



Research article

Exploring the roles and challenges of the servant leadership: A critical examination of the Bangladesh police

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ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Police
 Servant leadership model (SLM)
 Challenges of SLM
 SLM Roles
 NVivo
 Participant observation
 Thematic analysis
 Bangladesh

ABSTRACT

The police work relentlessly to control national, transnational, and economic cybercrimes despite the numerous internal, external, mental, physical, political, and social problems they face. This study attempted to assess the servant leadership (SL) roles of the police and the challenges they face with regard to SL practice. Using a self-directed survey questionnaire, the current study collected open-ended responses from 88 Bangladesh Police (BP) personnel ranking from Assistant Superintendent of Police to Additional Deputy Inspector General. The authors identified the SL roles of police, such as terrorism control, judicial assistance, empowering subordinates, engaging the community, police-media relationship, and contributing to the national economy. Besides, the participant observation method was used to explore several challenges that the police face in regard to SL practice, such as long working hours, inadequate logistical support, work stress, insufficient compensation package, and unfair promotion & performance appraisal system. This study recommended increasing cooperation among top and bottom-line police, including bottom-line police in decision-making authority, providing adequate logistic support and training and development opportunities to the police personnel, and ensuring fair promotion and performance appraisal system for the police.

1. Introduction

In recent research, the servant leadership model (SLM) has been applied in versatile ways irrespective of industry; whether in education, non-profit organisation, tourism and hospitality, or sports, managers need to perform the dual roles of leader and servant [1, 2, 3, 4, 5]. The SLM is used to analyse how effectively and appropriately others can be led and served. It was first propounded as ‘servant leadership’ (SL) by Robert K. Greenleaf in the 1970s [6, 7]. Since then, the concept of SLM has been used extensively in much academic literature, especially in professions in which the professionals—that is, teachers, doctors, nurses, engineers, sports coaches, and athletes—play the dual roles of like servant and leader [4, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12]. A plethora of studies on police officers can be found, with scholars arguing that the police play dual roles, depending on the situation; these roles include their positions as servants of the people and decision-making leaders [13, 14, 15]. As servants, the police have to follow and maintain the rules and orders of the government. As leaders, they make decisions based on different circumstances and contingencies, directing their subordinates and even the general public [16, 17, 18]. They work collaboratively with the government and the public. As a result, they have to work in a way that ensures that the public is not provoked while law and justice are maintained [5, 18]. This perplexity in their work creates and

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even exacerbates several problems and challenges for the police as they play both servant and leadership roles.

Apart from servant leadership, previous studies have adopted different theories e.g., leader member exchange theory, team characteristics, transactional, transformational, and charismatic leadership theory to study police related issues – psychological stress, turnover intention, organizational commitment, and organizational culture [19, 20, 21, 22, 23]. For example [22], have explored the impacts of perceived organizational support and leader-member exchange on turnover intention of United Arab Amirate (UAE) police personnel. The role of transformational leaders in supporting of shared leadership has been explored by Ref. [19]. But servant-leadership model is used in this study due to the nature of servant leaders as police plays dual roles depending on their positions as servants of the people and decision-making leaders [13, 14, 15].

However, despite the complex nature of the job, it is worth mentioning that societal safety and security are largely dependent on the police force [1, 2, 3]. Generally, it is the police who respond to emergency calls, such as those pertaining to accidents, crimes, natural disasters, and any situations that require first aid responses [24, 25]. They patrol assigned areas to enforce court orders, laws, and regulations [26, 27, 28]. Hence, they are the state's core investigating organ [2, 29, 30]. However, the police face several challenges and barriers, as well as the dilemma of playing dual roles while enforcing court orders, laws, and regulations [13, 31, 32, 33]. This is especially challenging in developing countries such as Bangladesh, due to conventional laws, inadequate logistical support, and undue political influences [13, 14, 15,34,35].

Moreover, because of socioeconomic and socio-political interests, Bangladesh harbours a legion of criminal offences, such as international terrorism, militancy, drug trafficking, gang rape, child marriage, and corruption [36, 37, 38, 39]. To counteract such phenomena, the Bangladesh police has expanded its duties, as well as reformed its operations, responsibilities, and role-playing around the country, especially to eradicate terrorism [40, 41, 42]. As a core internal security protector, the Bangladesh police has been diligent in regard to ensuring public safety and security [43, 44, 45]. As servants, the police provide services to the community, helping to establish a good relationship between them and keeping society secure against crimes and criminals, and as leaders, they have to make instant decisions to get problematic situations under control [46]. The Bangladesh police play the role of servant by educating the public on crime prevention and safety. This is done, for instance, by organising 'Open House Day' which involves numerous stakeholders, such as teachers, media representatives, students, and government officials, to share ideas and educate the community regarding crime and safety [47,48]. However, the Bangladesh police are still highly criticised for their inefficiency, dishonesty, extrajudicial killings, oppression and violent repression of opposition, as well as for the high number of deaths in custody [49, 50, 51]. Consequently, the authors think that such recent incidents among several police officers raises a question about the servant and leadership role of the Bangladesh police. The number of cases filed with the court against police personnel calls into question the dyadic nature of SL roles [52]. As far as the concern of the authors, there is a very few studies undertaken to explore the SL role of police and their associated challenges. Given this reality, the current study approached with two overarching questions in mind: (a) what are the roles of servant leaders from the perspective of police? And (b) what are the challenges police face to play the servant leadership roles? To address these questions, the research objective of this study is to explore SL roles, as well as their associated challenges, from the perspective of the Bangladesh police.

