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The Elusiveness of Food Self-Sufficiency in Bangladesh: A Critical Review

M. Aminul Islam

1. Introduction

Bangladesh confronts the enoromous challenges over the next decade of trying to achieve food self-sufficiency and of ensuring food security for all individuals and groups in the country. Over this period the national population will continue to increase the rural non-farm and urban population rapidly, and natural disasters are likely to become more frequent. Modernization of agriculture is the key to achieving food self-sufficiency and to maintaining the food-population balance in Bangladesh. Though rice and wheat as foodgrains represent over 95 per cent of the value of all crop production in Bangladesh but an increasing foodgrain deficit has imposed an unbearable burden on the national economy. Therefore, increased foodgrain production may be attained through (a) replacing traditional with modern varieties, (b) increasing intensity of land use through water control measures, (c) increasing yield per unit of land through the application of improved inputs and (d) improved farm management practices.

The production of foodgrains increased at the rate of 1.5 per cent per annum during 1960 to 1987 while the population growth rate was 2.8 per cent a year over the same period. The analysis of surplus and deficit areas of foodgrains availability shows that at macro level all four administrative Divisions of the country are found deficit and at micro level 40 per cent of the Upazilas are found surplus in 1978-79 and it increased to 46 per cent over 3 years in 1981-82.

This paper is based on secondary data sources. It attempts to make a critical review of the programmes of the foodgrain production performance from the point of 'seed-fertilizer and water technology' issues. Government plans, its inconsistencies towards optimising food productivity and related regional issues are also discussed in the paper which are important for policy implications.

2. Review of Food Supply Situation

The territory constituting Bangladesh was almost self-sufficient in foodgrain production during the 50's and earlier. Since then the country is experiencing food deficit by any method of measurement and by any criteria (Tarrant, 1982). In Bangladesh food production needs to be sharply increased to meet the requirements of the growing population just to maintain the existing standards of inadequate nutrition intake. The production of foodgrains increased at the rate of about 1.5 per cent per annum during 1958 to 1988, while the population growth rate was almost 2.8 per cent a year over the same period. In past all the political regimes in government used to pledge achieving self-sufficiency in foodgrain production by the end of their Five Year Plan programme. But the domestic foodgrain demand and supply gap is widening over time. Food deficits exist and have to be met by commercial imports and by food aid or aggravating the state of malnutrition. To reduce these means increasing domestic production—not only to keep pace with the increased demand resulting from the growing population but also fast enough to eliminate imports or to check the downward trend of malnutrition. During the late 50's and first half of the 60's some shortfall in domestic supply appeared. The average yearly imports of rice and wheat was about 0.5 million tons in 1960-62 period, and further to 1.0 million in 1969-71. Recent import of food stands at 2.0 million tons (1987-88). The average calorie intake of Bangladesh declined 7 per cent i.e., from 2,224 kcals in 1962-64 to 2,094 kcals in 1975-76 (FAO's minimum standard is 2,150 calories). The impact of the rapid growth of population is reacted greatly in the agricultural sector, with far reaching implications for the institutional and structural aspects of the rural economy of Bangladesh. The number of persons per acre of land increased from 1.50 in 1951 to 3 in 1981. Pressure on land is doubled over a period of 30 years.

Bangladesh agriculture remains primarily a peasant economy with more than 70 per cent of small farms having less than 2.5 acres (about 1 Hectare) of land which covers 29 per cent of the total farm area (Table 1). Whereas only 12.6 per cent of farms having more than 5 acres of land, occupies 43.5 per cent of farm area. The peasant structure is far from egaletarian and with the growing population they will become increasingly constrained in their efforts to raise the level of food production. Kuznets (1974) in his study on 'Population, Capital and Growth' maintains that population growth should not act as a serious constraint to economic development when a nation has the ability to introduce technological change. The pace of technological change in agriculture is hampered not only by resource constraints, demographic or physical limitations but also by external relations as aid dependency and institutional factors as well as inconsistency in formulation of plans and policies.

Moreover, regional analysis of foodgrain production performance, potential and constraints would throw light on the inherent properties of the problem itself which are not meaningful in aggregate macro analysis.

TABLE 1

Number of Households in 1983-84 by Type of Farm

Geographic area Country and Region	Total House-holds	Non-farm House-holds	% of Total	Farm Households				
				Total	% of Total	Small	Medi-um	Large
Bangladesh	13818	3773	27.30	10045	72.70	7066	2483	496
Bandarban	34	8	23.53	26	76.47	10	13	3
Chittagong	738	308	41.73	430	58.27	343	78	9
Ctg. H.T.	114	22	19.30	92	80.70	42	43	7
Comilla	1139	235	20.63	904	79.37	763	131	10
Noakhali	661	148	22.39	513	77.61	428	73	12
Sylhet	909	237	26.07	672	73.93	451	173	48
Dhaka	1178	401	34.04	777	65.96	613	146	18
Faridpur	794	167	21.03	627	78.97	442	157	28
Jamalpur	434	134	30.88	300	69.12	209	78	13
Mymensing	1167	335	28.71	832	71.29	581	211	40
Tangail	396	89	22.47	307	77.53	222	75	10
Barisal	790	179	22.66	611	77 34	462	127	22
Jessore	603	133	22.06	470	77.94	278	158	34
Khulna	619	146	23.59	473	79.41	313	125	35
Khustia	344	100	29.07	244	70.93	152	73	19
Patuakhali	310	76	24.52	234	75.48	156	61	17
Bogra	492	128	26.02	364	73.98	259	90	15
Dinajpur	577	165	28.60	412	71.40	212	160	40
Pabna	512	168	32.81	344	67.19	223	98	23
Rajshahi	866	252	29.10	614	70.90	370	192	52
Rangpur	1141	342	29.97	799	70.03	537	221	41

Source: Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, Statistical Pocket Book of 1987.

3. Pattern of Population and Foodgrain Gap

The foodgrain 'gap' is defined as the difference between domestic requirements and domestic production. Import of foodgrain is actually used to bridge the gap between demand and domestic supply. Over the last

two decades, the country's population growth declined from 2.8% to approximately 2.4% and the trend is continuing to fall slowly. But the annual rates of growth in foodgrain production was about 1.4% over the period from 1964/65 to 1977/78 (10.5 m. tons to 13.2 m. tons). The year 1964/65 adopted in the study as the base year to count the line before and after introduction of modern technology.

If we compare the trend of growth rates in foodgrain production with the annual rates of growth in population over the period 1964/65 to 1977/78, it is remarkable that the rate of growth in food production was higher than that of population in six districts, namely Chittagong, Noakhali, Sylhet, Comilla, Barisal and Mymensingh. In Chittagong the growth rate in production was 4.1% implying a growth in per capita food availability to the extent of nearly 2% per annum. Particularly in Chittagong and Noakhali the rate of growth in per capita food production was more than 2% per annum (Hossain, 1980). This eastern of 'food surplus' belt covering the districts of Sylhet, Comilla, Noakhali and Chittaagong coincide with the area identified as relatively highest developed region in the work of Islam ('84) on 'Regional differences in the level of socio economic development in Bangladesh' based on factor analysis of 19 socio-economic variables. In context to this it is important to note that the uneven regional impact of the agricultural production programme could only be counteracted by a policy of geographical dispersion of the rural public works in such a way as to promote regional equity (Islam N., 1979).

4. Post Liberation Regimes and Their Plans Toward Achieving Food Reliance

The First Five Year Plan (1973-78) was prepared by the Planning Commission within a year and a half of the liberation of Bangladesh. Causes of slow growth in agriculture during Pakistan period as identified in that plan were: (1) lack of appropriate development strategies in agriculture, (2) lack of incentive, (3) lack of right technology, (4) low level of investment, (5) low absorption of high productivity inputs, (6) ineffective implementation of the development programme and (7) inadequate physical and institutional infrastructure. Now, it is historically evident that FFY Plan of Bangladesh was unsuccessful due to almost same reasons. It is against this background the specific aim of the plan was to achieve self-sufficiency in the production of foodgrains by the end of the plan period (1977-78). The plan adopted two broad strategies to increase production of foodgrains : (i) increase in yield rates by introducing HYV and (ii) increase in cropped area by multiple cropping made possible

by irrigation. Target of the plan was to increase the foodgrain production from the benchmark level of 11.3 million tons to 15.14 million tons an increase of 36% over the plan period. Regime was changed in August 1975 and at the end of the FFYP (1977-78) actual output was 13.11 million tons, 15% less than the target. The First Five Year Plan did not include regional aspects of development explicitly in the input-output model. Deputy Chairman of the then Planning Commission explained part of the reason for this as the high degree of mobility of labour within a compact, homogeneous and geographically small country (Islam N., 1979).

The Second Five Year Plan (1980-85) prepared during Ziaur Rahman's regime also desired for achieving self-sufficiency in food within the minimum possible time. Target of the SFYP in foodgrain production was determined from 13.5 million tons of Benchmark level (in 1980) to 20.1 million tons in 1984/1985, an increase of 39% in rice and 20·6% in wheat over the plan period. But actual foodgrain production at the terminal year (1984-85) of the plan period was only 16 million tons which was 20% less than the target. Hussain Muhammad Ershad took over power in the mid-term of the Second Five Year Plan (1983) with already recovered liberation war ravaged physical infra-structure and implemented 6.12 million acres of total area under irrigation and another 6.4 million acres of land under flood control and drainage by the end of SFYP. With this background, actual production of foodgrain in 1987 was 16.5 million tons which is far behind the target (20.6 million tons) set in 1984/85 i.e., one-third of the planned increase in production. The mid-term review of the Third Five Year Plan (1985-90) indicated that the production performance of the existing government does not give a picture of increase in productivity resulting from increased facility of irrigation and flood protection. Yield levels continue to reflect past trends rather than the accelerated improvement targeted in the Third Five Year Plan.

The concept of self-sufficiency in foodgrains for Bangladesh has emotional and political attractions, reducing the country's dependency on others for such an obviously essential commodity.

5. Recent Foodgrain Production Trend

Since the early 1970's foodgrain production has grown slightly faster than population, with value added rising at 2.5 per cent annually compared to a growth rate of 2.35 per cent. From the mid-1970's to 1988, the trend of growth rate of foodgrain output averaged about 3 per cent but, for the 1980's it was no more than 2.2 per cent. Significant growth

since the middle 80's is the result of expanded use of high yielding varieties and mechanised irrigation particularly for Boro rice and wheat during the dry season. Figure 1 (p. 7) shows the trend of production of different varieties of foodgrains by year (1970-88) which indicates a slowing of the rate of increase of total grain production. Regional pattern of foodgrain production support the notion that the slowing of the rate of increase is more prominent and may continue. Since the middle 70's there has been a remarkable increase in availability of ground water irrigation particularly in the North and Northwestern parts of Bangladesh. These regions produced at very high growth rates. Some districts of these regions experienced even in excess of 5 per cent growth rate per annum during the middle 70's but the rate of increase in output tend to be slowed in the 80's, when investment in irrigation facilities declined. The variation in the relative prices of cereal crops had important implications for their relative output. Previous Plans ignored the regional variation in value of cereal crops per unit of area (Appendix 1).

Though net production of foodgrain has increased in recent years as compared to 70's but during the 80's there has been an actual declines in per capita grain output due to continued high population growth (see Fig. 2.) Consequently a growing gap can be marked between the level of national consumption and domestic production of foodgrains.

The diminishing growth of foodgrain production in the 80's is associated with the fact that the growth rate of yields from modern variety of Aus, Boro and wheat declined due to low growth rate of fertiliser used and reduction in area under irrigation (Appendix 2 & 3). In addition to this, wheat growing area has declined and the cropping intensity remained stagnant. The gradual withdrawal of subsidies on both irrigation equipment and fertiliser has contributed to a decrease in output, particularly of the modern varieties in recent years. Withdrawal of subsidy in phases became major public policy objective during the Second Five Year Plan. Subsidy on mechanized irrigation equipments (Shallow and hand tube wells particularly used by small and medium farmers who constitute 70% of the total farmers) was totally withdrawn by 1983. The rental charge for low lift pumps for irrigation increased and the subsidy on it reduced to 25% of previous levels in 1984-85. The Third Five Year Plan reduced the subsidy on input prices in the expectations to bring an effective and better utilization of scarce resources. But such policy in a poverty stricken peasant economy like Bangladesh whould reduce production incentives and tend to restrain output growth.

FIG.1. PRODUCTION OF FOODGRAINS

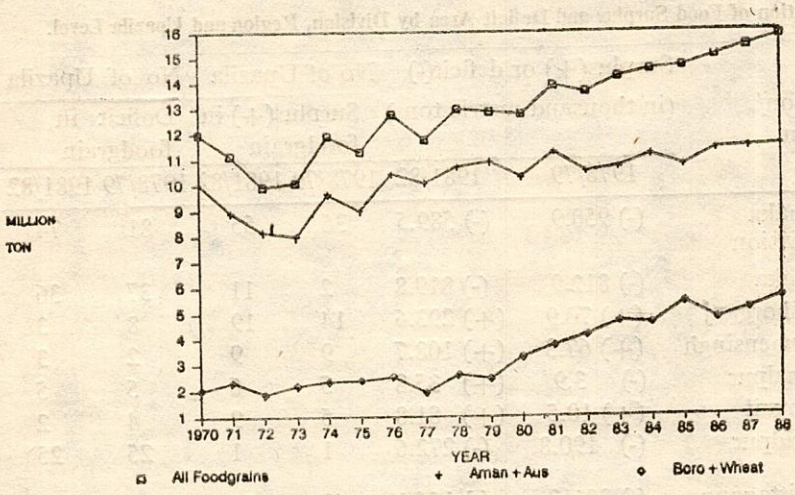
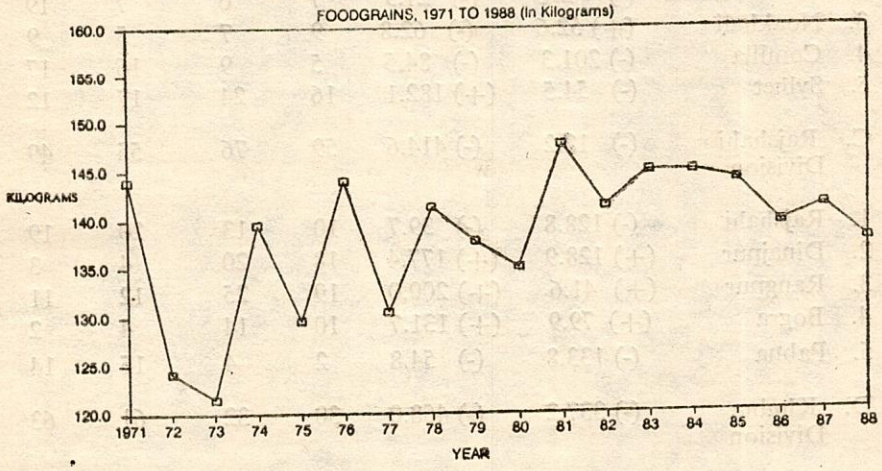


FIG.2. ANNUAL PER CAPITA NET PRODUCTION



6. Regional Pattern of Foodgrain Availability Trend

The analysis of the regional pattern of the status of foodgrain availability shows singnificant variation over place and time. There are 218 Upazilas (the lower administrative unit) found surplus in foodgrain production in relation to population size, out of total 490 Upazilas in Bangladesh (B.B.S., 1982). But the inter and intra regional performance of foodgrain production as presented in Table 2 identifies food surplus 8

TABLE 2

Distribution of Food Surplus and Deficit Area by Division, Region and Upazila Level.

Division/ Region	Surplus(+) or deficit(-) (in thousand metric tons)		No of Upazila Surplus(+) in foodgrain		No of Upazila Deficit in foodgrain	
	1978/79	1981/82	1978/79	1981/82	1978/79	1981/82
A. Dhaka Division	(-) 958.9	(-) 589.5	36	55	81	74
1. Dhaka	(-) 812.9	(-) 819.8	2	11	37	36
2. Kishorganj	(+) 70.9	(+) 293.6	14	19	8	3
3. Mymensingh	(+) 67.3	(+) 108.7	9	9	2	3
4. Jamalpur	(-) 3.9	(+) 35.8	5	6	5	5
5. Tangail	(+) 10.5	(+) 81.8	5	9	4	2
6. Faridpur	(-) 190.8	(-) 272.6	1	1	25	25
B. Chittagong Division	(-) 391.6	(-) 154.1	43	55	60	74
1. Chittagong	(-) 186.3	(-) 161.0	6	9	15	17
2. C. Hill Tracts	(-) 2.1	(-) 27.9	7	6	7	19
3. Noakhali	(+) 52.6	(-) 62.8	9	7	5	9
4. Comilla	(-) 201.3	(-) 84.5	5	9	16	17
5. Sylhet	(-) 54.5	(+) 182.1	16	24	17	12
C. Rajshahi Division	(-) 12.2	(-) 414.6	59	76	55	49
1. Rajshahi	(-) 128.8	(-) 39.7	10	13	20	19
2. Dinajpur	(+) 128.9	(+) 177.4	18	20	4	3
3. Rangpur	(+) 41.6	(+) 200.0	19	25	12	11
4. Bogra	(+) 79.9	(+) 131.7	10	14	4	2
5. Pabna	(-) 133.8	(-) 54.8	2	4	15	14
D. Khulna Division	(-) 337.2	(-) 458.0	30	32	61	63
1. Khulna	(-) 174.0	(-) 182.8	7	9	15	15
2. Barisal	(-) 83.8	(-) 162.1	8	6	19	21
3. Patuakhali	(+) 70.1	(+) 58.2	7	9	3	2
4. Jessore	(-) 86.5	(-) 85.5	5	6	15	15
5. Kushtia	(-) 63.0	(-) 85.8	3	2	9	10

Source: Upazila statistics 1978/79-1982/83, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 1985.

districts in 1979 and 9 districts in 1982 out of total 21 (old) districts in Bangladesh. Food surplus and deficit has been worked out on the basis of per capita per day food requirements at 15.5 ozs. (the coefficient used by the Directorate of Food). Further work has been done to identify the micro-level i.e., upazilawise distribution pattern of food surplus and deficit. It reveals that the intra regional variation is more frequent and wide ranging than the inter regions. Aggregate or macro level statistics on food availability always gives a false impression for adopting any appropriate planning strategies. Stress should be given to understand the problem of micro-regions or to start from lowest administrative unit. In 1978/79 all the four administrative divisions of Bangladesh are found food deficit. Status of food availability in Rajshahi division was relatively better though a deficit zone where 59 upazilas out of total 114 are found as food surplus. Rajshahi division became food surplus in 1981/82, when 76 of its upazilas were surplus and other 49 found as deficit in foodgrain. Such variation in production performance by regions and upazilas are remarkable due to fluctuations in input package supply or affects of natural calamities.

This study marks that at the highest administrative areal units (Macro level, all the four divisions) are deficit but at micro regional level 40% of the Upazilas found surplus in 1978/79 and this figure increased to 46% over 3 years in 1981/82. This increasing trend in Northwestern region achieved mainly through bringing more land under modern rice variety and supported by chemical fertilizer and mechanical irrigation to increase yield per unit of land. Table 3 explains the district level statistics on adoption of modern rice and wheat varieties, percentage of cultivated land under irrigation and land concentration and shows significant regional variation which are important determinants to grow more food. Bangladesh essentially requires a big initiatives to increase both land and labour productivity which are still at a very low level. In spite of all possible efforts since green revolution in mid-60's the country with its limited resources has acheived a little progress in terms of irrigation coverage (12.5% of total cropped area) fertilizer application is very low and coverage of modern variety of rice increased from 2.6 per cent in 1969/70 to 21.3 per cent in 1980/81 and for wheat, from 7.5 to 96.8 per cent respectively. But the analysis made by Mujeri (1983) suggests that the adoption of modern innovations in Bangladesh agriculture, despite some initial successes, has failed to provide significant and sustained impact on overall productivity.

TABLE 3

Adoption of HYVs, Land Concentration and the Incidence of Tenancy and Irrigation at the District Level

Districts	HYV Area as a % of total Rice & Wheat Area 1977/78	HYV Aus and Aman Area as a % of Land suitable for these crops 1977/78	Percentage of Cultivated Land Irrigated 1977/78	Land Held In Farms over 5.0 Acres as a % of Total Cultivated Land in 1960	Percentage of Cultivated Area under share-tenancy 1960
Dhaka	22.3	44.7	16.3	46.0	14.2
Mymensing	19.2	25.2	13.8	53.1	17.0
Faridpur	5.0	1.7	4.4	51.3	16.6
Chittagong	49.6	39.2	15.5	45.8	25.2
Noakhali	33.1	33.6	7.8	41.0	15.0
Comilla	29.9	58.0	14.5	27.8	4.4
Sylhet	14.7	17.3	12.5	63.8	10.7
Rajshahi	7.8	4.3	5.5	70.8	28.7
Dinajpur	7.2	4.1	5.2	71.6	28.8
Rangpur	7.6	7.3	4.3	56.6	16.7
Bogra	15.3	10.9	12.7	54.2	14.5
Pabna	9.4	11.6	6.3	62.7	21.9
Khulna	6.6	7.6	5.5	64.3	26.4
Bakerganj	7.8	7.8	7.6	60.0	19.7
Jessore	9.1	13.5	6.3	64.7	20.2
Kushtia	18.2	8.4	17.5	75.5	24.3

Source: Hossain M., "Foodtrain Production in Bangladesh: Performance, potential and constraints", *The Bangladesh Development Studies*, Vol. VIII, Nos. 1 & 2, 1980.

7. Regional Variation in Fertilizer Use

Chemical fertilizer is an essential ingredient for increasing foodgrain production in Bangladesh. The achievement of self-sufficiency in foodgrain production rests on increasing the application of chemical fertilizer as one of the element of package input of modern crop technology. Regional pattern of demand of fertilizer use is determined by the factors

such as (a) price level, (b) seasonality, (c) climatic condition, (d) availability of irrigation facilities, (e) physical infra-structure level, (f) institutional support, (g) farm size and tenural type and (h) physical properties and type of soil. Consequently, it would appear that there are significant regional variation in the application of chemical fertilizers. Starting with limited use of fertilizer in the early sixties, level of consumption climbed from 11 thousand tons to over 950 thousand tons in 1985/86. Fertilizer use reached at 56 pounds per acre of cropped area in 1983/84. But Chittagong District had a level of 131.66 pounds of fertilizer per acre even in 1969/70 compared to the lowest 6.12 pounds per acre in the district of Faridpur. Ahmed (1977) in his study mentioned the fact that response of fertilizer use in irrigated area is higher than that in non-irrigated area. The risk involvement of fertilizer application in irrigated area is also considered lesser than in non-irrigated area. This study also noted that in low lying areas where flood hazard is high, suitable crop is generally the deep-water paddy which floats on water, and there is no need of fertilizer use in such regions. Farm size and land tenure system also have significant impact on the rate of use of fertilizer.

The use of fertilizer during the dry or rabi season crops production is highest, accounting for 56% of fertilizer use (Ahmed 1988). It is found that the intensity of fertilizer use is much higher for modern varieties compared to local varieties. It can be noted that intensity of fertilizer and irrigation use is higher in the smaller farms. Ahmed (1988) also found that most of the regional differences in fertilizer use is dependent on the extent of control over water resource by the farms. Table 4 shows the inter-regional variation of chemical fertilizer consumption percentage over the period from 1974 to 1986. Steady growth of fertilizer use trend is marked in the districts of Rajshahi Division, which was food deficit area by 12.2 thousand metric tons in 1978/79 and became food surplus with 414.6 thousand metric tons by the year 1981/82.

8. Current Government Objective to Achieve Food Self-Sufficiency by 2000 A.D.

In absolute terms, Bangladesh is now as far away from food self-sufficiency as the country has ever been, and recent trends are not encouraging as most Third Five Year Plan objectives are not being realised, both for output volumes and for input targets. Agriculture and Rural Institution Division of Planning Commission has prepared a working paper to establish the dimensions of the effort required to achieve food-

TABLE 4

Chemical Fertilizer Consumption by Regions during 1974-1986 (per cent)

Region	1974/75	1975/76	1976/77	1977/78	1978/79	1979/80	1980/81	1981/82	1982/83	1983/84	1984/85	1985/86
Chittagong	14	12	11	10	10	8	7	6	8	7	7	5
Chittagong H.T.	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	1	1	1
Comilla	13	14	13	14	16	15	14	13	13	11	10	9
Noakhali	5	6	5	5	4	4	4	3	3	2	3	3
Sylhet	5	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	3
Dhaka	8	11	11	9	9	9	9	11	9	10	9	13
Faridpur	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Jamalpur	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	3	3	4
Kishoreganj	6	7	6	6	6	5	6	6	5	5	5	5
Mymengingh	6	6	6	7	7	6	6	3	4	3	4	3
Tangail	2	3	3	3	4	4	4	5	5	4	4	4
Barisal	4	5	4	3	3	3	3	2	3	2	2	2
Jessore	3	3	3	5	4	5	4	5	4	5	5	4
Khulna	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	3
Kushtia	3	3	1	4	4	5	5	4	4	5	5	4
Patuakhali	1	1	4	1	1	1	1	1	1	—	—	—
Bogra	6	5	4	6	6	7	8	8	8	8	7	8
Dinajpur	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	6	5	6	6	5
Pabna	3	4	7	4	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	7
Rajshahi	6	5	5	6	6	7	7	7	7	8	8	7
Rangpur	5	5	5	5	6	5	6	6	6	8	7	7
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Bangladesh Agriculture Development Corporation (BADC).

grain self-sufficiency by 2000 A.D. Adopting a 2.2 per cent population growth rate, and applying a 453.6 gram (16 ozs.) per capita daily foodgrain quota the Plan document forecasts foodgrain needs of 21.0 million metric tons (mt.) in 1995 and 22.9 million mt. in 2000 A.D. To achieve this target an impact model was developed to determine the foodgrain output implications and input requirements by 2000 A.D. which includes two alternative paths for possible futures: (i) one that based on current trends termed as continuation scenario and (ii) another action programme that closes the foodgrain gap before the end of the projection period termed as gap closing scenario. A direct comparison of the two scenarios presented in the following Table 5. The current growth path implies total of 3.0 million hectares planted to modern varieties, whereas closing the gap requires 4.2 million hectares. The current growth path involves yield increases of 17 per cent for all foodgrains and closing the gap requires increases of upto 84 per cent for modern variety and 40 per cent for local variety. According to this projection current growth path is leading the country to a 5.5 million metric ton foodgrain gap in the year 2000 A.D., while the other scenario eliminates the gap. With this background, an immense effort will be required to transform Bangladesh agriculture so that the country can become self-sufficient in foodgrain supply by the year 2000 A.D. In this regard, the plan document of Planning Commission recommends policy issues like (a) a complete re-organization of the current delivery mechanisms, (b) greater reliance on objective measures of performance, (c) a wide-scale reform of inefficient, costly and time consuming administrative procedures, (d) a re-thinking of the current anti-mechanization bias and a more positive approach to the use of modern technology and (e) greater amounts of funds devoted to the sector's development.

Professor Hamid in his study on "Food Demand-supply Projections: Bangladesh 2000" (Hamid M.A., 1980) presented more realistic estimation of foodgrain requirements on the basis of biological requirement by age-group and another projection based on economic demand. Master Plan Organization also prepared a foodgrain requirement projection for 2000 A.D. on the basis of multi-dimensional factors, particularly physical conditions of production potential. Both the projections presented in Table 6 shows much more higher requirements than that of projection made by Planning Commission. In this backdrop, it is quite evident that the objective pursued by the government to achieve self-sufficiency in food by the year 2000 A.D. is an illusion.

TABLE 5 (a)

Foodgrain Production Iudicators (in millions of Metric Tons)

Type of crop	Current Level (1986-87)	Continuation Scenario (1999-2000)	Gap closing Scenario (1999-2000)
Aus:			
Local	2.1469	2.1930	1.8316
HYV	0.9454	1.2891	3.2538
Pajam	0.0180	0.0180	0.0180
T. Aman:			
Local	4.3383	4.8678	4.2321
HYV	1.7131	2.3360	4.9364
Pajam	0.7689	0.7689	0.7689
B. Aman:			
Local	1.3332	1.3332	1.3332
Boro:			
Local	0.4318	0.4042	0.7324
HYV	3.3133	4.5180	5.5358
Pajam	0.2519	0.2519	0.2519
Sub-total:			
Local	8.2502	8.8982	8.1293
HYV	5.9718	8.1431	13.7260
Pajam	1.0388	1.0388	1.0388
Total Rice	15.2608	18.0801	22.8941
Wheat	1.0892	1.2719	2.0264
Grand Total	16.3500	19.3520	24.9211
Results (in millions of Metric Tons)			
Total Production	16.350	19.352	24.921
Foodgrain Availability	14.715	17.417	22.927
Food Requirements	17.237	22.873	22.873
Foodgrain Gap	2.522	5.456	0.054

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding.

Source: Agriculture and Rural Institution Division, Planning Commission, Govt. of Bangladesh, 1988.

TABLE 5 (b)

Projection of Planning Commission (Comparison of Selected Indications)
Cropping Area in Million Hectares

Type of crop	Current Level (1986-87)	Continuation Scenario (1999-2000)	Gap closing Scenario (1999-2000)
Aus:			
Local	2.3336	2.0413	1.4365
HYV	0.5252	0.6133	0.9771
Pajam	0.0116	0.0116	0.0116
T. Aman:			
Local	3.4160	3.2823	2.7304
HYV	0.7968	0.9305	1.4824
Pajam	0.4156	0.4156	0.4156
B. Aman:			
Local	1.3332	1.3332	1.3332
Boro:			
Local	0.3084	0.3084	0.3084
HYV	1.2174	1.4214	1.6624
Pajam	0.1072	0.1072	0.1072
Sub-total Rice:			
Local	7.3912	6.9652	5.8085
HYV	2.5392	2.9652	4.1219
Pajam	0.5344	0.5344	0.5344
Total Rice	10.4648	10.4648	10.4648
Wheat	0.5856	0.5856	0.5856
Grand Total	11.0504	11.0504	11.0504

Source: Agriculture and Rural Institution Division Plannihg Commission, Govt. of Bangladesh, 1988.

TABLE 5 (c)

Foodgrain Yield Indicators
(in Metric Tons per Hectare)

Type of crop	Current Level (1986-87)	Continuation Scenario (1999-2000)	Gap closing Scenario (1999-2000)
Aus:			
Local	0.92	1.07	1.28
HYV	1.80	2.10	3.33
Pajam	1.55	1.55	1.55
T. Aman:			
Local	1.27	1.48	1.55
HYV	2.15	2.51	3.33
Pajam	1.85	1.85	1.85
B. Aman:			
Local	1.00	1.00	1.00
Boro:			
Local	1.40	1.63	2.38
HYV	2.72	3.18	3.33
Pajam	2.35	2.35	2.35
Wheat	1.86	2.17	3.46

Source: Agriculture and Rural Institution Division, Planning Commission, Govt. of Bangladesh, 1988.

TABLE 6

Projection of Population and Foodgrain Demand for Self-sufficiency*

(In million metric tons)

Year	Population (in million)	Economic Demand	Biological Demand	Demand for achieving food self-sufficiency	
	1	2	3	Hamid's finding (2)+(3) ÷2	MPO**
1990-91	116.34	19.85	24.54	22.20	
1991-92	118.79	20.57	25.15	22.86	
1992-93	121.22	21.32	25.82	23.57	
1993-94	123.65	22.07	26.44	24.26	
1994-95	126.06	22.84	27.11	24.98	25.1
1999-2000	137.82	27.16	30.39	28.78	29.2
2000-2005	148.84	32.18	33.63	32.91	33.8

Note: *Population Projection and the Economic and Biological Food Demand Projections are compiled from the article: M. A. Hamid., "Food Demand— Supply Projection: Bangladesh 1978-2000", *The Bangladesh Development Studies*, Winter-Summer, 1980.

Data sources: **Master Plan Organization, National Water Plan, Vol. I, December 1986.

9. Socio-economic Problems of Modernization of Agriculture

The low priority given to agriculture has been reflected in the low proportion of public expenditure allocated to agriculture in different Five Year Plans.

Following are the reasons which adversely affected the modernization of agriculture in Bangladesh:

a. Traditional rice dominant dietary habit

b. Very low literacy rate

c. Relative factor price have affected the pattern of investment within agriculture.

d. Share of public expenditure in agriculture was always low in all regimes although investment in absolute terms has increased.

e. Absence of effective crop insurance programme

f. Resource allocation within agriculture placed more emphasis on the imported capital intensive irrigation and water control technology.

g. Neglect of indigenous agricultural research—both basic and applied.

h. Regional disparity in the infrastructural facilities.

i. Lack of appropriate institution.

j. Large farmers are not induced to invest their own surplus in agriculture even where the available technology appears suitable to the particular condition.

k. High interest rates in the informal rural credit market.

l. High profitability of investment in the urban areas and speculative business ventures have also adversely affected the incentive to invest in agriculture.

m. Poor economic condition of the farmer.

In fact, government economic policies have adversely affected the performance of the private sector in terms of its impact on agriculture develoment.

The experience of agronomic research over the last 15 years in Bangladesh indicates that it is possible to overcome the technical problems involved in the cultivation of HYV crops which can solve the problem of food problem in short time. However, the diffusion of tech-

nology has been sluggish in Bangladesh mainly due to institutional problems. Today, less than 20% of the cultivated area is under HYV crops.

Peasant economies generally fail to introduce improved technology in response to population growth. In Bangladesh as man land ratio increases the peasants will become increasingly constrained in their efforts to raise the level of food production. In such a stagnated position the solution is to introduce a series of technological changes which can raise productivity at a rate that surpasses the population growth rate. It is now widely recognized that a major constraint to achieving a high rate of growth in food production is the prevailing agrarian structure. Two major elements in the structure which are responsible to influence the growth are (i) the concentration in land ownership and (ii) the prevalence of share tenancy. The top 10% of rural households owned about 50% of the total land and about 24% of the total land was found to be tenant cultivated. About 22% of the land was under share-tenancy, under which, in most of the cases, the tenancy receive 50% to 33% vary from district to district.

There are also a number of other socio-economic and institutional factors.

a. increased input price
b. poor credit supply to farmer
c. absentee landlord
d. uncontrolled market
e. poor input delivery system.

10. Recommendation

1. Sectoral allocation in budget should be based on the identification of the planning region for each sector and then rational priority of problem should be determined.

2. Scientific forecast of climatic conditions, natural disasters, river and soil erosion should be considered in the preparation of perspective plan.

3. Rural to urban resource transfer process is going on by (a) wage and price variation which goes in favour of industrial production, (b) transfer of farm income from rural area to urban areas, (c) savings from the farm sources are mainly used for non-farm activities. Stress should be given to raise rural income and off farm employment generation.

4. Existing pattern of land ownership and land tenurual systems are quite unfavourable for better agricultural productivity. Structral change is necessary to remove the bottlenecks of development.

5. Comprehensive socio-economic development is the prerequisite to the attempt toward achieving food self-sufficiency.

6. Food habit should be changed at the level from school children and nutrition education programme should be introduced.

7. Crop insurance should be introduced.

8. Subsidy on modern innovation and input package should be maintained.

11. Conclusion

Balanced growth of population and food will require not only economic resources, but also crucially needed optimum utilization of land resource, introduction of adaptive innovation and social reforms for which strong political will and commitment is indispensable. Under the inegalitarian socio-economic structure and imperfect factor markets, the efficient supply of modern inputs and services is difficult toward achieving food self-sufficiency. There is a need for a long-term development strategy emphasizing small farm production, and for the creation of a structure of land tenure and resource allocation that will increase the adoption trend of intermediate technologist appropriate in local context. On the other hand, till peculiarity of the regional pattern of foodgrain production risk due to irregularities in the monsoon rains and other natural calamities and agro-ecological conditions are properly understood by the planners and policy makers, the new technology in Bangladesh agriculture would remain an illusion while food gap will continue to mount.

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APPENDIX 1

Regional Variation in per Acre Value of Cereal Produced

Region	Total cropped Area (in Thousand Acre)	Value of cereal production at current price (in million Taka)	Per acre cropped area value of cereal
1. Bandarabon	58+		
2. Chittagong	1172	6661	5683
3. Comilla	2081	9110	4378
4. Khagrachhari	86+		
5. Noakhali	1364		
6. Rangamati	90+	860	3675
7. Sylhet	2219	8424	3796
8. Dhaka	1758	6423	3654
9. Faridpur	1850	4659	2518
10. Jamalpur	1165	4355	3738
11. Kihsoreganj	1583		
	} = 3102		
12. Mymensingh	1519	12204	3934
13. Tangail	1045	3772	3610
14. Baaisal	1682	5482	3259
15. Jessore	1586	5450	3436
16. Khulna	1362	5723	4202
17. Khustia	932	2858	3066
18. Patuakhali	1009	3365	3335
19. Bogra	1260	5576	4425
20. Dinajpur	1750	5915	3380
21. Pabna	1440	4045	2809
22. Rajshahi	2252	7480	3321
23. Rangpur	3233	11026	3410
Bangladesh	32496	119299	3671

Index of Foodgrain Production and Population Growth

(Base: 1972/73 = 100)

Items	1981/82	1983/84	1984/85	1985/86
1. Cereals	148	154	156	158
a. Rice (all varieties)	155	146	147	148
b. Wheat	1056	1321	1977	1105
2. Per capita cereals	110	112	110	108
3. Population (in million)	92	96	99	102
Population growth index	123	130	134	137

Source: B.B.S

APPENDIX 2

Farm Holding Reporting Irrigation, 1977 and 1984

Geographic area and Region	Percentage of Farm Holding Reporting Irrigation		
	1977	1983/84	% Change
BANGLADESH	30.37	43.29	42.54
Bandarban	N.A.	27.52	4.12
Chittagong H. T.	26.43	19.57	(-)25.95
Chittagong	73.98	62.67	(-)15.28
Comilla	44.41	61.10	37.58
Noakhali	31.98	32.46	1.81
Sylhet	37.38	44.85	20.24
Dhaka	29.35	44.68	52.23
Faridpur	3.53	11.30	220.11
Jamalpur	34.45	47.66	38.34
Mymensingh	41.03	43.58	6.21
Tangail	29.93	59.28	98.06
Barisal	14.03	12.35	(-)11.97
Jessore	13.27	31.31	135.94
Khulna	15.17	33.40	120.17
Kushtia	30.54	48.37	58.38
Patuakhali	15.22	6.01	(-)60.51
Bogra	64.14	84.75	32.13
Dinajpur	15.90	45.15	183.96
Pabna	12.79	46.53	263.80
Rajshahi	38.96	53.90	38.34
Rangpur	19.54	53.88	175.74

(-) indicates decrease. N.A.: Not available

Source: BBS. Agricultural Census 1983/84

A Fresh Study of Abdul Latif's Diary

(NORTH BENGAL IN 1609 A. D.)

Abdul Karim

Abdul Latif was a favourite retainer of Abul Hasan, diwan of Bengal. In 1608, in about the same time as Islam Khan Chishti was appointed subahdar of Bengal, Abul Hasan Shihabkhani was given the title of Mutaqid Khan and was appointed diwan of Bengal and the latter continued in that post until about the middle of 1612 A.D. Abdul Latif, son of Abdullah Abbasi of Ahmadabad accompanied his master Abul Hasan to Bengal.

Abdul Latif left a diary of his journey, first from Ahmadabad to Agra and then to Bengal. The Bengal portion of the diary contains an account of the journey from Rajmahal to Ghoraghat, in the train of Islam Khan and other imperial officers, including the diwan Abul Hasan Mutaqid Khan. In the *Baharistan-i-Ghaibai*, Mirza Nathan refers to one Abdul Latif, an accountant of the diwan, Mutaqid Khan. Possibly, he is the same Abdul Latif, the author of this diary.[1]

A copy of the diary was made available to Sir Jadu-Nath Sarkar by his friend Professor Abdur Rahman of Delhi. Sir Jadu-Nath translated the diary into both English and Bengali, the English rendering was made with some abridgement.[2] A perusal of the diary shows that it contains new information or information that contradict the known facts of history. We, therefore, propose to examine the diary afresh.

[1] *Baharistan-i-Ghaybi* of Mirza Natha, tr. M.I. Boarah, Govt. of Assam, 1936 (here-after referred to as *Baharistan*), vol. I, p. 166..

[2] The English translation was published in *Bengal Past and Present* (hereafter referred to as *BPP*), vol. XXXV, Nos. 69-70, 1928, pp. 143-46, and The Bengali translation was published in *Prabasi*, Aswin, 1326 B.S. and *Shanibarer Chiti*, Ashar, 1326 B.S. The Bengali translation has been reprinted by Satish Chandra Mitra in his *Jashohar-Khulnar Itihas*, vol. II, Calcutta 1329 B.S., pp. 908-12. I have followed both the English translation and the Bengali translation in S.C. Mitra's reprinted copy.

Sir Jadu-Nath introduces the diary in the following words:[3] "Khwajah Abul Hasan, afterwards surnamed Yamin-ud-daula Asaf Khan, was a brother of Nur Jahan and the father of the Empress Mumtaz Mahal. In 1608 before the rise of his sister to share the throne of Jahangir, he was appointed to the comparatively humble post of diwan of Bengal vice Wazir Khan ... Abul Hasan had a favourite retainer named Abdul Latif, the son of Abdullah Abbasi, a native of Ahmadabad in Gujarat whom he asked to come from his home to Delhi ... He has left a diary of this journey and the next one to Bengal ..." Obviously, Sir Jadu-Nath takes Abul Hasan, the diwan of Bengal from 1608 and the master of Abdul Latif, to be the same as Abul Hasan, later entitled Asaf Khan and Yamin-ud-daula and brother of Nur Jahan and father of Mumtaz Mahal. But this identification of Sir Jadu-Nath is not correct. In the *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri* there are three persons holding the same name Abul Hasan, but Jahangir distinguishes them calling the first as "Khwajah Abul Hasan," the second as "Abul Hasan, son of Itimad-ud-daulah" and the third as "Abul Hasan Shihabkhani". When the second Abul Hasan, i.e., the son of Itimad-ud-daulah and brother of Nur Jahan got the title of Itiqad Khan and later Asaf Khan, he was called by his titles, first as Itiqad Khan and then as Asaf Khan.

The first, i.e., Khwajah Abul Hasan was originally the diwan of Prince Daniyal, Jahangir's brother. When Daniyal died, he was first appointed diwan at the centre, and then subahdar in the Deccan. In 1613, on being summoned, he came from Burhanpur and presented to the emperor 50 mohurs, 15 jewelled vessels and one elephant. In 1614, he held the post of bakhshi of the royal household, jointly with Ibrahim Khan. Later he was promoted to be Bakhshi-ul-Mulk or Chief Bakhshi of the empire.[4] In the *Tazuk*, he is always called Khwajah Abul Hasan and there is no evidence of his ever coming to Bengal.

The second Abul Hasan was the son of Itimad-ud-daula. He received the title of Itiqad Khan in 1611, later the same year the emperor presented him a sword named Sar-andaz; in 1613 the emperor honoured him by visiting his house on the Jumna ; in 1614 his mansab was raised to 3000/1000 and was given the title of Asaf Khan.[5] (Later he received

[3] *BPP*, vol. *XXXV*, 1928, p. 143.

[4] *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, tr. by Rogers and Beveridge (hereafter referred to as *Tuzuk*), vol. I, pp. 202, 252-53, 260 ; vol. II. pp. 5, 82, 127, 163.

[5] *Tuzuk*, vol. I, pp. 202-203, 249, 260.

further favours). In the meantime Jahangir married Meher-un-Nisa (Nur Jahan) in 1611, and the Prince Shah Jahan married Arjumand Banu Begum (Mumtaz Mahal), daughter of Abul Hasan (Itiqad Khan, Asaf Khan) in 1612. There is also no evidence of this Abul Hasan ever coming to Bengal.

The second Abul Hasan was a son of Mirza Ghias Beg (Itimad-ud-daulah); so he was a Mirza and not Khwajah. This Abul Hasan's title was Itiqad Khan, but the title of the Bengal diwan Abul Hasan was Mutaqid Khan. In the *Baharistan-i-Ghaibi*, he is always called Mutaqid Khan, and the author Mirza Nathan is not likely to err the name of his colleague for over four years. As diwan, Mutaqid Khan was concerned with the granting of jagirs to all officers, and he also took part in many battles. Mirza Nathan came in close contact with him. While appointing him diwan of Bengal vice Wazir Khan, Jahangir writes his name as Abul Hasan Shihabkhani,[6] and while relieving him of the diwani of Bengal, he writes his name as Mutaqid Khan.[7] This man later got the title of Lashkar Khan and was promoted to be bakhshi of the empire and held other high posts.[8]

So Abul Hasan, son of Itimad-ud-daulah (or Itiqad Khan or Asaf Khan) was never the diwan of Bengal ; Abul Hasan Shihabkhani was the diwan. As has been seen he was a different person, he was a son of Shihab Khan or Shihab-ud-din Khan, whose identity could not be ascertained. On being appointed the diwan of Bengal, he got the title of Mutaqid Khan. Sir Jadu-Nath commits a mistake by identifying Mutaqid Khan (Abul Hasan Shihabkhani) with Asaf Khan, son of Itimad-ud-daulah.

