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EXPLORING SOFT POWER POTENTIALS OF BANGLADESH: RESOURCES, LIMITATIONS AND OPTIONS

Abstract

With the end of the Cold War, soft power has started to get prominence in international arena. Consequently, there is a growing awareness amongst big and small states to pursue soft power in order to achieve their foreign policy objectives. In this respect, this paper explores the soft power potentials of Bangladesh. Since its inception in 1971, Bangladesh's foreign policy embeds the principle of peace and friendship to all and malice to none. It also encompasses the strive for renunciation of the use of force in international relations and for general and complete disarmament. In all, foreign policy of Bangladesh does not advocate the use of hard power. Given this backdrop, this paper argues that the concept of soft power offers a golden possibility for small states like Bangladesh to gain its foreign policy objectives by marking its footprints globally and regionally. This can only be achieved once it undertakes necessary steps to transform its soft power resource capacity into soft power capability. Based on these arguments, the paper explores the potential resources of Bangladesh's soft power and its limitations. The paper ends with an exposition of possible options to develop its soft power capability further.

1. Introduction

The 21st century is marked by extensive deployment of soft power in international politics. Though the concept of soft power was only developed in 1990s, it has gained considerable currency in recent times. It has moved from the world of academia to the front-page of newspapers and the speeches of political leaders.¹ Both big² and small³ states are using soft power not only to play a major role in global

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¹ Parama Sinha Palit, *Analysing China's Soft Power Strategy and Comparative Indian Initiatives*, New Delhi: SAGE Publications, 2017, pp. 1-5.

² It refers to those states which are recognised as having the ability and expertise to exert their influence on a global scale. These states possess military, economic as well as diplomatic strength at the same time. In other words, it also refers to those states that have giant territorial size among their common neighbours.

³ A comparison of global and regional configurations of states of the world shows that several countries appear small when they are surrounded by states with much larger powers. Netherlands, Poland, Norway,

affairs but in some cases to mark their footprints in international politics as well. Much of the United States of America's (USA) seemingly unipolar dominance comes from its soft power resources such as Fulbright scholarship, diverse visa programme, Cable News Network (CNN), MacDonalD's, Microsoft and Hollywood.⁴ In order to compete with USA's soft power, China is spending billions in its own soft power programmes and has set up 322 Confucius Institutes spreading across 96 countries.⁵ India, which in turn is competing with China, has also taken to the promotion of soft power through setting up Nehru Centres and Indira Gandhi Centres and providing scholarships across the world.⁶

As big states race to accumulate soft power, small states are also exploring their potential soft power capacities. Hard power, which uses the method of "carrot and the stick", in fact, is not in the disposal of small states.⁷ Consequently, small state has severe deficit in hard power vis-à-vis big powers. In such cases, sometimes the expected results can be achieved by attracting others rather than using intimidation and coercion.⁸ There is question on whether without hard power, soft power is useful in the conduct of foreign policy of small states. In fact, having inadequate hard power does not make the small states' soft power weaker directly. But its weakness in hard power decreases a country's potential of using soft power in combination with hard power as both are necessary ingredients of smart power.⁹ So, small states, due to their limited hard power are unable to use their soft power as a part of smart power. The presence of hard power is not integral for soft power in the conduct of foreign policy.

There are plenty of examples where smaller states, with lesser hard power resources, have exercised soft power in various ways and succeeded. Norway captured the world's attention when it negotiated Oslo Accords in 1993 to end Palestinian-Israeli conflict by deploying Norwegian "Soft Power" diplomacy.¹⁰ Singapore has

South Korea, Singapore and Bangladesh appear as fairly large powers in global perspective. But in their respective region, they look small. It is true that none of these states is a small state in the strict sense of the term. Nevertheless, because of the sheer gigantic size of their common neighbours, all these states obviously appear to be small states, no matter how big they are in size or population compared with other smaller states in the international system. For details see, Shaheen Afroze, "Small States in Global Perspective: In Search of a Role Model in Regional Stability", in Mohammad Humayun Kabir (ed.), *Small States and Regional Stability in South Asia*, Dhaka: The University Press Limited, 2005, p. 27.

⁴ Henry H. Sun, "International Political Marketing: A Case Study of United States Soft Power and Public Diplomacy", *Journal of Public Affairs*, Vol. 8, No. 3, 2008, pp. 165-183.

⁵ David Shambaugh, "China's Soft-power Push", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 94, No. 4, 2015, pp. 99-107.

⁶ Shashi Tharoor, "India as a Soft Power", *IIC Quarterly*, Vol. 35, No. 1, 2008, pp. 32-45.

⁷ MA. Gjenis Haxhimehmeti, "The Soft Power of Small Countries: Kosovo Challenges and Potentials Based on the Experience of Switzerland and Slovenia", *ILIRIA International Review*, Vol. 5, No. 1, 2015, pp. 337-350.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Alan Chong, "Small State Soft Power Strategies: Virtual Enlargement in the Cases of the Vatican City State and Singapore", *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 23, No. 3, 2010, pp. 383-405.

¹⁰ Md Sarwar Hossain, "Soft Power Aspirations and Bangladesh", *Dhaka Times*, 15 April 2014.

consistently been ranked amongst the most competitive small economies¹¹ and is keeping a strong stance of diplomatic boldness at international forums. Again, Thailand has successfully integrated tourism with medical treatment and traditional massage attracting tourists in great numbers from around.¹² South Korea has gained influence on global audiences through Korean Pop (K-pop), as illustrated by pop artist Psy's "Gangnam dance" that overtook the world. In the multi-dimensional and interdependent world, no country is staying behind in using their soft power resource. As a small state, it is also crucial for Bangladesh to endeavour its soft power capacity. In this respect, this paper limits its scope to explore the soft power potentials of Bangladesh.

Since its inception in 1971, Bangladesh foreign policy has been guided by the principle of "Friendship to all, malice to none". This remains primary driving force of Bangladesh foreign policy.¹³ Fundamental principles that Bangladesh always sought to uphold in its foreign policy are: to work for national sovereignty and equality, non-interference in internal affairs of other states, peaceful settlement of international disputes and respect for international law and principles.¹⁴ Principally, it encompasses: strive for renunciation of the use of force in international relations and for general and complete disarmament; support for the cause of world peace; uphold the cause of the United Nations (UN); opposition to all forms of colonial oppression and discrimination and support for people fighting for liberation and human rights etc.¹⁵ It reflects that foreign policy of Bangladesh since independence does not advocate the use of hard power. Peace is the cornerstone of Bangladesh's foreign policy. In this respect, this paper argues that the concept of soft power offers a golden possibility for Bangladesh to achieve its foreign policy objectives by marking its footprints among international community. But it can only be achieved once Bangladesh undertakes necessary step to transform its soft power capacity (potential resources that Bangladesh has at its disposal) to soft power capability (ability to utilise those resources successfully in the conduct of foreign policy). While soft power resource capacity could be a necessary condition, soft power capability is a sufficient condition for soft power to come into effect.

Given this backdrop, this paper is an attempt to explore the soft power potentials of Bangladesh. The paper is qualitative in nature. It examines existing literatures on soft power that come from varieties of sources e.g., government and non-government documents, academic journals, books and newspaper articles. It

¹¹ Esther Teo, "Singapore Retains Spot as most Competitive Asian Economy: Report", *The Strait Times*, 15 March 2017.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ M. Morshed Khan, "Foreign Policy Dimension: Issues, Options and Directions", in Abul Kalam (ed.), *Bangladesh in the New Millennium*, Dhaka: The University Press Limited, 2004, p. 59.

¹⁴ Sajid Karim and Mohammad Jasim Uddin, "Foreign Policy of Bangladesh", *BIISS Journal*, Vol. 37, No. 4, 2016, pp. 339-362.

¹⁵ Shaheen Afroze, *op. cit.*

also relies on semi-structured interview of the purposively selected respondents. The interviewees from academic and practitioners backgrounds are selected based on their expertise on the issue. For the convenience of the discussion, the paper is divided into five major sections including introduction and conclusion. The second section comprehensively discusses the soft power concept. The third section discusses potential soft power resources of Bangladesh. The fourth section assesses limitations of Bangladesh's soft power and suggests ways to use the resources to its optimum level. The fifth section concludes the paper.

2. Concept of Soft Power

In the field of international relations, power is one of the central, crucial and most discussed concepts. Power can be defined as "the ability to achieve an individual or organisation's purposes or goals as well as the ability and strength to influence the behaviour of others to get desired outcome."¹⁶ During the Cold War era, this ability to obtain the outcomes one desires was often linked with the possession of material resources such as population, industrial, economic and military power and natural resources. These parameters have traditionally been the benchmarks of applying hard power in international politics.¹⁷ However, with the passage of time, the concept of power in international politics has become diffused. Due to globalisation, economic interdependence, rise of non-state actors, spread of technology, non-traditional security threats and changing political issues, the concept of soft power arrived in the world politics.¹⁸ This section, by conceptualising the soft power, gives a working definition and an analytical framework to understand the soft power potentials of Bangladesh.

