

**PUBLIC INFORMATION: THE ROLE OF  
INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES IN BANGLADESH  
A STRATEGY PAPER**

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## Foreword

Bangladesh was the victim of several terrorist attacks by Islamist extremist groups during the period 1999-2005. The initial reaction was to play down these attacks but the grenade attack on the then Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina, currently the Prime Minister of Bangladesh on 21 August 2004, and the simultaneous bomb blasts in 63 out of 64 districts on 17 August 2005 provoked a strong reaction both at home and abroad. It was only then that Bangladesh and its people were made painfully aware that they had to deal with a very serious threat to the security of the country. Although these terrorist outfits espouse disparate doctrines, a mutually beneficial support network was established among some of these extremist groups to facilitate inter-organizational cooperation. Investigations into these terrorist attacks also revealed a nexus between and among terrorist groups and other elements like smuggling syndicates, criminal gangs, foreign insurgents, outlawed organizations, and remnants of defunct insurgent groups. All these factors have drawn attention to the need for reform of the existing intelligence and law enforcement structures in Bangladesh.

The Bangladesh Enterprise Institute (BEI), with support from the Australian High Commission in Dhaka, undertook a comprehensive study under the People Peace Building Programme. As part of the project, a strategy paper on Public Information Role of Intelligence Agencies has been developed. The paper offers observations and recommendations to the government, law enforcement and intelligence agencies that we believe can assist in building a strong partnership between civil society and these agencies. For this strategy paper, in-depth research was conducted involving diverse socio-economic groups. Information was gathered from various parts of

Bangladesh, namely Sylhet, Jessore, Kushtia, Satkhira, Chuadanga, Naogaon, Rajshahi, Cox's Bazar and Bandarban. Interviews with concerned stakeholders were conducted in order to generate comprehensive and detailed information on the prospect and modalities of information-sharing between communities and intelligence agencies in Bangladesh. From the views and perceptions of the survey participants and interviewees, the constraints and bottlenecks that hinder community participation in security and intelligence decision-making were also examined.

The study reveals that, through dialogue, consultation and interaction with intelligence agencies, people would feel a sense of ownership in the decisions that influence their security and lives. The resultant confidence would facilitate a shift towards greater equality in social relations. This would, in turn, create an effective mechanism for an inflow of credible information from the communities as well as enhance the ability of intelligence agencies to effectively share information and thus enhance the overall security environment in the country.

The diligence and dedication of the BEI research team and the contribution of the many other participants in the study are commended. The generous financial support of the Australian High Commission in Bangladesh towards the People Peace Building Programme and for publication of this report is highly appreciated.



**Farooq Sobhan**  
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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Terrorism in Bangladesh is a relatively new but internationally linked phenomenon, compared to some other South Asian states. Bangladesh has witnessed terrorism since the nineteen nineties. A nexus has developed between terrorist groups and other elements like smuggling syndicates, criminal gangs, foreign insurgents and outlawed organizations that mutually nourish a supporting network for one another with conflicting goals. These factors have brought in the issue of reform in the role of the intelligence and law enforcement structure in Bangladesh. Participation of local communities in information generation and intelligence sharing has become an important aspect in the Bangladesh context. In view of these facts, the Bangladesh Enterprise Institute (BEI), with support from the Australian High Commission in Dhaka, has undertaken a comprehensive project on People Peace Building Program in Bangladesh spanning from 2009-2010. The project, in principle, seeks to identify the obstacles that hinder scopes of inter-agency information sharing mechanisms in Bangladesh and to address the barriers to cooperation between the grass-roots community and the Law Enforcement and Intelligence Agencies. As part of the project, this strategy paper on Public Information Role of Intelligence Agencies in Bangladesh has been developed. The paper is informed by an in-depth research, best practices in the region and beyond, interviews with relevant stakeholders and a structured survey on 330 people in various parts of Bangladesh. This study has found that, through participation in security decision-making, people in local communities would feel a sense of confidence in decisions that influence their security and lives. Such engagements would facilitate a shift towards greater equality in the social relations of power. This would, in turn, create an effective mechanism for an inflow of credible information from the communities, as well as enhance the ability of these agencies to effectively

