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## **WOMEN IN UNITED NATIONS PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS: DRIVERS AND BARRIERS FOR BANGLADESH**

### **Abstract**

Growing necessity for female peacekeepers in the United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (UNPKOs) to cope up with the changing nature of armed conflicts and their disproportionate impacts on women has been widely recognized by the United Nations (UN). Indeed, the increased proportion of female police and military peacekeepers in the UNPKOs is not satisfactory and remains well below targets. As one of the major Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs), Bangladesh is currently leading the wave of change by recruiting and deploying women peacekeepers, police and civilian officers to the UN missions. However, compared to the total contribution, the gender ratio of women participation from Bangladesh is not up to the mark. Against this backdrop, the paper endeavours to find out how women are incorporated in the UNPKOs and how Bangladesh has progressed in this regard. It also explores how different drivers as well as barriers influence Bangladesh to increase the women participation in UN missions. Besides, the paper argues that Bangladesh has been making its best efforts but due to multiple barriers it is still struggling to increase its female peacekeepers in keeping with the country's commitment to safeguarding global peace based on the UN Charter and in the light of the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (WPS).

**Keywords:** United Nations (UN), Peacekeeping Operations, Women Peacekeepers, UNSC Resolution 1325, Women, Peace and Security (WPS).

### **1. Introduction**

The integration of women into the United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (UNPKOs) has been widely recognized at the international level since the 1990s. Acknowledging the changing nature of the contemporary armed conflict, its disproportionate and unique impact on women and girls and the continued exclusion of women's participation in peace processes, in 2000 the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) unanimously adopted the landmark Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (WPS).<sup>1</sup> It is

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celebrated as a triumph of women's peace movements and transnational feminist organizing.<sup>2</sup> With a view to addressing these issues, it also urges all actors to increase the participation of women and incorporate gender perspectives in all United Nations peace and security efforts.<sup>3</sup> As a result, realizing the necessity of women in conflict-torn countries for intelligence-gathering; trust-building with the locals through communication; mapping and tracking military factions; enhancing the access of local women to services; improving community relations; reducing the incidence of sexual and gender-based violence; capacity building of local women and break down gender norms, the UN has undertaken several initiatives and strategies to increase the number of women peacekeepers in missions. However, little progress has been made so far. The increased proportion of female police and military peacekeepers in the last decade remains well below targets. Women made up only 1 per cent of the UNPKOs uniformed force in 1993.<sup>4</sup> Meanwhile, 5.4 per cent of military personnel and 15 per cent of police personnel are women as of January 2020.<sup>5</sup> Thus, the series of ambitious targets to increase women's participation in PKOs, especially since the 1990s, have not been met yet.

Indeed, the rise in the participation of women in UNPKOs largely depends on the Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs). Despite the growing demand of women in UNPKOs, TCC's inclusion of female uniformed personnel in national contributions to UN peace operations has grown over the past years at a slow pace.<sup>6</sup> Thus, these countries are yet to realize the UN Resolution 1325, which reaffirms the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, peace negotiations, peacebuilding, peacekeeping, humanitarian response and post-conflict reconstruction. However, countries like South Africa, Nigeria, Jordan, Tunisia, Algeria, Turkey, Egypt and Bangladesh are currently leading the wave of change by recruiting and deploying women peacekeepers,

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<sup>1</sup> Olivera Simić, "Increasing Women's Presence in Peacekeeping Operations: The Rationales and Realities of 'Gender Balance'", in Gina Heathcote and Dianne Otto (eds.), *Rethinking Peacekeeping, Gender Equality and Collective Security: Thinking Gender in Transnational Times*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014, pp. 185-199.

<sup>2</sup> Jennifer F. Klot, *The United Nations Security Council's Agenda on 'Women Peace and Security': Bureaucratic Pathologies and Unrealized Potential*, A thesis submitted to the Department of Social Policy of the London School of Economics, London, 2015.

<sup>3</sup> United Nations Security Council, "Resolution 1325 (2000)", available at [https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/SC\\_ResolutionWomenPeaceSecurity\\_SRES1325%282000%29%28english\\_0.pdf](https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/SC_ResolutionWomenPeaceSecurity_SRES1325%282000%29%28english_0.pdf), accessed on 15 January 2020.

<sup>4</sup> United Nations Peacekeeping, "Women in Peacekeeping", available at <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/women-peacekeeping>, accessed on 05 February 2020.

<sup>5</sup> United Nations Peacekeeping, "Gender Report", available at [https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/7\\_gender\\_report\\_15pdf](https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/7_gender_report_15pdf), accessed on 05 February 2020.

<sup>6</sup> Helena Carreiras, "Women and Peace Operations", in Maria Grazia Galantino and Maria Raquel Freire (eds.), *Managing Crises, Making Peace: Rethinking Peace and Conflict Studies*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015, pp. 69-90.

police and civilian officers to the field.<sup>7</sup> As one of the top contributors to UN peacekeeping missions, Bangladesh has a long history of deployment.

After independence, Bangladesh became a full member of the UN. Since then, it actively participates in UN forums like the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) and the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). However, the most spectacular manifestation of the participation lies in the field of peacekeeping. Approximately 1,63,887 peacekeepers from Bangladesh have participated in 54 UN missions in 40 different countries till 2019.<sup>8</sup> From 1990 to 2020, the total number of female peacekeepers from Bangladesh Armed Forces is 413 and Bangladesh Police is 1,475.<sup>9</sup> As of January 2020, Bangladesh is the second highest troop contributing country after Ethiopia. Currently, 6,413 peacekeepers from Bangladesh are deployed in nine peacekeeping missions in eight different countries. The percentage of women peacekeepers from Bangladesh is only 4 per cent of its current total deployment.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, Bangladesh remained unable to achieve the UN's target of deploying 16 per cent female staff officers and military observers in UNPKOs in 2019.<sup>11</sup> In terms of absolute number, with 261 female peacekeepers, Bangladesh ranked 4<sup>th</sup> among the TCCs in UNPKOs in 2019. However, compared to the total contribution, the gender ratio for Bangladeshi female peacekeepers is not up to the mark.<sup>12</sup>

Against this backdrop, the paper endeavours to find out: how are women incorporated in the UNPKOs? How has Bangladesh progressed in this regard? How do different drivers as well as barriers influence Bangladesh to increase the participation of women in UN missions? Besides, the paper also argues that Bangladesh has been making its best efforts, but due to multiple barriers it is still struggling to increase its female peacekeepers in keeping with the country's commitment to safeguarding global peace based on the UN Charter and in the light of the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on WPS. To answer these questions, the paper examines the existing literature. Literature is taken from different sources, e.g., government and

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<sup>7</sup> Marcela Donadio, *Women, Security Forces and Peacekeeping in the MENA Region*, Buenos Aires: RESDAL, 2019, p. 6.

<sup>8</sup> Bangladesh Army, "Our Contribution in Global Peacekeeping", available at <https://www.army.mil.bd/PeaceKeeping-Work>, accessed on 17 January 2020.

<sup>9</sup> Armed Forces Division, "Female Participation of Bangladesh in UN Peace Operation", available at <https://www.afd.gov.bd/index.php/un-peacekeeping/female-participation>, accessed on 01 February 2020; Bangladesh Police, "At a Glance Deployment and Completed UN Missions", available at [https://www.police.gov.bd/en/at\\_a\\_glance\\_deployment\\_and\\_completed\\_un\\_missions](https://www.police.gov.bd/en/at_a_glance_deployment_and_completed_un_missions), accessed on 01 February 2020.

<sup>10</sup> United Nations Peacekeeping, "Summary of Troops Contributing Countries by Ranking", available at [https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/2\\_country\\_ranking\\_13.pdf](https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/2_country_ranking_13.pdf), accessed on 01 March 2020.

<sup>11</sup> United Nations Peacekeeping, "Operational effect and women peacekeepers: Addressing the gender imbalance (As of 31 December 2019)", available at [https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/operational\\_effect\\_and\\_women\\_peacekeepers\\_december\\_2019.pdf](https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/operational_effect_and_women_peacekeepers_december_2019.pdf), accessed on 01 March 2020.

<sup>12</sup> United Nations Peacekeeping, "Summary of Troops Contributing Countries by Ranking", available at [https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/2\\_country\\_ranking\\_15.pdf](https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/2_country_ranking_15.pdf), accessed on 01 March 2020.

non-government documents, academic journals, books and newspaper articles. The paper is qualitative in nature. Primary data has been collected from the semi-structured in-depth interview of the purposely selected five female police officers and five uniformed personnel as well as five female peacekeepers who participated in various missions. The study was designed to conduct a semi-structured in-depth interview in a pre- and post-recall method as there is no baseline data along with the inability to have an experimental study. The sampling unit is solely the female uniformed and police officers as well as female peacekeepers. Purposive sampling was conducted due to the lack of access to documentation and the database of the studied population. Moreover, experts were also interviewed from academic and practitioner backgrounds based on their expertise.

For the convenience of the discussion, the paper is divided into six sections, including an introduction and conclusion. The second section explores how women are incorporated into the UNPKOs and its current status. The third section briefly discusses the past and present progression of women in the UNPKOs in the context of Bangladesh. The fourth section identifies the factors that drive Bangladesh to increase the participation of women in UN missions. The fifth section elaborates on the barriers Bangladesh faces in this regard. The sixth section concludes the paper.

