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# Family Communication Patterns between Muslim and Santal Communities in Rural Bangladesh: A Cross-Cultural Perspective

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***Abstract*****—**This study compares family communication patterns in association with family socio-cultural status, especially marriage and family pattern, and couples' socio-economic status between Muslim and Santal communities in rural Bangladesh. A total of 288 couples, 145 couples from the Muslim and 143 couples from the Santal were randomly selected through cluster sampling procedure from *Kalna* village situated in *Tanore Upazila* of *Rajshahi* district of Bangladesh, where both the communities dwell as neighbors. In order to collect data from the selected samples, interview method with semi-structural questionnaire schedule was applied. The responses given by the respondents were analyzed by Pearson's chi-squire test and bivariate correlation techniques. The results of Pearson's chi-squire test revealed that family communication patterns ($X^{2=}$ 25. 90, df= 2, $p<0.01$, $p>0.05$) were significantly different between the Muslim and Santal communities. In addition, Spearman's bivariate correlation coefficients suggested that among the exogenous factors, family type ($r_{s=}$.135, $p<0.05$) and occupation of both husband ($r_{s=}$ .197, $p<0.01$) and wife ($r_{s=}$ .265, $p<0.01$) were significantly positive associations, and marital arrangement ($r_{s=}$ -.177, $p<0.01$), education of husband ($r_{s=}$ -.108, $p<0.05$) and wife ($r_{s=}$ -.142, $p<0.01$ & $p<0.05$), and family income ($r_{s=}$ -.164, $p<0.01$) were significantly negative relations with the family communication patterns followed between the two communities, although age difference between husband and wife, family head and residence patterns were not significant relations with ones.

***Keywords*****—**Bangladesh, Cross-Cultural Comparison, Family Communication Patterns, Family Socio-Cultural Status, Muslim, Santal.

## I. Introduction

FAMILY in every society is a basic small unit of social structure in which family members united by blood, marriage and adoption communicate with each other in a certain manner to meet universal human needs across their life cycle [1]-[12]. Sedgwick [9, p. 61] defined family communication "as the organization and use of words, gestures, expressions, sounds, and action to create expectations, portrays images, describe feelings, and share meaning". Meadowcroft and Fitzpatrick [13, p. 253] viewed family communication as "playing an integral part in the stability, maintenance, and change that occur in close relationships as well as playing a key role in childhood socialization".

Most of the previous studies on family communication were culture-specific [1]-[3], [7], [8], [12], [14]-[22] in which renowned communication researchers investigated family communication patterns including the terms "conversation orientation" and "conformity orientation". This study focuses on comparison of family communication patterns in relation to family socio-cultural status between Muslim and Santal communities in rural Bangladesh with reference to Sedgwick's [9], Shaw's [23], Shaw's, Rothschild and Strickland's [24] (family) communication typology: autocratic, democratic and egalitarian. Especially, Sedgwick [9, p. 61] 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.

In order to understand, explain and compare family communication patterns, mentioned above, environmental approach is very much important. Environmental oriented communication scientists argue that family communication is a symbolic, dynamic and learned behavior through which family members across the generations exchange ideas, feelings, information, values, and norms with the verbal and non-verbal symbols to influence their interpersonal behavior, to reduce negative feelings, and to create positive images and feelings in support of emotional, social, economic, physical, political needs fulfillment that increases cohesion and adaptability within and outside the family environment [5], [6], [13], [21]. According to system theorists family is a system in which husband and wife, father and son, mother and son, father and daughter, mother and daughter, brother and

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sister, grand parents and grand siblings are the sub system of the family. These sub-systems of the family are hierarchically arranged based on age, sex, gender, marriage and family patterns, socio-economic status, power and authority position, role distribution that develop certain patterns, style and content of communication and interaction within the families [5], [25]–[33].

Based on system theory several cultural-specific, especially cross-cultural studies reveal that every religious/ethnic communities in world cultures are more or less patrilineal, patriarchal and patrilocal in nature in which family authority is normatively assigned on an elder male member, especially husband/father who practices either autocratic or democratic or egalitarian communication to exchange information with or without concern of the family members to maintain and manage family life, depending upon the respective people's cultural patterns [11], [27]-[31], [34]–[45]. These studies clearly indicate that family communication patterns not only vary among world cultures, but also vary among sub-cultures within the same society. For example, in individualistic (democratic) societies such as North America and European cultures families with romantic marriage, conjugal/nuclear family form, neolocal/bilocal marital residence, and minimum differences in marital age, gender norms, and socio-economic statuses between husband and wife where most of the family head (males) follow either democratic or egalitarian communication in which all members of the family are considered equal, involve in gathering information for decision-making and other purposes and discuss family situations freely and frankly, exchange feelings, ideas and meaning through multiple channels, while in the totalitarian societies such as the Middle East Muslim culture, China, Africa, where families with arranged marriage, joint/extended family type, patrilocal marital residence, and higher differences in couples' marital age, gender norms, and socio-economic statuses, most of the family head (males) generally practice authoritarian/autocratic communication through which they not only maintain face and avoid open discussion, disagreement, debate of other members about family matters, but in most of the cases they are inconsiderate, rude and aggressive towards the members of lower status, such as wives, children, and others if any.