Although the term "soft power" was first coined by Joseph Nye Jr., the idea of soft power is not a modern invention; rather it can be found in the earlier writing of both western and non-western scholars. Yin Fan argues that the concept of soft power can be found in the works of Hans J. Morgenthau, Klaus Knorr and Ray Cline. He states that Morgenthau has identified national character, national morale, the quality of diplomacy and the quality of government among his concept of nine elements of national power.¹⁹ Both Fan and Palit note that Carr's concept of 'power of opinion' is closely linked with soft power. Carr understood 'power of opinion' as abilities of countries to condition the opinions of others.²⁰ Other famous western thinkers such

¹⁶ Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye, *Power and Interdependence: World Politics in Transition*, Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1977, p. 11.

¹⁷ Mithlesh Jayas Mukherji, "India's Rising Soft Power: Implications for India's Relations with Its Southern Asian Neighbours", *World Focus*, Vol. XXXVI, No. 8, 2015, pp. 102-110.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Ying Fan, "Soft Power: Power of Attraction or Confusion?", *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy*, Vol. 4, No. 2, 2008, pp. 147-158.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

as Foucault, Bourdieu, Gramsci and Habermas have also articulated soft power in implicit and contextual fashions.²¹

On the other hand, the root of soft power as an idea in the non-western philosophy goes even further back. Sun Tzu (544-496 BC) - a Chinese military strategist - advocated winning a battle without a fight 2500 years ago. Confucius (551-479 BC) wisdom also proclaims that the ruler should win the allegiance of people with virtue (soft power) not by force (hard power).²² There is also historical existence of soft power in Indian statecraft, showcased in books like *Mahabharata*, *Manusmriti* and *Arthashastra*.²³

The great credit of Joseph Nye Jr. is that he had summarised the ideas that were provided by the earlier scholars and brought them under a framework. He is also acknowledged for the popularity of soft power concept in the modern era, which he established through his works in, *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power*²⁴, *The Paradox of American Power: Why the World's only Superpower Cannot Go Alone?*²⁵, *Soft power: The Means to Success in World Politics*²⁶ and *The Future of Power*.²⁷

Joseph Nye Jr. noted that by the beginning of 1990s, the traditional hard power resources were becoming less important and there was rise of power of private actors and small states. He identified five trends that contributed to this diffusion of power: economic interdependence, transnational actors, nationalism in weak states, the spread of technology and changing political issues. In this context, Nye coined the term soft power or co-optive power.²⁸

Nye defines power as, "the ability to alter the behaviour of others to get what you want."²⁹ He states that a country can affect others' behaviour in three ways: coercion (by the use of threats/military domination), payment (by inducing with rewards/economic influence) and attraction (attract and co-opt to get people to perform desired actions/influence through cultural and societal link).³⁰ He describes

²¹ Parama Sinha Palit, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

²² Yan Fan, *op. cit.*

²³ Parama Sinha Palit, *op. cit.*, pp. 210-211.

²⁴ Joseph S. Nye, *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power*, New York: Basic Books, 1990.

²⁵ Joseph S. Nye, *The Paradox of American Power: Why the World's Only Superpower Cannot Go Alone?*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.

²⁶ Joseph S. Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, New York: Public Affairs, 2004.

²⁷ Joseph S. Nye, *The Future of Power*, New York: Public Affairs, 2011.

²⁸ Joseph S. Nye, "Soft Power", *Foreign Policy*, Vol. 80, 1990, pp. 153-171.

²⁹ Joseph S. Nye, "Think Again: Soft Power", *Foreign Policy*, 23 February 2006, available at <http://foreignpolicy.com/2006/02/23/think-again-soft-power/>, accessed on 25 January 2018.

³⁰ Joseph S. Nye, *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power*, *op. cit.*; Joseph S. Nye, "Soft power", *Foreign Policy*, *op. cit.*; Joseph S. Nye, "Think Again: Soft Power", *op. cit.*; Joseph S. Nye, "Public Diplomacy and Soft Power", *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 616, No. 1, 2008, pp. 94-109.

the third way as soft power.³¹ Over the years, Nye has provided a number of ways to define soft power. He described soft power as the ability of a country to influence the thinking of another country by using the attractive value of its culture, common values, political system and societal make-up as well as economic prowess.³² In his 2004 book, Nye described soft power in a number of ways, including “the ability to shape the preferences of others” or “the ability to get others to want the outcome you want because of your cultural or ideological appeal.”³³ Again, Nye defined soft power as the ability to get preferred outcomes through co-optive means of agenda-setting, persuasion and attraction.³⁴ The common theme in all these definitions is that soft power means using one’s appeal to persuade other actors to gain one’s desired end.

According to Nye, soft power capacity is based on three main resources: its culture (in places where it is attractive to others), its political values (when it lives up to them at home and abroad) and its foreign policy (when they are seen as legitimate and having moral authority). He has also defined each of the three resources. For him, ‘culture’ is the “set of values and practices that create meaning for a society”³⁵, which can be manifested through high culture (such as higher education) and low culture (such as popular culture). He refers ‘political values’ as the domestic and international policies of a government. The values that are promoted by a government in its domestic and international arena are part of this. ‘Foreign policy’ on the other hand, refers to the ways in which government formulates goals and works to pursue them.³⁶ Later, he has also discussed the importance of economic power as an important part of soft power framework.³⁷

Joseph Nye also provided a model to show how the soft power resources can be translated into impact. In his model, he identified that the resources are converted into soft power through policy tools, conversion skill and target response.³⁸ The conversion process can be shown through following figure:

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² Joseph S. Nye, *Bound to Lead : The Changing Nature of American Power*, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

³³ Joseph S. Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, *op. cit.*

³⁴ Joseph S. Nye, *The Future of Power*, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 6-31.

³⁷ Joseph S. Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, *op. cit.*

³⁸ Joseph S. Nye, *The Future of Power*, *op. cit.*

Figure: Conversion of Soft Power Resources to Behaviour (Outcomes)



Source: Joseph S. Nye, *The Future of Power*, New York: Public Affairs, 2011, p. 100.

Along with Nye, a number of other scholars have also contributed to the concept of soft power. According to Kurlantzick, soft power includes not only popular culture and public diplomacy but also more coercive economic and diplomatic levers like aid and investment and participation in multilateral organisations.³⁹

Gallarotti, on the other hand, represents soft power as a form of meta-power. He describes meta-power as “situations in which power relations themselves are embedded within some greater constellation of social relations that influence those relations and thereby influence final outcomes that derive from the interactions among actors and greater set of social relations can skew the bargaining space in favor of the compliant actor.”⁴⁰ He has also provided a list of domestic and international sources of soft power, which is much broader than the Nye’s. The list of sources is given through following table:

³⁹ Joshua Kurlantzick, *Charm Offensive: How China’s Soft Power is Transforming the World*, New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2007, p. 6.

⁴⁰ Giulio M. Gallarotti, “Soft Power: What It is, Why It’s Important, and the Conditions under Which It Can be Effectively Used”, *Journal of Political Power*, Vol. 4, No. 1, 2011, p. 12.

Table: Foundations of Soft Power

International Sources	Domestic Sources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect for international laws, norms and institutions • Fundamental reliance on multilateralism and disposition against excessive unilateralism • Respect for international treaties and alliance commitments • Willingness to sacrifice short-run national interests in order to contribute towards the collective good • Liberal foreign economic policies 	<p>Culture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Pronounced social cohesion -Elevated quality of life -Freedom -Sufficient opportunities -Tolerance -Alluring lifestyle <p>Political institutions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Democracy -Constitutionalism -Liberalism/Pluralism -A well functioning government <p>Bureaucracy</p>

Source: Giulio M.Gallarotti, "Soft Power: What It is, Why It's Important, and the Conditions under Which It Can be Effectively Used", *Journal of Political Power*, Vol. 4, No. 1, 2011, p. 23.

Since the last decade, there has been a sharp increase in the non-western academic discourse on soft power. From the Chinese perspective, soft power is relative, intangible and uncontrollable and has entailed more of cultural diplomacy.⁴¹ Additionally, it is also characterised by its pronounced economic content, diaspora, role of mass media⁴², public diplomacy, foreign policy and institutions⁴³, multilateral diplomacy⁴⁴, overseas assistance programme, Chinese development model and good-neighbourly policy.⁴⁵ In China, two schools of thought have developed on soft power: one is cultural school and another is political school. Cultural school argues that the soft power is based on its cultural brands. On the other hand, the political school insists on the priority of participation in international institution building, strategic alliance with key partners and domestic reforms to balance economic development and social welfare.⁴⁶ Studies indicate both similarities and dissimilarities between China's and Nye's concepts of soft power. Both give emphasis on the three fundamentals: cultural diplomacy, multilateral

⁴¹ Parama Sinha Palit, *op. cit.*, pp. XVII-30.

⁴² Ingrid d'Hooghe, *The Rise of China's Public Diplomacy*, Netherlands: Netherlands Institute of International Relations, 2007, p. 18.

⁴³ Kingsley Edney, Stanley Rosen and Ying Zhu (eds.), *Soft Power with Chinese Characteristics: China's Campaign for Hearts and Minds*, UK: Routledge, 2018.

