Family Structure between Muslim and Santal Communities in Rural Bangladesh

Md. Emaj Uddin

Abstract—Family structure that is culturally constructed in every society is the basic unit of social structure. Purpose of the study was to compare family structure, including marriage, residence, family size, type, role sharing, authority, and communication patterns between Muslim and Santal communities in rural Bangladesh. For this we assumed that family structure with the elements was significantly different between the two communities in rural Bangladesh. In so doing, 288 active couples (145 for Muslim and 143 for Santal) selected by cluster random sampling were intensively interviewed with a semi-structured questionnaire method. The results of *Pearson Chi-Squire Test* reveal that there were significant differences in the family structure followed by the two communities in the study area. Further cross-cultural study should be done on why family structure varies between the communities in Bangladesh.

Keywords—Bangladesh, Cross-Cultural Comparison, Family Structure, Muslim, Santal.

I. INTRODUCTION

FAMILY structure is the building block of social structure across the societies. In social science literatures a family has been defined as a group of persons who are united by marriage, blood, or adoption, constituting a single unit, interacting and communicating with each other, and creating and maintaining a common culture [1-4]. Accordingly *family structure* has been indicated as the arrangements of those family members into the status and role, authority, and communication patterns intended to fulfill common human needs at family level [4-6].

Although biological nature of human beings is universal, relevant *culture-specific* and/or *cross-cultural* evidences suggest that family structure in every society is influenced and shaped by subjective culture viz. values, beliefs, norms, attitude, language, customs as well as objective culture, modes of production [5] that not only orient, direct and control human nature and nurture systems, but also organize and integrate family members into certain marital and family relationships (1) to meet and satisfy their physiological, material, psycho-emotional and social needs for proper human development, (2) to generate and continue human races, and

Md. Emaj Uddin (Ph. D.) is an Associate Professor, Department of Social Work, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Rajshahi, Bangladesh. [Phone: (0721) 750041- 4158, Fax: (0721) 750064, Email: emaj691@yahoo.com].

(3) to transmit cultures across the generations ensuring effective human adaptation to the environment. For these human purposes family structure in every culture or sub-culture in a culture is consisted of marriage, residence, family size and composition, family status and role, family power and authority, family communication that are quite universal. These elements of family structure not only vary from one society to another but also differ among the different segments of the same society [1-13].

Likewise several researches in Bangladesh [14-30] indicate that both Muslim and Santal communities devise family structure based on their respective cultural system, fulfilling basic human purposes indicated above. To do so each community culturally designs and defines certain patterns of family structure: marriage (monogamy, polygyny, and remarriage), residential pattern (patrilocal, Matrilocal, bilateral, and Neolocal), family size (high, moderate and low), family type (nuclear, joint and extended), family role (instrumental and emotional), family authority (autocratic, Syncratic and autonomic), family communication (autocratic, democratic and egalitarian) and family property distribution (equality and inequality) are more appropriate to them and accordingly they prefer one of the patterns of family structure in their familial life, depending on their respective cultural patterns and socio-economic status in Bangladesh.

The above-mentioned problem situations clearly show that there are comprehensive cross-cultural knowledge gap on the typology of family structure viz. marriage, residence, family size, family type, family role, family authority, family communication and family property distribution between Muslim and Santal communities in Bangladesh. So, present study examines and compares the typological aspects of family structure, including marriage and marital residence, family size, family type, family role, family authority, family communication and family property distribution that are the fabric of family relationships between the communities in Bangladesh. The findings of this study on the typology of family structure may contribute to social science literatures.

II. BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

A. Background

A community is a group of people who share the same belief system and behave in social situations accordingly [31]. Cultural belief system of the Muslim and Santal community differently reflects family structure in the agrarian economy of

Bangladesh. Actually, the *Muslim* in this country is the major dominant religious community. Ethnically, Bangladeshi Muslims are *Sunni;* physically they are mixture of different races, folks, traditions, beliefs and ideas. They speak in *Bengali* language with the mixture of *Arabic-Urdu.* Religiously, they believe in Monotheism *(Tawhid),* Holy Qur'an as His Devine laws and principles, Muhammad (sm) as His nominated last Prophet and his *Hadith (Sunnah)* [14-18, 23]. On the other hand, the *Santal* is the largest tribal group of Aborigines. Racially, they belong to *Proto-Australoid* stocks and speak in *Austric-Mundary* language and sometimes they speak in *Bengali* with the other *Bengali-*speaking people. They believe in several B*ongas*, animating nature's worship [18-22, 24-30]. These fundamental belief systems of the communities may influence their respective family structure in rural Bangladesh context.