## **2. Understanding Women in the UNPKOs: A Brief Analysis**

Long before the establishment of the UN, women started to participate in peace movements. In the Hague Congress of Women in 1915 different ideas like, ‘living together in peace with one another’, ‘universal peace’ and the ‘peaceful’ or ‘pacific’ settlement of disputes were upheld to develop strategies to bring the conflict to a speedy conclusion. The conference was attended by women from many countries. It also established the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), as a transnational attempt by women to stop war. It was active throughout the twentieth century.<sup>13</sup> In the 1970s, women became a major constituency of the peace movement. Many feminists addressed the issue of antimilitarism, critiquing the male language of strategy. Furthermore, the UN ‘Decade of the Woman’ (1975–1985) led to increased global awareness of and involvement in the peace movement by women.<sup>14</sup>

Though the UNPKO began in 1948, over the last 40 years, the participation of women in UNPKOs has remained a perennial issue.<sup>15</sup> The UN’s male-dominated

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<sup>13</sup> Lela B. Costin, “Feminism, Pacificism, Internationalism and the 1915 International Congress of Women”, *Women’s Studies International Forum*, Vol. 5, 1982, p. 310.

<sup>14</sup> “Women and The Peace Movement”, available at <https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/dictionaries-thesauruses-pictures-and-press-releases/women-and-peace-movement>, accessed on 18 March 2020.

<sup>15</sup> Joachim Koops, Norrie MacQueen, Thierry Tardy and Paul D. Williams (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of*

recruitment procedures for peacekeeping operations had been questioned by feminist scholars throughout the UN Decade of Women.<sup>16</sup> In 1994, the UNGA set the goal to reach gender parity in the Secretariat by 2000. Later, the parity goal extended to all field missions in 1995.<sup>17</sup> Falling short of the goal to reach gender balance in missions by 2000, the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (UNDPKO) adopted the Windhoek Declaration and the Namibia Plan of Action in 2000. The declaration and action plan called for the target of reaching gender parity in UNPKOs by 2015.<sup>18</sup> In line with DPKO, UNSC had also adopted several resolutions regarding the issue of gender parity in UNPKOs. WILPF took the lead in persuading the UNSC to adopt United Nations UNSCR 1325 and remains actively involved in the NGO Working Group on WPS which promotes the implementation of all the WPS resolutions.<sup>19</sup>

With the first UNSCR 1325 on the WPS, the UNSC urges greater inclusion of women in peace processes, specifically more uniformed women in UNPKOs. This resolution was subsequently followed by nine more which combinedly constitute the normative framework of the WPS Agenda.<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, calling on member states to double the number of female uniformed peacekeepers every year for the next few years, in 2006 DPKO adopted the ‘UN Policy Directive on Gender Equality in Peacekeeping Operations’. Subsequently, in 2009, DPKO also published ‘Guidelines for Integrating a Gender Perspective into the Work of the United Nations Military in Peacekeeping Operations’. These documents were intended to provide a practical translation and elaboration of the requirements for implementing UN mandates on WPS in the work of all missions.<sup>21</sup>

Again, the UN Police launched an initiative called ‘The Global Effort’ to increase the percentage of female police serving in missions to 20 per cent by 2014. Similarly, without setting any firm targets, the UN Office of Military Affairs also began to encourage member states to deploy more female peacekeepers. In 2015, UNSCR 2242 called upon the Secretary-General and the member states to formulate a revised strategy to double the number of women in military and police contingents

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*United Nations Peacekeeping Operations*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015, p. 13.

<sup>16</sup> Judith Hicks Stiehm, “Women, Peacekeeping and Peacemaking: Gender Balance and Mainstreaming”, *International Peacekeeping*, Vol. 8, No. 2, 2001, p. 42.

<sup>17</sup> Ann Blomberg and Daniel de Torres (eds.), *Elsie Initiative for Women in Peace Operations: Baseline Study*, Geneva: DCAF, 2018, pp. 5-10.

<sup>18</sup> Tinuke M. Fapohunda, “Integrating Women and Gender Issues in Peace Development”, *International Journal of Peace and Development Studies*, Vol. 2, No. 6, 2011, pp. 162-170.

<sup>19</sup> Dianne Otto, *Women, Peace and Security: A Critical Analysis of the Security Council Vision*, London: Centre for Women, Peace and Security, 2016, p. 1.

<sup>20</sup> Susan Willett, “Introduction: Security Council Resolution 1325: Assessing the Impact on Women, Peace and Security”, *International Peacekeeping*, Vol. 17, No. 2, 2010, p. 196.

<sup>21</sup> Ann Blomberg and Daniel de Torres, op. cit.

of UNPKOs by 2020, from 4.2 per cent to 8.4 per cent.<sup>22</sup> The Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy (2018-2028), adopted in 2019 also includes a target of having women comprise 15 per cent of military contingents, 25 per cent of military observers and staff officers, 30 per cent of individual police officers and 20 per cent of formed police units by 2028.<sup>23</sup>

According to the UN statistics, since the inception of UNPKOs, women’s participation in UNPKOs has been low. Studies found that historically, female peacekeeper soldiers began to participate in 1957. During the period from 1957 to 1979, only five out of 6,250 soldiers were female.<sup>24</sup> From the period 1957 to 1993, no female military officers were assigned to peacekeeping offices except 20 women, who served in peacekeeping missions mainly as nurses in medical units.<sup>25</sup> Table 1 shows since 2010, the overall percentage of women in peacekeeping has only increased from 3.1 per cent to 6.4 per cent in 2020. When comparing the variance in gender balance between PKOs, as of October 2019, the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS, 7 per cent), the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO, 5.2 per cent), the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA, 6 per cent) and United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA, 5.1 per cent) have the highest percentage of female uniformed personnel.<sup>26</sup>

**Table 1: Participation of Women in UNPKOs from 2010-2020**

Years	Military			Police			Combined Military and Police		
	Total	Female (F)	(%) of F	Total (F+M)	Female(F)	(%) of F	Total (F+M)	Female (F)	(%) of F
<b>2010</b>	84,316	2,030	<b>2.4</b>	14,322	1,380	<b>9.6</b>	98,638	3,410	<b>3.1</b>
<b>2011</b>	84,341	2,190	<b>2.6</b>	14,306	1,444	<b>10.1</b>	98,647	3,634	<b>3.7</b>
<b>2012</b>	82,915	2,265	<b>2.7</b>	12,641	1,266	<b>10.0</b>	95,556	3,531	<b>3.7</b>
<b>2013</b>	85,350	2,404	<b>2.8</b>	12,917	1,273	<b>9.8</b>	98,267	3,677	<b>3.7</b>
<b>2014</b>	91,890	2,820	<b>3.1</b>	12,430	1,138	<b>9.2</b>	104,320	3,958	<b>3.8</b>
<b>2015</b>	92,620	2,951	<b>3.2</b>	13,916	1,505	<b>10.8</b>	106,536	4,456	<b>4.2</b>
<b>2016</b>	87,997	2,900	<b>3.1</b>	12,854	1,275	<b>9.9</b>	100,851	4,175	<b>4.1</b>

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Department of Peace Operation, *The Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy (2018-2028)*, New York: United Nations, 2019, p. 4.

<sup>24</sup> Bishwambhar Ghimire, “Contributions and Challenges: Female Participations in UN Peacekeeping Missions”, *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, Vol. 7, No. 3, 2017, p. 208.

<sup>25</sup> Division for the Advancement of Women, Department of Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development, *The Role of United Nations Peace-keeping*, New York: United Nations, 1995.

<sup>26</sup> United Nations Peacekeeping, “Gender Report”, available at [https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/report7\\_gender\\_report\\_october\\_2019.pdf](https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/report7_gender_report_october_2019.pdf), accessed on 05 February 2020.

<b>2017</b>	81,599	3,145	<b>3.9</b>	11,083	1,130	<b>10.2</b>	92,682	4,275	<b>4.6</b>
<b>2018</b>	80,036	3,379	<b>4.2</b>	10,790	1,305	<b>12.1</b>	90,821	4,684	<b>5.2</b>
<b>2019</b>	75,809	3,865	<b>5.1</b>	9,159	1,405	<b>15.3</b>	84,968	5,270	<b>6.2</b>
<b>2020</b>	74,009	3,961	<b>5.4</b>	8,854	1,323	<b>15</b>	82,863	5,284	<b>6.4</b>

Source: Compiled by authors based on the UN website. United Nations Peacekeeping, “Gender”, available at <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/gender>, accessed on 03 February 2020.

## 2.1 Analytical Framework

The contribution of women peacekeepers in UNPKOs largely depends on drivers and barriers of the TCCs. Scholars have identified several reasons behind the low women participation in UNPKOs from TCCs. Firstly, the discrepancy between the intended and actual implementation of the mandate of the UN which urges mainstreaming gender in all UNPKOs and mandates, expanding the role and participation of women in UNPKOs and adopting national and regional action plans to promote the Resolution 1325 with specific measures, clear targets and appropriate benchmarks.<sup>27</sup> Highlighting these discrepancies, scholars argue that in peace negotiations, little progress has hitherto been made. For example, at the negotiating table in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), there were no women in the peace settlement.<sup>28</sup> Women now comprise only 6.4 per cent of UN peacekeepers globally.<sup>29</sup> Though South Africa is one of the top female peacekeepers sending countries, the percentage of women peacekeepers is only 15 per cent.<sup>30</sup> Moreover, most member states have yet to adopt national action plans to realize UNSCR 1325.<sup>31</sup>

Secondly, the lack of equal opportunity for women peacekeepers and removing barriers created through the culture of ‘gender protection norms’. The very idea of ‘gender protection norms’ demonstrates that women always need protection even though they are serving in the military and police. From the study, Sabrina Karim and Kyle Beardsley found that instead of sending women peacekeepers where needed, they were mainly sent to safe missions. This is because they are considered as ‘others’ in the missions due to the lack of physical and psychological strength and endurance. For example, a higher proportion of women peacekeepers were visible

<sup>27</sup> United Nations Security Council, “Resolution 1325 (2000)”, op. cit.; Susan Willett, op. cit.; Swanee Hunt and Cristina Posa, *Inclusive Security: Women Waging Peace*, Washington, DC: The United Nations Foundation, 2015, pp. 1-12; Joachim Koops, et al., op. cit.; Sahana Dharmapuri, *Not Just a Numbers Game: Increasing Women’s Participation in UN Peacekeeping*, New York: International Peace Institute, 2013, pp. 1-32.