⁴⁴ Yao Xu, "Communication Methods of Public Relations and China's Soft Power Building", *News Frontline*, Vol. 93, No. 7, 2007.

⁴⁵ Zheng Yongnian and Zhang Chi, "Soft Power in International Politics and an Observation of China's Soft Power", New Delhi: SAGE Publication, 2017, p. 30.

⁴⁶ Saurav Sarma, "China's Soft Power Dilemma", *World Focus*, Vol. XXXIII, No. 7, 2012, pp. 65-72.

diplomacy and overseas assistance programmes.⁴⁷ However, deviating from Nye's core positions, Chinese perspective argues that the sources of soft power come from three dimensions⁴⁸: institutional power⁴⁹, identifying power⁵⁰ and assimilating power.⁵¹ From Indian perspective, soft power lies among other things *e.g.*, in its democratic credentials, secular values, pluralistic society, considerable pool of English speaking professionals, Bollywood movies, food and handicrafts, diaspora, tourism, free media, its independent judiciary, dynamic civil society and impressive struggle for human rights.⁵²

Unlike big states, few authors have talked about soft power of small states. Authors who write on small states soft power argue that the concept of soft power can be applied to any states *e.g.*, big, medium and small states that are able to influence others in multiple ways rather than militarily.⁵³ Nye describes that three types of countries can gain soft power *e.g.*, those whose cultures and ideals are closer to dominant global norms; those who are proficient in multiple channels of communication and so have more influence over the framing of issues; and those who are perceived as credible due to their domestic and international performance.⁵⁴ Nye's work remains particularly concerned about the use of USA's soft power. However, difficulties arise when applying Nye's soft power framework directly in the context of small states like Bangladesh.

Authors who worked on soft power of big or small states considered several resources in their analytical framework. These resources have been pertinent in the context of particular country. As for example, Alan Chong identified political economy potential, models of good governance and diplomatic mediation to analyse soft power of Vatican City State and Singapore.⁵⁵ Likewise, Kevin D. Stringer considered diplomatic, informational, cultural and economic elements to understand the soft power of Liechtenstein.⁵⁶ It is difficult to follow a single author's analytical framework to understand the soft power potentials of Bangladesh as no two small states are completely alike in their soft power capacity (potential resources *e.g.*, political, cultural, economic and institutional that a country has at its disposal). Additionally, the concept of soft power is dynamic and expansive as new elements are incorporated by

⁴⁷ Parama Sinha Palit, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

⁴⁸ Li Mingjiang, "China Debates Soft Power", *Chinese Journal of International Politics*, Vol. 2, 2008, pp. 287-308.

⁴⁹ It refers to a state's ability to propose or build new international institutions or arrangements.

⁵⁰ It refers to a state's ability to influence other states through the latter's recognition of its leadership role.

⁵¹ It refers to the attraction of a state's cultural values, ideology and social system.

⁵² David Malone, "Soft Power in Indian Foreign Policy", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. XLVI, No. 36, 2011, pp. 35-39; C. Raja Mohan, "Indian Diaspora and Soft Power", *The Hindu*, 06 January 2003.

⁵³ Jacqueline Anne Braveboy-Wagner, "Small Power Influence: An Oxymoron? The Case of Trinidad and Tobago", paper presented at FLASCO-ISA, Buenos Aires, Argentina, 23-25 July 2014.

⁵⁴ Joseph S. Nye, *The Paradox of American Power: Why the World's Only Superpower Cannot Go Alone?*, *op. cit.*, pp. 20-25.

⁵⁵ Alan Chong, *op. cit.*, pp. 383-405.

⁵⁶ The Centre for Small States Studies, *Sovereign Liechtenstein: The Soft Power Projection of a Very Small State*, Iceland: University of Iceland, 2013.

scholars and academicians regularly,⁵⁷ which must also be taken into consideration for a comprehensive discussion.

Thus, the analytical framework employed for this paper is the construct of soft power by synthesising different scholar's analytical framework, mentioned above, in the context of Bangladesh. For the purpose of the paper, a working definition is provided here. Soft power is defined as the ability of a state to serve its national interest by increasing its positive image globally and influencing the decision of other actors (both state and non-state) without using hard power (coercion). Additionally, soft power may also be manifested through influencing the negotiating agenda at the global stage. This paper identifies political values, cultural resources, diplomacy, economic engagement and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) as pertinent resources for analysing potential soft power capacity of Bangladesh. The analytical framework also identifies three requirements for five resources to constitute soft power base of the country: (a) appeal to and/or recognition from the relevant international audience (b) institutional arrangements that help not only promote but also utilise soft power resources and (c) success in terms of leveraging soft power resources in the conduct of foreign policy.

3. Bangladesh's Soft Power Resources

Each country has some unique resources which have to be used for their advantage in soft power. Bangladesh is no different. It has unique cultural heritage and traditions and well recognised political values and NGOs. Additionally, it is doing well in practicing certain sorts of diplomacy *e.g.*, peacekeeping diplomacy, climate diplomacy and humanitarian diplomacy. All these can be considered as soft power capacity of Bangladesh. While assessing soft power of Bangladesh, it is necessary to assess both its soft power capacity and capability. It is not enough to have soft power resources. Resources need to be channelled to have real impact through soft power capability.

3.1 Political Values

In the soft power discourse, political values are the combination of a state's internal political system and political culture, compatibility of its ideology with the dominant global values and quality of leadership of individuals. Much of a nation's image in a foreign country depends on the political values that a state holds. Bangladesh's political values emphasise on peace, secularism, nationalism, democracy, gender equality and women empowerment, no use of force in international relations and complete disarmament, religious tolerance and socialism. Among these values, several values have the potential to constitute soft power base for the country.

⁵⁷ Interview with Rashed Uz Zaman, Professor, Department of International Relations, University of Dhaka, 2018.

Bangladesh is a land where people of many religions and ethnicity are living with each other in harmony. Because of this political traits, western politicians refer to Bangladesh as a “moderate” as well as a “non communal” country.⁵⁸ President of the Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue in Vatican, Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran, recognised Bangladesh “as an example of how it is possible for people of different religions to live together, cooperate together and simply be together.”⁵⁹ In order to confirm this political value, the constitution of Bangladesh assures religious rights to its citizens as it states, “It provides for the right to profess, practice or propagate any religion”. Article 28 (1) of the Constitution of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh says, “The State shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth.”⁶⁰ To maintain diversity and peace, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina settled the Hill Tracts insurgency over 25 years through a peace agreement in 1997.⁶¹ Additionally, to sustain religious tolerance, government of Bangladesh shows ‘zero tolerance’ for terrorism and militancy. Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) unit was formed as a part of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police in 2014.⁶² Besides, Bangladesh joined the Global Community Resilience Fund (GCERF) as a pilot country to prevent violent extremism. It is also collaborating with the UN for the implementation of the United Nations Secretary General’s Plan of Action on Violent Extremism.⁶³

Gender equality is another important recognised constitutional political value. Bangladesh has continued its signature national endeavour of women’s empowerment and development and utilisation of women as agents of peace. In recognition of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina’s admirable leadership in women empowerment, she received the ‘Planet 50-50 Champion’ from the UN-Women 71st United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). She received the ‘Agent of Change’ recognition from the Global Partnership Forum. She was also invited by the director general of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to attend the Global Women Leaders’ Forum in Sofia, Bulgaria in May 2016 as a keynote speaker and guest of honour. Women in Parliament (WIP) and UNESCO awarded her with the ‘WIP Global Forum Award’ for her leading role in reducing gender gap in political sphere in South and Southeast Asia in 2015 and ‘Tree of Peace Award’ for promotion of girls’ and women’s education in September, 2014.⁶⁴ To promote gender equality and women empowerment as a

⁵⁸ Golam Sarwar Chowdhury, “A Moderate Muslim Country!”, *The Daily Star*, 06 April 2010.

⁵⁹ Harun ur Rashid, “Bangladesh, a Model of Communal Harmony”, *Bottom Line*, 11 May 2011.

⁶⁰ Article 28, *Constitution of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh*, available at http://bdlaws.minlaw.gov.bd/sections_detail.php?id=367§ions_id=24549, accessed on 18 January 2018.

⁶¹ Shakhawat Liton, “CHT Peace Accord: Achievement Sinks in Negligence”, *The Daily Star*, 02 December 2016.

⁶² Zaid Kalam, “Interactive: Bangladesh’s Fight against Militancy Gained New Grounds in 2017”, *The Daily Star*, 03 January 2017.

⁶³ “Foreign Policy Milestones of Bangladesh in 2016”, available at <https://turningpoints.bdnews24.com/2017/foreign-policy-milestones-of-bangladesh-in-2016/>, accessed on 18 January 2018.