a. Marriage Pattern

Every family and its structure begin with marital norms. Marriage refers to rules or norms of socially and legally approved relationship between the opposite sexes: male and female who expect relatively enduring relationship across their life cycle [17, 18]. Marriage in both the communities is a universal institution. Although their culture permits *polygyny* the marriage of one man to more than one woman at a time and other marriages: sororate and levirate, widow or widower' remarriage, they widely practice *monogamy* the marriage of one man to one woman at a time) or *serial monogamy* remarriage of one man to one woman after divorce. Regarding this the Muslim compared to the Santal practice more polygamous and monogamous marriage [18-22, 25, 28, 50-52], because of their high socio-economic status to maintain it. So, we assume that *prevalence of monogamous and polygamous marriage in the Muslim culture is relatively higher than the Santal culture in rural Bangladesh.*

b. Residential Pattern

Residence refers to the rules by which a newly married couple after marriage resides with the bride or groom's parents' family. Social and anthropological studies reveal that decision about the place of residence is typically determined by community cultural rules that conform to one of the residences: *neolocal[1], bilocal[2], patrilocal[3], and matrilocal[4]* [33, 47], depending on the environmental and socio-cultural situations. Based on patri-local norms every married woman in both the Muslim and Santal communities becomes a member of her husband or husband's parent's family [18, 21, 22, 32, 50-52]. Although the communities prefer patri-local marital residence, several cross-cultural studies [18, 28]

indicate that most of the Muslim families follow more patri-local marital residence, but most of the Santal were bilateral ones, because most of the Santal are married within their village or their adjacent villages due to paucity of prospective marital partners or residential instability or migration from one village to another for economic and social security. Therefore, we may assume that *Muslim compared to Santal practice more patri-local marital residence in rural area of this country*.

c. Family Pattern

Every man is born and develops in *family of orientation[5]* and then after marriage a couple forms a *family of procreation[6]*. So, every of us is a member of many types of family, such as conjugal, nuclear, sub-nuclear, joint or extended, depending also on the environmental and socio-cultural situations. Although the cultures in peasant economy generally prefer *joint* or *extended family type[7]*, several periodical researches [17-22, 39-41, 49] suggest that most of the families in both the communities are *nuclear[8]* in nature because of their economic instability, landlessness and mass poverty in rural Bangladesh. In a cross-cultural study Uddin [18] found that the Santal couples compared to the Muslim ones prefer more nuclear family because of the same arguments mentioned above. However, regarding this we may draw an assumption in the following way: *The Muslim community compared to the Santal one prefers more joint or extended family than other family types in rural Bangladesh economy.*

d. Family Size Pattern

Family size refers to the number of persons who consider themselves as members, and have biological, social and legal rights to each other within the family [34-37]. Relevant studies show that average family size of the Muslim is higher than the Santal community [38]. In another recent cross-cultural study Uddin [27] found that mean family size of the Muslim (5.45) was higher than the Santal community (4.5). These studies clearly indicate that as Muslim community is culturally sensitive to over population and less use contraceptives and have more land property with traditional technology, they usually prefer high to maintain family than other communities in Bangladesh. In addition, they also incorporate other types of members, such as polygyny, adoption etc. These factors influence high family size in the Muslim community than the Santal. However, regarding this we may assume that *family size in the Muslim culture is higher than the Santal community in rural Bangladesh.*

e. Family Role Pattern

Family role is the shared, ordered, and reciprocally expected behavior of family members who occupy the given

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[1] a norm of residence in which newly married couple establishes residence separate from those of both sides of parents.
[2] a norm of residence in which a newly married couple establishes residence with or near the parents of either spouse.
[3] a norm of residence by which a married couple lives with the husband's parents' family or husband family.
[4] another norm by which a couple lives with the wife's parents' family.

[5] a family unit in which someone is born and reared as a son and daughter.
[6] a family unit formed by a newly married couple.
[7] a family form where three or more generations live together or seperately.
[8] a family form where one or two generations live.

statuses within the family. In sociological and cultural literatures family role is classified into two main categories: Instrumental and emotional. Gender based cross-cultural studies reveal that in gender segregated cultures like Bangladesh women play only emotional role: child bearing and rearing, cooking, household chores and care for elderly and men play instrumental role: cultivating, farming, managing and decision-making [1-5]. Relevant literatures reveal that Santal women in Bangladesh play an instrumental role in agriculture and any other fields of operations as manual labor side by side men and an emotional role within the family [18-22, 24, 25, 32, 41], whereas division of family labor in the Muslim one is separately maintained between men and women: men play instrumental role and women emotional ones. They think that all adult men should be breadwinners of the family. So the Muslim men not only work in agricultural field but also play an important part in petty trade and business, and other formal and informal work forces. Generally, Muslim women do not work on the agricultural field and usually do not go outside the family alone. Their main functions are to bear and rear children, maintain family chores, serve family members and observe purdah in their familial and community life [17, 18, 24, 25, 40, 50-52]. Regarding this our assumption is as follows: *Both Santal husband and wife highly share family instrumental and emotional role, while the Muslim husband plays family instrumental role and the wife emotional ones.*