Now the journey from Rajmahal to Ghoraghat. The itinerary was as follows:

7 December, 1608	Left Rajmahal in the train of the subahdar, Islam Khan, and proceeded down the Ganges towards Bhati.
2 January, 1609	Reached Pargana Goash in Sarkar Narangabad (or Naurangabad).

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 139.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 230.

[8] *Ibid.*, pp. 231, 265, 406. There was one Abul Hasan Mashhadi, who got the title of Lashkar Khan from Jahangir (Maasir-ul-Umara, vol. I, tr. B. Prasad and Beveridge, Calcutta, 1941, pp. 831-834), but it is not known whether he was in the Bengal service.

Date not mentioned	Crossed the Ganges near Goash.
Date not mentioned	Crossing the Ganges reached Alaipur. One league from here, there are two villages—Bagha and Malik (or mulk), the former was in the Pargana Chandibazu and the latter in Pargana Alaipur.
2 March, 1609	Left Alaipur for Nazirpur.
Date not mentioned	On way to Nazirpur reached Fathpur.
30 March, 1609	Left Fathpur and reached the village of Rana Tandapur.
26 April, 1609	Reached Bajrapur
30 April, 1609	Left Bajrapur and reached Shahpur. From Shahpur, Islam Khan left for Nazirpur to hunt elephants.
2 June, 1609	Reached Ghoraghat, passed the rainy season there.
15 October, 1609	Left Ghoraghat for Bhati.

Here the manuscript ends abruptly. If, however, Abdul Latif, the author of this diary is the same person as Abdul Latif, the accountant of the diwan, Mutaqid Khan, as found in the *Baharistan* (mentioned above), it appears that the author remained in Bengal until at least 1612 A.D. when Mutaqid Khan left. So we find no reason why Abdul Latif did not complete his diary. It is possible that the missing portion of the diary will come to light somewhere in the libraries. If such a fortunate discovery ever takes place, we shall have another (beside *Baharistan*) independent account of the subjugation of Bengal by Islam Khan.

Mirza Nathan in his *Baharistan-i-Ghaibi* also describes Islam Khan's route to Ghoraghat. He does not furnish any date; Nathan himself was following Islam Khan with the imperial boats, in the train of his father Admiral Ihtimam Khan. But from Alaipur, he was sent on an expedition against some rebels. So he does not give names of all halting stations, but only important places, relevant to his narratives. The places mentioned by him are as follows:

Rajmahal to Tipura	Ihtiman Khan and Mirza Nathan were then one station behind at Tituli.
Tipura to Gaur Alaipur	Nathan does not mention the crossing of the river.

Nazirpur	Nathan also mentions the Kheda operations, in which he himself took part.
Opposite (Shahpur)	
Ghoraghat	

So the route described both by Abdul Latif and Mirza Nathan is the same.

The route of Islam Khan's journey from Rajmahal to Ghoraghat may now be examined. The places mentioned are Tipura, Tituli, Gaur, Sarkar Narangabad (or Naurangabad), Goash, Alaipur, Bagha, Malik (or Mulk), Fathpur, Rana Tandapur, Bajrapur, Shahpur, Nazirpur and Ghoraghat.

Tipura is an obscure place and cannot be identified. As this place was the first halting station, it was not very far from Rajmahal. The navy under Ihtimam Khan was following Islam Khan and halted at a place called Tituli which also seems to be an obscure place. Here at Tituli Mirza Nathan fell ill and so the navy had to stay there for more than a week.[9] Islam Khan also waited for them at Tipura during this period. Next station was Gaur, the famous city and the historic capital. The party did not go to Gaur but remained on the river. Then the party came to Goash, situated in between the cities of Murshidabad and Jalangi. At present Goash is about 8 miles south of the Padma, but in Rennell's Bengal Atlas (Sheet No. 10), it is placed just a little south of the Ganges. Goash became prominent in history in the Mughal period. It was a halting station of the Mughal navy proceeding to the east, south or north from Rajmahal or Tanda. In 1578, Khan Jahan, the Mughal general, on his way to Bhati came to this place and halted, where Daud Karrani's mother Naulakha and other members of the family surrendered.[10] Islam Khan also performed two state functions at Goash. First, the subahdar received the emissary of Khwaja Usman Afghan. Usman sent his brother to the subahdar with presents offering his submission. Islam Khan's emissary Mirza Ali brought Usman's brother with him and presented him before the subahdar.[11] This is a new information not available in any other source. Second, at Goash, Islam Khan discussed with the imperial officers about his future course of action. They decided that

[9] *Baharistan*, vol. I, p. 17.

[10] *Akbarnama* of Abul Fazl, tr. H. Beveridge, vol. III, pp. 327-28 ; *History of Bengal*, vol. II, ed. J.N. Sarkar, Dhaka 1948 (hereafter referred to *HB II*), p. 195.

[11] S.C. Mitra: *Jashahar-Khulnar Itihas*, vol. II, p. 909, These points were not translated by J.N. Sarkar in his English version.

the subahdar will get down on the bank of the river, and then will proceed either to Bhati or to Ghoraghat on way to Khwaja Usman's territory as the officers may deem fit.[12] Then they crossed the river on way to Alaipur. While crossing the river the brother of Raja Satrajit of Bhushna came and submitted to the subahdar and presented a few elephants. Simultaneously, the petition of Raja Pratapaditya of Jessore was also presented. Pratapaditya's son and emissary saw the subahdar at Rajmahal with presents of elephants and other gifts. In this petition Pratapaditya wanted to know whether he himself should come to the subahdar to offer submission. During the same time, Muhammad Yar, the emissary of Raja Mukut Narayan (the correct name is Lakshkmi Narayan), the king of Kuch Bihar came and met the subahdar. He presented three elephants and eighty tangan horses.[13]

The name of Sarkar Narangabad (or Naurangabad) is found nowhere else. In the *Ain-i-Akbari*, where the names of nineteen *sarkars* were first mentioned, no sarkar was named Narangabad. In the interval of a decade between the completion of the *Ain-i-Akbari* and Abdul Latif's diary, no new Sarkar was likely to be created, because Mughal hold in Bengal during this period was very shaky. So Sarkar Narangabad of Abdul Latif's *diary* was another name of one of the existing sarkars. Pargana Goash was within the Sarkar Audambar, also called Tanda in the *Ain-i-Akbari*. Goash was very near Tanda, once capital of the Bengal Subah (upto 1596, when the capital was transferred to Rajmahal by Man Singh). So Narangabad appears to be the other name of Audambar (or Tanda). The next station was Alaipur. The name exists in modern maps also. It is situated on the Ganges (Padma), opposite Sar-daha (Sarda) and 12 miles to the south-east in Rajshahi district. In modern maps there is no big river at Alaipur, navigable by a large fleet as that of Islam Khan and Ihtimam Khan. The Baral river joins the Padma at a place called Char-ghat, which is about a mile from Sar-daha (Sarda) and a few miles up Alaipur. But in the early 17th century, Alaipur stood at the confluence of rivers. While discussing the return march of the rebel Prince Shah Jahan from Dhaka to Rajmahal in 1624, Mirza Nathan says that when the prince reached the mohana of Alaipur, the prince met with a terrible storm, many boats were sunk and the boat carrying the prince

[12] *Ibid.*

[13] *Ibid.*

was about to be capsized.[14] At Alaipur Islam Khan and the party stayed for about a month or two in expectation of the arrival of Raja Satrajit of Bhushna and Raja Pratapaditya of Jessore, but none of them arrived. One league, i.e., about three miles away there were two villages Bagha and Malik (or Mulk). The villages still appear in modern maps bearing the names of of Bagha and Bagha Mulki. The importance of Bagha has been discussed hereinafter.

From Alaipur Islam Khan proceeded northwards through the greater district of Rajshahi to Ghoraghat, situated in the south-eastern corner of greater Dinajpur district. Abdul Latif says that the party passed through the river Jamuna, which the people called Atrai. It is clear that the route was through the river Atrai. This river, and all rivers of Bengal changed their courses during the last three hundred years. In the new edition of the *Rajshahi District Gazetteer* we get the following information about the change of course of Atrai river: "Before 1787, the Atrai was one of the great rivers of North Bengal for through this channel the Tista used to discharge its water into the Padma. But in 1787, a great flood took place and changes occurred in the river system of this region. This was also due to earthquakes and earth movement. As a result the Tista broke away from its old channel and found a new and capacious channel south eastward and joined the Brahmaputra (Jamuna) instead of joining the Padma. Since then the Atrai has lost its former importance, but still navigable by large country boats during the rainy season ... The western Jamuna or Jabuna is the principal tributary of the Atrai within the district (Rajshahi). The river originates in Jalpaiguri

[14] *Baharistan*, vol. II, p. 711. The route of Shah Jahan's journey was as follows:
From Dhaka to Khizirpur. Khizirpur is to the north east of Narayanganj, about 9 miles off from Dhaka. It is on the river Lakhya, about 3 miles from Sonargaon.
From Khizirpur to Rasulpur. Rasulpur was the other name of Nabiganj, opposite Narayanganj, The Prince performed a pilgrimage to Qadam Rasul at Rasulpr (Nabiganj).
From Rasulpur to opposite Bikrampur. (Bikrampur is a pargana in the district of Dhaka. It is bounded on the north by Dhaleswari, on the east by Meghna, on the west by Padma and on the south by Idilpur pargana.)
From opposite Bikrampur to Kalakupa. (Kalakupa is about 17 miles west of Dhaka)
From Kalakupa to Mohana Jatrapur. (Jatrapur is on the river Ichamati, about 30 miles west of Dhaka).
From Mohana Jatrapur to Mohana Alaipur.
From Mohana Alaipur to Rajmahal.

district of India and runs more or less southward through the eastern part of Dinajpur district and western part of Bogra district and then enters into Rajshahi district. It passes by the town of Naogaon and joins the Atrai at Saktigacha.[15]

As a result of the change of course of the rivers, it is difficult to identify other places mentioned by Abdul Latif. The next halting station was Fathpur. The date of arrival at Fathpur is not mentioned. The party left Alaipur on 2nd March, 1609 and reaching Fathpur celebrated the Eid-ul-Azha festival there which took place on 17th March and they left Fathpur on 30th March. Here at Fathpur Raja Satrajit of Bhushna came and waited upon the subahdar and presented 18 elephants. Fathpur should be placed in between Alaipur and Natore, but no such place is found in modern maps. There is a Gada Fathpur, situated about 5/6 miles north of Naogaon town, but this was not probably the Fathpur of Abdul Latif's diary, because the party passed that area almost at the end of their journey. The next halting station was Rana Tandapur, this place could not be identified in modern maps. At Rana Tandapur, zamindars (as will be seen below) of Birbhum, Pachet and Hijli met the subahdar and presented elephants. The next station was Bajrapur; here Raja Pratapaditya of Jessore met the subahdar with presents. Sir Jadu-Nath says that Bajrapur was situated 15 miles north of Natore town and 4 miles south of Suktigacha. In Rennell's Bengal Atlas, sheet no 6, Bajrapur is shown near the junction of Atrai and Jamuna in pargana Amrul and near Bandaikhara. So Sir Jadu-Nath's identification of Bajrapur is acceptable. It seems, therefore, that the party moved a little learning towards north-west from Alaipur, passed the western side of Natore, continued the journey towards north-west, reached the junction of Atrai and Jamuna in the pargana Amrul near Bandaikhara. From Bajrapur they went to Shahpur which is 35 miles south east of Ghoraghat. In modern maps, there are two Shahpurs, one five to six miles north of Naogaon and the other twenty to twenty two miles north of the same place and five to six miles north of Badalgachi. The latter place must have been meant here. So from Bandaikhara in Amrul pargana, the party passed through the Jamuna, passed Naogaon town and reached Shahpur to its north. Leaving the camp at Shahpur, Islam Khan went to Nazirpur for hunting operations. He passed 9 days and nights at Nazirpur, and returned after capturing 32 elephants. It appears that Nazirpur was off his

[15] *Bangladesh District Gazetteers, Rajshahi*, 1976, p. 12.

route and was a place full of deep jungles where elephants could be found. M.I. Borah writes about its identification as follows[16] "Nazirpur is situated on what the modern maps call the Nandakuja river, known further eastwards as the Gomani river, about four miles north-east of the headquarters of the Gurudaspur Police Station at the south eastern corner of the Rajshahi district. The place is about 12 miles east of Natore ... It should be mentioned here that there is a pargana called Nazirpur under the Faridpur Police Station of the Pabna district which is centrally situated amidst Chatmohar, Ekdanta and Shahpur and this may be Nazirpur of our narrative." None of the above identifications appears to be correct. According to Abdul Latif, Islam Khan went to Nazirpur from Shahpur, i.e. he had already reached near Ghoraghat. So it is not reasonable to say that Islam Khan went back from Shahpur to south-eastern corner of Rajshahi district or to a more distant place in Pabna district. If he went to such a distance, he could not have come back to Shahpur in 9 days, after spending about 3/4 days in actual Kheda operations. Moreover, Nazirpur of Pabna was nearer the parganas of the Bara-Bhuiyans. So it was very unlikely that Islam Khan had taken the risk of going to that place leaving his camp behind at Shahpur. There is a Nazirpur near the headquarters of the Patnitola P.S. of Rajshahi. This must have been the place where Islam Khan made Kheda operations. The place was formerly included in the Dinajpur district. Abdul Latif says that Islam Khan ordered a bridge to be built over the Jamuna and led his army across to Ghoraghat. Mirza Nathan also says that Islam Khan marched to Ghoraghat by land.

Now the dates and the period covered by the journey. Abdul Latif is particular about mentioning dates and according to his chronology the journey took 178 days, from 7 December, 1608 to 2nd June, 1609. As stated above, Mirza Nathan does not mention any date of the journey, but three dates mentioned by him in other contexts, contradict the dates mentioned by Abdul Latif. These three dates are as follows:

5th Rabi I, 1016 A.H./ 30 June, 1607 A.D.[17]	The emperor gave leave of departure to Ihtimam Khan, the newly appointed *Mir-i-Bahr* (Admiral) of Bengal.
9th Rabi I, 1016 A.H./ 4 July, 1607 A.D.[18]	The emperor reviewed Ihtimam Khan's fleet.

[16] *Baharistan*, vol. II, p. 803.

[17] *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 6.

[18] *Ibid.*, p. 7.

27th Rabi I, 1017 A.H./ 11 July, 1608 A.D.[19]	The imperial fleet enters the river Ichamati, in preparation of assault on Musa Khan and his 12 zamindar allies.

It is an acknowledged fact that the *Baharistan* is very deficient in dates, but these three dates have upset the whole chronology of Islam Khan's viceroyalty in Bengal. These dates mean that Islam Khan (and also Ihtimam Khan) was appointed subahdar of Bengal in 1607, and all the subsequent dates should be pushed back by one or two years. The dates also upset and nullify the dates found in Abdul Latif's diary. In fact, some modern schools have accepted the dates of Mirza Nathan and have given the opinion that Islam Khan was appointed subahdar of Bengal in 1607 and that he reached Dhaka in the middle of 1608.[20] In giving such opinion they failed to notice that Mirza Nathan's dates are incompatible even with his own narratives. Leaving Agra with a large fleet, Ihtimam Khan covered the distance to Rajmahal with several haltages. These haltages were first at Allahabad, then at Patna, a pilgrimage to Jhunsi (just above the confluence of rivers at Allahabad) and a fight with the pirates at Chajuha (about 25 miles down Jhunsi). Then he went to Rohtas from Patna and came back after a haltage there for 12 days. The distance from Agra to Rajmahal is more than 250 miles and then to Rohtas and back, another about 200 miles.[21] Supposing that Ihtimam Khan left Agra on 4th July, 1607, as said by Mirza Nathan, Ihtimam Khan spent the whole rainy season of that year on the way and reached Rajmahal at the close of the year. Islam Khan left Rajmahal for Bhati after Ihtimam Khan had arrived at the place. Then again, according to Mirza Nathan's own narratives, Islam Khan passed another rainy season at Ghoraghat. So the rainy season spent at Ghoraghat was that of 1608. After the rainy season was over, Islam Khan came out of Ghoraghat towards the end of 1608, and reached Dhaka during the rainy season of next year, i.e., 1609. So according to Mirza Nathan's own narratives, Islam Khan could not have reached Dhaka before 1609, whereas these modern scholars have concluded that Islam Khan reached Dhaka in July 1608.

[19] *Ibid.*, p. 64.

[20] M.I. Borah in *Baharistan*, vol. II, pp. 791-92 ; 813-814; N.K. Bhattasali in *BPP*, vol. 51, pp. 48-49; A.H. Dani; *Dacca, a record of its Changing Fortune*, Dhaka, 1962, p. 31.

[21] *Baharistan*, vol. I. pp. 6-13.

Fortunately, there is another very important, dependable and contemporary source in Jahangir's Memoirs, the *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*. The dates available in the *Tuzuk* and relevant for this discussion are as follows:[22]

20 Jamadi II, 1014/ 24 October, 1605	Man Singh was appointed subahdar of Bengal.
9 Jamadi I, 1015/ 12 September, 1606	Qutb-ud-Khan was appointed subahdar of Bengal.
2 Safar, 1016/ 30 May, 1607	Death of Qutb-ud-din Khan at Burdwan
27 Rabi I, 1016/ 21 August, 1607	Jahangir received news of the death of Qutb-ud-din Khan.
20 Muharram, 1017/ 6 May, 1608	Jahangir received news of the death of the subahdar, Jahangir Quali Khan.
Do Do	Islam Khan was appointed subahdar of Bengal.
Do Do	Ihtimam Khan was appointed *mir-i-bahr* of Bengal.

The above dates found in the *Tuzuk* are consistent and they also agree with the dates found in Abdul Latif's Diary. According to these sources, Islam Khan passed one rainy season (that of 1608) at Rajmahal, another rainy season (that of 1609) at Ghoraghat, to reach Dhaka in the next rainy season, that of 1610 A.D. We have seen that Mirza Nathan's dates are inconsistent by his own narratives. Abdul Latif's diary, suported by the *Tuzuk* is, therefore, to be preferred so far as dates are concerned. The details about Islam Khan's arrival at Dhaka received attention of previous scholars[23] and need not be repeated here.

Let us now take up the personages mentioned in the *Diary*. While at Goash, Abdul Latif says that the cities of Gaur, Tanda, Malda and Pandua were on their left. He further says that Pandua was "the burial-place of His Holiness Makhdum Shaikh Nur, Qutb-i-Alam, the successor of Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya."[24] Shaikh Nur Qutb Alam[25] was a re-

[22] *Tuzuk*, vol. I, pp. 15, 78, 113-115, 142-43.

[23] S.N. Bhattacharya in *HB II*, pp. 270-72; A. Karim: *Dacca the Mughal Capital*, Dhaka 1964, pp. 9-14.

[24] *BPP*, vol. *XXXV*, 1928, p. 143.

[25] For details about Shaikh Nur Qutab Alam see A. Karim: *Social History of the Muslims in Bengal*, 2nd edition, Chittagong 1985, pp. 136-139.

nowned saint, son and spiritual successor of another great saint Shaikh Alaol Huq. His mausoleum at Pandua is called Choti dargah (or Shash Hazari or six thousand) to distinguish it from Bari dargah (or Bais Hazari or twenty two thousand) of Shaikh Jalal-ud-din Tabrizi in the same city. Shaikh Nur Qutb was the spiritual successor of Shaikh Nizam-ud-din-Auliya of Delhi and the spiritual line is as follows:

Shaikh Muin-ud-din Chishti of Ajmer
Shaikh Qutb-ud-din Bakhtyar Kaki of Delhi
Shaikh Farid-ud-din Shakarganj of Pak Patan
Shaikh Nizamud-din Auliya of Delhi
Shaikh Akhi Siraj-ud-din of Gaur
Shaikh Alaul Huq of Pandua
Shaikh Nur Qutb Alam of Pandua

Referring to Bagha, Abdul Latif says that Hawadha Mian, an old sage, aged about a hundred years, lived there. There was a tank of sweet water, and on its four banks were located the houses of Hawdha Mian, his sons and dependents. Abdul Latif also refers to two institutions, one mosque and one madrasah. He says that the mosque was built in 930 A. H. by Sultan Ala-ud-din Husain Shah. The madrasah was built of grass-thatched roofs and mud-plastered walls. Many of the dependents of Hawadha Mian and other students were engaged there in study.[26]

Abdul Latif has given an eye-witness account of the mosque, madrasah and tank of Bagha. It appears that when the imperial camp halted at Alaipur "for a month or two," he visited Bagha which is at a distance of one league, i.e., three miles, a walking distance from Alaipur. But Abdul Latif could not give the name of the sultan, i.e., builder of the mosque correctly. The last date of Sultan Ala-ud-din Husain Shah is 925.A.H., so he could not have built the moque in 930 A.H.[27] Fortunately, the text of the inscription is now available to us. The mosque was built in 930 A.H. by Sultan Nasir-ud-din Nusrat Shah, son of Ala-uddin

[26]*BPP*, vol. *XXXV*, 1928, pp. 143-44.

[27]Jadu-Nath Sarkar says, "Husain Shah died in 925 A.H. Therefore, 930 should be read as 913 or 903." (*BPP*, vol. *XXXV*, 1926, p. 144, note 1). Maulvi Abdul Wali had published the text of the inscription in 1904, i.e., long before the publication of the Diary by Jadu-Nath Sarkar, but the latter obviously missed it.

Husain Shah.[28] Abdul Latif found the inscription *in situ*, which has since been removed to Karachi during the Pakistani regime.[29] According to the new edition of the *Rajshahi District Gazetteer*, there is another inscription lying inside the mosque which records the construction of a gateway to the mosque. But though Abdul Latif could read the date and the name of the father of the sultan, he could not read the name of the sultan. That is why, he made the mistake. The mosque exists till today in a ruinous state, but the madrasah built of grass-thatched roof and mud-wall vanished long before.

Edward Adam, while preparing his *Report on the State of Education in Bengal*[30] visited Bagha and left a rather lengthy report on the endowment of land, the condition of the madrasah and the nature of

[28]The inscription consists of three lines of writing and the language is Arabic. The text and translation of the inscription are as follows:

1- قال النبی صلی الله علیه وسلم من بنی مسجد الله فی الدنیا بنی الله له بیت فی الجنة - بنی هذا المسجد الجامع السلطان

2- المفظم و المکرم السلطان بن السلطان ناصر الدنیا و الدین ابو المظفر

3- نصر تشاه السلطان ابن حسین شاه السلطان الحسینی - خلد الله ملکه و سلطانه فی سنة ثلیثی و تسعمایة -

"The Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, has said, 'He who builds a mosque for Allah in the world, Allah builds for him a house in Paradise. This Jami mosque was built

"by the great and benevolent Sultan, son of the Sultan, Nasir-ud-dunya wad-din Abul Muzaffar

"Nusrat Shah, the Sultan, son of Husain Shah, the Sultan, al-Husaini. May Allah perpetuate his kingdom and sovereignty, in the year 930 A.H. (1523 A.D.)" 930 A.H begins on 10th November, 1523 A.D.

(Shams-ud-din Ahmad: *Inscriptions of Bengal*, vol. *IV*, Rajshahi, 1960, pp. 213-14).

According to the new edition of the Rajshahi District Gazetteer (1976 A.D.), "The vaulted roof of the building which had four domes collapsed during the earthquake of 1897".

[29]*The District of Rajshahi: Its Past and Present*, ed. S.A. Akanda, IBS, Rajshahi University, 1983, p. 39.

[30]Edward Adam: *Second Report on the State of Education in Bengal* (District of Rajshahi), Calcutta, 1836, pp. 112-116.

instructions given in the madrasah. In his time, two brothers, Musafir-ul-Islam and Aziz-ul-Islam were heads of two branches of the family. Musafir-ul-Islam showed the original land-grant to Edward Adam under the seal of Shah Jahan. The document was worn out at that time, and the date in Hijri year was lost, the nineteenth year of Shah Jahan's reign could be read. The other land grant, the one of the sultanate period could not be produced by the proprietors, who said that it was lying in the Collector's office. Adam verified this at Collector's office, but found that it was merely a copy of the one shown to him. The English government confirmed the grant by Regulation II, of 1819. The land grant was in the form of *madad-i-maash* (assistance for subsistence or subsistence allowance) and was granted for the following purposes — (1) maintenance of the Khandkar family, i.e., the descendants of Shaikh Abdul Wahhab, (2) maintenance of public worship, referring to the maintenance of mosque and performance of other Muslim prayers and festivals, (3) entertainment of faqirs and religious mendicants, and (4) maintenance and support of the madrasah. Adam saw the mosque, which was in a tolerably good position in his time. In the madrasah, both Persian and Arabic were taught. The Persian teacher was Nisar Ali, aged about sixty. He received eight rupees per month, besides lodging, food, washing and other personal expenses, together with presents at the principal Muslim festivals. He did not receive clothes which he provided himself. The Arabic teacher was Abdul Azim, aged about fifty. He received forty rupees a month plus other allowances enjoyed by the Persian teacher. There were forty eight students in the Persian section, of which twelve belonged to Bagha, thirty six from other villages. On the day of Adam's visit, twelve students of this section were absent. The students also received lodging, clothing, food, washing, oil, stationery including what was necessary for copying manuscripts used as text-books. The Persian course of study included from reading alphabets and the Quran, to the study of such books as *Pandnamah, Amadnamah, Gulistan, Bostan, Yusuf Julaikha, Jami-ul-Qawanin, Insha-i-Yar Muhammad, Sikandarnamah, Bahar Danish,* Abul Fazal's works etc. The number of stuldents in the Arabic section was seven, of whom two belonged to the village of Bagha and five came from other villages. On the day of Adam's visit only two students of this section were present. The Arabic teacher was also absent. Students of this section also received the same facilities as those of the Persian section. The course of Arabic study included *Mizan Munshab, Saraf Mir, Tasraif, Miat Amil* and *Sharh-i-Miat-Amil.* No student advanced beyond the reading of these books. About

the administration of the madrasah, Adam writes: "There is no fixed age for admission or dimission, for beginning or completing the course of study. Students are admitted at the arbitrary pleasure of Musafir-ul-Islam and they leave sooner or later according to their own caprice. During the period that they are nominally students, their attendance from day to day is eqully uncontrolled and unregulated except by their own wishes and convenience. Many of the students are mere children, while others are grown up men. The business of the school commences at six in the morning and continues till eleven, again at mid-day and continues till four. Every scholar reads a separate lesson to the master, one coming when another withdraws, so that there is a total absence of classification. The weekly periods of vacation are for Arabic students every Tuesday and Friday, and for Persian students every Thursday and Friday; and the annual periods of vacation are the whole month of Ramzan, ten days for the Mohurram, and five days at four different periods of the year required by other religious observances."

The Bagha madrasah was, therefore, a residential institution, teachers and students living in the same compound. Adam does not give a description of the madrasah or hostel building, which must have been thatched houses as seen by Abdul Latif more than two hundred years back. It is a matter of satisfaction that the madrasah continued for more than two hundred years, but though the proprietor enjoyed fabulous rent-free lands, he did not take steps to develop the madrasah and to build a durable house for the madrasah. As regards the course of instruction and discipline, it may be stated that the indigenous system of education did not provide for uniform courses of study, class routine, division of students into classes, examination and promotion etc. The students were under intensive care of particular teachers, how imparted instructions on subjects of his choice. The teachers was the best judge of his students, his words were final about the accomplishment of students. If the teacher became satisfied he gave the students *sanad* or certificate. The teacher was not dependent on students' fees, but lived on *madad-i-maash* or subsistence allowance granted by the government. The merits of this system were that the teachers were free from pecuniary anxieties, and there was no chance of cramming and copying by the students during examinations. There were also demerits of this system; if the teacher became unscrupulous, the standard of education became low and so there were cases of indiscipline, When Adam saw the madrasah, the madrasah was in a state of indiscipline. In this case, the holders of land

did not teach themselves but engaged others to teach on payment of salary. May be that the descendants of the saints were not scholars themselves, in the words of Sir Jadu-Nath, "Arabic learning has departed from the place." In Adam's time, the Arabic teacher used to get a salary five times more than that of the Persian teacher, although the number of students in Arabic section was much less. It was probably because there was dearth of Arabic scholars. The earthquake of 1897 damaged the Bagha mosque and ruined the madrasah building of mud-plastered wall with thatched roof. The madrasah was closed.

J.S. Carstains, the then Magistrate and Collector of Rajshahi collected a tradition from Bagha in 1872.[31] According to the tradition, a certain king of Gaur, during his sojourn, accidently met a Muslim saint named Shah Muhammad Daula, in the jungle of a place, which later on came to be known as Bagha. Being impressed by his miracle, the king offered a grant of land, which the saint refused. So the king granted 22 mauzas rent-free, to the saint's son Hazrat Maulana Danismand. The tradition further says that the original name of the saint was Maulana Shah Muazzam Danishmand; he came from Baghdad, settled at Bagha and married the daughter of a noble, Ala Bakhsh Barkhurdar Laskhari of Makhdumpur. Bagha was within Makhdumpur, but according to tradition, as tigers were tamed by the miracles of the saint, the place came to be known as Bagha. According to the same account, Abdul Wahhab, son of Maulana Hamid Danishmand, received a grant of 42 villages on an annual rent of Rupees eight thousand from Prince Khurram Shah Jahan, when the latter came to Bengal as a rebel against his father Jahangir. The farman granting the land was still in possession of the family in 1835 and was shown to Adam when he visited the place. The title was not resumed but confirmed by the East India Company. As stated above, the Prince Shah Jahan while returning from Dhaka to Rajmahal halted at Alaipur and at that time he granted the lands. K.M. Meser collected a tradition (*Rajshahir Itihas*, vol. II) which says that Prince Shah Jahan, on reaching Alaipur, was attacked with serious colic pain, which was cured by the blessings of the saint of Bagha. In return, the prince granted the above mentioned 42 villages.

[31]Mr. Carstains submitted the report to the Divisional Commissioner. The report was lying in the Record Room, from where Maulvi Abdul Wali, the then executive officer of the district traced it and published the same in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* (hereafter referred to as *JASB*), Calcutta, 1904, Part I, pp. 108-13.

The above traditions and documentary evidence of granting land by Shah Jahan, read with Abdul Latif's diary, probably furnishes us with a missing link in the history of the area. It appears that Alaipur was named after Ala Bakhsh Barkhurdar Lashkari. This man was a zamindar of Alaipur and Mokhdumpur during the time of Sultan Nasir-ud-din Nusrat Shah (1519-1533) or even from before. During the time of Ala Bakhsh Burkhurdar Lashkari, Maulana Shah Muazzam Danishmand (otherwise called Shah Muhammad Daula) came and settled at Bagha. His family became the recepient of landed estates granted by Nusrat Shah and later by Shah Jahan. As the mosque was built by Sultan Nusrat Shah, both Ala Bakhsh Barkhurdar Lashkari and Maulana Shah Muazzam Danishmand may be taken to be contemporary of Nusrat Shah. Shah Jahan granted land to Abdul Wahhab, son of Maulana Hamid Danishmand. The latter may be identified with Hawadha Mian seen by Abdul Latif. Hamid of Hamid Danishmand must have got the nickname of Hawadha from the local people and Abdul Latif heard this nickname. As Hawadha Mian was already hundred years' old in 1609, he must have died during the time of Shah Jahan's visit in 1624 and was succeeded by Abdul Wahhab who got the land from Shah Jahan. Here we get names of four generations in the saintly family of Bagha — Maulana Shah Muazzam Danishmand, his son Maulana Danishmand, his son Maulana Hamid Danishmand (Hawadha Mian) and his son Abdul Wahhab.

A tradition current in the Puthia Raj family says that Pitambar was the founder of the family in the reign of Akbar. When Lashkar Khan of Lashkarpur pargana rebelled against Akbar, he was defeated and his zamindari was given to Pitambar.[32] Pitambar is also mentioned in the *Baharistan*. Mirza Nathan says that Pitambar and Ananta, zamindars of Chilajuwar[33] refused payment of revenues. Islam Khan sent Mirza Nathan to chastise them. On Nathan's approach, Pitambar and Ananta fled and took shelter with Ilah Bakhsh, son of Barkhurdar, zamindar of Alaipur. They were beseized in the fort of Alaipur and made to surrender.[34] In this connection Mirza Nathan says that Illah Bakhsh's father was

[32]. *BPP*, vol. *XXXV*, 1928, p. 37.

[33]Chilajuwar is a small pargana included in the pargana of Bhaturiabazu. It is situated on the Ganges near about the station of Sara Ghat. Its real name is Chila, Juwar is a termination denoting a part or unit of a pargana. (*BPP*, vol. *XXXV*, 1928, p. 36).

[34]*Baharistan*, vol. I, pp. 123-24.

defeated by the Mughal general Shahbaz Khan in the reign of Akbar.[35] Nathan probably refers to the same event as found current in the family tradition of the Putia Raj family. In the *Baharistan*, there is no more reference to them. Later events show that Pitambar and Ananta submitted to the Mughals and got back their zamindari, but what became of Ilah Bakhsh of Alaipur is not known. It is possible that by submitting to the Mughals, Pitambar and Ananta grabbed Alaipur zamindari also.

Abdul Latif refers to several zamindars who sent emissaries or personally waited upon the subahdar Islam Khan on his way to Ghoraghat. First mention was made of Khwajah Usman Afghan, who sent his emissary, his own brother, with presents and assuring his loyalty, while the subahdar was halting at Goash. While Islam Khan was at Rajmahal, Usman attacked Alapsingh, an imperial thana (in Mymensingh) and killed the imperial officer Sajawal Khan posted there. Islam Khan sent his brother Shaikh Ghias-ud-din with an army against Usman who reoccupied the thana. In the *Baharistan* there is nothing more about this event. And now Abdul Latif says that when Islam Khan reached Goash, Usman sent his brother to Islam Khan. Abdul Latif further says that Islam Khan's emissary Mirza Ali brought Usman's brother with him and presented him before the subahdar. It appears that after reoccupying the than Alapsingh, Islam Khan sent an emissary to Khwajah Usman asking him to offer submission to the Mughal authority. It was in reply to Islam Khan's message that Khwajah Usman sent his emissary. Khwajah Usman is the well-known Afghan hero who put up a stubborn resistance against the Mughals from his fortified capital Bukainagar (Mymensingh). Ultimately he was defeated and killed in 1612 A.D.[36]

Then when Islam Khan was crossing the river Ganges (Padma) from Goash to Alaipur, the emissaries of Raja Satrajit of Bhushna, Raja Pratapaditya of Jessore and the king of Kuch Bihar met the subahdar. Later Raja Satrajit personally visited the subahdar at Fathpur and Raja Pratapaditya waited upon him at Bajrapur. Raja Satrajit and Raja Pratapaditya are well-known figures, the former submitted and remained in Mughal service all through his life. Pratapaditya wavered between loyalty and rebellion; his kingodom was forfeited and he paid heavily for his own treachery and that of his father. Kuch Bihar was a frontier state

[35] *Ibid.*, p. 123.

[36] *Ibid.*, p. 9 ; there is a detailed account of Usman's fight and ultimate death in the *Baharistan. Ibid.*, pp. 157-205.

bordering Ghoraghat. From the time of Akbar, the Afghan rebels concentrated at Ghoraghat, but when chased by the Mughals, they crossed the border over to Kuch Bihar. A friendly Kuch Bihar was, therefore, a must for the Mughal advance against their enemies. The sending of emissary and friendly gesture of the king of Kuch Bihar was, therefore, a happy augury for Islam Khan. Here Abdul Latif commits a mistake by saying that Mukut Narayan was the king of Kuch Bihar. Actually the name of the king was Lakshmi Narayan. Numismatic evidence shows that king Nara Narayan of Kuch Bihar ascended the throne in 1477 S.E./1555 A.D. and after his death his son Lakshmi Narayan occupied the throne in 1509 S.E./1587 A.D. So Lakshmi Narayan was the king of Kuch Bihar during the time of Islam Khan. In the *Baharistan* also his name is Lakshmi Narayan.[37]

Then Abdul Latif says that when the subahdar reached the village of Rana Tandapur Salim Khan, the brother of Raja Indra Narayan and Bir Hambir came with Shaikh Kamla and presented 109 elephants. The personages mentioned have beeen identified within bracket as Salim Khan, zamindar of Hijli, the brother of Raja Indra Narayan, zamindar of Pachet and Bir Hambair, Raja of Sarkar Mandaran. Since the identification is given in bracket, it seems that the identification was made by the translator Sir Jadu-Nath Sarkar. But whether the identification is that of the translator or the author himself, the identification except that of the first one, has led to confusion. This information is also found in the *Baharistan-i-Ghaibi*. Mirza Nathan says that when Islam Khan, on coming out of Rajmahal reached near Gaur, he sent Shaikh Kamal "to fight against Bir Hamir, Shams Khan and Salim Khan whose territories lay adjoining one another.[38] Shaikh Kamal first went to the country of Bir Hamir who submitted without resistance. Then he went to the country of Shams Khan; the latter resisted for 15 days, "but when the imperial force reached the skirt of Darni hill where a big fort was situated, Bir Hamir all the time pouring the vinegar of admonition on the goblet of his dissoluteness," Shams Khan submitted.[39] Then the imperial force went "to Hijli and endeavoured to capture Salim Khan." The latter came out of Hijli and submitted.[40] Shaikh Kamal along with the zamindars

[37]R.C. Majumdar, ed. *Bangladesher Itihas*, vol. II, Madhyayuga, Calcutta, 2nd edition, 1380 B.S., pp. 500-501 ; *Baharistan*, vol, I, pp. 39-40.

[38]*Baharistan*, vol. I, p. 18.

[39]*Ibid.*, p. 19.

[40]*Ibid.*

reached Alaipur and presented them to the subahdar.[41] In the above statements Mirza Nathan does not specify the territories of the zamindars or chiefs, but says that their territories were contiguous. But in opening the chapter, Nathan gives the heading as "... the despatch of a large army under the command of Shaykh Kamal (Islam Khan's personal officer) against Bir Hamir, Shams Khan and Salim Khan, zamindars of Birbhum, Pachet and Hijli."[42] In another place Mirza Nathan says that Bir Hamir, Shams Khan and Bahadur Khan (nephew of Salim Khan who was dead by this time) were zamindars of Pachet, Birbhum and Hijli respectively.[43] There is, therefore, real confusion in the evidence of these two contemporary writers, between Abdul Latif and Mirza Nathan and in the two statements of Mirza Nathan himself. Among modern writers, Jadu-Nath Sarkar does not attach any importance to these anomalous statements; M.I. Borah takes Bir Hamir, Shams Khan and Salim Khan to be zamindars of Pachet, Birbhum and Hijli respectively,[44] while S.N. Bhattacharya takes Bir Hamir, Shams Khan and Salim Khan as Zamindars of Birbhum, Pachet and Hijli respectively.[45]

Now let us look at the topography of south-western Bengal where the territories of these zamindars were located. Here two statements of Mirza Nathan come to our help. First, he says that these three kingdoms, Birbhum, Pachet and Hijli are contiguous. The location of Birbhum and Hijli does not pose any problem, Birbhum is still present with the same name and the name Hijli still lingers in Midnapore district, though the glory of this old kingdom has gone. Mirza Nathan also refers to Dorni hill of the kingdom of Pachet which is identified with Dorunda hills of Chotanagpur.[46] So Pachet should be located in between Birbhum and Hijli, and when Mirza Nathan says that the three kingdoms were contiguous, the order of the kingdoms from north to south is, first, Birbhum, 2nd Pachet, and third Hijli. Mirza Nathan categorically says that "First of all Shaykh Kamal went to the country of Bir Hamir," then he attacked Shams Khan, and then last of all Salim Khan of Hijli. Military strategy also demanded that the northern most country should have been first invaded and made to submission, because, the invader

[41] *Ibid.*, p. 20.
[42] *Ibid.*, p. 15.
[43] *Ibid.*, p. 327.
[44] *Ibid.*, vol. II, pp. 800-801.
[45] *H.B.* II, p. 250, note 1.
[46] *Baharistan*, vol. II, p. 801.

could not have proceeded keeping the enemy in the rear. So in actual description of warfare, when Mirza Nathan says that the kingdoms were contiguous, and that Shaykh Kamal invaded Bir Hamir first, Bir Hamir was obviously the zamindar of Birbhum, the northern-most kingdom. Bir Hamir was not a proper name, it was an hereditary title of the Bishnupur Rajas, the old Bishnupur kingdom comprised of Birbhum and Bankura districts. So it may be stated that Bir Hamir, Shams Khan and Salim Khan were zamindars of Birbhum, Pachet and Hijli respectively. They, accompanied by Shaikh Kamal, visited the subahdar Islam Khan. The place was Rana Tandapur according to Abdul Latif and Alaipur according to Mirza Nathan. Here, Abdul Latif's evidence is to be preferred, he was present in the camp of the subahdar, but Mirza Nathan was not present. The "brother if Raha Indra Narayan" of Abdul Latif may have been a different person, who also presented himself before the subahdar.

Abdul Latif also refers to the shrine of Shah Ismail Gazi at Ghoraghat. He says that the saint lived in the time of Sultan Muzaffar Shah of Bengal.[47] There is only one Sultan of Bengal bearing the name Muzaffar Shah and he was Sultan Shams-ud-din Muzaffar Shah Habshi who reigned from 1491-1493 A.D. This evidence of Abdul Latif goes counter to the hitherto known facts of history. In 1874, G.H. Damant published the text and summary translation of a Persian work *Risalat-us-Shuhada* of Pir Muhammad Shattari.[48] The book was written in 1633 A.D. and it was discovered in the shrine of the saint at Kantaduar in the Pirganj P.S. of Rangpur, a few miles north-east of Ghoraghat. According to the *Risalat*, Shah Ismail Ghazi, a resident of Arabia left the country with the avowed intention of doing *jihad* and attain martyrdom. In course of his journey, he came to Gaur, during the regin of Sultan Rukn-ud-din Barbak Shah (1459-1474 A.D.). The Sultan was at that time busy to find out ways and means to control floods in the vicinity of the capital. He engaged all his engineers for the purpose, but they failed. At last following the advice of Shah Ismail Ghazi, he came out successful and this brought the saint to the notice of the Sultan. The saint was then appointed to conduct warfare against the neighbouring kingdoms. Ismail Ghazi defeated the kings of Orissa and Kamrup and made them pay tribute to the Bengal Sultan. When he was thus at the height of his

[47] *BPP*, vol. *XXXV*, 1928, p. 146.

[48] *JASB*, vol. *XLIII*, 1874, pp. 215-239.

fame, one Bhandsi Rai, the commandant of the Sultan at Ghoraghat became envious of him and sent a false report to the Sultan saying that Shah Ismail Ghazi had entered into offensive and defensive alliance with the king of Kamrup and was meditating upon rebellion. The Sultan got furious and ordered Ismail Ghazi to be put to death and he was beheaded in 1474 A.D. According to traditions, the head of Shah Ismail Ghazi was buried at Kantaduar, Rangpur and his body at Mandaran in Hugli. There are as many as four shrines bearing the name of the same saint in Rangpur alone.[49] The Ghoraghat shrine was also noticed by Buchanan in 1810 A.D. He says:[50] "The most celebrated place in the town is the tomb of Ismail Ghazi, placed in the south-east corner of the fort. He is much respected and feared, both by Hindus and Muhammadans, and a small canopy is still hung over his tomb, which is very ruinous." The shrine also exists today, it is a pucca structure, but not well-preserved.[51]

Abdul Latif says that Shah Ismail Ghazi was living in the time of Sultan Shams-ud-din Muzaffar Shah, but according to Pir Muhammad Shattari, the saint was beheaded in 1474 A.D. i.e. 17 years back. Abdul Latif wrote his diary 24 years prior to the writing of the *Risalat* of Pir Muhammad Shattari, so both of them were almost contemporary, both of them wrote more than a century after the death of Shah Ismail Ghazi. So one cannot be preferred to the other and at the present state of our knowledge, we cannot definitely say when exactly the saint died. A pertinent question may, however, be raised. Ismail Ghazi did immense service to Barbak Shah; it seems improbable that the Sultan ordered for the execution of the saint simply on a false report. Either there was a genuine cause for his execution, or he was not executed by Barbak Shah. It is also possible that Ismail Ghazi survived Barbak Shah lived upto the time of Muzaffar Shah, as stated by Abdul Latif, and was killed by some other Sultan. That he was executed is probably true, the myth that has grown up round him suggests an unnatural death.