⁶⁴ “Sheikh Hasina Accolades with 18 Awards, 9 Honorary Doctorate degrees”, available at <http://en.ntvbd.com/bangladesh/10501/Sheikh-Hasina-accolades-with-18-awards-9-honorary-doctorate-degrees>,

political value, Bangladesh has already undertaken certain initiatives e.g., reserved 50 seats for women in the national parliament, 10 per cent quota for gazetted and 15 per cent for non-gazetted post and 33 per cent positions of all committees in the political parties, established Joyeeta Foundation to promote women entrepreneurship, ratified Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1984 and sent two Female Police Units (FPUs) to the UN Peacekeeping Missions in Haiti and Democratic Republic of Congo.⁶⁵

In its resolve to contribute to international peace, Bangladesh continues to support 'no use of force' in international relations and total disarmament. The UN has widely acclaimed its initiatives to uphold peace in South Asia and beyond.⁶⁶ In order to promote its longstanding position for peace, non-violence and disarmament, Bangladesh has taken certain initiatives. At the 66th UNGA, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina presented a peace model named "People's Empowerment and Development" which was accepted by the UN as a resolution. Bangladesh pioneered the UN Culture of Peace resolution adopted in the 52nd session of the General Assembly in 1997 which proclaimed the year 2000 as "International Year for Culture of Peace." It also pioneered the initiative to declare 2001-2010 as the "International Decade of Culture of Peace and Non Violence for the Children of the World".⁶⁷ It entered into partnerships with Russia, India and Japan for peaceful uses of nuclear energy.⁶⁸ It has also joined in voicing concern over the resurgence of the use or the threat of use of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs) involving chemical, biological and radioactive materials. It was elected as a member of the Executive Council of the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) for the 2016-18 terms.⁶⁹ On the domestic front, Bangladesh has initiated national legislation for disarmament treaties (for example, the Biological and Toxic Weapons Convention). Additionally, as an effort to ensure the peaceful use of chemical materials, it hosted the Asian Chemical Congress in Dhaka in 2017.⁷⁰

Religious tolerance, communal harmony, gender equality and non-violence in international relations are relevant to the foreign policy of Bangladesh in two ways. Firstly, these internationally well recognised political values help in defending the viability of statehood as alternative is the humiliation of foreign intervention.

accessed on 15 May 2017.

⁶⁵ Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, "Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's Commitment Gender Equality and Women Empowerment", available at https://mowca.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/mowca.portal.gov.bd/publications/e3a8842d_ab43_42f8_91b1_2e18356cd888/Women%20Empowerment%20%20Flyer%20Final%20%2002102016.pdf, accessed on 15 May 2017.

⁶⁶ Md Shariful Islam, "Exploring Soft Power of Bangladesh", *Kutniti*, 02 October 2015, available at kutniti.com/index.php/2015/10/02/exploring-soft-power-of-bangladesh/, accessed on 28 February 2016.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ Dipanjan Roy Chaudhury, "India, Russia, Bangladesh Sign Tripartite Pact for Civil Nuclear Cooperation", *The Economic Times*, 01 March 2018.

⁶⁹ "Bangladesh Elected EC Member of OPCW", *The Independent*, 16 May 2018.

⁷⁰ "Foreign Policy Milestones of Bangladesh in 2016", *op. cit.*

Secondly, circulation of these political values through regime norms and political discourses aligned to its allies and friendly international organisations certainly has brought its usual partners closer and created new areas of partnership through mutual understanding, cooperation and shared benefits. Religious tolerance is vital for Bangladesh's economy as the country's largest share of foreign earnings comes from remittances sent by Bangladeshi migrant workers residing in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries.⁷¹ Circulation of religious tolerance and communal violence through the Bangladesh government's ideological stance has significantly influenced Bangladesh-India relations since 2009. Many agreements have been signed between the two countries especially in security arena. Such cooperation has reduced mutual mistrust and suspicion between them.⁷²

3.2 Cultural Resources

Cultural resources basically refer to both unique tangible and intangible assets which are able to attract others by creating positive image of the country. Bangladesh is a country of diversified culture enriched with cultural resources.⁷³ Historical, archaeological and natural sites, arts and crafts, language, literature, movies, sports, music, dance, cuisine etc., all are part of its cultural resources. Among these enormous cultural resources, certain resources constitute soft power base of the country.

The 1952 Language Movement and 1971 Liberation war of Bangladesh are major cultural keystones with international recognition. 98 per cent of Bangladeshi population speaks in Bengali⁷⁴ and it is the only country which has history of protesting and sacrificing lives for their mother tongue. UNESCO has declared 21st February as the International Mother Language Day by recognising the significance of language movement.⁷⁵ The historic 7th March speech of the Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, has been included in the Memory of the World International Register. It is a list of the world's important documentary heritage maintained by UNESCO.⁷⁶

Bangladesh has a rich tradition of folk songs. *Bhatiali*, *Baul*, *Marfati*, *Murshidi* and *Bhawaiya* are the most prevalent in its folk songs collection. Additionally, lyricists like Lalon Shah, Hason Raja, Kanganal Harinath, Abbas Uddin have enriched the traditional folk culture of Bangladesh. In 2008, UNESCO enshrined Bangladesh's Baul songs in

⁷¹ Sajid Karim and Mohammad Jasim Uddin, *op. cit.*

⁷² Bhumitra Chakma, "Sheikh Hasina Government's India Policy: A Three-level Game?", *Journal of Asian Security and International Affairs*, Vol. 2, No.1, 2015, pp. 27-51.

⁷³ Interview with Amena Mohsin, Professor, Department of International Relations, University of Dhaka, 2018.

⁷⁴ Reece Jones, "Searching for the Greatest Bengali: The BBC and Shifting Identity Categories in South Asia", *National Identities*, Vol. 10, No. 2, June 2008, p. 157.

⁷⁵ BBC Media Action, "Country Case Study: Bangladesh", available at <http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/mediaaction/pdf/bangladesh.pdf>, accessed on 25 February 2017.

⁷⁶ "UNESCO Recognises Bangabandhu's 7th March Speech", *The Daily Star*, 31 October 2017.

its representative list of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.⁷⁷ Fancy pots, fancy dolls, *nakshi kantha*, *nakshi pakha*, *nakshi shika*, *rickshaw* art, terracotta slabs, *Jamdani* and *Muslin* cloth are the examples of the rich folk art and craft of Bangladesh. UNESCO has declared *Jamdani* handicraft as sole tradition and intangible cultural heritage of Bangladesh.⁷⁸ Besides, traditional art of *Shital Pati* weaving of Sylhet has been included in the UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) of Humanity. The recognition came at the 12th session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the ICH.

Bangladesh has numerous historical, archaeological and natural sites, the world's longest natural sandy sea beach Cox's Bazar, world's single largest mangrove forest Sundarbans, the Saint Martin Island, Kuakata beach, tea gardens of Sylhet, Paharpur, Mahasthangarh and Mainamati.⁷⁹ Among these sites the Sundarbans, Historic Mosque in the city of Bagerhat and Ruins of the Buddhist Vihara at Paharpur have been declared by UNESCO as World Heritage Site in Bangladesh.⁸⁰ Mahasthangarh is recognised as a SAARC Cultural Capital for the year 2017.⁸¹ Additionally, traditional festival and cuisine are important elements of soft power. *Pohela Boishakh*, celebrated on 14th April each year, is one of the traditional festivals and a tool of Branding Bangladesh. Celebration of this festival is incomplete without the colourful possession known as *Mangal Shobhajatra* which, in 2016, UNESCO recognised as an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.⁸² Bangladeshi cuisines (*Rasmalai*, *Rasgulla*, *Chingri Malai Curry*, *Panta bhat* with hilsa, hilsa with mustard, *bakarkhani*, *kachchi* and *pakki biryani*, *haleem*, mutton *bhuna khichuri*) are powerful agents for shaping public perception. Hilsa gets recognition of Geographical Indication (GI) product and modern day sweet brand, Premium Sweet, is spreading in Canada, Australia and the US.⁸³

In order to promote and utilise these internationally recognised cultural resources, Bangladesh has undertaken certain initiatives. It signed cultural exchange programme with China for the year 2009 to 2012 and with India for the year 2015 to 2017. It also signed Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) and cultural agreements with countries of East Asia and the Pacific like China, Japan and South Korea.⁸⁴ The

⁷⁷ "UNESCO Recognition of Baul Songs, Jamdani Celebrated", *The Independent*, 25 February 2018.

⁷⁸ Md. Nawrose Fatemi, "Folk Arts and Crafts of Bangladesh-their Uniqueness in *Naksha*", paper presented in the National Workshop on *Implementation of the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) in Bangladesh*, organised by UNESCO, Dhaka, 17-20 July 2013.

⁷⁹ Wahida Shahan Tinne, "Nation Branding: Beautiful Bangladesh", *Asian Business Review*, Vol. 2, No. 1, 2013, pp. 31-36.

⁸⁰ Sanjay Chandra Roy and Mallika Roy, "Tourism in Bangladesh: Present Status and Future Prospects", *International Journal of Management Science and Business Administration*, Vol. 1, No. 8, 2015, pp. 53-61.

⁸¹ Rajib Kanti Roy, "Mahasthangarh: The SAARC Cultural Capital", *Daily Sun*, 20 January 2017.

⁸² "UNESCO Lists *Mangal Shobhajatra* as Cultural Heritage", *The Daily Star*, 01 December 2016.