Historically, family and marriage in Bangladesh are important institutions which perform many functions and play many important roles for human development and adjustment across the generations, as are many developing and underdeveloped societies. Several culture-specific studies in rural Bangladesh [46]–[63] reveal that family and marriage institutions in both the Muslim and Santal communities are generally shaped by patriarchal system through which marital tie between a male and a female is developed and after marriage every married woman goes to husband's house or husband's father's house where she is a subordinate and dependent member of the family due to prevail patriarchal authority and patrilocal marital norms. Although socio-demographic statuses such as age at marriage, family pattern, education, occupation, income etc. for both male and female in both rural and urban areas of Bangladesh are changing due to changes in social structure, most of the families of the communities in rural area are nuclear type and most of the parents of both the communities expect early age at marriage for their children, especially for the Muslim daughters due to keep virginity, where age, sex, couples' socio-economic status differences between husband and wife are higher. Although married women of the communities in lower class families play many roles a as housewife and work from dawn to dusk within and outside the family, the male heads of the families less value for their contributions. As a result, women of the communities, in general, may not participate in family decision-making. Although husband and wife' socio-cultural statuses are more or less the same, in one cross-cultural study, sampled 70 families for Muslim and 30 families for Santal, Uddin [63] reveals that the Muslim families prefer more authoritarian family structure in which the heads of the families, in most of the cases, make decisions without concern of their wives who are fully dependent on their partners within the families, while the Santal families practice more democratic or egalitarian family structure in which both the husband and wife take part in family decision-making due to both their economic independence and social-cultural freedom.

Although *culture-specific* and even *cross-cultural* studies on family communication patterns are increasing day by day due to seek for universality, to create awareness, accuracy and validity for cultural similarities and differences across the societies, to build up positive inter-cultural relations and to help service providers making policy and programs with which minority groups in multilingual and multicultural societies may skillfully adapt to intercultural situations, several studies [36], [37], [64] reveal that there is a paucity of cross-cultural information on family communication patterns in association with the familial socio-cultural factors across the ethnic groups in the Western and European cultures, in general, and in Bangladesh culture, in particular [63]. So, the present study may fill the knowledge gap to compare family communication patterns in relation to family socio-cultural status, especially marriage and family pattern, and couples' socio-economic status between Muslim and Santal communities in rural Bangladesh.

A community is a group of people who share the same belief system and behave in social situations accordingly [65, p.219]. Bangladesh is an agrarian economy based rural country where various ethnic communities, especially Muslim and Santal, live side by side. The *Muslims* are major dominant religious community covering 86% of the populations in Bangladesh [66]. Ethnically, Bangladeshi Muslims are *Sunni*, physically they are mixture of different stocks, and have common ordinary folks with the long traditions of beliefs and ideas traced from Arabian Muslim culture. They speak in *Bengali* language with the mixture of *Arabic-Urdu* preference. Religiously, they believe in Islam which includes oneness of God (Allah), *Monotheism (Tawhid),* Holy Qur'an as His

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Devine laws and principles, Muhammad (sm) as His nominated last Prophet and His *Hadith (Sunnah*) as practices of sayings [48], [61], [67]. Islam means "surrender", "resignation", and "submission" to Allah. A man, who submits to the will of Allah, is called a Muslim. This subjugation involves a total commitment in faith and obedience, and trust to this one God [68]. Because Islam affirms that Allah is almighty, omnipresent, and invisible sovereignty of the universe in which He is the only Creator, Master, and Sustainer of all living beings and objects, visible and invisible, and the every thing existed in the universe is operating and controlling by His planned order. The things He has created have identified as sacred and profane. The sacred things must be observed, required doing, and the latter is strictly prohibited and disapproved to the men and women who believe in Islam. In addition, He is possessed of purity, justice, virtue, mercifulness, etc. With these qualities He has created Adam and Eve from whom all human beings are generated and posited on the highest position of the living creatures are gradually evolved. So, He always call for His believers to act according to His guidances that have revealed in *Qur'an* and His nominated Prophet Muhammad (sm)'s *Sunna* [58], [61], [67]. These fundamental aspects of Islam not only influence ideas of man-nature relation, but also influence human relationships in the Muslim community. Actually, the Muslims all over the world strictly believe in hierarchical principles with which they arrange all living beings and non-living things according to their statuses. According to Islamic faith, God (Allah) occupies the highest position compared to the angels. Following this principle, the Prophets as human beings are the highest position compared to the other pious fellow beings, such as the males, the females, the junior and then the infra-humans.

On the other hand, the *Santal* community is the largest tribal group including 4% of the population in Bangladesh [66]. Racially, they belong to *Proto-Australoid* stocks and speak in *Austric-Mundary* group, and sometimes they speak in *Bengali* version with the *Bengali*-speaking people. They are called themselves *Hor,* which means man. Religiously, they believe in several *bongas.* A man who believes in different bongas is called a Santal. According to Bandyopadhyay [70, pp. 51-52]:

"*Towards the rising of Sun (East) was the birth of man. At first there was only water, and under the water there was earth. Then Thakur Jiu created the beings that live in water first, and thereafter he made two 'Has Hasil birds. Thakur called earthworm to bring earth. The earth was brought. Then Thakur sowed seeds of different kinks of plant. They grew up. Then two birds laid two eggs wherefrom two human beings were born, one boy and one girl. Then 'Has Hasil' took them to Hihiri Pipiri. The name of these two human beings was Haram and Ayo. Some people call them Pilchu Haram and Pilchu Budhi. They learned to prepare fermenting staff from Lita (Maran buru) and being drunk they had sexual intercourse, which led to the birth of seven boys and seven girls. Then all of them grew up and became pairs of their own accord. Haram and Budhi put one pair in each room. This is how their marriage was performed. After this, they also got children. Then they were divided into septs by Haram and Budhi who forbade marriage within the same sept. Then long time passed and they multiplied exceedingly. Thereafter, they went to Khoj Kaman. There mankind became bad and Thakur destroyed them by fire-rain excepting two who listened to Thakur's word. They were in the care of Harata Mountain. Those who got children were multiplied very much. Then they came from Harata Mountain to Sasan Beda"*

The Santal believe in *animism*, nature worships, which includes *polytheism* associated with the natural phenomena such as birth, death, illness, Sun, Moon, stars, rain, air, cyclone and other natural disasters that control human life, that are detrimental to human life, please them by worships. They firmly believe that natural phenomena are forces or spirits, which are Goddesses such as bongas. The chief *bongas* are *Marang buru, Mirolkoturoiko, Jahar era, Gosae era, Pagana bonga, and Manjhi bonga*. The first five bongas reside at the J*aherthan*, sacrificing grove found near their village and *Manjhi bonga* is located at the manjhithan inside the village. These bongas are national. The other bongas are regional such as *Sima bonga, Bahre bonga*, and the family bongas such as *Orak bonga, abge bonga*, and *ancestral bonga*. These bongas are hierarchically ordered Supreme Beings who control the way of Santal life [59], [62], [71].