Abdul Latif also paid attention to landscape, scenes and sceneries around him and fauna and flora of Bagha and Ghoraghat. He was particularly eloquent about Bagha. He says:[52] "On the banks of the tank

[49]For Shah Ismail Ghazi see A. Karim: *Social History of Muslims in Bengal*, 2nd edition, Chittagong, 1985, pp. 148-49.

[50]M. Martin: *Eastern India*, vol. III, Delhi Reprint, 1976, p. 681.

[51]*Bangladesh District Gazetteers, Dinajpur*, Photo following, p. 318.

[52]*BPP*, vol. *XXXV*, 1928, p. 144.

are jack and mango trees, — green, flourishing and giving shade. Around the village the entire countryside is green and refreshing ... it is a very delightful place. In this province we have not beheld any spot other than this which savours of Islam and is free from overcrowding." Abdul Latif visited in January-February, so he saw green vegetable field around him, but his last sentence is unwarranted, because Abdul Latif had no chance to visit cultural centres in other parts of Bengal, like Gaur, Pandua, Deokot, Satgaon, Sonargaon, Sylhet and Chittagong.

About Ghoraghat Abdul Latif says:[53] "As the land is high, it is rarely covered by flood water. The river Karatoya ... passes below it ...Here are found abundance of tangan (hill ponies), do-patta and precious stuffs manufactured in Kuch and the maina bird." It appears that the tangan horses and cotton stuffs of Kuch Bihar and other hilly areas of the north passed to the Bengal market through Ghoraghat. The movement of goods and tangan horses from the hills to the plains of Bengal has also been mentioned by Minhaj-i-Siraj during the period of early Muslim conquest of Bengal.[54] Abdul Latif devotes a whole paragraph in praise of the maina bird. He was particularly amused to see that by repeated teaching, the maina could acquire the habit of speaking. He says:[55] "It can exactly reproduce the cries of the cock, the horse or any other animal that it may hear. Whatever word in Persian or Hindi is spoken (before it) it also recites and it repeats the sound of every musical instrument which is played (in its hearing)." The author also refers to the abundant availability of deer, birds, etc. in hunting. He also refers to wild buffaloes and says:[56] "In this province there are wild buffaloes, equal in strength to 14 elephants (each) and with horns five or six yards (in expanse). This buffalo considers a mounted hunter as no more than a bubble of air and never stirs from its position in fear of musket arrow or sword. But the tigers of this province are inferior to these buffaloes, and before the latter the tiger becomes no better than an (ordinary) buffalo! Very often these buffaloes hunt the tiger." The author also refers to rhinoceros and says:[57] "The rhinoceros, too, abounds in this province and is hunted with muskets. Excellent shields are made of its hide, which arrows and bullets cannot penetrate. In the

[53] *Ibid.*, p. 145.

[54] *Tabakat-i-Nasiri*, tr. Major Raverty, vol. I, pp. 567-68.

[55] *BPP, vol. XXXV*, 1928, p. 145.

[56] *Ibid.*, pp. 145-46.

[57] *Ibid.*, p. 146.

middle of its head it has a horn which is sent to distant countries as a rarity and gift." Foreign writers beginning from the Arab geographers to the European travellers of 16th to 17th centuries refer to the rhinoceros of Bengal, which they called unicorn. Then the author refers to fruits available in Ghoraghat. He particularly mentions the pineapples, the jack-fruits, the mangoes, kamala (orange), martaban banana, betel-nuts and mulberry. He says that mangoes of Ghoraghat contained black worms within it, as he heard, "due to a curse pronounced by the saint Qutb-i-Alam on a villaege headman of this region.[58] In flowers, Abdul Latif refers to only the champa.

Abdul Latif was aware of the fact that Bengal was a deltaic country full of rivers and rivulets and remaining inundated for half of the year. He says: "For five or six months most of the land of this province remains under water, during which period, one must use boats for the purposes of warfare, travelling or hunting." Islam Khan was at Alaipur during January-February when the country-side was dry. So the officers gave a parade of the imperial artillery and war-boats before the subahdar. Then Abdul Latif gives a description of various kinds of boats, but unfortunately the translator omits this portion of the diary.

Bengal is notoriously famous for its absence of contemporary history. The discovery of Mirza Nathan's *Baharistan-i-Ghaibi* and Abdul Latif's *Diary* is, therefore, a welcome relief to the historians. But for the *Baharistan*, the history of the gallant resistance of the Bara Bhuiyans would have remained completely in obscurity. Abdul Latif's short *Diary* supplements the information available in the *Baharistan*. The halting stations of Islam Khan in his march to Ghoraghat have not been properly given in the *Baharistan*, which are found only in Abdul Latif's *Diary*. This gives an idea about the river position in North Bengal in the early 17th century. Abdul Latif's *Diary* supplies the missing link in the history of Alaipur and Bagha; his reference to the madrasah at Bagha and its founder Hawadha Mian, and the reference to the shrine of Shah Ismail Ghazi at Ghoraghat are new information, not available in any other contemporary works. Khwaja Usman Afghan and Kuch Bihar Raja Lakshmi Narayan's sending of emissaries to Islam Khan at Goash and at the crossing of the river respectively are also new information, not available anywhere else. Raja Satrajit and Raja Pratapaditya's sending of presents to Islam Khan while crossing the river is also known only from Abdul Latif's *Diary*. Even Mirza Nathan does not mention these facts. Therefore the historical value of Abdul Latif's *Diary* is significantly high.

[58] *Ibid.*, p. 146.

Development of Transport and Communications System in Bengal Till 1947*

Md. Wazed Ali

The usefulness of the transport and communications system is well-known to all. The transport and communications system — rivers, roads and railways — plays an important role in the development agriculture and trade. Improvements in transport help agriculture to take to increased specialization in particular crops in the areas suitable for their cultivation. The demand for a particular raw material stimulates the agriculturists to make greater efforts towards increased production, and they can hope to import some of the foodstuff they require. Improved transport facilities also make possible a more easy supply of inputs which the cultivators require. The communications system helps in the supply of labour, when necessary, by making it more mobile, and can import fertilizer and modern implements from factories or ports. It brings to the doors of peasants goods for consumption and cheap articles of luxury. It thus opens up avenues of both earning and spending. Moreover, a better transportation and communications system may reduce the chances of famine. It can quickly transport foodstuff to the famine-striken areas. It thus proves a boon to the famine affected people, but it may, at the same time, affect the population of those areas from where foodstuff is diverted by raising prices.

The British government was aware of the usefulness of improved transport and communications system and, therefore, attempted to modernize it. The present article deals with the development of the transport and communications system in British Bengal.

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River Communication[1]

There were four great rivers in Bengal — the Ganges or the Padma, running from the north-west to the south-east, the Brahmaputra, running from the north to the south, the Jumna, taking the same course and the Meghna, originating from Assam and running into the Bay of Bengal. The great characteristic of these rivers was that they remained navigable throughout the year for big rivercrafts as well for small.

Apart from the great rivers, each region of Bengal had its own lesser river systems. The Northern Bengal rivers were the Mahananda, the Atrai the Korotoa and the Tista. The Mahananda fell to the Ganges in the north-west, the Atrai and the Korotoa to the Jumna and the Tista to the Brahmaputra. The West Bengal rivers were the Damodar, the Rupnarain and the Kosi, all originating from Chota-Nagpur and joining the Hooghly below Calcutta. The Central Bengal rivers were the Bhagirathi (known as the Hooghly in its lower course), originating from the Ganges in the north-west and running into the Bay of Bengal in the south, the Jelangi, originating from the Ganges and later joining the Bhagirathi, and the Mathabhanga and the Gorai, both originating from the Ganges and joining the Madhumati. The crucial characteristic of these rivers was that they were navigable only during the monsoon, i.e., from June to October. Owing to continuous silting they were inadequate as trade routes during the dry season, i.e., from November to May. The Eastern Bengal rivers — the Brahmaputra, the Lokhya, the Dhaleswari, the Meghna, the Madhumati and numerous others, penetrating through its every part, remained navigable throughout the year. From the basis of this natural waterway system giving reasonable communications, a series of innovations were instituted under British rule to give Bengal a more sophisticated and flexible transport network. These innovations included canal, road and railway communications.

Since river communication was the most important means of carriage before the construction of railways, efforts were made by the government to shorten the route between the Eastern Bengal districts and Calcutta. At the onset of British rule boats from the Eastern Bengal districts could only reach Calcutta by a route close to the sea, which brought them into the Hooghly, 70 miles below Calcutta.[2] This route was

[1]The information about the courses of the various rivers has been taken from a map of Bengal.

[2]L.S.S. O'Malley, *Bengal District Gazetteers, 24 Paraganas* (Calcutta: Bengal Secretariat Book Depot, 1914), p. 159.

not only circuitous, but also impracticable for country boats during the monsoon[3] when strong sea breezes made it difficult for them to ply. To shorten the route a new canal system, known as the Calcutta (or Circular) and Eastern Canals was planned to allow country boats to pass from the eastern districts to Calcutta by a direct inland route through the districts of Faridpur, Backarganj, Khulna and 24 Paraganas. It was to be a route of 1,127 miles of which 47 miles were to be artificial canals, the rest being natural channels.[4] The development of the canal system was started in 1777 with the construction of Tolly's *Nullah* (canal),[5] called after Major Tolly who built it. By 1850 a part of the system was developed and by the beginning of the twentieth century it was fully completed. This canal system was under the control and supervision of the government, which annually cleared the route of silt and charged tolls when the boats entered the Circular canal at Dhopa lake, 5 miles east of the Hooghly. It was solely a boat route. Steamers were too big to take it and they followed a route further south through the *Sundarbans*. It remained the sole boat route between the Eastern Bengal districts and Calcutta up to 1947.

Boats carried the produce of the four regions to Calcutta, taking various routes.[6] Boats from Northern Bengal came to the Brahmaputra and the Jumna through the Tista, the Korotoa and the Atrai, and thence to the Meghna entering into the canal system in the district of Faridpur. Boats from the eastern districts came to the Meghna through the Brahmaputra, the Lokhya and the Dhaleswari to take the route to Calcutta. The Bhagirathi brought the produce of Central Bengal direct to Calcutta, and the Gorai and the Mathabhanga through the Madhumati and the canal system. The traffic from Western Bengal came to Calcutta directly through the Damodar, the Rupnarain and the Kosi.

In the early part of the nineteenth century country boats of various sizes with a carrying capacity of from 5 tp 2,500 maunds were the only river crafts. Smaller crafts were used for covering short distances, the bigger ones being used for long distance journeys. In the latter part of the nineteenth century, however, some river transport came to be mechanized. Two navigation companies — the Rivers Steam Navigation Company and the India General Steam Navigation Company were responsible for the introduction of steamers and flats in Bengal.[7] Steamers and

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 158.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 159.

[6] The boat routes have been worked out from a map of Bengal.

[7] O'Malley, *op. cit.*, p. 163.

flats carried passengers and goods from Chandpur and Narayanganj to Goalanda and Khulna serving as links between the railway lines. Ferry services between Bahadurabadghat and Fulchharighat, between Sirajganjghat and Jagannathganjghat and between Saraghat and Damukdiaghat were conducted by steamers and flats. Besides connecting the railway lines, steamers carried goods direct from Eastern Bengal to Calcutta. In the first half of the twentieth century further expansion of steamer services took place.

Road Communication

With few exceptions, roads in the modern sense of the term did not exist in Bengal when the British took power. Some medieval monarchs had constructed certain roads, but these had been partially destroyed through disuse or by retreating armies and had become inaccessible to traffic.[8] Warren Hastings in 1785 undertook the proper repair and construction of the Grand Trunk Road from Calcutta to the North Western Frontier which had been surveyed and laid out by Sher Shah and the Moghul Emperors.[9] Military fair-weather roads had also been constructed for the use of armies on the march, but these were usually left uncared for as soon as their immediate purpose was met. The construction of roads obtained a new impetus under William Bentinck (1826-35;1839-49). Several roads of various kinds were built.[10] But they still proved inadequate. In the latter part of the nineteenth century, however, the development of road communications received the urgent attention of the government. The government introduced a road cess by the passage of the Road Cess Act in 1871 which provided for the collection, from the *raiyats*, of half an anna in a rupee of rent.[11] This stimulated the construction of new roads and the repair and the bridging of the old ones. The railway companies also built certain roads as feeders. Roads were constructed in Northern Western and Central Bengal. In Eastern Bengal the rivers completed with roads and hence no large some of money was spent on them.[12]

By 1901 there were 40,000 miles of roads in Bengal (including Bihar and Orissa).[13] In the period between 1901 and 1947 the road communication was further expanded. The roads thus constructed and repaired

[8]N. Sanyal, *Development of Indian Railways* (Calcutta: Calcutta University Press, 1930), p. 1.

[9]*Ibid.*, p. 3.

[10]*Ibid.*

[11]L.S.S. O'Malley, *Bengal District Gazetteers, Khulna* (Calcutta: Bengal Secretariat Book Depot, 1908), p. 150.

[12]*Moral and Material Progress Report, 1872-73*, p. 77.

[13]*Census of India (Bengal), 1901*, Vol. VI, Part I, p. 12.

were of three classes. There were first class roads which were raised, bridged and metalled with *kankar* or nodular limestone. Second class roads were raised and occasionally bridged but not metalled. There was a class of roads which were fair-weather tracks across the country on which light traffic could ply in the dry season.[14] This class of roads was maintained by local cess.[15] The roads were usually used as feeders to rail and waterways. Carts drawn by bullocks and buffaloes capable of carrying 7 or 8 cwt.[16] were the predominant means of carriage. The ordinary rate of freight by cart was from 2 to $2\frac{1}{2}$ annas per ton per mile.[17] There was, however, little overall improvement in road transport.

Railways

A wide range of interacting factors — social, political, strategic, commercial and economic — determined the actions of the government of India in the construction of Indian railways. Socially, the railways would help in the improvement of Indian conditions, the spread of western civilization and the elevation of a backward people.[18] Politically, they would increase the efficiency of internal administration and reduce military expenditure.[19] Economically and commercially, they would stimulate the production of Indian raw materials for British industry, would facilitate the transport of primary commodities for both internal and export markets[20] and would bring to the most distant markets of India articles of British manufacture.[21] Strategic reasons influenced the construction of some particular lines. There was apprehension about the potential Russian threat to the British Empire in India through Afghanistan, and this led to the construction of a line from Lahore to Peshwar to strengthen the defence of North-West Frontier.[22] To prevent local famines a few famine lines such as the Tirhut, Baroda and Patna-Gaya lines were constructed.[23] The pattern of the growth of railways shows that the need for particular commodities influenced the construction of particular lines and certain lines were built to fulfil certain definite commercial objects.

[14] *Famine Commission Report, 1880*, Part II, p. 99.

[15] *Moral and Material Progress Report, 1872-73*, p. 77.

[16] *Famine Commission Report, 1880*, Part II, p. 99.

[17] *Ibid.*

[18] W. J. Macpherson, "Investment in Indian Railways, 1845-1875", *Economic History Review*, Second Series, Vol. 8 (1955-56), p. 177.

[19] *Ibid.*, p. 179.

[20] *Ibid.*, p. 177.

[21] Sanyal, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

[22] Macpherson, *op. cit.*, p. 179.

[23] Sanyal, *op. cit.*, p. 113.

Cotton, for example, had an important influence on the construction of lines in Western India. For the transport of cotton to the port of Bombay, the Manchester and Glasgow Chambers of Commerce pressed for lines to link up the cotton regions of India, since they lacked the natural waterways which Bengal enjoyed. The secretary of state for India was floaded with petitions and memorials from Manchester and Glasgow, whilst their MPs took up the question in Parliament.[24] The result was the early construction of lines in the cotton regions of Western India. The Manchester and Glasgow cotton interests thus took the initiative in pressing the government to build the railways they needed. For the establishment of lines in the jute districts of Bengal, the Calcutta and Dundee jute interests might have been expected to have shown interest. However, we have no reference to any correspondence on this issue between the Dundee and Calcutta Jute Mills Associations and the Government. The silence of these associations about the construction of railways was probably due to the fact that there was no difficulty in the carriage of jute through river communication. Moreover, by 1880's, when jute trade reached its apogee, most of the jute districts were linked with Calcutta by rail.

We know of one instance of the government of Bengal showing an interest in the development of railways in the jute districts of Bengal. In 1873 the government of Bengal constituted a Jute Commission to enquire into the production of, and trade in, jute. One of the considerations in the appointment of the commission was that the "necessities of jute trade must have a very great influence on all our plans for roads, railways and canals."[25] But nothing specific was done for the implementation of the resolution after the publication of the commission's report. However, in 1870's the northern section and in 1880's the Dacca Section of the Eastern Bengal Railways were constructed. These lines ran through the major jute growing districts described in the commission's report. This was probably the reason why no action was taken to implement the government resolution.

Construction of Railways

The railway network established in British Bengal had six main systems — the East Indian System, the Eastern Bengal State Railway System,

[24]Macpherson, *op. cit.*, p. 184.

[25]Resolution of the Government of Bengal in the Agricultural Department, No. 1, Feb. 4, 1873, proposing to make equiry into the Production of, and Trade in, Jute. See H.C. Kerr, *Report on the Cultivation of, and Trade in, Jute in Bengal* (Calcutta: Bengal Secretariat Press, 1877), Appendix A, p. 1.

having five sections namely, Eastern, Southern, Central, Northern and Dacca, the Bengal-Nagpur Railway System, the Assam-Bengal Railway System, the Darjeeling-Himalayan Railway System and the Bengal-Duars Railway System.[26] Some lines were owned, and even worked by the State, and others were owned and run by private companies.

For the convenience of study the history of the development of railways has been divided into three periods — up to 1872, between 1872 and 1895 and between 1895 and 1947.

Railway Development upto 1872

In this period the construction of three main lines was undertaken — the Calcutta-Goalanda line, the Howrah-Delhi line and the Calcutta-Chittagong line through the *Sundarbans*. The Calcutta-Goalanda line, passing through the districts of 24 Paraganas and Nadia, was opened up to Jagati Junction, the Howrah-Delhi line, passing through the districts of Howrah, Hooghly and Burdwan, reached Sitarampur and the Calcutta-Chittagong line linked Calcutta with Port Canning. A loop line, passing through the districts of Burdwan and Birbhum, was constructed to connect Khana on the Howrah-Sitarampur line with Barharwa in Bihar.

Political objects are said to have initiated the opening of the main lines.[27] The Calcutta-Goalanda line was intended to connect Calcutta with Dacca and eventually Dacca with Akyab in Burma which was annexed in 1854; the Calcutta-Chittagong line aimed to establish quicker transit between Calcutta and Chittagong[28] and the Howrah-Delhi line to link Calcutta with Delhi. But commercial interests also played a part in the alignment of the lines. The Calcutta-Goalanda line would tap at Goalanda the traffic which went to Calcutta through the Ganges and the Jumna. The Calcutta-Chittagong line would have attracted the river traffic coming to Calcutta from the Eastern Bengal districts. But the pro-

[26]Information about the construction of railways in British Bengal has been taken from the *Administration Report on the Indian Railways for 1913-14*, Vol. II, Parliamentary Papers, 1915, Cd. 7656.

Note: In Bengal most of the major railway lines of the British period were built before 1914. Only a few lines were constructed between 1914 and 1947. Hence the *Administration Report on the Indian Railways for 1913-14* has been taken as the source for the development of railways in Bengal in the British period.

[27]Sanyal, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

[28]*Ibid.*, pp. 27-28.

ject for this line proved absurd, because it was impossible to construct and maintain numerous bridges and embankments, involving huge expenditure, in the *Sundarbans* area which abounded in rivers, channels and creeks. As a result the line was abandoned after Port Canning. In the west, after the construction of a Calcutta-Delhi line was decided upon, controversy arose over the question alignment — whether the line was to take the river route via Rajmahal, known as the commercial route, or the direct route known as the political.[29] Dalhousie advocated the direct route and the construction of the line between Howrah and Sitarampur was undertaken.[30] However, after the construction work had started, it was, after all, thought economic to adopt the river route along the Ganges, since this would divert to the railways the river traffic coming down to Calcutta through the Ganges and the Bhagirathi as well as serve the line's political purpose.

Railway Development Between 1872 and 1895

In the second period the character of railway building was different. from the first. Whilst in the first period the emphasis was on trunk lines, in the second more local and district lines were built. Thus the aims of the post-1872 railways were more economic and commercial than those of pre-1872.

In this period two extension and several main lines were constructed. The Calcutta-Goalanda line was extened upto Pachooria Junction. An extension line was built to connect Sonapur on the Calcutta-Port Canning line with Diamond Harbour on the Hooghly. A main line was opened through the districts of 24 Paraganas, Jessore and Khulna connecting Calcutta with the towns of Jessore and Khulna. Another main line was constructed through the districts of Pabna, Rajshahi, Bogra, Dinajpur, Rangpur and Jalpaiguri to connect Saraghat on the Ganges with Siliguri in Jalpaiguri. A third line connected Katihar in Bihar with Gauhati in Assam, passing through the districts of Dinajpur and Rangpur from the west to the east. It touched the towns of Dinajpur, Parbatipur and Rangpur. A line, too, was built linking Dacca and Mymensingh with Narayanganj.

The Darjeeling-Himalayan line connected Siliguri with Darjeeling Bazar. The Bengal-Duars line was opened on the right bank of the Tista

[29] *Ibid.*, p. 31.
[30] *Ibid.*

in the districts of Jalpaiguri and Rangpur. It met the Katihar-Gauhati line at Kaunia.

The extension lines were probably designed to tap water routes and divert traffic to existing lines. The Sonapur-Diamond Harbour line, for example, would divert river traffic to rail from Diamond Harbour. Steamers with cargoes from Eastern Bengal did no longer continue on to Calcutta but stopped at Diamond Harbour and shifted their cargoes to trains. The extension of the Calcutta-Goalanda line to Pachooria Junction was aimed at completing the line to Goalanda in order to intercept the Ganges-Jumna traffic.

The object of the opening of the new major lines appeared to be to penetrate the countryside with a view to opening new routes away from the major waterways and providing traffic to waterway-rail main routes. The Narayanganj-Mymensingh line would bring the traffic of Mymensingh and Dacca to Narayanganj to be carried by boats to Calcutta or to be transhipped to Goalanda to be conveyed to Calcutta by rail. The Calcutta-Jessore-Khulna line would bring traffic from Khulna and Jessore direct to Calcutta. The Saraghat-Siliguri line would convey the produce of Northern Bengal to Calcutta. The Siliguri Darjeeling and Bengal-Duars lines were built to open up the tea districts of Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri.

Railway Development between 1895 and 1947

In this period several lines, both main and extension, were constructed. A line to connect Bandel near Hooghly with Barharwa, passing through the districts of Hooghly, Burdwan and Murshidabad, was opened. Calcutta was finally connected with Goalanda. An extension line from Pachooria Junction to the town of Faridpur was constructed. A line was built to connect Ranaghat on the Calcutta-Goalanda line with Lalgolaghat on the upper reaches of the Ganges, passing through the districts of Nadia and Murshidabad. A light railway to connect Jessore with Jhenidah was also constructed. A loop line was opened to connect Santahar on the Saraghat-Siliguri line with Kaunia on the Katihar-Gauhati line. It passed through the districts of Bogra and Rangpur. A line to connect Katihar with Godagarighat on the Ganges, opposite Lalgolaghat, passing through the district of Malda, was built. The Mymensingh-Narayanganj line was extended to Singhjani. From Singhjani two branch lines to Bahadurabadghat on the Brahmaputra and Jagannathganjghat on the Jumuna were constructed. The Assam Bengal railway built a line which, passing through the districts of Chittagong, Tippera and Noakhali, connected Chittagong Port with Chittagong and Laksham and Laksham with Akhaura, Chandpur and Noakhali. This line linked Assam with Eastern Bengal. The Bengal-Nagpur Railway constructed two lines in Bengal. The one, passing through the district of Midnapore, connected

Howrah with Sini. The other, passing through the districts of Midnapore and Bankura, connected Cuttack with Bhojudih.

The Kaunia-Santahar line was constructed probably to open a more direct route between the tea districts of Assam where cultivation was fast developing and Calcutta, as well as to serve as a feeder to the main line. The Assam-Bengal line was opened for the same purpose, i.e., to convey the traffic from Assam to Chandpur for transporting to Calcutta by steamer and rail or to Chittagong for direct export abroad. In the west the Ranaghat-Katihar and the Bandel-Barharwa lines were opened to tap the commerce of the rest of the Ganges plains. In the jute districts of Eastern Bengal a few feeder lines such as the Singhjani-Bahadurabadghat and Singhjani-Jagannathganjghat lines were built. These two lines were later to serve as connecting lines with Northern and Southern Bengal respectively.

Between 1914 and 1947 a few branch lines were constructed. A line was built from Bonarpara on the Santahar-Kaunia line to Fulchharighat, opposite Bahadurabadghat. It connected North Bengal with Dacca. Another line was opened from Ishurdi on the Saraghat-Siliguri line to Sirajganjghat on the Jumna. It was connected with the line of Jagannathganjghat by steamer services. This line connected Southern Bengal with Dacca and Eastern Bengal with Calcutta. A third line was built between Abdulpur on the Saraghat-Siliguri line and Amnura. It passed through the districts of Rajshahi and Malda. From Amnura two branch lines were opened, one connecting Amnura with Chapai Nawabganj and the other Amnura with Rohanpur. To connect Khulna with Bagherhat the Rupsa-Bagherhat line was constructed. Another branch line was opened to connect Dinajpur with Panchagarh.

By 1947 Bengal had about 3,000 miles of railroad.[31] The railway network connected all the districts of Bengal except Backarganj and Chittagong Hill Tracts with Calcutta. At the same time, with the above two exceptions, it connected one district with another.

Thus during British rule canals were dug, a part of river transport mechanized, roads repaired, constructed and bridged and railways built. In a word, the transport and communications system was modernized. The system of transport and communications as developed by the British stimulated the production of primary commodities, brought foreign manufactured articles to the doors of the villagers, acted as a stimulant for the development of trade and commerce, improved law and order, reduced chances of famines and facilitated the spread of western civilization.

[31]In 1914 Bengal had 2,722 miles of railroad. This figure has been compiled from the *Administration Report on the Indian Railways for 1913-14*, Vol. II. Between 1914 and 1947 a few lines were constructed. Thus it may be safely assumed that the total mileage of Bengal's railroad in 1947 would be about 3,000.

The Bengali Muslim Press and Education of the Muslim Women of Bengal 1900-1940

M. Nurul Quaiyum

Islam made it obligatory upon Muslims to acquire knowledge as a necessary condition to their being true believers in God and Islam. Acquisition of knowledge was as great a duty of woman as of man, for Islam wanted the womenfolk to develop their rational faculties along with their physical ones.[1] With the advent of Islam, the culture and education of the women proceeded along with that of the men and 'the education of women actually attained a very high standard.'[2] During the Abbasid regime, girls and young women used to attend the educational institutions frequently.[3] It s wellknown fact that many Muslim women became famous poetesses and rhetoricians. They were in many cases equal to or even better than contemporary men.[4]

But the Islamic traditions and the law of Islamic jurisprudence were seldom remembered by the religious and social leaders of the Muslim community of 19th century Bengal in dealing about women's affairs and even in the early twentieth century, the position of women in Bengali Muslim society was hopelessly miserable. The declining condition of the Muslims in the early nineteenth century kept them away from the new streams of western education which intensified the backwardness of the community and widened the gulf between the Hindus and the Muslims in the field of education and progress. The Muslims of Bengal, like the Muslims of the rest of India, had been suffering from decadence, ignorance, frustrations and were trammelled by the yokes of immobile customs and

[1]See Muhammad Qutb, *Islam the Misunderstood Religion*, Dacca, 1969, p. 136.

[2]James Hastings (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, vol. V, Edinburgh, 1912, p. 205. Also see Ameer Ali, *The Spirit of Islam*, London, 1955, pp. 393-399.

[3]A.S. Tritton, *Materials on Muslim Education in the Middle Ages*, London, 1957, p. 140.

[4]Ahmad Shalaby, *History of Muslim Education*, Beirut, 1954, pp. 194-195.

prejudices based on misinterpreted religious injunctions. As is usual in most backward societies, the worst sufferers from all social ills of the Muslim communities were the weak women.[5]

The awakening that took place in Bengal in the nineteenth century as a consequence of the emergence of the new economic environment, the establishment of the new political system and the spread of modern western education and ideologies among the people found expression in the movement for the liberation of the Indian women from the medieval forms of social subordination and suppression from which they suffered for countless centuries.[6] As a result, we find that in Hindu society great figures like Raja Rammohun Roy and Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar in the nineteenth century felt sympathetic to and spoke for the women of their society. Rammohun Roy defended the legal rights of women and pleaded for their right to education and enlightenment. 'The woman of India', it is said, 'have found no greater defender of their rights than Raja Rammohun Roy.'[7] Vidyasagar, working in an official capacity as Inspector of Schools, established over forty girls schools between 1855 and 1858.[8]

But the ill fated Muslim society of the nineteenth century had not a single man like Rammohun Roy or Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar who fought or even thought for the female education of his own community. Nawab Abdul Latif founded Mohammedan Literary Society in 1836 with the aim of making the Muslims conscious about the need for spread of western education.[9] While he was reading a paper to the Bengal Social Science Association in 1868, a discussion took place on his article which reflected the attitude of the Muslims towards female education. Mr. Parichand Mitra (1814-1883), a noted Derozian,[10] who was present

[5]Shahanara Husain, 'Karimunnesa Khanam Chaudhurani, a notable Bengali Muslim Lady in the Nineteetnth Century', *Rajshahi University Studies*, 1978-1979, pp. 78-79.

[6]A.R. Desai, *Social background of Indian Nationalism*, Bombay, 1966, p. 273.

[7]Pandit Sivanath Shastri, 'Rammohun Roy: The story of his life' in Amal Home (ed.), *Rammohun Roy, the Man and his Work*, Calcutta, 1933, p. 19

[8]See Mrs. H. Gray, 'The Progress of Women' in L.S.S. O' Malley (ed.), *Modern India and the West*, Oxford, 1968, p. 456.

[9]See Enamul Huque, *Nawab Bahadur Abdul Latif; His Writings and Related Documents*, Dacca, 1968, p. 79.

[10]The Young Bengal Movement owed its origin to one of the most remarkable personalities of the nineteenth century—Henry Louis Vivian Derozio (1809-1831) an Eurosian free thinker and a teacher of Hindu College. His followers were known as Derozians who were inspired and excited by a spirit of free thought and revolt against the existing social and religious structure of Hindu Society. See Nemai Sadhan Bose, *Indian Awakening and Bengal*, Calcutta, 1976, pp. 69-91.

at the meeting wanted to know if the Muslims were trying to spread education among their women like the Hindus. In response, a notable Muslim, named Maulavi Abdul Hakim of Calcutta Madrassah told in Urdu that there was no necessity to educate the girls separately. With the education of the male, he added, female education would also be advanced. Therefore, it was useless to send Muslim girls to schools like those of other creeds as there was allegedly religious instructions with regard to keeping the girls under seclusion.[11]

It is not surprising, therefore, that while in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, there was quite a number of educated girls among the Hindus and numerous Hindu girls received elementary education in reading and writing at the Schools founded in and around Calcutta under auspices of Calcutta Female Juvenile Society, Ladies Society, the Ladies Association and the Serampore Mission,[12] the Muslims were making little or no efforts for the spread of female education in their society.

Christian missionaries of Serampore opened girls school in 1816-17 which is the first instance of girls school in the history of Bengal.[13] Between 1830 and 1857, they conducted a number of elementary vernacular and English schools both for boys and girls in different places of Bengal.[14] The Hindu society which opened itself to western ideas and influence began to send their boys as well as girls to the Christian schools.[15] But the Muslims, who regarded the introduction of modern education as 'a step towards conversion to Christianity',[16] could hardly think to send their daughters to missionary schools. Moreover it was considered 'highly improper' in some places of Bengal to bestow literary education on women and 'no man would marry a girl who was known to be capable of reading', because it was believed that 'no man will live long who has a wife who knows too much.'[17]

[11]Kazi Abdul Odud, *Banglar Jagaran*, Calcutta, 1956, pp. 121-122.

[12]About the functions of female Juvenile Society, Ladies Society, the Ladies Association and the Serampore Mission, see chapters II, III, IV and V respectively in J.C. Bagal, *Women's Education in Eastern India*, Calcutta, 1956.

[13]Sunil Kumar Chattapadhyay, *Banglar Nabajagarane William Carey O Tar Parijan*, Calcutta, 1974, pp. 21-22.

[14]M. Mohar Ali, *The Bengali Reaction to Christian Missionary Activities*, 1833-1857, Chittagong, 1965, p. 68.

[15]*Ibid.*, p. 72.

[16]Abdul Karim, *Muhammadan Education in Bengal*, Calcutta, 1900, p. 3.

[17]J.A. Vas, *Eastern Bengal and Assam District Gazetters: Rangpur*, Allahabad, 1911, p. 135.

Paucity of Muslim female students in educational institutions of Bengal in 1901-02 can be noticed in the following table:

TABLE I

Showing pupils in secondary schools for girls in East Bengal and Assam according to race or religion during 1901-02.

Race or Religion	Secondary English		Secondary Vernacular	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Hindus	108	44.1	615	83.9
Mohammadans	—	—	26	3.6
Native Christians Europeans and Eurasians	117	47.8	88	12.2
Others	20	8.1	4	.5
	245	100	733	100

Source: *Report on the Progress of Education in Eastern Bengal and Assam During the years 1901-02 — 1906-07*, vol. II, Shillong, 1906, p. 60.

In the report on the Administration of Bengal, 1884-85, it was stated that 'good progress was made in the development of education for girls.'[18] It was further said that girls schools increased from 1,785 to 2,309 and the girls under instruction, including those taught in boys schools increased from 64,883 to 75,770.[19] But all these progress of female education was made by the communities other than the Muslims. As the Report on Public Instruction of Bengal for 1909-1910 mentioned: 'The number of Muhammadan girls at school forms as yet a very insignificant part of the female population of school going age, being only 25,061 out of a total of 6,76,631.'[20] Writing on the progress of education in Bengal during 1907-08 to 1911-12, one Government officer mentioned: 'There are only 67 Muhammadan girls in secondary schools and only one in every 62 Muhammadan is attending a primary or secondary school against 1 in every 27 Hindu girls.'[21]

[18] *Report on the Administration of Bengal, 1884-85*, Calcutta, 1886, p. 38.

[19] *Ibid.*

[20] *Report on Public Instruction in Bengal for 1909-10*, Calcutta, 1910, p. 47.

[21] M. Prothero, *Progress of Education in Bengal 1907-08 to 1911-12. Fourth Quinquennial Review*, Calcutta, 1913, p. 122.

There were a few girls schools designed specially for Muslims, but the quality of teaching in those schools was extremely poor.[22] The schools were badly attended and the majority of the children in them were 'not taught beyond the standard of the infant section.'[23] We come to know from a Government record that not a single female student from the Muslim community attended in the medical colleges of Bengal during the year 1911-1912[24] and only 67 Muslim girls attended in non-European secondary schools against 3,269 Hindu girls and 2,371 Christian girls.[25] Progress of education among the Muslim females of Bengal from 1911 to 1931 in comparison with the females of other religious sects was quite unsatisfactory, as has been shown in the following table:

TABLE II

Showing number of literate per 1000 females of the same religion aged 5 and over in successive census years

Religion	1911	1921	1931
Parsi	851	893	584
Jew	712	709	680
Sikh	95	172	244
Christian	467	425	384
Jain	122	201	199
Hindu	23	36	49
Muslim	3	6	17

Source: *Census of India, 1931*, vol. V, Part I, Calcutta, 1933, p. 324.

[22]W.W. Hornell, *Progress of Education in Bengal 1902-03 to 1906-07. Third Quinquennial Review*, Calcutta, 1907, p. 128.

[23]*Ibid.*

[24]*Supplement to the Progress of Education in Bengal, 1907-08 to 1911-12. Fourth Quinquennial Review*, Calcutta, 1914, p. 39.

[25]*Ibid.*, p. 38.

Even Muslim women's backwardness in education in comparison with Muslim men can be observed in the following table:

TABLE III

Showing the number of literate males and females of Muslim Society in 1891 in each district per 10,000 of the population.

District	Literate Muslim Males	Literate Muslim Females
Rangpur	413	3
Dinajpur	847	7
Bogra	652	3
Pabna	391	3
Malda	405	3
Rajshahi	414	3
Jalpaiguri	760	18

Source: *Census of India, 1891*, vol. III, Calcutta, 1893, p. 223.

According to the census report of 1891, the total number of Muslim women in Bengal was 96,72,181 out of which only 8,406 could read and write. On the otherhand, the number of literate men in Muslim Society was 5,45,053 out of the 99,05,300 Muslim male population in Bengal.[26]

It was Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain (1880-1932)[27] who kindled the fire of education among her fellow women and became the pioneer of the Muslim women's emancipation. Her famous achievement was the establishment of the Sakhawat Memorial Girls School at Bhagalpur in 1909, later on shifted to Calcutta in 1911. From that time onwards, Rokeya devoted her full energy to the management and development of her school. In 1915 this school became a high primary school, in 1917 it advanced to a middle English School and in 1930 it turned into the

[26] *Census of India, 1891*, Vol. IV, Caccutta, 1893, p. 268.

[27] For details of Rokeya's life, see Begum Shamsunnahar Mahmud, *Rokeya Jivani*, Calcutta, 1937 and for Rokeya's contributions in the field of Bengali Muslim women's education, see Shahanara Husain, 'Begum Rokeya Sakhawat Husain and the Education of the Bengali Muslim women' in S.A. Akanda (ed.), *Studies in Modern Bengal*, Rajshahi, 1981.

first girls high school for Muslim women in Bengal. As a writer, as an educationist, and as a social worker she devoted her whole adult life to the cause of women.

The Bengali Muslim press also profoundly understood the necessity of female education and for the progress and advancement of Muslim community, called for giving women modern education. Through countless articles, essays and editorials, the journals, periodicals and newspapers bitterly criticised the conservatives who were against female education and explained why women ought to be educated. The following section will prove the earnest desires and sincere efforts of the Bengali Muslim press to the cause of the female education.

Explaining the need of female education, *Basana* wrote in 1908: 'Women is like soil and education is like fertilizer. Unless fertilizer is added to the soil, it remains barren and only grass and weeds grow on it. So the hearts of women remain barren in the absence of education. No learned or successful offspring grows from it and it remains a place for superstitions and sins.'[28] About the benefits of female education as reaped by Brahmo women, it was said in *Basana:* 'Brahmo community is prospering day after day as a result of the spread of female education among them. Due to the influence of western education the Brahmo women are now devoid of all superstition and idolatry.'[29] *Basana,* at the same time wrote about the ill effects of ignorance on rural Muslim women: 'Now most of the rural Muslim women of Bengal, who are illiterate, are fond of superstitions. They pay no heed to good advice or logical arguments. Until their hearts are illuminated by education, they would cling to those tituals, habits and customs.'[30]

Nabanur published an article of Begum Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain in 1906 where arguments were given in favour of female education: 'Men always say that women are inferior in intelligence. That is why women think themselves of possessing no merit and are gradually becoming discouraged. If a sane man is called insane, he really becomes so. Are women really lack in intelligence ? No, they are the early queens of talent.[31]

[28]'Stri Siksha', *Basana,* 1st part, 6th no., *Ashwin,* 1315 B.S. (1908), p. 101.

[29]*Ibid.,* p. 102. The first Indians to take an active interest in women's education were not unnaturally the most Europeanized communities in India — the Brahmo Samaj in Bengal and the Parsis in Bombay. See H. Gray, *op. cit.,* p. 456.

[30]*Ibid.,* p. 103.

[31]Mrs. R. S. Hossain, 'Asha Jyoti', *Nabanur,* 4th yr., 2nd no., *Jaistha,* 1313 B. S. (1906), p. 76.

Quoting the examination results of Bombay Schools where Muslim girls showed better performance than the Muslim boys, she said that when given a chance they displayed their superiority or atleast equality.[32] Explaining the necessity of female education in the interest of social progress, Rokeya said that it was impossible to prosper with half the society paralysed. In calling upon the women to cross obstacles and seek education, she further said: 'If it is believed that education is the way to spiritual salvation, the faithful will come forward to remove thorns from the path.'[33]

Satyagrahi also published a speech of Begum Rokeya in which she complained that although Islam had stopped the physical murder of daughters, yet the Muslims of India were imperturbably and truly killing the minds, brains and intelligence of their daughters. To keep the daughters inside the four walls and away from knowledge and conscience were considered by many to be a sign of aristocracy. Even the guardians of many girls used to write letters to the teachers asking that their girls should be taught a little Urdu and Arabic and nothing else particularly not English.[34] *Satyagrahi* asked: 'How would a nation who keeps half of its population in imprisonment by ignorance and seclusion, compete in the struggle for existence with those who give their women equal opportunity for education ?[35] It called upon the Bengali Muslims to pay attention to their daughter's education and wrote : 'They should spend some of the money they spend on ornaments and dowry, on education and health of their daughters.'[36]

Hedayat laid emphasis on education for women side by side with education for men in the interest of progress and advancement of the Muslim community. 'We need massive and intense movement for female education. Hope everyone will, in the name of *Allah* and his Prophet, come forward and do his best for the spread of female education.'[37]

Gunabati Patrika mentioned with sadness about the backwardness of Muslim women in education: 'The other pillar of Society, the women

[32]*Ibid.*

[33]*Ibid.*, p. 103.

[34]Mrs. R.S. Hossain, 'Abhibhasan', *Satyagrahi*, 27th *Saban*, 1345 A.H. (1926), p. 492.

[35]*Ibid.*

[36]*Ibid.*, p. 493.

[37]M. Serajul Huque Miah, 'Stri Siksha O Jatia Unnati', *Hedayat*, 1st yr., 5th no., *Jaistha*, 1343 B. S. (1936), p. 95.

are living in darkness of ignorance and superstition and inside inner appartments for ever. The intellectuals of the society are showing little interest about their education. Our society is still not recognising that female education is just as or even more important than education for men.'[38] Explaining the need for female education, the paper commented that the causes of high death rate of pregnant women were the ignorance and superstition of Muslim women. It commented: 'For the salvation of the country and the progress of the community we would have to spread the movement for female education in every nook and corner of the country.'[39]

Narrating the necessity of female education, another paper wrote: 'Women constitute one half of the society. So the Muslim society should know that if women are kept away from education, one part of the society would be crippled.'[40] Calling for unrestricted female education, it said: 'Today we need extension of female education. Its necessity should be preached in villages. Their closed doors should be knocked on. If they get the right education the interests of religion, country and nation would be properly served rather than neglected.'[41]

Al Islah published an article on Muslim Society and Female education which was written by a school mistress. It was stated there that the boys and girls of an educated mother would naturally become educated. 'So female education is essential in order to elevate the society'—it commented.[42] *Al-Islah* appealed to the influential people and educated women of every village to engage themselves in removing illiteracy from villages. 'Unless the leaders of the society join in the great task, there is little hope of women's progress'—it commented.[43]

Sadhana felt the necessity of female education for the upliftment of society: 'Men and women are the two limbs of the society. They would not be able to do anything without each other's co-operation. So if men are educated and keep the women illiterate, there would be brittleness in their (men's) progress which would ultimately lead the society towards decline. On the otherhand if the women are educated and allowed to

[38]Shah Serajul Huque, 'Nari Siksha', *Gunabati Patrika*, 4th yr., Tuesday, 1st August, 1939, p. 4.

[39]*Ibid.*, pp. 3-4.

[40]Miss Marium Khatun, 'Narir Siksha O Adhaikar, *Mohammadi*, Eid Edition, 4th *Paush*, 1342 B.S. (1935), p. 23.

[41]*Ibid.*

[42]Mosammat Meher Angez Khatun Chaudhuri, 'Musalman Samaj O Nari Siksha', *Al Islah*, 2nd yr., 2nd no., *Jaistha*, 1341 B.S. (1934), p. 41.