⁸³ Md. Sarwar Hossain, *op. cit.*

⁸⁴ "Agreements/MoUs between Bangladesh & the Countries of East Asia and Pacific", available at <http://www.mofa.gov.bd/media/agreementsmous-between-bangladesh-countries-east-asia-and-pacific>,

External Publicity Wing of Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), since 2010, has also undertaken initiatives like “Visit Bangladesh” programme to promote Bangladesh’s cultural heritage. Under this, foreign journalists visit Bangladesh for 7-8 days. The wing also publishes book reflecting the rich culture and history of Bangladesh. In 2016, it arranged a photo exhibition in collaboration with Shilpakala Academy. Later, those photos were incorporated in a book named “1971 Emergence of A Nation: A Multimedia Exhibition” and it was circulated in foreign missions abroad. Besides, Bangladesh Embassies also arrange different events every year in order to celebrate International Mother Language Day, Victory Day, *Pohela Boishakh* keeping the cultural heritage in mind.

Cultural resources contribute to the foreign policy of Bangladesh in two ways. Firstly, it contributes to Bangladesh’s economy through cultural tourism. The World Tourism Organization defines cultural tourism as a discrete product category that is differentiated from other tourism activities or attractions by consumption of a destination’s tangible and intangible cultural heritage.⁸⁵ According to the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), the total contribution of travel and tourism to Bangladesh’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was US\$ 10.6 billion, 4.3 per cent of GDP in 2016, and is to rise by 7.1 per cent to US\$ 22.6 billion, 4.7 per cent of GDP in 2027. In 2016, the total contribution of travel and tourism to employment was 3.8 per cent of total employment. This is expected to rise by 1.8 per cent in 2027. Bangladesh has generated US\$ 140.0 million, 0.4 per cent of total exports in 2016 through visitor’s exports. This is likely to grow by US\$ 324.2 million in 2027.⁸⁶

Secondly, cultural resources facilitate an environment conducive for negotiation and cooperation through practicing cultural diplomacy. Culture as a diplomatic component is nothing new. It is closely interlinked with the diplomatic history. It refers to the “the exchange of ideals, information, values, systems, traditions, beliefs and other aspects of culture among nations.”⁸⁷ Cultural diplomacy through utilising cultural resources can help Bangladesh to foster mutual understanding, create trust and positive image about itself. It will also help Bangladesh to build broad support for economic and political goals and promote national interest. Additionally, it will aid in changing the policies or political environment and prevent, manage and mitigate conflict with the target nation.

accessed on 18 March 2017.

⁸⁵ Md. Wahidur Rahman, “Cultural Tourism and Bangladesh: An Overview”, *Bangladesh Research Publications Journal*, Vol. 7, No. 1, 2012, pp. 6-15.

⁸⁶ World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), “The Economic Impact of Travel and Tourism March 2017”, available at <https://www.wttc.org/-/media/files/reports/economic-impact...2017/world2017.pdf>, accessed on 18 April 2017.

⁸⁷ Institute for Cultural Diplomacy, available at www.culturaldiplomacy.org/index.php?en, accessed on 18 January 2017.

3.3 Diplomacy

Diplomacy is the art and practice of conducting negotiations between representatives of states and international organisations in the conduct of international relations.⁸⁸ Bangladesh has been pursuing multiple sorts of diplomacy e.g., peacekeeping diplomacy, humanitarian diplomacy, energy diplomacy, regional diplomacy, climate diplomacy, cultural diplomacy, host diplomacy and maritime diplomacy in order to advocate its national interest, economic development and image. Among these, certain sorts of diplomacy have the potential to constitute soft power base of the country.

In the context of Bangladesh, peacekeeping diplomacy could mean diplomatic apparatus to have a constructive role to play in UN peacekeeping missions in order to participate and contribute to the maintenance of global peace and security. As of December 2017, there are 7,246 Bangladeshi troops and police personnel in 10 UN peacekeeping missions around the world,⁸⁹ making it the second largest contributor of troops and police in UN peacekeeping in 2017.⁹⁰ It is recognised as a leader in UN peacekeeping operations. “Bangladesh troops lead global peacekeeping”- the headline of *Al Jazeera* on 29 May 2012 is a good example of how peacekeeping missions got recognition from international audience.⁹¹ The contribution of Bangladesh has been recognised several times in the Security Council. In recognition and appreciation to the contribution made by the Bangladeshi peacemakers, Sierra Leone has declared Bangla as their 2nd language and Liberia has named one of their capital’s major streets after Bangladesh. Even a few African countries have set up schools naming Bangladesh.⁹²

Bangladesh has undertaken several initiatives in order to promote and utilise its image in UN peacekeeping mission. As the Chair of the UN Peacebuilding Commission in 2012, Bangladesh organised the first ever summit level meeting of the Commission in New York on the sideline of 67th UNGA session. The meeting was chaired by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. To ensure longer-term peacebuilding and sustainable development, she mobilised support of global political leadership towards incorporation of a peacebuilding perspective in the mandates of the peacekeeping operations.⁹³ In line with Bangladesh’s commitment to this, it is in the process of establishing ‘Bangladesh Peacebuilding Centre’ to develop specialised capacity for a

⁸⁸ Ronald Peter Barston, *Modern Diplomacy*, New York: Routledge, 2014, pp. 17-20.

⁸⁹ United Nations Peacekeeping, “Bangladesh: Three Decades of Service and Sacrifice in UN Peacekeeping”, available at <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/bangladesh-three-decades-of-service-and-sacrifice-un-peacekeeping>, accessed on 26 January 2018.

⁹⁰ “Reception of Bangladesh 30 Years of Peacekeeping”, available at <https://www.un.org/pga/72/2018/04/25/reception-of-bangladesh-30-years-of-peacekeeping/ars-of-peacekeeping/>, accessed on 22 May 2018.

⁹¹ Md Shariful Islam, *op. cit.*

⁹² “Why Bangla is an Official Language in Sierra Leone”, *Dhaka Tribune*, 28 May 2018.

⁹³ “Bangladesh’s Diplomatic Role in UN Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding”, *Saudi Gazette*, 28 May 2018.

range of peace building activities including electoral management, administrative, judicial and security sector reforms, human rights promotion and protection, disaster management, women's empowerment and socio-economic development. Bangladesh is also currently developing a National Strategy on Peace Support Operations to provide general guidance for coordination and capacity-building to add further value to Bangladesh's participation in UN-led peace-support operations.⁹⁴

Bangladesh's peacekeeping diplomacy has become relevant in the conduct of foreign policy in several ways. First, it will allow Bangladesh to place its nationals in key positions in international organisations, to influence in shaping the international system and to enhance its prestige and standing in the international community. Consequently, Bangladesh's clout in international and multilateral settings will grow accordingly and it will be able to attract greater economic assistance and foreign investment for its economy. Second, it allows Bangladesh to develop relations with the conflict-prone regions and countries. As for example, the economic relations between Bangladesh and Sierra Leone have been largely influenced by the contribution of Bangladesh forces as part of UN Peacekeeping mission in Sierra Leone.⁹⁵ Third, the interpersonal aspect of international peacekeeping is most recognised in the form of technical training. Bangladesh's participation in peacekeeping operations provides a good opportunity for countries to test their equipment in harsh settings. Particularly, they get to know how more advanced armies operate as they are exposed to many different systems of military management and equipment of other countries.

Climate diplomacy could mean the diplomatic apparatus of Bangladesh to project its vulnerability due to global climate change at international forums in order to increase its influence in international climate change policy and on negotiation processes. Bangladesh has already gained some reputation for its efforts in climate negotiations. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has received the 'United Nations Champion of the Earth' award for her "outstanding leadership on the frontline of climate change".⁹⁶ Bangladesh has also become a leading voice among the least developed countries in the Conference of the Parties (COPs). Alice Baillat⁹⁷, in her doctoral dissertation titled "The Weak Power in Action: Bangladesh Climate Diplomacy" highlighted Bangladesh's climate leadership role. The ministerial level meeting of the Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF) held in 2011 in Bangladesh speaks about the success of Bangladesh in climate negotiations.⁹⁸

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ "4 Years Bengal Agro Project as US\$ 39m Bangladeshi Investment Poured for Agriculture", *Awoko*, 28 May 2018.

⁹⁶ "Hasina Receives Champions of the Earth Award", *Prothom Alo*, 28 September 2015, available at <http://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/news/80823/Hasina-receives-Champions-of-the-Earth-award>, accessed on 26 June 2017.

⁹⁷ Alice Baillat is Research Fellow at *Institut de Relations Internationales et Stratégiques* where she works for the new Observatory on Climate and Defence funded by the French Ministry of Defence. Her research mostly deals with migratory and security consequences of climate change and international climate negotiations.

⁹⁸ Saleemul Huq, "The Climate Vulnerable Forum Has Come of Age", *The Daily Star*, 18 November 2015.