Based on fundamental religious belief systems both the Muslim and the Santal communities design their respective social system and behave accordingly. Although the social system of the communities is patri-lineal, patriarchal and patri-local in nature in which they both prefer male dominance in all affairs of the family and community life, and women and children are subordinated and subjugated to men in many areas of human relations, Bangladeshi Muslims believe in more authoritarian and hierarchical human relations between male and female, between husband and wife, between parent and sibling, between senior and junior, between social classes with which they prefer social, religious, economic, political and cultural activities separately among the clusters of the community life [46]-[49], [51]-[61], [63], [72], while Bangladeshi Santals believe in more egalitarian human relations through which they jointly engage in social, religious, economic, political and cultural activities without discrimination between sexes, age grades and classes [50], [59], [62], [71]. These fundamental differences in human relations and social activities between Muslim and Santal communities create socio-cultural variations in marriage norms, family form, marital residence, couples' socio-economic status that may differentially influence family communication patterns between them [63].

### *A. Marriage Norms and Marital Age*

Marriage refers to rules or norms of socially and legally approved relationship between adult men and women who expect to have relatively enduring relationship involving economic cooperation, and allowing exclusive sexual relationship between them leading to child bearing and rearing [73]. Relevant studies [11], [36], [74], [75] reveal that a couple with romantic marriage and lesser marital age differences practice more democratic or egalitarian communication, because romantic partners are more informal, and have reciprocal love, fellow-feelings and companionship well-established compared to a couple with arranged marriage who follow more autocratic communication because of their

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formal relationship and higher marital age differences between them. Traditionally, conjugal or marital life between an adult man and an adult woman in Bangladesh begins at time when respective parents or elder members arrange their marriage according to communities' norms to gain marital and family purposes. Although both the communities prefer contracted marriage[1], the Santals widely practice romantic marriage[2] than the Muslims. According to Islamic rules before marriage an adult male and female cannot meet together, because it is sinful [48], [61]. In this respect relevant studies reveal that the Muslims prefer delayed marriage for males and earlier marriage for females due to keep chastity, beauty and male domination on female, while the Santals expect earlier age at marriage for both males and females due to social and economic reasons [59], [62], [63]. Especially, Sultana [62] in her culture-specific study found out that mean age at marriage for Santal husband and wife was 19.9 and 16.1 respectively and mean age difference between them was around 10.0. In another cross-cultural study Uddin [63] explored that mean age at marriage in the Muslim community was 22.92 for husband and 16.67 for wife compared to the Santal was 20.55 for husband and 15.08 for wife. The study also indicated that there were differences in age at marriage between husband and wife between two the communities: average year interval of age for the Muslim couples was 8.0, while it was 9.89 for the Santal Couples.

### *B. Family Pattern*

Every man is born and develops in *family of orientation*[3] and then after marriage a couple forms a *family of procreation*[4]. So, every of us is a member of many types of family, such as conjugal, nuclear, sub-nuclear or extended, depending on the environmental and socio-cultural situations. Relevant studies [39], [42], [76]-[78] reveal that communication patterns between husband and wife and even among members of the family may vary according to family patterns, such as family head, family form and marital residence. In the peasant economy, although Muslim culture prefers more *extended family type*[5], because they believe in *familism,* which means feeling of subordination of the individual goals to the family and belonging to the family for co-ordination of family activities to achieve family goals, support for family members, and maintenance of family continuity and the Santal couples prefer more *nuclear family type*[6] because of economic instability and poverty, several culture-specific studies reveal that most of the families in both the communities are nuclear type in nature because of economic instability, landlessness and mass poverty in rural Bangladesh [56], [57], [59], [61]-[63].

Residence refers to the rules by which a newly married couple after marriage resides with the bride or groom's parents' family. Decision about the place of residence is typically determined by community cultural rules that conform to one of the residences: *neolocal*[7]*, bilocal*[8]*, patrilocal*[9]*, and matrilocal*[10] [79, 1981, pp.353-354], depending on the environmental and socio-economic situations. Several studies indicate that a couple with neolocal or bilocal residence practices more democratic or egalitarian communication, while a couple with patrilocal or matrilocal residence follows more autocratic communication. Although both the communities in Bangladesh prefer patrilocal marital residence according to patriarchal norms, one cross-cultural study [63] indicated that most of the Muslim families (70 families) follow patrilocal marital residence, but most of the Santal (30 families) were bilateral, because most of the Santal were 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.

### *C. Family Socio-Economic Status*

Socio-economic status is an assessment of statuses that take into accounts a person's income, education, and occupation characteristics within the family or in wider community life [68, p. 209]. With the socio-economic status factors, a person's position in the family and the community is not only considered, but also is assessed interpersonal influence in the social networks in which he or she lives. Several studies reveal that socio-economic status factors have pervasive influences on family communication patterns [26], [27], [44]. Although both the Muslim and Santal communities have specific rules through which the members within the family occupy certain kinship statuses with which they play important roles for family maintenance, there are wide cultural variations in family role distribution and socio-economic status achievement between male and female, especially between husband and wife between the communities. Relevant studies indicate that about 76% of the people live in rural area of Bangladesh whose main occupation is agriculture based on land, but land-man ratio is very low and about 62% of the rural households are functionally land less or near the land less due to over population and land fragmentation. As a result, most of the people, irrespective of all communities, live in poverty. Minority groups such as, Hindu, Santal, Oraon, and Mahali are the poorest of the poor [80], [81]. Although most of the Muslim and Santal in rural Bangladesh live in poverty in which there are no differences in division of labor among the children in both the communities: the children

[1] Marital arrangement in which parents or elder members of the family select mates of their son or daughter with or without concerned of his or her.