This paper makes a threefold contribution. First, the present paper reviews the roles of the police using SLM from the perspective of a developing nation. Second, using the active participant observation method, the current study explores the problems and challenges that the police face while playing SL roles. Third, the present study would like to contribute to the policy so that policymakers can better understand the crux of SLM and add where necessary from the perspective of a developing nation. The current study use the latest analytical procedure available in NVivo 12 to explore the SL roles of the police. The remainder of the paper has been arranged as follows: Literature review is discussed in Section 2 while the detailed methodology, as well as the analysis and findings, are described in Sections 3 and 4, respectively. Finally, Section 5 comprises the conclusion and recommendations, followed by future research directions.

2. Literature review

2.1. An overview of the servant leadership model

SL, a unique leadership style that emerged in the 1970s, is related to the particular principles of openness, selflessness, and respect for others [53, 54, 55, 56]. SL represents an unprecedented paradigm shift in traditional leadership practices. The discussed model is supportive, understanding, and humble, and it brings about the best outcome for the subordinates [57, 58]. It offers an efficient and dynamic style of leadership whereby the servant and leader can operate in partnership [54]. In particular, SL means that whoever wants to be great must be a servant and whoever wants to be a leader must be a slave to all [17, 59, 60]. The term SL is mainly concerned with serving and leading the people. According to Ref. [61], the SLM purports that other people should be served first. Empathetic attitudes are displayed and applied in the workplace and surrounding community [61]. In addition [59], defined SL from three standpoints that make it more comprehensive and utilitarian than other leadership models namely, outcomes (i.e., organisational citizenship behaviour); examples (i.e., self-sacrificing behaviour); and, finally, antecedents (i.e., personality). They further stated that SL is a follower-centric approach to leadership that manifests through prioritising the needs and interests of the followers while reorienting the leader's concerns regarding others within the organisation and community [59].

Several researchers have attempted to distinguish the concept of SL from transformational, authentic, and ethical leadership, although these positive forms of leadership share some similarities [59, 62,6 3]. Specifically [62], drew a clear distinction, arguing that servant leaders focus more on the psychological needs of followers, while transformational leaders prioritise the goals of the organisation over the needs of followers. Servant leaders have a crystal clear self-regulated motive to serve others that might spring from

altruistic and spiritual motivation, while authentic leaders recognise the significance of being authentic while interacting with others [59]. Compared to ethical leaders, servant leaders are more contingent and flexible while considering the context of the followers and organisation. Ethical leaders direct and lead according to what is right based on their intuitive ethical rules [59, 63].

3. The application of the servant leadership model in the public sector

Depending on the situation, public organisations can follow many leadership styles—servant, autocratic, democratic, paternalistic, structured, or interactive [58, 64, 65, 66]. It is worth mentioning that Robert K. Greenleaf was the first to introduce the SL concept in the public sector [67]. By following SL, a public institution can inspire trust by building good relationships among leaders and followers, clarifying their purpose by creating achievable goals, aligning systems to avoid role conflicts, and unleashing talent in other people [68]. Different public organisations, regardless of their nature—whether healthcare, defence, consumer protection, higher education, or environmental protection—adhere to the fundamental propositions of SL theory [69, 70, 71, 72, 73]. The fundamental proposition is that leaders can engage in the decision-making of public organisations [74]. They guide, direct, and control the followers to enable the successful implementation of decisions [75, 76]. Further, they listen to and consult with the followers to eradicate the deficiency between actual outcomes and desired goals, improve the working environment to achieve targeted goals, and eventually enable the organisation to realise success [67, 77].

