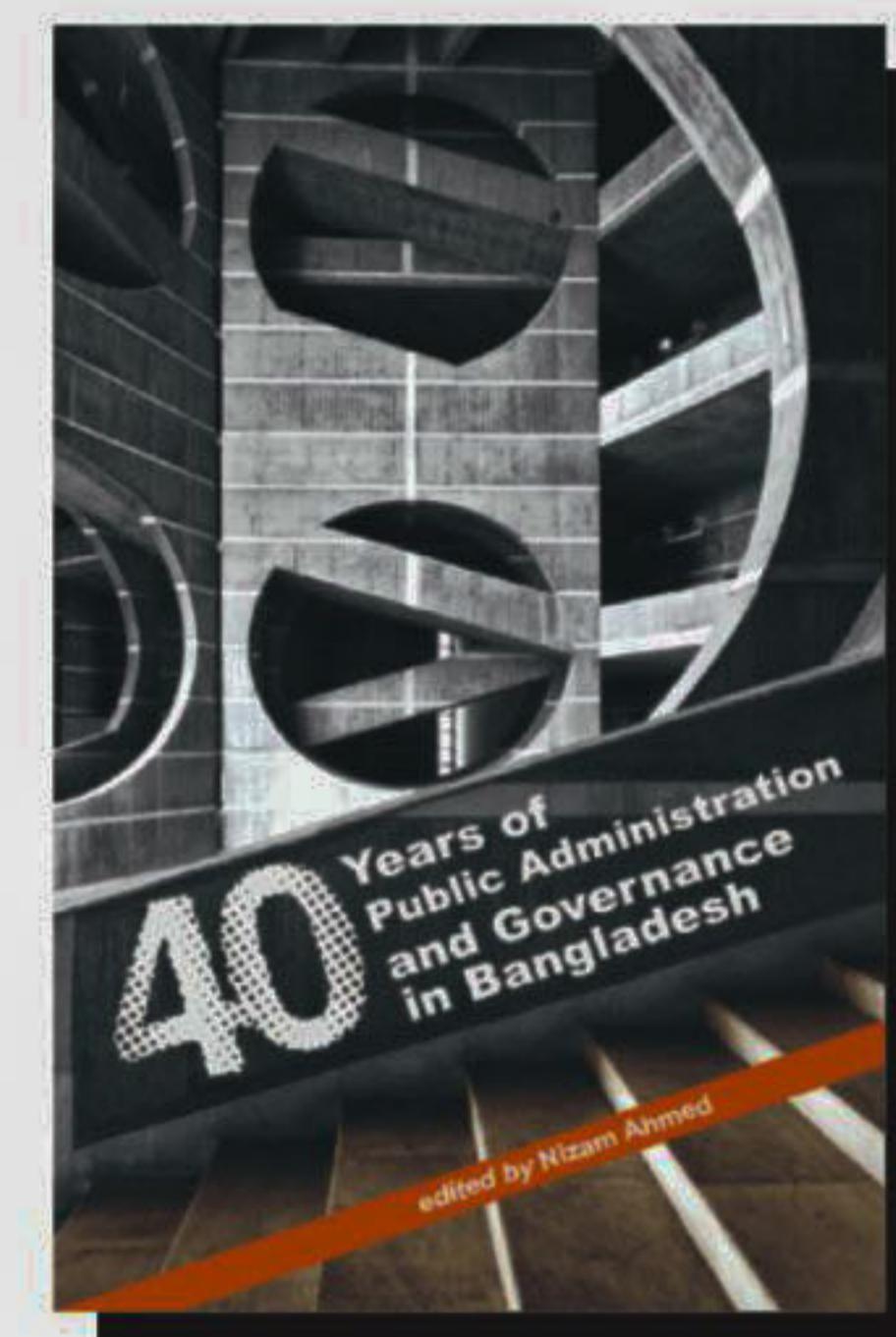