[2] Marital arrangement in which marital partners fall in love and select themselves as mates for marriage.

[3] a family unit in which someone is born and reared as a son and daughter.

[4] a family unit formed by a newly married couple.

[5] a family form where three or more generations live.

[6] a family form where one or two generations live.

[7] a norm of residence in which newly married couple establishes residence separate from those of both sides of parents.

[8] a norm of residence in which a newly married couple establishes residence with or near the parents of either spouse.

[9] a norm of residence by which a married couple lives with the husband's parents' family or husband family.

[10] another norm by which a couple lives with the wife's parents' family.

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(under 15) of both the sexes do petty work in the fields, in cattle tending, collection of cow dung, firewood, growing and selling vegetables, in doing paid work as a child laborer and domestic servant [82, p.191), there are marked differences in division of labor between adult men and women between the communities. Both the Santal adult men and women take part in agriculture and any other fields of operations as manual labor inside and outside the family [71, p.129], [83, p.890], whereas division of labor in the Muslim is strictly maintained among the adult males and females according to sex norms. The Muslims think adult men should be only the breadwinners of the family. So the Muslim men work in agricultural field, petty trade and business, and other formal and informal organizations. Generally, Muslim women do not work on the agricultural field and 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, although the women in the lower class families work outside the family under economic pressure for maintaining the family [53], [54], [84, p.56].

However, both the Santal adult men and women and even children are economically independent and each of them enjoys much social freedom, and maintains autonomy and takes part in social activities within and outside the family either singly or jointly. So, both the husband and wife take part in family decision-making process in which Santal women have great influence on their counterpart, husbands [59, p.67], [62], although legitimate power remains with them. On the other hand, elderly male member, especially husband in the Muslim family dominates family all affairs. In most of the cases husband makes family decisions without concerns of his dependent wife and other members within the family [63]. According to research reports, Muslim women, in some families, have no social identity; they in the kinship position are known as daughter, wife, mother, and grandmother of someone [61, p.53]. 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 family decision-making process. So, they cannot influence their male partners as the Santal women do [52], [63]. Based on comprehensive relevant literatures review, however, the study broadly assumes that there are significant differences in family communication patterns associated with family socio-cultural status, especially the marriage and family pattern, and couples' socio-economic status between Muslim and Santal communities in rural Bangladesh.

## II. Data and Methods

### A. Participants

In order to compare family communication patterns in relation to marriage and family pattern, and couples' socio-economic status between Muslim and Santal communities in rural Bangladesh, 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 purposes, two separate sampling units were developed: one for Muslim and another for Santal. Each community 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, where both the sample husband and wife of the communities, whose mean age range 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 samples respectively, actively participated for the study purpose. This sample procedure to select the samples was more appropriate to create homogeneity among the samples within cluster community and to make differences between the two samples of the two communities.

### B. Variables and Measures

In order to valid cross-cultural comparison the family communication patterns in relation to marriage and family pattern, and the couples' socio-economic statuses used as exogenous variables between the Muslim and Santal communities in rural Bangladesh, were measured in the following ways:

*Community* was measured nominally and coded 1= Muslim and 2 = Santal. *Age* and also marital age of respondents, husband and wife was counted in year. *Sex of respondents was* measured nominally and coded 1= Husband and 2= Wife. *Family and marriage pattern Characteristics* were included as family type, marital arrangement and residence patterns which were nominally measured and categorized. Family type coded 1= Nuclear Family and 2= Extended Family; Marital arrangement coded 1= Romantic, and 2= Arranged/Contractual, and residential pattern coded 1= Patrilocal, 2= Matrilocal, 3= Bilocal. *Couples' Socio-Economic Characteristics* were measured and coded by both categorical and numerical values, such as husband's occupation (1= farming only, 2= farming + employment, 3= farming + business, 4 = day laboring and 5 = van + rickshaw pulling), wife's occupation (1= housewife only, 2 = housewife + day laboring, 3 = maid servant, 4 = others), education was measured in years and yearly family income in Taka respectively.

*Family Communication Patterns* used as endogenous variables were nominally measured and categorized as 1= Autocratic Communication, 2= Democratic Communication and 3= Egalitarian Communication in the family.

### C. Instrument and Procedure

The survey study design used in this study was cross-cultural one in which both qualitative and quantitative (Subjective and objective) aspects of exogenous (Family

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socio-cultural background variables) and endogenous factors (family communication patterns) were considered for formulation of questionnaire. Based on the exogenous factors, especially family head, marital arrangement, marital age difference between husband and wife, family type, marital residence, husband and wife's education, occupation, family income and the endogenous factors such as family communication patterns: autocratic communication, democratic communication and egalitarian communication, semi-structural questionnaire with open-ended and close-ended questions was designed, followed from *Handbook of Family communication* edited by A.L. Vangelisti [33], Uddin's [63] cross-cultural study, and *Family Measurement in India* edited by S. Bharat [85] with which interview technique in consideration of respondents' socio-cultural status factors was applied for data collection.

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 of the communities' 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 in order to establish research reliability. 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 with the questionnaire. 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 in agricultural field. So, the necessary data were collected by author at afternoon when the husbands of the Muslim and both the husband and wife of the Santal 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 to each couple were given for further contact. In so doing the author conversed in *Bengali* language with the respondents because the respondents of both the communities 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. The analysis of collected data was carried out by using SPSS, especially with the techniques of descriptive statistics, especially Pearson's Chi-Squire test was applied to find out variations in family communication patterns, and bivariate correlation technique, especially Spearman's correlation coefficients were used to know the strength of relationships between family socio-cultural status (marriage: marital arrangement and age difference between husband and wife, family pattern: family head, family form, marital residence, and the couples' socio-economic status: education, occupation, and income) and the family communication patterns. These statistical techniques used for making the differences in family communication patterns and the co-variations or strength of relationships between the exogenous and endogenous variables were more relevant, because most of the exogenous and especially endogenous variables were categorical (qualitative) in nature. The findings of the analysis were presented by cross-tabulation.