share information and intelligence. This strategy paper offers recommendations to the government and intelligence and law enforcement agencies that could help build a strong partnership with the society. This paper recommends that, to combat terrorism and criminal acts, there is a need to create a broad framework and policy of sharing information and intelligence based on community engagement. An independent central agency could be established to coordinate and communicate policy concerns for information. Local people in Bangladesh are willing to work together with the security agencies in preventing terrorist attacks and criminal incidents. These agencies must ensure compliance with the law and make the commitment visible to the public. Exchange of views on regular basis on a wider platform, i.e. consultation workshop or seminar, could be the best medium for intelligence sharing between the government agencies and the community. Usage of ICT could prove to be beneficial for disseminating information and launch awareness and advocacy campaigns for the purpose of both inflow and outflow of information. Effective guidelines, human rights training and focused community-security partnership related training can improve the confidence of the members of the security agencies and the public perception that information is being handled appropriately. Right training, coupled with intelligence policies, will better enable sharing and ultimately help change the cultures of non-cooperation and excessive secrecy. Intelligence sharing should not be seen as an impediment to national security and there is a need to abolish the organizational politics of inter-agency non-cooperation and the rivalrous search for primacy and influence.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Since August 17, 2005, the intelligence and law enforcement agencies in Bangladesh have struggled to adapt to new challenges and to refocus and reorder priorities to combat terrorism. The synchronized bombings in 63 out of the 64 district towns of Bangladesh, including the capital Dhaka, on August 17, 2005 between 10:30 and 11:30 am, demonstrated the might and strength of terrorism in Bangladesh. The bombings caused deaths of two innocent people, wounded hundreds of them, and terrorized the whole country. Around 500 simple 'home-made' bombs blasted off in front of government offices, court houses, public parks, universities, airports and shopping centers and on roadside. Although the number of dead and injured was relatively small, in comparison with the toll of roadside bombs in Iraq, the fact signifies the point that terrorism poses a serious threat to the stability of Bangladesh.<sup>1</sup>

Bangladesh also experienced several other major terrorist incidents including a bomb blast in December 2005 in front of the Udichi Office, the cultural wing of the Communist Party of Bangladesh, at Netrakona leaving six persons killed and 46 others injured, while in November 2005, nine people, including two lawyers and a police constable, were killed and 78 persons injured in two suicide bomb attacks by the Jamaatul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) cadres on the Chittagong and Gazipur court premises. The Gazipur suicide bomber was killed and the Chittagong suicide bomber, Abul Bashar, was seriously injured in the incident. On November 14, 2005, a

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<sup>1</sup> Kabir, Humayun, and Shahab Enam Khan. 2010. *Understanding the Threats from Islamist Terrorism in Bangladesh*. Paper Presented at the ORF-BEI 2<sup>nd</sup> India-Bangladesh Dialogue, held in New Delhi, India, March 19-20, 2010. [www.bei-bd.org](http://www.bei-bd.org)

JMB cadre belonging to the suicide squad of the outfit exploded a bomb killing two senior assistant judges and wounding three people in the district headquarters of Jhalakathi. A series of grenade attacks were conducted on the then Leader of the Opposition and now Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on Bangabandhu Avenue on August 21, 2004 which left 24 people dead and 200 others injured. A bomb attack on May 21 of the same year, on the then British High Commissioner to Bangladesh, Mr. Anwar Choudhury, at the Hazrat Shahjalal shrine in Sylhet, left two persons killed and at least 100 others injured. On February 27, 2004, suspected Islamist extremists stabbed prominent writer Humayun Azad in front of the Bangla Academy in Dhaka. On January 12, 2004, two persons were killed and 37 others injured in a bomb explosion at the shrine of Hazrat Shahjalal in Sylhet. On October 8, 1999, seven persons of the Ahamadiya sect were killed and at least 40 others injured during a bomb explosion at the Quadiani Mosque in Khulna. On March 07, 1999, six persons were killed and approximately 100 others injured in two bomb explosions at a cultural function organized by Udichi in Jessore district.<sup>2</sup>