4. The roles and challenges of servant leaders

Servant leaders, whether doctors, teachers, nurses, police, or sports coaches, are required to perform several roles within their professions [4, 10, 59, 78, 79, 80]. Several past researchers attempted to explore the specific roles of servant leaders [67, 81, 82, 83]. For instance Ref. [81], conducted a systematic literature review of 87 quality papers on SL, published from 2000 to 2015, that entailed the standardised inclusion and exclusion criteria and identified several functions of servant leaders, such as formulating and implementing visions and nurturing and growing talents. Similarly [82], conducted a quantitative study to validate the SL measurement scale while exploring different dimensions of servant leaders (e.g., showing emotional intelligence, becoming involved in community activities, and prioritising the goals of subordinates). The data for their study were collected from 552 leader–follower dyads from 11 organisations, 218 graduate students, 729 undergraduate students, and 71 ongoing work teams. Other authors [7,83, 84, 85] have also attempted to explore the roles and functions of servant leaders (See Table 1).

Numerous obstacles and challenges may hinder the application of the SL style explored in the previous studies irrespective of sector, whether education, public leadership, or athletics [12, 86, 87, 88]. Based on a sample of 2636 schoolteachers in South China [88], identified that stressful work conditions, heavy workloads, and emotional exhaustion are the primary concerns regarding the adoption of SL in the education sector. Similarly [86], performed a qualitative study utilising a semi-structured interview format to elicit the opinions of 14 departmental chairpersons. He found that the nature of workplace culture, the attitudes of leaders, and the reactions of followers may impede the adoption of SL in the education industry [86]. Regarding public leadership [87], assessed the challenges of adopting SL in the context of the public sector of Tanzania based on the opinions of 109 members of parliament. He determined that the self-interests of leaders, the poor legal framework for resolving conflicts of interest, and the lack of patriotism and dedicated leaders are prime obstacles to adherence to the SLM in the public sector [87]. Further, in athletics, the lack of behavioural integrity and the absence of trust may create obstacles along the SL path [12].

5. The application of the servant leadership model in the police

The term SL can be reasonably used in regard to the police because they play two different roles (servants and leaders) simultaneously [18, 89, 90, 91]. As servants, they maintain/follow the rules and orders of the government and the public. As leaders, they take leadership in the field to control any hazardous, unlawful situations—namely, riots, crowds, and assembly [18]. According to the SLM, conflicts arise between the servant and leader roles. Therefore, it is imperative to clarify the SL roles due to the importance of policing in society. SL policing meets the needs of the public in various ways, including by providing quality service and community-based policing; prioritising teamwork; establishing mutual accountability if necessary; changing the organisational culture; and regularly analysing data, strategies, and resources [18, 92, 93]. In an emergency, the police have to use deadly force to serve the community [90]. In such cases, police officers become customer-oriented, problem-solving leaders [94]. In SL policing, people trust the police, who introduce the principles of commitment to the organisation and the larger community. Loyalty and trust go hand in hand [89].

Table 1
Roles of servant leaders.

Roles of Servant Leaders	References
Articulating, transforming, and implementing an excellent purpose vision; performing as a role model and ambassador for the organisation; integrating, nurturing, and growing talent; and relentlessly monitoring and improving performance	[81]
Building, engaging, and becoming involved in community activities	[7]
Showing emotional intelligence, pursuing value for the community, having conceptual skills, empowering subordinates, assisting subordinates in growing and succeeding, prioritising subordinates, and performing ethically	[82]
Performing voluntary subordination, displaying responsibility and morality, and influencing and transforming spirituality	[83]
Remaining humble, standing behind subordinates, and having the courage to take proper actions	[84, 85]

Hence, society can derive incredible benefits from this model. From constable to inspector general of police (IGP), everyone is considered a servant. They are bound to follow the rules and regulations. They must obey the directives of senior officers and be loyal to their leaders. From time to time, they have to report to their directing officers. If they face difficulty in executing any order, they must report this to the senior officers and should expect a guideline regarding how to resolve the issue. Servants must be honest, dedicated, and feel their organisation [44].

On the contrary, from sub-inspector (SI) to IGP, everyone is considered both a servant and a leader. The followers are bound to follow the orders of leaders. Leaders have to create a congenial working environment so that the servants can engage themselves [44]. They have to create a proper communication channel that enables nonstop correspondence. Both verbal and written communication channels must be structured appropriately [95]. From time to time, subordinates and senior officers must communicate with one another [96] so that effective decisions can be easily made. Leaders must understand, motivate, and encourage their followers. As leaders, the police need to perform several tasks. First, leaders must strive to solve all of their subordinates' problems [97]; second, leaders must maintain outside channels to collect information [95]; third, leaders must share the mission and vision of the organisation beyond profit and loss [98]; fourth, leaders must remind each individual on the team of their direct role in fulfilling the purpose [99]; fifth, leaders must ensure recognition when jobs are well done and expectations are met [100]; sixth, to undo scheduled jobs, leaders must go to the followers and assist in completing the job [101]; seventh, there must be a consistent conversations between leaders and servants [102], during which servants must have open-door access to leaders to enable the former to complete the job in a timely manner [95]; eighth, leaders must ask servants what help or support they need to enable them to accomplish their assigned jobs [103]; and, finally, leaders must ensure a congenial environment that enables good and open communication [95, 98].