### *D. Reliability*

The responses on family communication patterns in relation to family socio-cultural status characteristics given by the selected respondents were reliable in the sense that the interview technique with the semi-structural questionnaire schedule 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.[11] 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 [86, pp. 408-410], [87, p. 153]. 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 statistical methods to test reliability of collected data, this research followed 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.

## III. Results

### *A. Differences in Family Communication Patterns*

Both Muslim and Santal communities' social systems were patriarchal, patrilocal 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 community social life, about 56.55% of the Muslim practiced autocratic communication in the family, while 27.27% of the Santal

[11] 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.

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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 I). 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, $p<0.01$, $p>0.05$).

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

| Family Communication Patterns | Muslim | Santal | Total | $X^2$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Freq | Freq | | |
| Autocratic Communication | 82 | 39 | 121 | |
| Democratic Communication | 46 | 70 | 116 | |
| Egalitarian Communication | 17 | 34 | 51 | 25.90 |
| Total | 145 | 143 | 288 | *, ** |

Note: Freq= Frequency, * $p<0.01$, ** $p<0.05$

*B. Differences in Family Socio-Cultural Status and Family Communication Patterns*

Actually, differences in family communication patterns depend on the respective communities' socio-cultural orientations, especially family socio-cultural statuses, such as marital arrangement, age difference between husband and wife, family pattern: family type and authority distribution, residential norms, and couple's socio-economic status within the family. These factors of family socio-cultural status of both the communities studied may differentially influence family communication patterns in the study village.

*1. Marital Arrangement and Age Difference*

Table II and III represent data on family communication patterns in relation to marital arrangement and age difference between husband and wife by Muslim and Santal community. Table II reveals that most of the Muslim couples were married by arranged marriage, while most of the Santal were married by romantic marriage (17.24% for romantic and 82.76% for arranged marriage for the Muslim and 63.64% for romantic and 36.36% for arranged marriage for the Santal respectively). Table 3 shows that age at marriage to access in marital life for both husband and wife of the Santal culture is earlier than that the Muslim's husband and wife[12]. Table II also shows that the Muslim couples with arranged marriage practiced more autocratic communication (44.14%) rather than democratic communication (27.59%) and egalitarian communication (8.28%), while the Santal couples with romantic marriage followed more democratic communication (35.66%) rather than autocratic (14.69%) or egalitarian (13.29%) communication.

TABLE II
RESULTS OF SPEARMAN'S CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS BETWEEN MARITAL ARRANGEMENT AND FAMILY COMMUNICATION PATTERNS BY MUSLIM (N=145) AND SANTAL (N=143), KALNA, BANGLADESH, 2007

| Marital Arrangement | Family Communication Patterns | | | | | | $r_s$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Muslim | | | Santal | | | |
| | A | D | E | A | D | E | |
| Romantic | 14 | 6 | 5 | 21 | 51 | 19 | -.17* |
| Arranged | 64 | 40 | 12 | 18 | 19 | 15 | (.00) |
| Total | 82 | 46 | 17 | 39 | 70 | 34 | |

Note: A= Autocratic, D=Democratic, E=Egalitarian, * $p<0.01$

TABLE III
RESULTS OF SPEARMAN'S CORRELATIONS COEFFICIENTS BETWEEN AGE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HUSBAND AND WIFE AND FAMILY COMMUNICATION PATTERNS BY MUSLIM (N=145) AND SANTAL (N=143), KALNA, BANGLADESH, 2007

| Age Difference in Year | Family Communication Patterns | | | | | | $r_s$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Muslim | | | Santal | | | |
| | A | D | E | A | D | E | |
| 1-5 | 29 | 15 | 5 | 19 | 31 | 12 | .03* |
| 6-10 | 44 | 26 | 12 | 18 | 34 | 19 | (.54) |
| 11-15 | 5 | 3 | - | - | - | - | |
| 16+ | 4 | 2 | - | 2 | 5 | 3 | |
| Total | 82 | 46 | 17 | 39 | 70 | 34 | |

Note: A= Autocratic, D=Democratic, E=Egalitarian,
*Not significant at any level

In addition, the Muslim couples with the age difference in 1-5 and 6-10 years followed more autocratic communication (20% and 30.34%) than democratic (10.34% and 17.93%) and egalitarian communication (3.45% and 8.28%), but the Santal couples with the criterion practiced more democratic communication (23.78%) than the autocratic (13.29% and 12.39%) and egalitarian family communication (8.39% and 13.29%) respectively (see Table III). However, the results of Spearman's correlation coefficients suggest that there were significantly negative relation between marital arrangement and family communication patterns ($\mathbf{r_s}$= -.177, $p<0.01$, $p<0.05$), although the relationship between age difference between husband and wife and family communication patterns was not significantly correlated.

*2. Family Pattern*

Table IV, V and VI presents data on family patterns (family head, family type and marital residence) in relation to family communication patterns by Muslim and Santal community. Table IV shows that most of the family head of both the communities were husband/father and the least of them were

[12] In 15 and below age group about 17% of the Santal husbands were married, while no Muslim's husbands did marry in that age group. In 16-20, 21-25 and 26-30 age groups marital frequency of the Muslim husbands were higher than that the Santal husbands, although in 30 and above age group marital frequency of the Santal husbands (9.79%) was slightly higher than that the Muslim husbands (8.28%). Data in the table 2 reveal that age differences between the husbands and wives are slightly different between the communities. That is frequency of minimum age interval (1-5 years) between husband and wife of the Santal (43.36%) was higher than that the Muslim (33.79%), while the frequency of maximum age differences (6+ years) between husband and wife of the Muslim (66.21%) was higher than that the Santal (56.64%).