<sup>28</sup> Sabrina Karim and Kyle Beardsley, *Equal Opportunity Peacekeeping Women, Peace, and Security in Post-Conflict States*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017, p. 77.

<sup>29</sup> United Nations Peacekeeping, “Gender Report”, op. cit.

<sup>30</sup> Ann Blomberg and Daniel de Torres, op. cit.

<sup>31</sup> Jacqui True, “The Unfulfilled Mandate: Gender Mainstreaming and UN Peace Operations”, *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 10, No. 2, 2009, p. 41; Paul Kirby and Laura J. Shepherd, “The Futures Past of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda”, *International Affairs*, Vol. 92, No. 2, 2016, pp. 373-392.

in Kosovo and Liberia rather than the Central African Republic and DRC because of the existence of the extreme level of sexual violence.<sup>32</sup> Hence, some scholars highlight the UN emphasize on quantity at the expense of quality peacekeeping as one of the major barriers for low women participation.<sup>33</sup>

Thirdly, the existence of gender stereotypes in the mission, e.g., women peacekeepers are more passive, compassionate and peaceful; more adept at resolving disputes without using force; less likely to use excessive force and more likely to calm a situation with their presence and negotiating skills compared to men.<sup>34</sup> In this respect, social constructivists argue that women’s ability to perform these functions is context-specific.<sup>35</sup> Angela Alchin, Amanda Gouws and Lindy Heinecken conducted a study among the South African male and female peacekeepers returning from DRC and Sudan. It found that South African female peacekeepers reached out to women and children of DRC more readily than other contingents because they were mostly black and could understand Swahili. Unlike DRC, in Sudan, the local population, especially the local women were afraid to speak to the peacekeepers, whether men or women. Based on the study they infer that the ability of female peacekeepers to make a difference largely depends not on gender rather on race, ability to speak the local language and respect for the local culture.<sup>36</sup> Hence, in lieu of ensuring gender neutrality and mainstreaming, such assumptions certainly create gender inequality in UNPKOs.<sup>37</sup>

Similarly, there are sets of drivers for the TCCs to support UN missions with troops. Khusrav Gaibulloev, Todd Sandler and Hirofumi Shimizu highlight country-specific interest as the main driving force.<sup>38</sup> Waheguru Pal Singh Sidhu has identified UN-funded training and showing commitment towards maintaining

<sup>32</sup> Sabrina Karim and Kyle Beardsley, op. cit.

<sup>33</sup> Natalie Florea Hudson, “En-Gendering UN Peacekeeping Operations”, *International Journal*, Vol. 60, No. 3, 2005, pp. 785-807.

<sup>34</sup> Olivera Simić, op. cit.; Donna Bridges and Debbie Horsfall, “Increasing Operational Effectiveness in UN Peacekeeping: Toward a Gender-Balanced Force”, *Armed Forces and Society*, Vol. 36, No. 1, pp. 120-130.

<sup>35</sup> Gerard J. DeGroot, “A Few Good Women: Gender stereotypes, the Military and Peacekeeping”, *International Peacekeeping*, Vol. 8, No. 2, 2001, pp. 23-38; Judith Hicks Stiehm, op. cit., pp. 39-48; Sandra Whitworth, *Men, Militarism and UN Peacekeeping: A Gendered Analysis*, London: Lynne Rienner, 2004, pp. 119-150; Sabrina Karim and Kyle Beardsley, op. cit.

<sup>36</sup> Angela Alchin, Amanda Gouws and Lindy Heinecken, “Making a Difference in Peacekeeping Operations: Voices of South African Women Peacekeepers”, *African Security Review*, Vol. 27, No. 1, 2018, pp. 1-19.

<sup>37</sup> Johanna Valenius, “A Few Kind Women: Gender Essentialism and Nordic Peacekeeping Operations”, *International Peacekeeping*, Vol. 14, No. 4, 2007, pp. 510-523; Helen S. A. Basini, “Gender Mainstreaming Unraveled: The Case of DDDR in Liberia”, *International Interactions*, Vol. 39, No. 4, 2013, pp. 535-557; Lindy Heinecken, “Are Women ‘Really’ Making a Unique Contribution to Peacekeeping?”, *International Peacekeeping*, Vol. 19, No. 3-4, 2015, pp. 239-242.

<sup>38</sup> Khusrav Gaibulloev, Todd Sandler and Hirofumi Shimizu, “Demands for UN and Non-UN Peacekeeping: Nonvoluntary versus Voluntary Contributions to a Public Good”, *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 53, No. 6, pp. 827-852.



international peace as two important motivating factors.<sup>39</sup> Some scholars identify global responsibility, burden sharing, regional dynamics and national interests as major reasons. Others highlight financial imperatives and the size of the military as vital forces to participate in the UNPKOs. Moreover, implicit support of the armed forces and integrated foreign and defence policies certainly motivate countries to increase their involvement in UN missions.<sup>40</sup>

From the above discussion, the paper argues that authors who studied UNPKOs consider those drivers and barriers in their analytical framework which are identical to all TCCs or more pertinent in the context of a particular country. For example, Angela Alchin, Amanda Gouws and Lindy Heinecken identify current recruiting processes, the self-perception of female soldiers, the deeply patriarchal ideologies within South African society and the hyper-masculine culture in missions as the vital barriers for South African women participation in UNPKO.<sup>41</sup> Walter Lotze divided the rationale driving South African contributions to provide peacekeepers into five categories, e.g., political, economic, institutional, normative and security.<sup>42</sup> Similarly, aspiration for recognition as a great power and having a permanent seat in the UNSC work as the main driver for Indian contribution to UNPKOs.<sup>43</sup> It is difficult to follow a single author's analytical framework to understand the contribution of women peacekeeping from Bangladesh as no two states are completely alike with regard to drivers and barriers. Thus, by synthesizing different scholars' understanding as well as analyzing the primary data, the paper proceeds with an analytical framework comprising both drivers and barriers of women peacekeepers in the context of Bangladesh. The driving forces are divided into two categories, e.g., internal and external. Similarly, the barriers are clustered into three levels, e.g., international, national and individual.

### **3. Bangladeshi Women in UN Peacekeeping: Past and Present Progress**

Since Bangladesh's first deployment in 1988, the number of peacekeepers has seen a steady rise. Bangladesh is one of the top contributors and the first South Asian

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<sup>39</sup> Waheguru Pal Singh Sidhu, "What Drivers South Asians to Peacekeeping", *Global Peace Operations Review*, 11 January 2016.

<sup>40</sup> Arturo C. Sotomayor Velázquez, "Why Some States Participate in UN Peace Missions While Others Do Not: An Analysis of Civil-Military Relations and Its Effects on Latin America's Contributions to Peacekeeping Operations", *Security Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 1, 2010.

<sup>41</sup> Angela Alchin, Amanda Gouws and Lindy Heinecken, op. cit.

<sup>42</sup> Walter Lotze, "Peacekeeping Contributor Profile: South Africa", available at <http://www.providingforpeacekeeping.org/2014/04/03/contributor-profile-south-africa/>, accessed on 30 March 2020.

<sup>43</sup> Yeshi Choedon, "India's UN Peacekeeping Operations Involvement in Africa: Change in Nature of Participation and Driving Factors", *International Studies*, Vol. 51, No. 1-4, 2014.

country to deploy uniformed personnel to the UNPKOs.<sup>44</sup> This triumphant journey of Bangladesh at UNPKOs has started by holding the hands of male peacekeepers. Along with many other initiatives of the UN, the adoption of Resolution 1325 created a greater opportunity for the TCCs like Bangladesh to engage their female personnel into peacekeeping missions. Bangladeshi women contributed to the UN missions from the 1990s. By employing the women as peacekeepers in volatile security situations of the field missions, Bangladesh Armed Forces and Police have played a significant role in women empowerment and gender mainstreaming.

Female officers from Bangladesh Army, for their sincere performance, have been deployed as Contingent Commander in the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI), United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), MINUSCA and United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO). For sincere duties as a Military Contingent Commander in Ivory Coast, Colonel Nazma Begum, a female officer of Bangladesh Army, was nominated as one of the competitors for 'Military Gender Advocate of the Year 2016'.<sup>45</sup> Moreover, Bangladesh Army has started to include the 'Female Community Engagement Team' in the Battalion from January 2019 and will continue deploying the same in all subsequent major contingents in UNPKOs.<sup>46</sup> Till now, Bangladesh Air Force's (BAF) female officers have participated in two UN missions, e.g., MINUSTAH and MONUSCO. In 2017, Bangladesh sent two female combat pilots to MONUSCO — Flight Lieutenant Nayma Haque and Flight Lieutenant Tamanna-E-Lutfi.<sup>47</sup>

Women police peacekeepers began participating in the UNPKOs in 2000. The country first deployed five female police peacekeepers on a UN mission in East Timor in 2000. As the second country in UNPKO's history and the first Muslim country, on 15 May 2010, Bangladesh sent its first female All Formed Police Unit (FPU) in Haiti composed of 160 policewomen with 30 supporting male staff. They worked there on a rotation basis in approximately 700 makeshift camps of the UN

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<sup>44</sup> A. K. M. Abdur Rahman, "Contemporary Peacebuilding Challenges: Bangladesh as a Mitigating Actor", in A. K. M. Abdur Rahman (ed.), *Bangladesh in International Peacebuilding: Discourses from Japan and Beyond*, Dhaka, Bangladesh: Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies, 2019, pp. 30-35.