f. Family Authority Pattern

Family authority refers to the norm by which legitimate power is assigned on the family member who controls behavior and resource within the family and makes important decisions about family matters with or without concern other members of the family [17, 18]. According to Wolfe and others [42, 43] *family authority pattern* may be classified into three categories: 1) *Autocratic authority* is an authority type in which a husband is more dominant than his wife and has larger the range of relative and shared authority than wife in the family, 2) *Syncratic authority* is an authority type in which both husband and wife have balance of relative authority, but the range of shared authority is equal to or greater than the combined ranges of the husband and wife, 3) *Autonomic type* in which both husband and wife have nearly a balance of relative authority, but one has greater range in the shared authority than other within the family.

Although both the communities are male dominated, there are wide cultural differences in authority patterns followed by the communities in their families. The Santal in Bangladesh are very poor. Most of them have no land property and usually live in nuclear family. In this situation, both male and female members of the family work outside the home as paid wage laborers. As both adult men and women and even children are economically independent, each of them enjoys more freedom and autonomy. So, both husband and wife take part in decision-making process concerning the family affairs. In the Santal community and Santal women have a great influence

on their counterpart, although legitimate power remains with husband [18, 21, 22]. On the other hand, senior male members in the Muslim family dominate all family affairs. Traditionally, they as a family head can decide all affairs of the family matters without discussion with other members. According to research reports, Muslim women, in some families, have no social identity; they are known as daughter, wife, mother, and grandmother of someone [17, 18]. They are almost dependent on their male partners in their life cycle for livelihood. In this situation, women and other dependent members cannot fully participate in the decision-making process in the family. So, they cannot influence their male partners as the Santal women do. Here relevant assumption is: *Muslim family prefers more Autocratic family authority, while the Santal family follows more Syncratic or Autonomic family authority.*

g. Family Communication Pattern

Family communication is an important live element of family structure. Meadowcroft [44, 45] and others viewed family communication as playing an integral part in the Stability, maintenance, and change that occurs in close relationships as well as playing a key role in childhood socialization". Sedgwick [46] defined family communication patterns in the following way: *Autocratic communication* is a hierarchical structure in which one person with the most power and influence posited in the top and others with the least power and influence posited in the bottom exchanges information in family decision-making; *Democratic communication* is a wheel-shaped structure in which all members of the family involve in to input and provide messages in family decision making one or two persons are ultimate decision makers in the family; *Egalitarian communication* is a star-shaped structure in which all members are involved as equal partners in gathering information and sharing decision –making.

The Muslim and Santal communities' social systems were patriarchal, patri-local and patrilineal in nature in which family authority was assigned on the elder male member, especially husband/father in the nuclear family and grand father in the extended/joint family. Although both the communities were dominated by men in all affairs of family and community social life mentioned earlier, most of the Muslim families practiced more autocratic communication, while most of the Santal families were led by democratic or egalitarian family communication pattern [18, 28]. Therefore, we may draw an assumption in this way: *Muslim family follows more autocratic communication, but the Santal family prefers more democratic or egalitarian communication pattern.*

h. Family Property Distribution

Rules of ownership of family property also show great variations between the two communities. In the Santal community, family property is transformed from father to son, not to daughter [18-22]. After the death of the husband, a wife

cannot inherit any property from him. On the other hand, rules of inheritance among the Muslim in Bangladesh are mainly based on the Islamic law of inheritance. According to Islamic law of inheritance, all sons inherit an equal amount of property or wealth if any, but a daughter inherits half the amount a son gets. From the legal point of view a Muslim woman is an heir to the property of her father, mother, husband, son, and even daughter. When her husband dies, the widow should inherit one eighth of his property and if he dies childless, she should inherit one fourth. The other part of the property is passed on to the husband's closest relatives. If no son is born to a couple, daughters alone cannot inherit all the properties of their parents; a part of the properties of the parents goes to their father's brother's sons [14, 17, 18, 23]. So, in this respect our assumption is as follows: *Inequality of family property distribution between son and daughter in the Santal culture is higher than that in the Muslim culture in rural Bangladesh.*