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either wife/mother or grand father. Data presented in the table clearly show that the Muslim families with the headship of husband/father rather than wife/mother or grand father followed more autocratic communication (51.72%) than democratic (28.97%) or egalitarian communication (8.97%), but the Santal families with the head of husband/father practiced democratic communication (44.06%) than autocratic (23.78%) or egalitarian communication (20.28%). In terms of family type, Table V shows that the Muslims with nuclear family rather than joint family practiced more autocratic communication (55.86%) than democratic communication (29.66%) or egalitarian communication (10.34%), while the Santals practiced more democratic communication (39.86%) than autocratic (23.08%) or egalitarian communication (16.78%). In addition, although both the communities preferred patrilocal marital residence, other residence patterns such as matrilocal or bilocal marital residence were also prevailed in the study village. Table VI shows that the Muslim couples with the marital residence patterns, especially patrilocal residence followed more autocratic communication (47.59%) than democratic (24.83%) or egalitarian family communication (9.66%). On the other hand, the Santal couples with the residence patterns practiced more democratic communication (32.87%) rather than autocratic (9.09%) or egalitarian family communication (17.48%). However, the results of Spearman correlation coefficients suggest that only the family type rather than family head and marital residence of both the communities had significantly positive relation with the family communication patterns prevailed ($\mathbf{r_s}$= . 135, $p< 0.05$).

TABLE IV
RESULTS OF SPEARMAN'S CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS BETWEEN FAMILY HEAD AND FAMILY COMMUNICATION PATTERNS BY MUSLIM (N=145) AND SANTAL (N=143), KALNA, BANGLADESH, 2007

| Family Head | Family Communication Patterns | | | | | | $\mathbf{r_s}$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Muslim | | | Santal | | | |
| | A | D | E | A | D | E | |
| Husband | 75 | 42 | 13 | 34 | 63 | 29 | .13* |
| Wife | 4 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 4 | (00) |
| G. Father | 3 | - | 1 | 3 | 3 | 1 | |
| Total | 82 | 46 | 17 | 39 | 70 | 34 | |

Note: A= Autocratic, D=Democratic, E=Egalitarian,
* Not significant at any level

TABLE V
RESULTS OF SPEARMAN'S CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS BETWEEN FAMILY TYPE AND FAMILY COMMUNICATION PATTERNS BY MUSLIM (N=145) AND SANTAL (N=143), KALNA, BANGLADESH, 2007

| Family Type | Family Communication Patterns | | | | | | $\mathbf{r_s}$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Muslim | | | Santal | | | |
| | A | D | E | A | D | E | |
| Nuclear | 81 | 43 | 15 | 33 | 57 | 24 | .13* |
| Joint | 1 | 3 | 2 | 6 | 13 | 6 | (.00) |
| Total | 82 | 46 | 17 | 39 | 70 | 34 | |

Note: A= Autocratic, D=Democratic, E=Egalitarian,
* Not significant at any level

TABLE VI
RESULTS OF SPEARMAN'S CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS BETWEEN RESIDENCE PATTERNS AND FAMILY COMMUNICATION PATTERNS BY MUSLIM (N=145) AND SANTAL (N=143), KALNA, BANGLADESH, 2007

| Residence Patterns | Family Communication Patterns | | | | | | $\mathbf{r_s}$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Muslim | | | Santal | | | |
| | A | D | E | A | D | E | |
| Patrilocal | 69 | 36 | 14 | 13 | 47 | 25 | .08* |
| Matrilocal | 1 | 2 | - | 4 | 14 | 4 | (.17) |
| Bilocal | 12 | 8 | 3 | 4 | 9 | 5 | |
| Total | 82 | 46 | 17 | 39 | 70 | 34 | |

Note: A= Autocratic, D=Democratic,
E=Egalitarian,* Not significant at any level

*3. Family Socio-Economic Status*

Table VII, VIII and IX represents data on family communication patterns associated with family socio-economic statuses, especially husband and wife education and occupation statuses, and family income by Muslim and Santal community[13]. The data in the tables show that the Muslim families' socio-economic status was slightly higher than that the Santal families. With these family socio-economic status factors the autocratic family communication rather than democratic or egalitarian family communication was more prevailed in the Muslim families compared to the Santal families adopted more democratic family communication than the autocratic or egalitarian family communication. Table VII clearly shows that the Muslim husbands with farming rather than other occupations practiced more autocratic family communication (37.24%) rather than democratic communication (20%) or egalitarian communication (11.59%), but the Santal husbands with day laboring rather than other occupations followed more democratic family communication (41.1%) than the autocratic (23.78%) or egalitarian family communication (21.68%). In terms of wife's occupation, the Muslim families with housewives followed more autocratic family communication (55.17%) than democratic (31.03%) or egalitarian family communication (11.03%), while the Santal families with housewives + day laboring practiced more democratic family communication (44.76%) than autocratic (24.48%) or egalitarian family communication (21.68%). These occupational statuses of the respondents were the significantly positive relation with the family communication patterns ($\mathbf{r_s}$= .197, for Husband's occupation and $\mathbf{r_s}$= .265, for wife's

[13] Although master occupation of the respondents was farming, most of the Muslim husbands (66%) and the least of the Santal husbands (14%) were engaged in farming. The rest of them adopted other occupations, such as petty trade, day laboring (7% for Muslim and 85% for Santal) because of landlessness (30% for Muslim and 86% for Santal respectively) and poverty. In wife's occupation, cent percent of the Muslim wives were only housewives, but the wives of the Santal were both housewives and day laborers. In education most of the respondents were totally illiterate. Some of them completed primary and secondary education. In yearly family income, most of the families earned from10 to TK. 20 thousands. (31% for Muslim and 80% for Santal); 27% of the Muslim and 16% of the Santal earned TK.21-30 thousands, and about 40% of the Muslim and 3% of the Santal families were 31-50 and above thousands. However, family income of the Muslim families, however, was higher than that of the Santal families.

occupation, p<0.01). Likewise, illiteracy and even low rate of education and income also influence more autocratic family communication in both the communities. Table VIII and IX show that the Muslim couples with their illiteracy and 1-5 years of education rather than higher rate of literacy and family income practiced more autocratic family communication than the democratic or egalitarian family communication, but the Santal families with these characteristics followed more democratic family communication than the autocratic or egalitarian family communication. However, the results of Spearman's correlation coefficients suggest that there were the significantly negative relations between family socio-economic status and family communication patterns, because $\mathbf{r_s}$= -.108, p<0.05 for husband's education, $\mathbf{r_s}$= -.142, for wife' education, at both p<0.01 and p<0.05 levels and $\mathbf{r_s}$= -.164, p< 0.01 for family income for both the communities.