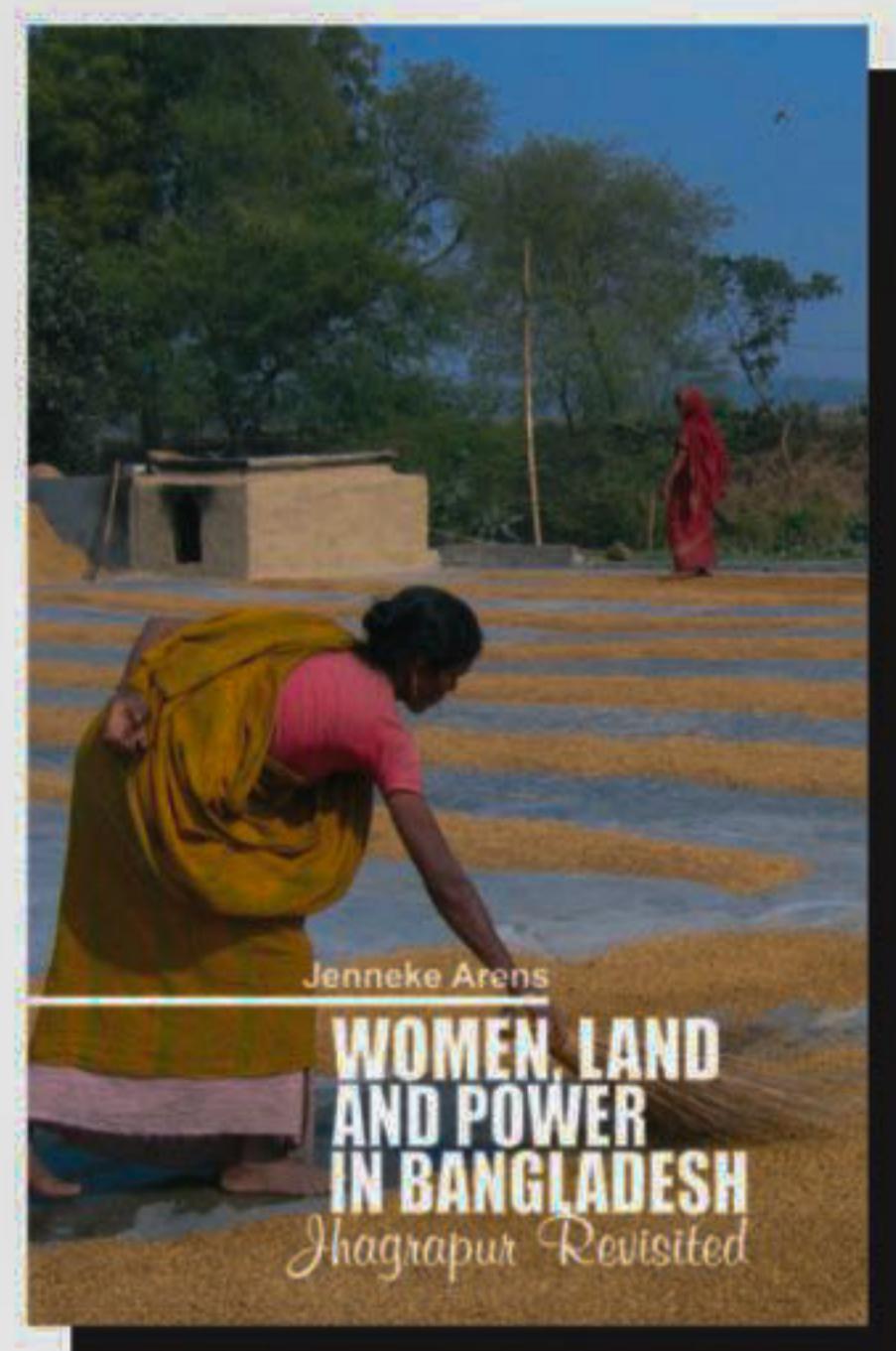
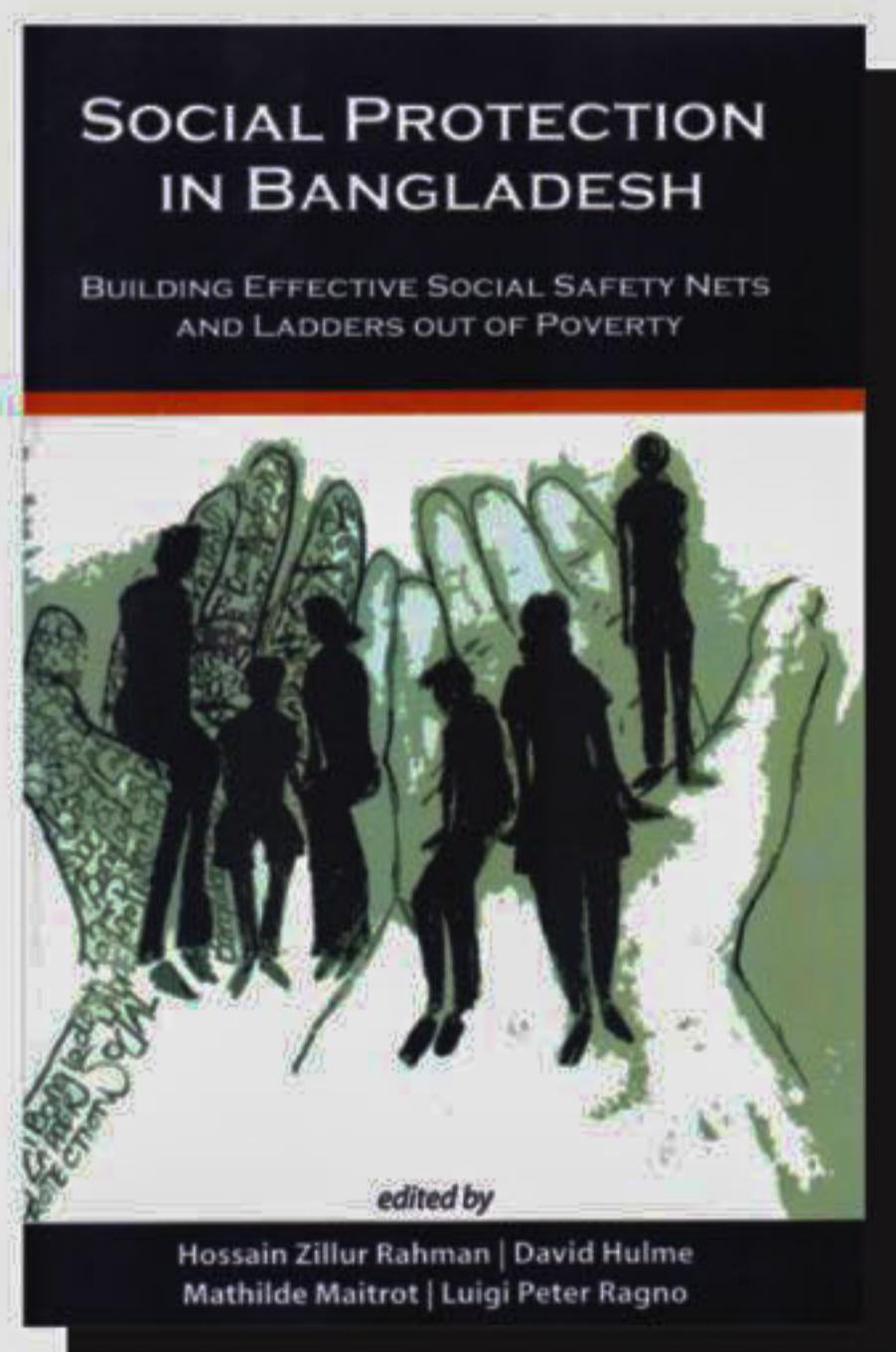