<sup>45</sup> "First female officer leads contingent", *The Daily Star*, 29 February 2016; Md. Tariqul Islam, "Women soldiers in Bangladesh Army", *The Independent*, 21 January 2018.

<sup>46</sup> Armed Forces Division, op. cit.

<sup>47</sup> "BAF includes two female pilots in UN peacekeeping mission for the first time", *Dhaka Tribune*, 04 December 2017; Bangladesh Air Force, "BAF in Peacekeeping Operation", available at [https://www.baf.mil.bd/?page\\_id=49](https://www.baf.mil.bd/?page_id=49), accessed on 25 January 2020.

for internally displaced persons.<sup>48</sup> FPU completed its mission in 2017.<sup>49</sup> Responding to the challenges in implementing the UN mandate in the field of gender issues, women and children affairs, Bangladesh Police has sent another women FPU in Congo composed of 180 policewomen in 2019.<sup>50</sup> Currently, Bangladesh female police officers are also working in four UNPKOs including United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), MINUSMA, United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC) and UNMISS.<sup>51</sup>

Women as military observers and staff officers also play a crucial role in UNPKOs. Table 2 shows Bangladeshi women as military observers and staff officers in UNPKOs. In 2017 and 2018 Bangladesh remained unable to reach the set 15 per cent target of the UN. In the year 2019 and 2020, the UN set a target of deploying 16 per cent women staff officers and military observers in UNPKOs. The percentage of women was 15.07 and 15.0 compared to 84.03 and 85 per cent of men in December 2019 and January 2020 consecutively.

**Table 2: Women from Bangladesh in UNPKOs as Military Observers and Staff Officers**

Years	Male	Female	Total	(%) of Female	Number of Women required to reach UN target
2020	122	22	144	15	2 (UN target 16 %)
2019	118	24	142	15.07	1 (UN target 16 %)
2018	115	10	125	8.0	19 (UN target 15 %)
2017	140	9	149	6.0	22 (UN target 15 %)

Source: Compiled by authors based on the UN website. United Nations Peacekeeping, “Gender”, available at <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/gender>, accessed on 03 February 2020.

Statistics from different sources showed that from the year 1991 to 1995, a total 10,986 peacekeepers from Bangladesh participated in the UN missions. Of these peacekeepers, the number of the female is 461 (4.38 per cent) and male is 10,525 (95.61 per cent). In the period 1996 to 2001, from Bangladesh 13,296 peacekeepers took part in the UN mission comprising 309 (2.38 per cent) females and 12,990 males (97.62 per cent). From 2007 to 2008, only 208 (1.11 per cent) out of 18,735 peacekeepers were female, while 443 (0.90 per cent) out of 48,813 were

<sup>48</sup> Rashed Uz Zaman and Niloy Ranjan Biswas, “Bangladesh and United Nations Peacekeeping Missions: The Quest for a National Policy to Meet the Challenges of Uncertainty”, *Journal of Asiatic Society of Bangladesh (Hum)*, Vol. 62, No. 2, 2017, pp. 151-181.

<sup>49</sup> “Bangladesh Women Peacekeepers are role models in UN peacekeeping Mission”, *Prothom Alo*, 19 February 2016.

<sup>50</sup> “180 female police peacekeepers leave for Congo UN mission”, *The Financial Express*, 25 March 2020.

<sup>51</sup> Bangladesh Police, “Female Peacekeepers”, available at [https://www.police.gov.bd/en/female\\_police\\_in\\_un\\_mission](https://www.police.gov.bd/en/female_police_in_un_mission), accessed on 07 February 2020.

female from 2009 to 2013.<sup>52</sup> Table 3 represents the gender ratio of Bangladesh in UNPKOs from 2010 to 2020. Within one decade, the gender parity of Bangladesh has increased from 1.6 per cent to 4.0 per cent. Men still currently represent above 95 per cent of the personnel in peacekeeping.

**Table 3: Gender Ratio of Bangladesh in UNPKOs from 2010-2020**

Years	Male	Female	Total	(%) of Female
2010	10,231	171	10,402	1.6
2011	10,240	256	10,496	2.4
2012	8,613	228	8,841	2.6
2013	7,713	205	7,918	2.6
2014	9,185	215	9,400	2.3
2015	8,292	204	8,486	2.4
2016	6,661	201	6,862	2.9
2017	7,093	153	7,246	2.1
2018	6,441	183	6,624	2.8
2019	6,162	261	6,423	4.1
2020	6,155	258	6,413	4.0

Source: Compiled by authors based on the UN website. United Nations Peacekeeping, “Troop and Police Contributors”, available at <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/troop-and-police-contributors>, accessed on 15 February 2020.

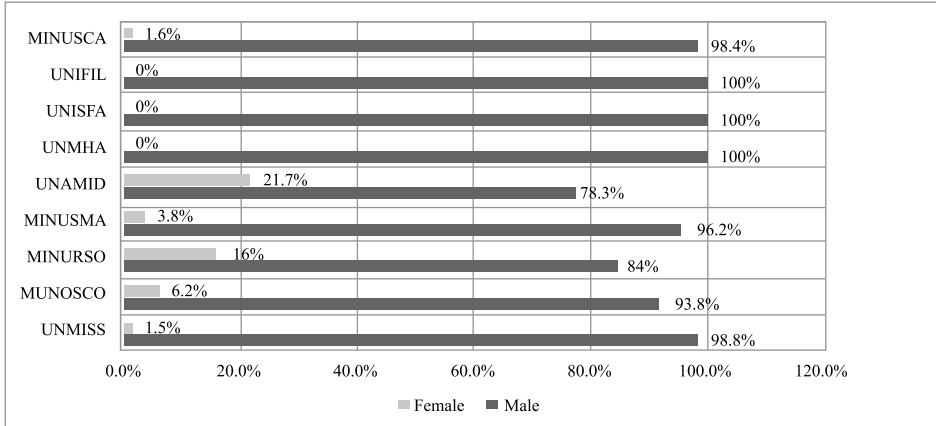
As of December 2019, peacekeepers from Bangladesh have participated in the nine UN missions.<sup>53</sup> Figure 1 shows the percentage of male and female in the nine UN missions. Of these missions, women have participated in six missions. Approximately, 24 out of 1,623 peacekeepers in the UNMISS (1.5 per cent); 115 out 1,857 in the MONUSCO (6.2 per cent); 4 out of 25 in United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO, 16 per cent); 60 out of 1,577 in the MINUSMA (3.8 per cent); 33 out of 152 in the UNAMID (21.7 per cent) and 16 out of 1,026 in the MINUSCA (1.6 per cent) were women. In contrast, women were absent in three missions, e.g., the United Nations Mission in Support of the Hodeidah Agreement (UNMHA), the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) and the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). When comparing the variance in gender balance between PKOs from Bangladesh, UNAMID and MINURSO have the highest percentage of female peacekeepers. Due

<sup>52</sup> “Bangladesh earned US\$ 1.16 billion from the UN peacekeeping mission”, *The Daily Sangram*, 23 April 2014.

<sup>53</sup> United Nations Peacekeeping, “Summary of Contribution to UN Peacekeeping by Country, Mission and Post”, available at [https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/3\\_country\\_and\\_mission\\_15.pdf](https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/3_country_and_mission_15.pdf), accessed on 29 January 2020.

to various drivers, e.g., UN demand for women, nature of the missions, policies undertaken by the Bangladesh governments which will be discussed elaborately in section four, overall participation of women in UNPKOs from Bangladesh is increasing gradually. But the higher percentage of women participation in some missions than the others have seen due to the diverse size of the missions.

**Figure 1: As of December 2019, Gender Ratio of Bangladesh in the UN Missions**



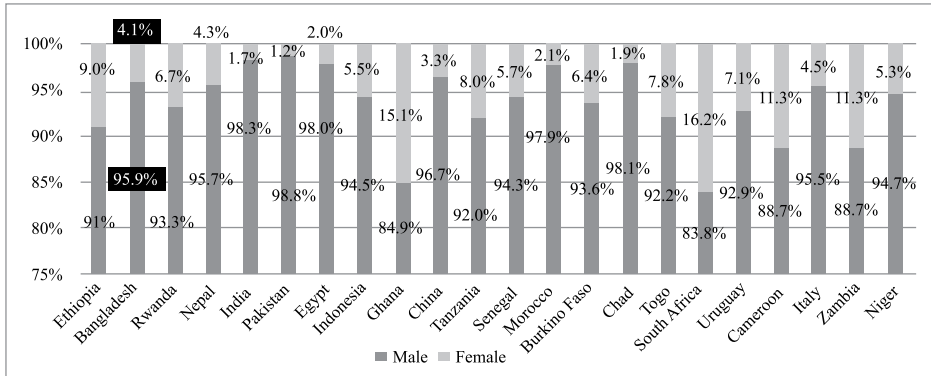
Source: Compiled by authors based on the UN website. United Nations Peacekeeping, “Summary of Contribution to UN Peacekeeping by Country, Mission and Post”, available at [https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/3\\_country\\_and\\_mission\\_15.pdf](https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/3_country_and_mission_15.pdf), accessed on 29 January 2020.