B. Methodology
a. Samples

Based on the several specific assumptions derived from the relevant literatures review mentioned above this study cross-culturally investigated family structure between Muslim and Santal communities in rural Bangladesh. In so doing the village *Kalna*, situated in *Tanore Upazila* of *Rajshahi* district, Bangladesh, was purposefully selected for this study, where two distinct cultural communities: Muslim and Santal were living side by side as neighbors. In this village, there were about 380 eligible couples (families): 200 couples were Muslim's and the rest of them were Santal's. In order to collect data for the research purpose, two separate sampling units were developed: one for Muslim and another for Santal. Each sampling unit was considered as a cluster and each couple of both the cluster communities was accounted for as a study unit and then 288 couples, 145 couples (72.5%) from the Muslim and 143 couples (79.44%) from the Santal, were randomly selected through cluster sampling. The mean age of the selected samples, who actively participated in this study, was 23.05 for husbands and 15.11 for wives for the Muslim and 20.71 for husbands and 14.34 for wives for the Santal respectively. The samples selected by this sampling procedure were cross-culturally equivalent for cross-cultural comparison of family structure between the communities.

b. Variables and Measures

This study compares the typological aspects of family structure between the Muslim and Santal communities in rural Bangladesh. In so doing the eight major typological concepts: marriage, residence, family size, family type, family role, family authority, family communication pattern, and family property distribution were nominally categorized and measured in the following ways:

First of all *community* was nominally measured and coded as 1= Muslim and 2 = Santal. *Age* of the respondents: (husband and wife) was counted in year. *Sex* of the

respondents was nominally measured and coded 1= Husband and 2= Wife. The compared variables of the family structure such as *Marriage Pattern* was nominally categorized, measured and coded as 1= Monogamy, 2= Polygyny and 3= Others (Widow or Widower Remarriage, Serial Monogamy); *Residential Pattern* was nominally measured and coded as 1= Patrilocal, 2= Matrilocal, 3= Biolocal, 4= Neolocal; *Family Size* pattern was accounted for in numbers and after coded as 1= Low (1-3 persons), 2= Medium (4-7 persons) and 3= High (8+); *Family type* was coded 1= Conjugal Family, 2= Nuclear Family, 3= Extended Family and 4= Joint family; *Family Role Sharing* was also measured nominally and coded as 1= Low Role Sharing, 2= Medium Role Sharing and 3= High Role Sharing; Likely, *Family Authority Pattern* was coded as 1= Autocratic Authority, 2= Syncratic Authority and 3= Egalitarian Authority; *Family Communication Pattern* was nominally measured and categorized as 1= Autocratic Communication, 2= Democratic Communication and 3= Egalitarian Communication and lastly *Family Property Distribution* was also nominally measured and coded as 1= High Inequality and 2= Low Inequality between the Muslim and Santal families in rural Bangladesh. In measurement most of the variables of family structure used in this study, however, were pre-coded and the least of them were post-coded.

c. Instrument and Procedure

This study used cross-cultural descriptive survey design in which qualitative (subjective) aspects of family structure typology were categorically measured. Based on the measure semi-structural questionnaire with open-ended and close-ended questions on the variables defined and coded above was designed, followed from Uddin's [18, 28, 29] cross-cultural studies, and *Family Measurement in India* edited by S. Bharat [53]. As most of the respondents were low socio-cultural statuses, interview technique with the questionnaire was applied for data collection. According to the questionnaire designed author as a data collector was asked for relevant answers to every couple selected. Sometimes the questions were proved to the specific respondents who could not understand.

Field work for this research was conducted from January to June 2007. In order to collect real and valid data from the selected couples of the communities with the questionnaire the author built up rapport with the respondents to create consciousness about the research purposes and objectives, to make easy them for conversation and to encourage them to active participation in the research. It continued until the completion of data collection. First 4 months of the data collection period were used to build up rapport with the respondents and 2 months were worked for data collection. Most of the respondents of the communities, especially the husbands in the Muslim community and both the husband and wife in the Santal community worked from morning to midday and even round the day in agricultural field. So, the necessary data were collected by author at afternoon when the

respondents of the communities were leisured, and each couple was met together within the family setting where they were intensively interviewed by author for one hour. After completion the interview especial thanks were given to each couple for further contact. In so doing the author conversed in *Bengali* language with the respondents because they all did converse in Bengali language and then the responses of the selected respondents were converted in English by author, because he was skillful in both languages: Bengali as a mother tongue and English as a second language.

d. Reliability

The responses given by the selected respondents on the qualitative variables of family structure were reliable in the sense that the interview technique with the semi-structural questionnaire was applied in which both the open-ended and close -ended questions were included and the author as an interviewer was skillful in that technique.[9] In so doing the author built up rapport with the respondents in which interpersonal trust between the interviewer (author) and the respondents was developed. Based on the interpersonal relationship (subjectivity) the author intensively interviewed every couple of the communities with the questionnaire schedule aimed to collect objective data within one hour in their personal and familial settings [54]. In addition, the author also considered cultural and status factors of both the parties (interviewer and respondents) when he interacted with the respondents for data collection. However, although there were many quantitative methods to test reliability of the collected data, this research followed qualitative techniques: rapport building with the respondents, one hour structural interview for per couple, interview in personal and familial settings, and controlled interpersonal cultural factors to collect reliable responses presented in the result section.