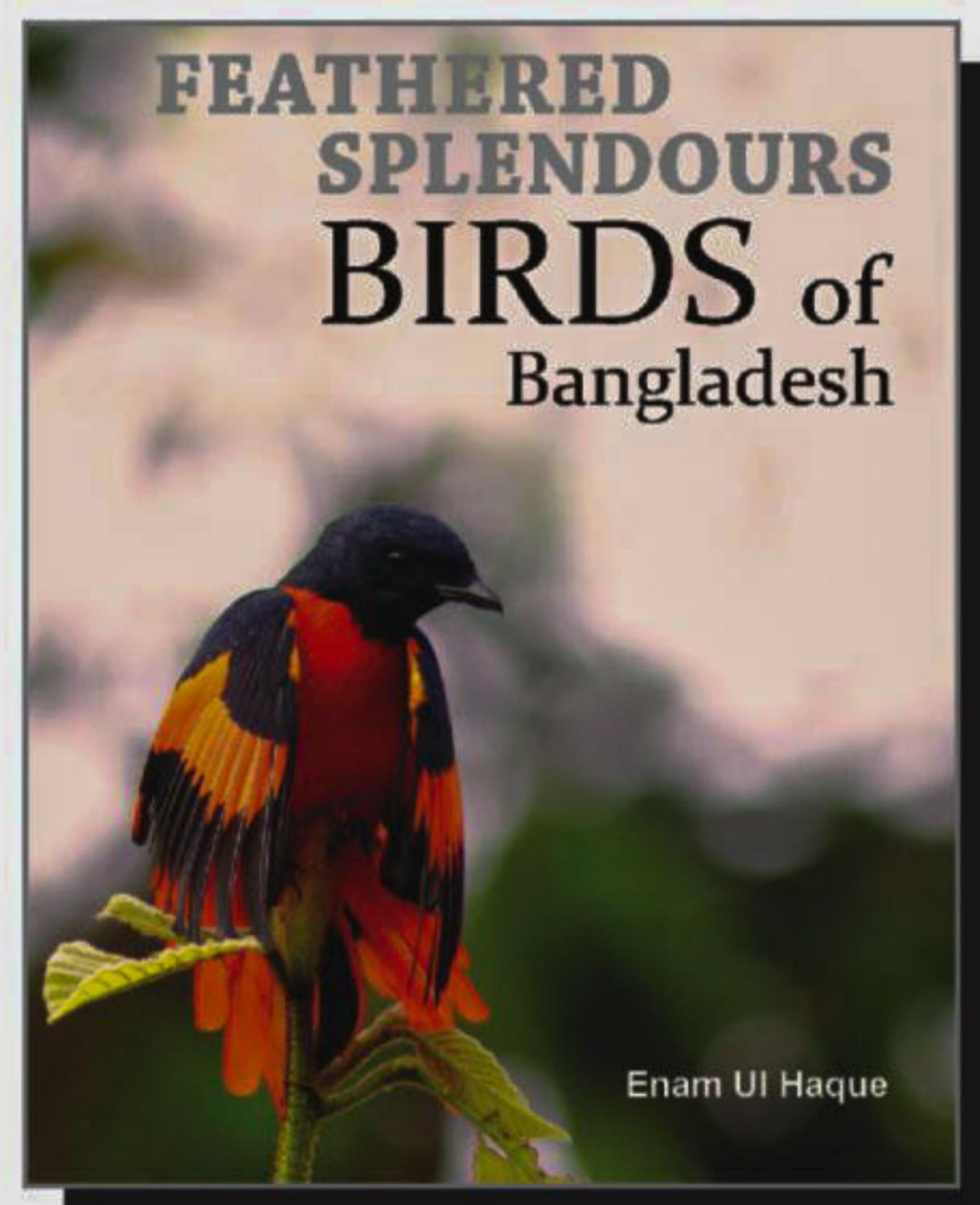