However, terrorism in Bangladesh is a relatively new but internationally linked phenomenon, compared to some other South Asian states. Bangladesh has witnessed terrorism since the mid-nineteen nineties. A nexus has developed between terrorist groups and other elements like smuggling syndicates, criminal gangs, foreign insurgents and outlawed organizations

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<sup>2</sup> Compiled from various sources including <http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/bangladesh/database/Fatalities-Islamist%20Terrorism%202010.htm> [www.thedailystar.com](http://www.thedailystar.com) [www.prothomalo.com](http://www.prothomalo.com)

that mutually nourish a supporting network for one another with conflicting goals.<sup>3</sup>

Apart from the terrorism issue, Bangladesh experienced a bloody mutiny on February 25-26, 2009. The mutiny exposed the fact that despite the Bangladesh Rifles having its own intelligence agency to maintain its internal security, a carnage took place that claimed the lives of 74 people including 57 serving army officers. The BDR intelligence agency had no coordination with other intelligence agencies. These facts have brought up the issue of reform in the role of the intelligence and law enforcement structure in Bangladesh. These agencies have undergone adjustments and upheaval while simultaneously confronting different forms of terrorism. This study has found that both law enforcement and intelligence organizations, namely the Police, Rapid Action Battalion (RAB), Directorate General of Forces Intelligence (DGFI) and National Security Intelligence (NSI), recognize the need to collaborate, share, and exchange information with the Bangladesh society as a whole; however, the legal and artificial boundaries between these agencies and the community have created a formidable impediment to do so.

This strategy paper offers observations and recommendations to the government and intelligence and law enforcement agencies that can help in building strong partnership between the society and these agencies. Therefore, the objectives of this strategy paper are the following:

- to create a broad framework for sharing information and intelligence based on community engagement;

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<sup>3</sup> Kabir, Humayun and Shahab Enam Khan. 2010. *Understanding the Threats from Islamist Terrorism in Bangladesh*. Paper Presented at the ORF-BEI 2<sup>nd</sup> India-Bangladesh Dialogue, held in New Delhi, India, March 19-20, 2010. [www.bei-bd.org](http://www.bei-bd.org)

- to establish the rule of law in the society and combat terrorism;
- to establish a society free of crimes, narcotic substances, and anti-social activities;
- to create local people's awareness and participation in maintaining the law and order;
- to assist law enforcement and intelligence agencies in maintaining the law and order by providing information on crimes and terrorism; and
- to develop effective and sustained cooperation between the law enforcement and intelligence agencies and the public.

## II. METHODOLOGY

To prepare this strategy, field visits to different parts of Bangladesh, namely Sylhet, Jessore, Kushtia, Satkhira, Chuadanga, Naogaon, Rajshahi, Joypurhat, Cox's Bazar and Bandarban were undertaken. In these areas diversified socio-economic environment generated different levels of reactions and impacts on the security agencies. Knowledge on the social impacts of security agencies and reviewing of existing literature published by the government, academia, and NGOs provided necessary tools to carry out a holistic research. A structured questionnaire was formulated to test public perceptions and identify public opinion on the prospect and modalities of the community-intelligence agencies information sharing in Bangladesh. In this regard, 300 random samples were taken. Equipped with such knowledge and insight, interviews and focused group discussions with concerned stakeholders and inter-personal communications with policy makers, opinion leaders, media professionals, owners, and general people were conducted. This process had generated a comprehensive view of the intelligence landscape in

Bangladesh. In the process, constraints and bottlenecks hindering community participation in security and intelligence decision making were also identified.

### **III. INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY AND PUBLIC SHARING OF INFORMATION IN BANGLADESH**

At present, there are no written rules agreed to by any of the branches of intelligence and law enforcement agencies regarding what intelligence will be shared with the public and how effectively public can provide information. There are no clear guidelines or strategies on the limit of sharing information or cross-departmental exchange of information. The current system of intelligence sharing and methods to obtain information is entirely the product of experience, shaped by the needs and concerns of all the agencies. While some aspects of the current practice appear to have achieved the status of mutually accepted "policy", few represent hard-and-fast rules. Traditionally, NSI and DGFI use information to gauge *foreign* capabilities and intentions of the terrorists and terrorist groups, while the law enforcement organizations like the Police and RAB, along with their intelligence wings, collect information to support *domestic* prosecution.