TABLE VII
RESULTS OF SPEARMAN'S CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS BETWEEN HUSBAND AND WIFE'S OCCUPATION AND FAMILY COMMUNICATION PATTERNS BY MUSLIM (N=145) AND SANTAL (N=143), KALNA, BANGLADESH, 2007

| Hus & Wife Occu. | Family Communication Patterns | | | | | | $\mathbf{r_s}$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Muslim | | | Santal | | | |
| | A | D | E | A | D | E | |
| *Hus. Occu.* | | | | | | | .19* |
| Farming | 54 | 29 | 11 | 3 | 7 | 3 | (.00) |
| Employment | 7 | 1 | 1 | - | - | - | |
| Business | 11 | 7 | 5 | 2 | 3 | - | |
| Day Labor | 6 | 5 | - | 34 | 60 | 31 | |
| Van Pulling | 4 | 4 | - | - | - | - | |
| Total | 82 | 46 | 17 | 39 | 70 | 34 | |
| *Wife Occu.* | | | | | | | .26** |
| H. W. O. | 80 | 45 | 16 | 4 | 6 | 13 | (.00) |
| H. W.+ D. | 1 | - | 1 | 35 | 64 | 31 | |
| M. S. | 1 | 1 | - | - | - | - | |
| Total | 82 | 46 | 17 | 39 | 70 | 34 | |

Note: Hus. Occ. = Husband Occupation, Wife Oc.= Wife Occupation, Employ= Employment, H. W. O.= Housewife Only, HW+D.= House Wife+ Day Laboring, M.S.= Maid Servent, A=Autocratic, D= Democratic, E= Egalitarian, * p<0.01, ** p<0.01

TABLE VIII
RESULTS OF SPEARMAN'S CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS BETWEEN HUSBAND AND WIFE'S EDUCATION AND FAMILY COMMUNICATION PATTERNS BY MUSLIM (N=145) AND SANTAL (N=143), KALNA, BANGLADESH, 2007

| Hus & Wife Education in Year | Family Communication Patterns | | | | | | $\mathbf{r_s}$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Muslim | | | Santal | | | |
| | A | D | E | A | D | E | |
| *Hus. Edu.* | | | | | | | -.10* |
| Illitarate | 22 | 9 | 7 | 18 | 40 | 17 | (.03) |
| 1-5 | 35 | 24 | 8 | 20 | 29 | 14 | |
| 6-10 | 23 | 12 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | |
| 11+ | 2 | 1 | 1 | - | - | - | |
| Total | 82 | 46 | 17 | 39 | 70 | 34 | |
| *Wife Edu.* | | | | | | | - |
| Illiterate | 35 | 12 | 8 | 19 | 40 | 27 | .14** |
| 1-5 | 37 | 29 | 8 | 20 | 30 | 17 | (.00) |
| 6-10 | 10 | 5 | 1 | - | - | - | |
| 11+ | - | - | - | - | - | - | |
| Total | 82 | 46 | 17 | 39 | 70 | 34 | |

Note: Hus. Edu.= Husband Education, Wife's Edu= Wife's Education, A=Autocratic, D= Democratic, E= Egalitarian, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01 and p<0.05

TABLE IX
RESULTS OF SPEARMAN'S CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS BETWEEN YEARLY FAMILY INCOME AND FAMILY COMMUNICATION PATTERNS BY MUSLIM (N=145) AND SANTAL (N=143), KALNA, BANGLADESH, 2007

| Yearly Family Income in Thousand | Family Communication Patterns | | | | | | $\mathbf{r_s}$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Muslim | | | Santal | | | |
| | A | D | E | A | D | E | |
| 10-15 | 6 | 5 | 3 | 18 | 24 | 13 | -.16* |
| 16-20 | 18 | 12 | 2 | 16 | 31 | 17 | (.00) |
| 21-25 | 11 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 8 | 1 | |
| 26-30 | 13 | 9 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 3 | |
| 31+ | 34 | 16 | 8 | - | 4 | - | |
| Total | 82 | 46 | 17 | 39 | 70 | 34 | |

Note: A=Autocratic, D= Democratic, E= Egalitarian, * p<0.01

## IV. DISCUSSION

### A. Family Communication Patterns

Family communication is the functional prerequisite to meet basic human needs and human adaptation to environment. Gudykunst and Lee [37] indicate that community ethnic identity and their cultural patterns may influence family communication patterns. In order to compare family communication patterns associated with marital arrangement and age difference between husband and wife, family pattern (family head, family type, marital residence) and family socio-economic status (couples' occupation, education, income), 288 couples (145 couples from the Muslim and 143 couples from the Santal) were randomly selected through cluster sampling. Although both the communities believe in patriarchal social system, most of the Muslim families with hierarchical and authoritarian/totalitarian norms preferred more autocratic family communication (56.55%) than democratic (31.72%) or egalitarian family communication (11.73%), but the Santal families with the less hierarchical and more democratic norms widely practiced more democratic family communication (48.65%) than the other types of family communication, such as autocratic (27.27%) or egalitarian communication (23.78%) respectively. The results of Pearson's Chi-Squire test as well as Spearman's correlation coefficients suggest that there were significant differences in family communication patterns in association with the marital arrangement, family pattern and family socio-economic status between the Muslim and Santal communities in the *Kalna* village of Bangladesh. The findings of the study are supported by several cross-cultural studies [35]-[45], [63]. These studies clearly indicated that the family heads with the Western and European cultural background where democratic or egalitarian norms were prevailed in the

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families followed more democratic or egalitarian family communication, while the family heads with Asian cultural background where totalitarian/authoritarian/collectivistic norms were existed in the families adopted more autocratic family communication.