6. Methodology

The present study follows an ethnographic approach [104, 105, 106] to explore the SL roles and challenges of the BP. A participant observation [107, 108, 109, 110] was used to explore the SL challenges of BP. One of the authors conducted approximately 576 h of participant observation at five different police stations in Gopalganj District, Baourngladesh — Gopalganj Sadar, Mokshudpur, Kashiani, Kotalipara, and Tongipara during September 2021 to November 2021 as a part of the probation time of his job. During participant observation, semi-structured interview was conducted with four BP ranks namely, Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP), Additional Superintendent of Police (Additional SP), Superintendent of Police (SP), and Additional Deputy Inspector General of Police (Additional DIG). There were 5 questions in the interview schedule excluding the demographic questions (discussed later in measures and instruments section). All field notes and replies were written down on paper and afterwards transcribed into Microsoft Word before being imported into NVivo for analysis.

A total of 120 respondents was approached for this study ranking from ASP to DIG to explore the SL roles of BP. Previous studies shows that a total of 120 respondents is regarded as representative sample size for this type of study [111, 112, 113, 114]. This study used a conservative approach to ensure an equivalent number of 30 respondents [112] from each of the four BP ranks namely, ASP, Additional SP, SP, and Additional DIG to attain the goal of 120 respondents. This was purposefully done to avoid publishing Bangladesh Police officers' deployment patterns and population distributions. Non-disclosure of police populations and deployment details is used by the Bangladesh Police as a strategic move, and hence such information is considered as top secret and handled with utmost confidentiality. The participant observation and survey were done under keen supervision of an ethical committee named, Research Administration and Compliance (2021) and proper informed consent was also obtained from all participants in this study.

The primary data for this study was collected through a structured questionnaire. The study received 92 responses, yielding a 77% response rate. Four responses were eliminated due to missing more than 25% of responses, and thus only 88 subjects indicating 73% of the sample were considered for analysis of this study as indicated in Table 2.

NVivo (latest edition released in 2020) was used to analyse the open-ended responses. The methodology, comprising measures & instruments, and data analysis techniques, is discussed in the following sections.

6.1. Measures and instruments

To collect the primary data, a self-directed, one-on-one questionnaire was given to the police officers who work at the police headquarters and the operational units. In addition to demographic questions, there were five open – ended questions regarding various aspects of their jobs: the role of implementing an excellent purpose of SL [81], authentic characteristics of SL [12], the humility role of SL [85], community engaging activities of SL [7, 82], and empowering, growing, & nurturing characteristics of SL [81, 82]. The questions were pre-tested for content validity with eight police officers and two academicians who had certain theoretical experience

Table 2
Respondents as per the various BP ranks.

BP ranks	Target sample	Respondents	Response rate (%)
ASP	30	26	30
Additional SP	30	23	26
SP	30	20	23
Additional DIG	30	19	21
Total	120	88	73

regarding servant leadership. The responders were asked for their thoughts on the vagueness, structure, redability, and completeness of questions [115]. The original questions were revised and certain modifications were made with the help of the pre-test.

Further, there were five questions in the interview schedule excluding demographic questions – limitations regarding working culture [54], long working hours [116], reasons of fatigue and decreased motivation ([12], inadequate logistic support [7], and limitations in promotion and performance appraisal system [117, 118]. The semi-structured interview schedule was pre-tested for content validity with five experienced police officers and asked to provide feedbacks and suggestions regarding the specificity, ambiguity, structure, and completeness of the items [115]. The original schedule was revised, and some extent modifications were done according to the feedback of the pre-test.

6.2. Data analysis techniques

The responses of open-ended questions were analyzed using NVivo (latest edition, which was released in 2020) while utilising the compelling techniques of thematic analysis, cluster analysis, word frequency analysis, and tree map analysis [119, 120, 121, 122] viewed NVivo as a dominant qualitative data analysis tool but opined that the utility of the software depends on the prowess of the researchers who use it. However, the study utilised numerous data analysis techniques—codes, nodes, word tree, tree map, and word tag clouds—to validate the various themes of the study [123, 124, 125].

7. Analysis and findings

7.1. Profiles of the respondents

The following table (Table 3) illustrates the demographic profiles of the respondents.

Table 3 shows that approximately 70% of the respondents were male, while 30% were female. Further, the data show that more than half of the respondents 53.41% had 5–10 years of work experience and that 31.82% had 10–15 years, while around 14.77% had a service length of more than 15 years.