However, the goal of sharing information has a long, murky, and complex history. Part of the problem has been an inconsistent implementation of policies stemming from different interpretations of what is legally permissible. In the years leading up to the attacks of August 17, 2005, the Parliament and other actors in both the legislative and executive branches of government had barely reviewed the legal and governing policies regarding the sharing of intelligence information. However, the lack of information

sharing between the law enforcement and intelligence agencies and with the local communities was highlighted as a failure. Following the August 17, 2005 attacks or February 25-26, 2009 carnage, the objections against closer cooperation and involvement of local communities are gradually disappearing. It is noteworthy that there is a lack of proper institutional mechanism to create an enabling environment that provides the technologies, procedures, policies, and standards for sharing terrorism-related information among government and local jurisdictions and with the public in general.

Apart from the lack of institutional mechanism, there is a lack of legal arrangements to facilitate information inflow and outflow. Inter-agency coordination to disseminate information is largely done on *ad hoc* basis. A national level security body therefore needs to be established to help assure the flow of information and develop comprehensive effective mechanisms. Beside the institutional and legal concerns, the cultural differences between the intelligence and law enforcement communities are an important factor. The law enforcement focuses on building a legal case related to a crime that already has been committed—an historical perspective with a forensic cast. A case is carefully constructed based on admissible evidence. The evidence is handled in a prescribed manner. The rules associated with the chain-of-custody are designed to protect the integrity of information and reduce the integrity of the evidence as much as possible. A set of procedures is followed precisely to ensure the case will be successfully prosecuted. In comparison, intelligence agencies often collect information in a way that is not admissible in a court of law. Intelligence agencies are traditionally reluctant to use such information because of the potential of it being challenged and thereby jeopardizing a case.

Bangladesh enacted the Right to Information Act in 2009 which has unique features to guarantee the right of the citizen.

As per article 9 of the Act, no request shall be summarily rejected on the ground of national security, and if there is any part of the request that is not related to national security it must be disclosed to the citizen who has sought such information. The Act has superseded all prevailing acts including the official Secrecy Act 1923, meaning there is no restriction on free flow of information. Some of the information like life, death, arrest, confinement or release by law enforcement agencies, etc. must be disclosed within 24 hours of request by any citizen. However, concern emerges from the section 32 of the Act that provides immunity of the following organizations and institutions involved with national security and intelligence<sup>4</sup>:

1. National Security Intelligence (NSI)
2. Directorate General of Forces Intelligence (DGFI)
3. Defence Intelligence Units
4. Criminal Investigation Department (CID), Bangladesh Police
5. Special Security Force (SSF)
6. Intelligence Cell of the National Board of Revenue
7. Special Branch, Bangladesh Police
8. Intelligence Cell of Rapid Action Battalion (RAB)

The intelligence community has its own deeply embedded culture and value systems. In the case of Bangladesh, unlike the law enforcement agencies, the intelligence agencies, i.e.

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<sup>4</sup> The Act mentions: The number of institutions mentioned in the list above can be decreased or increased by the Government by amending the schedule in consultation with the Information Commission from time to time by notification published in the government gazette. The Government Service Rules 1979 has specified that disclosure of departmental information would be punished but the RTI act exempted them of any punishment. The service rule may be amended to match the RTI act to make the process smooth.

DGFI and NSI focus also beyond the borders of Bangladesh. Policies regarding the intelligence agencies in the past have erred by being too cautious. The intelligence agencies are guided by policies and guidelines to ensure their personnel compliance within legal boundaries for the gathering and use of national intelligence information. These policies are sometimes so restrictive that they effectively prohibit legal exchanges of information, outside the agency and, at times, even within. In many cases, no information is exchanged, and harmonization and cross-verification is nearly impossible.