e. Data Analysis

Based on the main research objective, including assumptions the analysis of collected data was carried out by SPSS. Especially Pearson's Chi-Squire test was applied to find out similarities or differences in the patterned behavior of family structure: marriage, residence, family type, family size, role, authority, communication and property distribution

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[9] Because he involved in several research projects for field work. 120 working-days fieldwork (internship) experience at "Family Planning Association of Bangladesh (FPAB)" Rajshahi City, Rajshahi; and "Rural Social Services Program", Mohan Pur, Rajshahi, as a part of B.S.S. (Honors) and M.S.S. curricula respectively.
In both B.S.S. and M.S.S. field practice, I engaged in counseling and motivating persons in adopting program goals. During my field practicum, I learned the skills of applying social work methods. I conducted survey, formed and organized group, motivated the group members, and accelerate social actions for the wellbeing of target groups and underprivileged population.
I was also a data collector in the "Child Survival Project" of UNICEF at Rajshahi office at two phases, on 1 July – 30 August 1993, 1 January – 30 March 2005. In addition, he himself collected data for his Ph. D. research entitled "Family Structure in a Village of Bangladesh: A Cross-Cultural Study. He also involved in periodical researches for doing field work.

between Muslim and Santal communities in the study village *Kalna,* Bangladesh. This statistical technique to cross-cultural data analysis on the variables of family structure was more relevant, because the variables used to compare family structure between the communities were categorical (qualitative) in nature [28]. The findings of the analysis with frequency distribution and test scores were presented by cross-tabulation.

III. RESULTS

Every family structure across the ethnic communities begins with marriage norm that unite relatively adult men and women into family relations to gain social purposes. After marriage every couple prefers one pattern of residence, family type, family size, role, authority, communication and property distribution to meet day-to-day basic human needs and human adaptation across the generations, depending on the cultural patterns of the communities studied. What patterns of family structure followed by Muslim and Santal in rural Bangladesh explored by interview method including questionnaire were presented in the following tables, 1-8.

A. Marriage Pattern

Table 1 shows data on marriage patterns, including monogamy, polygyny and other marriage types (serial monogamy and remarriage). Although both communities prefer monogamy to form a family, monogamous marriage among the Muslim couples (88.28%) was higher than that among the Santal couples (73.43%). In polygamous marriage Muslim cases (11) were higher and in other marriages, especially serial monogamy or remarriage cases were lower than the Santal ones. Our Pearson Chi-Squire results suggest that marriage patterns with which they were formed families were significantly different between the two communities in the study village, *Kanla* ($X^{2=}$ 13.35, df= 2, Sig.= .001, p<0.01).

TABLE I
RESULTS OF PEARSON'S CHI-SQUIRE TEST ON MARRIAGE PATTERN BY MUSLIM (N=145) AND SANTAL (N=143), VILLAGE KALNA, BANGLADESH, 2007

Marriage Pattern	Muslim Frequency	Santal Frequency	Total	X^2
Monogamy	128	105	233	
Polygyny	6	5	11	13.35*
Others	11	33	44	(.001)
Total	145	143	288	

Note: df= 2, * p<0.01

B. Residence Pattern

Table 2 presents data on the residence patterns practiced by the Muslim and Santal couples in their family cultural life. The data clearly show that most of the Muslim couples (87.59%) followed patrilocal residence compared to the Santal couples (67.83%). In other residence patterns such as Matrilocal, Biolocal and Neolocal percentages of the Santal couples were higher than the Muslim couples. Regarding this

results of *Pearson* Chi-Squire test also suggest that marital residence patterns followed by the Muslim and Santal couples were significantly different at p<0.01 level in the village studied ($X^{2=}$ 16.70, df= 3, Sig.= .001, p<0.01).

TABLE II
RESULTS OF PEARSON'S CHI-SQUIRE TEST ON RESIDENCE PATTERN BY MUSLIM (N=145) AND SANTAL (N=143), VILLAGE KALNA, BANGLADESH, 2007

Residence Pattern	Muslim Frequency	Santal Frequency	Total	X^2
Patrilocal	127	97	224	
Matrilocal	5	13	18	16.70*
Biolocal	8	24	32	(.001)
Neolocal	5	9	14	
Total	145	143	288	

Note: df=3, * p<0.01

C. Family Pattern

Like residence patterns the couples studied also preferred family patterns. The data presented in the table 3 show that the trends of conjugal (11.89%), nuclear (79.72%) and extended family patterns among the Santal couples were higher than the Muslim couples' ones (6.21% for conjugal, 74.48% for nuclear respectively). On the other hand, joint family pattern (15.86%) of the Muslim couples was four fold higher than the Santal couples in the village studied. In this respect, Pearson Chi-Squire test results reveal that family patterns maintained by the communities' couples also significantly varied at ($X^{2=}$ 12.67, df= 3, Sig. = .005) p<0.01 level.