7.2. Exploring the roles and problems of the police through the lens of SLM

One of the most potent and robust ways to explore different themes and contents from qualitative data is to exploit the power of NVivo [119,121,125]. To ascertain the roles and problems of the police from the SLM perspective, the latest analytical power of NVivo—thematic, word tree, word cloud, and word map analysis—was applied [119].

7.3. The most common words used in the responses to the survey questionnaire

The most common words used in the responses to the open-ended survey questionnaire were determined using NVivo 12. The data from Table 4 show that the most commonly used words in the survey responses were ‘police,’ ‘policing,’ ‘community,’ ‘terrorism,’ ‘public,’ ‘Bangladesh,’ ‘officers,’ and ‘government.’

Figure 1, which illustrates the word cloud analysis originated from NVivo 12, depicts the most common survey responses in bigger and bolder fonts, while the less common words appear in smaller fonts. Earlier qualitative research experts viewed the word cloud as the easiest way to illustrate the most common words used in the qualitative opinion survey [126, 127, 128].

7.4. Word tree analysis to explore the SL roles of police

The word tree analysis was used to explore the police roles that corresponded to SLM. To fulfil this objective, this study utilised NVivo to perform a text search query using the most common words identified in the previous phrase. The text search query produced a word tree to ascertain the most common words in the sentence structure [123]. The results are illustrated in Fig. 2. The earlier phase identified ‘police’ and ‘policing’ as the most common words. Further, to ascertain the central theme of the policing role from the SL perspective, NVivo 12 was employed to perform a text search query using the word ‘police.’ Consequently, the software produced the word tree demonstrated in Fig. 2.

As Fig. 2 depicts, the word ‘police’ was placed in different sentence structures while its links to the policing roles corresponding to

Table 3
Demographic profiles of respondents.

Variables	Sample Characteristics	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	61	69.32%
	Female	27	30.68%
	Total	88	100%
Service length (years)	More than 15 years	13	14.77%
	10–15 years	28	31.82%
	5–10 years	47	53.41%
	Total	88	100%

Table 4
Most common words used in survey questionnaire.

Word	Count	Word	Count
Police	117	Public	25
Policing	38	Bangladesh	23
Community	35	Officers	21
Terrorism	28	Government	17



Fig. 1. Word cloud analysis depicting most common words in survey.

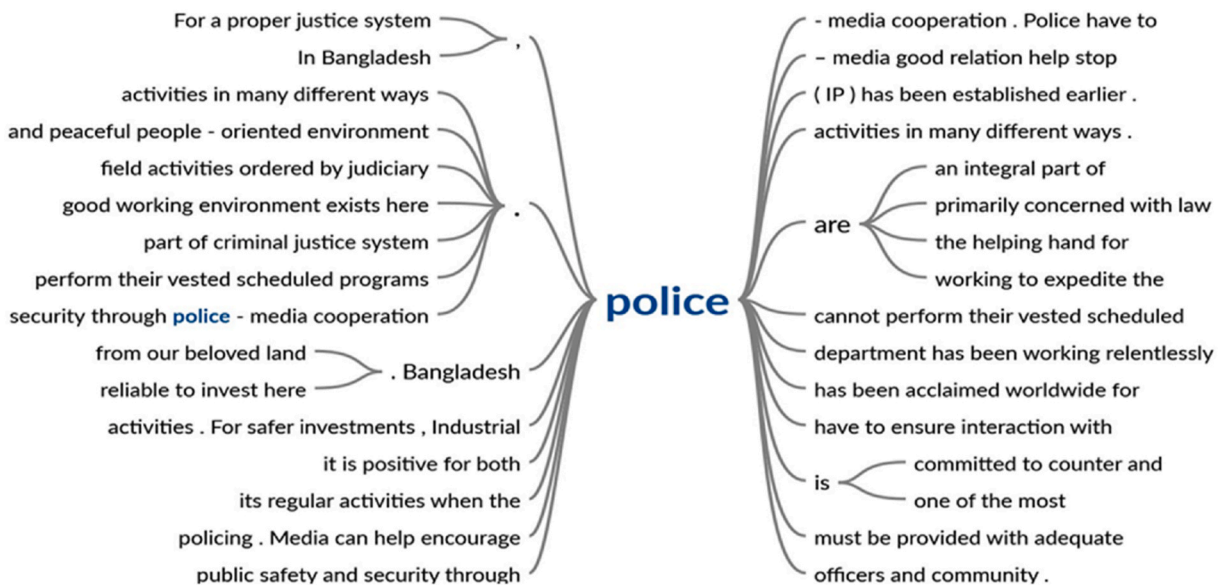


Fig. 2. Placement of the word ‘police’ in survey responses.