[43]*Ibid.*

depend on their sense of judgement or given freedom, then they will ease the pressure they had been hitherto exerting on us and will truly be our help mates in our struggle for existance.'[44] *Sadhana* blamed the lack of female education for the 'high infant mortality rate' and said in conclusion: 'It must be admitted that if we are to maintain our existance and keep the highway of life sublime, it is essential to take proper steps for education of women.'[45]

Raoshan Hedayet commented that unless women were given proper education and the condition of their community improved, national advancement was impossible. In an article on 'Female Education and National Progress' it was said: 'Just as bird can not fly on only one wing, a bullock cart can not move on only one wheel, so men alone can not be successful in their attempts to prosper without co-operation from women.'[46] Criticising the prevailing Bengali Muslim society, it said: 'A nation which until now could not realize that unless the mothers are learned, intelligent and educated, progress is only a far away dream and it is even silly,[47] to think about the advancement of this nation. *Raoshan Hedayet* urged to establish girls schools in all villages and localities because it thought that 'the national life would not be properly organised without educated and brave mothers.'[48]

In another issue of *Raoshan Hedayet* the necessity of female education was discussed in the following words: 'The Muslim community is inexorably sliding downwards, one of the main reasons being the absence of female education. Muslim women are becoming cripples and worthless due to want of education. Yet it is universally known that peace and happiness of men rest with women.'[49] *Raoshan Hedayet* tried to make the society conscious about how the illiterate Muslim women cook in un-hygienic conditions due to ignorance, how she brings up children in an unscientific manner, how she goes to the dens of the *Pirs* and does indecent things and how she becomes responsible for breach of peace in the family in a host of other ways.[50]

[44]Sri Khirod Kumar Das, 'Stri Siksha O Stri Swadhinata' *Sadhana*, 2nd yr., 11th no., *Falgun*, 1327 B.S. (1921), p. 428.

[45]*Ibid.*, p. 429.

[46]M. Serajul Huque Miah, 'Stri Siksha O Jatiya Unnati,' *Raoshan Hedayet*, 2nd yr., 6th no, *Chaitra*, 1332 B.S. (1926), p. 108.

[47]*Ibid.*

[48]*Ibid.*, p. 110.

[49]Mawlana Moezuddin Hamidi, 'Samaje Stri Sikshar Abashyakata', *Ibid.*, 2nd yr., 9th no., *Asharh*, 1333 B.S. (1926), p. 176.

[50]*Ibid.*, 2nd yr., 10th no., *Shraban*, 1333 B.S. (1926), pp. 194-196.

Shariate Eslam wrote: 'There is tremendous eagerness for awakening throughout the world in the present age. No nation appears to be apathetic or inactive. All are turning their eyes towards modern education and learning. The awakening of women and female education have begun simultaneously. The paper further stated that the right of men and women on education and civilization were equal. It said that both were created by Allah and both had souls given by Him. Both had conscience and could be seekers of knowledge. Therefore, Islam has made education compulsory for both men and women.'[51]

Jagaran published an article in which a strong appeal was made for Muslim female education: 'Islam did not ask women to remain confined; it asked them to seek knowledge. If the minds and souls of women are illuminated by the light of knowledge, they would never do anything for which they might be ashamed to face their conscience.'[52]

Explaining the necessity of female education, *Moajjin* stated that women 'in order to assert her rights and take those over entirely from men, would have to glorify themselves through education. Otherwise, they would have to spend their lives in the same darkness in which they are now immersed.'[53]

About the necessity of educated mothers *Moajjin* said: 'The father may be honest, but lessons given by him can not be as effective and permanent as those given by mother. Moreover, the father can not always stay near the child. So the characters of the children become similar to those of their mothers. Many people have become famous in the world as a result of the teachings they have received from their mothers'[54] *Moajjin* further stated that just as an educated mother could give her children proper upbringing, an illiterate and ignorant mother could only give her children a bad upbringing and a dark future. *Moajjin* went so far as to say: 'Bengali mothers are at the root of Bengali's downfall. It is simply madness to try to improve the condition of Bengali Muslims without educating the mothers.'[55]

[51]S. Farhad, 'Nari Shakti', *Shariat-e-Eslam*, 9th yr., 9th no., *Ashwin*, 1341 B.S. (1934), p. 202.

[52]Miss Fazilatun Nesa, 'Muslim Narir Jagaran', *Jagaran*, 1st yr., 1st no., *Baishakh*, 1355 B.S. (1928), p. 22.

[53]Rizia Begum Rashida, 'Islam O Nari', *Moajjin*, 1st yr., 3rd no., *Kartik*, 1335 B.S. (1928), p. 145.

[54]Mohammad Abdur Rashid, 'Griha Siksha O Musalman Balak' *Ibid.*, 1st yr., 2nd no, *Shraban*, 1335 B.S. (1928), p. 63.

[55]*Ibid.*, p. 64.

Krishak called on the educated women to spread the light of education among the illiterate women: 'In Bengal, out of a hundred women, three are educated. The duty of this three women is to educate the remaining ninety seven. Women who are educated have a responsibility in their spare time to educate the illiterate women living next door. If everyone does her duty in this manner, our sufferings may be over.'[56]

Moslem Darpan also explained the necessity of female education and called on the Muslims not to close their eyes any more to this matter. 'The welfare of the society depends on women; so unless they are educated, the society would not awaken. Brother Muslims ! make arrangements for their education by establishing girls schools and night schools in villages and localities.'[57] The women were told: 'Sisters, you should leave your slumber, lethergy and laziness and notice that the Muslim community is becoming weak and tumbling behind other communities. Sisters ! we appeal to you in the name of Allah to make an effort to learn.'[58]

Sikha laid special emphasis on women's education: 'Unless women are educated men remain crippled. That is exactly what has happened to us. We are cripples. To-day all our women are uneducated. So we are affected by the curse of degradation.'[59] *Sikha* mentioned the progress made by Muslim women in Turkey, Egypt and other countries and said: 'It is a matter of great regret that the Muslim women of India are grossly lagging behind their counterparts of other countries.'[60] The paper held the 'narrow minded *Mullas* responsible for entirely forsaking female education in the name of religion and called upon them to change their outlook.'[61]

Another magazine wrote: 'Everyone ought to understand that girls like boys should be educated. It is entirely wrong to think that with education women will become unfit for family duties as wives or mothers. On the contrary, education will elevate their hearts and make their minds holy and beautiful. They will be good mother to their children and will be able to teach their children properly ... They will be able to do household work more nicely. A taste of literature and fine arts would

[56]Professor Shamsunnahar Mahmud, 'Meyeder Siksha, Sasthya O Jibanjatra', *Krishak* Eid ul Fitr edition, 1347 B.S. (1940), p. 46.

[57]Seikh Nurul Huque, 'Stri Siksha', *Moslem Darpan*, 3rd yr., 4th no., April, 1927, p. 147.

[58]*Ibid.*

[59]'Sadharan Sabhapatir Abhibhasan', *Sikha*, 3rd yr., 1929, p. 9.

[60]*Ibid.*

[61]*Ibid.*

make their ideals lofty and noble. They will be perfect companions for men everywhere.'[62]

Shariate Eslam mentioned the unjustifiable fear of people particularly of rural areas regarding female education. It said that the rural Muslims used to think that when girls would receive education, they would leave homes thereby creating scandals. The paper commented that such ideas were responsible for the downfall of the society. It said: 'We appeal to all our countrymen to give proper education to their wives and daughters. Female education is obligatory for social uplift. Its absence is degrading us.[63]

Tablig wrote about the necessity of educating women: 'Just as it is essential for men to be educated in order to make human community of earth glorious, so it is essential for women to get themselves educated for making family life full of pleasantness.'[64]

Saogat perceived that without the spread of education among Muslim women it was impossible to change their fate. Hence it launched massive campaign to awaken the society[65] and to kindle the light of education. Miss Fazilatun Nesa,[66] the first Muslim woman who secured highest position in University education, elaborately described the necessity of women's education in an article in 1334 B.S. (1927 A.D.). The life of a person, said the writer, could not blossom fully without education and liberty. 'We want that type of education which will broaden our mind removing superstition and narrowness and which will give us the power to distinguish between right and wrong. In short what we desire is the harmonious development of all our faculties: mental, physical and moral.'[67]

[62]Sri Makhan Gangapadhyay, 'Bharater Nari', *Bangiya Musalman Sahitya Patrika*, 3rd yr., 4th no., *Magh*, 1327 B.S. (1920-21) p. 310.

[63]Mir A ftabuddin Ahmed, 'Nari Samajer Durabastha', *Shariate Eslam*, 4th yr., 2nd no., *Falgun*, 1335 B.S. (1929), p. 34.

[64]Muhammad R. Mahbub, 'Nari Swadhinata O Parda', *Tablig*, 1st yr., 11th no., *Chaitra*, 1334 B.S. (1928), p. 209.

[65]*Saogat* played a very prominent role for the awakening of the Bengali Muslim women. See M. Nurul Quaiyum, 'The Role of the Sawgat in the Emancipation of Bengali Muslim Women During Early Twentieth century', *Rajshahi University Studies*, vol. IX-IX, 1978-1979, pp. 69-88.

[66]*Saogat* published a brief life sketch of Miss Fazilatun Nesa as one of the pioneers of female education in Muslim Society. *Saogat* appreciated the outlook of Mr. Wahed Ali Khan, her father regarding female education. See Editorial, *Saogat*, 5th yr., 6th no., *Agrahayan*, 1334 B.S. (1927), p. 540.

[67]Miss Fazilatun Nesa, Muslim Nari Shikshar Prayajaniyata', *Saogat*, 5th yr., 6th no., *Agrahayan*, 1334 B.S. (1927), pp. 524-525.

Of course, controversy occurred over the nature of female education. Some people feared that if women were given the same education and equal rights as men then the family life would be at stake. They also argued that the natural functions of men and women were different as the structure of their body shows. Of course, they supported education for girls upto a certain limit so that they might be able to provide their children a good teaching while staying at the house under the guidance of their husbands.[68]

But other writers of *Saogat* tried to prove that though the women were physically weaker than the men they were not so much incapable as the people of our country thought. Citing the example of the world's famous women literates, scientists, politicians and workers of different fields, one writer argued that the women of our country could also prove their ability if they could have proper education.[69] *Saogat* also strongly argued that it was not a reasonable assumption that the women after having education would be licentious. Rather it commented: 'We would have to remember that until our women advance in the path of education, our national welfare would only be a dream.'[70]

In this way Bengali Muslim journals and periodicals encouraged the Bengali Muslim society to impart education to their women. The journalists used to publish illlustrated accounts of women's awakening and progress in the contemporary world and made a fervent call for the emancipation of Bengali Muslim women. Gradually the conservative attitude of the Bengali Muslim society towards women changed and progressive journalism of Muslim Bengal enthusiastically hailed such change. A paper noticed in 1940 the increasing eagerness of Bengali women for education and expressed satisfaction as 'women in this country have learnt to understand the dignity of education. There is no doubt that education is spreading fast among women. This is a very auspicious sign. Any civilized country can take pride in such things.'[71]

[68]M. Wazed Ali,'Stri Shiksha', *Ibid.*, 5th yr., 12th no., *Jaistha*, 1335 B.S. (1928), pp. 979-983.

[69]Taheruddin Ahmed, 'Stri Shiksha', *Ibid*, 5th yr., 5th no., *Kartik* 1334 B.S. (1927), pp. 451-454.

[70]Mosammat M. Khatun, 'Stri Shiksha Samasya', *Ibid.*, 6th yr., 7th no., *Magh*, 1335 B.S. (1929), B. S (1929) p. 523.

[71]Professor Shamsunnahar Mahmud, 'Meyeder Siksha, Sasthya O Jibanjatra', *Krishak*, Eid ul Fitr edition, 1347 B.S. (1940), p. 45.

The Emergence of Bangladesh: Issues, Forces and Personalities

Syed Humayun

The Six Point Formula, as presented by Sheikh Mujib in 1966, was the logical outcome of the Bengali regional demands which had been articulated against the central political system ever since independence. It had boldly expressed the common urge of the Bengalis to preserve their distinctive socio-cultural, economic and political interests within the body-politic of Pakistan. Infact the Bengalis' urge for preserving their separate identity, within a loose federal set-up, was inherent in the territorial structure of Pakistan in so far as the two wings of the country were separated from each other by more than a thousand miles of hostile territory and its two peoples, despite having a common realigion and a common history of freedom struggle, were dissimilar in their attitudes, aspirations and, in their lifestyles. These differences, further accentuated by economic imbalances and political suspicions and distrusts, reached such a stage that the viability of Pakistan as a nation was itself seriously threatened. It is a sad commentary on United Pakistan's history that the power elites[1] who incidentally always belonged to the West Wing never tried sincerely to preserve the unity and solidarity of Pakistan, although they had always loudly talked about national unity, integrity and Islamic Ideology. For the power-elites the ideal had been to maintain the existing centralized political structure which had adequately protected their vested interests. Any system to be designed on the basis of the Six Point Formula which would have challenged the status quo was not to be tolerated by the power elites. They had a stake in preserving the unity of the nation as long as it was advantageous to their

[1]The term has been used in broader sense to cover the whole spectrum of elites such as politicians, bureaucrats, militarymen, industrialists, big businessmen, feudal lords, tribal chiefs, prominent journalists, lawyers and ulemas who influenced directly or indirectly the decision making process of the government. For the role played by the elites, see C.W. Mills, *The Power Elite* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956), and Seymour Martin Lipset and Aldo Solari (ed.), *Elites in Latin America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967); T. B. Bottomore, *Elites and Society* (London: C.A. Watts and Company), 1964.

vested interests. Otherwise they were ready even to sacrifice this unity.[2] The irony of the situation was that while the Bengalis really wanted independence in March 1971 and the West Pakistani power elites were also disgusted with their co-existence with the Bengalis, the country was still faced with the tragic happenings of 1971. The tragedy was largely due to, as a Bengali writer observes, 'the policy of racio-colonial obtrusiveness of the West Pakistani ruling elites.'[3] The ruling elite's treatment of the Bengalis as inferior, or as Ayub Khan prefers to call them, "down-trodden-race" and not offering them opportunities to participate in national affairs as equal partners was destined to result in Bengali regionalism or sub-nationalism. This regionalism or sub-nationalism in course of time became a full-fledged movement for achieving 'right of self-determination' for the Bengalis.

The first spark of Bengali-regionalism was found in 1948 when the central ruling elites declared their intention to make Urdu the State Language of Pakistan. This very issue not only struck at the cultural pride of the emotional Bengalis but it had strong socio-economic and political overtones. The issue thus appeared as a life and death question to the Bengalis. No wonder the ruling elite's move was looked upon by the Bengalis as a conspiracy to establish the perpetual domination of West Pakistanis over them. The continued neglect and apathy of the central ruling elites towards Bengali language, added more to their frustrations and discontents. The disgusted Bengalis, for the first time, became aware that independence, after all, was not the final stage in their pursuit of freedom and prosperity.

This was the fatal mistake that the central ruling elites committed at the initial stage. They sought unity by ignoring diversities. What they could not foresee was that unity could not be imposed. The language

[2]A Bengali MNA complained before the National Assembly in early sixties, "Today in the 16th year, when we have been reduced as pauper to build West Pakistan, we are told get out you, we have nothing for you. We do not require you." See National Assembly of Pakistan, *Debates*, No. 2, May 29, 1963), p. 83. When faced with the Six Point Movement in mid sixties, Ayub Khan also observed that there were discernible indications that West Pakistan was becoming weary of East Pakistan's constantly reiterated complaints, grievances and insinuations. See *Dawn*, August 22, 1966. At the height of 1971 Crisis Asghar Khan, a West Pakistani Tehrik-e-Istaklal leader made the following remarks, "It was most unfortunate to hear voice in this wing (West Wing) saying that if East Pakistan was to go ultimately, it should go as early as possible." *The Pakistan Observer*, Dacca, March 14, 1971.

[3]See Moudud Ahmed, *Bangladesh: Constitutional Quest for Autonomy 1950-71* (Dacca: University Press Limited, 1979), p. 263.

controversy continued to poison the Bengali mind until it reached a climax in 1952 which ultimately forced the ruling elites to recognise Bengali as one of the state languages. The immediate crisis was averted but the seed of distrust and suspicion sowed at that time could never be uprooted. The language crisis also made the Bengalis conscious about their relative position in political and economic set-up of the country. In short, the demand of provincial autonomy which the Six Point Formula championed in an extreme form, had its root in the language crisis.

The demand for provincial autonomy, first raised in the Grand National Convention at Dacca, in 1950, gradually became popular in the Eastern Wing. The landslide victory of the United Front and the complete rout of the Muslim League in the Election of East Bengal Legislative Assembly in 1954 established the popularity of the demand. The demand was constantly raised in the first and second Constituent Assemblies of Pakistan. These were the symptoms of the disease — the disease being the danger of disingtegration of Pakistan. The disease, thus required a sound cure to prevent it from becoming fatal. The short-sighted ruling elites, instead, prescribed wrong medicines. The autonomists were branded as unpatriotic and traitorous and hence treated as anti-state elements.

The most unfortunate development during this period was the clash of interests between the Punjabi-haves and the Bengali have-nots. The Bengalis became painfully aware that inspite of their numerical majority, the real power in Pakistan was exercised by the Punjabis because of their virtual control over the civil and military establishments. The dismissal of Khawaja Nazimuddin, a Bengali Prime Minister, and the dissolution of the First Pakistan Constitueht Assembly, where the Bengalis had played a dominating role, were looked upon as Punjabi conspiracy[4] to establish their supremacy. The mutual distrust and suspicion which emerged between these two ethnic groups in the initial stages pervaded upto the last days of United Pakistan. In a way the East-West conflict was largely a problem to accommodate the divergent claims and counter claims of the Punjabis and the Bengalis. Such conflicts were not confined to political sphere alone but were quite discernible even in the fields of civil and military establishments which were traditionally regarded as above political bickerings. Bengali officers were often found loudly protesting against the behaviour of their counterparts from the Punjab. It

[4]According to Herbert Feldman, a well-known observer of Pakistani politics, "The man who probably laid the foundations for the demise of the old Pakistan was the late Ghulam Mohammad, (A Punjabi bureaucrat) a former Governor General." Herbert Feldman, *The End and the Beginning: Pakistan 1969-1971*, (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1976), p. 7.

was also due to this Bengali-Punjabi antagonism that constitution making in Pakistan was delayed for eight long years for it was difficult to reconcile their divergent view-points. While the 1956 Constitution had been regarded as a 'compromise formula' between the Bengali autonomists and centralists representing Punjabi views, it still could not solve the East-West problem to the satisfaction of the Bengalis. The 1956 structure, however, began to show some signs of improvement in East-West relations under Suhrawardy, a Bengali Prime Minister. A number of measures were undertaken by his government to rectify the past misdeeds done towards East Wing. Had he remained in power for a few more years, regionalism in East Wing would have lost much of its vigour. Unfortunately, he also became a victim of the intrigues of the West Pakistani power elites.

All these unfortunate events had increased the resentment of the Bengalis against the Central Government. Their resentment gained more credence, especially when they found that every institution of the Central Government was dominated by West Pakistanis, and thus the complex of second-class citizens developed among them.

A general election was scheduled to be held in the beginning of 1959. The Bengali leaders regarded Parliamentary Democracy a means not only for asserting their numerical majority, but also for establishing their claims for a greater share in the government of the country. They were thus hopefully looking to the future with the expectation that working of Parliamentary Democracy might after all give them a chance to come to power to counter-balance the domineering influences of the civil-military bureaucracy. But to their utter disappointment, a long reign of West Pakistani 'military-cum-bureaucratic despotism' followed. Ayub Khan's political system, contrary to the Bengali sentiment, concentrated all the powers to himself and the Central Government which virtually excluded Bengalis from the decision-making process. A tremendous socio-economic change also took place during his time but all the benefits of such development were enjoyed by West Wing. Ayub Khan, it appears, failed to maintain the delicate balance between state-building and nation-building activities.[5] Indeed he overemphasized state-building at the cost of nation-building. He thought that by the instrument of economic development and a powerful centralized machinery, he would be able to pull the different groups, and more particularly the two regions together

[5]See Joseph R. Strayer, "The Historical Experience of National-building in Europe" and Karl J. Friedrich, "National-building" ; chapters 1 and 2 respectively, in Karl W. Deutsch and William J. Foltz (ed.), *National-building* (New York: Atherton Press, 1963).

for a constructive national purpose. But his scheme had boomering effects in so far as it not only heightened the have and have-nots' conflict but widened the gulf further between the two wings by increasing the levels of disparities in every sphere of life. The Bengalis under Ayub Khan's system continued to find themselves exploited by power elites of West Wing. Their discontentments against Ayub Khan's centralized-authoritarianism were expressed in the form of constant 'hartals' (strikes), processions and demonstrations. By this time, a powerful middle-class ready to act as an agent of change also appeared in East Wing. A new generation of Bengali youth, ignorant of the sacrifices that were associated with the partition, and more secular in outlook, also started to assert themselves in the political spheres. The Bengali political leaders, and the intelligentsia, being deprived of any share in the administration of the country, were already dissatisfied. The situation thus took ultra-regional turn in outlook and behaviour. The defenceless position of East Wing during the 1965-War added more fuel to the regional sentiments. In fact it was this War which more than anything else convinced the Bengalis that East Wing should be self-sufficient in every respect. The Six Point Formula however, expressed that sentiment in an extreme form. It demanded provincial autonomy that in fact amounted to the establishment of a confederal set-up for Pakistan.

In the beginning Ayub Khan could not correctly assess the actual strength of the Awami League and the popular impact of the Six Point Formula. He mistook the Awami League as an aberration — a handmaid of few adventurist politicians and demagogues. When he realised that Sheikh Mujib's policy was signalling grave dangers, he instead of restraining the policy, arrested Sheikh Mujib. In other words, he chose to apply what he called the 'language of weapons' and not the 'weapon of languages'. His attitude towards Bengali demands seemed to be guided by the notion that the Bengalis were agitators and hence there was no need to pay any heed to their demands. On the other hand a ruthless policy of persecution and repression was let loose which virtually turned the situation into a colonial conflict. The Bengalis began to consider the Central Government as an alien power imposed on them by force. They became painfully aware that East Wing was being treated as nothing better than a colony of West Wing. All these sentiments gave credence to the cause that the Awami League had been championing so long. A general feeling developed that East Wing's interest could no longer be safeguarded under the Central Government. The Bengalis discontentment against centralized authoritarianism reached its zenith during the Ayub Khan era. It was thus Ayub Khan, who, by alienating the

Bengalis from any genuine political participation[6] laid the foundation for the break-up of Pakistan.[7] No wonder the Bengalis revolted against Ayub Khan's system. It was a revolt not only against Ayub Khan but also against the central authority which had been acting as an agent of West Pakistani vested interests. The Movement against Ayub Khan was spearheaded by the students in the Eastern Wing and there was a clear indication that the Movement was leading towards independence of East Wing. On his release from jail, on February 22, 1969, Sheikh Mujib found the political atmosphere very much to his favour. His bitter experience in Ayub Khan's jail also taught him that there was no point in living in a United Pakistan. His real work for a confederal scheme for Pakistan thus began. He, however, wanted to achieve his goal of 'Sonar Bangla' through constitutional and gradual process. The landslide victory of the Awami League in the Elections convinced him about his ultimate victory. But the ruling elites, now strengthened by the emerging force of Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party stood as a barrier to his scheme. The West Pakistani elites were perhaps right that Sheikh Mujib's scheme would ultimately lead to the separation of East Wing. But what they could not foresee was the fact that the unity of Pakistan could not be preserved this time at the expense of the Bengalis. In other words if the West Pakistani power elites were not ready to accommodate the Bengali interests, then there was no alternative to Bengali independence. It is true that the election verdict for the Awami League was not for independence but for provincial autonomy. However, it would not be wrong to say that had there been an election or referendum on the issue of 'independence' in March, 1971 in East Wing, the results would have been the same. For the Awami League had earned the confidence of almost every Bengali, from intellectuals down to men in the street. Had the Awami League been afforded an opportunity to come to power, the circumstances could have changed, and thus led to better results. As an eminent observer of Pakistani politics comments:

> "Even the most pessimistic observer would have said under the Six Points the union would have lingered for several years, and an optimist might have predicted that such a union might have flowered into a stable consociational system and an example for other pluralist societies."[8]

[6]At the end of his political career, Ayub Khan, however, acknowledged that under his system, the Bengalis lacked political participation. See Ayub Khan broadcast to the Nation, February 21, 1969. *The Pakistan Times* (Lahore), February 22, 1969.

[7]See Herbert Feldman, *op. cit.*, p. 2; K.B. Sayeed, *Politics in Pakistan: The Nature and Direction of Change* (New York: Praeger, 1980), p. 63; G.W. Choudhury, *The Last Days of United Pakistan* (London: C. Hurst and Company, 1974), p. 43.

[8]K.B. Sayeed, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

But such a course was clearly not to the liking of Bhutto who wanted immediate power. As a shrewd and intelligent politician, he could easily perceive the future course of events in East Wing. He, therefore, seemed to have concluded that if East Wing was 'to separate one day, why not today' and in that way only he could come to power in West Wing. Being the most intelligent among the three actors in 1971 political drama, he played his role cautiously and intelligently. His presentation of two-majorities party thesis was nothing but his desire to assume immediate power. Hence, though throughout the crisis he talked about preserving national unity between the two wings, his actions, in effect, went a long way in accelerating the process of disintegration of Pakistan. His fault was that he sacrificed the nation at the altar of his personal lust for power. He diagnosed that the patient was in the last stage of tuberculosis,[9] but his role seemed to be, as a doctor in the operation theatre to withdraw the oxygen masks from the patient in coma, so that the latter might die immediately. Otherwise his ambition would have remained unfulfilled.

Sheikh Mujib's fault was that he had miserably failed to act with foresight and wisdom during the 1971 Crisis. With a little bit of patience, prudence and statesmanship, he could have easily achieved his goal in due course of time. Unfortunately, he took a very rigid posture throughout the Crisis which stood as a barrier to solve the Crisis in a 'spirit of give and take'. He perhaps thought that even the political situation with Bengali nationalism at its height, this was the right moment to get all the Bengali demands accepted by the West Pakistani power elites. If the opportunity was missed, then the golden opportunity would be missed for ever. While the victory was so near, Sheikh Mujib, thus, could not opt for compromise, and unnecessarily plunged himself in uncertain future. He was aware of his mediocre calibre, and given the Bengali political character of betrayal and West Pakistani ruling elites political intrigues it was quite possible that if he had opted for a compromise, the trump-cards might have passed from his hands. Furthermore Sheikh Mujib also believed that the ruling military junta would not dare to resort to military option for it was difficult to subdue the whole mass of awakened Bengalis. In his opinion, the ruling junta had no alternative but to agree to his terms. He was sure that if the ruling junta opted for a military solution, then that would be the end of United Pakistan. A hard fact of 1971 Crisis was that Sheikh Mujib did not take any initiative to steer the ship to reach its destination. This was true both in respect of safeguarding the unity of Pakistan or creation of Bangladesh. On the other hand, he allowed the events to take their natural course. A close friend

[9]Z.A. Bhutto, *The Great Tragedy* (Karachi: A People's Party Publication, 1971), p. 9.

of Sheikh Mujib observes, "... he left the events to lead him rather than himself leading the events."[10] As usual he thus preferred to be 'the prisoner of circumstances' rather than 'master of circumstances'.

Moreover, in the ultimate analysis, it was Yahya Khan and his confidants among the army generals who were the main culprits of the great tragedy that had befallen Pakistan in 1971. It was Pakistan's misfortune that at such a crucial period of her history she had the most incompetent,[11] corrupt,[12] foolish,[13] and mad[14] person at the helm of state affairs. The ruling junta was so blind that it, as Hasnain Haykal puts it 'could not see beyond its feet.'[15] The decision of the ruling junta to thrust upon the people of Eastern Wing a military solution of a

[10]Moudud Ahmed, *op. cit.*, p. 260.

[11]According to a London paper, Yahya Khan's handling first of the separatist crisis in East Wing and then of the War itself has been outstandingly incompetent. *The Listener*, London, January 6, 1972.

[12]Fazal Muqeem Khan, a retired Pakistani Major-General writes about Yahya Khan, "A number of important decisions were taken after sunset, particularly during 1971, when the President could not function during the day after long nights, which gradually became a daily routine. Commenting on this decision-making process, a Lieut-Colonel working in the HQ CMLA had remarked, 'It is disgusting to note that important decisions affecting the destiny of the nation are being taken in that careless and perfunctory manner." Fazal Muqeem Khan, *Pakistan's Crisis in Leadership* (Islamabad: National Book Foundation, 1973), p. 28. It is also said that when Dacca was about to fall, Mr. Nurul Amin, the then designate Prime Minister, being worried about the situation, went to see Yahya Khan and found the latter and the Chief of Staff, Hamid drinking and enjoying. When asked, Yahya Khan said, "We are helpless, yet war will continue." See Nurul Amin's interview in *Zindagi*, a weekly from Lahore 24-30 January, 1972. Also quoted in Safdar Mahmood, *The Deliberate Debacle* (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1976), p. 197.

[13]See his offensively belligerent remarks about Mrs. Indira Gandhi as "That woman can't cow me" or his offensive reply to a super power like the USSR, *Dawn*, April 6, 1971.

[14]Even when the country had been dismembered and the War was still on, he like Nero of Rome, was seen busy giving the final touch to such a constitutional scheme which was no longer applicable for the existing situation. No wonder, the very day when the outlines of the new Constitution were going to be announced, he was ousted from power. See Herbert Feldman, *op. cit.*, pp. 186-189. For detail of Yahya Khan's constitutional proposal, also see Appendix-H.

[15]See Muhammad Hasnain Haykal, "The General who was defeated" in his weekly *Frankly Speaking*, articles in Arabic, *MENA*, Cairo, April 19, 1973. Also quoted in G.W. Choudhury, *op. cit.*, p. 193.

problem that was basically a political one, was bound to destroy the very fabric of Pakistan. And that happened on December 16, 1971 when the Eastern Wing seceded from Pakistan and became an independent state namely Bangladesh. Here, we are, however, not ignoring the heinous intervention of India in Pakistan's internal affairs which ultimately brought about the dismemberment of Pakistan. But it would be honest to say that India got this opportunity due to the follies and errors committed by Yahya Khan. Thus Yahya Khan's short-sighted policies were mainly responsible for the immediate disintegration of Pakistan.[16] We may end with S.M. Burke's observation:

> 'In truth if West Pakistanis really wished their union with East Pakistan to endure, they should have woken up to realities much earlier and pursued utterly different political and economic policies from the very inception of Pakistan."[17]

[16] It is sad to note that the very demands which Yahya Khan refused to accept in March 1971, were, however, conceded by the end of the year (see Appendix-H).

[17] Burke, *Pakistan's Foreign Policy : A Historical Analysis* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 401.

The Ershad Regime: Problems and Prospects of Stability in Bangladesh

Abul Fazl Huq

Bangladesh achieved independence in December, 1971 through a bloody war of national liberation. In about three and a half years of civilian rule of the Awami League (AL) led by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujiburf Rahman (Mujib), the state power was seized by the military in August, 1975. General Ziaur Rahman (Zia), who eventually emerged as the leader of the military regime, 'civilianised' his government and lifted Martial Law in April 1979. In about two years of 'civil restoration' Zia was killed in an abortive military coup in May, 1981 and his Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) was overthrown in March, 1982 through another coup led by General H.M. Ershad. General Ershad has been in power for long seven years, but his regime is yet to offer a reasonable assurance of stability. The objectives of this paper are to study the working of the Ershad regime and analyse the problems of political stability in Bangldesh.[1]

A general consensus about the fundamentals of the polity is generally considered to be the basic condition for a stable political system. But there is no precise list of questions on which consensus is necessary. Lipset stressed on the acceptance of the legitimacy of the system and its effectiveness, an accord on the issue of "entry into politics", and a common "secular political culture" as the necessary conditions of stability.[2]

[1]As suggested in Scott, by political stability we mean not merely the continuity of a government for a long period of time or for a full term but the persistence of certain institutional arrangements over time and the growth of a routine and predictable procedure of change. See Roger Scott (ed.), *The Politics of New States* (London, 1970), p. 44.

[2]Seymour Martin Lipset, *Political Man* (New Delhi, 1973), Chapter III.

Huntington as stressed the need of institutionalised participation and for that matter a wide agreement on the methods of resolving conflicts regarding the allocation of office and determination of policy.[3] Sidney Verba has suggested that a political system requires a political culture that is characterised by a general agreement about national identity, horizontal relations among the citizens, the level of governmental output and the process of decision-making.[4] More recently, Binder and others have identified five crises, namely legitimacy, national identity, political participation, penetration and distribution as the major sources of conflict and disorder that plague the developing countries with instability.[5] From these suggessions made by writers on the politics of developing areas, we may deduce four major problem areas—legitimacy, national identity, political participation and governmental output or effectiveness—in which consensus is necessary for an orderly and stable political system.

Legitimacy mainly refers to the sentiments of the people towards the nature of authority to which political obligation is owed. It means the general acceptance of the rulers as well as of the constitution as just and proper for the society.[6] If a substantial portion of the population, particularly that section of the people which is politically concerned, does not regard the government and the constitutional order as just and a appropriate, peaceful competition for power and orderly change may not be possible.

National identity generally refers to the sentiments of nationalism and the feelings of the people about their membership in the polity.[7] It requires that the individuals who are physically and legally members of a political system also psychologically belong to that system. Not only the members should owe allegiance to the political unit, called the nation-state, they should also agree about the definition and basis of national entity. In addition to the verticall identification with the nation, the members of a political system should have horizontal identification with each other. It is this sense of identity that makes it possible for

[3]Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Order in a Changing Society* (London, 1968), p. 196.

[4]Sidney Verba, "Comparative Political Culture," in L.W. Pye and Sidney Verba (eds.), *Political Culture and Political Development* (Princeton, 1965), pp. 529-543.

[5]Leonard Binder *et. al.*, *Crises and Sequences in Political Development* (Princeton, 1971).

[6]L.W. Pye, "The Legitimacy Crisis," in Binder *et. al.*, *op. cit.* pp. 136-137.

[7]L.W. Pye, "Identity and Political Culture," in Binder *et. al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 110.

a people to work togather in seeking collective goals and facilitates the task of mobilising commitment to new political institutions. The lack of political identity increases the likelihood of agressive behaviour resulting in political chaos and destabilisation.

Political participation refers to any voluntary action, including verbal action, intended to influence the choice of public policies, the administration of public affairs or the choice of political leaders at any level of government.[8] It is the nature of response of the governing elites to the demands of various aspiring groups for participation that largely influences the working of a political system. When the individuals and groups seeking participation are denied adequate opportunities within the system, they are likely to adopt violent means for winning influence and power.

Effectiveness refers to the degree of actual performance of the government. Governmental output should be satisfying enough to evoke and retain the loyalty of most of the population and powerful groups. Governmental output involves primarily economic development.[9] But increase in the national wealth is not enough; distribution must also be equitable. Effectiveness also involves penetrative and regulative capabilities of the government for maintaining peaceful living conditions and securing the life and property of the citizens, and this depends upon the creation of viable institutions and the extent of mutual trust and cooperation among them. Conspicuous coflict between and within the dominant party, civil bureaucracy and military reduces the effectiveness of the government.

The Problem of Legitimacy

The problem of legitimacy arises where a change (governmental or constitutional) occurs through extra-constitutional or arbitrary means. From the very inception of Bangladesh, the countries politics has been characterised by violent changes. The legitimacy of the rulers as well as the constitution has been challenged over and again, and the rulers have sought to gain legitimacy through referendum or election.

The AL came into power in 1971 through an armed nationalist struggle and formulated a constitution in 1972 through a one-party Constituent Assembly. The Constitution provided for a liberal parliamentary system proclaiming Bengali nationalism, socialism, democracy and secu-

[8]Myron Weiner, "Political Participation," in Binder *et. al., op. cit.*, p. 164.

[9]Lipset, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

larism as the four Fundamental Principles of State Policy.[10] Challenged by the opposition, the AL sought and gained legitimacy for itself and the constitution through the general elections le March, 1973. But the failure of the AL to fulfill the expectations of the peopole generated through the 1971 Liberation War and the arbitrary switch over to the one-party presidential system in January, 1975 weakened the legitimacy of the rulers and the system itself. The coups of August and November, 1975 and the constitutional changes promulgated by General Zia through Martial Law orders complicated further the legitimacy problem.[11] General Zia held a national referendum in May, 1977, a presidential election in June 1978, and a parliamentary election in February, 1979. Notwithstanding allegations of rigging, the opposition parties apparently accepted the results and participated in the parliamentary process, thus putting a stamp of legitimacy on the Zia regime. But the major opposition parties refused to accept the existing constitution as just and legitimate.[12]

Vice-President Justice Abdus Sattar succeeded Zia as the President of Bangladesh, and the presidential election of 1981 affiirmed the succession. But the overthrow of Justice Sattar by General Ershad in March, 1982 created a fresh problem of governmental legitimacy in addition to the persisting problem of constitutional legitimacy. Like most military rulers, Ershad pursued a policy of gradual 'civilianisation' and held a number of elections to legitimise his regime.

General Ershad sought to retain the presidential system as left by Zia and hold the presidential election first to establish his personal legitimacy. But the opposition parties were not prepared to participate in any election under Martial Law. A 15-party alliance, led by the AL, demanded

[10]See Abul Fazl Huq, "Constitution-Making in Bangladesh," *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 46, No. 3, Spring 1973.

[11]General Zia came to power through a military uprising on 7 November, 1975. He abolished the one-party system but retained the presidential authoritarianism as introduced by the Fourth Amendment in January, 1975. He also omitted secularism, redefined socialism and redesignated the nation as Bangladeshi. For details, see Abul Fazl Huq, "Constitutional Development in Bangladesh", *The Journal of the Institute of Bangladesh Studies*, Vol. VI, 1982-83.

[12]For a detailed analysis of the legitimisation process of the Mujib and Zia regime, see Abul Fazl Huq, "The Problem of Legitimacy and Elections in Bangladesh," *The Journal of Social Studies*, No. 41, July 1988.

the withdrawal of Martial Law and transfer of power to a "sovereign parliament" on the basis of the Constitution as adopted in 1972. A 7-party alliance, led by the BNP, also demanded the withdrawal of Martial Law but insisted upon the revival of the constitution as suspended in March, 1982. Thus, the major political parties were united against the Martial Law Administration of General Ershad. But they differed as to the form of constitution. However, in September, 1983, the two alliances agreed on a 5-point programme as the basis of anti-Martial Law movement. The programme included (i) immediate withdrawal of Martial Law; (ii) restoration of fundamental rights ; (iii) holding of election to the parliament before any other election and transfer of power to the elected "sovereign parliament" which would decide on all national issues including the constitutional issue; (iv) release of all political prisoners; and (v) holding of inquiry into the killing of students in the 1983, mid-February anti-government demonstration.[13] The Jamaat-i-Islami (the strongest fundamentalist Islamic party) also raised the demand for lifting of Martial Law and holding of election to a "sovereign parliament" first under the supervision of an impartial care-taker government.

The Referendum, 1985

In an effort to persuade the opposition parties to participate in elections, General Ershad accepted the demand for holding elections to the parliament first and promised to lift Martial Law during the first session of the elected parliament. But the opposition parties persisted in their demand for immediate withdrawal of Martial Law and holding of election under an impartial government. On the other hand, General Ershad was not prepared to relinquish his power and withdraw the Martial Law before elections. So he held a referendum on 21 March, 1985 under severe restrictions of Martial Law, seeking mandate for his continuation as the president until the next presidential election.

Opposition parties attempted to foil the referendum but failed. According to official records, 72.14 per cent of the voters cast their votes, of whom 94.14 per cent voted "yes".[14] But it was widely believed that a very small portion of the voters went to the polling centres and, in the absence of freedom of speech and propaganda, the referendum added very little to the legitimacy of the Ershad regime.

[13] *Bichitra* (Dhaka Weekly), 28 October, 1983.

[14] Bangladesh Election Commission, Dhaka.

The Parliamentary Election, 1986

Successful competition of the referendum encouraged Ershad to go ahead with his 'civilianisation' scheme. Meanwhile he had been able to create a political base and a party of his own, named Jatyiya Party. On 2 March, 1986 it was announced that the parliamentary election would be held in the last week of April, 1986. But the opposition alliances and parties persisted in their demand for the withdrawal of Martial Law and called for a general strike on 22 March, the date fixed for filing nomination papers for parliamentary elections. On the other side, the government seemed to be determined to hold election by any means. General Ershad, in an address to the nation on 21 March, 1986, warned the opposition parties that all anti-election activities would be banned with effect from the morning of 22 March should they fail to give a categorical declaration about their participation in the election. The major section of the 15-party alliance, including the AL, and the Jamaat-i-Islami posthaste decided in favour of participation. But the 7-party alliance and the five left parties of the 15-party alliance (which later formed a separate 5-party alliance) boycotted the election.

The date of filing nomination papers was extended and that of polling was shifted from 26 April to 7 May, 1986. Twenty-eight political parties contested in the election. The 15-party alliance, which was virtually reduced to eight parties, fought combinedly. It made the "end of military rule" as the sole issue in the election and pledged for the establishment of an exploitation-free society on the basis of the 1972 constitution. Although the Jamaat i-Islami favoured a kind of parliamentary government, it was against the restoration of the 1972 constitution as such because of its secular and socialist orientation and wanted to establish an Islamic society. On the other hand, the government-sponsored Jatiya Party wanted to revive the constitution as suspended in March, 1982 with its presidential near-authoritarianism. But General Ershad, who campaigned for the Jatiya Party, side-tracked the constitutional issue and asked the support of the people for his "politics of peace, production and development".[15]

According to the Election Commission, about 60 per cent (highest ever in Bangladesh) of the voters exercised their franchise. But it is generally believed that the percentage of votes cast was between 10 and

[15]See the speeches of Sheikh Hasina, leader of the 15-party alliance, and General Ershad, *Sangbad*, 23-30 April and 1-5 May, 1986.

15. While the Jatiya Party was officially reported to have polled about 42 per cent of the valid votes, the 8-party alliance polled 31 per cent and the Jamaat-i-Islami polled about five per cent. The 300 general seats of the parliament were distributed as follows: Jatiya Party 153, the 8-party alliance 97, Jamaat-i-Islami 10, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD-Rob) 4, Muslim League 4, and independents 32.

Local and foreign observers reported large-scale terrorisation, forcible occupation of polling booths, hijaching of ballot boxes and bogus voting, and held the government party mainly responsible for those unfair means. A 3-member British observer team invited by the AL-backed "People's Commission' described the election as a "tragedy for democracy".[16]

Sheikh Hasina, the AL president, observed that rigging was too small a word to describe the 1986 parliamentary election — this was a "dacoity of votes". She furhter contended that the election was a "media coup"— the Jatiya Party candidates were unduly declared winners through the government owned media.[17]

The first session of the new parliament was held on 10-22 July, 1986. The 8-party alliance, Jamaat-i-Islami and independent members of parliament boycotted the session, declaring that they would not join the parliament until the Martial Law was withdrawn. On the other hand, General Ershad decided to hold the presidential election under the cover of Martial Law to establish his personal legitimacy.

The Presidential Election, 1986

The presidential election was held on 15 October, 1986 and General Ershad contested in it as the nominee of the Jatiya Party. Major opposition parties boycotted the election. There were 12 candidates. Of them, four were retired army officers, and almost all were politically unknown. The election appeared to be an "arranged game". The candidates did not speak against each other. Rather, they brought about charges of anarchy against the anti-election parties.

According to the official counts, 54.09 per cent of the registered voters cast their votes, and General Ershad obtained 84.09 per cent of the valid votes.[18] But the opposition parties described the election as "another farce" and contended that less than three per cent of the voters

[16]*Asia Week*, Vol. 12, No. 20 (18 May, 1986), p. 24.

[17]See *Sangbad*, (Dhaka Daily), 8 May; *Ekata* (Dhaka Weekly), 9 May, and *Bichitra*, 16 May, 1986.

[18]Bangladesh Election Commission, Dhaka.

participated in it.

In fact, a country-wide general strike was observed on the polling day at the call of the opposition parties, and a very small number of voters were found in the polling centres. There were also wide-spread allegations of rigging. According to a BBC correspondent, ballot papers were marked beforehand in favour of General Ershad.[19]

After the election, a brief one-day session of the parliament was held on 10 November, 1986 in which the Constitution Seventh Amendment Bill validating all acts of the Martial Law regime of General Ershad was passed by 223-0 votes with the support of some opposition and independent MP's. Major parliamentary groups belonging to the 8-party alliance and the Jamaat-i-Islami boycotted the session. Immediately after the enactment of the Seventh Amendment, the Martial Law was withdrawn and the constitution as suspended in March, 1982 was revived.

The 8-party alliance and the Jamaat-i-Islami paticipated in the parliament after the withdrawal of Martial Law, but this did not mean that they accepted the Ershad regime as legitimate. Sheikh Hasina contended that in the parliamentary election voters had given their verdict in favour of the 8-party alliance and she declared that the alliance would fight against the regime from both within and outside the parliament. The 7-party and 5-party alliances refused to accept the legitimacy of the parliament as well as the president. All major opposition parties, and intellectual, student and occupational groups persisted in demanding the resignation of president Ershad and holding of fresh elections under a neutral caretaker government.