*B. Family Socio-Cultural Status and Family Communication Patterns*

*1. Marital Arrangement and Age Difference*

Marital arrangement and age differences between husband and wife in marriage influence family communication patterns [11], [36], [74], [75]. Although frequency distribution between marital arrangement and age differences by Muslim and Santal suggest that the Santal couples with more romantic marriage than arranged marriage practiced more democratic communication than autocratic or egalitarian communication because of their informality and less age differences, reciprocal love, fellow-feelings and companionship well-established before and after marriage in relationship compared to the Muslim couples with arranged marriage and higher age differences between husband and wife followed more autocratic communication because of their formal relationship, although the present study explored that there were significantly negative relation between marital arrangement and family communication patterns ($\mathbf{r_s}$= -.177, p<0.01, p<0.05) and the relationship between age differences between husband and wife and family communication patterns was not significantly correlated [63].

*2. Family Pattern*

Family patterns including family head, family form and post marital residence are also important factors which influence family communication patterns [39]-[42], [77], [78]. In this family pattern context such as family head, family type, residence pattern, although the descriptive statistics, especially frequency distribution reveal that the Muslim husband/fathers followed more autocratic family communication than democratic or egalitarian family communication, while the Santal family heads practiced more democratic family communication than autocratic or egalitarian family communication, the results of Spearman correlation coefficients suggest that only the family type rather than family head and marital residence of both the communities had significantly positive relation with the family communication patterns prevailed ($\mathbf{r_s}$= . 135, p< 0.05). In this connection Fincham [75] indicated that family communication patterns emerge from the processes by which families create a shared social reality with which each type of the family: intact or non-intact characterizes distinct communication behavior for the different areas of family life, such as decision-making or conflict resolution.

*3. Family Socio-Economic Status*

Family socio-economic status may also influence nature and patterns of family communication [27], [44]. The present study explored that the Muslim husbands with farming and wives with housewives practiced more autocratic family communication rather than democratic family communication or egalitarian family communication, but the Santal husbands with day laboring and wives with day laboring + housewives followed more democratic family communication than the autocratic or egalitarian family communication. These occupational statuses of the respondents of both the communities were the significantly positive relations with the family communication patterns ($\mathbf{r_s}$= .197 for Husband's occupation and $\mathbf{r_s}$= .265 for wife's occupation, p<0.01). In addition, the Muslim couples with their educational background and family income practiced more autocratic family communication than the democratic or egalitarian family communication, but the Santal couples with these characteristics followed more democratic family communication than the autocratic or egalitarian family communication that were the significantly negative relations between husband and wife' education status, family income and family communication patterns, because $\mathbf{r_s}$= -.108, p<0.05 for husband's education, rs= -.142, p<0.01/ p<0.05 for wife' education and rs= -.164, p< 0.01 for family income for both the communities. These findings are supported by several [53], [54], [59], [61], [63], [71], [84] Studies. Especially, Uddin's cross-cultural study [63] and others [61] found out that although most of the families of both the communities in rural Bangladesh were poor, the adult men in the Muslim families were only the income earner and the married women were the housewives who would bear and rear children, maintain family chores, serve family members and observe purdah in the families, while both the Santal adult men and women did take part in agriculture and any other fields of operations as manual labor inside and outside their families. As a result, both the Santal adult men and women and even children were economically independent and each of them would enjoy much freedom and autonomy and would take part in social activities. So, both the husband and wife would take part in family decision-making process in which Santal women had great influence on their counterpart, especially the husbands, although legitimate power would remain with them [59], [62]. On the other hand, husbands in the Muslim families would dominate family affairs. In most of the cases the husbands would make family decisions without concerns of their wives and other members within the family, because of their economic dependency on husbands or fathers and only kinship identity such as wives, son, daughter etc.

## V. Conclusion and Implications

The present study explores and compares family communication patterns between Muslim and Santal communities in rural Bangladesh. The findings of the study suggest that the Muslim families preferred more autocratic way of communication than democratic or egalitarian communication, but the Santal families preferred more democratic communication than autocratic or egalitarian communication pattern that were significant differences

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between the communities, both positively and negatively influenced by the respective community's family socio-cultural background variables, such as marital arrangement, family type, husband and wife occupation, education and family income in rural Bangladesh. These findings are consistent with the previous researches conducted by several researchers [35]-[45], [63]. These findings of the study may contribute to communication literatures in cross-cultural perspective. Moreover, these findings may also have a number of implications for the provision of social services and further research.

The findings of the study seem to be imperative for policy-makers and professional practitioners at various social science disciplines, such as social work, sociology, anthropology, political science, communication and information, psychology, Public administration to understand and acquire the knowledge and ideas of family communication patterns in cross-cultural perspective and then the knowledge and experiences may help design to social policy and programs on family communication patterns considering community socio-cultural contexts, such as the Muslim and the Santal. These social policy and programs associated with communication problems within and between cultural contexts may help professional practitioner to apply communication knowledge and experiences for direct practices, because relevant research experiences suggest that democratic or egalitarian communication rather than autocratic communication within and between cultural contexts was more helpful or fruitful for sound decision-making, proper human development, strengthened interpersonal relationship, social role performances, conflict resolution within and outside the family environment, and highly adaptive capacity development [35]-[44]. In addition, the findings are also imperative for further research in cross-cultural perspective which communication pattern of the autocratic, democratic and egalitarian communication is more satisfactory for proper human development, intra and/or intercultural relations and successful human adaptation in the multilingual and multicultural societies.

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