As of December 2019, the top 22 contributing countries deployed more than 950 men and women to the ongoing peacekeeping operations.<sup>54</sup> Figure 2 includes all women and men deployed as individual police, FPU, experts on missions and contingent troops. In these missions, Bangladesh has sent 261 female peacekeepers out of 6,423 peacekeepers. With regard to absolute numbers, it ranked 4<sup>th</sup>, whereas Ethiopia (596 out of 6651) stood first followed by Rwanda (424 out of 6367) and Ghana (423 out of 2801). In contrast, the position of Bangladesh is 16<sup>th</sup>, in terms of the percentage of women deployed compared to their total contribution. The percentage of women peacekeepers from Bangladesh is 4.1 per cent. South Africa, Ghana, Cameroon, Ethiopia and Tanzania are the top five countries with the highest percentage of women deployed compared to their total contribution with 16.2 per cent, 15.1 per cent, 11.3 per cent, 9.0 per cent and 8.0 per cent respectively. Due to several reasons, the higher percentage of women participation from African countries is visible. Firstly, Africa hosts seven of the current UN’s peacekeeping operations. Secondly, the majority of troops come from African countries. Thirdly, Organization of African Union’s (OAU) growing participation in UNPKOs, e.g., African Union

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and joint African Union-United Nations fact-finding mission on women, peace and security.

**Figure 2: Gender Parity of Bangladesh in Comparison with the Top 20 TCCs in UNPKOs as of December 2019**



Source: Compiled by authors based on the UN website. United Nations Peacekeeping, “Summary of Troops Contributing Countries by Ranking”, available at [https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/2\\_country\\_ranking\\_15.pdf](https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/2_country_ranking_15.pdf), accessed on 29 January 2020.

Though Bangladesh is performing well in terms of absolute number, the percentage of women peacekeepers compared to men is rising at a slow pace. Indeed, women police started to join the UN mission lately, their percentage is greater than military women due to higher demand of female police as FPU in UN missions, active involvement of Bangladesh Police and lower number of women in the Armed Forces Division. Being the top contributor of female police officers to the UNPKOs as FPU, Bangladesh female peacekeepers have placed themselves as a key driving force to deal with public order and threats to peace. Given the higher representation of women police officers compared to the uniformed personnel in UNPKOs, the size of the police contingent thus seems to be an important determinant for increasing the overall participation of women peacekeepers.

#### 4. Drivers for Bangladesh

The increasing participation of Bangladeshi female peacekeepers in UNPKOs would not be possible without some forces acting on it. Based on the analytical framework discussed in section 2.1, this section tries to find the driving forces which are changing the motion of Bangladeshi female peacekeepers’ participation in the UN missions. The forces are clustered under internal and external drivers.

## 4.1 *Internal Drivers*

Internal drivers refer to those forces which are intrinsic to the TCCs, act as push factors and vary from country to country. Internal drivers for Bangladesh are discussed below:

### 4.1.1 *Historical Legacy*

The role of Bangladeshi women in maintaining peace and security is not new. The history of the freedom struggle is incomplete without mentioning the contributions of women. Bangladeshi women's active participation dates back to the Indian Independence Movement (1857-1947). The sacrifice made by Pritilata Waddadar occupies a foremost place in history. Many women like Halima Khatun and Rowshan Ara participated in meetings and walked down to the streets to join processions in the Language Movement of 1952.<sup>55</sup> During the Liberation War of 1971 women war heroes also made remarkable contributions in conjunction with men. Captain Sitara Begum, Taramon Bibi, Shirin Banu, Farquan Begum, Alamtaj Begum, Karuna Begum, Shobha Rani, Bithika Biswas, Meherunnesa and many more women freedom fighters participated directly and indirectly as combatants, informants and nurses. They not only fought against Pakistanis in the battlefield but also supported the valiant freedom fighters with food, shelter and funds.<sup>56</sup> This historical legacies of women in wars and conflicts certainly led to the inclusion of women in all the services of the republic including defence forces and law enforcement agencies as well as increasing participation of women in UN peacekeeping from Bangladesh.

### 4.1.2 *Legal Obligation*

The participation of women in UNPKOs can also be explained by legal factors. Bangladesh has recognized the UN Charter in its national constitution. The preamble of the constitution inscribes, "...we may prosper in freedom and may make our full contribution towards international peace and cooperation in keeping with the progressive aspirations of mankind". Hence, it is committed to maintaining international peace and security by multilateral means. Moreover, articles 10, 11, 19, 27, 28 and 29 of the constitution elaborate on the equality of women and men in every service. Article 29 (1) of the Constitution requires that there shall be equality of opportunity for all citizens in respect of employment or office in the service of the republic. The same article under clause (2) further requires that no citizen shall,

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<sup>55</sup> Parvez Babul, "Women's role in '52, '71, Shahbagh", *The Daily Star*, 02 December 2014.

<sup>56</sup> Yasmin Saikia, *Women, War, and the Making of Bangladesh: Remembering 1971*, United Kingdom: Duke University Press, 2011, pp. 137-212.

on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth, be ineligible for, or discriminated against in respect of any employment or office in the service of the republic.<sup>57</sup> Along with the overarching provisions of the Constitution, Bangladesh Labour Act and Bangladesh Labour Rules uphold the equal rights of female service holders as their male counterparts. In addition, the endorsement of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and ratification of International Labour Organization (ILO) Conventions create a legal obligation for Bangladesh to ensure gender equality and special measures for women in UNPKOs.

#### 4.1.3 *Adoption of the Resolution 1325*

After the adoption of the resolution 1325 in 2000 by UNSC, it also recommended member states to facilitate the implementation of the UNSCR 1325 and subsequent nine resolutions, e.g., Resolution 1820 (2008); Resolution 1889 (2009); Resolution 1960 (2010); Resolution 2122 (2013); Resolution 2106 (2013); 2122 (2013); 2242 (2015); 2467 (2019) and 2493 (2019) on the agenda of WPS. Till now, nearly 73 states have adopted national plans of action.<sup>58</sup> Intending to increase women's participation in UN efforts to maintain peace and security, UN Women and Bangladesh's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) had jointly held a National Symposium to present the methodology of the drafting of the National Action Plan (NAP) in 2017. Eight government ministries and divisions led by MoFA are involved in the drafting process. Moreover, it also includes civil society organizations across the country to obtain community input for developing the NAP. The country is now at the final stage of drafting NAP which includes time-bound goals for the advancement of women's participation and rights, with indicators to measure success. It also encompasses all strategic and practical issues involved in the four pillars of the WPS: Participation, Prevention, Protection and Relief, and Recovery.<sup>59</sup> Thus, NAP reinforces Bangladesh's continued efforts in establishing peace and security within and beyond its border by ensuring women's greater role in peacekeeping, peacebuilding, disaster management, prevention of violence against women and preventing violent extremism among others.

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<sup>57</sup> "Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh", available at <http://bdlaws.minlaw.gov.bd/act-367.html>, accessed on 18 February 2020.

<sup>58</sup> Peace Women, "Bangladesh to Ensure Women's Participation in Peace, Security Efforts", available at <http://peacewomen.org/node/101318>, accessed on 10 January 2020.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.



#### 4.1.4 Policy Initiatives

Bangladesh has undertaken a number of policies in line with international legal mechanisms to create greater opportunities for women in the workplace. Generally, Seventh Five-Year Plan (SFYP) 2016-2020, National Women Development Policy 2011 and Vision 2021 underlie the importance of promoting an enabling environment at the services, setting up daycare centres for the children of working mothers, women empowerment and equality.<sup>60</sup> In light of these broader policies, Bangladesh Police have taken specific policies and action plans. A partnership programme titled Police Reform Programme (PRP) between the Bangladesh Police and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has begun in 2006. This programme is working as a driving force beneath the priority given to the employment and inclusion of women in the Bangladesh Police. Besides, the Bangladesh Police's Strategic Plan 2008-2009 which enunciated 'gender neutrality' as a core value is another motivating factor in this regard. To foster gender equal opportunity in policing, numerous goals set out in this plan, e.g., drawing an internal policy on gender equality, development of gender sensitization training and an increase in women's representation in the services.<sup>61</sup> Moreover, as per the commitment of Bangladesh to achieve the desired goal of reaching 20 per cent policewomen in all UN missions, Bangladesh hosted the Asian Region Women Police Conference in 2012 in Dhaka.<sup>62</sup>

Similarly, echoing the government slogan of equal rights of women in all spheres, BAF was the forerunner to undertake policy in 2000 to employ female officers in every branch except general duties pilot and navigation. Moreover, they also took necessary initiatives to induct combat pilots in their operational branch since 2015. Following BAF, Bangladesh Army (BA) and Bangladesh Navy (BN) have also started recruiting female officers in their respective officer cadres since 2003.<sup>63</sup> Bangladesh Army's new recruitment policy has opened all officer ranks to women and lifted the prohibitions to join combat forces. Previously, in the armed forces, the role of women was restricted to the medical community, i.e., doctors and nurses for an extended time.<sup>64</sup> In 2003, women officers began serving in the Bangladesh

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<sup>60</sup> United Nations Development Programme, "Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Public Administration: Bangladesh Case Study", available at <https://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/Democratic%20Governance/Womens%20Empowerment/BangladeshFinal%20-%20HiRes.pdf>, accessed on 23 January 2020.

<sup>61</sup> Sangida Rahman, "Women's Participation in Administration: An Analysis on Police Administration in Bangladesh", *Humanities and Social Sciences*, Vol. 6, No. 6, 2018, pp. 182-187.

<sup>62</sup> "Bangladesh Police Women's Network", available at <http://www.bpwn.org.bd/cgi-sys/suspendedpage.cgi>, accessed on 02 January 2020.