The Parliamentary Election, 1988

The anti-Ershad movement in the form of demonstration, General strike, and gherao launched simultaneously by the 8-party, 7-party and 5-party alliances and the Jamaat-i-Islami took a violent turn since 10 November, 1986 when the opposition attempted to "seize" Dhaka and paralyse the administration to force the resignation of the government.

In the face of increasing violence, the government declared a state of emergency throughout Bangladesh on 27 November, 1987 prohibiting political activities and suspending the fundemental rights. The president also dissolved the parliament on 6 December, 1987 and called for a fresh parliamentary election to be held on 3 March, 1988. But the main

[19] *Sangbad*, 11 April, 1988.

opposition parties refused to participate in it, as they apprehended the election under Ershad would not be free and fair.

Only two factions of the JSD (one headed by Abdur Rob and the other by Sajahan Seraj), which worked as loyal opposition in the previous parliament, were the known political parties that contested in the election with the Jatiya Party. The total number of candidates was only 981 as against 1089 in the 1973, 2125 in the 1979 and 1527 in the 1986 parliamentary polls. All kinds of anti-election activities were prohibited and many opposition leaders and political workers were arrested under emergency rules. On the other hand, the opposition alliances and parties called for a general strike on 2 and 3 March and a boycott of polls. During the election campaign, the government and the loyal opposition blamed the anti-election parties for creating anarchy in the country and spent their energy to defend the March 3 election as a lawful means of ascertaining public support.[20] Thus, participation in the election itself appeared to be the real issue in that election. According to official results, Jatiya Party bagged 251 of the 300 seats in the parliament, and the remaining 49 seats were distributed as follows: Combined Opposition Party (COP)19,[21] JSD (Seraj) 3, Freedom Party 2 and independents 25.[22] The percentage of votes cast and votes polled by contesting parties are yet to be published. It is however generally believed that very few of the voters went to the polling centres to cast their votes.

Thus, the parliamentary election of 1988 failed to serve as a measure for ascertaining popular support for the regime. Sheikh Hasina, Khaleda Zia and other opposition leaders dismissed the election as a fraud. They claimed that the people, in response to their call, had abstained from voting, and persisted in their demand for the resignation of the "illegimate" Ershad government.

[20]See Jatiya Party, *Nirbachani Isteher* (Election Manifesto) 1988 ; Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (Rob), *Nirbachani Isteher*, 1988.

[21]The COP was formed by Abdur Rob of the JSD on 2 January, 1988 presumably with the blessings of General Erhsad. It consisted of 76 small factions, and a very few of them were known to the public. It nominated 272 candidates, most of whom belonged to the JSD (Rob).

[22]*Sangbad*, 11 April, 1988.

The Eighth Amendment

While the personal legitimacy of the rulers remained in question, the adoption of the Eighth Amendment on 7 June, 1988 complicated the problem of legitimacy of the Constitution. Genetal Ershad sought to retain the presidential system and Bangladeshi nationalism as left by Zia but did not make the constitution any issue in the parliamentary or presidential election. But immediately after the parliamentary election of March, 1988, he began to stress the need for a state religion, and the Fourth Parliament, in its first session, enacted the Eighth Amendment to the constitution declaring Islam as the state religion of Bangladesh. Another important feature of the Eighth Amendment was its provision for decentralising the judiciary by establishing permanent benches of the High Court Division of the Supreme Court at six different places of the country.

While the government leaders argued that Islam was made the state religion to show respect to the sentiments of the Muslim majority in Bangladesh and strenghthen national unity and independence by giving a distinct (Islamic) identity to the nation,[23] major opposition alliances and parties challenged the authority of the parliament, elected in a "voterless election", to make any change in the constitution. They rejected the Eighth Amendment as illegal and, a country-wide general strike was observed on 12 June, 1988 at the call of the three opposition alliances demanding its repeal.[24] Even the loyal opposition in the parliament crititicised the Eighth Amendment as a hoax and staged a walk-out to protest its passage. The lawyers, who considered the provision for the establishment of permanent benches outside Dhaka as a device to curb the independence of the judiciary by breaking the High Court into pieces, boycotted the courts for several days to force the government to repeal the amendment. Even the Jamaat-i-Islami considered the Eighth Amendment as inadequate since the Quran and the Sunnah were not declared to be the sources of all laws, though it did not join the general strike called by the opposition alliances. Only a few small political factions

[23]See the speeches of Prime Minister Maudud, Ahmed and President Ershad in *The New Nation* (Dhaka Daily), 8 and 9 June 1988

[24]For a detailed explanation of the "Bangalee" and "Bangladeshi" nationalism and analysis of the identity problem during the Mujib and Zia regime, see Abul Fazl Huq, "The Problem of National Identity in Bangladesh," *The Journal of Social Studies*, No. 24, March 1984.

and social organisations of lesser political consequences publicly hailed the provision of state religion. Thus, the adoption of the Eighth Amendment only served to sharpen the controversies about the Constitution.

The Problem of Identity

The Constitution of 1972 designated the nation as "Bangalee" and described the identity of language and culture as the basis of "Bangalee" nationalism. Thus it recognised the political and geographic separation of Bangladesh from the Bengali-speaking Indian of West Bengal but accepted the entire treasure of Bengali language and culture as a part of its own heritage. But the Islamic parties and a section of pro-Chinese leftists who opposed the 1971 Liberation War refused to accept the "Bangalee" identity and did not recognised Bangladesh as an independent nation. In an effort to forge a broad-based national unity, Zia propounded a new "Bangladeshi" nationalism intermingling the linguistic sentiments of the secular nationalists and the religious sentiments of Islamic rightists and emphasising cultural separation between the Bengalis of Bangladesh and those of India. But this could not satisfy any of the groups.

Secular nationalist forces and the religious minorities (particularly the largest Hindu minority group), strongly attached to the Bengali language, culture and traditions, were not prepared to give up the "Bangalee" identity. The Islamic rightists and the pro-Peking leftists appreciated "Bangladeshi" nationalism in-so-far as it highlighted separation from the Indian Bengalis, but they refused to accept the ideology of "Bangladeshi" nationalism. While the Islamic groups persisted in their demand for the acceptance of Islamic ideolgoy as the sole basis of national identity, the leftists advocated communist internationalism rather than territorial, linguistic or religious nationalism.

General Ershad initially did not make any effort to create a separate doctrinal base for his regime. Rather, he accepted "Bangladeshi" nationalism, as propounded by Zia, as one of the fundamental ideals of his party and government, but pursued the policy of Islamisation more vigorously than Zia to extend his support base among the Islamic rightists. He would frequently visit the important mosques of the City and elsewhere on Fridays to offer his Jumma prayer, address the *Musallis* (gathering for prayer) reminding the practice of early Caliphs of Islam, and express his determination to establish Islamic values in all walks of life. But he could not make any sizeable dent in the Islamic camp. This is evidenced from his failure to

induce the Islamic parties to partcipate in the presidential election of 1986 and the parliamentary election of 1988, which was badly needed to augment the legitimacy of his regime.

The Western donor countries, particularly the USA, having considerable commercial and political interests in Bangladesh seemed to be concerned at the possible destablishing effects of the "voterless elections" under Ershad and were reportedly pressing for a meaningful election with the participation of major opposition parties, such as the AL and BNP.[25] On the other hand, the Islamic parties were persistent in their demand for declaring Bangladesh as an Islamic Republic with strong backing from Saudi Arabia, one of the biggest non-Western donors of Bangladesh.[26] Perhaps, to counterbalance the external pressures of the donor countries and enlist the support of Islamic people in the upcoming elections Ershad government enacted the Eighth Amendment declaring Islam as the state religion of Bangladesh, claiming that it would give a distinct identity to the nation and thus strengthen national unity and independence.

The issue of state religion provoked sharp reactions throughout the country. Instead of strengthening national unity, it exacerbated the existing conflicts and suspicion among various political and religious groups. The secular nationalist and left forces belonging to the 8-party and 5-party alliances contended that Bangladesh was the product of a long struggle fought on the basis of secular "Banglaee" nationalism and the Eighth Amendment was a henious move to revive the two-nation theory (communalism) of the Pakistan days and re-unite Bangladesh with Pakistan by destroying the spirit of the Liberation War. They would treat the supporters of state religion as pro-Pakistani collaborators and call for unity of the democrtatic pro-liberation forces against them.[27] Major professional, cultural and student organisations, such as the Supreme Court Bar Association, Coordination Council of the Lawyers, the

[25]See Amanullah, "Marky Weather", *Holiday* (Dhaka Weekly), 22 April, 1988; "Politics Looks for Miracles," *ibid.*, 3 June, 1988.

[26]That Saudi Arabia and some other Muslim couhtries had a pressure for making Bangladesh an Islamic State is indicated by President Ershad when he said that after passing the state religion bill, the King of Saudi Arabia and heads of some other Muslim states received him during the Hajj more cordially than ever before. See the President's press conference, *Sangbad*, 6 August, 1988.

[27]See *Sangbad* 9 and 10 June, 1988; *The Bangladesh Observer* (Dhaka Daily) and *The New Nation*, 10 June, 1988.

Federation of Teachers Association, Group Theatre Federation, Sramik Karmachari Oikya Parishad (Workers and Government Employees' Association), and Chhatra Sangram Parishad (Students Action Committee), also strongly opposed the state religion bill.[28]

The inclusion of some Islamic symbols (such as Bismillah-ar-Rahman ar-Rahim) in the constitution and the omission of secularism by Zia had already created disaffection and uneasiness among the religious minorities. The declaration of Islam as the state religion only deepened the feeling of inequality and insecurity among them. On the introduction of the state religion bill in the parliment, 51 distinguished Hindu, Buddhist and Christian citizens of Bangladesh, in a joint statement, said that it was contrary to the main spirit and objective of the creation of independent Bangladesh. They resented that it would "denationalise" the followers of other religions by depriving them of their civil rights, and expressed their determination to resist the "hateful move".[29] Some Hindu organisations, such as the Hindu Oikya Front and Hindu Foundation, declared that the Hindu community would not accept this "step-motherly" step of the government reducing them to "second class citizens".[30] The Hindu, Buddhist and Christian intellectuals also formed a "Unity Front" to protect their rights and interests.

The Problems of Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT)

The tribals of the CHT refused to accept the "Bangalee" identity; nor could the "Bangladeshi" nationalism of Zia satisfy them. They continued to fight for the preservation of their ethnic identity, prevention of Bengali settlement in the CHT and achievement of an autonomous status for the region. The period between 1976 and 1982 was marked by violent insurgent activities of the tribals and severe retaliatory measures by the government. Though schism between and within the rebel groups and consequent killing of the Chakma leader Manabendra Narayan Larma in November, 1983 temporarily lessened the violent activities of the rebels, by 1986 the Shanti Bahini (the military organ of the most militant and largest Chakma tribe), reorganised itself and became fully active leading to bloody clashes with government forces and consequent emigration of about 40,000 tribesmen into India.

[28]See statements of these organisations in *Sangbad*, 12 and 13 May, 1988.

[29]*Sangbad*, 15 May, 1988.

[30]*Ibid.*

While the Mujib regime pursued a policy of cultural assimilation of the tribals, General Zia treated the problem mainly as an economic one, and side by side with military measures, took various steps for the economic and social upliftment of the tribals. The Ershad regime, for the first time, recognised the tribal problem as political and sought to arrive at a negotiated settlement with the tribal insurgents.

In August, 1987 the government set up a high-powered National Committee headed by Air Vice-Marshall (retired) A. K. Khandoker, the minister in charge of planning, to study the problems of the CHT and make recommendations to the president.

In view of an apparently rigid stand of the Shanti Bahini rebels on the autonomy of the CHT, the Committee held talks with cooperative leaders of the three tribal Districts separately and signed three peace packages with them in October, 1988. They dealt mainly with the administrative status of the CHT. The three tribal Districts, unlike other Districts of the country, would enjoy some administrative autonomy. Each of the three District Councils would be headed by a tribal Chairman. Besides the usual general administration, these Councils would have control over primary education, police administration, public health, agriculture, development of sports and culture, forest, cottage industry, land administration and local planning and development works. To limit the scope of Bengali settlement in the region, there would be no transaction of land without the concurrence of the Chairman of the respective District Council. Each District Council would have its own police force to be recruited afresh upto the rank of Sub-Inspector. The Chairman and members of the District Councils would be directly elected by the people living in the districts on the basis of a fixed quota for different tribals and nontribals.[31] Three separate laws for the three hill Districts were passed by the parliament on the above lines.

Thus, the government was able to win over a section of the tribal leaders, particularly of the smaller tribes. But the signing of separate peace agreements with them created resentments in the most militan Chakma tribe, and the dialogue between the government and Shanti Bahini rebals reached a stalemate, the later insisting on complete withdrawal of the Bangladesh army and the Bengali settlers from the CHT.[32]

[31]Ali Murtaza, "CHT Issue Heads for a Settlement," *Holiday*, 25 November, 1988.

[32]See Amanullah, "An Incidous Campaign," *Holiday*, 23 December 1988.

Assasination of some co-operative tribal leaders taking part in concluding peace agreements has also been reported.[33] Perhaps the government is in a position to impose a military solution. But such an attempt is likely to aggravate the situation resulting in further exodus of tribesmen to India.

The presence of a large number of tribal refugees in India has already turned the CHT problem into a bilateral issue between India and Bengladesh. While India considers the refugees as a heavy burden on her economy and puts pressure on Bangladesh to stop emigration of tribals and take back the refugees by restoring normalcy in the CHT, Bangladesh press and government authorities allege that the Shanti Bahini insurgency and the non-patriation of tribal refugees are due to Indian conspiracy.[34] In these circumstances, esclation of hostilities in the CHT would add to the international dimension of the problem.

Political Participation

Extra-Parliamentary Politics

On 24 March, 1982, General Ershad imposed Martial Law and prohibited all sorts of political activities. As a part of its 'civilianisation' scheme, the military government permitted "indoor politics" from 1 April, 1983. Major opposition parties and alliances, as noted above, carried on simultaneous movement for the withdrawal of Martial Law and holding of elections under a neutral government. But General Ershad was not prepared to relinquish his power. He took various prohibitive measures and police actions to suppress the movement, and held a referendum in March, 1985 under severe restrictions of Martial Law.

Meanwhile, the government proceeded to create a political base for itself and split the opposition movement. In November, 1983, it floated a political party, named Janadal, with Justice Ahsanuddin Choudhury (then president of Bangladesh) as its acting Chairman. The AL (Mizan) of the 15-party alliance, the Jatiya League of the 7-party alliance, a large section of the BNP, and the Democratic League (Shah Moazzem) were induced to join the Janadal by offering ministership to their leaders. In August, 1985, the Janadal entered into an alliance with the UPP and

[33]*Sangbad*, 24 December, 1988.

[34]See A. N. Shamsul Hoque, "Ethnic Conflict in Chittagong Hill Tracts The Problems and Prospects of Tribal Integration," a paper presented in the IPSA seminar held in Washington D.C., August 28, 1988.

Ganatantrik Party of the 7-party alliance, the Muslim League (Siddique), and another breakaway faction of the BNP. In January, 1986 these factions merged themselves into one party, named Jatiya Party, under the leadership of General Ershad.

Thus after consolidating a support-base for itself, the government lifted restrictions on political activities from 1 January and held the parliamentary election in May, 1986. As noted above, a segment of the opposition, including eight parties of the 15-party alliance and the Jamaat-i-Islami, participated in the election creating a rift in the opposition camp. While the 8-party alliance wanted to carry on the anti-Ershad movement from both within and outside the parliament, the 7-party and 5-party alliances insisted upon the dissolution of parliament and holding of fresh elections under a neutral government. However, the adoption of the District Council Bill on 13 July, 1987 providing for the representation of the members of armed forces in the District Councils, sparked off a new wave of general strikes bringing the alliances closer. On 28 October, 1987, the two ladies, Sheikh Hasina of the AL and Khaleda Zia of the BNP, for the first time sat together and called for a united mass movement to force the resignation of General Ershad. Major alliances and parties adopted a programme of seizing Dhaka on 10 Novem ber, 1987. The government stopped rail, road and river communications between Dhaka and outside and adopted other strong-arm tactics to foil the programme. On 10 November, at least 10 persons were killed by police firing and the opposition reacted by organising violent demonstrations and massive general strikes. In the face of mounting violence, the government imposed a state of emergency throughout the country prohibiting political activities and dissolved the Parliament. As stated earlier, a fresh parliamentary election was held on 3 March, 1988, which was boycotted by the major opposition parties. After the election, the anti-government movement waned considerably, and the year, 1988 happened to be the most comfortable period for the regime.

Thus, for the last seven years the opposition political parties had been waging a relentless struggle to dislodge the Ershad regime and ensure a free and fair election. They resorted to mass rallies, demonstrations and frequent strikes. Never in the history of independent Bangladesh so many general strikes were observed or so mouch blood was shed during a particular regime.[35] But the opposition failed to achieve their goals

[35]During the period, 1983-88 general strikes were held for about 200 hours and about 170 persons lost their lives in political movements.

because of mutual distrust and political differences among themselves.

The Jamaat-i-Islami was considered as an anti-independence anti-democratic force. Though it took an anti-government stance, the main opposition parties were not prepared to formally accept it as their ally. Most of the parties belonging to the 15-party alliance participated in the Liberation War and were committed to the four state ideologies—Bengali nationalism, democracy, socialism and secularism, favouring the restoration of the parliamentary system as enshrined in the Constitution of 1972. But they differed as to the method of establishing socialism. Major parties of the 15-party alliance (the AL, Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB), National Awami Party (NAP), etc.) advocated "socialism through parliamentary road" and stressed the need for the withdrawal of Martial Law and restoration of basic democratic rights through peaceful electoral means. So they decided in favour of participation in the parliamentary election of 1986. On the other hand, the left parties did not have faith in parliamentary politics; they sought to establish socialism through revolutionary means. Besides, these parties were comparatively new and small and had little possibility of winning considerable parliamentary seats. So, instead of participating in the parliamentary polls, they adopted the strategy of expanding their organisation through mass movement and of creating a revolutionary situation in the country.

But the distrust and conflict between the AL and BNP, the two parties leading the 8-party and 7-party alliances respectively, were the major factors shaping the politics of the opposition camp. Many of the Awami Leaguers believed that General Zia was involved in the 15 August coup killing Mujib and his principal associates. Besides, the BNP overnment of Zia politically rehabilitated the anti-AL forces and struck at the ideological base of the AL by changing the fundamental principles of the Constitution. Although Ershad followed the principles of Bangladeshi nationalism, establishment of Islamic values and free economy as initiated by Zia, the AL considered the BNP as its greater enemy than Ershad, because it suffered most at the hands of the BNP government in the past. On the other hand, Ershad as a part of his "divide and rule" policy took a comparatively soft attitude towards the AL. So the AL sought to realise maximum concessions for a free and fair election under Ershad and establish itself at least as the main opposition party in the country.

Since the BNP government was overthrown by General Ershad and a section of its leadership suspected Ershad's involvement in the killing

of Zia, the BNP took a hard line against the regime. So Ershad did his best to suppress and weaken the BNP. Many of the BNP leaders were imprisoned on charges of corruption. Some of them were also debarred from contesting in elections. The BNP also apprehended that election under Ershad would not be free and fair and it would be the worst victim of such an unfair election. So it took a "no election under Ershad" stand, stressing the need for dislodging the regime through movement. On the other hand, the AL considered the BNP as a military-backed party, like the Jatiya Party of Ershad, and feared that a continuous mass movement or disorders might lead to another military coup which would go in favour of the BNP. Thus, despite tremendous pressure from smaller political parties, intellectuals and professional organisations for a united movement, the two ladies never met in one platform.

Opposition parties demanded elections under a neutral government. But they could not agree as to the composition of the neutral government or the mechanism of transfer of power, and thus failed to present to the people a clear alternative to Ershad government. Besides, the movement was too much political. The opposition failed to present any socio-economic programme for the amelioration of the lot of the masses that could rouse them to a do-or-die action.

As noted above, the AL and the BNP also differed on fundamental issues, like the form of government and national identity. The question of state religion further widened the gap. In a bid to win over the Islamic groups, Ershad adopted Islam as the state religion. Although the Jamaat-i-Islami criticised the state religion bill as a bluff designed to counter the politics of Jamaat, it refrained from joining the strikes called by the three alliances to protest against the bill. Perhaps encouraged by the government's drift towards Islamisation, the Jamaat-i-Islami and its student wing, Islami Chhatra Shibir, revived their demand for the restoration of citizenship of their leader Golam Azam and carried on attacks on the pro-liberation secular forces in various places of the country. The AL-led 8-party alliance reacted sharply and called for a greater unity on the basis of the spirit of the Liberation War to resist the communal activities of Jamaat-Shibir elements. The 5-party alliance also took a similar stand. These two alliances and the Students Action Committee supported by them as well as the Freedom-Fighters associations raised the demand for banning the Jamaat-i-Islami. But the BNP, which initiated the Islamisation process during the Zia regime and termed the state religion as "unnecessary", took a soft attitude towards the Jamaat and launched a separate programme of movement which was supported

by the latter.[36]

Thus, a new ploarisation was in the offiing, which tended to sharpen the division between the secular Bengali nationalists on the one hand and the pro-Islamic and Bangladeshi nationlists on the other. While the 8-party alliance announced a 7-point politico-economic programme as the basis of anti-Ershad movement,[37] the 7-party alliance stuck to the one-point demand of the resignation of Ershad. The 5-party alliance tried to bring about a rapproachment between the two major alliances but failed. And, the two major parties—the AL and the BNP—instead of building an effective anti-Ershad movement were engaged in mutual recriminations.

Parliamentary Politics

As noted above, during the short period of two years, two parliamentary elections were held under Ershad to earn legitimacy of his government. The Third Parliament of Bangladesh elected in May 1986 was dissolved in December, 1987 and the Fourth Parliament was elected in March, 1989.

Durihg the 15 months of its existence, the Third Parliament met in four sessions and worked for about 367 hours in 75 working days. The first session (10-22 July, 1986) was boycotted by opposition and independent MP's[38] protesting the continuation of Martial Law, and it held only a mock debate on the President's address to Parliament. The one-day second session (10 November, 1986) was also boycotted by major

[36]For a detailed account of the enter-party feuds and the position of the Jamaat, see *Bichitra*, 6 January, 1988, pp. 19-23.

[37]The 7-point programme included: (1) the re-establishment of the spirit of the Liberation War, the trial of the killers of Mujib, restoration of the Constitution of 1972 with the four Fundamental Principles, and to stop military interference in the politics and administration; (2) Cancellation of the policy of denationalisation and preservation and promotion of the legitimate rights and interests of the workers; (3) radical land reforms, establishment of cultivators' rights to the land, encouragement for cooperative farming, ceiling on landholding, and preservation of the rights of share-croppers ; (4) to control the price of essentials; (5) introduction of universal people-oriented and scientific education sytem and erradication of illiteracy; (6) political settlement of the tribal problems of the CHT; and (7) independent and non-aligned foriegn policy.

[38]117 MP's belonging to the AL, Jamaat-i-Islami, CPB, NAP, Workers Party, JSD (Seraj), BAKSAL, NAP (M), and independents were absent during the session.

opposition groups,[39] and the only business it transacted was the adoption of the Seventh Amendment Bill validating the acts of the Martial Law regime.

During its third and fourth sessions, the Third Parliament passed a total of 39 bills of which 12 (31% of the total) were promulgated earlier in the form of ordinance. During these two sessions, 2796 questions were raised and answered in the House. The Third Parliament passed one private member's resolution, and discussed four adjournment motions, 47 "call attention" motions and five motions of "discussion for short duration".[40]

Compared to the First and Second Parliament, the Third Parliament had a large representation of the opposition parties. But a major section of the opposition boycotted the 1986 parliamentary polls and refused to accept the legitimacy of the parliament. Even the major opposition groups in the parliament described the parliamentary election as a "media coup" and grudgingly participated in the parliament to use it as a forum of movement. The government tried to maintain a good working relation with the parliamentary opposition and augment its legitimacy through smooth functioning of the parliament. The opposition was allowed fairly adequate opportunities of discussion. Breaking all parliamentary traditions, an opposition MP (A.S.M. Abdur Rob of the JSD) was allowed to move the vote of thanks on the president's address to parliament in its third session. A private member's resolution, tabled by an opposition MP (AL), was unanimously adopted by the parliament, and the opposition reciprocated by adopting a bill without dissent.[41] However, the opposition failed to substantially influence the government policy through the parliament, and the adoption of the District Council bill in the fourth session, providing for the representation of the military in the District

[39]The JSD (Seraj) and BAKSAL joined the second session and other 106 opposition and independent MP's remained absent.

[40]These figures are derived from Bangladesh Jatiya Sangsad, *Jatiya Sangsader..... Karjyabaher Sarangsa* (Summary of the proceedings of the Parliament), 1986-87 (four volumes).

[41]The Private Member's Resolution, adopted on 12 February, 1987, urged for the stopping of the politics of arms and restoration of congenial atmosphere in the Universities and other educational institutions. The bill that was unanimously adopted in the Parliament on 26 February, 1987, provided for the use of Bengali language in all spheres of activities.

Councils, drove the parliamentary opposition to take the movement from parliament to the street. When a section of the opposition resigned or threatened to resign from the parliament, the government dissolved it in December, 1987.

The Fourth Parliament elected in March, 1988 met in two sessions in the year, 1988. In its first session (25 April to 11 July, 1988), the Fourth Parliament worked for 230 hours on 47 working days and passed 38 bills, of which 33 (about 87%) were earlier promulgated as ordinances. In this session, 1921 starred questions were answered and one private member's resolution, one adjournment motion and two motions for short discussion were discussed in the House.[42]

The second session of the Fourth Parliament held in October, 1988 met for four days and only debated the president's address to parliament on the flood problems.

In the absence of effective opposition, debates and discussions in the Fourth Parliament generated little heat or interests. And it failed to serve as a legitimising tool, the opposition persisting in their demand for its dissolution. The government also seems to be aware of its ineffectiveness and is thinking aloud about a fresh parliamentary election.

Effectiveness of the Government

If elections and parliament are the primary instruments of legitimisation, prolonged effectiveness of a government may legitimise an otherwise illegitimate regime. But the performance of the Ershad government did not prove to be satisfying enough to evoke commitment or loyalty of the people.

Economic Development

After assuming power in 1982, the Ershad government fixed the target of seven per cent economic growth. But the average annual growth of the economy during the first six years of Ershad's rule was only 3.8 per cent as against 5.2 per cent average of the previous nine years.[43] Per capita income (GDP) increased from Tk. 473 in 1981-82 to Tk. 803 in 1987-88.[44] But disproportionate increase in money supply and consequent rise in the price-level continued to cause hardship to the fixed-

[42]BJS, *Bangladesher Chaturtha Jatiya Sangsader Pratham Adhibeshaner Karjabaher Sarangsa* (Summary of the Proceedings of the First Session of the Fourth Parliament), 1988.

[43]The Government of Bangladesh, Ministry of Finance, *Bangladesh Arthanitik Jareep* (Bangladesh Economic Survey), 1987-88, p. 582.

[44]*Ibid.*

income groups. The consumer price index for middle income groups rose from 709 in 1981-82 to 1130 in 1986-87 reaching the mark of 1241 in 1987-88 (with base 1969-70=100).[45] Although nominal wages increased considerably during the recent years, real wages comparatively lagged behind.[46] Thus the marginal increase in the national wealth was expropriated by a small affluent class.

Another declared objective of the Ershad regime was the achievement of self-sufficiency in food within a minimum period of time. The total production of foodgrains (rice and wheat) increased from about 144 lakh Metric tones in 1981-82 to about 165 lakh Metric tones in 1986 87.[47] But it fell far short of the requirement, forcing the government to import large quantity of food grains every year. While the import of foodgrains was to the tune of 12 lakh tones in 1981-82, it was about 33 lakh tones in the fiscal year, 1987-88.[48] The huge import of food enabled the government to keep the price of foodgrains within reasonable limits. But this adversely affected domestic production, as the farmers did not get reasonable price for their product. While the growth rate in the agricultural sector was 4.62 per cent in 1982-83, it was only 1.62 per cent in 1986-87.[49]

The policy of denationalisation and pampering the private sector initiated by the Zia regime was pursued by Ershad with a greater zeal, widening the scope of amassing wealth by a few. Private investment increased and the index of industrial growth rose from 136 in 1982-83 to 156 in 1986-87 (with base 1973-74= 100),[50] but industry's share in the GDP remained below 10 per cent as against agriculture's share of 50 per cent.[51]

The Law and Order Situation

The law and order situation also deteriorated during the Ershad regime. The number of registered crimes increased from 52,337 in 1981 to

[45]BBS, *Monthly Indicators of Current Economic Situation of Bangladesh*, June 1988, p. 3.

[46]*Ibid.*, p. 20.

[47]Bangladesh Planning Commission, *Economic Review*, 1986-87, p. 152.

[48]*Bangladesh Arthanitik Jareep*, *op. cit.*, pp. 607-608.

[49]BBS, 1987 *Statistical Yearbook of Bangladesh*, p. 493.

[50]*Bangladesh Arthnaitik Jareep*, *op. cit.*, pp. 610-611.

[51]Bangladesh Planning Commission, *Economic Review*, *op. cit.*, p. 148.

54,245 in 1986.[52] As mentioned above, during the period, 1983-87 the opposition parties carried on simultaneous movement to dislodge the government, and the frequent strikes, gheraos and demonstrations paralysed normal life at times resulting in the death of nearly 200 persons in violent clashes between the government and the opposition forces. Although the anti-government movement waned considerably during 1988, inter-party conflicts in the opposition camp, particularly between the secular pro-liberation forces and the fundamentalist Jamaat elements created a tense situation in the country. Bloody clashes, mostly between the Students Action Committee and the Islami Chhatra Shibir, vitiated the atmosphere in the campuses, the most sensitive arena of politics leading to the closure of most of the Universities and at least 39 colleges for several months. As reported by a national weekly, at least 60 students were killed and over 600 others were injured in about 200 cases of clashes between rival student groups or between the police and students, during 1 January and 15 October, 1988.[53] Although the official figures of of crimes during 1988 were not available, reports in the national newspapers indicated that anti-social activities, like hijacking, kidnapping, trafficking in women, smuggling and drug addiction were on the increase. About 150 cases of criminal violence of women were reported during 1988. Of the victims, at least 40 were murdered after rape.[54] In about 50 cases, alleged criminals or anti-social elements were beaten to death by angry mobs in different parts of the country during the first seven months of 1988.[55] These incidents of people taking law in their own hands indicated the loss of trust in the law-enforcing agencies of government.

The Party and Bureaucracy

The Jatiya Party of Ershad, like Zia's BNP, was organised from above as a vehicle of 'civilianisation' of a military regime. It attracted men of diverse political beliefs and interests, whose principal consideration was government power and patronages. As the composition of the parliamentary party and the cabinet indicated, deserters from the AL, BNP and Muslim League were the major components of the Jatiya Party. With considerable political and historical differences, these elements could

[52]BBS, 1987 *Statistical Yearbook of Bangladesh*, p. 609.

[53]*Holiday*, 21 October, 1988.

[54]*Ibid.*, 20 January, 1989.

[55]*Ibid.*, 19 August, 1988.

not work in harmony in the new party. Besides, personal rivalry for power and position in the party and government and consequent factionalism at all levels prevented the growth of the party as an effective organisation to mobilise public support or implement government policies.[56] Allegations of corruption on the part of the party leaders and ministers also disgraced the party.[57]

The Jatiya Party also failed to attain the status of an autonomous organisation. The constitution of the party was designed to concentrate all powers in the hands of its Chairman. The presidium, said to be the highest policy-making organ of the party, and central office bearers, including the Secretary-General, would be nominated by the Chairman. As the "highest officer" of the party, the Chairman would control, supervise and coordinate the activities of all organs of the party.[58] As the Chairman of the party and the chief executive of the government, President Ershad tended to exercise absolute authority, the party organs being marginally involved in the decision-making process.

The civil and military bureaucracy continued to play a dominant role in state affairs. As in July, 1983, the Council of Ministers consisted of seven military officers, three civil servents, two technocrats and four lawyers. Gradually, the politicians were given larger representation in the cabinet. As in December 1988, in the 23-member Council of Ministers there were four retired military bureaucrats, one retired civil servent and one technocrat and the rest were drawn from politicians. Of the 10 Ministers of State, one was a retired army officer. Yet, the real policy-making authority appeared to be resting with the military bureaucracy. President Ershad continued to hold the Ministry of Defence and the post of Commander-in-Chief (C-in-C) of the armed forces. He also continued to reside in the cantonment and would frequently meet the top brasses in the office of the C-in-C presumably discussing with them the

[56]For factional strifes in the Jatiya Party, see M.H. Manik, "Kith and Kin", *Holiday*, 10 June, 1988; "Shocking JP show," *Ibid.*, 10 October, 1988; "Murmurings within JP," *ibid.*, 31 March, 1989 and Kazi Ibne Shakoor, "War of Nurve in JP" *ibid.*, 8 July, 1988 ; "Rivalry in JP," *ibid.*, 15 July, 1988.

[57]Religion Minister Maulana Abdul Mannan was removed from the cabinet in June, 1988 and was prosecuted on charges of corruption. Foreign Minister Humayun Rashid Choudhury resigned in December, 1988 in the face of allegation of corruption.

[58]Jatiya Party, *Gathantantra* (Constitution), 1986, Article 12, Clause 1.

important national issues. Occassionally, he would also meet the rank and file in various cantonments and exhort or eulogise them for nation-building activities. His preference for the members of armed forces to the political workers in relief and development activities was conspicuous. He would seldom take high party officials with him in his meet-the-people tours.

As the Jatiya Party failed to gain popular legitimacy through elections, the political elites seemed to be prepared to share power with the civil and military bureaucracy, and the regime was able to suppress discontents within the party through distribution or redistribution of spoils. Only two ministers of Ershad Government resigned from the cabinet for political differences.[59] Besides frequent redistribution of ministerial posts, the government extended material benefits to the MP's by enhancing their salaries and allowances. It also permitted each of the MP's to procure one motor car free of import duties involving an amount of Tk. eight crore. Sixty-one Jatiya Party MP's or influential leaders were appointed as chairmen of the newly formed District Councils with the rank, status and privileges of Deputy Minister, rewarding them for their "sincerity and dedication" to the party and government. The chairmen of the District Councils would be directly responsible to the President and coordinate the development activities in their respective Districts. On the other hand, there had been Deputy Commissioners with great power and overall authority as the administrative head in each District. This dual administration in the District created a new arena of conflict between the political elite and civil bureaucracy.

While the Jatiya Party politicians seemed to have acquiesced in the military dominance, the civil bureaucracy resented the gradual militarisation of the civil administration. As in July, 1985, there were at least 12 retired army officers holding the post of Secretary, Joint Secretary or Deputy Secretary in the civil secretariate.[60] At about that time, 53 out of the 64 Superintendents of Police were retired military officers, and out of 36 public corporations, 17 were headed by military personnel.[61] The

[59]In January, 1988, Anwar Jahid and Salahuddin Qader Choudhury resigned for their differences with the government on the issue of holding parliamentary election without the participation of the mainstream opposition.

[60]This figure is derived from Bangladesh Secretariate, *Telephone Directory*, July, 1985.

[61]Speeches of Muhammad Ayeenuddin MP, the leader of the Muslim League Parliamentary Party, in the Parliament on 10 November, 1986.

government also took a move in early 1988 to reserve 10 per cent of the vacant posts in all cadres and other services of the Republic of Bangladesh for the members of the armed forces. This policy of militarisation of the civil administration not only limited the chance of promotion to higher position but also restricted the freedom and privileges of the civil servants, creating wide-spread disaffection among them.

In an open circular, dated 17 January 1988, Bangladesh Civil Service (Administration) Association expressed its deep concern and resentment "against the undemocratic militarisation" effort of the government, terming it as contrary to the principle of equality of citizens as incorporated in the Constitution. It also demanded the security of civil servants against political interferences and called upon its members to resist all kinds of external pressure. During 1986-88, the Civil Service (Administration) Association submitted three memoranda to the government demanding the discotinuation of appointment of "outsiders" in the civil services and safeguards against political interferences. Recently, the members of the cadre services in the secretariate protested against the government for non-fulfilment of their demands by wearing black badges and "go slow" programme.[62] Such a public demonstration and resentment of the higher civil servants was perhaps the first of its kind in Bangladesh.

However, General Ershad was able to maintain unity and discpline within the armed forces. While the Zia regime witnessed 19 coups, no coup attempt has yet been reported during the Ershad regime. He systematically eliminated the radicalised elements from important positions in the army, and pacified the rank and file by enhancing the material and other facilities. Actual expenditure for the armed forces thus increased from Tk. 322 crores (19.4 per cent of the total revenue expenditure) in 1981-82 to Tk. 815 crores (20.74 per cent) in 1986-87 fiscal year.[63]

Conclusions

During about seven years of Ershad's rule, one nation-wide referndum and three national-level elections have been held in Bangladesh besides a number of local-level elections. Yet the regime has failed to establish its legitimacy. Nor could it build a national consensus about the Constitution. Rather, the adoption of the Eighth Amendment declaring Islam as the state religion has complicated the problem of national identity. The division between the secular pro-liberation forces and the

[62] See *Sangbad*, 2 and 5 April, 1989.

[63] Bangladesh Planning Commission, *Economic Review*, *op. cit.*, Table 8, pp. 154-156.

anti-liberation pro-Islamic elements has been sharpened. The ethnic problem of the CHT has assumed a new dimension with the involvement of India. The gap between participatory demands and responses has also been widened. The level of performance of the government has not been enough to evoke the loyalty of the people, and the tension between the politicians and the military and civil bureaucracy has broken the morale of the administration.

Although Ershad has been ruling the country for the longest period of time (in comparison with the previous rulers of Bangladesh), his regime appears to be most controversial. Major opposition parties have been relentless in their struggle for dislodging the government. People have shown their dislike for the regime by joning anti-Ershad strikes and demonstrations in large numbers. But, because of the lack of mutual trust and unity among the opposition parties and their failure to present a clear alternative, the anti-Ershad movement has been ineffective. If the division in the opposition camp is a source of Ershad's strength, his real strength lies in the unity of the military.

However, the government seems to be aware of its tenuous legitimacy base and is speaking of fresh national elections with the participation of major opposition parties. But the crux of the problem is whether it is willing or able to ensure really free and fair elections, or plans to stage "another farce".

It may be mentioned that General Ershad came to power wiht the promise of a vanguardist role for the military in state affairs.[64] Although he failed to make a constitutional re-arrangement guaranteeing such a role, in reality the military bureaucracy remains the policy-making authority, and it seems to be determined to maintain the *status quo*. On the other hand, the government is heavily dependent on foreign aid.[65] And, the Western donor countries appear to be putting pressure on Ershad for establishing "genuine democracy" in Bangladesh through meaningful elections. It is to be seen how real is the pressure and to what extent the military bureaucracy yields to it.

In a free and fair election, the government-supported Jatiya Party is not sure to win. So it is unlikely that the military elite will allow an election without some safeguards for its interests. President Ershad is

[64]See General Ershad's press briefing, *The Bangladesh Observer*, 29 November, 1981.

[65]As in 1986-87, the foreign aid constituted more than 82 per cent of the annual development expenditure. See *Economic Review*, *op. cit.*, p. 159.

reportedly negotiating with the major opposition parties, including the AL and BNP, on a compromise formula about power-sharing between the military and political elites, so that elections may be arranged shortly. Would the opposition agree to any formula of power-sharings ? Is it possible to accommodate both the AL and BNP at the same time?

Any "arranged election" may prolong the life of the present regime but cannot ensure a peaceful and orderly change for the future. A free and fair election is the need of the hour, and only a genuine representative government is capable of building a national consensus that is required for a stable polity.

"Ecological Pressure, Structural Imbalance, and Population Redistribution as Factors in Urbanization of Bangladesh : A Diachronic Analysis of Human Ecological Complex"

Ahmed Fazle Hasan Choudhury

Introduction

Until recently, there has been very few systematic research concerning the function of migration in urbanization in developing countries. The process and pattern of urbanization in Third World countries have been so far viewed from the hypothesized experience of the economically more advanced nations. In studying this phenomenon in newly developing countries, it is important to divest oneself from the western image of urbanization. By contrast, the best grasp of their present situation may come from analyzing how their course differs from the western pattern of urban growth. The political, economic and demographic situations in the developed countries today have very little in common with conditions in the developed countries during their pre-industrial phases. Among the forces of urbanization the most important to consider is the colonial experiences in these developing nations. It is the colonial impact which has left the greatest marks on contemporary South and Southeast Asia, most strikingly in their cities. The experience of colonialism has unquestionably shaped a great many underdeveloped societies with a pattern quite different from that of the west in its period of rapid urbanization. In the west, changes in occupational structure have accompanied the twin process of industrialization and urbanization. There has been a both geographical and occupational shift of population, rural to urban, and agricultural to industrial. In the developed nation, urbaniza-

tion came about as a product of increasing economic specialization which was reflected in the differential ordering of occupations within a given territorial space. Industrialization in urban areas created a high demand for labour connected with the expansion of manufacturing and thereby produced pull forces. On the other hand, mechanization and commercialization of the agricultural sector both increased the efficiency of farming and reduced the need for labour in the rural areas (Hoselitz 1973, Lampard 1973, Hauser 1965, Davis 1970). As a result, urbanization in the west occurred through a balanced interplay of both 'push' and 'pull' factors.

Paradoxically, for most of the developing countries, urbanization is the result of exogenous factors rather than their indigenous economic development, which is rooted in their long colonial experiences. Many of the primate cities that today bear the legacies of colonial rule in the contemporary Third World contributed to a stagnation of the economic growth of their countries. Under the conditions of colonialism, the growth of cities concentrated to a few centres, a phenomenon described as 'primate city' or 'polarized urbanization'. (Friedmann 1969, Hoselitz 1973). A city is designated as a primate in a circumstance in which there is one surprisingly larger city in a country compared to other urban centres. Southeast Asian countries such as India, Burma, Indonesia, Malayasia, Singapore experienced such a city development. The new techniques introduced by the colonizing powers and the increase of trade did result in the economic growth within these cities and their immediate environs. But the advantages accruing from this kind of urban growth to the wider region in which these cities were located were counterbalanced by an excessive depletion of natural resources and the exploitation of primary producers. This initiated a culturally heterogenous cycle of urbanization but at the same time exerted an unfavourable influence on the potentialities of economic growth of the surrounding areas. This colonial pattern of urban growth is often designated as 'polarized urbanization' which is typically characterized by the coexistence of the two polar economies—one modern and urban, and the other, underdeveloped and overwhelmingly rural (Brutzkus 1975, Choudhury 1977).

The progress of urbanization against this background has resulted in a massive movement of population from impoverished rural to prospering few urban centres in contemporary developing countries. The huge populations of the former colonial countries, now independent, are taking part in an urbanization more massive than any before. A marked acceleration in rates of in-migration has been a feature of the urban experience

of developing countries in the recent years. The growth of urban populations in these countries appears to be occurring at a much faster rate than ever before. The current size of the major cities throughout the developing world seems to be expression of rural underdevelopment, lack of demand of labour in the countryside, and decreased carrying capacity of the land due to population pressure. These conditions together are by no means outcome of long years of colonial exploitation which have generated a high rate of internal spatial mobility in the current decades as a long term effect. The present paper a ms to examine the pattern of migration in rural to urban communities in Bangladesh from diachronic point of view by employing the human ecological approach.

Conceptual Framework for Analysis of Migration

An important theoretical perspective in the study of the role of migration in urbanization process is the human ecological approach. Ecological anthropologists have attemted to examine the relationship of population movement to socio-environmental process in terms of the concept 'ecological complex' which broadly includes population, social organization, environment and technology (POET system). The outstanding representatives of this approach are Hawley (1971). Duncan (1969), Schnore (1969), McGee (1967), and Lampard (1965). The human ecological approach is a theory of change of a community as a eco-social system in terms of the interaction of these four component elements. This perspective has been the logical development from the ecological doctrine of the Chicago school led by Burges and Park (1928). The process of urbanization is seen more or less in the redistribution of population in space, and migration can be interpreted as a function of changes in the ecological complex. To conceive of migration as the function of this system is equivalent to analyzing it as the product of the social dynamics of a set of historical environmental conditions. For cities to increase in number and size, change occur not only in population and space, but in other variables as in environmental and technological spheres.