A survey conducted for this study has identified that corruption, lack of confidence in the security agencies and lack of political will to strengthen law enforcement agencies are the predominant obstacles in facilitating effective local community-law enforcement and intelligence agencies relationship. However, one has to note that sometimes the pursuit of criminals requires secrecy. The premature release of data can destroy a criminal prosecution. Witnesses can change their testimony or even disappear. Important evidence may not become available if criminals learn that they are of interest to law enforcement. Nevertheless, the law enforcement community lacks not only the desire but also an effective way of routinely providing information to the intelligence community.

#### **IV. INFLOW AND OUTFLOW OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Given the huge population and inadequate human and financial resources, Bangladesh needs to adopt pragmatic and sustainable solutions to its intelligence concerns. Threats from terrorism and organized crimes and subsequent developments in the national security situation highlight the need for an inclusive intelligence framework that provides more effective threat warning, helps in developing efficient action plans, and

better supports national security decision-making. These needs however pre-date the events of August 17, 2005 and, despite significant progress in strengthening national intelligence capabilities, important challenges remain. Overall, the structure of today's intelligence framework, including regulatory, organizational, budget, infrastructure, and other components, needs to incorporate representation of the local communities in Bangladesh.

**Flowchart 1: Local Community Based Information Flow**

Sustainability of effective community participation in security decision-making largely depends on three factors:

1. Geographical proximity – assumes that people living in the same area have the same neighbourhood concerns.
2. Cultural similarity – assumes common cultural traditions transcend geographical barriers and unite disparate groups of people.
3. Social stratification based on common interests or characteristics – members often share support networks, knowledge and resources that transcend geographical and other boundaries.

It is important to note that people may belong to several communities within a locality, may have varying degrees of commitment and that the significance of a community may differ during the varying stages of life. Within a community people interact with each other and their environment (social, physical and policy). This interaction is a significant determinant of the community's security environment. Community engagement as the first step in effective security intervention focuses on developing, empowering and building the capacity of the community to generate interactions between the community members and the law enforcement and intelligence agencies. Given the socio-economic context of Bangladesh, long-term sustainable engagement would prove to be successful due to strong social, human and economic capitals that exist in the Bangladesh society (table 1).

**Table 1: Factors in Sustainable Engagement**

Type of Capital	Description	Process
Social Capital	Social capital is the primary factor that holds communities together. It has both an informal aspect related to social networks and a more formal aspect related to social issues. High intensity of social capital is rooted in Bangladesh society.	High level of social capital would boost community engagement with the law and intelligence agencies
Human Capital	Well educated, socially respectable personalities, skilled, innovative and creative people engaged in their communities can participate in the information sharing process.	Every community is consisted of such people dedicated to the development of their society
Economic Capital	Collective actions and local government provide economic capitals within almost all of the communities in	However, the means of increasing

Type of Capital	Description	Process
	Bangladesh. Economic capital can and should create community organizations.	economic capital must not threaten either our social capital or human capital, upon which community law and intelligence engagement depend.

There are several factors and methods underpinning community's participation that must be explored to assist in the consideration of strategies and planning for community engagement to enhance security capacity in Bangladesh. The key community development factors of participation, empowerment, equity and community organisation and action are outlined in Table 2.

**Table 2: Process of Community Participation in the Security Decision Making**

Factor	Description	Process
People's Participation	The term 'participation' is generally used to refer to processes of communication and joint action between communities and the law enforcement and intelligence agencies. The purpose of such participatory processes is to facilitate the planning and implementing of community security strategies and services which are responsive to community determined security needs, and which are sensitive to the	Consultation, seminars, regular exchange of views with local population can occur that would ensure both inflow and outflow of information