D. Family Size Pattern

How many members, including husband, wife or wives, children and others will dwell in the family depend on the socio-cultural status possessed by the families. The findings on family size pattern in the table 4 show that medium family size compared to low and high family size among the Santal families was two fold higher than that among the Muslim families'. Results of *Pearson* Chi-Squire test reveal that family size patterns determined and explored in this study also varied between the Muslim and Santal families at (($X^{2=}$ 9.35, df= 2, Sig. = .009) p<0.01 level.

TABLE III
RESULTS OF PEARSON'S CHI-SQUIRE TEST ON FAMILY PATTERN BY MUSLIM (N=145) AND SANTAL (N=143), VILLAGE KALNA, BANGLADESH, 2007

Family Pattern	Muslim Frequency	Santal Frequency	Total	X^2
Conjugal	9	17	26	
Nuclear	108	114	222	12.67*
Joint	23	6	29	(.005)
Extended	5	6	11	
Total	145	143	288	

Note: df=3, * p<0.01

TABLE IV
RESULTS OF PEARSON'S CHI-SQUIRE TEST ON FAMILY SIZE PATTERN BY MUSLIM (N=145) AND SANTAL (N=143), VILLAGE KALNA, BANGLADESH, 2007

Family Size Pattern	Muslim Frequency	Santal Frequency	Total	X^2
Low	38	56	94	
Medium	88	80	168	9.35*
High	19	7	26	(.009)
Total	145	143	288	

Note: df=2, * p<0.01

E. Family Role Pattern

Table 5 shows data on family role sharing between husband and wife by the Muslim and Santal in the agricultural economy of rural Bangladesh. The data suggest that most of the Santal couples compared to the Muslim ones highly (40.56%) and moderately (50.35%) would share family roles with each other to meet day-to-day needs. That is family role sharing between the Muslim husband and wife was very low (62.07%). The results of Pearson Chi-Squire test on the family role sharing between Muslim and Santal couples were also significantly different at (($X^{2=}$ 95.14, df= 2, Sig. = .000) p<0.01 level.

TABLE V
RESULTS OF PEARSON'S CHI-SQUIRE TEST ON FAMILY ROLE PATTERN BY MUSLIM (N=145) AND SANTAL (N=143), VILLAGE KALNA, BANGLADESH, 2007

Family Role Sharing	Muslim Frequency	Santal Frequency	Total	X^2
Low	91	15	106	
Medium	46	74	120	95.14*
High	8	54	62	(.000)
Total	145	143	288	

Note: df=2, * p<0.01,

F. Family Authority Pattern

Family authority pattern was one of the aspects of family structure on which data present in the table 6. The data show data that most of the Muslim couples followed autocratic authority (62.07%), while most of the Santal couples practiced Syncratic authority (71.33%) compared to other authority patterns to manage and lead their families. The results of *Pearson* Chi-Squire test reveal that family authority patterns practiced by the communities were significantly different at ($X^{2=}$ 55.58, df= 2, Sig. = .000) p<0.01 level.

G. Family Communication Pattern

Although both the communities were dominated by men in all affairs of community social life, about 56.55% of the Muslim practiced autocratic communication in the family, while 27.27% of the Santal preferred this type of family communication. In democratic and egalitarian family communication frequency of the Santal (48.95% for democratic communication and 23.78% for egalitarian communication) was higher than the Muslim (31.72% for democratic communication and 11.73% for egalitarian

communication) respectively (see, table 7). However, Muslim families followed more autocratic family communication, but the Santal preferred more democratic and even egalitarian family communication. The result of Pearson Chi-Squire test shows that family communication patterns were significantly different between the two communities in the study village, *Kanla* ($X^{2=}$ 25. 90, df= 2, Sig. = .000, p<0.01).

TABLE VI
RESULTS OF PEARSON'S CHI-SQUIRE TEST ON FAMILY
AUTHORITY PATTERN BY MUSLIM (N=145) AND SANTAL (N=143),
VILLAGE KALNA, BANGLADESH, 2007

Family Authority Pattern	Muslim Frequency	Santal Frequency	Total	X^2
Autocratic	81	20	101	
Syncratic	48	89	137	55.58*
Autonomic	16	34	50	(.000)
Total	145	143	288	

Note: df= 2, * p<0.01

TABLE VII
RESULTS OF PEARSON'S CHI-SQUIRE TEST ON FAMILY
COMMUNICATION PATTERNS BY MUSLIM (N=145) AND SANTAL
(N=143), VILLAGE KALNA, BANGLADESH, 2007

Communication Patterns	Muslim Frequency	Santal Frequency	Total	X^2
Autocratic	82	39	121	
Democratic	46	70	116	25.90*
Egalitarian	17	34	51	(.000)
Total	145	143	288	

Note: df=2, * p<0.01,

H. Family Property Distribution

Although the Santal family relations compared to the Muslim ones were more egalitarian, property distribution between son and daughter in the former is more unequal than the later. Table 8 reveals data on unequal distribution of family property between son and daughter by the Muslim and Santal communities. The frequency distribution on the variable suggests that inequality of family property distribution in the Santal community was higher than its counterpart, the Muslim community. The results also varied at p<0.01 level.