The urban and the countryside may be regarded as the two poles in reference to one or the other in which all human settlements tend to arrange themselves. The degree to which a society may be characterized 'urban' cannot be wholly measured by the proportion of the total population living in cities. Rather urbanization represents the broader process whereby (1) geographical redistribution of population is concomitantly accompanied by an occupational shift in the proportional scale, and

(2) when the process increases the integrative and interdependent developments of both sectors that is urban and hinterland interactions. A population within a given territory may redistribute itself either through centripetal or centrifugal movement. Centripetal movement refers to the process by which population and resources are drawn into a point of population concentration indicated by relatively larger numbers and higher density in a given area. On the contrary, centrifugal movement represents the process by which population and resources move outward toward the periphery from a centre and develop closer relations with the surrounding hinterland. This centrifugal movement of resources from centre to the periphery reflects a balanced growth of the overall country since developments begin to radiate to the remote countryside through decentralized movement of both resources and population (Hauser 1965, Dwyer 1974). Such pattern is often evident in the urbanization process of advanced western countries.

The centripetal type of population movement occurs in main in response to an intersectoral disequilibrium manifested by a differential in manufacturing (urban) and agricultural (rural) incomes. A familiar model which anthropologists use to describe the process of economic growth treats migration as an economic phenomenon (technology) involved in intersectoral resource allocation (Burnum 1976, Borukhow 1975, Jackson 1969). A valuable contribution of this model to an explanation of the role of migration in the process of urbanization is to specify the manner in which migration relates to changes in economic structure. Breese observes, "migration is a necessary element of normal population redistribution and an arrangement for making the maximum use of available manpower" (1969:26). The phenomenon of migration in Bangladesh context will be examined as the key ecological mechanism by which the population equilibrium is being maintained. It is premised that the contemporary trend of higher city-ward migration in Bangladesh in recent decades has been initiated by increasing repulsion of the rural economy, declining land-man ratio, and the strained carrying capacity of the rural environment due to population pressure, all of which are conditioned in turn by long years of colonial rule.

Nature and Determinants of Migration in Bangladesh

A change in the urban population of a country can take place in two possible ways. Firstly by migration and secondly by natural increase of population itself. One great difficulty which hampers an understanding of rural-urban migration in Bangladesh is rendered by the lack of accurate and reliable data on population mobility in census reports. In the

absence of such information, it is difficult to provide anything but a generalized projection of the phenomenon. In addition, the nature of migration also makes accurate measurement somewhat problematic in as much as many urban dwellers in Bangladesh continue to maintain close ties with their rural habitat and periodically return there. The migrants tend to keep close links with village roots for the pervasive influence of kinship based extended family system and its importance in inheritance which is responsible for a circulatory mode of migration. The seasonal migration of labourers also provides another major illustration of the indeterminate nature of migration to be reckoned with. In such a situation, it can be postulated that the net permanent migration is likely to be less than gross overall migration, and as such, given the admitted importance of the role of migration in urbanization, one is oblized to treat census figures with some caution.

Until the middle of the present century, when the country was still under the British rule, the level of urbanization was extremely meagre. In 1941, only 3.36 per cent of population of Bangladesh, then known as East Bengal, lived in urban areas. The lower level of urbanization in this part of the world can be attributed to the overall feudal character of her economy under the imperial rule of the British in India. East Bengal, what constitutes Bangladesh today, formed the agricultural hinterland of Calcutta as an integral part of the British colonial system. As I have mentioned in the beginning, colonialism tends to produce a pattern of polarized urban growth, the Indian condition was not an exception to this rule. With the firm consolidation of the colonial administration, the single primate city, Calcutta, the seat of the British government in India, became dominant in the whole Indian economy (Desai 1948, Choudhury 1977). The prominence of Calcutta as a primate city came from her role as an economic intermediary—the link between the colony and Britain. The increasing importance of few port cities, like Madras, and Bombay, in addition to Calcutta hindered the growth of a number of smaller but more closely connected urban centres that might more effectively bridge the growing gap between urban and rural society. The census of India of 1921 reports:

> "The towns with 50,000 and above increased by 16 per cent in the decade 1911-1921; the increase has been considerably less in those between 5,000 and 50,000; while the populations of the towns between 10,000 and 20,000 has not even kept up with the growth of

the general population of the country. The significance of these comparisons lies in the strong indication which they give to the gradual decadence of the medium-sized country towns and the growth of the larger cities under the influence of commercial and industrial developments" (Vol. 16, p. 66).

The prime reason for the paucity of large cities in Bangladesh during the British period can be attributed to the fact that this region turned into agricultural hinterland to the industrial development of Calcutta and its adjacent centres (Ahmed 1968). Calcutta along with a ring of satellite industrial towns were developed as a base from which excessive depletion of natural resources and the exploitation of primary producers were subsequently carried on. The extraction and the removal of raw materials were more important from the trader's point of view than either their processing or utilization in the area of their origin. This area, as a result speedily acquired the position of a base for raw materials to feed and nurture the European commerce and industrial enterprises in Calcutta, Bombay and Madras. It is important to mention that cities of commercial interest as cited above tended to be concentrated and limited to a few port areas. The location chosen for such settlements were those at which exportable products could be conveniently assembled from which larger productive areas could be commanded. The introduction of new technologies in manufacturing in these cities apparently generated economic growth and internal momentum and could perpetuate development only within the confines of such urban environments, while developmental disparities between the urban sector and vast peripheral areas widened significantly.

The widespread planting of cash crops destroyed the indigenous enterprises, particularly textile industries which once flourished in this part of the Indian sub-continent. The imported manufactured goods adversely affected the traditional village-centered handicraft industries, like 'Maslin' cloth. Under the colonial conditions of polarized growth, few of the prospering medieval cities, such as 'Sonargaon' and 'Jahangir Nagar' decayed in importance and suffered de-urbanization (Choudhury 1977, 1988). Dasai observes, "The history of East Bengal's rural economy under British rule was a history of progressive impoverishment of the agricultual population, of the increasing expropriation of the peasants of their land" (1949:49). Most of the towns and cities of East Bengal were simply district administrative centres and had nothing to contribute to manu-

facturing economy. As a result, population mobility to such urban centres were minimal, and the growth of urban population almost remained stagnant for decades (around 3.5 per cent),

One of the emerging features in agriculture was the extreme sub-division and fragmentation of land. The amount of available land to each cultivator declined over time. The introduction of capital relations in agriculture in the European countries was paralleled by the creation of compact farms as units of cultivation. In this region, no such organization of land was undertaken by the British. From the standpoint of ownership and cultivation, the land remained intermixed. Consequently, the disadvantages of land fragmentation and the open field system continued in British India. Furthermore, excessive land revenues imposed by the British also affected the poor agricltural people. With increasing poverty, the passing of land from the hands of the peasants to non-cultivating landlords began to bring about polarization of class in the rural social structure : at one pole of the agrarian population, the rising group of non-cultivating landlords, at the other the rapidly growing groups of landless peasants (Choudhury 1977). Table 1 shows the rate at which the

TABLE 1
Rural Social Strata
Bengal 1921-31:

Rural Social Strata	Population (000's)		Percentage Increase/ decrease
	1921	1931	
Non-cultivating landlord	390	634	+62
Cultivating owners	9,275	6,041	—35
Landless peasant	1,805	2,719	+50

Source: A.R. Desai, Background of Indian Nationalism, Bombay: Popular Book Depot, 1948:60.

growth of non-cultivating landlords and the parallel growth of landless labourers took place in Bengal in 1920's and 1930's. The process of class differentiation went on at an increasing pace among the agricultural population of East Bengal. This eventually resulted in a decline in the income of the broad strata of agricultural population. A situation was created in which the countryside became increasingly impoverished in comparison with the towns.

The pattern of urban growth in Bangladesh (that is, gain in urban population) did not change greatly when it formed the eastern wing of Pakistan for the period from 1947 to 1971, which can be seen from Table 2 given below. The increase in urban population came more from the natural growth of population of the urban centres than from the urbanizing factor itself. It may be relevant to mention that the population during this period increased at an rate of 3.1 per annum, and the

TABLE 2
Degree of Urbanization in Bangladesh
1941-1981

Decade	Total Urban Population	% of Urban Population
1941	1,537,000	3·36
1951	1,820,000	4·34
1961	2,640,000	5·19
1974	6,273,000	8·78
1981	13,228,000	15·18

Source: Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics. Statistical Year Book of Bangladesh Dhaka: Government of Bangladesh, 1983.

growth of urban population in East Pakistan was far below this figure for any given intercensal period until 1961. A continuing growth rate of approximately one per cent in urban population against the background of overall population increase of the country at 3 per cent speaks implicitly that rural-urban migration was not responsible for observed changes in the degree of urbanization in Bangladesh during Pakistan period. It is more obvious because of the fact that nowhere in rural communities population sustained decrease. The familiar combination of higher fertility rate and modern mortality rate (owing from the control of traditional epidemics and improvement of the disease specific prevention programmes) was responsible for population increase in both rural and urban sectors of Bangladesh during 1951 and 1961. This further needs to stressed that population control programme was launched nationally only from early 1960's. As such, no immediate consequence could be expected alter the demographic structure of the country within short span of

time. By implication, the variation in urban population between two points in time came from natural increase, not migration.

It is pertinent to examine the extent of intersectoral changes in Bangladesh economy during its experience as the eastern wing of Pakistan, since the volume of mirgation as a proportion of the base population may increase or decrease with the income differential between the sending and the receiving areas. It may be emphasized that when Bangladesh (East Bengal) was partioned out of India as the Eastern wing of Pakistan, the country entered into the second phase of discriminatory exploitation. The West Pakistan dominated central government continued to pursue a policy of exploitation of the more populous eastern wing. The resources of this part were utilized for the infrastructural development of the other part, and the province of East Pakistan soon became the market of the industrializing West Pakistan (Alamgir and Berlage 1974, Faaland and Parkinson 1976). Because of slower economic growth, its heavy dependence on subsistence agriculture, and the negligence of the secondary sector (industrial), the progress of urbanization remained quite low compared to its other counterpart. More importantly, the continuing population growth further brought about declining land-man ratio in the agricultural sector. During the period 1949-60, agriculture registered a rate of growth only 1.5 per cent per annum which was insignificant in relation to a population growth of 2.8 per hundred per annum. One of the problems in its agricultural sector was the low productivity of the land.

The average of agricultural value added per head of agricultural population in Bangladesh for the period 1949-1955 was Taka 122 and that of the period 1955-1960 was Taka 185. The figure for the period 1965-1970 rose to 194 (Alamgir and Berlage 1974: 65). The staticness in the yield of rice as well as the decline in agricultural production per head of rural people are evidences of growing impoverishment of the village population in pre-independent times. Along with this, the volume of landless labourer began to increase in each succeeding decade, since the expansion of the population beyond the carrying capacity of the land raptured the population equilibrium in the rural environment. In terms of population density, Bangladesh presents perhaps the most difficult problem of any country in this region. Since the growing population could not be supported by the available land and the given level of technology, it called for a population redistribution which began to appear since the country became independent. The overall land-man ratio, that is, cultivated land per capita has declined steadily since 1949. Landless labourers

constitute a large proportion of the total rural population in Bangladesh, approaching 38.7 per cent (BBS 1983). The figure may have greatly exceeded presently. A noteworthy feature of landless labourers is their mixed and floating status. They tend to oscillate between the pure labourer status and cultivator status, and represent a type of circulatory labour force for both urban and rural areas during harvest and non-harvest seasons (Weitz 1971). The phenomenon of migration in this context speaks of a continuous feedback process to the rural environment.

The analysis of urbanization between 1974 and 1981, a period following the independence of Bangladesh reveals a new pattern as presented in Table 2. In spite of the low proportion of urban population in the total population of Bangladesh, the rate of change in this proportion during the last census is the highest of all the precceding decades. The degree of urbanization which was merely 5.19 in 1961, increased to 8.78 in 1974 and 15.18 in 1981. From the Table 3, it can be further observed that

TABLE 3

Ratio of Urban Growth in Bangladesh and Population Change in two Major Cities

Decade	Intercensal Numerical Increase in Urban Population	Intercensal % Increase in Urban Poulation
Bangladesh:		
1951-61	820,000	45.1 %
1961-74	3,633,000	137.5 %
1974-81	6,955,000	110.5 %

Two Major Metropolitan Cities:	Urban Population in Nmber		
	1961	1974	1981
Dhaka	566,712	1,167,572	3,458,652
Chittagong	237,752	889,760	1,388,476

Source: Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics. Statistical Year Book of Bangladesh, Dhaka: Government of Bangladesh, 1983.

6.2 million population of Bangladesh lived in urban areas in 1974 and the average population gain in the urban areas was 137.5 per cent during 1961-1974 intercensal period. Again, in the next intercensal period; 1974-1981, the total urban population reached 13.2 million showing an increase of 11.8 per cent during this time. In demographic terms, the growth

is spectacular compared to the preceeding decades. Such expansions in urban population could have occurred only if massive rural-urban migration had been underway. The actual numbers in the cities multiplied almost more than hundred per cent. Urban populations increased at an average annual rate of 12 per cent in 1961-74 period as well as 10 per cent annually since 1974, where as the natural growth rate during this time was close to 3 per cent annually. A continuing higher growth rate in the urban population since 1974 indicates that much of the increase was undoubtedly attributable to rural-urban migration.

It is also important to mention that the two metropolitan cities, namely Dhaka and Chittagong received bulk of the migrants. (Table 3). Dhaka had the highest increase for any city in the country with a population of 3.4 million in 1981. It alone had an increase of 209.0 per cent in 1974 and again 196.2 per cent in 1981. Next in importance comes Chittagong, which today has 1.3 million population. Both Dhaka and Chittagong together consist of more than one third of the total urban population of Bangladesh (26.1% and 10.4% respectively). Dhaka alone contains one fourth of the total urban population of Bangladesh. It is very much clear that such a phenomenal increase could have been possible through population redistribution in a centripetal direction, illustrated in the theoretical framework. When we look at the increase in absolute numbers for migration, it seems that migration has favoured the larger cities. The rapidly growing metropolis of Dhaka and Chittagong have sustained increases by migration which are nearly 20 times higher than that of the growth by natural increase in the decade 1974-81. Both the significant increase in the volume of migration and generally and the increasing contribution of migration to the current growth of cities lead us to examine one vital question: Why has the rate of urbanization increased in the recent years ? Is it because the labour force demands in the urban areas are encouraging the potential stream of migration from rural to urban areas?

The interacting and interrelated nature of urban and industrial development has been the subject of much discussion ever since the impact of industrialization in the West has become apparent. Experience in newly developing countries has demonstrated that urbanization can occur without concomitant industrialization (Abu-Lughod 1964, Bose 1973, Gutkind 1974). The huge geographial shift of rural population of Bangladesh today does not reflect the proportional expansion in manu-

facturing by any empirical yardstick. The nature of sectoral changes in Bangladesh economy is brought home by the following facts. A large portion of the labour force is employed in the unorganized sector such as in small-scale enterprises. The most singular spectacular growth in the urban based economy took place in tartiary sector (service) which shares 55 per cent of the contribution of the urban-based economy in the gross domestic product (BBS 1983). The important reasons for the preponderance of many small-scale enterprises are the very ineffective capital market, the absence of effective institutions for combining many small-scale enterprises into one of large size, and an overall low level of saving in the country. These factors in turn tended to inhibit the development many external economies in urban areas which are acknowledged to have been important factors in the economic development of Western countries (Hoselitz 1974). The preponderance of the tertiary industries in urban areas of Bangladesh signifies the growth of marginal employment and low productive service industries, especially retail trading and domestic services. The secondary sector, on the other hand, one which is recognized to be more viable indicator of economic development, has not been altered in a significant way, compared to the tartiary sector.

The recent expansion in manufacturing industries, though has modestly broadened the base for industrial work force, has not been sufficient to alter the occupational structure of the country's work force, particularly in the manufacturing sector. It is, therefore, difficult to relate the on-going exodus of rural population to urban places to the process of industrialization. Migration has rather taken place against the background of a somewhat static occupational structure. The fact that the occupational structure has been dominated by the primary and the tartiary sectors—not the secondary one, while urbanization in Bangladesh has enjoyed a continuous increase, it is clear that industrialization has not been fully responsible for the current growth of urban settlements. The tremendous acceleration in city-ward migration is more associated with village push factors, and only to a lesser degree with urban pull factors. The reason is then an excessively large growth of population in rural areas beyond the existing carrying capacity of the land. Urbanization progressed, unlike the Western countries, from a lack of demand of labour in the depleted rural environment and overwhelming rural unemployment. The current size of the major cities like Dhaka and Chittagong seems to

be more expression of rural underdevelopment than general economic growth of the country. The concentration of people and resources in such large cities further serve to inhibit the growth of decentralized pattern of urban development. In their present level of expansion in manufacturing and industrialization, the cities as a whole do not have the productive economic base which would be commensurate of their size and their proper functioning in the total economy.

Conclusion

The analysis of migration from human ecological perspective may contribute significantly to our knowledge of urbanization in developing countries. The renewed interest in this area suggests not only the continuing importance and utility of the ecological approach to the study of migration but also demonstrates the various analytical issues motivating the investigations of human ecologists. Urbanization, when interpreted in these terms, can be conceived as a way of ordering a population to attain certain level of subsistence in a given environment arising from infrastructural disequilibrium. There is an impressive body of works on urbanization as studied from the town end of the process, but more works are desirable on the rural end of the migratory process. One dimension that is often neglected is the diachronic (historical) frame of reference. It is worth emphasizing that the events of the colonial period are of fundamental importance in helping to shape the present patterns of urban growth and urbanization in the Third World countries. Various economic and sociopolitical conditions of colonial times have led a high rate of internal spatial mobility that can be discerned only in the contemporary times. A review of these factors reveal the extent of infrastructural disequilibrium that Bangladesh suffered as a result of polarized development in pre-independent period.

From the foregoing data, it can be concluded that rapid pace of urbanization in contemporary Bangladesh has resulted from the push factors. The very low standard of living and hard agrarian condition in the countryside have produced the exodus of rural population, particularly of the landless labourers in the absence of proportionate pull conditions from the urban centres. Such movement of pulation is taking place in response to a real differences in economic opportunities. There is an increasing tendency for this migratory labour force to concentrate more and more in the large metropolitan cities probably on a circulatory pattern, depending on needs of the both urban and rural economy. The cyclical migration of the landless labourers can be seen as a device to maintain family obligation and to preserve the unity of the extended

kinship network—where they cannot achieve this on a full year basis. This provides an illustration of the 'push type' urbanization pattern that operates in many developing countries, particularly in Africa. Migration has become a necessary element of population redistribution tending toward the establishment of a new population equilibrium. While in developed nations, there has been a geographical and occupational shift of population, rural to urban and agricultural to industrial, population movement in Bangladesh has taken place without a commensurate shift in the occupational structure.

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Patterns of Agricultural Landuse in Nilphamari Upazila: A Study in the Patterns of Some Aspects of the Rural Economy of Three Unions*

Jafar Reza Khan

The importance of agricultural landuse survey is considered essential in an agrarian country like Bangladesh where rural population constitutes 89.36 per cent of the total population of the country (Statistical Year Book, 1981:53). The population is now 10 crore and 77 lakh, the rate of population growth is 2.23 per cent (Bangladesh Observer, 1989:II) and if it continues, the population will be doubled in less than thirty years. This vast population is inconsistent to her geographical area and resources.

According to the report of Bangladesh Statistical Bureau, the total land area is estimated to be 3 crore 53 lakh and 80 thousand acres, out of which about 2 crore 8 lakh and 1 thousand acres are cultivate (Sikder 1982:5). Arable but fallow land area is about 6 lakh and 23 thousand acres and temporary fallow land area is 17 lakh 60 thousand acres (Sikder, 1982:5). The per capita land area is about 0.32 acres (Sikder, 1982:5). But under proper management and supervision, supply and application of inputs of production, along with other production practices, a plot of 2 acres in Bangladesh may be taken as a viable land holding

*A rural landuse survey was conducted under the auspices of the Department of Geography, University of Rajshahi in March, 1988. The authors wish to express their gratitudes to the students of M.A./M.Sc. Final Year Class, who took part in this landuse survey. The authors are also grateful to Dr. M. Aminul Islam, Assistant Professor, Institute of Bangladesh Studies, Rajshahi University; Mr. Khairant Ali, Cartographer and Mr. A.M.S. Rashid Reza, Cartographic Assistant, both of the Department of Geography, Rajshahi University who compiled and prepared the maps of this study.

If the number of total households in Bangladesh is estimated as 1 crore 26 lakhs and 75 thousands (Sikder 1982:5), then logically each household might have viable land in average. But in fact, land ownership pattern in Bangladesh is skewed which creates obstacles to production of crops and use of land economically. It is estimated that only 10 per cent household occupies about 50.7 per cent of total land and the rest 90 per cent households occupy about 49.3 per cent of total land (Sikder 1982:5). Thus the importance of rural landuse cannot be ignored in such a country like Bangladesh where density of population is higher and the pattern of farm ownership is skewed.

Since our objective is based on the higher productivity of agricultural crops, it is necessary to give more emphasis on the rational use of land for improving the life of the bulk of rural population. It is only the planned programme of rural landuse survey that can help us in reaching our desired goal of improved economic life for the villagers. With these aims in view, a rural landuse and socio-economic survey was conducted in fourteen mouzas of Kundupukur, Sangalshi and Charaikhola Unions of Nilphamari Upazila under Nilphamari District.

Objectives and Methods of Study

The main objective of rural landuse survey in Kundupukur, Sangalshi and Charaikhola Union Parishads was a modest attempt to present some factual information on the social, economic and rural characteristics of these areas. The other objectives of this survey were (a) to collect data on the patterns of land ownership; (b) to investigate the pattern of farm-size and cropping pattern and (c) to examine some aspects of the life patterns of the rural people.

The method of investigation was based mostly on field-work and partly on published documents like Bangladesh Population Census, Bureau of Statistics, etc. The data were recorded on cadastral map on a scale of 16″ to 1 mile. For obtaining information on physical aspects of land and the pattern of crops, the method of plot to plot survey was undertaken. Questionnaire survey was also conducted for collecting data on land tenure cropping pattern and some aspects of socio-economic conditions.

The Geographical Setting of the Study Area

Fourteen mouzas of Kundupukur, Sangalshi and Charaikhola Union Parishads in Nilhamari Upazila under Nilphamari district cover an area of 18.27 square miles (46.4 square K.M.) and has a total population of

37,210 (Population Census, 1981). The area lies approximately between 25°.48′ and 26°-03′ north latitutde and 88°-44′ and 88°-59′ east longitude. It is bounded in the north by Domar and Jaldhaka Upazilas, in the south by Saidpur Upazila, in the east by Jaldhaka and Keshargonj Upazilas and in the west by Khansama Upazila of Dinajpur district. The study area enjoys connections with other parts of the country by both railway and roads (Fig. 1).

Loation Map of Nilphamari Upazila

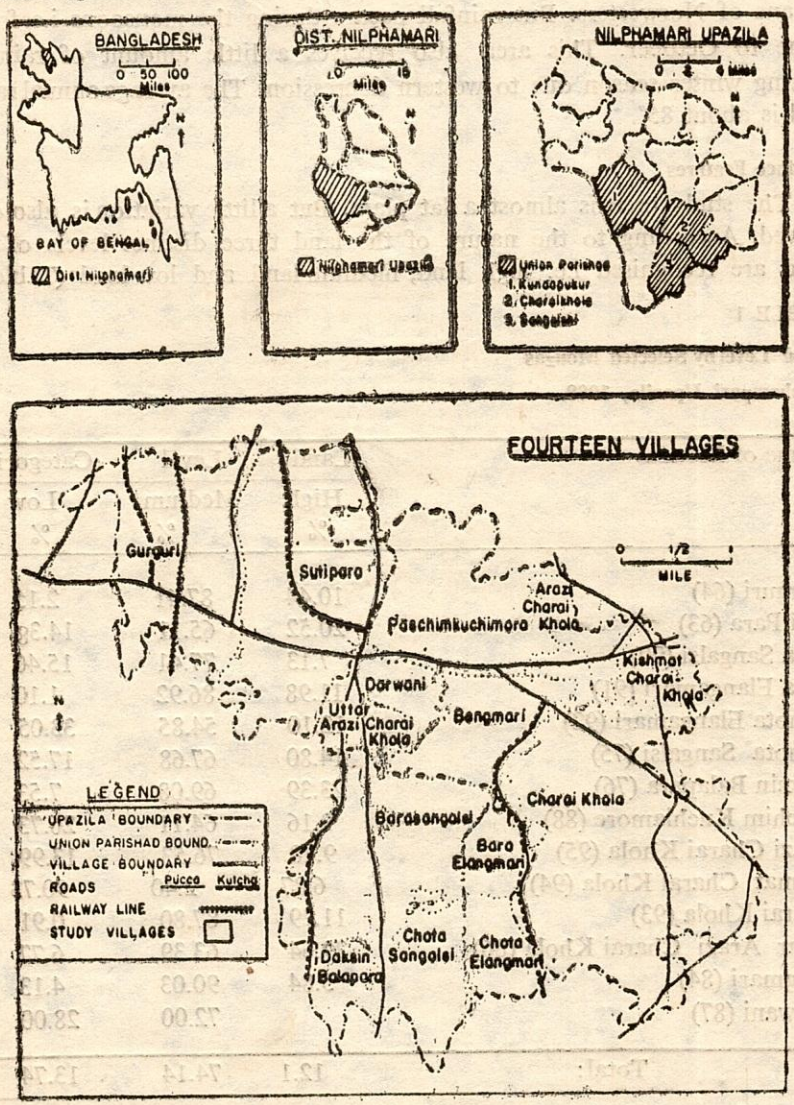


Fig. 1

Physical Environment

Climate

The study area enjoys tropical monsoon climate. The average annual temperature is 72° F (22° C). June is the hottest month with an average temperature of about 93F (35° C), while January with a mean of 55°F (13°C) is the coldest month. The area receives rainfall in all the seasons and on an average 6″ to 10″ rainfall occurs during March to May by means of Norwesters. But rainfall occurs during the monsoons i.e. from June to October. This area also receives a little amount of rainfall during winter season due to western depression. The average annual rainfall is about 85″.

Surface Features

The study area is almost a flat plain. But a little variation is also observed. According to the nature of the land three distinct levels of the land are recognised i.e. high land, medium land and low land (Table 1,

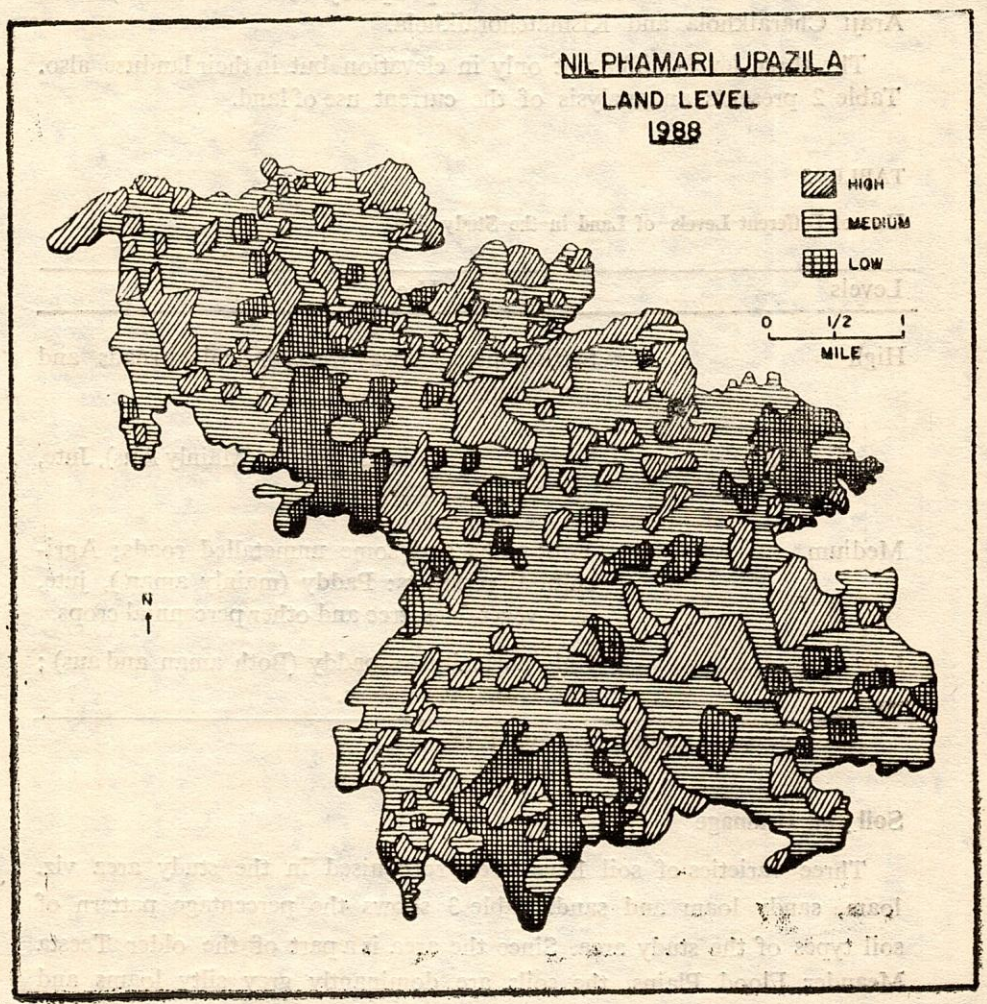
TABLE 1

Land Level by Selected Mouzas Nilphampari Upazila, 1988.

Name of Mouzas	Land Level Categories		
	High %	Medium %	Low %
Gurguri (64)	10.44	87.41	2.15
Suti Para (63)	20.52	65.11	14.38
Bara Sangalsi (90)	7.13	77.41	15.46
Bara Elangamari (91)	11.98	86.92	1.10
Chhota Elangamari (92)	12.10	54.85	33.05
Chhota Sangalsi (75)	14.80	67.68	17.52
Daksin Balapara (76)	23.39	69.08	7.53
Paschim Kuchiamore (88)	9.16	64.11	26.73
Asazi Charai Khola (95)	9.48	76.53	13.99
Kismat Charai Khola (94)	6.87	2.40	90.73
Charai Khola (93)	11.29	87.80	0.91
Uttar Arazi Charai Khola (86)	29.64	63.39	6.77
Bengmari (84)	5.84	90.03	4.13
Darwani (87)		72.00	28.00
Total:	12.1	74.14	13.74

Source : Field Survey, 1988

Fig. 2). The high land denotes to the land which remains above the level of flood-water during rainy season. This land is mostly occupied by settlement, roads, railways, orchards etc. Locally it is known as *vita* land. The medium land remains flooded temporarily and is best suited to rice cultivation. The low land remains under water during rainy season. After the recession of water, crops like wheat, mustard, sesame and pulses are cultivated.



Source : Fieldwork, 1988. Fig. 2

Table 1 shows the percentage pattern of different categories of land-levels in the study area. It is observed from the table that except-

ing Kismatcharaikhola mouza, the percentage of medium catetories of land levels varies from 55 to 90. This is more significant and it may be explained that the area is dominated by rice and jute cultivation. In Kismatchoraikhola the percentage of low land is about 91. It may be said that this mouza is entirely marshy (*bil*) area. The spatial pattern of the level of land is represented in Fig. 2. Fig. 2 shows that most of the low lands are concentrated in the periphery such as Darwani, Uttar Araji Charaikhola and Kismatchoraikhola.

The three levels differ not only in elevation but in their landuse also. Table 2 presents an analysis of the current use of land.

TABLE 2

Use of Different Levels of Land in the Study Area

Levels	Use
High	Settlements; Railway tract; Metalled roads and some unmetalled roads; Factory.
	Agricultural Products : Paddy (Mainly Aus), Jute, pulses and vegetables.
Medium	Foot-paths and some unmetalled roads; Agricultural products: Paddy (mainly aman), jute, and vegetables, tree and other percennial crops.
Low	Only agriculture: paddy (Both aman and aus); rabi crops, vegetables.

Source: Landuse Survey, 1988.

Soil and Drainage

Three varieties of soil have been recognised in the study area viz. loam, sandy loam and sand. Table 3 shows the percentage pattern of soil types of the study area. Since the area is a part of the older Teesta Meander Flood Plains, the soils are dominantly grey silty loams and sandy loams. Fig. 3 shows the distribution of soil types of the area. It may be said from the figure that loamy and sandy loam soils are mostly found in medium and high levels of the land. Since the grain size of the soil is finer, the drainage system is poor.

TABLE 3

Soil Types

Nilphamari Upazila, 1988

Name of Mouzas	Sandy %	Sandy loam %	Loam %
Gurgari (64)	1.63	35.48	62.89
Satipara (63)	32.15	14.73	53.12
Bara Sangalsi (90)	0.16	68.99	30.86
Bara Elangamari (91)	—	99.59	0.40
Chhota Elangemari (92)	11.57	88.43	—
Chhota Sangalsi (75)	3.62	59.56	36.82
Daksin Balapara (76)	2.90	2.62	94.48
Paschim Kuchiaman (88)	4.60	84.75	10.65
Arazi Chavaikhok (95)	27.90	19.19	52.92
Kismat Charai Khola (94)	38.35	1.59	60.06
Chwai Khola (93)	0.63	22.90	76.46
Bengamari (89)	7.00	84.61	8.39
Uttar Asazi Choraikhola (86)	0.24	86.76	13.00
Darwain (87)	21.00	3.41	77.17
Total :	10.86	48.44	40.69

Source: Landuse Survey, 1988

Landuse

Intensive subsistence type of cultivation is practised here. Jute and tobacco are the two important cash crops of this area. They play significant role in the economy of the study area. It is observed that the bulk of the agricultural crops grown in the area are consumed here. The area is dominated by the crop land which accounts for 86.04 per cent of the total land (Source: Table 4) shows the percentage pattern of mouzawise general landuse of the study area. Acreage under tree and other perennial crops accounts for only 2.83 per cent of the total area. Settlement occupy 701.11 acres amounting to 6 per cent of the total area and the rest of the land is occupied by current fallow, idle land, groves and orchards and lands used for miscellaneous purposes (Table 4 and Fig. 4).

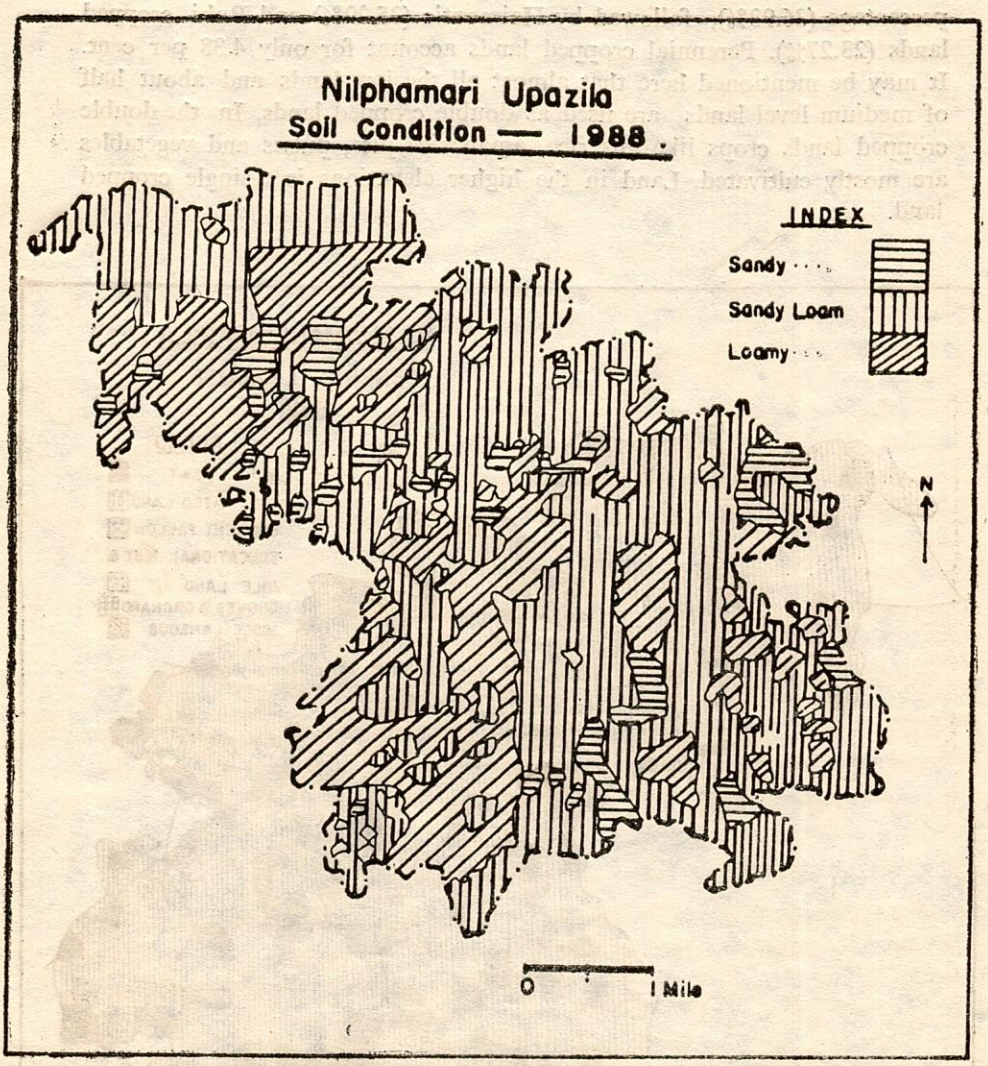
TABLE 4

General Landuse: Nilphamari Upazilla, 1988

Name of Mouzas	Settlement		Cultivated land		Current Fallow		Idle land		Groves & orchard		Miscellaneous		Total	
	Area in Acres	%	Area in Acres	%	Area in Acres	%	Area in Acres	%	Area in Acres	%	Area in Acres	%		
Gurgari (64)	66.90	9.54	1107.72	11.01	58.27	50.61			29.35	8.84	12.50	2.87	1274.00	10.90
Sutipara (63)	107.12	15.28	1582.81	15.74	21.89	19.01	0.75	1.16	46.31	13.95	101.67	23.34	1844.00	15.90
Bara Sangalsi (90)	68.65	9.79	1230.62	12.23	—	—	14.27	21.89	25.15	7.58	—	—	1338.00	11.45
Bara Elangari (91)	4.60	0.66	227.50	2.26	1.10	0.96	1.75	2.70	7.30	2.20	2.75	0.63	245.00	2.10
Chhota Elamgamari (92)	21.88	3.12	252.30	2.51	—	—	—	—	9.08	2.74	11.15	2.63	295.00	2.53
Chhota Samgalsi (75)	35.10	5.01	395.85	3.94	—	—	—	—	—	—	141.75	32.55	572.00	4.90
Dakrin Balapara (76)	28.30	4.04	166.42	1.65	—	—	—	—	21.90	6.60	1.00	0.23	217.00	1.86
Paschin Kachia More (86)	55.38	7.90	1037.44	10.31	—	—	27.58	42.48	32.05	9.66	30.40	6.98	1182.00	10.1
Arazi Choraikhcla (95)	31.36	4.47	188.29	1.87	—	—	—	—	16.01	4.82	27.24	6.25	262.00	2.25
Kismat Choraikhola (94)	19.20	2.74	294.92	2.93	—	—	—	—	—	—	90.62	20.81	404.00	3.46
Choraikhola (93)	152.62	21.77	241.64	23.97	29.14	25.31	5.52	8.50	79.50	23.95	8.29	1/90	2685.00	22.97
Bengmari (89)	15.70	2.24	797.51	7.93	4.73	4/11			17.54	5.28	5.75	1/32	841.00	7.20
Uttar Azazi (86)	55.38	7.90	148.26	1.47					32.05	9.66	2.11	0.48	234/00	2.63
Darwani (87)	38.92	5.55	217.75	2.16			15.06	23.19	15.69	4.73	—	—	287.00	2.46
Total	1701.11	5.99%	10058.53	86.04	115.15	0.98	64.93	0.55	331.93	2.83	435.53	.73	11690.00	100.00

Source : (a) Plot to plot survey, 1988.

(b) *Bangladesh Population, Census 1981, (Thana series) Rangpur*, Part-II, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, January 1986.



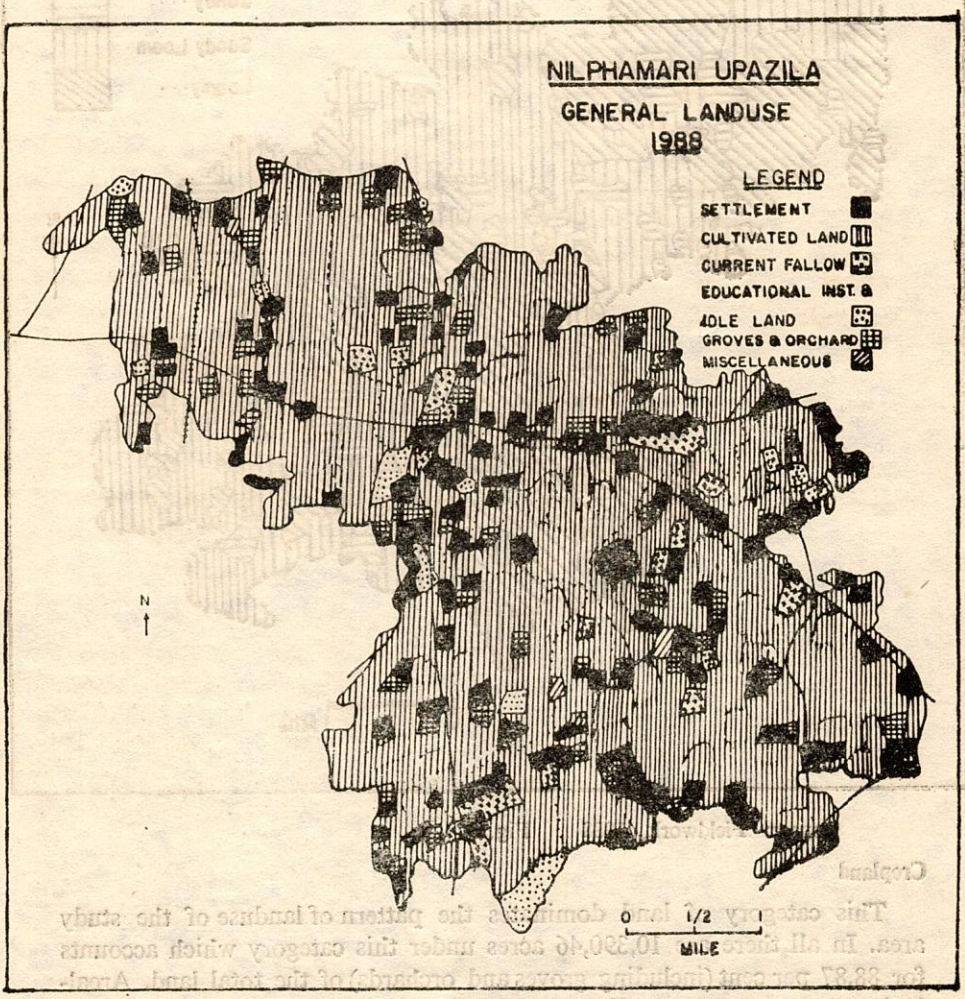
Source: Fieldwork, 1988 Fig. 3

Cropland

This category of land dominates the pattern of landuse of the study area. In all there are 10,390,46 acres under this category which accounts for 88.87 per cent (including groves and orchards) of the total land. Areally, it occurs more on medium and low level land.