Bangladesh has undertaken several initiatives and strategies both nationally and internationally in order to promote and utilise its image in climate diplomacy. Nationally, Bangladesh has initiated a number of policies, programmes and plan of actions. Of those, National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA) in 2005, Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (BCCSAP) in 2009, upcoming long-term National Adaptation Plan (NAP), the Seventh Five Year Plan (FYP) 2016-2020, National Climate Fund in 2009, *etc* are some of the important ones.⁹⁹ Bangladesh has been very proactive to develop forward-looking policy initiatives to mitigate adverse impacts of climate change.

In global climate negotiation, Bangladesh is practising two main kinds of strategies. First one relates to moral leadership. Being the least responsible for greenhouse gas emissions, Bangladesh is considered as one of the most vulnerable states and one of the “innocent victims” of climate change. This recognition gives a moral leadership which is an important asset for Bangladesh in negotiations. Strategically, by using the alarmist scenarios of its vulnerabilities, Bangladesh raises international attention. Consequently, it puts pressure on developed countries to have the moral right to request strict targets, to have priority in receiving funding for adaptation and technology transfer and to demand immediate, ambitious and binding action from all countries. At each COP of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Bangladesh has played an essential role in putting contentious issues, such as climate migration and loss and damage, on the agenda.

Second strategy relates to coalition building with state and non-state actors.¹⁰⁰ It is aligning itself with countries facing similar problems due to global warming and climate change to ensure its effective participation and influence.¹⁰¹ Bangladesh is a member of the G77+China group, the Least Developed Countries (LDC) group and the Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF). Before the Paris COP21 Conference, it hosted a conference of developing countries to coordinate policies of the developing countries and foster a common position on the issue. Similar to COP21, prior to COP23, Bangladesh delegates interacted well within G77, LDC and CVF groups focusing on the issues of its concerns.¹⁰²

Bangladesh’s climate diplomacy has become relevant in the conduct of foreign policy in two ways. Firstly, Bangladesh’s climate diplomacy has incited renewed attention from foreign scientists to develop pilot research projects and new

⁹⁹ Sultana Jareen and Roksana Islam Sujana, “Climate Change Adaptation Efforts of Bangladesh: An Assessment”, *BISS Journal*, Vol. 37, No. 2, 2016, pp. 165-167.

¹⁰⁰ Meraz Mostofa, “Climate Change is a Matter of Survival”, *Dhaka Tribune*, 11 January 2018.

¹⁰¹ Sajid Karim and Mohammad Jasim Uddin, *op. cit.*

¹⁰² Bhumitra Chakma, “Environmental Justice: the Case of Bangladesh”, available at https://www.bisa.ac.uk/index.php?option=com_bisa&task...https://www.bisa.ac.uk/index.php?option=com_bisa&task...paper...paper...paper...paper, accessed on 31 December 2017.

methodologies on climate change. The Action Research for Community Adaptation in Bangladesh (ARCAB) is a collaborative platform for action-research on community-based adaptation to climate change. "Gobeshona conference" is another platform that brings national and international scientists and practitioners working on climate change each year in Bangladesh to share knowledge for mutual benefit.¹⁰³ It helps Bangladesh to play leadership role in scientific studies of climate adaptation as well as gives greater visibility and authority to influence global climate change regime. Bangladesh needs huge amount of investment for its adaptation and mitigation efforts. As public funding is inadequate, it needs funding from both domestic and international sources to bridge the gap. In this respect, Bangladesh's climate diplomacy has garnered attention from international donors. Bangladesh has already sent proposal to Green Climate Fund (GCF). It is one of the few countries to be able to get US\$ 40 million grant from GCF for its "Climate Resilient Infrastructure Mainstreaming" (CRIM) project. It was also the largest of the eight projects that GCF decided to fund globally first. The project will have a cost of US\$ 82.29 million, of which GCF has been requested to provide US\$ 74.45 million.¹⁰⁴

Humanitarian diplomacy persuades decision makers and opinion leaders to act in the interests of vulnerable people and with full respect for fundamental humanitarian principle. As a political tool of constituting soft power, the government of Bangladesh has been pursuing humanitarian diplomacy¹⁰⁵ e.g., in the case of forcibly displaced Rohingya. The government itself spent more than US\$ 7.1 million as of November 2017¹⁰⁶ and also allocated 2,000 acres land in Thengar Char in Hatia for the Rohingyas.¹⁰⁷ Bangladesh has also urged other nations to come forward to help the Rohingyas as well. Bangladesh's diplomacy has been successful in attaining international attention towards Rohingya crisis with the UN, the USA and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) members condemning violence and providing humanitarian aid. Honourable Prime Minister's five-point proposal to resolve the Rohingya humanitarian crisis was also discussed in the UN Security Council.¹⁰⁸ Bilaterally, Bangladesh has also signed an agreement with the Myanmar government for Rohingya repatriation.¹⁰⁹ As to how humanitarian diplomacy is relevant to Bangladesh's foreign policy, there are two separate ways to look at it.

¹⁰³ Alice Baillat, "Bangladesh as a Weak Power Climate Leader", available at <http://www.icccad.net/bangladesh-as-a-weak-power-climate-leader/>, accessed on 31 May 2018.

¹⁰⁴ "Getting Bangladesh Ready for Green Climate Fund: Updates from Bangladesh's National Designated Authority (NDA)", *Dhaka Tribune*, 30 May 2018.

¹⁰⁵ Available at <https://www.diplomacy.edu/courses/humanitarian>, accessed on 24 June 2018.

¹⁰⁶ Asif Showkat Kallol, "Govt to Allocate Additional Funds for Rohingya Refugees", *Dhaka Tribune*, 26 November 2017.

¹⁰⁷ "Govt Allocates 2,000 Acres for Rohingyas", *The Daily Star*, 11 September 2017.

¹⁰⁸ Sheikh Shahriar Zaman, "UN Security Council to Discuss Bangladesh PM Hasina's 5-point Proposal on the Rohingya", *Dhaka Tribune*, 27 September 2017.

¹⁰⁹ "Rohingya Crisis: Bangladesh and Myanmar Agree Repatriation Timeframe", *BBC*, available at <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-42699602>, accessed on 25 June 2018.

Bangladesh's humanitarian efforts have received praise worldwide and boosted its image significantly. On the other hand, on the goal of solving the Rohingya crisis, the progress of reaching a solution to the Rohingya problem has been slow and Bangladesh could have received more support from international community.

3.4 *Economic Engagement*

In the current world, economic engagement has been noted as important soft power resources. Economic engagement as soft power resource refers to the use of aid, grants/loans, foreign direct investment and trade to influence and attract others. Bangladesh has always been at the receiving end of the economic assistance but government has provided significant economic assistance to the recent forcibly displaced Rohingyas. In terms of foreign direct investment, Square pharmaceutical has planned to build a factory in Kenya's export processing zone. In terms of trade, export of Ready Made Garments (RMGs), tea, jute, leather, handicraft, fish, dry food and cheap manpower has earned good reputation around the world. Export of RMGs and cheap manpower constitutes soft power base for Bangladesh.

Bangladesh is the 2nd largest exporter of the RMGs in the world and 'Made in Bangladesh' labels are now common in American and European stores.¹¹⁰ McKinsey and Company has called Bangladesh the 'next China' and predicted that Bangladeshi garment exports, now about US\$ 18 billion a year, could triple by 2020.¹¹¹ However, this remarkable achievement was undermined by industrial accidents that claimed many lives in the past years. But recovery after the Rana Plaza collapse in 2013 was the best example for Bangladesh's resilience. A number of measures have been undertaken for the promotion and utilisation of the RMG sector in Bangladesh. Three associations *e.g.*, Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA) and Bangladesh Textile Mills Association (BTMA) are working currently for the improvement of this sector. These organisations along with International Labour Organization (ILO) and International Training Centre (ITC) are implementing training programmes on worker-management relations, occupational safety and health and labour laws for both factory management and workers. Additionally, national and international reform platforms - NAP, Accord and Alliance - have made visible progress to ensure workplace safety.¹¹² Bangladesh government has agreed to provide all kinds of support to build "Garment Industrial Park" close to Dhaka-Chattagram highway on the bank of Meghna river (Munshiganj). However, the main purpose of this industrial park

¹¹⁰ Fatima Chowdhuri, "Bangladesh RMGs: Achievements and Future Potential", *The Daily Observer*, 22 June 2018.