SLM were explored. Some instances of these phrases evaluated policing. Some cases of these phrases for assessing the policing roles were ‘police for a proper justice system,’ ‘police are an integral part of the judicial system,’ ‘police have performed a vested schedule program,’ and ‘police department has been working relentlessly.’

7.5. Content analysis to explore the SL roles of police

Further, the NVivo 12 content analysis technique was used to explore the specific SL roles of police, which are illustrated in Fig. 3.

The majority of the respondents (approx. 80%) opined that the police facilitate the judicial system. Needless to say, the police are among the most integral components of the judicial system [129]. Additionally, approximately 78% of the respondents opined that policing contributes to controlling terrorism in any country as a part of the SL role of the police. About 73% of the respondents stated that the police role entailed contributing to the economy of Bangladesh. In addition, about 73% of the respondents emphasised the role of policing in community-based activities. About 75% of the respondents expressed that the police play a vital role in empowering and developing their subordinates. Finally, about 71% of the respondents argued that the police usually play a crucial role in maintaining the police–media relationship.

8. Exploring the challenges of implementing SLM in the police force

The current study used the participant observation method to explore the challenges of the SLM practices of the Bangladesh police. Based on three months of observation of the activities of the Bangladesh police at five police stations, the authors identified several challenges of SLM application. Table 5 summarises these challenges.

During the participant observation, the authors found that the Bangladesh police face many challenges while applying SLM. First, the police are overburdened with work but remain underpaid compared to other professions in Bangladesh. The present study found that, on average, the Bangladesh police work for 18 h per day. However, Section 22 of the Police Act of 1861 states that the police are bound to work 24 h a day. There is no provision for overtime allowances nor for working at night after completing their predefined roster hours. These long working hours eventually ignite work–family conflicts and lead to a deterioration in potency and efficiency.

Second, they have minimal logistical support, which creates extra hurdles for working diligently. However, in regard to logistics, the motorbike was standard for most constables, but they adjusted their funds to meet the fuel costs even for official purposes. Inadequate logistical support hinders the regular activities of the Bangladesh police. The government mandates the filing of cases in the Crime Data Management System, but the lack of computers, digital devices, and proper training makes this task difficult. As a result, police have no scope to obtain call detail record (CDR) information in the district. For the purposes of any investigation, the investigating officer has to wait a long time to get CDRs from police headquarters.

Third, the moods of crimes have changed, but many police are not well trained to deal with modern crimes. Analyses of recent crimes indicate that the use of sophisticated technologies and arms to commit crime is increasing, while the Bangladesh police lack modern components and equipment to address this issue.

Fourth, the Bangladesh police suffer from work stress owing to not only long working hours each day and minimal logistical support but also the immense pressure of the undue influence of senior officers and corrupt political leaders. The work stress is further elevated because of obsolete and conventional rules and regulations. The Bangladesh police has been governed by the rules of the Police Regulation of Bengal of 1943, the Police Act of 1861, the Code of Crime Procedure of 1898, and the Penal Code of 1860, which lacks the capacity to deal with modern crimes. This challenge becomes more intense as the Bangladesh police are put under extra stress by the media and public pressure.

Fifth, compensation and rewards lack internal and external equity. Regarding compensation and rewards, a clear distinction exists in the upper- and lower-level employees of the Bangladesh police. The upper-level employees receive many fringe benefits, such as ownership of plots of land, shops, and membership of the cooperative society. The current study identified the sheer dissatisfaction of the lower-level employees regarding this internal inequity, which indeed restricts them from applying for SL roles effectively. The overall compensation package is not sufficiently competitive, considering the extent of their tasks and duties. They do not have adequate housing facilities, travel allowance and dearness allowance, holidays, recreational leave, casual leave, etc. Sixth, the police face biases in regard to the promotion and performance appraisal system. To obtain a promotion, they must sit the departmental examination. Even after passing the examination, they are not promoted in most cases because it is subject to vacancy, the preferences of seniors, and nepotism. Therefore, the department officers (from constable upwards) do not obtain regular promotions nor receive equal treatment in the performance appraisal system and are subject to extraneous postings and transfers. The authors found that this unfair promotion and appraisal system creates a latent grievance among the police officers and internal conflict within the station,

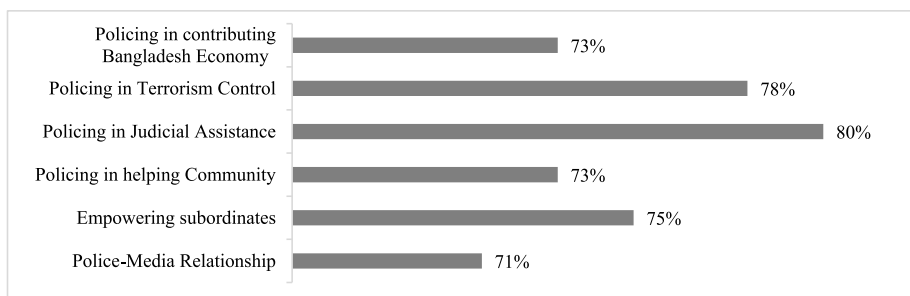


Fig. 3. Servant leadership roles of police.