<sup>63</sup> M. Nurul Islam, "Empowerment of Women in Bangladesh Air Force", *North American Academic Research*, Vol. 1, No. 4, 2018, pp. 56-67.

<sup>64</sup> Md. Tariqul Islam, "Women soldiers in Bangladesh Army", *The Independent*, 21 January 2018.

Army. Instead of 2 years, 3 years of training have been added for them. Besides, the regular army training additional Bachelor programme has been included. Following India and Sri Lanka, Bangladesh is the third South Asian nation to recruit women army officers.<sup>65</sup> Such national policies to ensure gender equality in the Armed Forces and Police undoubtedly drive Bangladesh to increase the involvement of women in UNPKOs.

## 4.2 *External Drivers*

External drivers refer to those forces which are extrinsic to the TCCs, act as pull factors and identical to all countries. External drivers for Bangladesh are discussed below:

### 4.2.1 *International Recognition and Publicity*

Since the beginning, the participation of Bangladesh in UN peacekeeping has been applauded by the international community. For instance, due to the contribution of Bangladeshi troops, the people of Sierra Leone recognized Bengali language as the second state language in the country and people of Côte d'Ivoire have named a particular street in Danane town as 'Bangladesh Road'.<sup>66</sup> Similarly, the role of female peacekeepers as the key driving force to reduce gender-based violence, conflict and confrontation, providing a sense of security, especially for women and children, mentoring female police officers in the local area and thus empowering women in the host country and promoting social cohesion is also upheld. For example, Bangladesh's deployment of two full contingents of All-Female Formed Police Units in Congo and Haiti is appreciated globally. With integrity, commitment and visionary ideas, these units have played an enormous role in ensuring peace and stability. Their contribution also got publicity through a documentary titled, *Journey of a Thousand Miles: Peacekeepers* directed by Sharmeen Obaid Chinoy and Geeta Gandhbir following the third deployment of 140 women serving in Haiti from June 2013 to July 2014. The documentary premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival 2015.<sup>67</sup> Henceforth, international recognition and publicity, which help to attain the objectives of its foreign policy and diplomacy in regional and global

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<sup>65</sup> Tabibul Islam, "Rights-Bangladesh: Women Queue up as Army Opens Door", *Inter Press Service*, 23 August 2000, available at <http://www.ipsnews.net/2000/08/rights-bangladesh-women-queue-up-as-army-opens-door/>, accessed on 01 February 2020.

<sup>66</sup> "How Bengali became an official language in Sierra Leone", *The Indian Express*, 21 February 2017; Julfikar Ali Manik, "Ivory Coast town proud of its Bangladesh Road", *The Daily Star*, 24 July 2007.

<sup>67</sup> "A Journey of a Thousand Miles: Peacekeepers premieres at the prestigious Toronto International Film Festival", available at <https://www.springmediabubble.com/a-journey-of-a-thousand-miles-peacekeepers-premieres-at-the-prestigious-toronto-international-film-festival/>, accessed on 18 January 2020.

forums, play a crucial role for Bangladesh to increase the participation of women peacekeepers in UNPKOs.

#### 4.2.2 *Image Building and Nation Branding*

Currently, women empowerment is playing multifarious pivotal roles in the process of nation branding and image building of Bangladesh. The country is internationally recognized for its remarkable progress on several gender indicators. These include gender parity in primary and secondary education and maternal mortality. Bangladesh ranks highest in the Gender Gap Index in South Asia. It stands 47<sup>th</sup> among 144 countries in the world.<sup>68</sup> The Prime Minister was honoured with ‘Planet 50-50 Champion’ and ‘Agent of Change’ awards in 2016 for her outstanding contributions to women empowerment by UN women.<sup>69</sup> Indeed, providing female peacekeepers to UNPKOs allows Bangladesh to promote the women empowerment image and peace model of the country abroad in another way. Thus, the nation branding of women empowerment reinforces Bangladesh to increase the contribution of female peacekeepers.

#### 4.2.3 *International Exposure*

Not only the international recognition and publicity but also the international exposure acts as a motivating factor for Bangladesh to encourage women to join the UN missions. For instance, to use new weapons and military vehicles, Bangladeshi troops were trained before the deployment in Haiti for peace operation by the US Special Forces and the British Army during a stop-over in Puerto Rico. Moreover, Bangladeshi pilots stationed in Dungu, Congo were able to fly at least 300 hours a year, in contrast, they are only able to exercise flying for less than 100 hours annually back home.<sup>70</sup> All the interviewed female peacekeepers said that they all wanted to serve in peacekeeping due to exposure. They got the opportunity to develop skills, capacity and career through international exposure to different systems of military management and equipment, types of conflict and advanced military operating systems. Moreover, they learned operating in an international and multinational environment that provided them with the opportunities to acquire and apply new knowledge and receive training from more trained and equipped troops from other countries. From such exposure, female peacekeepers are professionally gaining and adding value to the national security of Bangladesh.

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<sup>68</sup> “Gender Gap Index: Bangladesh stays top in South Asia”, *The Daily Star*, 04 November 2017.

<sup>69</sup> “PM awarded for women empowerment”, *The Daily Star*, 23 September 2016.

<sup>70</sup> “Why South Asia Loves Peacekeeping”, *The Diplomat*, 20 December 2010.

#### 4.2.4 Financial Imperative

There is enough scope for TCCs to gain financially by participating in peacekeeping missions. Approved budgets of UNPKOs for the period from July 2018 to June 2019 was about US\$6.69 billion.<sup>71</sup> Uniformed personnel to peacekeeping operations are reimbursed by the UN at a standard rate. Every year, both the country and peacekeepers accrue financial benefits from participating in these missions. One of the respondents from the interview said that after the severe sickness of her husband, her family was suffering financially which motivated her to join the peacekeeping missions. As of July 2019, each soldier was paid US\$1,428 per month.<sup>72</sup> Bangladeshi peacekeepers bring US\$500 million a year.<sup>73</sup> Due to the lack of updated data the following table shows the UN reimbursement of money to Bangladesh from 2001 to 2010 for both troops and equipment.

**Table 5: UN Reimbursement of Money to Government of Bangladesh (GoB) as of July 2010**

Fiscal Year	Equipment Reimbursement (US\$)	Troops Cost Reimbursement (US\$)	Total Reimbursement (US\$)
2001-2002	16,118,800.47	81,639,026.00	97,757,826.47
2002-2003	37,432,740.09	67,051,154.00	104,483,894.09
2003-2004	44,296,416.36	46,713,064.00	91,009,480.36
2004-2005	31,606,099.37	93,794,400.06	125,400,499.43
2005-2006	84,182,738.40	161,861,802.37	246,044,540.77
2006-2007	79,046,617.94	136,366,902.22	215,413,520.16
2007-2008	49,200,697.85	105,686,967.55	154,887,665.40
2008-2009	27,844,530.37	95,053,666.20	122,898,196.57
2009-2010	48,936,327.81	80,945,156.00	129,881,483.81
<b>Total</b>	418,664,968.66	869,112,138.40	1,287,777,107.06

Source: Krishna Kumar Saha, “UN Peacekeeping and Bangladesh”, *South Asia Journal*, available at <http://southasiajournal.net/un-peacekeeping-and-bangladesh/>, accessed on 23 January 2020.

As compensation for troop contributions, contingent-owned equipment and other forms of compensation from the year 2001 to 2010, the government received US\$1.28 billion from the UN peacekeeping missions.<sup>74</sup> From the

<sup>71</sup> United Nations Peacekeeping, “Peacekeeping Operations Factsheet”, available at [https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/pk\\_factsheet\\_07\\_19\\_eng\\_1.pdf](https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/pk_factsheet_07_19_eng_1.pdf), accessed on 31 January 2020.

<sup>72</sup> United Nations Peacekeeping, “How we are Funded”, available at <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/how-we-are-funded>, accessed on 31 January 2020.

<sup>73</sup> “Supply-side peacekeeping”, *The Economist*, 21 February 2017.

<sup>74</sup> Krishna Kumar Saha, “UN Peacekeeping and Bangladesh”, *South Asia Journal*, available at <http://southasiajournal.net/un-peacekeeping-and-bangladesh/>, accessed on 23 January 2020.

participation of Bangladesh Armed Forces, it earned US\$72 million in 2012-2013. In the last two decades, Bangladesh Police have earned US\$513 million.<sup>75</sup> The average reimbursement income of the Bangladesh Navy through the UN mission is US\$645.76 million per year. Bangladesh government receives US\$46.357 million per year on average as a UN mission allowance for the Bangladesh Navy. Till now, it has earned US\$579 million as a UN mission allowance for Bangladesh Naval peacekeepers.<sup>76</sup> This encourages both the women and the state to pursue their economic interests further from this exclusive and lucrative payment method through ensuring a greater role for the female peacekeepers.

## 5. Barriers for Bangladesh

Women's participation in peacekeeping missions has a short history, therefore, women still face many challenges. From the existing literature and primary data, it is found that barriers to increasing women's participation from Bangladesh in peacekeeping are diverse and emanate from multiple levels. By breaking these barriers into three levels, e.g., international, national and individual, this section illuminates different reasons for the low women participation in the UNPKOs.