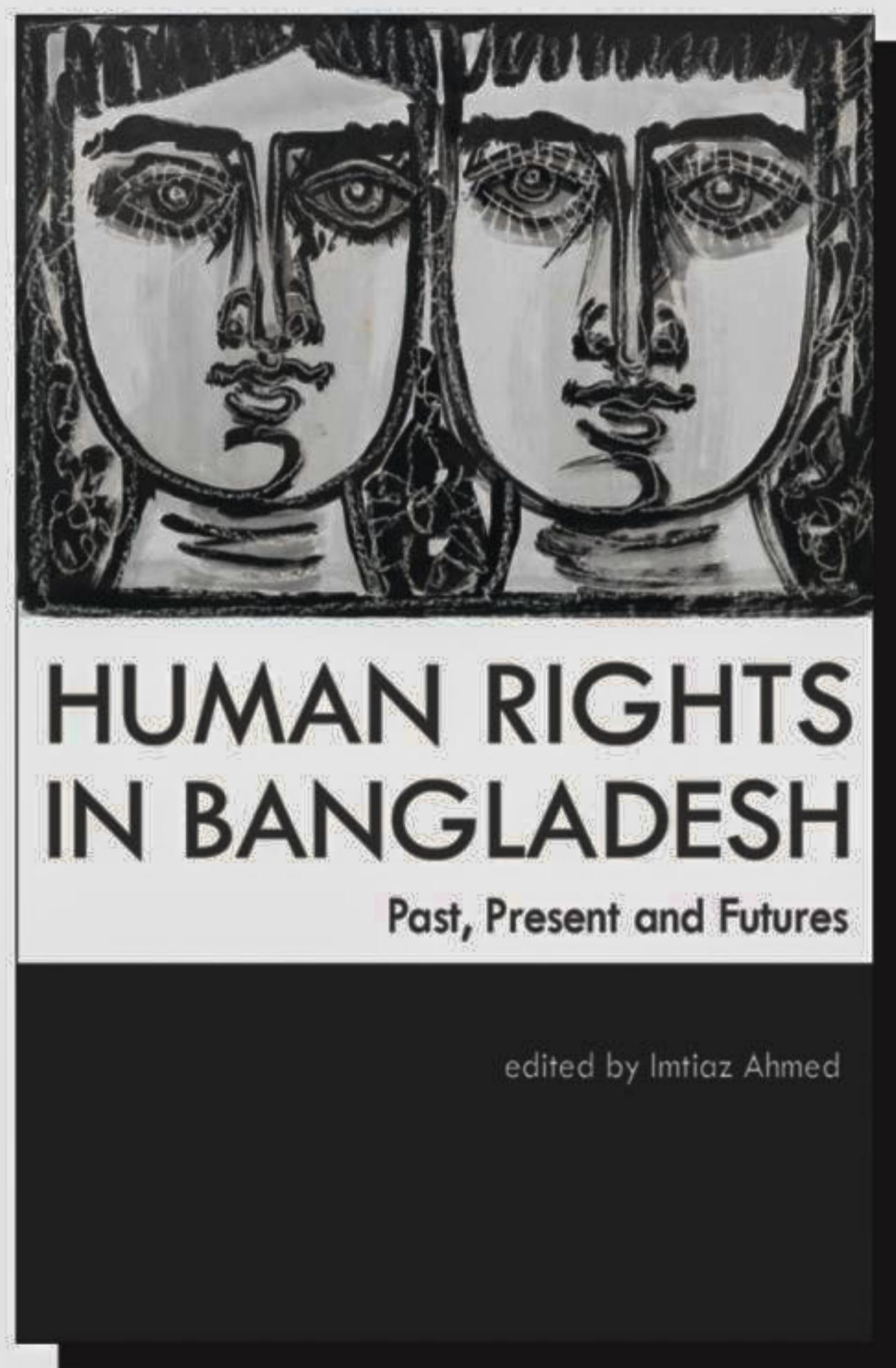