Factor	Description	Process
	political, social and economic realities of the context in question.	leading to community specific security needs.
Empowerment	Empowerment would emphasize on individual and collective actions focused on capacity building and shifts in power and impact on decisions and security cooperation. Through participation in the security decision making, people would experience confidence in decisions that influence their security and lives. More specifically, it refers to the shifts towards greater equality in the social relations of power. The key characteristics of empowerment should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) it applies to the individual and the collective/community;</li> <li>(ii) it addresses the issue of power and influence over resources and the direction of one's own life; and</li> <li>(iii) it addresses issues of capacity and confidence building of individuals, security agencies and the communities.</li> </ul>	Empowerment would lead to building confidence on the law enforcement and intelligence agencies and would bring necessary changes in political contexts.
Equity	Equity in security would refer to acknowledging lack of trust in law enforcement agencies and justice delivery systems and inequalities in gaining access to justice.	Participation and empowerment would reduce inequalities and substantially improve quality of service delivery related

Factor	Description	Process
		to justice.
Community Organizations and Collective Action	Community organizations would be able to facilitate the process of involving and mobilizing a variety of agencies, institutions and groups in a community to coordinate services and create programmes for the united purpose of improving the security situation of a community. This process would ensure effective information input to the relevant agencies and subsequently would identify the solutions for security concerns.	Community Organizations would develop effective partnerships and alliances between agencies from a wider spectrum.

Community participation in the Bangladesh context should be viewed as both a process and an outcome. As an outcome, community participation or empowerment to deal with intelligence needs involvement of the individuals and confidence of the community. The process would take a long time-frame, typically taking 5-10 years or longer. Community involvement would be a process in the form of a dynamic continuum, involving personal empowerment, the development of small mutual groups, community organizations, partnerships, and social and political action. The potential of community participation is gradually maximized as people progress from individual to collective action along this continuum.

## V. THE WAY FORWARD: RECOMMENDATIONS

The government of Bangladesh has already initiated moves to streamline intelligence agencies and better coordinate their activities against the backdrop of their failure in gathering

information on the plot for the February 2009 BDR mutiny. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina stated in the Parliament, “Effective measures have already been taken to streamline different intelligence agencies and coordinate their activities”.<sup>5</sup> Given the inadequacies, certain steps can help the intelligence and law enforcement agencies to build effective partnerships with the local communities in Bangladesh. This would create an effective mechanism for inflow of credible information from the communities, as well as enhance the ability of these agencies to effectively share information and intelligence. The following broad-based recommendations could be considered in designing the community-law enforcement and intelligence agencies collaboration:

**Communicate and Reinforce the Need for Sharing:** People have a natural tendency to resist change. For this reason, policy should be developed throughout the intelligence and law enforcement communities which could provide a guideline for consistent delivery of intelligence. The policy should ensure that everyone understands the importance of receiving, sharing and dissemination of information.

**Create Clear, Understandable, and Consistent Guidelines:** Many current guidelines, directives and policies are complex, confusing, inconsistent, and make sharing of information difficult to achieve. This complexity causes delays in sharing data and undermines its utility. A central agency could be established to coordinate and communicate guidelines for information.

**Earn Public Trust:** A survey undertaken to supplement this study has found that 63% of the respondents believe that their life is not safe, in terms of law and order in Bangladesh, while

<sup>5</sup> New Age. 2009. *Govt to streamline intel agencies: PM*. June 18, 2009. <http://www.newagebd.com/2009/jun/18/front.html> accessed on June 03, 2010

72 percent indicated that the law enforcement agencies are unable to provide effective services to the public. Eighty three percent of the respondents never availed of any services from the law enforcement agencies, while 47 percent of the respondents indicated that the quality of service from these agencies was poor. Abuses in the past have made the public skeptical about the security agencies' role in personal lives. Yet, the public want collaborative intelligence and law enforcement agencies that are effectively working together with the local communities in preventing terrorist attacks and criminal incidents. Building trust requires strong leadership, clear laws and guidelines, and advanced technologies to ensure that information sharing serves important purposes and operates consistently. The agencies must ensure compliance with the law and make the commitment visible to the public.

**Engage with Local Communities:** Participation of the local communities in the information generation and intelligence sharing has become an important aspect in the Bangladesh context. In this study, 98 percent of the respondents indicated that there should be an effective working relationship between the community, law enforcement and intelligence agencies. Fifty three percent of the respondents identified general people were the best source of information and should be invited to exchange views with these agencies. Thirty six percent identified social leaders, thirty one percent identified journalists, thirty percent identified local representatives and twenty one percent identified teachers as the effective community actors in this regard. Sixty five percent of the respondents indicated that 'exchange of views' on regular basis on a wider platform, i.e. consultation workshop or seminar, could be the best medium for intelligence sharing between government agencies and the community.