Table 5
Challenges of SLM practice of Bangladesh police.

Research Instrument	Challenges of SLM Practices of Bangladesh Police
Participant Observation	Long working hours Inadequate logistical support Lack of modern crime knowledge Work stress Inadequate compensation and reward packages Biases in promotion and performance appraisal system

which, in turn, create a psychic barrier for the implementation of SL roles.

9. Discussions

The findings of NVivo analysis from questionnaire survey show that the police are among the most integral components of the judicial system. The result is supported by the previous study of [129]. In some cases, the judicial system cannot execute its regular activities when the police are unable to perform their vested scheduled programmes. The police provide a helping hand with regard to the execution of field activities ordered by the judiciary. Courts serve summons, and the police introduce these before the witnesses, complainants, and defendants [130]. Sometimes, the police even become court witnesses. The court police also help the judiciary in some respects. Thus, the role of the police in their integration into the judicial system can be considered an SL role (e.g., implementing an excellent purpose), as the police are front and centre vis-à-vis the implementation of law and order [81]. Further, the present study found that terrorism is a crime that creates panic and a hazardous situation in the community which is considered as the national security threat globally [131,132]. The Bangladesh police are committed to countering and preventing terrorism and violent extremism within the country. The government of Bangladesh has taken a hard line on terrorism and declared a zero-tolerance policy against it. The Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime Unit and the Anti-Terrorism Unit are specially geared towards wiping out the root of terrorism. The Bangladesh police has been acclaimed worldwide for tackling terrorism. This role of the police can be traced back to the ‘authentic’ characteristics of servant leaders [12].

Additionally, the finding suggests that police department has been working relentlessly to ensure and maintain a congenial and peaceful people-oriented environment. The evidence is supported by the findings of [1, 133, 134, 135]. The present study has also found that the police are also working to expedite the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rate. In addition, to enable safer investments environment, the Industrial Police (IP) was established. This unit works towards keeping the industrial area of Bangladesh free of chaos and riots. Because of the IP, foreign investors feel relaxed and trustful with regard to investing. The role of the IP can be compared to the ‘humility’ role of servant leaders [85, 136], as the IP strengthens the relationship between national and foreign investors while creating a safer environment for investment in Bangladesh. In addition, finding show the role of policing in community-based activities. This finding was endorsed by earlier studies exploring whether policing is a community-based job [137, 138, 139, 140]. For the reason mentioned above Sir Robert Peel introduced community-based policing [141, 142]. One of his principles is that the public are the police and the police are the public [141]. In the 21st century, the importance of community policing is evident and is very much related to problem-oriented policing [137, 143, 144]. Community-based policing is also termed intelligence-led policing, which is proactive, not reactive. This objective is positive for police officers and the community [138]. The community can easily engage the police to control the criminals. Through community policing, policing authority is decentralised. It allows more discretion amongst lower-ranking officers, and more initiative can be expected. As a result, the lower-ranking officers can easily engage in effective decision-making [139, 140]. Therefore, the community-based role of police is an ideal example of the community-engaging activities of servant leaders [7, 82, 145, 146]. The finding also show that the police play a vital role in empowering and developing their subordinates. The police set missions for their subordinates but allow them to achieve them without constant micro-observation while remaining available to steer them in the right direction if they have any questions [147]. Similarly, the police encourage their subordinates to make on-demand self-directed decisions, to share information, and to sometimes perform as coaches to develop and nurture their subordinates while recognising and acknowledging what they can still learn [90]. Thus, these empowering characteristics of the police can be rightly compared to the empowering, growing, and nurturing features of SL [81, 82, 148].

Apart from these, the authors have found that the police usually play a crucial role in maintaining the police–media relationship. Previous studies maintained that a sound relationship with the media is vital to effective policing [149, 150, 151, 152]. The media can help encourage police activities in many different ways. Sound police–media relations help stop unfair, biased, motivated reports [149]. Mutual trust, mutual respect, and mutual credibility are essential pillars for ensuring public safety and security through police–media cooperation [150, 153]. Maintaining police–media relationships can be the best example of the ‘humility’ feature of servant leaders [85, 136].