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### CORPORAL PUNISHMENT OUTRAGE

# THE POPE IS UNDER FIRE WORLDWIDE

*"Is the Holy See now doing what it claimed not to be doing a year ago, namely actively and internationally promoting the corporal punishment of children?"*

— Former Irish President Mary McAleese

### SIR FRANK PETERS

The Pope's silence on corporal punishment to children continues to fuel the inferno he ignited globally. While sycophants, apologists and spokespersons have rallied around him in his defence to brush aside the seriousness of his remarks, only he has the power to undo the damage caused. His popularity is already showing serious decline.

On February 6, this year, Pope Francis, head of the Roman Catholic Church and spiritual leader to about 1.2-billion Christians worldwide turned back the clock to a less enlightened era that triggered an international uproar among anti corporal punishment campaign groups and concerned individuals like myself.

In essence, he said it is fine for parents to smack their children as punishment for bad behaviour... but he is **WRONG!**

At which point, when hitting a child does it become child abuse? After several wallops on the hands, legs and buttocks with a bamboo cane, a few well-aimed slaps on the face with a hand, or after the child becomes comatose? Or maybe after the child has been scarred for life after a demented schoolteacher has taken a red-hot cooking spatula to the child's leg calf, as one did at Talimul Quran Mahila Madrasa in Kadamtali where 14 young mercilessly suffered. Perhaps after their unheeded cries for help and they've committed suicide? Corporal punishment is child abuse however light – there are no degrees of wrongness in this.

Recalling a conversation the Pope had with a

father who told him that on occasions he hits his children if they have been naughty, His Holiness, smiling and miming the action of slapping a child on the bottom, said: "One time, I heard a father say, 'At times I have to hit my children a bit, but never in the face so as not to humiliate them.'

"That's great. He had a sense of dignity. He should punish, do the right thing, and then move on."

Campaign groups worldwide for child protection were horrified and outraged by the off-the-cuff comments and fear they could be misinterpreted as an endorsement of corporal punishment on children.

And taking into consideration his silence on the subject since, that's exactly how it looks. It should also be noted that the Holy See is a signatory to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and corporal punishment is in direct contravention of the Act.

Mary McAleese, former President of Ireland, asks: Is the Holy See now doing what it claimed not to be doing a year ago, namely actively and internationally promoting the corporal punishment of children? If it is, then Pope Francis has surely turned the clock back considerably. What faith are we to have now in the Holy See's commitment to the Convention on the Rights of the Child? Will we hear anything on this subject from the Holy See's new Pastoral Commission for the Protection of Minors?

"It is disappointing that anyone (the Pope) with that sort of influence would make such a comment,"