TABLE V III
RESULTS OF PEARSON'S CHI-SQUIRE TEST ON FAMILY PROPERTY
DISTRIBUTION BY MUSLIM (N=145) AND SANTAL (N=143),
VILLAGE KALNA, BANGLADESH, 2007

Property Distribution	Muslim Frequency	Santal Frequency	Total	X^2
Low	120	19	139	139.16*
High	25	124	149	(.000)
Total	145	143	288	

Note: df=1, * p<0.01

IV. DISCUSSION

Purpose of the study was to compare family structure between Muslim and Santal communities in rural Bangladesh.

For this, we assumed (1) prevalence of monogamous and polygamous marriage in the Muslim culture is relatively higher than the Santal culture, (2) Muslim compared to Santal practice more patri-local marital residence, (3) The Muslim compared to the Santal prefers more joint or extended family than other family types, (4) family size in the Muslim culture is higher than the Santal community, (5) Both Santal husband and wife highly or moderately share family instrumental and emotional role, while the Muslim husband plays family instrumental role and the wife emotional ones, (6) Muslim family prefers more Autocratic family authority, while the Santal family follows more Syncratic or Autonomic family authority, (7) Muslim family follows more autocratic communication, but the Santal family prefers more democratic or egalitarian communication, and (8) lastly inequality of family property distribution between the son and daughter in the Santal culture is higher than that in the Muslim culture in rural Bangladesh. In order to examine and compare the assumptions 288 active couples (145 Muslim couples and 143 Santal couples) from the village *Kalna,* Bangladesh, were randomly selected through cluster random sampling. The selected couples were intensively interviewed with semi-structural questionnaire method by the author. The findings of *Pearson Chi-Squire Test* suggest that there were significant differences in the family structure: marriage, residence, family size, role sharing, authority, property distribution, and communication patterns between the Muslim and Santal communities in the *Kalna* village studied. However, the findings of the study confirm the assumptions previously determined in rural Bangladesh.

A. Marriage Pattern

Marriage pattern in this study was one of the important aspects of family structure comparison between Muslim and Santal communities in rural Bangladesh. Although both the communities in Bangladesh permit *polygyny* and other marriage patterns: sororate and levirate, widow or widower' remarriage, they widely practice *monogamy* to form a family. In spite of it our results suggest that the Muslim couples practiced more monogamous marriage (88.28%) than the Santal couples (73.43%). Muslim cases (11) compared to the Santal ones in polygamous marriage were higher but lower in serial monogamy or remarriage that were significantly different at ($X^{2=}$ 13.35, df= 2, Sig.= .001,) p<0.01 level. These findings on the marriage patterns are supported by several studies [17-22, 25, 28, 50-52]. In a cross-cultural study Sarker [17] found that the Hindus practiced more monogamous marriage, while the Muslim followed more polygamous and remarriage in rural Bangladesh. In another cross-cultural study Uddin [18] found that although the Muslim and Santal preferred monogamous marriage, the former would practice more monogamous and polygamous marriage, but the later more remarriage because of socio-cultural and economic differences in their community life.

B. Residential Pattern

Residence pattern was also an important aspect to compare family structure between the communities. Although the communities prefer patri-local marital residence, this study explored that most of the Muslim couples (87.59%) followed patrilocal residence compared to the Santal couples (67.83%) and in other residence pattern percentages of the Santal couples were higher than the Muslim couples. These findings also confirm by several studies [18, 21, 22, 32, 50-52]. Uddin [18, 28] in his cross-cultural studies indicated that most of the Muslim families followed patri-local marital residence, while the Santal were bilateral ones, because most of the Santal compared to the Muslim married within their village or their adjacent villages or migrated from one village to another for economic and social security.

C. Family Pattern

Like residence patterns every couple of the communities preferred one of the family patterns, such as conjugal, nuclear, joint and extended family in their cultural life. This study explored that this study explored that the trends of conjugal (11.89%), nuclear (79.72%) and extended family patterns among the Santal couples were higher than the Muslim couples (6.21% for conjugal, 74.48% for nuclear respectively). On the other hand, joint family pattern (15.86%) of the Muslim couples was four fold higher than the Santal couples in the village studied. These findings also confirm our assumption determined previously. Regarding these findings several researches [17-22, 39-41, 49] indicated that most of the Santal families compared to the Muslim ones were nuclear, because of their economic instability, landlessness and mass poverty in rural Bangladesh. In another cross-cultural study Uddin [18] found that the Santal couples compared to the Muslim ones preferred more nuclear family because of the same arguments mentioned above.