### 5.1 *International Level*

Feminist scholars argued that the presence of hegemonic masculine culture or hegemonic masculinity prevailed in the UNPKOs. Due to the presence of gender protection norms, women peacekeepers did not deploy in the Central African Republic and DR Congo.<sup>77</sup> Moreover, the finding of some research reveals that women peacekeepers faced sexual harassment and gender discrimination in the UN missions.<sup>78</sup> In the UNMIL mission, 17 per cent of women listed sexual harassment within the mission as the biggest impediment to completing their duties.<sup>79</sup> The reported experience of sexual violence and the presence of gendered norms certainly create hindrance to increasing the number of women peacekeepers from Bangladesh. The decision-makers of Bangladesh in an interview said while sending all-female contingent, they primarily consider the safety of the female peacekeepers. Respondents also cited that despite having high qualifications,

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<sup>75</sup> Ishfaq Ilahi Choudhury, "Trends and imperatives", *The Daily Star*, 14 June 2013; Rashed Uz Zaman and Niloy Ranjan Biswas, "Bangladesh's Participation in UN Peacekeeping Missions and Challenges for Civil-Military Relations: A Case for Concordance Theory", *International Peacekeeping*, Vol. 21, No. 3, 2014, pp. 324-344.

<sup>76</sup> Noor Islam Habib, "Role of Bangladesh navy in UN peacekeeping mission", *The Independent*, 29 May 2019.

<sup>77</sup> Sabrina Karim and Kyle Beardsley, op. cit.; Natalie Florea Hudson, op. cit.

<sup>78</sup> Gerard J. DeGroot, op. cit.

<sup>79</sup> Vanessa Newby, "Challenges for female peacekeepers can come from within UN militaries", *The Strategist*, 04 April 2019.

many women peacekeepers find themselves assigned to safer, less visible or serious roles and confined to administrative tasks rather than decision making positions.

Furthermore, since the 1990s, the UN has set a series of ambitious targets to increase women's participation in PKOs. In 2006, DPKO called on member states to double the number of female uniformed peacekeepers every year for the next few years. Later, it had set a target to increase female in both police and soldiers up to 20 per cent by 2014 and to achieve a 50/50 representation by 2015.<sup>80</sup> Failing to reach the targets, it was recently postponed to 2020. Similarly, the Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy earlier in 2019 aims to reach a target of 15 per cent to 35 per cent for women's representation by 2028.<sup>81</sup> These set goals are yet to be met by the TCCs due to the absence of any binding legal mechanism to induce compliance. Thus, the UN's inability to set targets without placing a mechanism for compliance certainly justifies the low male to female peacekeepers ratio from the TCCs and Bangladesh also.

This is further complicated by a clear recruitment policy or mandate for the women regarding their deployment in the missions. Moreover, inadequate circulation of vacancy announcements and the post requirements present substantial challenges to the recruitment of women in UNPKOs. In missions like MONUC, United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) and MINURSO, women have not held senior management positions (D-1 and above) and mainly occupied mid-level management positions (P-4 and P-5).<sup>82</sup> From the interview of the peacekeepers, it is found that the requirement of military experience which is generally around five and up to eight for heads of operation certainly creates barriers for women's participation in peacekeeping operations. They also identified the physical fitness tests during the training sessions as a significant obstacle to the recruitment of women for PKOs. This is the only criterion where women peacekeepers often feel the need to abandon their femininity because in most training sessions male peacekeepers outperform the women peacekeepers.

Besides, DPKOs recruitment system is accused of being dominated by the systems of patronage, clientelism, favouritism and nepotism. In Bangladesh, Brazil, Burundi, Cameroon, China, Egypt, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Morocco, Rwanda and South Africa political allegiance and patronage in recruitment to peacekeeping operations have been reported by Transparency International.<sup>83</sup> Respondents cited that women

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<sup>80</sup> Ann Blomberg and Daniel de Torres, op. cit.

<sup>81</sup> Department of Peace Operation, op. cit.

<sup>82</sup> Francesco Bertolazzi, *Women with a Blue Helmet: The Integration of Women and Gender Issues in UN Peacekeeping Missions*, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic: United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, 2010, pp. 12-15.

<sup>83</sup> Transparency International, "Corruption & Peace Operations Risks and recommendations for Troop Contributing Countries and the United Nations", available at <http://ti-defence.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/0>

military personnel have less access to these patronage and clientelism networks that would facilitate mentoring, sponsorship and information sharing regarding the opportunity in UNPKOs. Additionally, in contrast with other UN agencies, the DPKO recruitment system offers fewer compensation packages because most of the DPKO missions are designed as non-family duty posts. The women peacekeepers considered this a serious obstacle.

Recently, NGO Working Group on WPS shows concern regarding the disproportionate cuts to gender functions in peacekeeping missions. Consequently, gender posts in the Central African Republic, Haiti and Liberia have been downgraded and in Mali, senior gender adviser posts remained vacant.<sup>84</sup> Moreover, as per UNSC resolution 2242 (2015), DPKO is responsible to deploy gender expertise in strategic assessment teams as well as all stages of a mission including planning to implementation. However, strategic assessment teams in Cyprus and South Sudan were not deployed with gender experts while all other components of the missions were being represented.<sup>85</sup> This inferred that UN leaders are deprioritizing gender as being non-essential in peacekeeping operations. By doing so they are also contravening the mandated Security Council's obligations. Thus, the lack of political will of the UN to implement the WPS agenda also demotivates the TCCs like Bangladesh to engage their female personnel in the missions.

In effect, as of December 2019, approximately 39 countries deployed less than 10 female peacekeepers, only 11 countries contributed more than 100 female peacekeepers and 11 TCCs did not contribute any women as police, UN military experts on mission, staff officers and contingent level troops out of their total contributions. Even being the top female peacekeepers sending countries, the percentage of women peacekeepers from South Africa is only 15 per cent.<sup>86</sup> Consequently, TCCs like Bangladesh who are trying to increase their female participation find few role models to follow their paths.

## 5.2 National Level

The entire issue of incorporating women into national Police and Armed Forces has been highlighted by some studies as a basic fact regarding greater and

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4/160330CorruptionRiskTCCsTIIDSPFIN.pdf, accessed on 03 February 2020.

<sup>84</sup> Louise Allen, "Gender Continues to be Overlooked by UN Peacekeeping", *NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security*, 23 October 2017, available at <https://www.womenpeacesecurity.org/blog-gender-continues-to-be-overlooked-by-un-peacekeeping-october-2017/>, accessed on 08 February 2020.

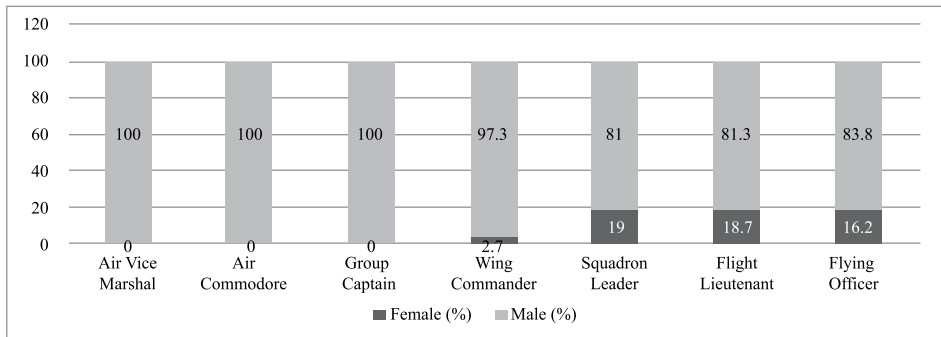
<sup>85</sup> Gabrielle Belli, "Strong Gender Focus Needed During UN Peacekeeping Discussions", *NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security*, 28 March 2018, available at <https://www.womenpeacesecurity.org/blog-strong-gender-focus-needed-during-un-peacekeeping-discussions-march-2018/>, accessed on 08 February 2020.

<sup>86</sup> United Nations Peacekeeping, "Summary of Troops Contributing Countries by Ranking", op. cit.

more significant recruitment and deployment of women in peacekeeping. Despite taking several policy initiatives to ensure justifiable participation of women in the defence service arena, the representation of women in Bangladesh Police and Armed Forces has not reached a satisfactory level. Consequently, it creates challenges for Bangladesh to increase the number of women in the military and police personnel deployed to UNPKOs.

The participation of women in Bangladesh Armed Forces was limited to the medical profession until 2000. In 2000 the Bangladeshi Armed Forces opened all officer ranks to women. Since then women have served in the Special Security Force, Army Aviation and Military Police Units of Bangladesh Army, Meteorology, Air Traffic Control, Admin, Legal, Supply, Finance, GDP, Engineering and Education Branch of Air Force and Supply, Engineering, Electrical and Education branch of Bangladesh Navy. Female officers are yet to be promoted in higher ranks of Lieutenant General and above in Bangladesh Army, Captain and above in Bangladesh Navy and Group Captain and above in Air Force.<sup>87</sup> As no updated data is available regarding the participation of female in the Army and Navy, Figure 4 only shows the rank wise percentage of female officers in the Bangladesh Air Force.

**Figure 4: Male and Female Officers of Bangladesh Air Force in 2018 (As per Rank)**



Source: M. Nurul Islam, “Empowerment of Women in Bangladesh Air Force”, *North American Academic Research*, Vol. 1, No. 4, 2018, p. 60.

Similarly, though the women had started to be appointed in Bangladesh Police from 1974, till now their participation rate is quite low in comparison with men. From 2007 to 2013, the percentage of women in the police had increased from 1.87 to 4.63 per cent. As of December 2016, out of 149,778 police personnel, the number of women was 11,130. In 2018, the percentage of women police among all working police personnel was 6.66 per cent and cadre personnel is 10.26 per cent.<sup>88</sup>

<sup>87</sup> M. Nurul Islam, op. cit.

<sup>88</sup> Bijoy Basak, “Trends and Issues of Women Policing in Bangladesh: A Socio-cultural Analysis”, *Journal of*



Table 5 shows the rank wise participation of women in Bangladesh Police.

