, the generation of planning, design criteria for specific types of building, and enables the designers to consider and document their experience. This enables the Abu Dhabi Municipality to avoid making the same past mistakes as well as acknowledge past success (Abdul-Rahman et al., 2008). The accumulated information is vital for enhancing the quality of future buildings and services. In addition, assessment results may be used to improve design practice by enlightening the designers that there is a possibility of their buildings being subject to scrutiny thereby motivating them to maintain quality and the performance of low-income projects in Abu Dhabi City (Abdellatif & Othman, 2006).

Agricultural Policies

The level of wastage of agricultural produce in the Abu Dhabi Municipality has reportedly been very high in the previous years. However, the Municipality has established agricultural policies with an aim of improving the sector's performance. Reports have shown that the sector has experienced very rapid developments resulting in increased output over the years. The agricultural policies set by the authorities have been shown to be effective in encouraging farmers to produce more through extensive and intensive farming. However, the marketing for vegetables and fruits remains poor in Abu Dhabi. The policy of the government on purchasing farmers' products stimulates increased production, but this has failed to match the level and form of marketing of the farm productions. The promotion of vegetable and fruit labeling, packaging, and presentation remains poor, the channels of distribution remain poorly managed, and the system of pricing does not have a bearing on agricultural activity cost structure or market competition. Marketing research to understand the market and the associated requirements and build a marketing information and database flow for marketing has not been undertaken.

In the early 1990s, about fifty percent of vegetables and fruits were reportedly spoiled, dumped, and left over as wastage. The major causes of wastage were found to be lack of effective presentation, marketing, and promotion of vegetables and fruits, poor system of distribution, lack of appropriate training on packaging, handling, and storage of vegetables and fruits, and lack of import control and export outlets, as well as uncontrolled government policies, instruments, and incentives. Based on these previous findings, recommendations have been put across so that the government can review its incentive policies, especially those related to training facilities, purchase arrangements, pricing, and support services (Tasha, 1994).

The Municipality has put in place measures and awareness programs among farmers to recycle farm waste annually by turning it into compost fertilizers to improve agriculture. There are also plans to open up more markets in residential areas to promote the sale and purchase of fresh fruits and vegetables within Abu Dhabi City. The Abu Dhabi Municipal-

ity has also put in place an initiative to increase the marketing of locally produced vegetables and fruits to increase the market share of local products in the city (Al Ali, 2013).

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Civil war, Libya-Tripoli 2014

Our author is an Amazaghin doctor, artist, poet and philosopher

Invasion and destruction of Tripoli

Why all that destruction and setting the airport on fire and demolition

Shooting out loud 'God is great', for what and why? The flames are rising up and exclaiming in jubilation!

Drawing the country in blaze and conflagration

Why all that hatred and annexation

Many Libyans passengers stayed at foreigner airports helpless in desperation

Holy month Ramadan supposed to be a mercy month and reconciliation

Mid Ramadan was the start of horror and eradication

How come people kill their own without appreciation and consideration

People lived all the last ten days of Ramadan in great fear and repulsion

People left their dwelling looking for a shelter, safety, demanding protection

A calling for humanity was sent and no one seems to care nor to understand what we have been through under the continuous bombardment, all day long and night, killing our kid's innocence and tranquility, lacking the outmost fortification

Petrol shortage in an oil country and motorists long lines queue standing miles away and waiting for a station to open, making people's life hard and in great expansion

Gas shortage making people lose their basic life needs, meaning and denotation

Food prices are soaring; uncollected garbage is piling up in the streets causing contamination

In Benghazi, Libya's second-largest city, the fighting has closed both its airport and seaport, and leads to complete struggles and isolation

Water shortage, electricity and blackouts for long hours (more than 17 hours) including streets at the capital and all just send us in complete dreadful gloominess impression

Eid supposed to celebrate and what it was, oil depots sat on fire and hearing that entire explosion sounds all day long, make you wish an immediate end, or a death to get rid of all this chaos, pollutions and polluted air with hot weather and suffocation

This burning just jagged black fumes and clouds shadow the city, obscured the sun and the blue sky, sending a gloomy sensation

Rivals did not understand it, it is time to rebuild rather than to kill and decapitation

Started to hate the night to come to fear the unknown and the random shooting in the complete blackouts, nothing to see, to visualize, just expecting death and fire reaction

Now, what is next.....why and under what name can this be called partition

The country driven apart by this constant unpredicted destabilization

Power domination, expression and desperation

Libyan civilians are despaired of any settlement and instant resolution

Caliphate and black banners of Islamist extremists, what is wrong with our Islamic belief and conviction

We need a non violent verbal negotiation and cooperation

Islam never called for long series of bombings, bloodshed, beheading and assassination

Stubbornness would not help any, just violence escalation

Kidnapping, killing, robbery, just aiming for a nameless reputation

Some speculate it, as Iraq, Somalia or like a new Afghanistan

Libyans simply aspire for decent living, still in need of liberation

We need an urgent call for a decent Inauguration

Photos from Libya, September 2014:



Car queue day and night (above and below)



Below: The sky during the day time