D. Family Size Pattern

Family size was a fundamental element of family structure comparison. Regarding this we assumed that Muslim family size was higher than the Santal ones in rural Bangladesh. The findings of the study confirm our assumption. That is medium family size compared to low and high family size among the Santal families was two fold higher than that among the Muslim families that were significant differences at p<0.01 level. This result is also supported by several studies [27, 38]. Especially, Uddin [27] in a cross-cultural study found that mean family size of the Muslim (5.45) was higher than the Santal community (4.5). The main arguments of the studies was as Muslim community was culturally sensitive to over population and less use contraceptives and had more land property with traditional technology, they would prefer more children and other types of members to maintain the family system than the other communities such as the Santal in Bangladesh.

E. Family Role Pattern

This study assumed that both Santal husband and wife highly share family instrumental and emotional role, while the Muslim husband plays family instrumental role and the wife emotional ones. The findings of the study suggest that most of the Santal couples compared to the Muslim ones highly (40.56%) and moderately (50.35%) would share both family instrumental and emotional roles to meet day-to-day needs. These findings are supported by several culture-specific and cross-cultural studies [18-22, 24, 25, 32, 41]. The main arguments behind this was Muslim culture in family role distribution was more sex segregated than the Santal culture. In another study Uddin [18] mentioned that as the Santal community compared to the Muslim was very poor, both husband and wife would work to maintain family.

F. Family Authority Pattern

In this study we assumed that Muslim family prefers more Autocratic family authority, while the Santal family follows more Syncratic or Autonomic family authority. Based on the assumption we explored that most of the Muslim couples followed autocratic authority (62.07%), while most of the Santal couples practiced Syncratic authority (71.33%) compared to the other authority patterns to manage and lead their families. These findings significantly differed at p<0.01 level are also supported by relevant cross-cultural studies [21, 22]. Regarding this researchers argued that the Santal in Bangladesh were very poor: Most of them had no land property and would usually dwell in nuclear family in which both male and female members of the family work outside the home as paid laborers. As both adult men and women and even children are economically independent, each of them would enjoy freedom and autonomy and both husband and wife would take part in decision-making process. In decision-making Santal women had a great influence on their counterpart although legitimate power remained with the husband. On the other hand, senior male members in the Muslim families would dominate family affairs. Traditionally, they would decide all affairs of the family without concern their respective wives because of authoritativeness [17, 18].

G. Family Communication Pattern

Family communication pattern was an important typology to compare family structure between the two communities in rural Bangladesh. In doing so, we assumed that Muslim families compared to the Santal follow more autocratic communication pattern than the democratic or egalitarian communication ones. The findings explored and presented in this study also confirm the assumption drawn earlier. The results of the study are supported by Sarker [17] and Uddin's [18] cross-cultural studies. Especially, Uddin [18, 28] explored that although the communities were patriarchal, patri-local and patrilineal in nature in which family authority was assigned on the elder male member, especially husband/father in the nuclear family and grand father in the extended/joint family, the Muslim families practiced more autocratic communication, while most of the Santal families

were led by democratic or egalitarian family communication to exchange messages among the family members.

H. Family Property Distribution

The last assumption on the family property distribution between son and daughter was: Inequality of family property distribution between the son and daughter in the Santal culture is higher than that in the Muslim community. This assumption is also proved by our findings explored in this study. Regarding this several studies mentioned that in the Santal community parental family property was transformed only into son. After the death of the husband, a wife cannot inherit any property from him [18-22]. On the other hand, based on Islamic law of inheritance, all sons would inherit an equal amount of property or wealth if any, but a daughter would inherit half the amount a son's inheritance. So, inequality of property distribution in the Santal community was higher than the Muslim ones in Bangladesh [14, 17, 18, 23].

V. CONCLUSION

Family structure is a basic unit of social structure, consisting of marriage, residence, family size, type, role, authority and communication patterns intended to meet human needs for human adaptation across the generations. In order to compare family structure, including these elements, this study randomly selected 288 couples, 145 for Muslim and 143 for Santal and interview method with semi-structured questionnaire was applied for data collection. The data collected were analyzed by Pearson Chi-Squire test. Based on the test our findings suggest that family structure was significantly varied between the two communities in the study village, *Kalna,* Bangladesh. These results of the study are supported by several studies conducted in Bangladesh. These studies indicate that differential socio-cultural patterns influence variations in family structure between the communities, although they are similar in many aspects of human life in the study area. Further cross-cultural study should be done on how socio-cultural factors influence family structure between the two communities in Bangladesh.

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