The findings of the participant observation show that the Bangladesh police are overburdened with work but remain underpaid compared to other professions in Bangladesh. The present study has found that, on average, the Bangladesh police work for 18 h per day. This long working hours centric working culture limits the efforts of the Bangladesh police to be selfless, open, respectful, and humble, all of which are aspects of SL. The evidence is supported by the previous study of [54]. The finding also show that they have minimal logistical support, which creates extra hurdles for working diligently. [While the moods of crimes have changed, but many

police are not well trained and equipped to deal with modern crimes [154, 155, 156]. Earlier studies also confirmed the findings that the police in developing countries face severe problems regarding inadequate logistics [157, 158, 159, 160].

In addition, the finding also express the lack internal and external equity. Regarding compensation and rewards, a clear distinction exists in the upper- and lower-level employees of the Bangladesh police. The overall compensation package is not sufficiently competitive, considering the extent of their tasks and duties. Similarly, the police face biases in regard to the promotion and performance appraisal system. Therefore, the long working hours with inadequate logistic supports lead the police to fatigue. These findings also endorsed by several previous studies also [161,162]. Similarly, uncompetitive compensation package along with some extent of biased promotion and performance appraisal system lead to decreased motivation of police [163, 164]. The findings of [165, 166] also expressed the similar results.

10. Conclusion and recommendations

Safety and security in a society largely depend on the police force, who are the country's internal core protecting organ. The nature of the policing profession compels the police to play dual roles of servants and leaders. As servants, the police provide services to the community while being open, humble, selfless, and respectful towards others. As leaders, the police direct their subordinates with the same SL attributes. While playing SL roles, the police provide judicial assistance, control terrorism, engage in community policing, maintain police–media relationships, and contribute to the national community. However, some challenges have an adverse impact on their SL roles and practices. Long working hours and work stress, inadequate logistical support, lack of modern crime knowledge, insufficient compensation and reward packages, and biases in the promotion and performance appraisal system create significant hurdles for police personnel as they strive to make changes along their path toward SL.

The authors have found crucial issues that the Bangladesh police need to consider. First, the cooperation between top and bottom-line police should be increased as many police personnel have discussed the cooperation between the top and bottom-line personnel, as well as the importance of understanding the SL roles of policing to ensure a successful transformation towards SL. Junior officers do not get adequate opportunities to share any problems with senior officers, and senior officers maintain distance to establish the scalar chain. The Bangladesh police have to be innovative to create a communication channel that will not distort the chain of command but, rather, will successfully address the issues above to bring SL into practice. Second, the inclusion of bottom-line personnel in decision-making is highly appreciated, as it encourages them to be open, selfless, respectful, humble, and innovative. Inclusive decision-making is significant for bringing SL into the Bangladesh police because constables, ASIs, SIs, and inspectors are the major actors implementing the strategies and tactics. Third, there should be an increase in compensation and rewards for the Bangladesh police officers to ensure external equity. There is a scope for policy recommendations and the equal distribution of benefits to maintain internal equity, including job-related and fringe benefits. An excellent option of unexpected rewards (monetary and appreciation), task-oriented incentives, risk allowances, and a performance-based compensation plan can be introduced. As a result, the Bangladesh police would perform SL roles and community-based services, ultimately benefiting citizens and hence the country. Fourth, adequate logistic support including training and developing opportunities will need to be ensured for the police personnel. Without logistical support, a leap toward the SLM would not be feasible. Modern, sophisticated, future-oriented technologies, arms, and support through adequate training must be provided to the Bangladesh police. It should also be noted that adjusting the man–machine ratio would enable a significant improvement in police performance. Fifth, the working hours of police would need to be decreased as the police personnel are overburdened by extended working periods; on average, they work 18 h per day. This intensifies their mental stress and hinders them from being open, selfless, and humble. Reasonable and well-planned working hours would need to be ensured in order for SL roles to be performed. Finally, the promotion and performance appraisal system should need to be fair as unfair and subjective promotion and performance appraisal systems create latent grievance among the police officers and internal conflict at the stations. The Bangladesh police need to be more innovative by placing efficient officers in the right places so that the government and citizens can derive maximum output from them. Besides, postings and transfers must be free from undue political influence to encourage the police personnel to perform SL roles.

11. Limitations and future research directions

Along with many limitations, this study cannot be generalized for the police throughout the world. This study is also not widely applicable in the other forces (e.g., military, navy). A limited sample size and distinct cultural context have been undertaken in this study. The present study focused on the SLM from the perspective of the Bangladesh police, exploring the policing role and confronting challenges along the path towards SL. Future research efforts can be directed towards the exploration of different leadership models through the lens of the Bangladesh police. Further, in future, the roles of the police can be explored based on the task-oriented, transactional, transformational, and charismatic leadership models. In addition to, research can also be expanded to examine how servant and transformational leadership effect innovation and follower behaviour. How servant leadership apply to other forces (e.g., military, navy) can also area for future studies.

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