**Table 5: Number of Female Police in Bangladesh (As per Rank)**

Rank	2018	2016	2015	2014	2013
Add. IGP	0	1	1	1	0
DIG	1	2	2	2	3
Addl. DIG	4	2	2	2	2
SP	37	29	19	12	2
Addl. SP	93	86	67	56	39
Sr. ASP	0	31	7	20	20
ASP	127	127	134	136	92
Inspector	107	93	84	66	38
SI	667	555	470	478	360
Sergeant	54	29	28	0	0
ASI	947	784	508	401	394
Naik	36	0	0	0	0
Constable	11,200	9,391	7,403	6,380	5,374
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,272</b>	<b>11,130</b>	<b>8,725</b>	<b>7,554</b>	<b>6,324</b>
<b>Percentage of Female</b>	<b>Cadre-6.7% and Working Police-10.3%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>5.5%</b>	<b>4.8%</b>

Source: Bijoy Basak, "Trends and Issues of Women Policing in Bangladesh: A Socio-cultural Analysis", *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh (Hum.)*, Vol. 63, No. 2, 2018, pp. 183-204; Sangida Rahman, "Women's Participation in Administration: An Analysis on Police Administration in Bangladesh", *Humanities and Social Sciences*, Vol. 6, No. 6, 2018, pp. 182-187.

Low participation of women in the national military and police forces is not the sufficient cause to explain the slow progress of women participation in the peacekeeping missions from Bangladesh. Many other barriers are also associated with it. Indeed, a proper national peacekeeping policy is essential to enable women participation equally; Bangladesh is yet to adopt such a policy. Even, FPU selection guideline which was first published in 2009 and revised in 2017 has not been made gender sensitive till now.<sup>89</sup> Though the practical demand of women police units from the United Nations creates opportunities for Bangladesh to increase its women participation, no such all-female police unit exists in the country. Many times, the proposal of establishing a separate female armed police battalion in the organizational structure of the Armed Police

*the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh (Hum.)*, Vol. 63, No. 2, 2018, pp. 183-204; Sangida Rahman, op. cit.

<sup>89</sup> Meherun Nesa, "Evolving Participation of Bangladesh Police in UN Peace Keeping Mission: Challenges and Opportunities", *Asia Pacific Journal of Multidisciplinary Research*, Vol. 7, No. 1, 2019, pp. 52-57.

Battalion has been raised. Yet no practical steps are visible to materialize the proposal to avail the opportunity.

These issues have also become complicated by the lack of a national female peacekeepers network. Such a network consisting of former and currently serving female peacekeepers, who will disseminate information regarding the peacekeeping operation, allow women to share their experiences, reach out to and encourage women to the UNPKOs and promote, strengthen and advance the profile of female military peacekeepers is essential for TCCs like Bangladesh. Though Bangladesh Policewomen's Network was set up in 2008 with the aim of providing leadership for achieving national and global objectives for women's development through capacity building and professional skill development, it has not expanded to female police peacekeepers yet.

Furthermore, relevant and appropriate training appears to be an effective step to increase women's participation in peacekeeping operations from Bangladesh. Though Bangladesh Peace Support Operation and Training (BIPSOT), Police Staff College at Dhaka and Police Academy at Rajshahi are conducting training programmes covering gender mainstreaming in peacekeeping, they do not provide courses exclusively for female military officers as part of a professional development opportunity to increase the deployment of women in peacekeeping operations. While training targeted only at women is needed, it is also essential to ensure that women are trained alongside men. That is because joint training will allow them to be better prepared to deploy together in mixed teams.

These training solely dedicated to women military and police personnel also require systematic research to examine the ways in which women peacekeepers contribute to the operational effectiveness of peacekeeping missions and how these contributions differ from the performance of male peacekeepers. But the study did not find any literature on the contribution and condition of women peacekeepers from Bangladesh. In some instances, sufficient and updated information and statistics on websites related to the number and ratio of women are not available. This leads to a knowledge gap about the pros and cons of the contribution of women personnel to the UNPKOs from Bangladesh.

### **5.3 Individual Level**

Nonetheless, women's under-representation in the peacekeeping missions is widely evident due to not only for the barriers that emanate from international and national levels but also for patriarchal social, structural, philosophical and cultural barriers prevailing within the society and family.

In order to further understand the context in which women are debarred to join in peacekeeping, one needs to understand the patriarchal social and family structure of Bangladesh where women are referred to as ‘beautiful souls’ and men as ‘just warriors’.<sup>90</sup> Hence, men are pushed to be brave warriors to protect the less strong women, who in turn are seen as procreators of children. Society views military and police works as men’s work which is physical, authoritative, forceful, dangerous and hence inherently unsuitable to the female physique and disposition. This certainly creates a negative attitude in the society to accept women into the security environment. Respondents also identified the social culture of Bangladesh which discourages and demoralizes women to render service in the UNPKOs.

Natalie Florea Hudson argues that patriarchal social structure reinforces a strict gender division of labour in which fighting and warfare are for the most part identified with masculinity while mothering and caring are synonymous with femininity. Due to these patriarchal structures, women in the defence force face dual responsibilities and the double burden of work and family more than the other women in the services.<sup>91</sup> In the case of participating in the PKOs, they have to choose between the family and career if her family is not cooperative. Most of the time, they give priority to the family. All the interviewees cited family responsibilities limit their participation in UNPKOs. One of the interviewed peacekeepers said that her husband was very angry at first when she decided to take part in UNPKOs. Later, he was convinced and became proud to say that his wife was doing a prestigious job. But he was not ready to share domestic work during her deployment. As a result, she remained concerned about children and family which certainly created a negative impact on her performance during the deployment. Another one stated that her husband and other family members did not give consent when she was about to submit the application. Thus, women who choose to join in peacekeeping operations have to combat both the external enemy and the patriarchal attitudes and actions within the society which impede the motivation of women to enter into defence service as well as in PKOs.

The barriers discussed above carry negative implications for Bangladesh. These identified barriers are restraining the country from promoting its soft power and women empowerment image of Bangladesh, showing a firm commitment to international peace and security and getting economic benefits. However, addressing these barriers can bring huge prospects for a developing country like Bangladesh in its conduct of foreign policy. It will allow Bangladesh to place its women nationals in key positions in international organizations, to influence in shaping the international

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<sup>90</sup> Mead Cain, Syeda Rokeya Khanam and Shamsun Nahar, “Class, Patriarchy, and Women’s Work in Bangladesh”, *Population and Development Review*, Vol. 5, No. 3, 1979, pp. 405-438.

<sup>91</sup> Natalie Florea Hudson, op. cit.

system and to enhance its prestige and standing in the international community. Consequently, its 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. It will also help the country to develop and improve diplomatic and economic relations with the conflict-affected regions and countries. Besides, Bangladesh's participation in peacekeeping operations provides not only an ample opportunity to get UN-funded advance trainings, but also 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. Thus, female participation in UNPKOs will help the country to acquire two kinds of power at the same time: hard power and soft power.

## **6. Conclusion**

Along with the UNDPKO, UN police, UNGA and UNSC also uphold the implications of women peacekeepers' participation in the UN mission in its landmark Resolution 1325 on WPS. Despite these undertakings, the number of female peacekeepers is still stagnating due to several reasons, e.g., the discrepancy between the intended and actual implementation of the mandate, lack of equal opportunity for women, existence of gender protection norms and gender stereotypes. These reasons also create barriers for the TCCs like Bangladesh to increase their women peacekeepers' participation in the mission.

As one of the major TCCs, Bangladesh is currently leading the wave of change by recruiting and deploying women peacekeepers, police and civilian officers to the UN missions. However, compared to the total contribution, the gender ratio of Bangladesh is not satisfactory. In the current deployment, women peacekeepers consist of 4 per cent. A comparative analysis between the top 22 troop contributing countries shows Bangladesh has secured 4<sup>th</sup> position from the top regarding total troops contribution. On the other hand, it has secured 6<sup>th</sup> position from the least in terms of the percentage of women deployed compared to their total contribution.

Though at a slow pace, there is evidence of increasing the ratio of women in UNPKOs. This can be explained by some driving forces which are clustered in the paper as internal drivers and external drivers. Internal drivers which are inherent to Bangladesh include the historical legacy of women in several war and conflict situations, international and national legal obligations, and policy initiative by the Bangladesh government as well as the adoption of UNSCR 1325. External drivers for Bangladesh include international recognition and publicity which has brought honour for the country and upholds them into international limelight, nation branding and image building of women empowerment, opportunity for international exposure

and gaining international level training motivate and financial imperatives. These drivers reinforce Bangladesh's continued efforts in establishing peace and security within and beyond its border by ensuring women's greater role in peacekeeping.

Indeed, there are some barriers along with these driving forces. The paper finds that diverse sorts of barriers emanate from multiple levels, e.g., international, national and individual, impede women's participation from Bangladesh in peacekeeping. Barriers that emanate from international level include hegemonic masculine culture, presence of gender protection norms, UN's inability to set binding targets, absence of clear recruitment policy, limiting women into mid-level position, the practices of patronage, clientelism, favouritism and nepotism in recruitment, non-family duty posts system, lack of political will of the UN to implement the WPS agenda and lack of role models. National level barriers include low participation of women in the national military and police forces along with lack of proper national peacekeeping policy and systematic research, failure to establish a separate female armed police battalion, absence of national female peacekeepers network and failure to provide exclusive gender training. Moreover, patriarchal social, structural, philosophical and cultural barriers prevailing within society and family are some of the crucial barriers that derive from the individual level. Hence, the interplay of these barriers that derive from three levels sufficiently explains women's under-representation in the peacekeeping missions from Bangladesh.