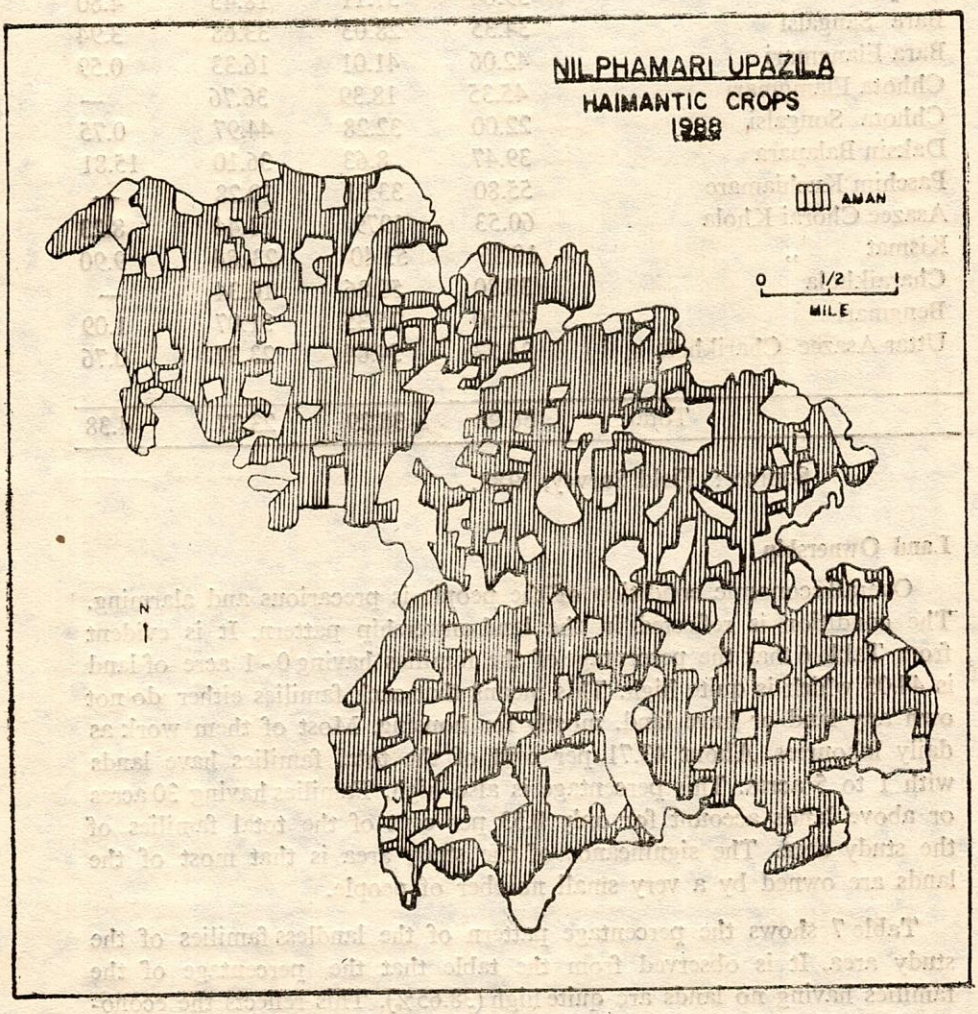
Table 5 shows the percentage of different types of cropped lands of the study area. According to this table Bhadoi accounts for the highest

percentage (36.98%), followed by Haimontic (35.29%) and Rabi cropped lands (23.27%). Perennial cropped lands account for only 4.38 per cent. It may be mentioned here that almost all the low lands and about half of medium level lands are used as double cropped lands. In the double cropped lands crops like aus rice, aman rice, jute, pulses and vegetables are mostly cultivated. Land in the higher elevations is a single cropped land.



Source : Fieldwork, 1988. Fig. 4

Rice, both aman and aus, is the dominant crop of the area (Fig. 5 and 6). In winter season rabi crops are cultivated widely. Wheat is also an important food crop of the area. Recently, it is observed that the increasing member of farmers are getting interested to grow HYV wheat in order to reduce burden on pady and meet increasing cereal requirements. The next important cash crop after jute is tobacco which is widely grown within the study area.



Source : Fieldwork, 1988. Fig. 5

TABLE 5

Nilphamari Upazila: Percentage of Diffferent Types of Cropped Lands, 1988.

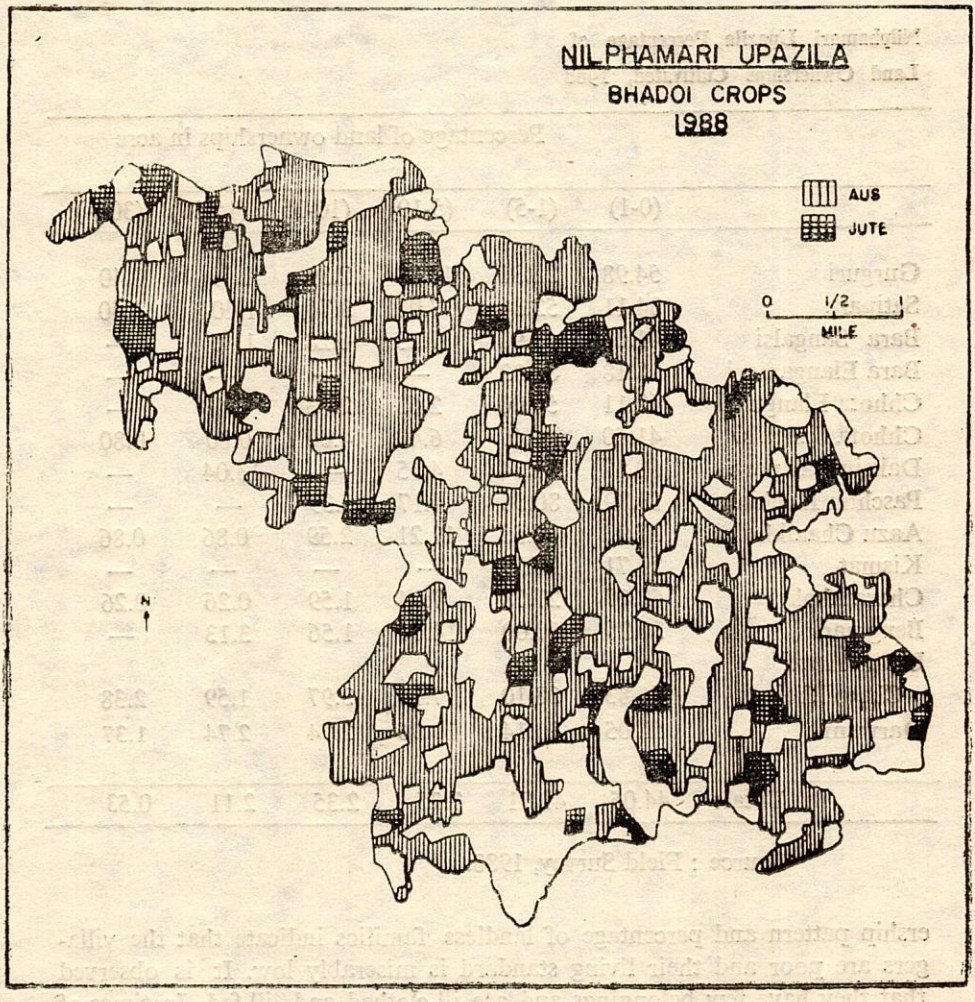
	Percentage of different types of cropped land.			
	Bhadoi	Haimantic	Rabi	Annual
Gurguri	39.12	38.93	12.30	9.65
Sutipara	39.64	37.11	18.45	4.80
Bara Sangalsi	34.35	28.03	33.68	3.94
Bara Elangmari	42.06	41.01	16.33	0.59
Chhota Elamgmari	45.35	18.39	36.76	—
Chhota Songalsi	22.00	32.28	44.97	0.75
Daksin Balapara	39.47	8.63	36.10	15.81
Paschim Kuchiamare	55.80	33.91	10.28	—
Asazee Chorai Khola	60.53	1979	11.44	8.23
Kismat ,, Charaikhola	10.86	53.40	23 .84	9.90
	38.80	50.86	10.34	—
Bengmari	42.50	75.35	31.07	1.09
Uttar Asazee Charikhola	34.23	54.64	23.37	0.76
Total:	36.98	35.29	23.27	4.38

Source : Field Survey, 1988.

Land Ownership

Overall economic condition of the people is precarious and alarming. The condition is reflected in the land onwership pattern. It is evident from Table 6 that the percentage of the families having 0 - 1 acre of land is 44.05 which is quite high. This means that such families either do not own any land or have land. mostly for housing. Most of them work as daily labourers. About 43.71 per cent of the total families have lands with 1 to 5 acres. This percentage is also high. Families having 30 acres or above lands account for only 0.53 per cent of the total families of the study area. The significance of the study area is that most of the lands are owned by a very small number of people.

Table 7 shows the percentage pattern of the landless families of the study area. It is observed from the table that the percentage of the families having no lands are quite high (38.65%). This reflects the economic hardships of the large number of people of the area.



Source : Fieldwork, 1988. Fig. 6

Conclusion

Kundupukur, Sangalshi and Charaikhola Unions are rural areas with an exclusively agricultural economy. The agriculture is characterised by (a) subsistence cropping, (b) primitive methods and implements of cultivation, (c) dominance of rice. Lack of water supply in proper time and unavailability of inputs such as fertilizers, insecticides etc., are the two major problems the farmers are facing at the present moment. Landown-

TABLE 6

Nilphamari Upazila, Percentage of Land Ownerships Cultivated, 1988

	Percentage of land ownerships in acre					
	(0-1)	(1-5)	(5-10)	(10-15)	(15-30)	(30+)
Gurguri	54.98	22.31	18.33	2.39	1.59	0.40
Satipara	34.11	52.34	7.01	3.74	1.40	1.40
Bara Sangalsi	41.06	43.96	7.25	6.28	1.45	—
Bara Elangamari	18.18	81.82	—	—	—	—
Chhota Elanguari	42.11	50.00	2.63	2.63	2.63	—
Chhota Sangalsi	41.60	46.40	6.40	4.00	0.80	0.80
Daksin Balapara	60.87	21.74	4.35	—	13.04	—
Paschim Kuchiara	13.89	80.56	4.17	1.39	—	—
Aazu Chaaikhola	37.93	46.55	11.21	2.59	0.86	0.86
Kismat "	79.71	20.29	—	—	—	—
Charaikhola	62.17	27.78	7.94	1.59	0.26	0.26
Bengmari	31.25	50.00	14.06	1.56	3.13	—
Uttar Arazi Charaikhola	46.83	38.10	7.14	3.97	1.59	2.38
Darwani	52.05	30.14	10.96	2.74	2.74	1.37
Total:	44.05	43.71	7.25	2.35	2.11	0.53

Source : Field Survey, 1988.

ership pattern and percentage of landless families indicate that the villagers are poor and their living standard is miserably low. It is observed that they have few belongings and are ill-clothed and ill-fed. In times of emergency, they have no funds to fall back upon and have to tide over their immediate difficulties by borrowing at an exhorbitant rates or selling their small holdings at a very low price.

The landuse survey of the study area has revealed that the land does not suffer from any physical limitation of any serious type. If the supply of water could be ensured wih the help of tube-wells and if the increasing amonunt of inputs could be properly utilised with the support of credit of efficient extension education programme, the existing level of production can be appreciably increased. If the production is improved

TABLE 7

Nilphamari Upazila, Percentage of Landless Families, 1988.

	Percentage of landless families.
Gurgari	27.35
Sutipara	52.00
Bara Sangalsi	18.68
Bara Elangmari	32.12
Chhota Elangmari	39.58
Chhota Sangalsi	40.95
Daksin Balapara	41.03
Paschim Kuchiamare	48.57
Azazu Charaikhola	10.59
Kismat "	36.23
Choraikhola	56.57
Bengmari	43.75
Uttar Arazu Chairkola	41.56
Daraachi	52.05
Total	38.65

Source: Field Survey, 1988.

and assured, the poor economic condition of the villagers may be considerably improved. The poor peasant of our country has accumulated vast experience through the ages. His understanding is purely practical. Given proper training and education to improve his managerial abilities with simultaneous support of modern inputs and credit as well proper incentives through lower input prices and higher out put prices, the farmer's economic condition may be gradually improved.

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TABLE 5

Nilphamari Upazila, Percentage of Landless Families, 1982.

	Percentage of landless families
Gurgari	27.35
Sutipara	52.00
Bara Sadgasi	16.66
Bara Elangmari	30.12
Chhota Elangmari	29.35
Chhoto Sangasi	40.35
Dalsin Dalapara	41.09
Paschim Kachimpara	13.57
Arazi Chaporkhola	10.59
Kismat "	36.23
Chotai Khola	56.57
Dangmari	43.75
Uttar Arazi Chaporkola	41.56
Darmachi	52.05
Total	35.65

Source: Field Survey, 1982.

and assured, the poor economic condition of the villagers may be considerably improved. The poor peasant of our country has accumulated vast experience through the ages. His understanding is purely practical. Given proper training and education to improve his managerial abilities with simultaneous support of modern inputs and credit as well as proper incentives through lower input prices and higher out put prices, the farmer's economic condition may be gradually improved.

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Retail Distribution in Rajshahi City: A Locational Analysis

Serajul Arephin
Raquib Ahmed

ABSTRACT

The study attempts to examine the distribution of various retail activities of Rajshahi city. Specifically, it investigates the locational centrality and dispersal of the retail activities in relation to the distance from the PLVI. The study reveals that the various types of retail activities may be ranked in terms of their central tendency as follows: (1) wearing goods; (2) household goods; (3) repairing and light manufacturing; (4) personal services ; (5) general goods ; (6) food items and (7) catering services.

The traditional city usually has a single core or nucleous. The location of a particular type of urban activity—indeed the spatial structure of the city as a whole can, therefore, be viewed as organized around a focal point, the city center. This view of the city is consistent with the most important feature of urban land value pattern; that the price (rent) of land is an inverse function—typically a negative exponential function of distance from the city center. The rent-distance function primarily reflects the influence of two major factors, viz. (1) external and other agglomeration economies and (2) transport cost. The concentric zonal concept of city structure based on the above theoretical framework is too well-known to be elaborated here. Sociologists, economists and geographers have attempted to interpret various urban distributions under the concept, using different techniques of gradient analysis, i.e. in terms of radial distance from city center (Burgess, 1925; Colby, 1933, pp. 1-20 ; Clark, 1951, pp. 490-96, Alonso, 1964). The present paper attempts to examine the distribution of retail activities in the Rajshahi city in terms of their radial distance from the peak land value intersection (PLVI) at the heart of city center.

It is evident from a casual observation that there are considerable locational differences in the distribution of the various retail activities of the city. As in any other major city, Rajshahi also shows two major

forms of retail structure, viz. the ribbon and the node. But Shaheb Bazar occupies such a unique position as the focal center of not only trade and commerce but also of all traffic that Rajshahi can be regarded as a uninuclear city. It is, therefore, worthwhile, and interesting as well, to examine the distribution of the various types of retail activities in relation to the focal point around which the spatial structure of the city is organized.

It may be pointed out here that the overriding locational requirement of a retail shop is a site that would attract customers, In general, the most desired sites are those which are located near the point of maximum intracity accessibility. There is obviously not enough space in the most accessible core area to meet the needs of the increasing number and volume of retail functions in a growing city like Rajshahi. Competitive bidding for sites, therefore, distributes the shops in locations outsides the central area in the various ribbons, outlying centers and in residential neighbourhoods. Broadly speaking, shops with the highest turn-over per unit-area outbid others and pre-empt the core sites. Such shops include those which deal in high-value, low-frequency goods. These require a high threshold population in order to thrive and seek central locations to draw customers from all over the city and its surrounding service area. Conversely, shops supplying low-value, high-frequency commodities have low threshold level as well as bidding power. These shops occur more widely and their distribution tends to follow that of the residential population more closely.

Classification of Retail Functions

A multitude of retail outlets are observed in a city of the size of Rajshahi. Some of them are important while others are negligible. It is hardly possible to consider every retail function in a study like the present one. So, a classification scheme has been adopted which would make the analysis both simple and comprehensible.

The main objective of any classification scheme is that it should meet its purpose. Classification of shops may be based on any one or more criteria. The basis of classification may be similarity or relatedness of commodities from production point of view or consumption point of view. Thus value of commodities, their quantity of consumption and frequency of demand, bulk and space requirements, threshold level etc. may serve as meaningful criteria for classification and different researchers have used different classification schemes according to their individual requirements and view points.

In all, more than 90 varieties of retail activities and a total of 2484 retail shops were found to exist in the city. Since it appeared to be both easy and simple, as well as meaningful, a classification based on consumption pattern was adopted for the present study. The categories distinguished are as follows:

(1) Food category (F) ; It includes all types of shops dealing in fresh food stuffs such as fish, meat, egg, vegetables, fruits etc. and prepared foods such as confectionary. Grocery is also included in this category.

(2) Apparel materials (W) : It includes all types of readymade garments, footwear and cloth shops.

(3) Household goods (H) : This category includes shops providing household goods such as electric and electronic goods, furniture, utensils, crokeries etc.

(4) Catering services (D) : It includes shops which offer both food and soft drinks with service facilities such as restaurants, tea-stalls, sweetmeats etc.

(5) Personal services (P) : It includes shops which offer personal services such as tailoring, laundering and dying, hairdressing, physicians' chamber, X-ray clinic, dentists' clinic etc. It is true that the service of a launderer or a tailor and that of physician are quite to different in character. These have been considered together in order restrict the number of categories. Such grouping has been done in a number of other studies also (Scott, 1970, pp. 91-111; Davies, 1972, pp. 1-32; Driskal, 1975, pp. 41-43).

(6) Repairing and light manufacturing works : All shops of repairing and light manufacturing works, printing press, leather works, photo studio, jewelry works, watch repairing, electric and electronic goods repairing etc. are included in this category.

(7) General and miscellaneous goods (G): The remaining major types such as stationary shops, books and magazins shops, sport goods, drug stores, scientific stores, building materials, hardwares, cigarettes and pan-biri shops including some general commodities etc. have been included in this category.

Measurement of Central Tendency

In order to measure the central tendency of the retail shops in terms of radial distance from the PLVI, the city has been divided into a number of concentric zones. In deciding the legnth of the radii for demarcating the zones, the overall pattern of retail distribution was taken into consideration so that shops cluster in outlying centers are not bifurcated by any circle. Each of the two innermost circles were, thus, drawn

at an interval of 0.20 miles and the remaining five circles at interval of 0.40 mile. The zones so demarcated and the distribution of retail establishments of each of the seven categories of functions are shown in Figure 1 and Figure 2.

Distribution of Shops: Rajshahi City

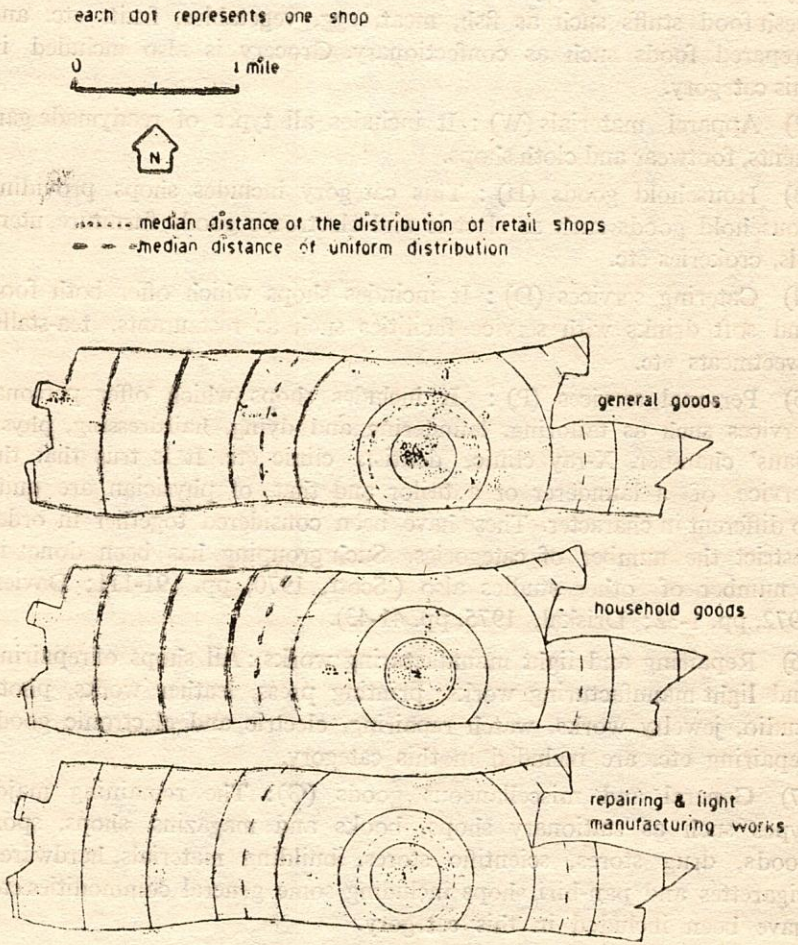


Fig. 1

The visual contrast betweeen the distribution of various catetories of retail shops, which is apparent from an examination of the maps, is quite revealing. A quantitative analysis, however, makes the difference more explicit and enables comparison of the various distributions and the ranking of the different retail functions in order of their centrality. This is done by a simple technique of drawing cumulative frequency curves

of the proportion of shops of different categories in the various zones of the city (Hammond and McCullagh, 1977, p. 39). Table 1 shows the

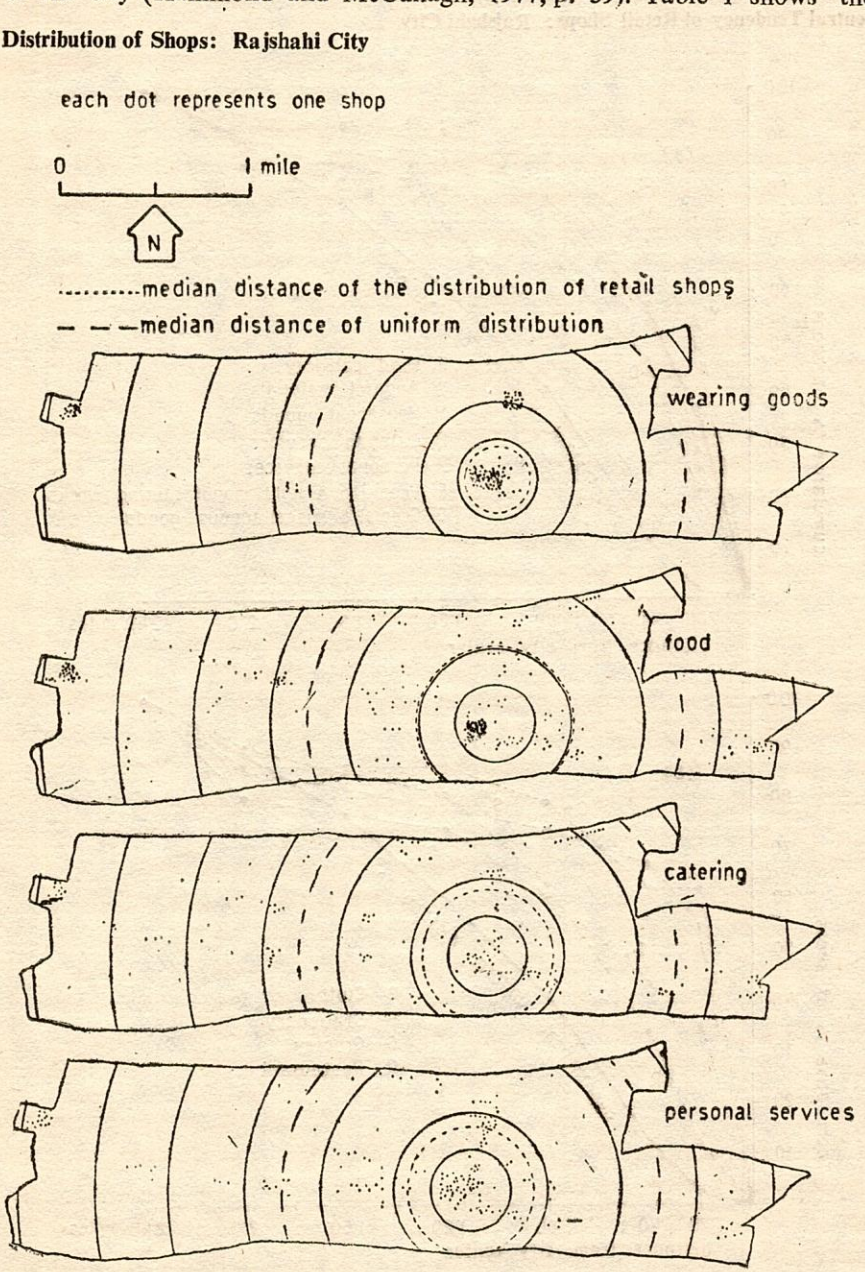
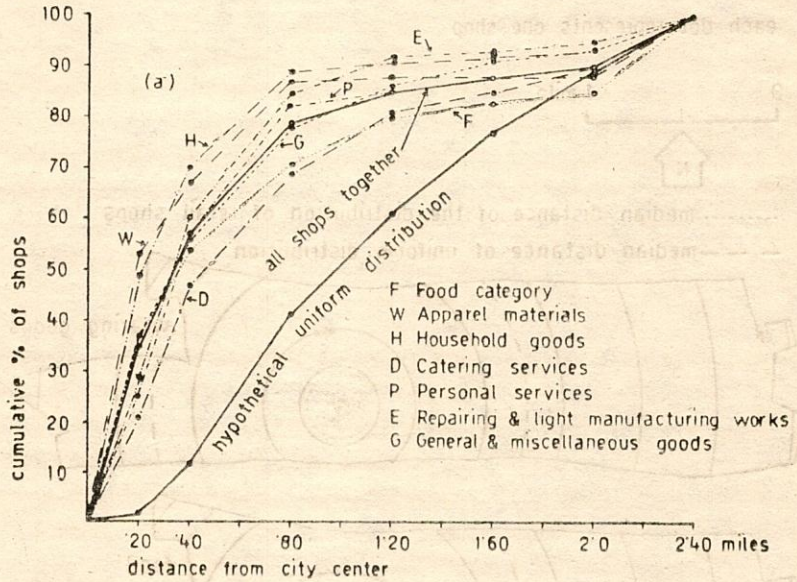


Fig. 2

zone-wise cumulative percentages of the different categories of shops and Figure 3a shows the cumulatve frequency curves.

Central Tendency of Retail Shops: Rajshahi City



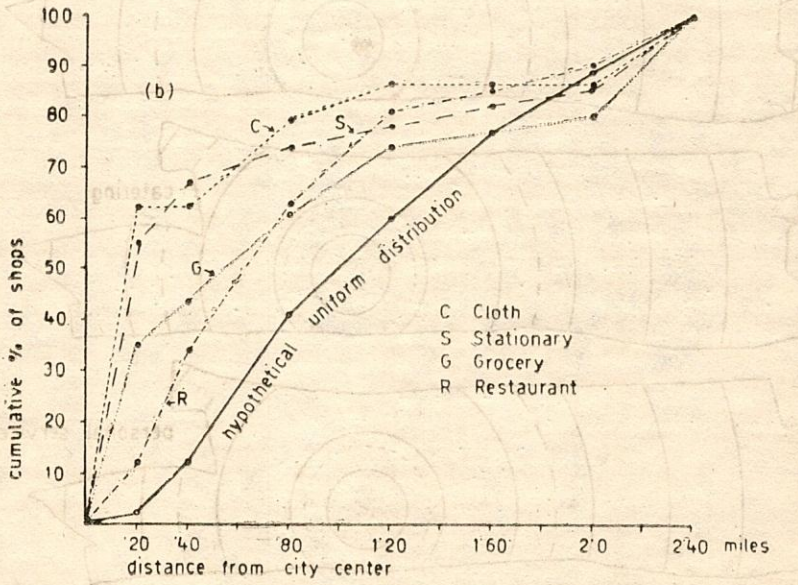


TABLE 1

Cumulative Percentage of Different Categories of Shops

	Retail Categories																All Shops	
	G		W		F		P		D		E		H					
Zone	%	Cum.%	%	Cum.%	%	Cum.%	%	Cum.%	%	Cum.%	%	Cum.%	%	Cum.%	%	Cum.%	%	Cum.%
1.	37.65	37.65	53.73	53.73	37.93	37.93	25.76	25.76	21.38	21.38	29.67	29.67	49.33	49.33	35.60	35.60		
2	18.82	56.47	13.45	67.18	16.57	54.50	31.08	56.84	26.17	47.55	30. 5	60.17	20. 8	70.13	22. 0	57. 6		
5	21.57	78.04	20.37	87.55	16.63	71.13	25.72	82.56	21.95	69.50	25.22	85.39	19.44	89.57	22.05	79.65		
4	8.24	86.28	.49	88.04	9.31	80.44	3.31	85.87	12.19	81.69	7.52	92.91	2.08	91.65	5.60	85.25		
5	4.96	91.24	—	88.04	2.75	83.19	1.24	87.11	4.26	85.95	.44	93.35	.69	92.34	3.50	88.75		
6	2. 1	93.34	—	88.04	2.41	85.60	3.36	90.47	4.26	90.21	1.76	95.11	1.38	93.72	1.57	90.32		
7	6.66	100. 0	11.96	100. 0	14.40	100. 0	9.53	100. 0	9.53	100. 0	4.89	100. 0	6.28	100. 0	9.68	100.0		

For the purpose of comparison, the gradient for a uniform distribution of shops has also been shown in the graph. It may be pointed out that zone-wise cumulative percentages of a uniform distribution of different types of shops would exactly tally with those of the city area. The proportion of the city area in different zones and their cumulative percentages, which were used for plotting the curve of uniform distribution, are shown below in Table 2. Normally, the cumulative frequency curve of a uniform distribution sholud be a concave one because the area of the successive outer zones would be increasingly larger. But in the case of Rajshahi city, because of its ribbon shape, the area of the zones actually decrease outward from the fourth one. Hence the gradient shows a slightly convex form.

A comparison of the gradient curves in figure 3a gives a measure of the relative central tendency of the various categories of shops in terms of distance from the PLVI. A gradient curve for all retail establishments has also been indicated in the graph in order to represent the average distribution pattern and to facilitate comparison.

TABLE 2

Zone-Wise Cumulative Percentage of City Area

Zone	Area in sq. mile	% of area	Cum. % of area
1	0.18	2.77	2.77
2	0.61	9.38	12.15
3	1.89	29.03	41.18
4	1.29	19.81	60.99
5	1.08	16.58	77.57
6	0.79	12.14	89.71
7	0.67	10.29	100.00
	6.51	100.00	

It should be noted in interpreting the graph that the closer the gradient curve of a retail activity to the curve of uniform distribution, the wider the spatial distribution of the activity. Again, the steeper the rise of

the gradient curve of an activity in a zone, the greater the concentration there. It may be observed that the gradient curve of the catering services category (D) is closest to the curve of uniform distribution which indicates that it is the most ubiquitous retail activity in the city. The next most widely distributed category is that of food items (F). General goods (G) and personal services (P) categories more or less closely follow the gradient curve of average distribution. Retail activities showing the highest degree of central concentration in the Rajshahi city are those dealing in wearing materials (W) and household goods (H). Reparing and light manufacturing (E) is found to have a lower-than-average representation in the inner parts but it is far less ubiquitous than either the catering or food categories.

Whatever the variation in the degree of the centrality of different categories of shops, it is apparent that all types of shops generally show a high degree of concentration in the inner area which reflects the predominance of the central node of Shaheb Bazar in the overall retail structure of the Rajshahi city. An examination of the frequency curves shows that very high proportion of all types of shops are concentrated within a distance of 0.40 mile from the PLVI and though the gradients tend to fall slightly after that, most of the remaining shops occur within a distance of 0.80 mile. All the gradient curves show further decline after that and become almost horizontal in the two zones from 1.20 to 2 miles, indicating very scanty occurrence of retail activities there. A slight rise is again observed beyond a distance of 2 miles which is explained by the presence of Haragram center at the extreme western periphery of the city.

Figure 4 shows the detailed zone-wise distribution of the various retail activities by histograms. The above characteristics of the various retail distributions as revealed by the cumulative frequency curves are also reflected in the histograms.

Figure 3b shows the cumulative frequency curves of the distribution of four specific types of retail establishments, viz. cloth stores, stationary shops, groceries and restaurants. Restaurants are found to be most ubiquitous establishments whose gradient curve is more close to that of uniform distribution compared to any other retail activity. It may be mentioned that besides restaurants, catering services category also includees other establishments such as hotels, sweetmeat shops etc. which have a greater concentration in the central area of the city. Hence the gradient curve of restaurants is found to be closer to that of uniform distribu-

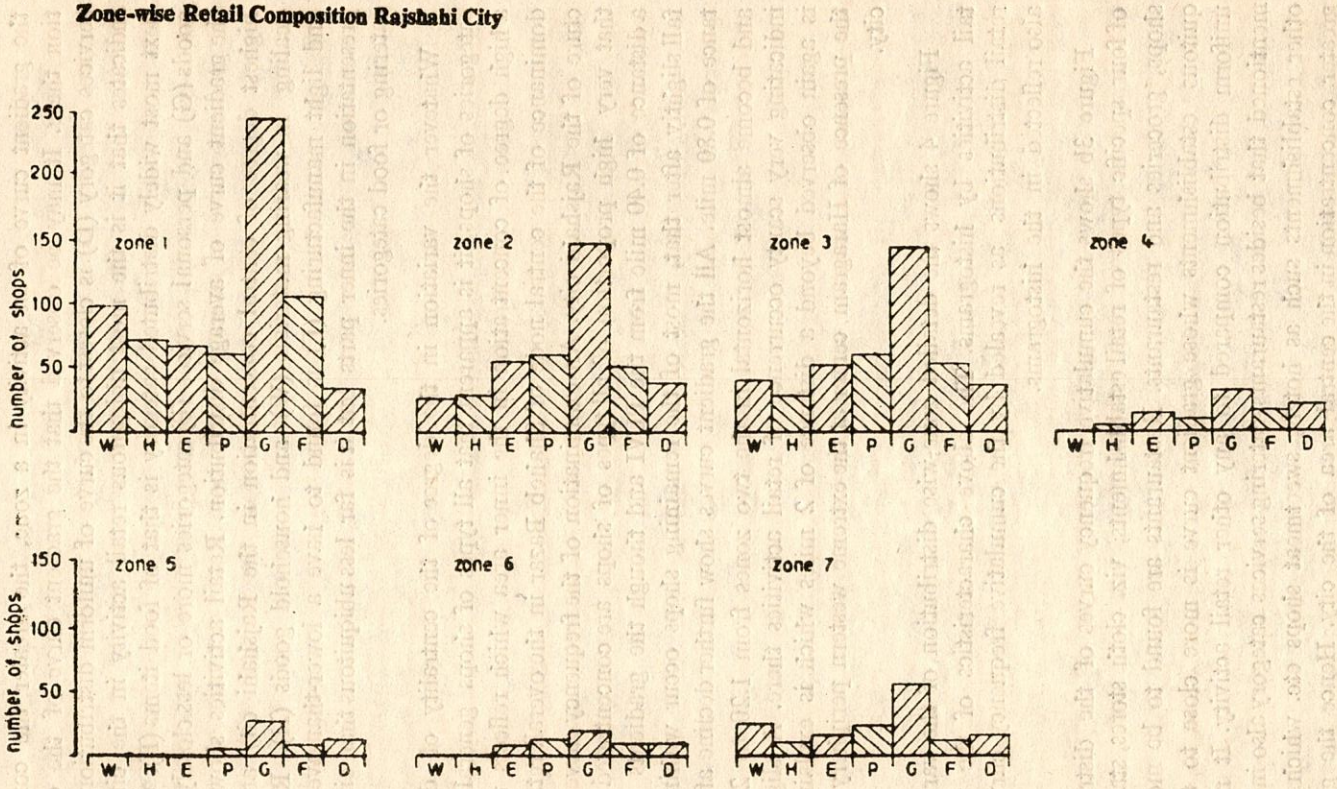

Zone-wise Retail Composition Rajshahi City
number of shops
250
200
150
100
50
zone 1
zone 2
zone 3
zone 4
zone 5
zone 6
zone 7
W H E P G F D

Fig. 4

tion compared to the catering services category as a whole. Grocery also shows a relatively wide distribution but has a markedly higher concentration in the central area than the restaurants. It is interesting to note that there is a relatively marked increase in the proportion of grocery shops at the periphery and decrease in the intermediate zone. This dis-

TABLE 3

Cumulative Percentage of Four Selected Retail Activities

Zone	Cloth shop		Stationary shop		Grocery shop		Restaurant		All shops	
	%	cum.%	%	cum%	%	cum.%	%	cum%	%	cum%
1	62.02	62.02	55.29	55.29	35.82	35.82	12.17	12.17	35.60	35.60
2	—	62.02	12.19	67.48	8.1	43.92	22.32	34.49	22.0	57.6
3	17.04	79.06	7.27	74.75	17.56	61.48	29.02	63.51	22.05	79.65
4	6.97	86.03	4.09	78.84	12.82	74.30	17.56	81.07	5.60	85.25
5	—	86.03	3.25	82.09	2.71	77.01	4.04	85.11	3.50	88.75
6	—	86.03	3.25	85.34	3.36	80.37	5.40	90.51	1.57	90.32
7	13.97	100.0	14.66	100.0	19.63	100.0	9.49	100.0	9.68	100.0

tribution pattern of the grocery shops well illustrates the principle that lower order functions, besides being available in the outlying lower centers, tend to concentrate in the higher order centers also, which are visited by customers of wider catchment areas for multiple shopping purpose (Berry, 1963, p. 21).

Cloth shops have the highest concentration in the central area closely followed by stationary shops. In the intermediate zone the occurrence of both these types of shops is almost nil or negligible while in the outer periphery a slight increase in their proposition is noticed which is explained, as noted earlier, by the presence of an important peripheral center, viz. Haragram.

A measure of the relative concentration (or dispersion) of the various types of retail establishments in relation to the PLVI may also be obtained from the median distance of various distributions which is represented by the length of the radius of circle enclosing 50% of the respective type of retail establishments. The central tendency of the various retail categories and of the four specific functions in terms of median distance of

their distribution is shown in Table 4. In the distribution maps (Figures 1 and 2), the median distance of a uniform distribution and that of the actual distribution are shown by broken circles. For obvious reason, the broken circle, which presents median distance of a uniform distribution, has the same radius in all the maps, while the median distance of the existing distribution of the different retail activities varies according to their respective central tendency.

TABLE 4

Median Distance of Seven Retail Categories and Four Specific Functions

Retail Categories	Mile	Specific Functions	Mile
W	0.12	Cloth	0.16
H	0.18	Stationary	0.18
E	0.27	Grocery	0.53
P	0.37	Restaurant	0.59
G	0.37		
F	0.42		
D	0.44		
All shops	0.31		

The most important feature of the retail distribution of Rajshahi that emerges from the analysis is the high concentration of nearly all types of shops in the central area—nearly half of them within 0.31 mile from the PLVI and three fourths within 0.77 mile. This feature is further substantiated by the histograms in Figure 5 which show the zone-wise percentage distribution of retail employees, shopping trips of customers and the volume of sale in Taka per day. Secondly, while nearly 70 to 90% of all types of shops occur within a distance of 0.80 mile from the PLVI, there is a marked decline in the occurrence of retail activities beyond that distance and the number of shops found in the zones from 1.20 miles to 2 miles is very negligible. The proportion of various types of shops slightly increases again at the periphery beyond a distance of 2 miles because of the outlying center of Haragram. Thirdly, different categories of retail establishments are found to have different degrees of tendency for central location, reflecting their differential bidding power, threshold level, demand frequency etc. In order of the degree of

their central tendency, the different categories of retail functions can be ranked as follows: (1) wearing goods; (2) household goods; (3) re-

Zone-wise Activity Intensity: Rajshahi City

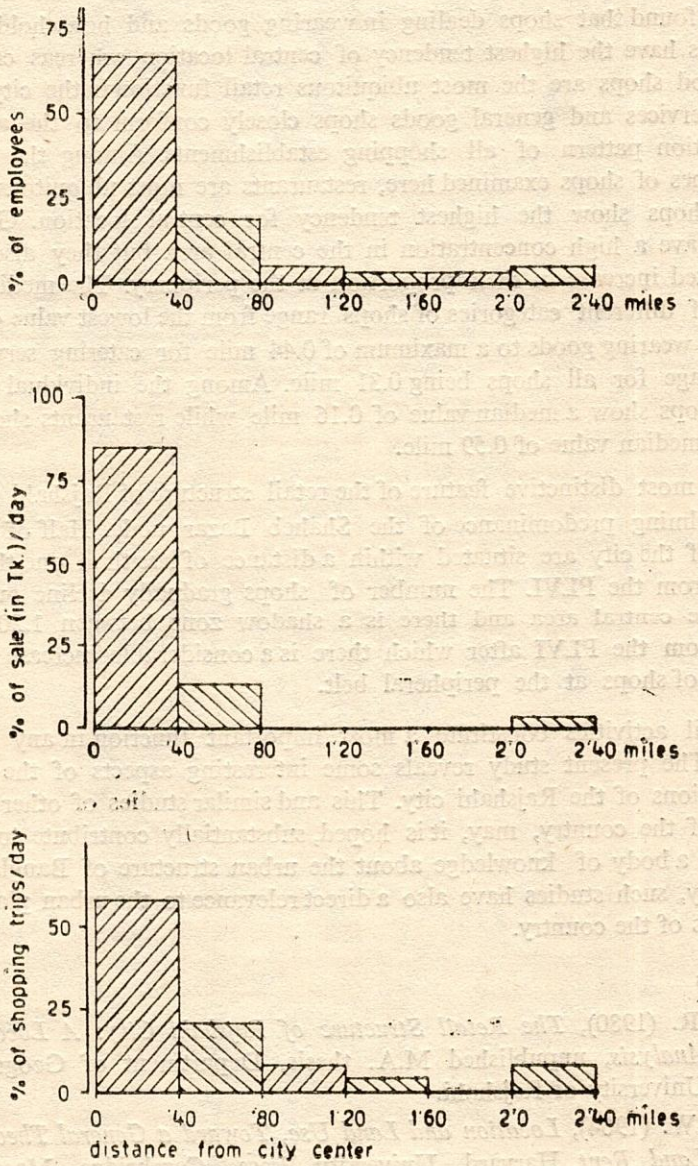


Fig. 5

pairing and light manufacturing ; (4) personal services ; (5) general goods (6) food items and (7) catering services.

Conclusion

It is found that shops dealing in wearing goods and household commodities have the highest tendency of central location, whereas catering and food shops are the most ubiquitous retail function in the city. Personal services and general goods shops closely conform to the average distribution pattern of all shopping establishments. Among the individual types of shops examined here, restaurants are most ubiquitous, while cloth shops show the highest tendency for central location. Grocery shops have a high concentration in the central area but they also show a marked increase in their proportion at the periphery. The median distance of different categories of shops range from the lowest value of 0.12 mile for wearing goods to a maximum of 0.44 mile for catering services—the average for all shops being 0.31 mile. Among the individual types, cloth shops show a median value of 0.16 mile while restaurants show the highest median value of 0.59 mile.

The most distinctive feature of the retail structure of Rajshahi is the overwhelming predominance of the Shaheb Bazar node. Half of all the shops of the city are situated within a distance of less than one-third of a mile from the PLVI. The number of shops gradually decline outward from the central area and there is a shadow zone between 1.20 to 2 miles from the PLVI after which there is a considerable increase in the number of shops at the peripheral belt.

Retail activities constitute a most important function in any urban center. The present study reveals some interesting aspects of the retail distributions of the Rajshahi city. This and similar studies of other urban center of the country, may, it is hoped, substantially contribute towards building a body of knowledge about the urban structure of Bangladesh. Evidently, such studies have also a direct relevance to the urban planning problems of the country.

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The Reorganization of Local Services in Bangladesh from 1982 to 1986*

M. A. Halim

The local level administration in this country has a long history.[1] It passed through many experiments the latest being the creation of *Upazila Parishad*.[2] The election on the basis of adult franchise to the office of the Chairman of the *Upazila Parishad* in May, 1985 marked a significant change in the structure of local government in Bangladesh. This local body was taken as the framework of rural administration at the *Upazila* level. The Martial Law regime which came to power in March, 1982 created this body with the declared aim to render social services to the overwhelming majority of the people living in rural areas. As a matter of fact, the *Upazila Parishad* was given responsibility of bringing about socio-economic development in rural Bangladesh. The Chairman of the *Parishad* was made the head of the *Upazila* administration for the first time. Thus, the creation of this local body had great implications

*The country was under Martial Law from March, 1982 to November 10, 1986.

[1]The *thana* (now *Upazila*) as a unit of law and order administration was conceived by Governor-General Cornwallis. He appointed a Police Officer called *Daroga* as its chief in 1792. Its evolution dates back to the enactment of Village *Chowkidari* Act, 1870 which led to the grouping of villages into *unions*. Later the *unions* were grouped into *circles* under the charge of a junior civil servant called Circle Officer. A circle usually covered two to three *thanas*. See, A. M. M. Shawkat Ali, *Field Administration and Rural Development in Bangladesh*, Centre for Social Studies, Dhaka University, 1982; Najmul Abedin, *Local Administration and Politics in Modernising Societies, Bangladesh and Pakistan*, Oxford University Press, Dhaka, 1973.

[2]*Upazila Parishad* is a local government unit. The name of the *thana* has been changed into *Upazila* by the government of President Ershad. It has an average population of about 1.5 to 2 lakhs. The country is divided into 4 divisions, 64 districts and 460 *upazilas* in a descending order. An *upazila* covers about 8 to 15 *unions*. *Unions* are the lowest local government units comprising a number of villages. *Upazila Parishad* provides a number of public utility services some of which are here mentioned as local services.

for the overall administration as well as the provision of social services. This article, therefore, deals with the structure and functioning of the *Upazila Parishad* with emphasis on the related problems such as departmentalism, lack of coordination and control that are likely to affect the provision of local social services. In short, the paper focusses the problem of reorganizing local bodies in a society where conflicts among services still continue. The politics of the country, however, provides a proper perspective for the current discussion.