¹¹¹ Wahida Shahan Tinne, *op. cit.*

¹¹² "Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association", available at <http://www.bgmea.com.bd/home/pages/aboutgarmentsindustry>, accessed on 06 May 2017.

will be to relocate the non-compliant factories that have been marked by the inspections of Accord, Alliance and NAP. Many RMG factories at their own are adopting green technologies and practices. Already a number of RMG factories have achieved Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification from US Green Building Council (USGBC) for their green practices. Besides, regular arrangement of trade shows and fairs are essential for RMG sector to flourish. In this regard, Grameentech Bangladesh has regularly arranged comprehensive technology trade show.¹¹³

Bangladesh sent 1.0 million workers abroad in the year 2017.¹¹⁴ According to Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET), from the year 1976 to 2016, nearly 10 million people migrated¹¹⁵ to overseas.¹¹⁶ Bangladeshi workers have been noted to be hardworking and many countries of Middle East are willing to import more labour migrants from Bangladesh.¹¹⁷ Bangladesh has undertaken several initiatives both nationally and internationally in order to promote and utilise its image as one of the largest exporters of cheap manpower. Nationally, the government of Bangladesh has initiated efforts to address problems confronting its labour migration process. The Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment is the highest government body responsible for migrant welfare and employment overseas. BMET is responsible for regulating the process of overseas employment by providing migration-related information to workers and families. A Wage Earners' Welfare Board under the BMET is mandated to provide various services to migrant workers. An expatriate welfare bank, the Probashi Kalyan Bank, has been set up to provide credit for meeting migration costs, assist for smooth transfer of remittances at low cost and encourage investment in productive sectors. Additionally, Bangladesh Overseas Employment Services Limited (BOESL) has been established to facilitate the recruitment process.¹¹⁸

Internationally, Bangladesh has consistently advocated to address large scale migration in a more humane and coordinated manner. Accordingly, it has envisioned and proposed the Global Compact for Migration to facilitate safe, regular and orderly migration. This will bring the existing instruments on migration together in a common framework. Bangladesh has hosted the 9th Global Forum on Migration

¹¹³ M. Saiful Islam, Md. Abdur Rakib and ATM Adnan, "Ready-Made Garments Sector of Bangladesh: Its Contribution and Challenges towards Development", *Journal of Asian Development Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 2, 2016, pp. 50-61.

¹¹⁴ "Remittance Constitutes 7.24 Percent of Bangladesh's GDP", *The Independent*, 08 March 2018.

¹¹⁵ Migration is the movement by people from one place to another with the intentions of settling temporarily in a new location for the main purpose of employment.

¹¹⁶ Muhammad Rabiul Islam Liton, Md. Alauddin and Md. Nazmus Sadekin, "Overseas Employment and Remittance Inflow in Bangladesh", *International Journal of African and Asian Studies*, Vol. 21, 2016, pp. 57-63.

¹¹⁷ Ashfaqur Rahman, *op. cit.*

¹¹⁸ "Overseas Employment of Bangladeshi Workers: Trends, Prospects and Challenges" *ADB Brief*, No. 63, August 2016.

and Development (GFMD) in Dhaka on 10-12 December 2016. It ratified the UN Convention on Protection of Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families in 2011 and submitted its initial report in 2015. It also played an important role in incorporating migration in the sustainable development agenda 2030. Besides, Bangladesh has signed bilateral agreements with Kuwait and Qatar and MoUs with Hong Kong, China, Jordan, the Republic of Korea, Libya, Malaysia, the Maldives, Oman and United Arab Emirates.¹¹⁹

Economic interest is a crucial aspect of national interest. Therefore, national interests have been more economic than political and foreign policy is ever increasingly being guided by economic factors.¹²⁰ In this respect, trade of RMG and manpower certainly help to promote economic diplomacy. In addition, manpower and RMG export act as a catalyst for the development of Bangladesh by eradicating poverty, offsetting unemployment, contributing to the national economy, increasing reserves and overall economic growth of Bangladesh. In the fiscal year 2016-2017, the RMG industry generated US\$ 28.14 billion, which was 80.7 per cent of the total export earnings and 12.36 per cent of the GDP. More than four million workers are directly employed in this sector.¹²¹ From manpower export, Bangladesh has earned US\$ 13.6 billion remittance in 2016. According to Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMRU), only 13 per cent of international migrants' family is living under poverty line, whereas 40 per cent of non-migrant family and 46 per cent internal migrants' family live below poverty line.¹²² Remittances have accounted for 61 per cent of foreign exchange reserves and constituted 7.24 per cent of Bangladesh's GDP in 2017.¹²³ Bangladesh's export of RMG products and low-cost manpower play significant role in the conduct of its foreign policy.

3.5 Non-Governmental Organisations

Joseph Nye opines that NGOs are important source of soft power for countries. According to him, "Much of America's soft power is generated by its NGOs rather than its government."¹²⁴ As a soft power resource, NGOs refer to those organisations that generate new norms and ideas in order to address both national and international challenges on different issues. In this regard, Bangladesh has potential to convert success of NGOs into meaningful soft power.

¹¹⁹ Tasneem Siddiqui, "International Labour Migration: Hurdles Ahead", *The Daily Star*, 05 February 2016.

¹²⁰ "Save RMG Sector", *The New Nation*, 08 January 2018.

¹²¹ Sajid Karim and Mohammad Jasim Uddin, *op. cit.*

¹²² Tasneem Siddiqui, *op. cit.*

¹²³ Bilkis Irani, "GDP Growth Peaks at 7.24% Breaking all Records", *Dhaka Tribune*, 14 May 2017.

¹²⁴ Joseph S. Nye, "The Information Revolution and Soft Power", *Current History*, Vol. 113, No. 759, 2014, p. 20.

Bangladesh has a large number of NGOs and civil society organisations which are vocal on a wide range of issues. Organisations like Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB), ActionAid, Bangladesh Rural & Advancement Committee (BRAC), etc. have been working freely in Bangladesh. CPD works with multiple networks of global NGOs and is head of a network of Southern Think Tanks named Southern Voice.¹²⁵ On the other hand, innovation of micro-credit or social business is an important contribution of Grameen Bank. These models are replicated in several developing countries of Asia and Africa.¹²⁶ Consequently, Bangladesh is widely regarded as founder of the microcredit and social business.¹²⁷

Bangladesh government has always been very supportive towards the development of NGOs in Bangladesh and abroad. The government sees the NGOs of Bangladesh as important partner in development. In the UN negotiations, there is an increasing involvement of the NGOs. Bangladeshi NGOs have been using that space to support the Bangladeshi cause. Examples of such can be found in the international negotiations regarding climate diplomacy, migration and attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In climate diplomacy, the current trends of GoB, related to forming negotiation team for the UNFCCC negotiation, reveal that experts from academic community and civil society are included in the team, apart from the government officials.¹²⁸ Both government and non-government organisations have contributed to the progress of climate diplomacy in Bangladesh.¹²⁹ Other than that, the NGOs and civil society organisations also provide valuable input in any kind of negotiation relating to development processes. Bangladeshi NGOs are also part of the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network, a UN platform for including NGOs in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) process. These reveal that in the international negotiations, Bangladeshi NGOs are participating actively. These NGOs and their initiatives and achievements have gained international recognition and certainly influence foreign policy of Bangladesh.

For example, as an NGO, BRAC is pioneering Bangladeshi brand to other countries. BRAC as an NGO fulfils all the three criteria of being a soft power resource: it has global appeal; it has the institutional arrangement to make the appeal work; and its involvement in international arena has implications for foreign policy as well.¹³⁰ BRAC has been recognised internationally for its contribution in poverty alleviation, education, climate action and MDGs.¹³¹ The founder and the organisation

¹²⁵ Southern Voice, available at <http://southernvoice.org/about-southern-voice/>, accessed on 17 February 2018.

¹²⁶ Shaheen Afroze, *op. cit.*, pp. 26-27.

¹²⁷ Ashfaqur Rahman, *op. cit.*

¹²⁸ Arif M. Faisal and M. Hafijul Islam Khan, "International Climate Change Policies: Strategies for Negotiations", *The Independent*, 29 January 2017.

¹²⁹ Saleemul Huq, "Bangladesh Needs to Promote Climate Diplomacy", *The Daily Star*, 31 May 2017.

¹³⁰ Interview with Rashed Uz Zaman, *op. cit.*

¹³¹ "BRAC Makes Significant Contributions to Reach Millennium Development Goals", available at <http://>

have been awarded many international awards for this, including the Knighthood and WISE Prize for Education.¹³² The Geneva-based NGO Advisor, an independent media organisation, ranked BRAC as the number one NGO as part of the 2017 Top 500 NGOs World rankings.¹³³ Now the organisation is spreading its operation in ten countries around Asia and Africa, building partnership with local NGOs in those countries and replicating their projects there. BRAC has also been signing many treaties and MoUs with foreign governments.

Political values (*e.g.*, gender equality, peace, religious and communal harmony), cultural values (*e.g.*, 1952 Language and 1971 Liberation war movement, folk songs, numerous historical, archaeological and natural sites, traditional festival and cuisine), diplomacy (*e.g.*, peacekeeping diplomacy and climate diplomacy), economic engagement (*e.g.*, export of RMG and cheap manpower) and NGOs, all fulfil the required criteria and thus, constitute the soft power base for Bangladesh.

4. Limitations and Options

The previous section reveals that Bangladesh has soft power resources at its disposal which is a necessary condition for soft power to have an impact on foreign policy. But to achieve foreign policy objectives and have their presence in international community, adequate ability to utilise those resources successfully is required. In this respect, soft power capability is a sufficient condition. In some areas, especially peacekeeping diplomacy and climate diplomacy, soft power capability of Bangladesh is robust and highly appreciable. However, in other areas, *e.g.*, cultural resources, export of manpower and RMG, efforts are not enough. There is scope for further promotion.