**Manage Risks:** The intelligence and law enforcement communities have been risk averse in the past regarding sharing information - often for good reasons. However, the present security environment in Bangladesh calls for a different approach. The risk of sharing information must be balanced against the risk of non-credible information. As an important step, local law enforcement agencies should have a collaborative presence in the community. This would give law enforcement officials early warning about terrorist and/or criminal tactics and activities before the terrorists try to apply them in Bangladesh.

**Eliminate the Construct of "Data Ownership:"** For sharing to be effective, those who have a broader picture may be the best advocates regarding what needs to be shared. For example, law enforcement and community organizations at the Upazila and district levels can make a critical contribution in terms of detection, prevention, and response. The central intelligence or law enforcement agencies may not be taking full advantage of these capabilities and skills because they do not have a clear understanding of the local situation. However, the fact that some information comes from an unclassified source does not automatically mean it is not useful or important.

**Use Technology in a Meaningful Way:** Technology should be embraced as a key in easing the administrative burdens of sharing information. The integration of local communities, leading to new, collaborative processes capable of supporting national security decision-making, is now technically possible. Currently, 56.36 million people in Bangladesh are subscribing to cell phone network.<sup>6</sup> Besides, our survey has found that

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<sup>6</sup> Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission. 2010. *Mobile Phone Subscribers in Bangladesh*. Data for the month of April 2010. [http://www.btrc.gov.bd/newsandevents/mobile\\_phone\\_subscribers/mobile\\_phone\\_subscribers\\_april\\_2010.php](http://www.btrc.gov.bd/newsandevents/mobile_phone_subscribers/mobile_phone_subscribers_april_2010.php) Accessed on June 5, 2010

almost seventy five percent of the respondents have been using cell phones for the past 1 to 5 years. Sixty seven percent of the respondents indicated newspaper and fifty nine percent indicated peer circles as the medium of information on the terrorist and criminal incidents. Therefore, usage of ICT could prove to be beneficial for disseminating information and launch awareness and advocacy campaigns for the purpose of both inflow and outflow of information.

**Emphasize Training:** Effective guidelines, human rights training and focused community-security partnership training can improve the confidence of the members of the security agencies and the public's perception that information is being handled appropriately. Right training, coupled with intelligence policies, will better enable sharing and ultimately help change the cultures. Awareness campaigns and workshops could be arranged on periodical basis for the local community actors, i.e. local eminent personalities, politicians, teachers, religious leaders, opinion and social leaders, and the youth leaders, in order to strengthen channels of communications between the communities and the law enforcement and intelligence agencies.

**Share Good Ideas and Lessons Learned:** Law enforcement and intelligence agencies can take initiatives to sensitize the communities regarding the need and types of information. Once central or local level law enforcement organizations articulate and justify specific needs, the community will show the willingness to share information. Therefore, quality and credibility of information and service delivery will improve significantly. The intelligence agencies, in particular, have the responsibility to provide and share information. This commitment can steer the government and the communities closer to the goal of a shared information environment.

## VI. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Understanding the attributes, nuances, cultural and historical context of a community is an important part of gathering intelligence. It is therefore important to develop an intelligence framework that meets the needs of the local communities, and for the country as a whole. Constant engagement with the communities would help in identifying the ever changing patterns of terrorism and crimes. The inclusion of communities in the intelligence would create an enabling environment where public participation will be possible in ensuring equitable civil liberties and strengthening democratic rights of the populace. This strategy paper has provided a model for community-based intelligence mechanism within the machinery of the government. Significant, but not insurmountable, impediments exist that must be addressed and resolved to achieve this inclusion. For that, it is imperative that a coherent strategy is adopted, involving all the stakeholders in Bangladesh. Intelligence sharing should not be seen as an impediment to national security and there is a need to abolish the organizational politics of inter-agency non-cooperation and the search for primacy and influence.

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