The Structure of Upazila Parishad

The *Upazila Parishad* came into being in 1982 as a result of the recommendations of the committee for administrative reorganization.[3] The vital aspects relating to the structure and functions of this local body were incorporated into a series of ordinances.[4] A high-powered body called 'National Implementation Committee for Administrative Reorganization/Reform' was formed for implementing the recommendations embodied in the report. The primary objectives of the *upazila parishad* are to take the administration to the door-step of the people, establish democracy at the local level, set up direct link between the government and the people and augment social development by bringing desirable changes in the fate of the common people.[5] To achieve these objectives a reorganized local government structure has been created. The *Parishad* consists of an elected chairman, elected members (chairmen of *union parishads* within the *upazila*), three nominated women members, *upazila* level officers of various government departments,[6] chairman of the cen-

[3]*Report of the Committee for Administrative Reorganization/Reform*, Dhaka, Government of Bangladesh, June, 1982.

[4]*The Local Government (Thana Parishad and Thana Administration Reorganization) Ordinance, 1982*; *The Local Government (Thana Parishad and Thana Administration Reorganization) Amendment Ordinance, 1983*; *(The Local Government (The Upazila Parishad and Upazila Administration Reorganization) (3rd Amendment) Ordinance, 1983*; *The Upazila Parishad (Election of Chairman) Rules, 1983.*

[5]Lecture delivered by the Chief Martial Law Administrator in a meeting of the *thana* level officers on the 24th October 1982. See the *Sangbad* (daily)—the Special Supplement on *thana* administration, November 7, 1982.

[6]*Upazila Nirbahi* Officer, Health and Family Planning Officer, Education Officer, Agriculture Officer, Engineer, Cooperative Officer, Live Stock Officer, Fishery Officer, Social Welfare Officer (Now Social Service Officer), Rural Development Officer and Mass Communication Officer. In addition, the *upazila* has a Magistrate, a Munsif, a Revenue Officer and an Officer-in-Charge of the Police Station who are not members of the *upazila parishad*.

tral cooperative society,[7] and a nominated member. An officer from the Bangladesh civil service administrative cadre known as *Upazila Nirbahi* Officer (UNO) is posted at each *upazila* who is the chief functionary of the *parishad* and is responsible for overseering the regulatory functions on behalf of the government. Thus, the creation of *upazila parishad* has made possible the posting of a good number of upper-grade government officers which never was the case in the past. They are expected to administer improved services at the *upazila* level.[8]

As a local government institution, the *upazila parishad* can be compared to certain extent to the *thana* council that worked under the Basic Democracies system during Ayub regime (1958-69).[9] Unlike the previous *thana* council, the *parishad* has been made a unit of administration headed by an elected chairman. The incorporation of elective principle ushered a departure from the past when this body was almost fully controlled by the Sub-Divisional Officer (SDO) and the Circle Officer (CO) as chairman and vice-chairman respectively.[10] The *upazila parishad* has powers to raise taxes which the earlier bodies at this level lacked. Moreover, it can allocate its resources for meeting different needs. Furthermore, unlike the *thana* council, the *upazila parishad* is given wide-ranging functions that are expected to influence the socio-economic conditions of the rural masses. The *parishad* can exercise powers over the transferred subjects which included planning and implementation of the *upazila* development projects, preparation of budget, putting government policies into effect, encouraging health and family planning activities, promoting education and family welfare, agriculture, etc. The *parishad* has powers to supervise government officials and their functions, thus adding a new dimension in local level administration. The officials being the members of the *upazila parishad* are made responsible for their action to this body. However,

[7]Central Cooperative Societies are under the Management of the Bangladesh Rural Development Board.

[8]Larry Schroeder, "Decentralization in Rural Bangladesh", *Asian Survey*, Vol. XXV, No. 11, November, 1985, p. 1138.

[9]The Basic Democracies Ordinance, 1959.

[10]The Local Government Ordinance, 1976 also provided for a *Thana Parishad* consisting of chairmen of all *Union Parishads* and selected Government *thana* level officers with the SDO and Circle Officer as its Chairman and Vice-Chairman, respectively.

the regulatory functions retained by the government are not within its perview.[11]

Local Social Services

Since the avowed aim of the reorganized local government structure at the *upazila* level as being the social development of the rural masses, a discussion of the role of social services at this level is in order. Now-a-days it is widely acknowledged that social services should no longer be neglected in the national development strategy as in the past, because the mobilization of human resources for development ultimately contributes to productive potential of a nation.[12] So the organizational and programmatic aspects of some selected social services such as health, education and social welfare (now renamed social services department) have been particularly dealt with.

Health

The primary health care facilities are expected to be made available to the rural masses through the *Upazila* Health Complex.[13] In each *upazila* there is a health complex having 32 beds to provide hospital-based treatment for some common diseases and preventive health care under the supervision of *Upazila* Health and Family Planning Officer who is a member of the *upazila parishad* as well. There is also provision for giving services in such areas as gynaecology, surgery, dentistry. *Upazila* Health Complex supports *Union* Health Centres by receiving clients on referral, sending supplies and supervising their overall activities. These sub-centres which are yet to be established throughout the country have a small staff consisting of a doctor and a few para-medics. The district

[11]Regulatory Functions include: Civil and Criminal Judiciary; Administration and Management of Central Revenue like Income-Tax, land revenue; law and order ; Registration; essential supplies like food, electric power, Education above primary level; Hospitals above *upazila* level; Research organizations like Council of Scientific and Industrial Research Laboratories; Interdistrict and inter *upazila* means of communications viz., railways, highways, ports, etc.; flood control and compilation of statistics (Resolution of Reorganization of *thana* Administration; *Bangladesh Gazette Extraordinary*, dated the 23 October, 1982).

[12]James Midgley, "Social Work in the Tlird World: Toward the Integration of Remedial and Development Orientations", *Social Development Issues*, Vol. 8, Spring/Summer, No. 1/2, 1984, p. 90.

[13]241 Health Complexes have been built by the end of 1985, *The Saugbad* (daily), January 7, 1986.

level hospitals that provide hospital-based services in a few specialised fields serve as referral hospitals for the *Upazila* Health Complex. On important feature of health service at this level was the merger of the family planning services with the health care system. In other word, the family planning officer with a sizeable number of staff serving at the *unions* and villages work under the overall supervision of the *upazila* health and family planning officer who is a medical graduate.

The expectation that the health care facilities at the *upazila* level would be revitalized under the reorganized administrative set up is still a far cry. The health system has suffered from a number of problems such as locational, lack of adequate linkage with modernized hospitals, inadequate preventive services, bad working condition of doctors, paucity of fund, and above all, poor quality of services.[14] A study indicates, the health care facilities are extremely limited to cater to the needs of the poor people.[15] Due to lack of fund minimum supplies and medicine are not available in these complexes.[16] Surprisingly enough, beds mostly remain unutilized and even out-patient attendance is relatively very poor[17]. This poor quality of service and other related conditions explain the present state of under-utilization in a country where demand for such services should be the greatest.

Education

Low literacy rate signifies a depressing picture of the state of underdevelopment as well as ineffectiveness in the system of education. Despite efforts to increase literacy rate the country claims to have attained a rate of 21 per cent for the males and 13 per cent for the females. Since primary education has been the responsibility of the *upazila parishad* the discussion is primarily limited to this service only. The *upazila parishad* is vested with the responsibility of administering educational services which include appointment, promotion and transfer of primary school teachers. It prepares the budget and development schemes and functions as Registration Authority for establishing new primary school.

The *Upazila Shiska* (education) Officer being the administrative head

[14]Mahmudul Haq and Ashraful Haq, "Health Care for All", *The Holiday* (Weekly), January 1, 8, 1983.

[15]Kamrul Hasan, "Kaliyakoyr Thana Health Centre and Savar Gana Shasthya Kendra: A Comparative Analysis", *Civil Officer Training Academy Bulletin*, Vol. 3, No. 3, March 1981, pp. 45-58.

[16]*The Sangbd*, October 22, 1985.

[17]Wasim Waliuzzaman, *Public Participation in Development and Health Programme: Lessons from Rural Bangladesh*, New York, University Press of America, 1984, p. 165.

of the *upazila* primary education is the member of the *upazila parishad.* An Assistant *Shiska* Officer helps him in carrying out his work. The *Upazila Shiska* Officer supervises the functioning of the government and non-government schools besides disbursing pay and grants.[18] An *Upazila Shiska* Committee of which the *Shiska* Officer is the ex-officio secretary acts as a sub-committee for promoting primary education. In order to encourage community involvement at the village level there is a nine-member Managing Committee for each primary school.

The government of Bangladesh nationalized primary education in early 1970s. Since then the administrations and financing of rural primary education became the direct responsibility of the government. In addition to government and non-government primary schools, the villages are also served by a variety of institutions connected with religious teaching — madrasah, *furquania* madrasah (for elementary Qur'an teaching) and *maqtabs*[19] (religious schools).

The performance of primary schools can be understood from the figures on the participation and drop-out rates of schools age population available from a nation-wide survey.[20] It was found that 40 per cent of 5-14 year child population attended primary schools. This low enrolment is due to mass poverty[21], wide-spread illiteracy of adult members, infant mortality and serious incidence of disease. These have created an adverse socio-economic condition for the education of children. The female children are further discouraged from attending schools because they help mothers in the household activities, are married at an early age, and family also does not attached much economic importance to their education. The low enrolment rate is accompanied by progressive drop-out of enrolled students. The same survey recorded that the drop-out rate in Class I was 2 per cent which gradually increased to 17 per cent in Class V. The reasons for drop-outs are the inability of parents to provide

[18]There are 36,698 Government and 4,661 non-Government Primary Schools, please see, *Statistics on Population and Education by Upazila and District* (Dhaka, Ministry of Education, May, 1985), p. 7.

[19]Mohammad Abdul Kuddus, "Primary Shiska-e-Arbi O Ingraji", *The Sangbad*, Novermber 16, 1982.

[20]*The Study on the Situation of Children in Bangladesh*, Dhaka, FRPD, 1981, pp. 75-90.

[21]83% is absolutely poor and 53% is extremely poor, *The Second Five Year Plan (1980-85)*, Government of Bangladesh, pp. 2-15.

clothes and other accessories, the necessity to engage children in house hold work and income-earning activities, their mental and physical ailments, bad communication especially in rainy season, tendency to take up parents' occupation and charmless environment in schools.[22]

Social Welfare Service

With the introduction of Rural Social Service in 1974 a new dimension was added to the development efforts of the country incorporating socio-economic programmes for the landless, needy women, elders, youth and children who were so long bypassed groups in the development activities.[23] It may not be out of place to mention that the government department of social welfare prior to 1974 provided remedial services mostly in the urban areas. The rural social service sought to motivate, educate and organize the especially depressed groups around income generating, skill training, population education and recreation activities.

Prior to the functioning of the *upazila parishad*, Rural Social Service Projects consisted of one *thana* social welfare officer, sixteen village social workers and a number of trade Instructors. Originally the programme covered eight villages taking one from each *union* of a *thana* (*upazila*). The Rural Social Service Programme was initially introduced in 40 *thanas*. With the creation of the new local government system Rural Social Service Programme had been expanded to cover all the *upazilas*. Although the national coverage has been attained, it has not been accompanied by needed programmatic expansion. The original staff position of the village social workers has been reduced to only three to five, thus, limiting the scope of the programme to a few villages leaving others in a state of dissatisfaction. The villages which were not included in the programme sufferred from a sense of not being served. Now the original purpose of covering all the villages has gradually receded to background. The rural Social Service Programme has virtually been transformed into mostly income generating efforts and organizing mothers' clubs. Because of shortage of staff disadvantaged families of two or three villages are given loans for income generating activities such as shoe making, goat and cow raising, paddy trading, rice processing and kitchen gardening etc. The grants received from government and

[22]*The Sangbad*, March 11, 1983.

[23]Nurul Islam Khan, *Social Welfare Services in Bangladesh*, Department of Social Welfare, Government of Bangladesh, 1978, pp. 37-45.

other international agencies enabled the Rural Social Service Department to disburse loans. Each loanee family repays loan money given to it in instalments. The money so repaid was allotted to other needy families later. Thus, a revolving fund amounting to fifty thousand to one lac has been created at the disposal of the social service department at the *upazila* level. Although the department claims considerably success of such financial assistance to distressed families, the impact of the programme is still very negligible in consideration of the vast number of families living in extreme poverty.[24]

The *upazila* social service officer who is also a member of the *upazila parishad* has to work in close cooperation with its chairman, other members and the social welfare committee.[25] Like the *Upazila Shiska* Committee, the social welfare committee also works as sub-committee of the *upazila parishad.* The social service officer prepares the annual scheme of services for placing the same for approval of the *parishad.*

Administrative Problems

The new style of rural administration at the *upazila* level has been confronted with a number of problems. It paved the way for the revival of the old controversis centering round the relationship between the generalist and the technocrats. This controversy was an inheritance from the days of Pakistan. The erstwhile members of the civil service of Pakistan, following the tradition of the Indian Civil Service of the colonial time, continued to enjoy power and authority over other government services. The rivalry among services was amply demonstrated in the word of the Secretary of the Institute of Engineers of the port city of Chittagong. He accused that public service of Bangladesh was dominated by

[24]Mohammad Alauddin, "Dealing with Poverty in Rural Bangladesh: An Impact Analysis of the RSS Programme", *Journal of Social Development*, Institute of Social Welfare and Research, Dhaka University, Vol. I, No. I, pp. 43-62; M. A. Akbar and G. Mostafa, "Poverty Alleviation: A Study of the Efficacy of the Rural Social Service Project Shibganj Upazila", Rajshahi, *The Journal of the Institute of Bangladesh Studies*, Vol. XI, 1988, pp. 173-187.

[25]*Upazila* Social Welfare Committee is composed as follows: Chairman: *Upazila* Chairman; Vice-Chairman: UNO; Secretary: Social Service Officer; Members: *Upazila* Education Officer, *Upazila* Family Planning Officer, Chairmen of all *Union Parishads* and three notable local Social Workers.

the elite civil service in all policy making and implementation positions ignoring the country's development.[26] It may be mentioned that within a few months following the assassination of the President Ziaur Rahman, the Bangladesh Civil Service Association (Admin.) in a memorandum to the then acting President demanded virtual restoration of its earlier privileges and superiority over other services.[27]

The professionals such as the doctors, engineers and agricultural graduates serving in government and semi-government organization formed a united front namely, *Chikitchak, Prokawshali, Krishibid Samannaya Committee* (Coordination committee of the doctors, engineers and agricultural graduates). The committee openly brought charges of domination of all by a particular service at all levels including *upazila.* To press forth their demand for equal status in the service of the government by curtailing the present privileges and powers vested in the Bangladesh Civil Service Administrative Cadre, they resorted to twenty four hours token strike and threatened continuous strike from 7th of February, 1985.[28] This protest got further support and momentum when seventeen other government services Associations formed a forum of action entitled, *Bangladesh Civil Service Samannita* (*Coordinated*) *Committee* to press home their demands[29]. In an open memorandum addressed to the Chief Martial Law Administrator the *Samannita* Committee demanded equal pay and status at all levels like those of the Bangladesh Civil Service Administrative Cadre. The demands included the upgradation and inclusion of government officers of all departments in the cadre services.[30] The action programme of these two service forums was temporarily

[26]Engr. Md. A. K. M. Azad, "Monopoly of the Bureaucracy in the Public Administration of Bangladesh", *The Bangladesh Observer* (Special Supplement) 29th Annual Convention, 1985, January 17, 1985.

[27]*The Daily Ittefaq*, September 27, 1981 (Memorandum).

[28]*The Bangladesh Observer*, February 3, 1985 (An Open Appeal to the Chief Martial Law Administrator).

[29]Service Association include: Police. College Teachers, Audit/Accounts, Road and High Ways, Engineering College Teachers, Statisticians, Finance, Customs/Excise, Economic, Tele-Communications, Food, Doctors, Public Works, Krishibids, Railway Engineers and Postal Service.

[30]Social Workers serving in the Social Service Department in Bangladesh, are not yet encadred.

halted with the tightening of martial law control on the first of March, 1985. However, when the political situation seemed a little relaxed the conflict that remained dormant for some months came to the fore-front again. At the call of the *Sammannya* Committee forty thousand professionals (doctors, engineers and agricultural graduates) went on a continuous strike from 22 December, 1985 in support of the nine-point demands which mostly relate to salary, status, promotion, training recruitment and to the reintroduction of line authority in the departments working at the *upazila* level.[31] In an effort to solve the crisis, the employees and the government started negotiation and conciliation which eventually failed. The government ultimately resorted to coercion such as threats and removal from service of some high officials under Martial Law Regulation.[32] Meanwhile, the professionals called off their strike after 14 days' abstention from duties in a sequal to meeting with the Chief Martial Law Administrator. Consequently, the Ministerial Committee formed by the government would consider their demands with particular emphasis on structural reorganization of the services.[33] However, as the use of strike by the employees of public service is a common form of pressure technique,[34] the punitive measures taken by the government contributed to mounting tension existing in the services resulting in accentuated problem of departmentalism, coordination and cooperative works at the *upazila* level as well.

However, the fact remains that the problems related to service delivery at this level continue. 'Departmentalism' according to a senior civil servant, has posed a great hindrance to the working of the *upazila* scheme. The tradition of working within the hierarchical system of one's own department and the loyalty growing out of this practice is what departmentalism means.[35] The technical officers particularly the doctors,

[31]*The Sangbad*, November 14, 1985; *The Bangladesh Observer*, December 25, 1985.

[32]"Professionals Warned", *The Holiday*, December 7, 1985; *The Bangladesh Observer* (Press Note), December 28, 1985.

[33]*The Bangladesh Observer*, January 6, 1986.

[34]Efren Cordova, "Strike in the Public Services: Some Determinants and Trends", *International Labour Review*, Vol. 124, No. 2, March/April, 1985, pp. 163-179.

[35]Hasnat Abdul Hye, "*Upazila at the Cross Roads*", *The Bangladesh Observer*, December 28, 1984.

the engineers and the agricultural graduates refused to work under the supervision of the UNO. Instead, they preferred to remain accountable for their work to their respective departmental superior officers stationed at districts. But such attitude of officers hampered coordination which is essential for ensuring cooperation across departments for the achievement of common goals. Moreover, in this country the tradition of government officials working under the direction of elected representative of the people at this level is yet to be implemented. The officers of different departments are not generally oriented to work through such a body as *upazila parishad* that functions under the guidance of an elected chairman. The chairmen have found themselves in an adversary role visa-a-vis the government officials which have seriously jeopardised the coordinating role of the chairman.[36] Again, even though the officials are deputed to *upazila parishad* they are simultaneously supervised by their departmental supervisors up from the districts. This dual control has created further problems of coordination.[37] The *upazila* education officer was also disgruntled since he could not exercise his authority unhindered in respect of appointment, transfer, promotion and punishment of primary school teachers and supervision of construction works of the schools. The annual social welfare scheme prepared by the social service department takes inordinately long time in obtaining the approval of the *parishad* if the schemes were not liked by the *upazila* chairman or any of the *union parishad* chairmen. The elected members often try to use these schemes for serving their own clientele. The *upazila* health and family planning officer was not on a good working relationship with the family planning personnel despite the integration of the Health and Family Planning Departments at the *upazila* level[38]. The constraining factors seem to be their prior separate existence as departments and lack of integration at the upper administrative level. Above all, coordination was finally driven to a low key due to discrepencies that exist among the *upazila*

[36]Hasnat Abdul Hye, "*Upazila:* A Framework for Rural Development"—paper read at the third National Seminar organized by the Bangladesh Young Economists Association, Dhaka, November, 1985.

[37]M. A. Mannan, *et al.*, Training of the *Upazila* Officials on Administrative Reorganization/Reform, Rural Development Academy, Bogra, 1984, p. 18 (mimeo.).

[38]Mostafa Moin, "Disintegration of Health and Family Planning Services", *The Holiday*, January 31, 1986, p. 3.

level officers in respect of pay and status. These conflicts among services are likely to undermine commitment of officials to public welfare.

Unresolved Political Issues

The reorganized system is beset not only with administrative problems but also with unresolved political issues. The mainstream of the opposition consisting of two political alliances *Panero Dalio Oikya Jote* (fifteen party alliance) and *Sat Dalio Oikya Jote* (seven party alliance) argued that the creation of *upazila parishad* and the holding of election to these bodies had no constitutional sanction. Moreover, the two political alliances apprehended that the election to these bodies would give the present regime a foothold in the politics of the country and help the government consolidate its support at the rice root.[39] On the other hand, the government claimed that the decisions concerning *upazila* scheme fell very much within its administrative purview. While claiming the process as non-political, the government maintained that the system was introduced in the interest of the welfare of the people.[40] The controversy centering round the *upazila* system took such a critical turn that resulted in the postponment of election to the office of the *upazila* chairman in March, 1984 in the face of the stiff opposition organised by the political parties. However, the programme of election was ultimately carried out in a state of tightened Martial Law Regulation prohibiting political activities altogether.

Government Control

One justification for eslablishing the new system was to delegate administrative as well as financial power to the *upazila parishad* to take decision for providing services to the rural masses. A close scrutiny of the relevant ordinance reveals that the situation might prove to be largely otherwise.[41] The government retains the strings that control the purse of the *parishad*. The budget prepared by the *parishad* are to be submitted to the government for approval which can be modified within a month. The budget, thus, modified should be treated as an approved one. The government could also interfere in the making of the devel-

[39]Peter Bertocci, "Bangladesh in 1984: A Year Protracted Turmoil", *Asian Survey*, Vol. XXV, No. 2, February, 1985, p. 157.

[40]*The Holiday*, February 25, 1984.

[41]*Local Government Ordinance (Third Amendment), 1983*. See Sections 40, 50, 52, 57 & 86.

opment plan because such a plan also require its sanction for implementation. It is very difficult for the *parishad* to work on its own when the government has some overriding powers of control over the activities of the *parishad*. The government might also declare the proceeding of the *parishad* null and void, keep the implementation of any resolution suspended, and direct the *parishad* to take specified courses of action. Even the *parishad* could be declared abolished if the government would think the *parishad* as incompetent to perform its responsibilities. To add more, all rules framed by the *parishad* need approval of the government. Moreover, although it has power to levy taxes, it is difficult to forecast if it would mobilise own resources to render the services. *Upazila parishad* is entirely dependent on government finance. Thus, it is reasonable to argue that the move for decentralization might not be easily carried out and the government may use the special provisions in its own interest.

Conclusion

Under the Martial Law regime *upazila parishad* emerged and was being used as a mechanism of local planning and decision-making for rendering social service at the lowest level of administration. But the problems in rendering social services still continue. Education, health and social welfare services which might work as a means of enhancing people's welfare are found to be inadequate both in quality and coverage. Again, the *upazila parishad* has been suffering from a number of vital administrative problems and contfronting vehement political opposition. The system also lacks support from large Political parties since they consider that the *upazila* would be used by the Martial Law regime as its support base.[42] The recent election to the office of the chairman of the *upazila parishad* may diminish opposition against the system since most of the candidates have affiliations with various political parties. Further, to the opponents of the regime the *upazila* system seems to be an effort to incorporate the local elite, the majority of the *upazila* chairmen being big land holders and higher income earners,[43] in its power structure. In the past also local bodies were accused of being utilised

[42]Md. Ataur Rahman, "Bangladesh in 1983: A Turning Point for the Military", *Asian Survey*, Vol. XXIV, No. 2, February, 1984, p. 245.

[43]Atiur Rahman, "Where do the Poor Stand in the Processes of Nation Building ?", Dhaka, *Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies*, 1985 (mimeo.).

by the rulers for political gains.[44] In this situation the chances of providing improved social services at the *upazila* do not seem to be very bright. The success of the system, however, depends on the reconciliation of conflicts among services, allocation of more resources for qualitative and quantitative expansion of services, settlement of political issues regarding restoration of democratic government, and above all, on the extent to which it is a means of fulfiling the basic needs of a people living in great poverty.

[44]Rehman Sobhan, *Basic Democracies Works Programme and Rural Development in East Pakistan*, Dacca, Bureau of Economic Research, Dacca University, 1968; Nazmul Abedin, *op. cit.*, p. 404.

Book Review

At Bangabhaban: Last Phase*

Mr. Justice Abusadat Mohammad Sayem has done a signal service to the nation by recounting his experiences during the period (5 November 1975—21 April 1977) he held the office of President of Bangladesh. After the assassination of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on 15 August 1975 by a band of disgruntled military men, power had passed into the hands of the armed forces. There were coups and counter-coups. But these involved only the men in the Cantonment. The civilian population was so stunned by the unbelievable tragedy — the brutal killing of the 'Father of the Nation' that they were completely dazed and could hardly lift a finger in protest. Through a maze of confusion and disorder, Major-General Ziaur Rahman emerged as the victor. But in the truly Napoleonic fashion he cleverly and deliberately chose to assume at the initial stage a seemingly modest posture. After Bangabandhu's assassination, the army had put up a civilian facade to camouflage its authority. Within few hours of the killing of Sheikh Mujib and most of his family members, one of his close political associates and a senior member of his cabinet, Khandokar Mushtaque Ahmed, assumed the office of President of Bangladesh at the behest of those who were responsible for the killings. Although most of the surviving members of the Mujib Cabinet were persuaded or rather forced to become ministers under Mushtaque's government, real power lay in the hands of the armed forces. In early November 1975, four top leaders of the Awami League, namely, Syed Nazrul Islam, Tajuddin Ahmed, Mansur Ali and Qamruzzaman — who had played a prominent role in the 1971 War of Liberation, were brutally murdered inside Dhaka Central Jail where they were kept in detention after the overthrow of Mujib's government. Another military coup brought about the overthrow of Khandokar Mushtaque.

*Abusadat Mohammad Sayem, *At Bangabhaban: Last Phase*, Dhaka, Hakkani Publishers, 1988.

It was at that critical moment that the then Chief Justice of Bangladesh, Mr. Abusadat Mohammad Sayem, was called upon to assume the office of President of the country. Mr. Justice Sayem faced a challenging situation. He took up the exalted assignment with dignity and a sense of mission. He seemed to have resolved to provide legitimacy to the government by holding fresh parliamentary election so that a truly representative government responsible to the people could be established. President Sayem had appointed a Council of Advisers with some non-party men who belonged to different professions. But he also included amongst his advisers chiefs of the three armed forces who were designated as DCMLAs, the President himself being the CMLA (this signified the existence of Martial Law). In order to achieve his declared mission of bringing back democracy, President Sayem decided to appoint Mr. Justice Abdus Sattar, who was his senior in legal profession and whom as he says, he "trusted most", as the Special Assistant to the President. It may be recalled that Mr. Sattar had been the Chief Election Commissioner of Pakistan when the elections of 1970 were held and as such he had gained reputation as an able and impartial administrator Mr. Sayem, therefore, expected that Mr. Sattar would be able to help him to take the necessary steps for holding the parliamentary election which he had visualized. The President, however, was too optimistic and, unfortunately, had little comprehension of the reality of the situation. Real power was in the hands of the army and it had no intention to lose it or share it with any civilian authority. But it had to put on a civilian mask to gain a respectable position in the international community. Mushtaque, Sayem and Sattar willingly or unwillingly played into the hands of the army to be used as civilian facade to cover military rule. The source of power was in the Cantonment. It is not surprizing, therefore, that much to the anguish of President Sayem, Mr. Justice Sattar, instead of carrying on his mission of negotiating with the political parties, started going to the Cantonment to hold talks with army leaders. Mr. Sattar seems to have realized that the army was so deeply entrenched in power that without its approval no political move could be undertaken. There was no question of Awami League accepting this position. But deprived of its top leadership, it was in disarray and could not take any positive action. This situation was exploited by some political non-entities who sought to flourish with army support. The army also needed them to have a political base. As Mr. Sayem observes:

> "The politicians used to go to the Cantonment for consultation. This I learnt while I was yet at Bangabhaban. Of course, the Awami League was not there. When I came out of Bangabhaban, I learnt that the Special Assistant (who used every afternoon to have a consultation with me) also used to go to the Cantonment." (p. 11)

Thus Mr. Sayem holds Mr. Sattar responsible for upsetting his plan to civilianize the government and perpetuating army rule. There is an old saying "eternal vigilence is the price of liberty". The task of preserving freedom is no less important than that of winning it. But it appears that the people of Bangladesh seemed to have forgotten this basic truth. Otherwise, how could we see so much confusion in the thought and action of those who came to power after the creation of Bangladesh? It is not surprising that taking advantage of the weakness of the Government those elements who had opposed tooth and nail the independence of Bangladesh, now began to raise their ugly heads. There were also some foreign powers who had, unfortunately, taken a positively unfriendly attitude toward us. In fact, the new-born state of Bangladesh became a victim of internal and external conspiracy. It is in this context that the coup of August 1975 and subsequent developments have to be viewed. No one would deny that Sheikh Mujib's government had its limitations and shortcomings. But it must be remembered that his government was a popular government, duly elected by the sovereign people of Bangladesh. They alone had the right and power to change it either through constitutional means such as election, or through popular uprising or revolution. But nothing of that sort happened. The Bangabandhu's government was overthrown through a series of massacres carried out after midnight of 15 August 1975 with ruthless military precision by a handful of militay men from the Cantonment. The intrusion of men with guns into the political arena had indeed posed a serious threat to our democratic system. In any truly democratic state, the army always remains under civil authority and keeps itself strictly aloof from politics. Unless this is assured, no democratic system could work effectively or remain safe. The former President sadly argues:

> May be, the armed forces take over governments with the best of intentions, as they may claim. But they are not familiar with the civil administration, far less with the demands of politics and the

working of the economic mechanism. It is not that they are unaware of these deficiencies. It is strange that still they take over governments.

The result of the take-over of governments by the armed forces, which is but solely in the interest of the army Chiefs and is invariably headed by them, is that the people are deprived of their right to choose their rulers and the politicians of their right to be in office. Consequently, both feel aggrieved ...

If the politicians are not allowed to govern, the political institutions will not grow up; and in such circumstances political leadership will never develop in Bangladesh to the detriment of the health and well-being of the nation. This should not be over-looked by the armed forces, if they have the good of the country in mind. (pp. 31-32)

Mr. Justice Sayem is critical not only of the armed forces but also of the political parties for not taking serious interest in participating in elections. Thus according to him:

"The Chief of every political party thought that if his party were not elected, then it would be useless to go in for election. It appears that the political parties, by going to the cantonment, wanted to enlist support of the army. It is unfortunate that the politicians could not come to an understanding amongst themselves even on some minimum points, and that with a view only to participating in the elections." (p. 37)

President Sayem has a special grievance against Mr. Justice Sattar who "seems to have taken absolutely no interest in the elections, though he was taken in the Government for the sole purpose of initiating the elections." (p. 43) The President had to come out of Bangabhaban without being able to fulfil his mission. But then he rightly points out that it was not a failure on his part alone "but a failure of the whole nation, especially of those who called themselves politicians and were yet averse to elections without the help of the cantonment." (p. 38)

By early 1977, when General Zia had consolidated his position in the Cantonment he resolved to throw away the civilian facade and assume the office of the President himself. He now cleverly used Mr. Justice Abdus Sattar, the most trusted man of President Sayem, to achieve his nefarious purpose. At Zia's bidding, Mr. Sattar did not hesitate to ask Mr. Sayem to quit so that Zia could smoothly take over the

Presidency. Mr. Sayem somewhat mournfully records that not only his most trusted friend had betrayed him, his civilian advisers also asked for his resignation indicating in clear language that they wanted to serve under General Ziaur Rahman. Thus betrayed and deserted by those on whom he had counted in his endeavours to establish a civilian and democratic government, Mr. Sayem signed the letter of resignation which was placed before him on 21 April, 1977 and promptly left Bangabhaban. Zia then playing the role of "little Napoleon" sought to legitimize his authority by holding a referendum. The people were asked to signify their approval or disapproval of his continuing as President. The referendum was so managed that it indicated 98% 'Yes' votes in favour of Zia. Shortly after realizing that military dictatorship was regarded with disfavour by the international community, he sought to have a civilian base and assume a democratic facade. With the help of Mr. Sattar who was elevated to the position of Vice-President, Zia eventually floated a new political party called the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP). A number of ambitious ex-army men, self-seeking bureaucrats and politicians, corrupt businessmen and fortune seekers readily joined the new political party which received massive government patronage and publicity.

Justice Sayem's little book is a work of great significance particularly for understanding the vagaries of contemporary Bangladesh politics. It tells the sad story of an honest man's noble endeavours to restore democracy in Bangladesh which were foiled by cruel circumstances.

A. F. Salahuddin Ahmed

Individuals and Ideas in Modern India: Nine Interpretative Studies

This is a multi-disciplinary approach to the history of change in India since her contact with Europe in modern times. Five historians collaborate with an anthropologist, a psychologist, a sociologist, a political scientist and a scholar of religion in writing nine articles on nine different topics, from diverse points of view, but all concentrate on the role certain individuals and ideas have played in the history of change in India since c. 1500 A.D. Four of the articles are directly concerned with the history of Bengal in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The rest deal with other regions and a few all-Indian topics. The overall emphasis is, however, on northern India, and the South generally remains less distinct in the depictions and discussions.

The main text of the volume opens, as usual, with an introduction by the editor, Professor Jagdish P. Sharma of the University of Hawaii, Honolulu, USA. Starting with thoughtful quotes from Karl Polanyi and Crane Brinton, the learned editor goes to explain the reason behind the enterprise: the will to provide new perspectives by involving scholars from different academic fields. Then he briefly surveys the subject matter of each of the nine papers and concludes with a sustained note of optimism for Indian democracy as expressed in a beautiful quote from the celebrated journalist Kuldip Nayar.

The first of the four articles that relate to Bengal deals with "Sutee as a Normative Institution." It is a comparative study of the role of women in nineteenth century Indian and English societies. The *sati* is juxtaposed to the English governess to reveal the basic similarity between the male attitudes toward redundant women in the two societies. "Sutee did not occur in England," writer Dorothy Stein informs, "but many manifestations of the attitudes and anxieties underlying the practice did." (p. 66)

•*Individuals and Ideas in Modern India: Nine Interpretative Studies.* Ed. Jagdish P. Sharma, Calcutta: Firma KLM, 1982, xviii+310 pp.

> The British could not counter the Hindu representation of the suttee's 'free choice' ... by any model in which a woman was free from the obligation to devote herself to a husband, free to dedicate herself to any other cause — because there was no such model at home —

Stein concludes. (p. 70) Thus suttee becomes a relative phenomenon — part of the worldwide pattern of male cruelties perpetrated against women rather than a bizarree peculiarity to India.

The movement against suttee in India was led by Raja Ram-Mohan Roy who emerges as an embodiment of liberty in Professor Cromwell Crawford's article on the great reformer. Roy's constant concern with and work for the cause of liberty is an established fact, and Crawford's is a powerful restatement of it with an impressive array of evidences. However, it is not really clear how Ram Mohan's life and activities constitute "one of the finest *demonstrations* of liberty." (p. 98) His life do illustrate a deep love for liberty, but it cannot be a demonstration of liberty by itself since it was not generally lived in a free country and liberated society.

Crawford's evidences also show that Ram Mohan's liberty was not an entity complete in itself, but only one part of a larger whole that comprised servitude also. Thus, to Ram Mohan, even bondage could be conductive to liberty and India "needed to undergo a period of political tutelage" before she could "come of age" and deserve freedom! (p. 103) It, however, goes to Professor Crawford's credit that he clearly sees that his hero "failed to perceive the essentially acquisitive character of the colonial mind." He confidently infers that Ram Mohan would have recommended an *effective resistance* to British rule after forty or fifty years of political tutelage. (p. 122) One wonders what kind of "determined enemy" of the British empire did his Brahmo followers prove to be when that period had actually elapsed.

Ram Mohan Roy's commitment to the liberty of belief as calculated by Professor Crawford (pp. 119-20) is not beyond question. Ram Mohan was a dogmatic monotheist and is known to have hated polytheism, trinitarianism and atheism. Such a person cannot be called champion of the freedom of belief or worship. In fact, it is traditional Hinduism and not Ram Mohan's reformed monotheism that should be able to accommodate itself to freedom of belief. Crawford's article, however, definitely adds to the quality of the volume by establishing the

individuality of Ram Mohan Roy and its close relationship with the idea of liberty.

Crawford's contention that Ram Mohan's love for liberty originated from his religion (pp. 99, 121) is also not tenable. The evidence he presents tends to make it the other way round. Consider these opinions of the great reformer: "The present system of religion adhered to by the Hindus is not well calculated to promote their *politicial interest*." Therefore, "some change should take place in their religion, at least for the sake of their *political advantage and social comfort*." (p. 99) (*emphasis ours*) Is it not clear that the *raisen d'etre* of Ram Mohan's reformed religion was the secular problem of social and political deficiency of India, and not that his religious conviction led to the liberal pursuits he undertook.

A similar case is at hand if we follow Barbara Southard's line of argument in her article on Swami Vivekananda. She reverses the conventional view that the neo-Hinduism of Vivekananda (and others) led to the rise of nationalist political awareness in Bengal and India in early twentieth century. She draws our attention to "the influence of *political interest* and convictions upon religious thought (p. 125) (emphasis ours) and concludes that Vivekananda's "political attitudes and resentment of British rule preceded and influenced his reinterpretation of Vedanta religious ideology." (142) This explanation of Vivekananda's new interpretation of Vedanta and *Sannyasa* in the shape of "practical Vedanta" is original and deserves admiration. Southard's thesis rests on the individuality of the energetic swami who deviated, she says, the individuality of the energetic swami who deviated, she says, fundamentally from his *guru* Ramakrishna to reinterpret Indian tradition and scripture and use indigenous symbols for popularizing the modern ideas of progress, nationalism and independence.

While Vivekananda developed his "religion of strength" from the Shakta-Vedanta tradition, Mahatma Gandhi's ideology of non-violence and passive resistance had its roots in the Jaina-Vaishnava heritage. Gandhi's chief rival Subhash Chandra Bose belonged to the tradition of militant nationalism which Swami Vivekananda was one of the architects of. Therefore the confrontation between Gandhi and Bose may be viewed as an expression of a far deeper rivalry between two opposite sets of Indian philosophical traditions. Historian James C. Wilson has identified Bose in his article "Bose vs. Gandhi: Tripuri and After" as "a

radical nationalist not untinged by the tradition of terrorist violence in Bengal politics." (p. 149) Viewed as rivals fighting for supremacy Gandhi and Bose have emerged as distinct individuals associated with ideas incompatible to each other.

Despite his general dislike for Bose, Wilson has been fairly able to identify the basic weaknesses of the Netaji: the regional nature of his leadership, the peripheral position of Bengal in Indian politics and geography, the minority position of Bose's supporters in Bengal, and the internal incoherence of his anti-Gandhi front. Against these stood the solid integrity of the Gandhiites and the broad consensus about the inevitability of Gandhi for unity in the Congress movement for independence. Wilson's discussion shows that the Mahatma was also an adept in political infighting.

Wilson's narrative is smooth, pleasant and well-documented, but his reasoning is not always sound. For example, his statement that one of the reasons of the Gandhiite's success against Subhash Chandra Bose was that "their policies and programs fitted the needs of the independence movement" (p. 189) has not been substantiated at all.

The remaining five papers deal with topics not particularly related to Bengal. Gerald Reardon uncovers the history of Portuguese racism in Goa in his well-documented article on early Goa. Gail Minault's paper on the education of Purdah-observing Muslim women of North India deals with a conservative Muslim technique to face the inevitability of change and modernity. The investigation makes her conclude that "the relationship between women's education and social change is neither an automatic nor a simple one." (p. 93) The writer however keeps herself confined to the Punjab and the UP alone. But any study of the education and progress of Indian Muslim women in the twentieth century is bound to remain incomplete without a discussion of the contribution of Begum Rokeya Sakhawat Husain (1880-1932) of Bengal. In fact, Minault's article, which is rather short and has eleven pages of background material followed by only five pages of discussion of the central theme, actually needed to include a report on the Bengal scene and Rokeya's brilliant efforts at Calcutta.

In their paper on Sarvodaya Professor J.P. Sharma and Dr. Mirium Sharma present a socio-anthropological analysis of the Gandhian program of total development based on Hindu religious ethics and spiritual

values. They find in Sarvodaya an Indian example of "culture management" and examine in detail its capacity to bring about change in India. They have also sought to locate the causes of Sarvodaya's apparent failure to address the stupendous socio-economic problems the country was beset with in early eighties.

While the Sharmas have been more concerned with the ideas than the individuals related to Sarvodya, Professors Brij Khare and K.N. Sharma prefer looking at Indira Gandhi and Jaya Prakash Narayan as products of the socio-economic order that prevailed in India in their days to emphasizing the ideas they strove for. Sharma declares that "ideas neither survive in thin air nor in their human symbols. For their survival they require congenial social milieu or material conditions." (p. 307) Khare's long article on the "Crisis of Democracy Under Emergency in India" seeks to explain Indira Gandhi and her Emergency in terms of social and economic realities, and Sharma's paper on JP's role supplement it with an evaluation of the work of Narayan toward restoration of democracy in India. The two studies together explain the situation in that country in the later half of the seventies and help open our eyes to the stakes of democracy in third-world societies. These two authors (as well as the editor himself in the Introduction) tend to estimate Indira Gandhi in the context of her role in imposing an Emergency on India rather than in the light of her whole career.

On the whole, it must be stated, the volume constitutes an important addition to our knowledge of modern India. The principal idea pursued throughout the book seems to be liberty — liberty from racial tyrany, from religious prejudice, from social and economic bondage, from foreign occupation of the country as well as from autocratic rule after independence. Two other endemic evils of India— caste and communalism — have received only a cursory treatment. The volume's general make-up including paper, printing, binding and cover is good. The preliminaries include fine biographical notes on the contributors, but the book lacks an index — a deficiency that will always remain an inconvenience to serious readers.

Priti Kumar Mitra

Role of Rural Women on Some Socio-Economic Activities in Bangladesh: A Case Study of Nutan Ruppur Village of Pabna District*

Dilruba Ahmed

The study was conducted in the village Nutan Ruppur in Bangladesh during March-June, 1982. The study area is a newly settled village; and the villagers are all Muslims. This study is limited to the married women of the study area.

This is an anthropological study. Data collection for the study was made through the interviewing and observation.

The study focuses on the women's socio-economic activities — child rearing, cooking, washing, grain processing, cattle and poultry ranching, gardening, *kantha* sewing, teaching, etc. which are done in their homestead. It also discusses the women's religious, cultural and political activities.

The women of the study area are generally found to be hardworking. They remain more or less busy with their chores during the whole day because they have to cook and rear up cattle. However, majority of the women who cook once or twice in a day have very light works in a certain period of the day.

Women want to make their family solvent by their own efforts along with their husbands' income. But they cannot do that for shortage of capial, disapproval of their husbands and social stigma.

Though the women play a vital role in their home as helmsmen albeit nearly half of the total women have inferior status. Some men consider the women inferior to men. Also some women consider themselves inferior to their husbands.

Women of the study area have heard of and knowledge about famliy planning. A few of them are currently using contraceptives.

*M. Phil/1985/Sociology

The Role of the S.D.O. in Development: A Case Study of a Sub-Division of Faridpur District in Bangladesh*

M. A. Latif

This study attempts at introducing the office of the S.D.O. with special emphasis on the role of the Officer in Development. The analysis is based on an intensive study of the role of the Sub-Divisional Officer in Development of Goalundo Sub-Division of the District of Faridpur supported by further observation of the traditional and developmental role of the Sub-Divisional Officer in Kushtia Sadar Sub-Division and Narail Sub-Division of Bangladesh.

The study reveals that the Sub-Divisional Officers play an important role in the field of development administration. They motivate the people, supervise the progress of development works and give directions to the local bodies.

The Sub-Divisional Officer has to look after each and every aspect of administration in the Sub-Division. Any extension of the functions of the government would add to his list of duties. As he enjoys enormous powers, position and prestige, his patronage and publicity greatly help to the vigour of the development programmes within his jurisdiction.

It has also been found that however important or good the government programmes may be, they do not serve the interest of the people or society if they are not implemented properly and timely. The Sub-Divisional Officer play a vital role in the implementation of development projects in the rural areas. He expedites the process of economic development by ensuring law and order, co-ordinating the activities of the nation-building departments, enlisting the support and co-operation of the local people and public representatives and inspiring the field officers to work with zeal and dedication. In the field of development, he provides leadership both to the officials and the public.

*M. Phil/1985/Pol. Sc.

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