Bangladesh is engaging with the rest of the world through soft power resources. But the scale and pace of such engagement is small and low. For example, in the RMG sector, export is limited to only six items *e.g.*, t-shirt, shirt, sweater, shorts, jeans, ladies and children's wears. These are low-value products with low marginal profits and hold almost 75 per cent of Bangladesh's RMG products. Bangladesh's export destination is also limited to few big buyers. The EU accommodates 59 per cent and USA accommodates 26 per cent of total RMG exports. The rest of the world accommodates only 15 per cent of total exports.¹³⁴ Even, in the EU, Germany, United Kingdom (UK), France and Italy accommodate 80 per cent of EU's total apparel exports from Bangladesh. Manpower export sector is also facing same situation.

www.brac.net/latest-news/item/713-brac-makes-significant-contributions-to-reach-millennium-development-goals, accessed on 02 May 2018.

¹³² Available at <https://www.prweb.com/releases/brac/awards/prweb3612194.htm>, accessed on 03 September 2017.

¹³³ "NGO Advisor Announces the Top 500 NGOs World 2017", available at <https://www.ngoadvisor.net/2017-edition-top-500-ngos-rankings/>, accessed on 05 February 2018.

¹³⁴ M. Saiful Islam, Md. Abdur Rakib and ATM Adnan, *op. cit.*

Almost 80 per cent of the workers, who migrated in 2015, went to the Gulf and other Arab countries. The remaining 20 per cent went mostly to different Southeast Asian countries and 23 per cent of the workers migrated to Oman.¹³⁵ To overcome these limitations, Bangladesh can take a number of actions. It can negotiate the issues of Duty-free and Quota-free market access, special and differential treatment with South Asian countries and sign Free Trade Agreement (FTA). Bangladesh needs to diversify its exportable products and their destinations. For manpower export, it needs to give greater preference to trained, skilled and professional labour. It can train-up its young generation and send them to the countries like Japan, South Korea etc., which are in need of manpower. For export of RMG, Bangladesh should search for new market in the EU as well as nontraditional markets e.g., Japan, Australia, South Korea, Brazil, Mexico, Hong Kong, Taiwan, China, Singapore and Russia.

Specifically, in terms of using and promoting cultural resources, Bangladesh has institutional limitations. Till now, Bangladesh has not established any cultural centre or institute to promote its culture abroad except in India. Recently, Bangladesh government has built Visva-Bharati 'Bangladesh Bhavana' in Kolkata. This newly constructed building has a modern theatre, display room and a large library for books on literature, culture, history and liberation war of Bangladesh and books on Bangladesh-India relations. During the inauguration of 'Bangladesh Bhavana', West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee also proposed to build Bangabandhu Bhavan in Kolkata.¹³⁶ Therefore, Bangladesh can think of building cultural centres like "Bangladesh Cultural Centre" and "Bangabandhu Centre". For this, experiences can be taken from France's *Alliance Francaise*, Germany's *Goethe Institut*, UK's British Council, China's Confucius Institute and India's Nehru Centre and Indira Gandhi Centre.¹³⁷ However, the centres are expected to serve as a catalyst for locals, Bangladeshi people in their overseas locations and visiting Bangladeshis to perform, speak, argue, display or screen their cultural resources. It would also be helpful for the foreigners to be familiarised with the products of Bangladesh's culture. The centres should be instrumental in numerous activities like organising Bangladesh's festivals abroad, film festivals, book fair, art events, translating literatures in various languages, providing courses on Bengali language, art and culture.

Soft power is not limited to the government, the non-state actors e.g., political parties, academia, intelligence agency, civil society, influential political and business elites, associations, unions, media and NGOs also hold significant amount of soft power.¹³⁸ So far, promotion of soft power in Bangladesh mostly depends on the state driven initiatives and lacks involvement of multiple actors. Even when non-state actors such as NGOs hold significant soft power, the government is often not adept

¹³⁵ Tasneem Siddiqui, *op. cit.*

¹³⁶ "PM Flies to Kolkata Tomorrow", *The Daily Star*, 24 May 2018.

¹³⁷ Parama Sinha Palit, *op. cit.*

¹³⁸ Ashfaqur Rahman, *op. cit.*

in using that power to Bangladesh's advantage. There is no coordination among state and non-state actors. As a non-state actor, diaspora is a useful medium of showcasing its soft power. Bangladesh is yet to establish an organisational set up to coordinate with the diaspora of nearly 8.6 million people.¹³⁹ Therefore, Bangladesh needs to focus on both state and non state actors' initiatives simultaneously and create opportunities for collaboration. In this regard, Indian Brand Equity Foundation (IBEF) is a good example for Bangladesh to follow. It was established as a public-private partnership propagating soft power of India. Through various activities like sponsoring "World Hindi Conference" at the regional level and supporting "India everywhere" campaign at the World Economic Forum, India is engaging itself with rest of the world.¹⁴⁰

Media plays significant roles to promote soft power resources of a country. But most of Bangladesh's media is focusing on the Bangladeshi population only and they lack global vision. There is no news media in Bangladesh that has popularity and good reputation in foreign countries. Thus, Bangladesh's image in the global arena is dependent on the portrayal by the major global media houses which often view Bangladesh through limited lenses. To counter this, both Bangladeshi state run media and the private organisations should focus on improving the quality of news, level of professionalism and target the global audience. Bangladesh can learn from China's initiatives to popularise China Global Television Network (CGTN) abroad through global expansion plan and English-language broadcast.¹⁴¹ On spreading Bangladeshi TV channels, language is a major barrier. Introduction of subtitles on TV channels can help the Bangladeshi media to attract larger audience. The same goes for online contents as well, much of the content created by Bangladeshi sources remains exclusively in Bangla. On the social media, Bangladesh government is not very active. MoFA has an Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Wing. It should have a social media account. Opening such account will help Bangladesh to represent the official position, to response in crisis situations and to tackle any negative coverage.

The creation of soft power is not static, but is an ongoing process. Consequently, it requires conversion skill to transform its soft power capacity into capability through proper policy tools. In this respect, Bangladesh needs to have a clear institutional strategy and arrangement for training the concerned staff to get basic knowledge over soft power and its importance. MoFA, in coordination with other governmental and nongovernmental institutions, the media, stakeholders, public persons, international friends or persons or other relevant organisations can undertake specific activities *e.g.*, providing training and adequate fund for conducting research on soft power of Bangladesh to improve the conversion skill.

¹³⁹ Interview with an Official from MoFA, who wished to remain anonymous.

¹⁴⁰ Christian Wagner, "India's Soft Power: Prospects and Limitations", *India Quarterly*, Vol. 44, No. 4, 2006, pp. 333-342.

¹⁴¹ "Chinese State TV Unveils Global Expansion Plan," *The Guardian*, 08 December 2011.

Generally, the efforts of Bangladesh lack an integrated approach and well-articulated plan. External Publicity Wing of MoFA is the focal point in promoting positive image of Bangladesh. But this wing is progressing slowly in establishing an inter-ministerial committee in order to coordinate with the other relevant ministries in promoting soft power potentials of Bangladesh. It also lacks manpower. In order to gear up the efforts of Bangladesh, MoFA needs to have an integrated approach under the wing or a new public diplomacy wing which will include a long term and visionary nation branding strategy and action plan. The nation branding strategy must consider two objectives: it must ensure collaboration among related ministries and it must ensure participation of multiple actors.

5. Conclusion

There is a growing awareness among states that promotion of soft power is necessary in order to play a major role in global affairs. Cultural resources, diplomacy, political values, economic engagement and to some extent NGOs, by fulfilling three criteria *e.g.*, having global appeal, institutional arrangement to make that appeal work and implications for foreign policy, constitute soft power for Bangladesh.

Bangladesh has rich cultural resources which include folk songs (*Bhatiali, Baul, Marfati, Murshidi, etc.*), celebration of *Pohela Boishakh*, 1952 Language Movement and 1971 Liberation war movement, rich folk art and craft *e.g.*, *Jamdani, Shital Pati* weaving *etc.* Political values of Bangladesh like gender equality, religious and communal tolerance and respect for international peace certainly increase soft power of the country. Through practicing peacekeeping and climate diplomacy, it creates positive image for itself worldwide. Economic engagement of Bangladesh in terms of exporting RMG and manpower is widely recognised and it has added value to the soft power of Bangladesh. In addition, some prominent NGOs *e.g.*, BRAC and Grameen Bank with their activities and achievements are also enhancing Bangladesh's soft power.

From the discussion of the soft power resources of Bangladesh, it is evident that it has started to utilise and promote its soft power resources. But these efforts are not sufficient and have some limitations like lack of institutional strength, integrated approach and multiple actors driven initiatives, narrow vision of media, *etc.* Improving the usage of its soft power resources to the optimum level is essential for Bangladesh. Proper utilisation and promotion of soft power require setting up of both cultural and language centres abroad, proper management of resources, diversification in international trade in terms of exportable products and its destinations. Besides, media needs to shift its vision from domestic audience to global audience. Most importantly, there is a need for an integrated approach and strategy that will include multiple actors and help to utilise soft power resources. Bangladesh should focus on proper utilisation and promotion of its soft power capacities and capabilities.

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